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# A Comparative Study of Classroom Teachers' Perceptions Towards Inclusion

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A Comparative Study of Classroom Teachers' Perceptions Towards Inclusion

By  
Keisha H. Pritchard

A Dissertation Submitted to the  
Gardner-Webb University School of Education  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

Gardner-Webb University  
2014

## Approval Page

This dissertation was submitted by Keisha H. Pritchard under the direction of the persons listed below. It was submitted to the Gardner-Webb University School of Education and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

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## Abstract

A Comparative Study of Classroom Teachers' Perceptions Towards Inclusion. Pritchard, Keisha, 2014: Dissertation, Gardner-Webb University, Perceptions/Elementary and Secondary/Gender/Years Experience/Subjects Taught/Experience with Inclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in local education agencies (LEAs) in North Carolina. Regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels were surveyed to determine characteristics that impact their perceptions of inclusion in regards to teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, number of hours of training concerning inclusion, and region. This study detailed related research in the area of inclusion and the variables that are a part of teachers' perceptions. The research provided guidance for the researcher and the study.

The Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS-mm) Instrument was used for this study. Permission for the use of the instrument was obtained from Jess Gregory, one of the authors of the instrument. The ATTAS-mm was developed in 2011 by Jess L. Gregory and Lori A. Noto. The ATTAS-mm is arranged to load onto three different components of attitude: cognitive, behavioral, and affective.

One research question is identified: What are the key identifiable characteristics that impact teachers' perceptions towards inclusion?

In analyzing the results of the survey, teachers' perceptions were disaggregated based on the characteristics provided. There was no significant difference in teachers' perceptions as related to current teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, experience with inclusion, or the number of hours of training in inclusive practices. In regards to the subject taught, elective teachers were more accommodating for students in the inclusive setting. Teachers who had personal experience with individuals with disabilities had a more positive attitude than those who had no experience. The greater the number of hours of academic coursework teachers had concerning disabilities, the more they felt that separate classrooms should not be eliminated. As the number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities increased, so did the degree of positive attitudes. Regions were analyzed with the most positive attitude towards inclusion being represented in the sandhills/south central region, and the southeast region was the most negative.

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## **Chapter 1: Introduction**

### **Statement of the Problem**

Every day in schools across the globe, students are educated on basic skills, tasks, and learning criteria. The nature by which each environment is represented is defined by educators, parents, lawmakers, students, media, and other social entities. What is thought of as the best method or setting for students varies widely and is often inconsistent (de Boer, Pijl, & Minnaert, 2011). As guaranteed by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 (IDEA), students with disabilities are afforded a free appropriate public education (FAPE). In ensuring a FAPE, provisions are made that ensure the education be provided in the student's least restrictive environment (LRE).

In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142 (Education for All Handicapped Children Act), now codified as IDEA. The thought of LRE was first presented in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975). In 2004 when IDEA was reauthorized, LRE became an even more widely debated topic as it relates to inclusion. Inclusion is not defined in IDEA; therefore, varied views on inclusion continue to exist (Gal, Schreur, & Engel-Yeger, 2010).

Due to the lack of a consistent definition for inclusion, people's perceptions range from students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with a regular education teacher only to the student being educated in the regular classroom with two highly qualified teachers, one of content (regular education) and one of strategy (special education) to everything else in between (Gal et al., 2010). Gal et al. (2010) also noted that inclusion is a philosophy of acceptance and is tightly connected to concepts of human rights and equal opportunities for individuals to participate.

The infusion of special education content across the curriculum is one

recommendation for enhancing and understanding of students with disabilities, but the quantity and quality of content in this area will vary based on the background knowledge of each instructor. (McCray & McHatton, 2011, p. 150)

### **Purpose of the Study**

The perceptions teachers hold today regarding inclusion continue to be a struggle across the world. As noted in “China: End Discrimination, Exclusion of Children with Disabilities” (Discrimination of Children with Disabilities in China, 2013), guidelines allow institutions of higher education to restrict or deny access to applicants with certain disabilities. They also indicated that 28% of children with disabilities are not receiving the education they are entitled to. Discrimination of individuals is also apparent in Mexico as noted in a study by Marshall and Juarez (2002); of the females with disabilities polled, the median level of completed education was eighth grade. Ferguson (2006) stated that a student with a disability in the United Kingdom has restricted access to education by physical barriers as well as academic and psychosocial factors. The previous research suggests that internationally there is disparity in educational services and equity among individuals with disabilities.

In the United States, students with disabilities are protected under IDEA (2004), which ensures a FAPE until the age of 21. Each state and local education agency (LEA) is required to provide special education services to students with identified disabilities as defined in IDEA (2004). Within LEA, the IEP team meets for each individual student to determine what special education services, related services, and accommodations the student needs to access the curriculum in his/her LRE. With inclusion model services being an option, the manners in which those services are carried out look very different, not only from LEA to LEA, but also school to school as there is no mandated model in

which agencies are required to follow. In order to educate students in the most appropriate manner, the researcher gained insight on teachers' perceptions towards inclusion in order to make recommendations for consistency and improvement for the betterment of students with disabilities.

The purpose of the study was to determine characteristics that impact classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina. The study surveyed regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels to determine if there was a difference in perception as influenced by elementary and secondary levels as well as teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, number of hours of training concerning inclusion, and region.

### **Background and Significance of the Problem**

**Instruction.** Chen and Howard (2010) noted that “teachers should adjust their instruction to students’ ability levels and background” (p. 134). In order to effectively instruct students at any level, teachers must evaluate the student’s needs and how best the information should be presented (Chen & Howard). Given that the primary role of educators is to teach, the methods and modes of instructional delivery are paramount. With the recent introduction of Common Core State Standards, the instructional drive is focused on more discovery learning and open-ended thoughts (Greene, 2012). Students are encouraged to do more critical thinking and skill transfer as opposed to segmented content strategies (Greene, 2012). With more global instruction being urged in classrooms across content areas, it is imperative that all educators and coaches alike

collaborate more so students do not function compartmentally (Constantinou, Manson, & Silverman, 2009).

In order for students to make gains, there must be quality instruction that is prefaced by high quality teacher preparation and effective instructional strategy (Chen & Howard, 2010). Educators must understand that quality instruction plays the dominant role and that this is the area they have the most control over in educating children (Hampton, Peng, & Ann, 2008). Instruction that is weak or lacks extensive planning and thought is wrought with failure. In order to move students to the next level and show growth as well as achieve proficiency, educators must capitalize on the opportunity to provide instruction that has both depth and breadth. This is a vital ingredient for students to make progress and be competitive in education and in the workforce (Chen & Howard, 2010).

With the diverse range of learning styles, ability levels, background knowledge and experience, and support that students come into the classroom with, educators must plan for and understand the differences of such including the implications of these differences when planning and designing their curriculum as well as instructional strategies and teacher-student interactions (Hampton et al., 2008). Students arrive at school each day with such varied baggage and experiences that it is virtually impossible for an educator to understand each instance (Hampton et al., 2008). It is not the teacher's responsibility to understand each, but it is their responsibility to identify what students deal with on a sometimes daily basis and incorporate this information into the instructional plan and lesson design (Hampton et al., 2008). The fact that not all students come from the same background or have the same experiences is a major challenge that teachers face when determining background knowledge, global awareness, and social

competence. Student preparedness to learn and succeed in school is influenced by varied external circumstances, be it positive or negative; and the impact of teaching on student motivation to learn will either give the student a boost or allow the student to remain idle or regress (Hampton et al., 2008).

While considering the varied range of experiences students in even one classroom possess, it is also important to note that their role models should be positive rather than negative (Jones, 2006). Regardless of the situation, instruction can only be enhanced when the educator maintains a positive nature and atmosphere. In a study conducted by Jones (2006), 18 male student teachers and 13 female teachers who had worked with men at Key Stage One (KS1) (5-7 year olds) in England were interviewed either at school or the university. The interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The research was to investigate teachers' perceptions and experiences of working at KS1 with men within this sector. Jones found that children need to experience a positive male influence and that men in the classroom have a strong impact on the success of male pupils. The importance of team players was highlighted noting that humor and the ability to work with anybody in the school was a component of successful teaching, thereby being a positive influence on instruction and delivery (Jones).

The demands teachers face with instruction and curriculum do not stand alone. Their instruction is influenced by a number of factors that must be considered and woven into planning. Lockwood (2006) identified that educators, who are often considered role models, also provide a template of behaviors that are needed to achieve success. This being stated, educators must not only know and understand the content and curriculum and how to deliver it effectively, they must be a moral compass who collaborates with others to aid in the success of students (Poyrazli et al., 2008).

The changes that have and continue to occur in education in regards to curriculum, objectives, goals, benchmark measurements, assessments, and support have an impact on teachers that must be considered as they affect teacher performance and outlook on the profession and their individual instruction (Krips, Lehtsaar, & Kukemelk, 2011). Krips et al. (2011) found that effective teachers are flexible, in control, committed to students and their learning, and able to juggle the demands that are thrust upon them in situations daily while maintaining respect. Instruction that is effective must be carried out and displayed by effective teachers. Collaboration is also a necessary ingredient to enhancing instruction in the classroom, whole school, district, and even nationally. Teachers must be able to communicate with an objective and respect others in order to make gains for students both instructionally and socially (Krips et al.).

**Inclusion.** In implementing inclusive practices with success, the social dimension is an important aspect. It affects not only the students in the classroom but the regular educator and special educator as well. How successful a teacher is with inclusive practices implementation and growth or proficiency results, determines the confidence peer educators will give in regards to their expertise in the profession (Krips et al., 2011). As a result, teachers are supportive of inclusion but do not want to be involved if it concerns their own teaching practices (de Boer et al., 2011). The current trend of inclusive practices is often based on parents' perceptions and the desire for their child to be socially accepted through positive contact, friendships, and acceptance (de Boer et al., 2011). Although the desire, this is not always the case. Glazzard (2011) reported that parents were resistant to inclusion when social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties were present. Resistance was evident when there was a cost to their own child's education and the efficiency of such (Glazzard). From a broad spectrum, inclusive

practices appear to be beneficial, but one should understand that the implementation and environment must be viewed carefully for each individual student. While there are many benefits and supports for inclusion, one must never forget the potential cost if the fit is not appropriate for the teacher and the student (Glazzard). Teachers are accountable for test scores for all students they teach; there are no passes for any student. Therefore, teachers are being graded too, which affects their attitude and willingness to teach in an inclusive setting (Glazzard). The assessment system needs to be modified to recognize students' individual strengths rather than a preoccupation with standards; as the current system of judging all children by the same standards is outdated, so is educating all students in the same way (Glazzard).

Veteran teachers or those who may not have as much experience with students with disabilities may be less accepting because the concept is new and comfort levels or the willingness to try new instructional approaches are uncertainties (Gal et al., 2010). Elementary education teachers had more favorable perceptions of inclusion as opposed to secondary education teachers who also doubted their own efficacy to teach students with disabilities (McCray & McHatton, 2011).

The disabilities that are recognized in special education vary somewhat from state to state. In North Carolina, there are 14 disabling categories. Although there is some variance, overall the categories are very similar. Teachers' perceptions of inclusion also are affected by the type(s) of disability represented in the inclusion setting. Students with learning disabilities and behavioral or emotional disabilities present more problems as opposed to students with sensory or motor problems (Gal et al., 2010). With learning disabilities comprising the largest percentage of students with disabilities in the state, it is alarming that teachers believe they present more problems. This is conflicted by a recent



study by Mamah, Deku, Darling, and Avoke (2011) that indicated teachers are more resistant to include students in their classrooms who have intellectual disabilities and multiple disabilities. Mamah et al. surveyed 110 university teachers/lecturers on their perceptions of inclusion. Quantitative research was conducted one on one with the participants with the use of a Likert scale format questionnaire. The items related to teachers' perceptions of inclusive education including knowledge of teaching students, perceptions of university teachers towards the concept inclusion, types of disabilities that can influence perception and acceptance, and influence of support from resource persons on lecturers' perceptions towards the inclusion of students who are visually impaired. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, t tests, and ANOVA. The data also reported that students with emotional disorders were easily managed in inclusive schools while students with visual impairments were not easily managed. This bears credence to the fact that teachers' perceptions are widely varied and depend largely on their own personal experiences and attitudes (Gal et al., 2010; Leatherman, 2007).

Teachers tend to have a more positive attitude towards inclusion if they have experience with an individual with a disability either personally or professionally as opposed to their peers who have little or no experience (de Boer et al., 2011). The fear of the unknown or not knowing what to expect when working with an individual with a disability resonates with some teachers in that they do not desire to experience what could be a very rewarding experience in educating that child (de Boer et al., 2011).

A negative perception that teachers often relayed was the amount or lack of training (de Boer et al., 2011; Gal et al., 2010; Glazzard, 2011; Leatherman, 2007; Mamah et al., 2011; McCray & McHatton, 2011). McCray and McHatton (2011) unveiled the need for additional support related to instructional strategies, specific

knowledge, and skills. Respondents also desired assistance in ensuring the needs of students with disabilities are met in a mixed-ability classroom. The intricacies of differentiation and meeting the needs of all students are daily requirements in any classroom but are more intense in an inclusive setting. Gal et al. (2010) reported that to be successful, such settings should occur in smaller settings with fewer pupils.

Without support from others, the success of inclusion is minimal (Gal et al., 2010). Support from administration, special educators, regular educators, speech language pathologists, physical therapists, and occupational therapists prove to only enhance the experience and outcomes of students served in an inclusion setting (Leatherman, 2007). The greater the training and education teachers receive in inclusive practices, the more comfortable they are in executing effective inclusion. Teachers who receive adequate support are also more positive about teaching in an inclusive setting (Mamah et al., 2011).

### **Setting**

The research took place in randomly selected LEAs in North Carolina public schools. North Carolina has an area of 52,586 square miles and a population of 8,049,313, as recorded in the 2000 census. North Carolina is home to three regions that are divided as the mountains, piedmont, and coastal plain (North Carolina Facts and Figures, 2012).

North Carolina public schools are made up of 115 LEAs including both county and city units. There are 2,418 public schools that serve 1,443,998 students daily. North Carolina public schools are divided into eight regions (Appendix A). They are identified by their geographic location, each including county and city units with the exception of Region 1, which is the northeast region and is comprised of only county units.

Table 1

*Regions and Number of Districts in North Carolina*

Region	Total Number of Districts
1: Northeast	15
2: Southeast	14
3: North Central	14
4: Sandhills/South Central	12
5: Piedmont-Triad/Central	15
6: Southwest	9
7: Northwest	19
8: Western	17
Total	115

In fall 2012, there were 177,149 full-time school personnel with 70.1% holding bachelor's degrees, 28.1% with master's degrees, 1.1% vocational, 0.3% sixth-year level, 0.2% doctorate, and 0.2% pending license approval (Public Schools of North Carolina, 2012). According to the April 1, 2013, child count of all LEAs in North Carolina, there were 195,416 individuals aged 3-22 who were identified as having a disability. This population accounts for 13.5% of students served in North Carolina public schools. The lowest incidence population recorded was deaf/blind which accounts for .019%, followed by deaf at .1%, and traumatic brain injury at .2%. The higher incident categories, as noted by the April 1, 2013, child count, include learning disability at 37%, other health impaired at 17.3%, and speech impaired at 15.6%.

