

Teacher Perceptions Toward Including Students with
Emotional Behavioral Disabilities in
General Education Classes

by

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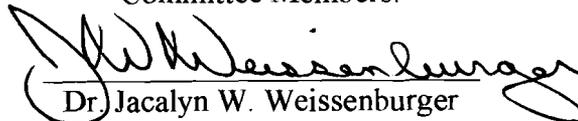
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine teacher perceptions toward including students with emotional behavioral disabilities (EBD) in general education classrooms. The results of the study will be used by the Medford Area School District in Medford, Wisconsin to make decisions regarding support and/or training for teachers, with the ultimate goal of providing improved services for students. The results were analyzed by gender of teacher, years of teaching experience, teacher's age, and educational training. The following conclusions were made from the data: 1) Male teachers felt less confident that their instructional background prepared them to teach students with EBD while female teachers were more willing to attend additional training to increase their knowledge about students with EBD; 2) Teachers with 6-10 years of experience were more likely to disagree that students with EBD received adequate counseling services; 3) Older teachers

were more likely to agree that students with EBD should not be included in general education classrooms, had poor attendance, and had a negative impact on the classroom;

4) Teachers who had formal college courses in special education were more likely to agree they were prepared to teach students with EBD and that those students should be in general education classes. Recommendations include providing staff training on working with students with EBD during professional in-service days since 84% of the respondents were willing to attend. A follow-up survey could be conducted to see if the proposed training would have an impact on teachers' attitudes.

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Chapter I: Introduction

Inclusion, the practice of providing services to all students with an equitable education (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997), has been a controversial issue in education since the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Shephard & Brown, 2000). There are positive and negative aspects for the practice of full inclusion to educate disabled students (Chow, Blais, & Hemingway, 1999) who are increasingly being placed in general education classrooms with non-special education teachers. Based on the federal guidelines for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), a student with a disability should be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). The removal of students with disabilities from the general education classes should occur only when the severity of the disability is such that the child's educational needs can not be met with supplementary aids and services.

Students with Emotional Behavioral Disabilities (EBD) are served in our public schools under IDEA and are among the most challenging students teachers have in their classrooms. Inclusion creates different challenges for certified teachers. Many studies have been conducted to examine the effects of inclusion and teacher attitudes (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Chandler & Sideridis, 1997; Van Reusen, Shoho & Barker, 2000/2001), but many of the studies have not specifically looked at teacher perceptions toward children with EBD and inclusion (Heflin & Bullock, 1999).

Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction (DPI) Evaluation Guide for EBD (2002) stated the following:

Students with EBD qualify for educational services based on the following legal guidelines: the student exhibits social, emotional, behavioral functioning that so departs from generally accepted age appropriate, ethnic, or cultural norms that it adversely affects the child in at least one of the following areas: academic progress, social relationships, personal adjustment, classroom adjustment, self-care, or vocational skills. The child's behaviors must be severe, chronic, and frequent and occur at school and one other setting, home or the community. At least one of the following areas must be present to meet the eligibility criteria for EBD: a) inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; b) inability to develop or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships; c) inappropriate affective or behavior response under normal circumstances; d) a general pervasive mood of happiness, depression, or anxiety; e) physical symptoms, pain or fears associated with personal or school problems; f) extreme withdrawal from social interaction, extreme aggressiveness for a long period of time; or g) other inappropriate behaviors that are so different from children of similar age, ability, educational experiences, and opportunities that the child or other children in a regular or special education program are negatively affected. (p. 6)

Students with EBD have individual educational plans (IEPs) which map out their curriculum by including annual, individual goals and objectives to address behavioral and academic areas. The IEP includes classroom methods, accommodations, and a behavioral plan needed for the student to achieve his/her educational goals. Both special and general educators are responsible for carrying out the IEP in the LRE.

Educators often are not trained to teach students with EBD in their general education classrooms. In 2001, a study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education, showed that 96% percent of general educators indicated they have taught students with disabilities, but only one-third of these teachers felt well prepared to teach them (Boyer & Mainzer, 2003). Students with EBD place a high demand on teachers to have special skills in dealing with this disability in the classroom (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). The lack of training, safety concerns, and behavioral challenges often lead to resistance and negativity from educators called on to include students with EBD in their classrooms. In addition, teacher attitudes can affect the quality of education provided to students with EBD, who are considered the most difficult disability group to include in the classroom (Walker & Bullis, 1991; Yell, 1995). Some educators believe students with EBD should not be fully included in the general classroom due to their behavioral and special instructional needs (Heflin, Boreson, Grossman, Huette & Iigen, 1994; Landrum & Kauffman, 1992).