Table 2

*Numbers and Percentages of Students with Disabilities in North Carolina Ages 3-22*

Disability	Total Number	Percentage
Autism	15,047	7.7
Deaf/Blind	37	.019
Developmentally Delayed	13,975	7.2
Deaf	190	.1
Emotional Disorder	5,967	3.1
Hearing Impaired	1,955	1
Intellectual Disorder/Mild	12,958	6.6
Intellectual Disorder/Moderate	4,203	2.2
Intellectual Disorder/Severe	806	.4
Learning Disability	71,337	37
Multiple Disabilities	2,621	1.3
Other Health Impairment	33,743	17.3
Orthopedic Impairment	956	.5
Speech Impairment	30,496	15.6
Traumatic Brain Injury	436	.2
Visual Impairment	689	.4
Total	195,416	100

The State Performance Plan indicated that in 2005-2006, students who were served in a regular setting with their nondisabled peers for 80% or more of their day was

60.59%, students with nondisabled peers for 40% or less of their day was 17.27%, and students in separate settings accounted for 2.23%. There is no indication as to the types of classes the students were served in during the 80% or more time period. These could either be regular education classes or inclusion classes.

Table 3

*Percentages of Students with Disabilities Served by Setting*

Setting	Percentage
Regular (with nondisabled peers 80% or more of the day)	60.59
Resource (with nondisabled peers 40-79% of the day)	17.27
Separate (with nondisabled peers less than 40% of the day)	2.23

**Summary**

In spite of the advances in education as related to inclusion, there still exists a gap between students with and without disabilities that current educational policy assumes can be narrowed (Glazzard, 2011). According to the North Carolina State Testing Results for 2011-2012, there is a disparity in the results between students with disabilities and nondisabled students. For the end-of-grade (EOG) testing for students in Grades 3-8, students without disabilities were 59.3% proficient, while students with disabilities were 32.2% proficient. The average reading score for students without disabilities was 351.2, whereas for students with disabilities it was 345.0. The average math score was 355.7 for students without disabilities and 350.1 for students with disabilities. Science EOGs are given in both fifth and eighth grade. For fifth grade, there was 66.6% proficiency for students without disabilities and 47.7% for students with disabilities. The mean scale

score was 155.6 for students without a disability and 151.6 for students identified with a disability. The eighth-grade results are very similar, with 69.2% proficient without a disability and 45.5% proficient with a disability. The mean scale scores were 153.6 for students without a disability and 148.8 for students identified with a disability.

End-of-course (EOC) tests are given in high school for various classes. Algebra I results: 78.7% proficient for nondisabled, 37.7% proficient for students with disabilities; Biology: 82.3% nondisabled, 45.5% students with disabilities; English I: 85.1% nondisabled, 39.4% students with disabilities. The mean scale scores for the EOCs are Algebra I: 155.0 nondisabled, 144.4 students with disabilities; Biology: 154.9 nondisabled, 145.8 students with disabilities; English I: 153.8 nondisabled, 143.5 students with disabilities.

Table 4

*North Carolina State Testing Results for Students With and Without Disabilities*

Test	Proficiency Rates			Mean Scale Scores	
	Without	With		Without	With
Gr. 3-8 EOG	59.3	32.2	Reading: Math:	351.2 355.7	345.0 350.1
Gr. 5 Science	66.6	47.4		155.6	151.6
Gr. 8 Science	69.2	45.5		153.6	148.8
Algebra I	78.7	37.7		155.0	144.4
Biology	82.3	45.5		154.9	145.8
English I	85.1	39.4		153.8	143.5

As indicated by the 2011-2012 test scores, gaps still exist in educating and assessing students with disabilities. Without support, training, and understanding perspectives of inclusion, educators and professionals will be missing a vital ingredient in making advancements in educating students (Glazzard, 2011). The effects on individual teachers' accountability data and student growth continue to be measured and discussed on an annual or bi-annual basis. As a result of the ambiguity in current data and the desire to determine if there are specific variables that affect a teacher's perception, additional research was warranted in order to make recommendations for enhancement.

### **Definition of Terms**

**Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students Instrument (ATTAS-mm).** A 9-item positively worded instrument that allows respondents to select their level of agreement that loads into three different components of attitude: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. It is determined to be a valid and reliable instrument for measuring attitudes towards teaching all students (Gregory & Noto, 2012).

**Autism.** A developmental disability significantly affecting verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction, generally evident before age three, that adversely affects a child's educational performance. This impairment may include Autistic Disorder, Pervasive Developmental Disorder-Not Otherwise Specified (Atypical Autism), Asperger's Disorder, Rett's Disorder, Childhood Disintegrative Disorder or all Pervasive Developmental Disorders (Policies Governing Services for Children with Disabilities [Policies], 2013).

**Core class.** A core class is considered for purposes of this study to be reading/language arts, math, science, and social studies/history classes.

**Co-teach.** Co-teach refers to two teachers having shared responsibility in

planning, delivering, and assessing instruction for a group of students. This is done by a regular educator and a special educator working collaboratively.

**Deaf-blindness.** Hearing and visual impairments that occur together, the combination of which causes such severe communication and other developmental and educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for children with deafness or children with blindness (Policies, 2013).

**Deafness.** A hearing impairment that is so severe that the child is impaired in processing linguistic information through hearing, with or without amplification that adversely affects the child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

**Developmental delay.** A child aged 3-7 whose development and/or behavior is delayed or atypical, as measured by appropriate diagnostic instruments and procedures, in one or more of the following areas: physical development, cognitive development, communication development, social or emotional development, or adaptive development; and who, by reason of the delay, needs special education and related services (Policies, 2013).

**Elective class.** An elective class is considered for purposes of this study as any course that is not a core class such as physical education, health, music, art, foreign language, humanities, career and technical education, etc.

**Elementary level.** Comprised of grades kindergarten through fifth (K-5).

**Hearing impairment.** An impairment in hearing, whether permanent or fluctuating, that adversely affects a child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

**Inclusion.** Refers to students with disabilities being educated in a regular education classroom setting with both a special education teacher and a regular education teacher.



**Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).** A law ensuring services to children with disabilities throughout the nation by governing how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services to children aged birth to 21 (IDEA, 2004).

**Intellectual disability.** A significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning that adversely affects a child's educational performance existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period (Policies, 2013).

**Least restrictive environment (LRE).** To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities shall be educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature of the disability is such that education in the regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (Policies, 2013).

**Mainstream.** Mainstream is referred to as students with disabilities being placed in regular education classes and receiving special education services while in the regular education setting.

**Multiple disabilities.** Two or more disabilities occurring together, the combination of which causes such severe educational needs that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments (Policies, 2013).

**Orthopedic impairment.** A severe physical impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes impairments caused by a congenital anomaly, impairments caused by disease (e.g., poliomyelitis, bone tuberculosis), and

impairments from other causes (e.g., cerebral palsy, amputations, and fractures or burns that cause contractures) (Policies, 2013).

**Other health impairment.** Having limited strength, vitality, or alertness, including a heightened alertness to environmental stimuli, that results in limited alertness with respect to the educational environment, that (1) is due to chronic or acute health problems such as asthma, attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, diabetes, epilepsy, a heart condition, hemophilia, lead poisoning, leukemia, nephritis, rheumatic fever, sickle cell anemia, and Tourette's Syndrome, etc.; and (2) adversely affects a child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

**Regular level of service.** Services/supports provided to individuals who require specially designed academic, communication, and/or behavior support outside the general classroom for 20% or less of the day (Policies, 2013).

**Regular educator.** A regular educator is a certified teacher who teaches either core classes or elective classes.

**Secondary level.** Comprised of Grades 6-12.

**Resource level of service.** Services/supports provided to students who require specific instruction in targeted skills areas (to include but not limited to reading, math, written expression, social skills) outside the general education classroom from 21-60% of the day (Policies, 2013).

**Separate level of service.** Services/supports outside the general education classroom for greater than 60% of the day, to students who require extensive explicit instruction to acquire, maintain, and generalize multiple skills (Policies, 2013).

**Serious emotional disability.** A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that adversely

affects a child's educational performance: (1) an inability to make educational progress that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (2) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (3) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (4) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; (5) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Policies, 2013).

**Special educator.** A teacher who is certified in the field of special education.

**Specific learning disability.** A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia (Policies, 2013).

**Speech or language impairment.** A communication disorder, such as an impairment in fluency, articulation, language, or voice/resonance that adversely affects a child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

**Traumatic brain injury.** An acquired injury to the brain caused by an external physical force or by an internal occurrence resulting in total or partial functional disability and/or psychosocial impairment that adversely affects a child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

**Visual impairment including blindness.** An impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance (Policies, 2013).

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Overview

The purpose of the study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina. The study surveyed regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels to determine if there is a difference in perception as influenced by elementary and secondary levels as well as teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, number of hours of training concerning inclusion, and region.

This study details related research in the area of inclusion and the variables that are a part of teachers' perceptions. The research provided guidance for the researcher and the study. Much research has been done on this topic and the variables that impact inclusion. Important literature and research associated with the topic including benefits and challenges of inclusion, elementary and secondary levels, gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught, and past experience with inclusion are discussed in further detail below.

The term inclusion is not mentioned in IDEA. It is not a legal requirement, but rather a legal notion of equality noting that students with disabilities should be educated to the maximum extent possible with their nondisabled peers (Taylor, 2011). When IDEA was reauthorized in 2004, lawmakers did not use the specific term inclusion as it does not provide how specially designed instruction should look, but that it benefits students with disabilities ensuring equal access to the curriculum. Human rights do not give entitlement to do whatever we want; only certain rights are protected by the law, and

inclusion is not a law (Greenhill & Whitehead, 2011). Since inclusion is not specifically stated, LEAs are not bound to provide an inclusive model, they are only required to provide a continuum of services for students with disabilities in the LRE (Taylor, 2011). Inclusion can be interpreted very differently depending upon the school district (Yssel, Engelbrecht, Oswald, Eloff, & Swart, 2007). Students with high-incidence disabilities are widely accepted in their neighborhood schools, whereas programs for students with severe or low-incidence disabilities are not always available at the neighborhood school and might be bused to another school in the district (Yssel et al., 2007). Students with more involved needs are often placed in self-contained classrooms for the majority of the school day, albeit in their neighborhood school (Yssel et al., 2007).

Inclusion has been a topic of concern not only in the United States but internationally as well (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012). Powerful advocates of inclusion as a core principle of education systems include such international agencies as the United Nations (UN), the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Bank, and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2011). These authors also noted that inclusive education may be a useful policy option that is less resource intensive than other approaches regarding service delivery for students with disabilities. Students with more involved disabilities such as intellectual disabilities have been less involved in the inclusion movement (Siperstein, Parker, Norins, & Widaman, 2011). Recently, China has enacted laws that provide for the inclusive educational opportunities for students with intellectual disabilities (Siperstein et al., 2011). In researching the inclusion of students with intellectual disabilities, Siperstein et al. (2011) found that adults in China supported separate schools for students with intellectual

disabilities as they believed there would be more discipline problems which would negatively affect students without disabilities. Youth in China were more supportive of students with intellectual disabilities in their nonacademic or elective classes rather than their academic classes. They also found that youths in the United States were not supportive of students with disabilities in their academic classes, despite overwhelming support for students with disabilities over the past 30 years (Siperstein et al., 2011).

Hwang and Evans (2011) conducted research in Korea regarding attitudes towards inclusion finding that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a goal of many, but barriers must be removed between general and special education teachers to facilitate a collaborative nature and change in educational values and philosophy. For students with and without disabilities to truly benefit from the education of students with disabilities in the regular classroom, professionals must work together to find a cohesive nature and learn to collaborate in the classroom, outside the classroom, and in regards to professional development opportunities (Hwang & Evans).

Education systems have had their share of difficulties worldwide (Armstrong et al., 2011). Inclusion is a topic that continues to be promoted, yet it is difficult to support when the basic infrastructure that is needed to support education is not there (Armstrong et al., 2011). Using the terminology does not make an environment inclusive; it takes all parties to ensure successful delivery and results. Collaboration and a common goal are only small pieces of the larger puzzle.

Cultural beliefs also play a large part of the acceptance of students with disabilities. Kayama (2010) reported that in Japan, the people tend to consider individuals with disabilities as abnormal and that the individual rights of these individuals including equal participation and opportunities are not yet typical, whereas it has become

so in the United States. It has been tradition that individuals with low incident disabilities are taught in special schools or classrooms separate from the general population.

Although it has been noted that inclusive education may be more convenient and cost effective, it is highly individualized (Boyle, Scriven, Durning, & Downes, 2011). Success depends not only on the collaboration and cohesion of the teaching staff but also on enthusiasm and confidence through the observation of staff who have experienced success (Cammuso, 2011). Attitudes of teachers in the classroom will either make or break the learning environment and the rate of success of all students affected.

### **Reported Benefits of Inclusion**

Facilitating learning for all students should always be the primary goal (Boyle et al., 2011). Understanding that every student, whether identified as having a disability or not, requires individualized instruction (Silverman, Hong, & Trepanier-Street, 2010). Teachers of all levels and areas should make certain that they are facilitators of learning, not prescribing a *one size fits all* approach. Benefits of inclusion include all students, not just students with disabilities, as every child has the right to an appropriate education (Taylor, 2011). To reduce the gap and stigma between regular and special education, quality instruction must occur to support development, growth, and academic achievement (Boyle et al., 2011). Good teaching practices are good practices for students with and without disabilities (Boyle et al., 2011). Quality of instruction is the most important predictor of learner achievement, rather than placement; therefore, quality and teachers' expectations positively influence the achievement of students with special learning needs (Boyle et al., 2011). Resources, support, using a differentiated approach and differentiated teaching, and pedagogic strategies (direct instruction, cognitive strategies, and co-operative learning), all enable teachers to effectively implement

inclusive practices in the classroom (Boyle et al., 2011).

Supporting inclusive practices and ensuring success involves not only the educators who are delivering the direct instruction but also requires the collaboration with key stakeholders including counselors, support teachers, administration, and parents (Woodcock, Hemmings, & Kay, 2012). Teaching in itself can be a challenge, but without support, a positive attitude, hands-on training, utilizing best practices, and forestalling barriers that may impede service delivery, educating students becomes burdensome and overwhelming for teachers at all levels of experience; thus, support is imperative (Polidore, Edmonson, & Slate, 2010). Sharma, Moore, and Sonawane (2009) also noted that successful implementation of inclusion depends on (1) policy that supports inclusive education, (2) adequately trained teachers, and (3) a commitment to the provision of necessary ongoing support; purporting that positive perceptions encourage appropriate policies and integrative practices, where negative attitudes sustain low expectations of students and unacceptable behaviors in students with disabilities. Boyle et al. (2011) noted that students without identified disabilities also benefit by connecting with students with disabilities; they have the opportunities to learn special skills that students with special learning needs may bring into the classroom (Braille, sign language, etc.), additional funding that may be provided, and the fact that inclusive schools value the learning of all students.

It has been argued that the most important factor in inclusive education is the teacher, and the success of inclusive education is dependent upon the teacher's positive attitude towards inclusion (Secer, 2010). These attitudes are influenced by personality factors such as experience, seniority, and knowledge (Secer, 2010). Encouragement and outlook is an intrinsic motivator that cannot be expressed upon someone, but often stems



from a deeply held belief in God and/or a strong moral obligation to others and has been deeply rooted since childhood (Polidore et al., 2010). Finding the right fit for pairing co-teachers should not be done on convenience, as there are many factors that influence and determine successful inclusive environments thus either encouraging or extinguishing the endless benefits of inclusion (Secer, 2010).

Trainor (2007) expressed the importance of caring relationships through learning how cultural identities shape interactions as well as strategies for establishing caring relationships that do not come at the expense of academic rigor. In establishing relationships that are positive for both student and teacher, a barrier is removed that could limit effective communication and nurturing relationships that will facilitate a positive learning environment to aid in academic achievement (Trainor). Creating a welcoming and effective environment for all students and staff involved in inclusive practices benefits the entire school culture which transcends teaching boundaries (Trainor). Peer support within departments is a very important aspect for inclusion, but support at the administrative level is also important (Boyle et al., 2011). Perhaps the support given along with sharing ideas among colleagues aids in the motivation and encouragement of teachers in inclusive settings which then facilitates endless possibilities of success (Boyle et al., 2011).

Orr (2009) highlighted additional supports of inclusion to include a school-wide inclusion philosophy (shared vision), positive attitudes of general education teachers, and partnerships between general and special educators (including interpersonal dynamics). Access to additional resources and training is also an added benefit. As the incidence of inclusive practices increases and the acceptance of individuals with disabilities becomes more positive, the collaboration and commitment among education professionals will be

greater enhanced (Orr). To ensure positive inclusion, flexibility, planning, knowing the children, modeling a positive tone, and respecting and celebrating each child's uniqueness are essential components (Silverman et al., 2010).

### **Reported Challenges of Inclusion**

Specially designed instruction must meet the needs of each student individually (Taylor, 2011). With that thought, it is important to note that one method of service delivery is not good for every student, and inclusion is not a good fit for all students with disabilities (Wilson, Ellerbee, & Christian, 2011). Individualizing instruction, ensuring positive classroom interactions, and lacking the necessary skills for adapting the curriculum to meet the needs of students with and without disabilities are a few of the challenges that teachers have expressed regarding inclusion (Silverman et al., 2010).

Also in regards to inclusive practices attitudes, Sharma et al. (2009) surveyed 478 preservice teachers to determine what attitudes preservice teachers held towards inclusive education and how these attitudes related to a number of variables (gender, age, previous contact with a person with a disability, educational level, knowledge of legislation, and level of confidence in teaching students with disabilities) and the level of concern of preservice teachers regarding the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classes. He used the Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES) and the Concerns about Inclusive Education Scale (CIES). Results indicated that participants with postgraduate qualifications were more positive toward implementing inclusive practices in their classrooms as compared to those with an undergraduate or diploma level qualification. Sharma et al. (2009) also found that participants of the study were most concerned with a lack of resources and least concerned with declining academic standards associated with students with disabilities being educated in a regular classroom.

Inadequate or missing learning resources and access to experts is also a concern of educators (Winzer & Mazurek, 2011). Education professionals are required to be creative with the resources they have, albeit insufficient, to ensure each student is successful (Winzer & Mazurek, 2011). While meeting the diverse learning needs of all students in the classroom can be challenging, ensuring all students experience growth and success regardless of the barriers is paramount.

Three distinct themes that Orr (2009) culled as barriers to inclusion are negative attitudes of general education teachers, lack of knowledge, and lack of administrative support. She also noted that the inadequate resource allocation towards implementation of inclusive practices was a major barrier. Winzer and Mazurek (2011) noted that the lack of classroom support for special needs students was one of the top factors contributing to teacher burnout and prompting young teachers to leave the profession. Wilson et al. (2011) also indicated the extra work that is required by teachers of inclusive settings becomes a limitation, although 56% of educators surveyed felt inclusion was best for all students involved. Time constraints and workload issues were aligned with concerns of the negative social and academic consequences for students without disabilities as well as the detrimental effect of the level of instruction provided for all students (Winzer & Mazurek, 2011).

One of the greatest barriers to overcome for individuals with disabilities is attitude (McMaster, 2012). Changing and cultivating the culture of a school and the attitudes and beliefs it holds takes great work. Sustainability is a central success factor in creating inclusive school cultures, and sustaining the change is more effective when teachers are given time to explore ideas and integrate them into their practice (McMaster, 2012). Additional barriers McMaster (2012) discovered were intentional attitudinal (isolation,

physical bullying, and emotional bullying) and unintentional attitudinal (lack of knowledge, understanding or willingness on the part of systems or teachers). Yssel et al. (2007) indicated that parents of students with disabilities who are a part of inclusive practices want teachers who have excitement, sensitivity, and honesty, further supporting the importance and role of attitudes in inclusive practices. The advocacy of parents has been a driving force in including students with disabilities. Teachers' attitudes are influenced by personality factors such as experience, seniority, and knowledge (Secer, 2010).

Boyle et al. (2011) indicated another barrier to successful inclusion as there seems to be a gap between acceptance of inclusion and actually being supportive of its implementation. Being supportive is a positive aspect, but if there is no substance or follow through with the implementation, the concept and potential success is stalled (Boyle et al., 2011). Inclusion also has an effect on students' academic, social, and behavioral developments which is a concern to many as being physically placed in a classroom setting does not suggest acceptance, and being *invisible* to peers can be just as devastating as rejection (Yssel et al., 2007). To ensure that the emotional well-being of students is being protected, it is crucial for educators collaborate with parents (Damber, 2009).

Male (2011) surveyed 48 teachers who were in a master's program in special and inclusive education at the beginning and end of a 10-week module. The ATIES questionnaire was used to aid in answering the question "will a program of professional development in the area of special and inclusive education be effective in achieving attitudinal shift in teachers?" The participants had more positive attitudes towards inclusion of students with physical/sensory difficulties, social difficulties, and academic

difficulties than towards students with behavioral difficulties.

Arampatzi, Mouratidou, Evaggeliou, Koidou, and Barkoukis (2011) claimed that the more a child adopts positive attitudes toward his/her classmates and effectively interacts with them, the more competent they are. They also supposed that the quality of interactions in a regular classroom setting for students with disabilities is defined by social insecurity and aggressive behavior. Arampatzi et al. suggested that a social insecure behavior or an aggressive behavior is unfavorably dysfunctional for the process of inclusion.

In a study conducted by Gao and Mager (2011), 168 preservice teachers enrolled in a dual-certification inclusive teacher preparation program at a private university and were given four questionnaires including demographics, Teacher Efficacy Scale (TES), ATIES, and Professional and Personal Beliefs of Diversity scale. The participants were provided the instruments 3 weeks before the end of the semester. The purpose of the study was to explore preservice teachers' perceived senses of efficacy and attitudes toward school diversity shift over the course of preparation and how teachers with different degrees of perceived efficacy view school diversity. The participants responded showing attitudes were most favorable towards inclusion of children with social disabilities and least favorable, although still positive, of the inclusion of children with behavioral disabilities (Gao & Mager). The data also reported favorable attitudes towards children with academic disabilities in general classrooms. Although students with behavioral disabilities are viewed less favorably, they still have the right to access their education and to be instructed in their LRE, not the LRE of the teacher (Gao & Mager).

Sharma et al. (2009) also reported that teachers would rather have students who

require academic and physical accommodations and were less positive about including students who display disruptive behaviors. Based on Horrocks, White, and Roberts (2008), this is a common trend, not just amongst teachers but administrators as well. Horrocks et al. surveyed 571 principals in Pennsylvania and found that principals were more likely to recommend higher levels of placement for students with stronger academic profiles than for more involved students. The results also indicated that elementary principals were more likely than secondary principals to recommend higher levels of inclusion (Horrocks et al.).

It is important to note that the attitudes and behaviors that educational professionals display are being monitored by the students they interact with on a daily basis (Lockwood, 2006; Ouazad & Page, 2012). The impressions and attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities into regular educational programs directly correlate to student behavior since nondisabled students often model the attitudes and behaviors of adults (Arampatzi et al., 2011; Polidore et al., 2010).

### **Elementary and Secondary Levels**

Hamaidi, Homidi, and Reyes (2012) conducted a survey of 225 early childhood teachers to gain their perspective on inclusive practices in their classrooms. The data revealed that there was a statistically significant relationship between teachers' negative attitudes towards the academic aspects of inclusion and the grade level taught. In a review of the literature, Secer (2010) summarized that teachers working in primary schools had negative attitudes and were unwilling to teach students with disabilities in their classes. Secer also noted that teachers believed inclusion was not useful because of inadequate support and a lack of teaching materials and technology to effectively implement it. Hwang and Evans (2011) reported that in a study of 900 teachers in the

United Arab Emirates, primary school teachers had more positive attitudes than early childhood and high school teachers, where high school teachers were found to emphasize teaching curriculum content and felt teaching students with disabilities would create problems.

Lee, Yin, Zhang, and Jin (2011) conducted a survey of 1,646 teachers from six provinces in China regarding teacher empowerment, teacher receptivity, and perceived outcomes of curriculum reform. Lee et al. found that primary teachers scored significantly lower on factors of teacher empowerment than secondary teachers but significantly higher on factors of teacher receptivity. In a review of the literature, Golmic and Hansen (2012) indicated that attitudes of secondary-level teachers were less positive than the attitudes of elementary or even middle-level teachers toward inclusion; and junior high teachers were more negative than teachers of younger grades. Elementary teachers indicated the need for increased opportunities to collaborate and adequate training. Teachers at the secondary level most often have a planning period that facilitates collaboration, whereas the elementary schedule does not often incorporate this time into the school day. Golmic and Hansen (2012) conducted a study with 85 secondary education majors at a private university. The Sentiments, Attitudes, and SACIE was the instrument used to determine preservice teachers' attitudes and concerns toward inclusion and their knowledge and skills to teach students with exceptional learning needs after having an INCLUDED Experience (Identify, Navigate, Categorize, List, Utilize, Document, Evaluate, Describe). Results of the study show that after participating in the experience, sentiments and attitudes were even more positive, and concerns were reduced (Golmic & Hansen).

Barnes (2008) surveyed 93 regular education teachers in Pennsylvania to examine

attitudes toward inclusion for students with autism. Barnes developed a survey for the purpose of the study which was titled *The Attitudes of Regular Educators toward Inclusion for Students with Autism (AREISA)*. There were no significant differences among teachers' attitudes based on their current grade-level teaching assignment. Results of the ANOVA indicated there was no significant difference in the overall score as related to grade teaching placement (Barnes). Klassen and Chiu (2010) found that teachers in elementary grades had higher levels of self-efficacy for classroom management and student engagement. Their study included 1,430 practicing teachers from western Canada who were working at the elementary or secondary level.

### **Gender**

Lee et al. (2011) surveyed 1,646 teachers in China as to their perceptions of curriculum reform. A 40-item Likert scale questionnaire was used to gather the information. The researchers found that female primary teachers were more receptive to curriculum reform than secondary teachers or male teachers even though they had less authority in decision making and less influence on their colleagues. The study also suggested that female schoolteachers were more obedient than their male counterparts (Lee et al., 2011). The ability to implement curriculum change and effectively carry out expectations is vital to the success that students experience in their instruction and education.

Barnes (2008) indicated results showed no significant differences by gender. Attitude toward inclusion scores did not vary significantly between males and females from the study of 93 regular education teachers in Pennsylvania. De Boer et al. (2011) found in a review of the literature that females had a more positive attitude than males as related to inclusion. In a survey of 72 postgraduate guidance and counseling student



teachers, results reported no significant differences in creativity as a result of gender (Kinai, 2013). Results from Klassen and Chiu's (2010) study of western Canadian teachers reported that there was a difference with gender. They reported female teachers had greater workload stress, greater classroom stress from student behaviors, and lower classroom management self-efficacy compared to their male counterparts.

Krips et al. (2011) surveyed 592 teachers from Estonian schools to study the differences of self-perceptions as well as social competence. Krips et al. reported that when compared to their male counterparts, female teachers are often friendlier and more caring. Females were also reported to be more assertive, *stronger*, and more objective in their feedback. Hamaidi et al. (2012) surveyed 225 early childhood teachers from Jordan, United Arab Emirates, and the southwestern United States. The purpose of the research was to learn about early childhood teachers' perceptions about the inclusive practices in their classrooms. Hamaidi et al. reported from their study that teacher gender was not related to teachers who had negative attitudes toward academic aspects of inclusion practices. Ouazad and Page (2012) conducted a survey in England of approximately 1,200 eighth-grade students to estimate how student beliefs are affected by grading practices. The study indicated that gender effects observed can be linked to substantial differences in subjective beliefs. The gender interactions prove to play a greater role in English and humanities classes and shape educational outcomes more strongly.

### **Years of Teaching Experience**

De Boer et al. (2011) summarized literature noting that teachers are undecided or negative about their beliefs of inclusive education. They also reported that teachers with less years of experience (1-5 years) had a more positive attitude than teachers with more experience. Forty-two parents from South Africa and the United States participated in a

study conducted by Yssel et al. (2007), indicating that experienced teachers might be less inclined to adapt their classrooms and practices to meet the needs of students with more severe disabilities. Unal and Unal (2012) surveyed 268 primary school teachers and found that experienced teachers are more likely to prefer to be in control in their classrooms than beginning teachers while interacting with students and making decisions. Investigating the previous studies, the researchers discovered that while preservice teachers prefer noninterventionism (minimum teacher control), they support interactionism (shared control) during internship and early career years; and finally they prefer to choose complete teacher control when they become experienced teachers.

From the results of Hwang and Evans's (2011) study in Korea, the older the respondents were, the more negative their attitudes and willingness regarding inclusion. Years of teaching experience were not indicated, only age of the respondent. The results of Barnes (2008) indicated that teachers with less than 5 years of experience had higher mean inclusion scores than teachers with 6-15 years of experience and more than 16 years of experience. In summation, the more years of teaching experience the respondents had, the less receptive they were towards including students with autism in the regular education classroom.

Webster, Villora, and Harvey (2012) surveyed physical education teachers concerning content relevance and found that experience is not a sufficient factor to distinguish expert from nonexpert teaching performance. As related to creativity, research conducted by Kinai (2013) also reported no significant difference as a result of teaching experience. On the contrary, Klassen and Chiu (2010) indicated nonlinear relationships with instructional strategies, classroom management, and student engagement, increasing from early career to mid-career and then falling afterwards.

Swan, Wolf, and Cano (2011) examined changes in teacher self-efficacy from the student teaching experience to the third year of teaching. The population was a cohort of student teachers from The Ohio State University which was comprised of 34 individuals who student taught and 17 who entered the teaching profession. Individuals reported the lowest levels of teacher self-efficacy at the end of their first year of teaching and the highest levels at the conclusion of their student teaching experience. Participants reported the lowest levels of teacher self-efficacy in the student engagement domain in each of the assessments.

### **Subject Taught**

In regards to instruction in a core content area classroom versus an elective class, art teachers report being more caring and open to communicate with others than science teachers who are more straightforward in their communication, which also tends to be more fair and honest (Krips et al., 2011). The authors surveyed 246 art teachers and 135 science teachers in Estonian schools to obtain teachers' self-perceptions of social competence. The research detailed that science teachers try to achieve objectivity both in feedback and discussions and may also be more oriented to subjectivity in social interactions and more often stress important aspects in teaching.

Combs, Elliott, and Whipple (2010) purposefully sampled four physical education teachers with years of experience ranging from 6-18 years. The participants were chosen with two each being on extreme ends of the continuum (positive and negative attitudes towards inclusion). The purpose was to collect in-depth descriptive information on issues surrounding inclusion. Each participant completed a questionnaire followed by a 60-90 minute interview. After comparing the responses of the two participants with positive attitudes to the two participants with negative attitudes, four assertions were generated.

Assertion 1: Teachers with positive attitudes towards inclusion had multiple focus areas or objectives. Assertion 2: Teachers with positive attitudes developed written lesson plans that incorporated many different teaching strategies. Assertion 3: Teachers with positive attitudes had completed coursework and training on teaching students with disabilities. Assertion 4: All four teachers wanted their children to be successful, although there were notable differences in how success was defined. As a result of the analysis, the teachers with the positive attitudes wanted students to be successful for the students' benefit, whereas the teachers with the negative attitudes wanted students to be successful for their (teachers) own benefit because it made them feel as though they were effective teachers.

When examined, physical education teachers' self-reported communication of content relevance indicated that they believed these strategies were in practice in part of their instructional repertoire (Webster et al., 2012). Fenty, McDuffie-Landrum, and Fisher (2012) also provide information that for content teachers, it is difficult to carve out long portions of instructional time to engage in extended lessons, but they can facilitate mini-lessons over multiple class sessions. This aids in providing students who need additional time the opportunity as well as continued practice for other students, all without monopolizing instructional time for struggling students in the inclusion setting.

### **Experience with Inclusion**

Golmic and Hansen (2012) noted in a review of the literature that secondary teachers with high levels of special education experience and training reported positive attitudes towards inclusion and were more willing to be assigned to inclusive classrooms. These claims were also supported by de Boer et al. (2011) who reported six different studies that suggested teachers with experience with students with disabilities, whether it

was in an inclusive setting or in general, held significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than teachers with little to no experience. Barnes (2008) concluded from results of an independent t test that attitudes did not vary as related to experience with inclusion.

Hamaidi et al. (2012) surveyed 225 early childhood teachers in Jordan, United Arab Emirates, and the southwestern United States to learn about their perceptions of inclusive practices in their classrooms. The data represented a positive relationship between teachers' attitudes towards academic aspects of inclusive practices as related to previous inclusive teaching experience. Sharma et al. (2009) surveyed 480 postgraduate students enrolled in a teacher education program and found that less than 3% of the participants had contact or ongoing contact with a person with a disability. With this finding, research suggests that contact with an individual with a disability is a significant factor in promoting positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

In 1986, Tallent conducted a study of classroom teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming. She surveyed 215 regular education teachers from LEAs in North Carolina ranging in grade levels taught from kindergarten to twelfth grade. Teacher responses were divided into two groups: elementary (118 participants) and secondary (97 participants). The secondary teachers were then divided by content area taught and either grouped as content (58) or noncontent (39) area teachers. All teachers were grouped according to their sex, with 41 being male and 174 being female. The degree teachers had completed was also factored, with 151 having bachelor's degrees only and 64 having advanced degrees (master's or education specialists). Years of teaching experience was grouped from 1-5 years (19 participants), 6-10 years (49 participants), and more than 10 years (147 participants). Tallent also gathered information regarding teachers who served

mainstreamed students and teachers who did not. Teachers who served students in the classroom were 149, and those who did not serve mainstreamed students in the classroom were 64. The participants were also questioned about the number of semester hours they completed in special education. Of the 214 participants, 117 did not have any coursework in special education, whereas 97 had coursework in special education.

Tallent (1986) used the Attitudes Toward Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS) which was developed by Joan Berryman, W. R. Neal, Jr., and Charles Berryman at the University of Georgia. The instrument was designed to be brief, easy to administer, and to use with subjects other than special educators. The ATMS was an 18-item Likert-type scale used to measure attitudes toward mainstreaming. The adjusted reliability coefficient for the instrument was 0.92 using the Spearman-Brown prophecy formula. The magnitude indicated satisfactory internal consistency for the scale.

The data compilation revealed that there was no significant difference between elementary and secondary teachers' attitudes (Tallent, 1986). There was, however, a significant difference in relation to female and male teachers (Tallent, 1986). Female teachers reported a significantly more positive attitude than males (Tallent, 1986). There was not a significant difference between the education levels of the respondents (Tallent, 1986).

In regards to teaching experience, teachers with 1-5 years of experience had significantly more positive attitudes toward mainstreaming than teachers with more than 10 years of experience (Tallent, 1986). There was no significant difference between attitudes of teachers with 1-5 years of experience and 6-10 or between 6-10 and more than 10 years of experience. There was also no significant difference between teachers who did and did not serve mainstreamed students in their classroom (Tallent, 1986).

Tallent (1986) reported that there was a significant difference between the attitudes of content and noncontent area teachers. Noncontent area teachers were more positive than content area teachers. However, there was not a significant difference between teachers who had taken coursework in special education as opposed to those who had not taken any coursework in special education (Tallent).

Overall, Tallent (1986) concluded that of the teachers surveyed, the participants had negative attitudes toward mainstreaming. This research study suggests that attitudes be examined further and play a role in personnel and placement decisions in schools and classrooms that support and educate using an inclusive education model.

Further research was conducted to replicate Tallent's (1986) study, as this was also conducted in various LEAs in North Carolina. Much research has been done regarding teachers' perspectives of inclusion (Barnes, 2008; Combs et al., 2010; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Orr, 2009; Tallent). Additional research that is updated provides educators and administrators with much needed information to help model and support classroom teachers to enable them to effectively educate students both with and without disabilities in a regular education classroom (McCray & McHatton, 2011). The information obtained also aids administrators in making co-teaching placements based on variables studied (Leatherman, 2007). Tallent's study was a statewide study that surveyed regular education teachers. The updated study provides additional information from a statewide survey based on variables that are present in schools.

### **Research Question**

What are the key identifiable characteristics that impact teachers' perceptions towards inclusion?

## Summary

Inclusion and inclusive education are viewed both nationally and internationally as a means to educating students with disabilities in the LRE (Armstrong et al., 2011; Boyle et al., 2011). Although inclusive practice has gained much support over the years, it has also been a topic of debate in regards to practices, funding, professional development, convenience, and placement of co-teaching partners (Gal et al., 2010; Leatherman, 2007; Mamah et al., 2011). The desire is that the benefits far outweigh the challenges and that all students regardless of disability would be educated in the most appropriate manner to individualize their learning and ensure success in their academics (Chen & Howard, 2010).

Much research has been conducted on inclusive practices and the attitudes teachers hold. There is disparity in findings as related to differences in levels taught (elementary/primary versus secondary) with research indicating no difference; elementary/primary being more positive and secondary being more negative, and the opposite with secondary being more positive and elementary/primary being more negative (Golmic & Hansen, 2012; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Secer, 2010; Tallent, 1986). The same holds true according to the literature review for gender. There are studies that indicate no difference; females being more positive, and males being more positive (Barnes, 2008; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Krips et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Tallent, 1986). Based on the literature, the studies were conducted in various locations with different respondents. In regards to years of experience, the data reviewed are all consistent in that the greater the number of years of experience, the less positive the attitude towards inclusive practices (Barnes, 2008; de Boer et al., 2011; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Tallent, 1986; Yssel et al., 2007).



The subjects that teachers are assigned, be it a core class or an elective, showed varied results. Both area teachers had positive and negative attitudes as related to inclusion (Combs et al., 2010; Krips et al., 2011; Tallent, 1986). Overwhelming positive attitudes were reported in the literature when respondents had experience either with an individual with a disability and/or experience in an inclusive setting (Barnes, 2008; de Boer et al., 2011; Golmic & Hansen, 2012; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2009; Tallent, 1986). There were positive correlations when compared to attitudes.

Research conducted in 1986 by Tallent provided data of teachers' attitudes toward inclusive practices, previously named mainstreaming. The research conducted then has been supported in various ways by a number of researchers worldwide when investigating teachers' attitudes in relation to grade levels, gender, years of experience, content area, experience with individuals with disabilities, level of education/degree attainment, and courses taken in special education (Barnes, 2008; Combs et al., 2010; de Boer et al., 2011; Golmic & Hansen, 2012; Hamaidi et al., 2012; Hwang & Evans, 2011; Krips et al., 2011; Lee et al., 2011; Secer, 2010; Sharma et al., 2009; Tallent, 1986; Yssel et al., 2007). The ongoing investigation of factors and experiences that influence attitudes has not changed over the years. The success and ability to influence teachers' attitudes regarding inclusive education are predicated by knowledge, ability, and comfort level of the individual as well as peer and administrative support (Horrocks et al., 2008).

As evidenced from the literature review, the attitudes teachers have regarding inclusive education are primary factors in successful implementation. Investigation into the attitudes and personal factors that influence attitudes can assist school districts in placement of teachers, students, and building-level administrators to successfully support and implement individualized education for all students in the LRE. The information

proves beneficial for districts to plan and deliver professional development that can aid in developing positive attitudes of teachers to ensure success for all involved.

## **Chapter 3: Methodology**

### **Introduction**

The purpose of the study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina. The study surveyed regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels to determine if there is a difference in perception as influenced by elementary and secondary levels as well as teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, and number of hours of training concerning inclusion.

One of the single most important predictors of successful integration of students with disabilities in the general education classrooms is the attitude of the general education teacher (Golmic & Hansen, 2012). The purpose of this study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina.

A quantitative research methodology was utilized within this study. As described by Aliaga and Gunderson (2000), quantitative research is the use of collecting numerical data that are analyzed using a mathematically based method. The data were collected electronically via a Survey Monkey document and analyzed using the database SPSS. Quantitative research is used to examine the views of a group of people or a group of statistics, whereas qualitative research examines the views of an individual (Meadows, 2003).

### **Participants**

Participants for this study were regular education teachers from selected public LEAs in North Carolina. The levels they taught ranged from elementary to secondary,

grades kindergarten through twelfth. These teachers either taught a core content class or an elective class. There were also varying experiences with inclusion or a co-taught class. There was a variance of years of teaching experience and teacher gender. LEAs were chosen randomly from an alphabetized list of both county and city units divided by the eight regions. The LEAs were chosen from an alphabetical list by selecting every sixth LEA unit. This produced a sample of eight different LEAs across North Carolina.

Table 5

*Regions and Selected Districts in North Carolina*

Region	District
1: Northeast	Edenton-Chowan
2: Southeast	Greene
3: North Central	Johnston
4: Sandhills/South Central	Lee
5: Piedmont-Triad/Central	Davidson
6: Southwest	Lincoln
7: Northwest	Caldwell
8: Western	Haywood
Total	8

Upon approval from the superintendent of each unit and receipt of the listing of teachers within the selected LEAs, a random sampling of teachers was selected. The selected teachers then received an electronic message with an explanation of the study and a link to complete the survey.

## **Instrument**

The ATTAS-mm was used for this study (Appendix B). Permission for the use of the instrument was obtained from Jess Gregory, one of the authors of the instrument (personal communication, October 8, 2013; Appendix C). The ATTAS-mm was developed in 2011 by Jess L. Gregory and Lori A. Noto. The ATTAS-mm is arranged to load onto three different components of attitude: cognitive, behavioral, and affective. The items are positively worded statements that allow respondents to select their level of agreement. The items were validated through alignment with the literature, narrow focus on the content, and vetting by a small panel of experts (Gregory & Noto, 2012). The instrument was piloted using [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com). In order for the pilot to be a success, there would need to be at least three items for each of the dimensions of attitude. The entire instrument and each of the subscales would need to be reliable as measured by Cronbach's alpha ( $\alpha=0.8$ , good;  $\alpha=0.6$ , acceptable) (Gregory & Noto, 2012).

The instrument was piloted with 48 respondents who were preservice teachers at a private, New England university in the spring semester of 2011. The originally piloted instrument was consisted of 27 items using Likert scale responses but was reduced to 26 items during the pilot because one item had poor wording.

Once initial factor analysis was run using SPSS, items with initial correlations of 0.7 or greater were retained, resulting in the retention of 12 items. The next step of Principal Component Analysis indicated cross load on two components, which eliminated three items. As a result of the elimination, a 9-item instrument with three items identified for each of the three components of attitude remained.

Factor analyses were run a third time on the nine remaining items, with nearly 80% of the variance explained. The three subscales were divided into components: first

subscale=Component 3, measures the cognitive dimension; second subscale=Component 1, measures the affective dimension; and third subscale=Component 2, assesses the behavioral aspect of attitude. The three subscales measure an individual's three elements of attitude.

The ATTAS-mm yielded an unstandardized Cronback alpha of 0.833. The three subscales also demonstrated acceptable reliability values with the subscale measuring affective attitude having the highest reliability. The emphasis on climate and school culture may have an impact on the reliability of measures of affect.

The ATTAS-mm meets the criteria set in the design of the pilot with strong internal and external reliability and validity (Gregory & Noto, 2012). The ATTAS-mm is determined to be a valid and reliable instrument for measuring attitudes towards teaching all students (Gregory & Noto, 2012).

## **Procedures**

Quantitative research was conducted to determine teachers' perceptions of inclusion. Once LEAs were identified, the superintendent for each unit was contacted and written permission requested to conduct the study and to survey teachers within their district (Appendix D). One week following the initial email, a follow-up email was sent. After a period of 2 weeks total, the researcher proceeded with LEAs that had provided permission. If prior to the 2 weeks there were LEAs that declined, another LEA from the region was selected. If the second LEA declined, the researcher proceeded with those that agreed to participate. Upon approval, a request was made for email addresses for all regular education teachers in the district. A random sampling of teachers was selected. Information about the study (Appendix E) as well as the survey were sent via email to the regular education teachers chosen in the district. The survey was sent via a link to

Survey Monkey which generated the survey as well as demographic information (Appendix F). Upon completion of the survey, the information was captured on a spreadsheet for the researcher to analyze the data. After the initial contact emails with the regular education teachers were made, a reminder email was sent 2 weeks after the first to acquire more participants and their feedback. One week after the reminder email, the researcher began to analyze the data. If responses were received after this time, they were not included in the analysis. A response rate of 35% or greater was desired to get a large sample size. If less than the desired response rate was received, the researcher chose additional participants and sent the survey link and information for additional responses. The researcher sent the survey and information to the randomly selected sample of teachers. The sample size was also dependent upon the approval of the LEA superintendents and the information they provided.

The researcher sorted the data according to the demographic questions which included elementary or secondary level, gender, years of experience, subjects taught (core or elective), experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, and number of hours of training concerning inclusion. Inferential statistics were used to run the data. The data were also compared to results from a study conducted nearly 30 years earlier by Tallent (1986). Tallent's study compared classroom teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming through a statewide survey of regular education classroom teachers.

The procedures that were used to analyze the data included frequency distribution, cross tabulation, and comparing the mean responses. Frequency distribution was used to describe the responses of participants based on the demographics of level taught

(elementary or secondary), gender, years of experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, experience with inclusion, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, and number of hours of training concerning inclusion. This information provided the response rate of participants. The survey was based on three categories. The three areas included cognitive dimension of attitude, affective dimension, and behavioral aspect of attitude. These forms of data were used to measure the degree of respondents' perceptions of each category.

### **Limitations**

There were a number of limitations that affected this study. First, of the chosen LEAs, superintendents may not have been willing to grant permission to conduct the survey within their LEA. They may also have not agreed to release email addresses of their regular education teachers. If so, they may have been after the time allotted for a response. Second, of the regular education teachers who were contacted, some chose not to participate. Third, those who did participate may not have completed the survey honestly or within the designated time. These are all factors that the researcher was unable to control. Fourth, the sample size may not be as large or as representative as desired based on participation and completion of the survey from various LEAs across North Carolina.

### **Summary**

In recent years, the push for inclusion has been on the rise (Hamaidi et al., 2012). With the desire and expectation that all students will demonstrate proficiency as outlined in the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA), more and more students with disabilities are being educated with their nondisabled peers in regular education



classrooms (Gao & Mager, 2011). The regular education teacher is considered an expert of content; therefore, more and more students are receiving primary instruction from them as opposed to instruction from a special education teacher in a special education classroom (McCray & McHatton, 2011). Scores and data are based on content knowledge and attainment, and more and more schools are relying on the regular education teacher to facilitate the learning to ensure content delivery (Hampton et al., 2008).

Special education teachers are also a part of this dynamic by co-teaching with the regular education teacher in the regular education classroom. They also have the skills to differentiate instruction and provide assistance to all students who may be struggling. With such practices taking place, it is imperative that research continue to be done to gain insight and knowledge into teachers' perceptions of inclusion. With this information, much can be done to ensure success is planned for in advance. Co-teaching assignments could be made based on data results and perceptions. The success of all students must always remain the primary goal. The methodology in this study sought to answer questions related to perceptions.

## Chapter 4: Results

### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina. The study surveyed regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels to determine if there is a difference in perception as influenced by elementary and secondary levels as well as teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, number of hours of training concerning inclusion, and region.

Eight LEAs were identified across North Carolina for the study. One LEA was chosen from each of the eight regions. Of those chosen, six agreed to participate at the initial request. One LEA declined in the northwest region, so an alternate was chosen. The alternate was Wilkes County Schools, which agreed to participate. The original LEA for the north central region declined as well as the alternate. A third LEA was selected but declined to respond. As a result, there were only seven of the eight regions represented in the study with no results from the north central region. A total of 405 surveys were distributed to the seven LEAs. Of the 405 distributed, 150 responded at the conclusion of the response time allowed, which was 3 weeks. This yielded a response rate of 37%. Table 6 provides the specifics on data by region and number of respondents.

Table 6

*Participants by Region*

Region	Respondents
1: Northeast	4%
2: Southeast	4%
3: Sandhills/South Central	10%
4: Piedmont-Triad/Central	23%
5: Southwest	33%
6: Northwest	12%
7: Western	14%
Total	100%

**Research Question**

What are the key identifiable characteristics that impact teachers' perceptions towards inclusion?

To address this question, demographics were used to distinguish between characteristics of participants. The demographics surveyed included teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, personal experience with individuals with disabilities, hours of academic coursework concerning disabilities, hours of professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region. To analyze the data, inferential statistics, frequency distribution, cross tabulation, and comparing the mean responses were used. Table 7 details the respondents' current teaching assignments.

Table 7

*Current Teaching Assignment*


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Level	Percent
Elementary (K-5)	44
Secondary (6-12)	56
Total	100

---

Table 8 provides the gender indicated by respondents.

Table 8

*Gender*


---

Gender	Percent
Male	23
Female	77
Total	100

---

Table 9 indicates the years of teaching experience of the respondents in incremental years.

Table 9

*Years of Teaching Experience*


---

Number of Years	Percent
0-5 Years	20.7
6-10 Years	24.7
11-15 Years	19.3
16+ Years	35.3
Total	100

---

Table 10 describes the subjects the respondents primarily teach.

Table 10

*Subject Primarily Taught*


---

Subject	Percent
Core Class (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	73.3
Elective Class (Art, Music, PE, Computers, etc.)	26.7
Total	100

---

Table 11 distinguishes whether respondents had any experience with inclusion.

Table 11

*Experience with Inclusion*


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Experience	Percent
Yes	87
No	13
Total	100

---

Table 12 specifies if respondents had any personal experience with individuals with disabilities.

Table 12

*Personal Experience with Individuals with Disabilities*


---

Experience	Percent
Yes	89
No	11
Total	100

---

Table 13 explains the number of hours of academic coursework respondents had concerning disabilities.

Table 13

*Hours of Academic Coursework Concerning Disabilities*


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Number of Hours	Percent
Zero	15
1-3 Credit Hours	40
4-6 Credit Hours	22
7+ Credit Hours	23
Total	100

---

Table 14 describes the number of hours of professional development respondents had concerning disabilities.

Table 14

*Hours of Professional Development Concerning Disabilities*


---

Number of Hours	Percent
Zero	15
1-3 Hours	48
4-6 Hours	15
7+ Hours	22
Total	100

---

Table 15 indicates the number of hours of training respondents had concerning inclusive practices.

Table 15

*Hours of Training Concerning Inclusive Practices*

Number of Hours	Percent
Zero	33.33
1-3 Hours	38
4-6 Hours	13.33
7+ Hours	15.33
Total	100

According to the responses of the participants, both levels of teaching assignments were represented; secondary was the most represented with 56%. Both males and females were represented with 77% being female. All increments of teaching experience were noted with the greatest response being from teachers who had 16+ years of experience. Core content area teachers accounted for 73.3% of the responses with only 26.7% being elective teachers. In regards to experience with both inclusion and personal experience with individuals with disabilities, a large majority had experience with 87% and 89%, respectively.

Academic coursework and professional development are additional avenues that allow educators the opportunity to enhance their knowledge concerning disabilities and inclusive practices. Results indicated that 85% of the participants had some coursework and professional development concerning disabilities. Hours of training concerning inclusive practices varied with only 66.66% of participants noting they had received any training. Overall, the results present information on all groups and levels of experience to



provide a representative sample of perceptions of inclusion.

### **Behavioral Dimension**

The behavioral dimension of attitude subscale included three of the survey questions. Those questions were as follows: most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated; students with mild to moderate disabilities should be taught in regular classes with nondisabled students because they will not require too much of the teacher's time; and students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms. When analyzing the data from the behavioral dimension, the following results were reported, each according to the demographics, including current teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, personal experience with individuals with disabilities, hours of academic coursework concerning disabilities, hours of professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region.

Table 16

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Current Teaching Assignment*

Level	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Elementary (K-5)	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.62	9.23	86.15
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	24.62	12.31	63.08
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	15.38	27.69	56.92
Secondary (6-12)	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.1	9.76	84.15
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	14.63	30.49	54.88
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	20	27.5	52.5

*Note.* N=148.

Participants at both the elementary and secondary levels presented similar results with the exception of regular education being favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time. Ten percent more of elementary teachers agreed with the statement, whereas secondary teachers disagreed with nearly 10% difference. Secondary teachers were 18% more neutral than elementary teachers on the same topic.

Table 17

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Gender*

Gender	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Male	Eliminate separate classrooms	8.57	8.57	82.86
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	17.14	26.71	57.14
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	20.59	32.35	47.06
Female	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.39	9.65	85.96
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	18.42	22.81	58.77
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	16.81	25.66	57.52

*Note.* N=148.

Males and females agreed on each of the questions of the behavioral dimension with the greatest disparity being in relation to the question "regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom." The males agreed 4% more than the females, 10% more were neutral, and over 11% more females disagreed.

Table 18

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Years of Teaching Experience*

Number of Years	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
0-5 Years	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.45	16.13	77.42
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	12.9	35.48	51.61
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	10	30	60
6-10 Years	Eliminate separate classrooms	2.7	2.7	94.59
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	16.22	18.92	64.86
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	18.92	24.32	56.76
11-15 Years	Eliminate separate classrooms	3.45	6.9	89.66
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	20.69	20.69	28.62
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	17.24	27.59	55.17
16+ Years	Eliminate separate classrooms	7.55	11.32	81.13
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	22.64	20.75	56.6
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	21.15	28.85	50

*Note.* N=148.

Teachers with 16+ years of experience were most in favor of eliminating separate

classrooms, regular education is favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time, and the regular education classroom is more effective than the special education classroom. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience disagreed the most in regards to eliminating separate classrooms and that special education is favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience disagreed the greatest that regular education classrooms are more effective than special education classrooms.

Table 19

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Subject Primarily Taught*

Subject	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Core Class (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	Eliminate separate classrooms	3.64	7.27	89.09
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	18.18	24.55	57.27
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	18.35	27.52	54.13
Elective Class (Art, Music, PE, Computers, etc.)	Eliminate separate classrooms	10	15	75
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	20	20	60
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	15.38	28.21	56.41

*Note.* N=148.

For each of the questions of the behavioral dimension, the responses were very

similar with the exception of eliminating separate classrooms. Elective teachers were nearly 7% more in agreement than core teachers, nearly 8% more neutral, and 14% less disagreed than did core teachers.

Table 20

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Experience with Inclusion*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Eliminate separate classrooms	5.38	9.23	85.38
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	17.69	25.38	56.92
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	15.63	28.91	55.47
No	Eliminate separate classrooms	5.26	10.53	84.21
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	26.32	10.53	63.16
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	26.32	21.05	52.63

*Note.* N=148.

For respondents who had experience with inclusion, more were neutral in their responses of favoring regular education as it would not require too much of the teacher's time than teachers who had no experience with inclusion. Teachers with no experience with inclusion agreed that the regular education classroom was more effective than the special education classroom by 10%.

Table 21

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Personal Experience with Individuals with Disabilities*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.06	8.33	85.61
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	19.7	25.76	54.55
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	18.46	28.46	53.08
No	Eliminate separate classrooms	0	17.65	82.35
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	11.76	5.88	82.35
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	5.88	23.53	70.59

*Note.* N=148.

Teachers who had personal experience with individuals with disabilities were 20% more neutral than those who had no personal experience with individuals with disabilities in favoring regular education as it would not require too much of the teacher's time. In regards to the same question, teachers who had no personal experience disagreed 28% more than those with personal experience. Teachers with no personal experience disagreed 17.5% more than those with personal experience in feeling the regular education classroom is more effective than the special education classroom.

Table 22

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Academic Coursework Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Eliminate separate classrooms	8.7	26.09	65.22
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	17.39	34.78	47.83
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	22.73	40.91	36.36
1-3 Credit Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	5.08	6.78	88.14
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	18.64	23.73	57.63
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	15.25	33.9	50.85
4-6 Credit Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.06	3.03	90.91
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	18.18	21.21	60.61
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	21.21	27.27	51.52
7+ Credit Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	2.94	5.88	91.18
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	20.59	14.71	64.71
	Regular education classroom Is more effective than special education classroom	14.71	8.82	76.47

*Note.* N=148.

Teachers with no academic coursework concerning disabilities were most in favor



of eliminating separate classrooms, and teachers with 7+ credit hours were least in favor of eliminating them. The same holds true for favoring regular education as it would not require too much of the teacher's time with teachers with 7+ hours of coursework disagreeing the most and those with zero hours disagreeing the least. Teachers with 7+ hours of coursework disagreed the most that the regular education classroom is more effective than the special education classroom with an astounding 76%, whereas teachers with zero hours disagreed the least with 36%.

Table 23

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Professional Development Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.55	18.18	77.27
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	13.64	31.82	54.55
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	4.55	40.91	54.55
1-3 Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.17	8.33	87.5
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	20.83	18.06	61.11
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	25.35	23.94	50.7
4-6 Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	9.09	13.64	77.27
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	13.64	36.36	50
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	4.76	38.1	57.14
7+ Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.06	3.03	90.91
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	21.21	21.21	57.58
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	18.18	18.18	63.64

*Note.* N=148.

Teachers with 4-6 hours of professional development concerning disabilities

agreed the most that separate classrooms should be eliminated. Those with 7+ hours favored regular education as it would not require too much of the teacher's time, and teachers with 1-3 hours of professional development agreed the most that the regular education classroom was more effective than the special education classroom.

Table 24

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Training Concerning Inclusive Practices*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Eliminate separate classrooms	4	12	84
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	22	22	56
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	18.37	32.65	48.98
1-3 Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	7.02	10.53	82.46
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	21.05	19.3	59.65
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	12.5	28.57	58.93
4-6 Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	5	10	85
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	5	40	55
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	30	25	45
7+ Hours	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.35	0	95.65
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	17.39	21.74	60.87
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	17.39	17.39	65.22

*Note.* N=148.

Respondents with 1-3 hours of training on inclusive practices agreed the most that separate classrooms should be eliminated, whereas teachers with 7+ hours disagreed the most. Teachers with zero hours of training agreed the most that regular education is favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time. Teachers who had 4-6

hours of training agreed the most that the regular education classroom was more effective than the special education classroom.

Table 25

*Behavioral Dimension of Attitude by Region*

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Northeast	Eliminate separate classrooms	0	16.67	83.33
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	50	33.33	16.67
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	0	50	50
Southeast	Eliminate separate classrooms	0	16.67	83.33
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	0	16.67	83.33
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	16.67	16.67	66.67
Sandhills/South Central	Eliminate separate classrooms	6.67	13.33	80
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	20	20	60
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	20	20	60
Piedmont-Triad/Central	Eliminate separate classrooms	5.88	11.76	82.35
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	14.71	14.71	70.59

(continued)

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	9.09	24.24	66.67
Southwest	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.08	6.12	89.8
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	14.29	28.57	57.14
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	14.58	33.33	52.08
Northwest	Eliminate separate classrooms	11.11	11.11	77.78
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	38.89	16.67	44.44
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	27.78	22.22	50
Western	Eliminate separate classrooms	4.76	4.76	90.48
	Regular education is favored as it will not require too much of the teacher's time	14.29	33.33	52.38
	Regular education classroom is more effective than special education classroom	33.33	28.57	38.1

*Note.* N=148.

In eliminating separate classrooms, the northwest region agreed the most with 11% in agreement, and the western region disagreed the most at 90%. The northeast region had 50% agreement that regular education is favored as it would not require too

much of the teacher's time, whereas the southeast region disagreed the most with 83%. The western region agreed at 33% that the regular education classroom was more effective than the special education classroom, with the southeast and piedmont-triad/central regions disagreeing the most at 66.67%.

### **Cognitive Dimension**

The cognitive dimension of attitude subscale included three of the survey questions. Those questions were as follows: I would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction; I want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions; and I believe including students with mild/moderate disabilities in the regular education classrooms is effective because they can learn the social skills necessary for success. When analyzing the data from the cognitive dimension, the following results were reported each according to the demographics including current teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, personal experience with individuals with disabilities, hours of academic coursework concerning disabilities, hours of professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region.



Table 26

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Current Teaching Assignment*

Level	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Elementary (K-5)	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	61.54	27.69	10.77
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	95.31	3.13	1.56
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	73.44	12.5	14.06
Secondary (6-12)	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	58.75	31.25	10
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	82.93	13.41	3.66
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	60.98	21.95	17.07

*Note.* N=149.

Elementary and secondary teachers agreed similarly on all areas of the cognitive dimension with the exception of regular education classrooms being more effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success. Elementary teachers agreed 12% more than secondary teachers, with secondary teachers being more neutral on the question.

Table 27

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Gender*

Gender	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Male	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	54.29	34.29	11.43
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	77.14	17.14	5.71
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	57.14	17.14	25.71
Female	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	61.61	27.68	10.71
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	92.04	6.19	1.77
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	69.91	17.7	12.39

*Note.* N=149.

More females than males agreed the most on all questions of the cognitive dimension of attitude. Males tended to be more neutral or disagree on all questions of the cognitive dimension.

Table 28

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Years of Teaching Experience*

Number of Years	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
0-5 Years	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	82.76	17.24	0
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	90.32	6.45	3.23
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	74.19	6.45	19.35
6-10 Years	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	70.27	24.32	5.41
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	100	0	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	70.27	16.22	13.51
11-15 Years	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	51.72	31.03	17.24
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	86.21	6.9	6.9
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	62.07	24.14	13.79
16+ Years	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	45.28	37.74	16.98
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	80.77	17.31	1.92
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	63.46	21.15	15.38

*Note.* N=149.

The percent of teachers who would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction decreased as the years of experience increased, going

from 82.76% to 45.25%. Teachers agreed ranging from 80.77% to 100% in wanting to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions. Teachers with 0-5 years of teaching experience agreed the most and disagreed the most that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success.

Table 29

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Subject Primarily Taught*

Subject	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Core Class (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	62.73	25.45	11.82
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	90.83	7.34	1.83
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	64.55	20	15.45
Elective Class (Art, Music, PE, Computers, etc.)	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	52.63	39.47	7.89
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	82.50	12.5	5
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	74.36	10.26	15.38

*Note.* N=149.

Core class teachers agreed more than elective teachers on being mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction and wanting to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions. Elective teachers agreed 10% more than core teachers that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success. There was no difference in the percent that disagreed; the 10% difference appeared in the neutral responses.

Table 30

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Experience with Inclusion*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	58.59	32.03	9.38
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	87.6	10.08	2.33
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	67.44	19.38	13.18
No	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	68.42	10.53	21.05
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	94.74	0	5.26
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	63.16	5.26	31.58

*Note.* N=149.

Teachers who had no experience with inclusion agreed the most in wanting to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction and wanting to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriated academic interventions.

Teachers with no experience with inclusion disagreed the most at 31% that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success.

Table 31

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Personal Experience with Individuals with Disabilities*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	60	30	10
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	88.64	9.09	2.27
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	68.7	18.32	12.98
No	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	58.82	23.53	17.65
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	88.24	5.88	5.88
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	52.94	11.76	35.29

*Note.* N=149.

Respondents were very similar in their areas of agreement regardless of their experience with individuals with disabilities except for the social skills aspect. Teachers who had experience with individuals with disabilities agreed 16% more than those who had no experience that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success. Teachers with no experience disagreed nearly 22% more on this same question than those who had experience.

Table 32

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Academic Coursework Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like to be mentored by teach who models effective differentiated instruction	30.43	52.17	17.39
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	69.57	26.09	4.35
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	47.83	34.78	17.39
1-3 Credit Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	66.67	22.81	10.53
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	93.22	3.39	3.39
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	72.88	15.25	11.86
4-6 Credit Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	75.76	21.21	3.03
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	93.75	3.13	3.13
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	68.75	12.5	18.75
7+ Credit Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	52.94	32.35	14.71
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	88.24	11.76	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	67.65	14.71	17.65

*Note.* N=149.

The percent of agreement increased as the number of credit hours increased regarding being mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction with the exception of those with 7+ credit hours, which decreased by nearly 23% from



the percent agreement of teachers with 4-6 credit hours. The majority of respondents wanted to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions with teachers with zero hours of coursework being the lowest at 69.57% and teachers with 4-6 hours being the highest at 93.75%. Teachers with 1-3 credit hours agreed the most at 72.88% that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success, and teachers with zero hours agreed the least at 47.83%.

Table 33

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Professional Development Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	77.27	18.18	4.55
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	77.27	13.64	9.09
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	54.55	13.64	31.82
1-3 Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	62.86	28.57	8.57
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	90.14	8.45	1.41
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	71.38	14.08	14.08
4-6 Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	54.55	31.82	13.64
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	95.45	4.55	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	50	36.36	13.64
7+ Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	45.45	36.36	18.18
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	87.88	9.09	3.03
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	78.79	12.12	9.09

*Note.* N=149.

The percent of agreement decreased as the number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities increased in regards to being mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction. Respondents who want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions agreed more as

their number of hours of professional development increased with the exception of 7+ hours, which was nearly 8% less than those with 4-6 hours but still 10% more than those with zero hours. Teachers with 7+ hours of professional development agreed the most at 78.79% that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success. Teachers with zero hours of professional development disagreed the most at 31.82%.

Table 34

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Training Concerning Inclusive Practices*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	74	18	8
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	89.9	4.08	6.12
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	64	20	16
1-3 Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	58.18	32.73	9.09
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	85.96	12.28	1.75
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	66.07	12.5	21.43
4-6 Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	35	50	15
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	100	0	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	60	35	5
7+ Hours	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	56.52	26.09	17.39
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	82.61	17.39	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	82.61	8.7	8.7

*Note.* N=149.

Teachers who had 4-6 hours of training concerning inclusive practices agreed the least at 35% that they would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction. This is in direct contrast to wanting to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions as this same group of

respondents agreed at 100%. Respondents agreed similarly that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success ranging from 60 to 66.07% for 0-6 hours. Teachers with 7+ hours of training agreed at 82.61%.

Table 35

*Cognitive Dimension of Attitude by Region*

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Northeast	Would like to be mentored by teacher who who models effective differentiated instruction	50	16.67	33.33
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	100	0	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	66.67	33.33	0
Southeast	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	66.67	16.67	16.67
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	100	0	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	66.67	0	33.33
Sandhills/South Centre	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	33.33	46.67	6.67
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	93.33	6.67	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	80	13.33	6.67
Piedmont-Triad/Central	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	70.59	17.65	11.76
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	82.35	5.88	11.76
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	44.12	26.47	29.41

(continued)

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Southwest	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	55.10	34.69	10.2
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	91.84	8.16	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	71.43	14.29	12.24
Northwest	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	61.11	38.89	0
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	88.89	11.11	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	77.78	5.56	16.67
Western	Would like to be mentored by teacher who models effective differentiated instruction	66.67	19.05	14.29
	Want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions	76.19	19.05	0
	Regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social skills necessary for success	71.43	23.81	4.76

*Note.* N=149.

Teachers in the sandhills/south central region agreed the least at only 33.33% that they would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction, with teachers in the piedmont-triad/central region agreeing the most at 70.59%. Only 76.19% of teachers in the western region wanted to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions, whereas 100% agreed in both the northeast and southeast regions. The piedmont-triad/central region agreed the least at 44.12% that regular education classrooms are effective because they can learn social

skills necessary for success, and the sandhills/south central region agreed the most at 80%.

### **Affective Dimension**

The affective dimension of attitude subscale included three of the survey questions. Those questions were as follows: I would like people to think that I can create a welcoming classroom environment for students with mild to moderate disabilities; students with mild to moderate disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom; and all students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible. When analyzing the data from the affective dimension, the following results were reported, each according to the demographics, including current teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, personal experience with individuals with disabilities, hours of academic coursework concerning disabilities, hours of professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region.



Table 36

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Current Teaching Assignment*

Level	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Elementary (K-5)	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	96.88	3.13	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	89.23	10.77	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	67.69	6.15	26.15
Secondary (6-12)	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	92.68	6.1	1.22
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	82.72	12.35	4.94
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	36.59	36.59	26.83

*Note.* N=149.

Participants responded similarly agreeing they would like people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities and that students with disabilities could be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom. In regards to students

with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers, there was much disparity. Elementary teachers agreed with 67.69%, and only 6.15% were neutral. The secondary teachers agreed with only 36.59%, and 36.59% were neutral. Both levels disagreed at 26%.

Table 37

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Gender*

Gender	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Male	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	91.43	5.71	2.86
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	82.86	4.29	2.86
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	42.86	25.71	31.43
Female	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	95.58	4.42	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	86.73	10.62	2.65
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	52.63	22.81	24.56

*Note.* N=149.

Male and female respondents shared very similar results in the affective dimension. The most variation in response was evident regarding students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers. The females agreed with 52.63% and disagreed with 24.56%. The males agreed with only 42.86% and disagreed with 31.43%.

Table 38

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Years of Teaching Experience*

Number of Years	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
0-5 Years	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	96.77	3.23	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	86.67	6.67	6.67
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	41.94	32.26	25.81
6-10 Years	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	97.3	2.7	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	89.19	10.81	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	54.05	21.62	24.32
11-15 Years	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	93.1	3.45	3.45
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	82.76	10.34	6.9
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	44.83	24.14	31.03
16+ Years	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	92.31	7.69	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	84.91	15.09	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	56.6	18.87	24.53

*Note.* N=149.

Respondents with varying years of experience were mostly in agreement in wanting people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities as well as students with disabilities being trusted with responsibilities in the classroom. Teachers with 16+ years of experience agreed the most with 56.6% that

students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers. The teachers who disagreed the most with this statement were those with 11-15 years of experience at 31.03%.

Table 39

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Subject Primarily Taught*

Subject	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Core Class (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	93.64	5.45	0.91
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	86.24	11.93	1.83
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	54.55	20	25.45
Elective Class (Art, Music, PE, Computers, etc.)	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	97.44	2.56	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	85	10	5
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	40	32.5	27.5

*Note.* N=149.

Core and elective teachers alike wanted people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities, and the majority believed students with disabilities could be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom. The core teachers

agreed 14.55% more than the elective teachers that students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classrooms with nondisabled peers, but the elective teachers were 12.5% more neutral on the same idea. Both groups of teachers disagreed similarly.

Table 40

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Experience with Inclusion*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	94.57	4.65	0.78
	Students with disabilities can be trusted trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	86.92	10	3.08
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	50.77	24.62	24.62
No	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	94.74	5.26	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	77.78	22.22	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	47.37	15.79	36.84

*Note.* N=149.

Regardless if the respondents had experience with inclusion, they tended to agree on all aspects of the affective dimension. Teachers with no experience were more neutral than those with experience regarding students being trusted with responsibilities in the classroom.

Table 41

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Personal Experience with Individuals with Disabilities*

Experience	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Yes	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	94.66	4.58	0.76
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	87.79	9.16	3.05
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	52.27	22.73	25
No	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	94.12	5.88	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	70.59	29.41	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	35.29	29.41	35.29

*Note.* N=149.

Respondents with and without personal experience with disabilities overwhelmingly wanted people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities. Teachers with personal experience agreed at 87.79% that students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom, whereas only 70.59% agreed who had no personal experience. These individuals were 20% more neutral than teachers with experience as well. Teachers with personal experience were 17% more in agreement that students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classrooms with nondisabled peers. Teachers with no experience disagreed 10% more

than those with experience.



Table 42

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Academic Coursework Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	86.96	13.04	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	82.61	17.39	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	39.13	30.43	30.43
1-3 Credit Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	98.28	1.72	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	83.05	13.56	3.39
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	45.76	28.81	25.42
4-6 Credit Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	87.88	9.09	3.03
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	87.88	6.06	6.06
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	57.58	18.18	24.24
7+ Credit Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	90.91	9.09	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	58.82	14.71	26.47

*Note.* N=149.

Respondents were overwhelmingly in agreement that they would like people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities ranging from 86.96% to 100%. The percent of agreement increased as the number of credit hours increased, starting at 82.61% and ending at 90.91% that students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom. The same was true for teachers believing that students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers increasing from 39.13% to 58.82%. The percent of respondents who were neutral decreased as the number of hours increased with the percent disagreeing being very similar.

Table 43

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Professional Development Concerning Disabilities*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	90.91	9.09	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	95.45	4.55	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	36.36	27.27	36.36
1-3 Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	92.96	7.04	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	78.87	16.9	4.23
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	47.22	23.61	29.17
4-6 Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	95.45	4.55	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	59.09	18.18	22.73
7+ Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	96.97	0	3.03
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	87.88	9.09	3.03
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	63.64	21.21	15.15

*Note.* N=149.

The large majority of respondents agreed that they would like people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities ranging from 90.91% to 100%, regardless of the number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities. Teachers with 1-3 hours of professional development agreed the least of the

participants with only 78.87% and disagreed the most at 4.23%. As the number of hours of professional development increased, so did the percent of participants who agreed that students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers. The opposite is true for those who disagreed, with the percent decreasing as the number of hours increased.

Table 44

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Hours of Training Concerning Inclusive Practices*

Number of Hours	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Zero	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	96	4	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	89.8	8.16	2.04
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	48	26	26
1-3 Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	91.07	7.14	1.79
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	80.7	14.04	5.26
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	47.37	17.54	35.09
4-6 Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	95	5	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	55	35	10
7+ Hours	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	95.65	4.35	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	82.61	17.39	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	60.87	21.74	17.39

*Note.* N=149.

Based on the responses from teachers, regardless of the number of hours of training concerning inclusive practices, the large majority agreed that they would like

people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities and that students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom.

Teachers with 4-6 hours of training were most in agreement with 95% and only 5% being neutral in regards to trust. Teachers with 0-3 hours of training agreed similarly that students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers at 48% and 47.37%, respectively. Teachers with 7+ hours agreed the most, with 60.87% of teachers with 1-3 hours disagreeing the most at 35.09%.

Table 45

*Affective Dimension of Attitude by Region*

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Northeast	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	66.67	16.67	16.67
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	33.33	66.67	0
Southeast	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	83.33	16.67	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	5	16.67	33.33
Sandhills/ South Central	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	100	0	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	86.67	0	13.33
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	4	46.67	13.33
Piedmont- Triad/Central	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	94.12	2.94	2.94
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	81.82	15.15	3.03
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	44.12	20.59	35.29
Southwest	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	95.92	4.08	0

(continued)

Region	Question	Percent		
		Agree	Neutral	Disagree
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	89.8	10.2	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	57.14	20.41	22.45
Northwest	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	88.89	11.11	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	88.89	11.11	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	44.44	11.11	44.44
Western	Would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities	90	10	0
	Students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom	85.71	14.29	0
	Students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers	61.9	19.05	19.05

*Note.* N=149.

All respondents in the northeast, southeast, and sandhills/south central region agreed 100% that they would like people to think they can create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities. Respondents from the southwest region were next to the highest percent in agreement at 95.92%, piedmont-triad/central 94.12%, western 90%, and northwest 88.89%. All regions were in the 80% range in agreement that students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom with the exception of the southeast region which was in agreement at only 66.67%. Respondents in the various regions varied regarding students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers. The western region agreed the most with 61.9%, and



the northeast agreed the least at 33.33%. In regards to respondents who disagreed, the northwest region disagreed the most at 44.44%, and the northeast disagreed the least with 0% yet had the most neutral at 66.67%.

### **Summary**

When surveying teachers for their perceptions of inclusion, results suggest many similarities in respondents' selections. The behavioral dimension of attitude included eliminating classrooms that serve students with mild to moderate disabilities, educating students with mild to moderate disabilities in regular classes with nondisabled students because they will not require too much of the teacher's time, and students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms. The teachers who responded overall disagreed on each of the three questions. They disagreed that separate classrooms should be eliminated, that regular education was favored because it would not require too much of the teacher's time, and that regular education was more effective than special education classes. Although there were some in agreement and some who were neutral, the majority disagreed with the behavioral dimension.

The cognitive dimension of attitude focused on the teachers' perceptions of being mentored by a teacher who modeled differentiated instruction, wanting to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate interventions, and believing that regular education was effective because students could learn social skills. The overwhelming majority agreed with each of these statements, regardless of the demographics. This dimension was more related to teachers' own feelings rather than appropriate instructional interventions or locations.

Teachers' responses remained very similar for the affective dimension for two of

the three statements but were sparser on the direct thought of placement. Overall, the responses showed that the teachers agreed on all questions. The affective dimension questioned teachers on whether they wanted people to think they could create a welcoming classroom for students with disabilities, if students with disabilities could be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom, and if students with disabilities should be educated in the regular education classroom with their nondisabled peers. Teachers wanted people to think they could create a welcoming classroom as well as trust students with responsibilities, again, regardless of their demographics. When asked if students with disabilities should be educated with their nondisabled peers, although the majority agreed, there were many responses that were very equal in both agree, neutral, and disagree. There were no overwhelming majorities regarding placement and no demographic that was more in agreement, neutral, or in disagreement.

## Chapter 5: Discussion

### Overview

The purpose of the study was to determine classroom teachers' perceptions of inclusion in LEAs in North Carolina. The study surveyed regular education teachers at both the elementary and secondary levels to determine if there was a difference in perception as influenced by elementary and secondary levels as well as teacher gender, years of teaching experience, subjects taught (core or elective classes), past experience with inclusion, personal experience with disabilities, number of hours of coursework concerning disabilities, number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities, and number of hours of training concerning inclusion.

### Conclusions

#### Research Question

What are the key identifiable characteristics that impact teachers' perceptions towards inclusion?

This study sought to address this question by surveying participants based on three dimensions of attitude while distinguishing between characteristics and demographics. The demographics surveyed included teaching assignment, gender, years of teaching experience, subject taught, experience with inclusion, personal experience with individuals with disabilities, hours of academic coursework concerning disabilities, hours of professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region.

**Teaching assignment.** The participants in this study were comprised of 44% elementary teachers and 56% secondary teachers. The respondents were very similar in their responses to the three dimensions of attitude measured. The largest difference

between teaching levels was in reference to students with mild to moderate disabilities being educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms. Elementary teachers agreed 30% more than secondary teachers, but the secondary teachers were 30% more neutral. There was only a 4% difference in disagreement, thus not validating that secondary teachers disagreed but that they were more neutral in their responses. The secondary teachers did not appear to have a strong opinion either way.

These findings support Barnes (2008) who surveyed 101 teachers and found no significant difference among teachers' attitudes based on their current grade-level teaching assignment. Golmic and Hansen (2012) and Hwang and Evans (2011) both reported that elementary teachers were more positive than secondary teachers, which is not supported by the current findings. Secer (2010) reported that elementary teachers had negative attitudes and were unwilling to teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. This is also in contrast to the findings of this study.

**Gender.** Females were more represented than males in the responses, with 77% being female and 23% being male. Although they were not equally represented, both genders were represented nonetheless. The respondents showed no difference in their responses based on gender but did vary slightly by 10% on one item in each of the three dimensions of attitude. In the behavioral dimension, females disagreed 10% more than the males that regular education was more effective than special education. In regards to regular education being effective to learn social skills in the cognitive dimension, there was a 10% disagreement, with females agreeing 10% more than males, and males disagreeing 10% more than the females. An item in the affective dimension asked if students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classroom as opposed to the special education classroom. Females agreed 10% more than males, and males disagreed

7% more than females that students with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms. Overall, gender did not impact the respondents' attitudes on inclusion.

Neither Barnes (2008), Hamaidi et al. (2012), or Kinai (2013) found a significant difference as related to gender in their research. The findings of this study are supported by these previous findings as gender was found not to be related to teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. In a study conducted by Lee et al. (2011) in China, the researchers reported that females were more receptive and obedient than their male counterparts, which contrasts the current findings.

**Years of teaching experience.** Teachers of varied years of experience were well represented in the study, with 0-5 years of experience accounting for 20.7%; 6-10 years, 24.7; 11-15 years, 19.3%; and 16+ years, 35.3%. The behavioral dimension of attitude reported that eliminating separate classes was disagreed upon most by teachers with 6-10 years of experience with 94.54%. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience disagreed the least at 77.42%. The large percentages reported by all levels of experience indicate that they feel strongly that separate classrooms should not be eliminated. Teachers with 6-10 years of experience also disagreed the most at 64.86% that the regular classroom was favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time. Teachers with 16+ years of experience disagreed the least at 56.6%, supporting that the majority of respondents did not agree that the regular classroom was favored because it would not require too much of the teacher's time.

The greatest difference evidenced by years of experience was the desire to be mentored by a teacher who modeled effective differentiated instruction. As the number of years of experience increased, the percent in agreement decreased. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience agreed at 82.76%, whereas teachers with 16+ years of experience

only agreed at 45.28%. Regardless of years of experience, they were all in similar agreement to emulate teachers who design appropriate academic interventions and that regular classrooms were beneficial in teaching appropriate social skills for students with disabilities.

The affective dimension found all teachers in agreement with the greatest disparity being in regards to students being educated in the regular classroom with nondisabled peers. Teachers with 0-5 years of experience agreed with 41.94%, and teachers with 16+ years agreed at 56.6%. Overall, the majority agreed that students should be educated in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible.

In 2011, de Boer et al. reported that teachers with 0-5 years of experience were more positive than teachers with more experience. This is supported by research conducted by Barnes (2008), Hwang and Evans (2011), and Yssel et al. (2007) as they each reported that more experienced the teacher, the more negative their attitudes were towards inclusion. Kinai (2013), however, reported no significant difference as a result of teaching experience.

**Subject primarily taught.** Core content area teachers were represented with 73.3% and elective area teachers comprised 26.7%. All responses were similar for the behavioral dimension except for eliminating separate classrooms. Core area teachers were in disagreement with eliminating them 14% more than elective teachers. Both area teachers were in disagreement with eliminating them with 75% and 89.09%. The cognitive dimension also exhibited agreement of both area teachers. Regular classrooms being effective for teaching appropriate social skills was agreed upon also at 64.55% for core teachers and 74.36% for elective teachers. For the affective dimension, core

teachers agreed 14.55% more than the elective teachers that students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classrooms with nondisabled peers, but the elective teachers were 12.5% more neutral on the same idea. Both groups of teachers disagreed similarly.

Previous research conducted by Krips et al. (2011) suggested that elective teachers are more caring and open than core content area teachers. Core area teachers tended to be more fair and honest. Fenty et al. (2012) noted that it is more difficult for core content teachers to carve out long portions of instructional time to engage in extended lessons but could facilitate mini-lessons that aided students who needed additional time to practice skills. Based on the findings of this study, the results tend to agree with previous research that suggests elective teachers may be more accommodating in their instruction and classrooms than core content teachers, which could be based upon pacing requirements and testing as mandated by the state.

**Experience with inclusion.** Of the respondents, 87% had experience with inclusion, leaving 13% who did not have experience. Teachers with no experience disagreed at 63.16% that regular classrooms were favored as it would not require too much of the teachers time, while 56.92% who had experience disagreed. On other aspects of the behavior dimension, respondents similarly agreed. The cognitive dimension exhibited 21.05% of teachers who had no experience did not want to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction, and 31.58% with no experience disagreed that regular classrooms were effective in teaching appropriate social skills. Regardless if the teachers had experience with inclusion, they all reported similar results on the affective dimension of attitude.

Previous studies conducted by de Boer et al. (2011) and Hamaidi et al. (2012)

reported teachers with experience with inclusion held significantly more positive attitudes towards inclusive education than those with no experience. Barnes (2008) concluded that attitudes did not vary significantly across categories of previous experience with inclusion. The current study supports the findings of Barnes.

**Personal experience with individuals with disabilities.** The large majority of participants (89%) had experience with individuals with disabilities with 11% not having had any. Teachers with no experience disagreed at 82.35% that a regular classroom was favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time, whereas 54.55% of those with experience disagreed. Both groups agreed with very low percentages at 18.46% with experience and 5.88% without experience that regular education is more effective than special education classrooms. The level of disagreement was 53.08% with experience and 70.59% with no experience. In regards to social skills being effectively taught in the regular classroom, teachers with no experience disagreed with 35.92%, and those with experience disagreed at 12.98%. The affective dimension also exhibited disparity with those with experience in agreement at 52.27% that students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers. Teachers without experience agreed at 35.29%.

The findings from this study correlate with findings from a study conducted by Sharma et al. (2009). Sharma et al.'s report suggested contact with an individual with a disability is a significant factor in promoting positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

**Academic coursework concerning disabilities.** The number of hours of academic coursework that participants had concerning disabilities varied from 15-40%. More specifically, those with zero hours comprised 15%, 1-3 hours 40%, 4-6 hours 22%,



and 7+ hours 23%. Within this demographic, there was a significant variance of agreement. In the behavioral dimension, as the number of hours of coursework increased, so did the percent disagreement on all three questions. It appeared the more educated the participant became, the more they felt separate classrooms should not be eliminated. Teachers with zero hours of coursework disagreed at 47.83% that the regular classroom was appropriate as it would not require too much of the teacher's time, whereas teachers with 7+ hours disagreed at 64.71%. The same held true with 36.36% of teachers with zero hours of coursework disagreeing that regular education is more effective than special education and 76.47% of teachers with 7+ hours disagreeing.

Teachers with zero hours of coursework wanted to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction at 30.43%, and 75.76% of teachers with 4-6 hours desired the mentoring. Teachers with zero hours of coursework agreed at 47.83% that the regular classroom was effective for teaching social skills to students with disabilities.

The results were similar for the affective dimension. Concerning students being educated in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible, teachers with zero hours of coursework had the lowest percentage of agreement (39.13%) and the highest percentage of disagreement (30.43%). Based on these data, teachers who have had no coursework concerning disabilities view inclusion very differently than those who have had coursework.

**Professional development concerning disabilities.** The majority of the participants have had some professional development concerning disabilities. Those having received zero hours totaled 15%; 1-3 hours, 48%; 4-6 hours, 15%, and 7+ hours, 22%. The participants' responses were similar in the behavioral dimension with the

exception of regular education is more effective than special education. Teachers with zero hours of professional development agreed at 4.55%, and those with 4-6 hours agreed at 4.76%. Teachers with 1-3 hours agreed at 25.35%, while those with 7+ hours agreed at 18.18%.

The cognitive dimension had two items that presented obvious differences. Teachers who wanted to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction decreased in agreement as the hours of professional development increased. The opposite was true for disagreement; as the number of hours of professional development increased, so did the percent who disagreed. Teachers who had 7+ hours of professional development agreed at 78.79% that regular classrooms taught appropriate social skills, whereas those with zero hours of professional development disagreed with 31.82%.

Responses for the affective dimension correlated with the number of hours of professional development. As the number of hours of professional development increased, so did the percent of agreement that students with disabilities should be educated in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers. The percent of disagreement decreased as the number of hours increased. The results of the three dimensions of attitude indicate that the number of hours of professional development concerning disabilities affects the respondents' attitudes of inclusion and factors associated with inclusion.

**Training concerning inclusive practices.** Of the respondents to the survey, 33.33% had no training concerning inclusive practices. Those with 1-3 hours totaled 38%, 4-6 hours were the least with 13.33%, and 7+ hours equaled 15.33%. All responses for the behavioral dimension were very similar. The cognitive dimension yielded

differences related to being mentored and thoughts on social skills. Regarding teachers desiring to be mentored by a teacher who modeled effective differentiated instruction, as the number of hours of training increased, the percent of agreement decreased with a range from 74% to 35% except for 7+ hours which reported 56.52% agreement. The outliers for regular classrooms being effective to learn appropriate social skills were those with 7+ hours agreeing at 82.61% and those with 1-3 hours disagreeing at 21.43%.

Teachers had differing views regarding students with disabilities being educated in the regular classroom with their nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible. Respondents with 4-6 hours of training and 7+ hours had an increased percent agreement with 55% and 60.87%, respectively. Those with zero and 1-3 hours were very similar at 48% and 47.37% agreement. Golmic and Hansen (2012) reported that teachers with high levels of special education experience and training held positive attitudes towards inclusion.

**Participants by region.** Seven of the eight regions in North Carolina were represented in this statewide survey. The percent of participants by region were Northeast 4%, Southeast 4%, Sandhills/South Central 10%, Piedmont-Triad/Central 23%, Southwest 33%, Northwest 12%, and Western 14%. Regular education classroom being favored as it would not require too much of the teacher's time was agreed upon most by the northeast region with 50% agreeing and 16.67% disagreeing. The southeast region yielded no one agreeing and 83.33% disagreeing. No respondents in the northeast region agreed that regular education is more effective than special education. The western region presented 33.33% agreeing and 38.1% disagreeing. The southeast and piedmont-triad/central regions both disagreed at 66.67%.

The cognitive dimension yielded teachers in the sandhills/south central region

agreed the least at 33.33% to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction. The piedmont-triad/central region agreed the most at 70.59%, while the northeast region disagreed the most at 33.33%. The sandhills/south central region agreed at 80% that the regular classroom is most effective to learn appropriate social skills and the piedmont-triad/central region agreed at 44.12%.

Respondents disagreed somewhat in the affective dimension with those in the western region agreeing at 61.9% that students should be educated in the regular classroom with nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible. On the same topic, the northwest region disagreed at 44.44%.

**Comparison to Tallent's (1986) results.** In comparing results from a statewide survey conducted 28 years earlier, both studies reported no difference in regards to grade level taught regarding elementary and secondary levels. Tallent found that females were more positive than males, but the current study reports no difference in gender. From the present study, there is no difference in years of experience, but Tallent detailed a difference in years of experience with 1-5 being more positive and 10+ more negative. There were no differences in 1-5 and 6-10 years or 6-10 and 10+ years of experience.

Noncontent teachers were more positive than content teachers in Tallent's (1986) study. The current study presented that elective teachers are more accommodating in instruction as opposed to core content teachers. Both studies found that there were no differences in the data for teachers who had experience with inclusion or mainstreaming. Tallent reported no significant difference in responses regarding coursework in special education. The current study found that the more hours in coursework concerning disabilities, the more negative teachers tended to be, possibly related to being more realistic.

Education levels were researched by Tallent (1986) and found to have no significant difference. This demographic was not studied in the current research. Additional areas that were surveyed in the current study that were not in 1986 include personal experience with disabilities, professional development concerning disabilities, training concerning inclusive practices, and region. The researcher found that participants with personal experience with disabilities had a more positive attitude than those who had no experience. The more the hours of professional development concerning disabilities, the more positive the respondents' attitudes were as well. There was no difference with participants who had training concerning inclusive practices. The responses by region were varied. Overall, the most positive region regarding inclusion was the sandhills/south central region. The region that was the most negative towards inclusion was the southeast region.

### **Recommendations**

In analyzing the data, recommendations can be made based on the current findings, in particular the results that yielded differences. The areas that presented differences include subject taught, personal experience with an individual with a disability, academic coursework, professional development, and region. Additional research that investigates the qualitative nature of each of these variables needs to be completed to provide information that would assist educators at all levels in making decisions for their schools or districts regarding inclusion.

According to the research study, elective teachers were more accommodating than core content teachers. This is supported by Tallent (1986) who conducted a statewide study in North Carolina and also reported noncontent teachers were more positive than content teachers. Fenty et al. (2012) also added that planning together fostered the

opportunity for teachers to share classroom instructional duties. Teachers of content are faced with the added challenge of providing evidence of student proficiency on statewide assessments which are tied to their evaluation as a teacher. For this reason, content teachers may be less willing to place that responsibility in the hands of a teacher who is not trained in content but rather strategy. Further investigation that presents information specific to content area teachers' apprehension or unwillingness to accommodate their instruction for students with mild to moderate disabilities needs to be presented.

Individuals who had experience with individuals with disabilities presented a more positive attitude in the research than those who had no experience. The current study yielded 89% of participants had personal experience with individuals with disabilities. Sharma et al. (2009) surveyed 478 individuals and only yielded 3% of the participants had experience with individuals with disabilities. Even with the differing rates in the studies, both presented information that the individuals who had experience were more positive towards inclusive education. Providing opportunities for individuals to interact with all ability levels of students allows for a more nurturing environment and a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Additional information would be beneficial to determine what causes the shift for teachers who have more coursework hours concerning disabilities to be more negative. The results indicated that the more hours of coursework they had, the more negative their attitude towards inclusion. Sharma et al. (2009) noted in their study that the focus of teacher education should be on sociological aspects of disabilities and strategies that have been shown to enhance inclusion of all students in the learning process. The concern is a result of research that suggests too much focus on causes and characteristics of disabilities may perpetuate negative attitudes. Postsecondary institutions that provide

academic coursework concerning disabilities should evaluate their curriculum and determine if their focus is appropriate to promote positive attitudes or to highlight causes and effects that may appear negative to the learner.

This is in contrast to those who had professional development concerning disabilities as they were more positive as the number of professional development hours increased. The types of training and information presented would need to be closely monitored to determine what caused the shift in attitude. Often professional development is tailored to the audience based on experience and need. This flexibility allows the presenter to focus on areas that can be enhanced and provide strategies that are beneficial based on experience either of the presenter or audience. Educators choose professional development based on their interests and current needs within the classroom setting. They have often experienced the topic or will be participating, hence their attendance. As a result, interest level is heightened and they are able to garner useful information either validating their current practices or providing new strategies.

The sandhills/south central region was the most positive toward inclusion. More research should be conducted to determine what is being done differently there to account for the positive attitudes. The same holds true for the region with the most negative attitude. The southeast region may need to make some changes in their delivery of services, training, and support to change attitudes towards inclusion for the better. Another area that should be monitored is the postsecondary institutions that surround these regions that may be supplying the professional development, coursework, and teachers to these districts. The scope of sequence could provide useful information for the other regions in North Carolina.

**Implications for school districts.** The information gathered from this study

could be used for placement of co-teachers in inclusive settings, professional development opportunities, and opportunities for collaboration with fellow superintendents as well as area postsecondary institutions. When making placement decisions, the grade level, gender, years of experience, and experience with inclusion do not factor into teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. The factors that do, however, need to be discussed prior to placement decisions for the best interest of students. With elective teachers being more accommodating, this would be a factor in hiring and placement if the position is for an inclusion setting. If the position is for a content area, discussions on attitude and perception of inclusion and students with disabilities would need to occur. Personal experience was also an area that presented more positive attitudes. Discussing experience and providing opportunities for both current and potential employees to interact and have a positive experience with individuals with disabilities would be beneficial to the organization.

Many LEAs have partnerships with institutions of higher education in their area. The information gathered from this study would be a conversation piece to ensure the information being delivered is positive and not negative. Recommendations from Sharma et al. (2009) that strategies be focused on more than causes could provide insight to individuals who make the curricular decisions for academic coursework. The underlying tones and perceptions that are presented in the academic coursework can aid in promoting or deterring individuals in their attitudes and perceptions of individuals with disabilities. The positive aspect of the professional development should also be shared so that the presenters can collaborate to ensure equitable delivery of information. The information presented in both academic realms and professional development venues may also be a factor in the differences in perceptions of inclusion based on region. The



study was conducted statewide which shows the differences not only in the regions but statewide. What is being done specifically in each region and LEA to promote and educate individuals regarding inclusion is clearly very different. The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction should also use these results to ensure equitable focus across the state and that information is not only being presented consistently but that follow-up occurs to account for any discrepancies.

### **Summary**

When looking at the teachers' perceptions of inclusion, it is clear that no single variable is the determining factor of it being positive or negative. The variables and demographics that were studied only represent a small portion of possibilities that affect teachers and their perceptions. The responses of each participant could have varied slightly depending upon the circumstances of the moment or those memories that were etched into their professional repertoire.

From the outcomes, providing appropriate training, follow-up, and support can only enhance service delivery to students with disabilities both in the regular education classroom and the special education classroom. Appropriately educating teachers, parents, administrators, and students to advocate and execute appropriate instructional methodology will only benefit everyone involved. The information gathered could aid upper-level and building administration in making staffing arrangements, planning training and professional development, and ensuring an inclusive environment in the schools. It is everyone's responsibility to educate all students, not specialized teachers only.

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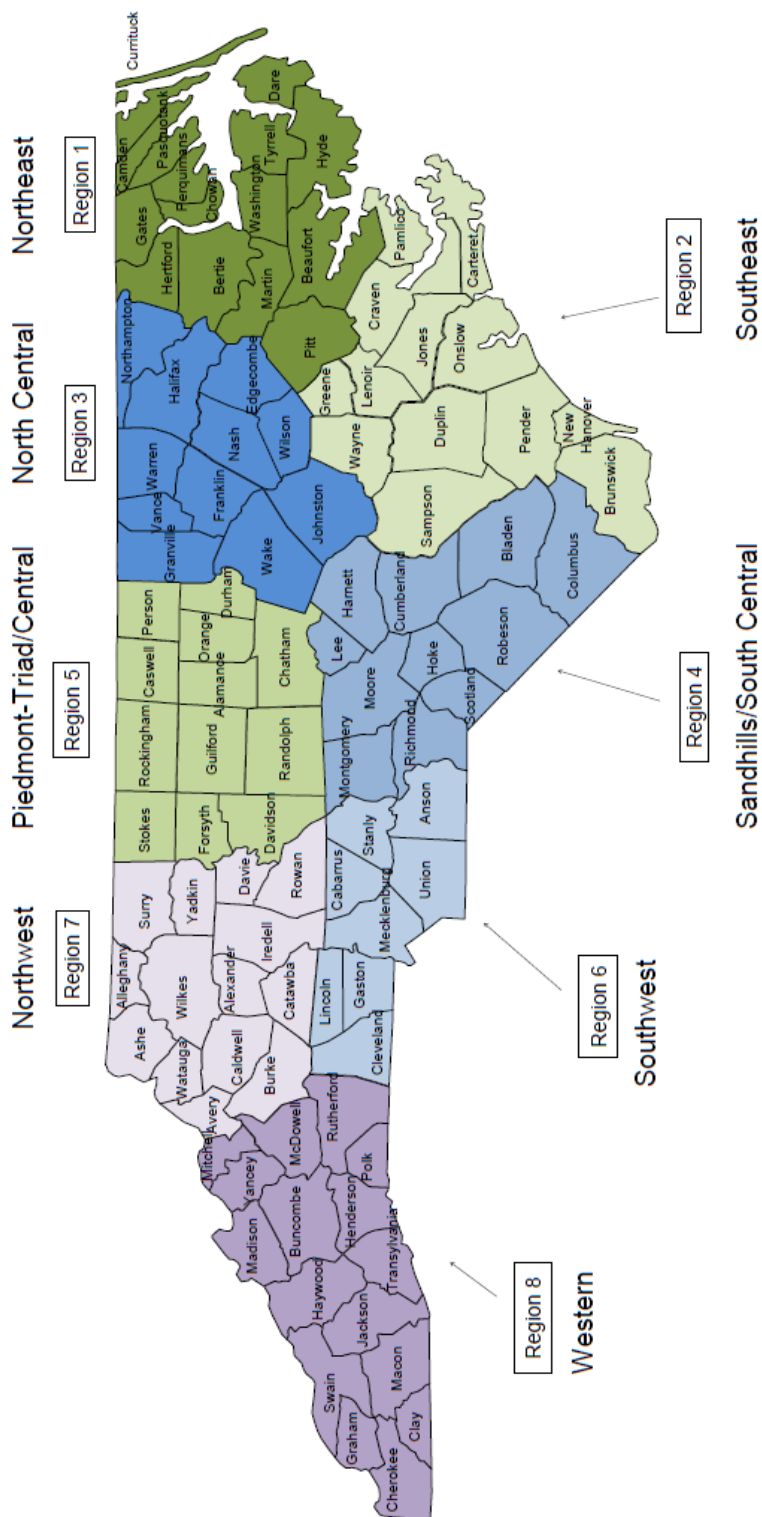
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Appendix A

Map of Education Regions in North Carolina

# North Carolina Education Regions



Appendix B

Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS-mm) Instrument

**Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students**  
ATTAS-mm

Jess L. Gregory  
Southern CT State University

Lori A. Noto  
University of Bridgeport

The purpose of this survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of teaching all students including students identified with mild to moderate disabilities. Because there are no “right” or “wrong” answers to these items, please respond candidly.

	Agree Very Strongly	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Very Strongly
1. Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild to moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
2. Students with mild to moderate disabilities should be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will not require too much of the teacher’s time.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
3. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
4. I would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
5. I want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
6. I believe including students with mild/moderate disabilities in the regular education classrooms is effective because they can learn the social skills necessary for success.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
7. I would like people to think that I can create a welcoming classroom environment for students with mild to moderate disabilities.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
8. Students with mild to moderate disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the classroom.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
9. All students with mild to moderate disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with non-handicapped peers to the fullest extent possible.	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)

Appendix C

Permission to use Instrument

Hi there!

I have attached a few things, the ATTAS-mm technical manual and scoring sheet.

You have permission to use the instrument, we ask that you use the whole thing as is, but you can add other questions (like open ended if you want). In return for permission, we ask that you send your raw data on the excel spread sheet so that we can further enhance future technical manuals.

There are references in the technical manual you may find helpful.

Enjoy your research,  
Jess

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On 10/6/13 6:43 PM, "Pritchard, Keisha H" <[kpritchard@lincoln.k12.nc.us](mailto:kpritchard@lincoln.k12.nc.us)> wrote:

Thank you for responding. If you could send the instrument to me that would be great. We were notified that with the government shutdown, full text was unavailable through ERIC along with some other features. I could take a look at it and get back to you.  
Thanks again!  
Keisha

Sent from my Verizon Wireless 4G LTE DROID

"Gregory, Jess L." <[gregoryj2@southernct.edu](mailto:gregoryj2@southernct.edu)> wrote:

I can't grant permission to use the TATIS because we found problems with the instrument. We developed a similar scale the ATTAS-mm. Take a look at that, it should be available through ERIC. I can send you the new instrument on Monday or Tuesday when I am back in the office if you are interested.

-Jess

Sent from my iPad

On Oct 5, 2013, at 10:04 AM, "Ms Keisha Hollar Pritchard" <[kpritchard@gardner-webb.edu](mailto:kpritchard@gardner-webb.edu)<<mailto:kpritchard@gardner-webb.edu>>> wrote:



Greetings!

My name is Keisha H. Pritchard and I am a doctoral candidate student at Gardner-Webb University in North Carolina. My dissertation focus is teacher's perspectives of inclusion. I am requesting permission to use The Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Scale (TATIS). With your permission I will use the instrument to gather data to determine if there are differences in teachers perspectives based upon their grade level (elementary vs. secondary), gender, years teaching experience, subject(s) taught, and experience with students with disabilities.

I appreciate your time and consideration. If permission is granted and there are additional resources related to the TATIS you would like to share, please do so.

My anticipated completion date of this dissertation is May 2014. I look forward to hearing from you regarding your decision.

Thanks in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Keisha H. Pritchard

Appendix D

Letter to Superintendents of Selected LEAs

Keisha H. Pritchard  
Doctoral Candidate  
Gardner-Webb University  
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

January 20, 2014

Dr./Mr./Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_  
Superintendent  
\_\_\_\_\_County Schools  
1234 Street  
Anywhere, NC 12345

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

My name is Keisha H. Pritchard and I am a doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University seeking a degree in Educational Leadership. I am also an Assistant Principal with Lincoln County Schools. My study will focus on teacher's attitudes towards inclusion.

Your school district has been randomly selected, along with seven other districts in North Carolina, to be included in this study. The success of my study depends largely on your cooperation and participation.

I intend to randomly sample classroom teachers from each selected school district. To ensure continued progress with my study, may I contact someone in your office to obtain a listing of all regular education K-12 classroom teachers? This information could be provided electronically, which would enable random selection and communication via email to chosen teachers. If you would prefer, I could send the information to someone in your office for them to send to teachers if you are uncomfortable with releasing email addresses. Data collection would also be electronic to ensure ease, accuracy, and convenience for the participants. This information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me. This project cannot be completed without your assistance. You may contact me via electronic mail at XXXXXXXX or by telephone at XXXXXXXX. I look forward to your response so I may proceed with my research.

Respectfully yours,

Keisha H. Pritchard

Appendix E  
Letter to Participants

Keisha H. Pritchard  
Doctoral Candidate  
Gardner-Webb University  
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

January 19, 2014

Dear Fellow Educator:

My name is Keisha H. Pritchard and I am a doctoral candidate at Gardner-Webb University seeking a degree in Educational Leadership. I am also an Assistant Principal with Lincoln County Schools. My dissertation, which I am currently writing, is focused on teachers' perceptions towards inclusion.

You have been randomly selected, along with a number of other educators in North Carolina, to be included in this study. Your participation would include completing demographics and a nine item survey using a Likert scale. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. Once finished, the results will be sent directly to me, which requires no additional time or action on your part. The success of my study depends largely on your cooperation and participation.

I intend to randomly sample classroom teachers to get their perspective on inclusion. If you choose to participate, please click on the following link which will take you directly to the survey and demographic information. Data collection will be electronic to ensure ease, accuracy, and convenience for the participants. This information will be kept strictly confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

If you require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at XXXXXXXX. This project cannot be completed without your assistance. I look forward to your expeditious response so I may proceed with my study.

Respectfully yours,

Keisha H. Pritchard

Appendix F  
Demographic Questionnaire

## DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Please read each statement/question carefully. Please choose the one that provides the best answer.

Thank you for your cooperation!

1. At what level do you teach?
  - a. Elementary (Kindergarten-5<sup>th</sup> grade)
  - b. Secondary (6<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade)
  
2. What is your gender?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_Female
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_Male
  
3. How many years have you been teaching?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_0-5 years
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_6-10 years
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_11-15 years
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_16+ years
  
4. What subject do you primarily teach?
  - a. Core Class (English, Math, Science, Social Studies)
  - b. Elective Class (Art, Music, PE, Computers, etc.)
  
5. Have you had any experience with inclusion?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_Yes
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_No
  
6. Have you had any personal experience with individuals with disabilities?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_Yes
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_No
  
7. How many hours of coursework have you had concerning disabilities?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_0 hours
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_1-3 hours
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_4-6 hours
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_7+ hours
  
8. How many hours of professional development have you had concerning disabilities?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_0 hours
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_1-3 hours
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_4-6 hours
  - d. \_\_\_\_\_7+ hours
  
9. How many hours of training have you had concerning inclusive practices?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_0 hours

- b. \_\_\_\_\_ 1-3 hours
- c. \_\_\_\_\_ 4-6 hours
- d. \_\_\_\_\_ 7+ hours