Placing students into inclusion programs when they are disruptive can hinder their education and that of their classmates (Chow et al., 1999). Burnette (1996) agrees the placement of students with disabilities in the general classroom should be decided on an individual basis due to the severity of the child's disability (as cited in Chow et al.). An appropriate placement may vary for each child with a disability. Zirkel and Gluckman stated that, "What is appropriate for one child with disabilities does not necessarily equate to what is appropriate for another eligible child" (1996, p. 91). Educators are often frustrated with the mandated inclusion process due to a lack of training, materials, support, and planning time. Appropriate teacher training or education on different

disabilities may increase teachers' willingness to include and teach students with disabilities in their classrooms (Lanier & Lanier, 1996). After more than two decades of mandated inclusion, many of the same issues remain. Those issues often create frustration for educators and can lead to negative perceptions toward students with EBD. Research indicates that EBD students create the greatest challenges in the classroom which may lead to negativity (Cheney & Muscott., 1996). This study hopes to show how changes still need to occur, such as teacher training and support from other specialized professionals, so that students with EBD are provided with the highest quality of educational programs.

Purpose of Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine teacher perceptions toward including students with EBD in their classrooms. The demographic data collected will be used to determine if years of experience, age, gender, and educational training have any influence on teachers' attitudes. The results of the study will be used by Medford Schools, a medium-sized rural school district, to make decisions regarding support and/or in-service for general education teachers, with the ultimate goal of providing improved services for students.

Research Objectives

1. To determine if there is a difference in perceptions toward including students with EBD according to the gender of the teachers.
2. To determine if years of teaching experience impacts teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with EBD.

3. To determine if the age of the teachers impacts their attitudes toward including students with EBD in their classrooms.

4. To determine if teachers who have educational training in dealing with students with EBD have more positive attitudes toward inclusion than teachers without such training.

Definition of Terms

The following terms will be defined to help clarify the study:

Certified teachers. Teaching staff that currently hold a teacher's license in the state of Wisconsin.

Emotional behavioral disability (EBD). A special education category in which a child has been found to have social, emotional, and behavioral difficulties that interfere with his or her total educational program.

Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting. A meeting in which parents, teachers, administrators, and educational specialists discuss a student's evaluation results, determine if the child meets state and federal guidelines for special education, and develop an individualized plan for the student's educational program.

Inclusion. Including students with disabilities in the general education classrooms to the maximum extent that is appropriate.

Least restrictive environment (LRE). An educational setting that provides maximum opportunities for interaction with non-disabled peers.

General education. Classes taught by general educators for the total student population.

Special education. Classes taught by special education teachers where the curriculum is adapted to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities.

Assumptions

The first assumption of this study is that the respondents will answer the items honestly and openly. The second assumption of this study is that the results will be used by the school district to meet the needs of the teachers and students within their district.

Limitations

One limitation of the study is that respondents may answer the items on the survey the way they think the researcher wants them to respond or the respondents will respond in a socially desirable direction. A second limitation is that the return rate may be reduced because not all teachers have students with EBD in their classrooms. Another limitation is that the results of the study are only limited to teachers perceptions in Medford. This, the results can not be generalized to other populations. In addition, the perceptions of teachers were assessed in the study, not the actual knowledge or behavior.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Chapter II covers the background and history of how the integration (inclusion) of students with disabilities has evolved from 1950 to the present. The involvement of general educators with students with disabilities during the progression from isolation to full inclusion will be discussed, along with teacher attitudes toward including students with disabilities in classrooms. Further, the impact of educational training and teaching experiences on professionals' attitudes toward including students with EBD will be addressed. The category of students with EBD will be the target group of this review of the literature.

History of Inclusion

Students with EBD have posed many challenges for educators in general classrooms. Since the 1950s, the trend in education has slowly moved toward including more students with EBD in general education classrooms. Before 1950, students with EBD often were educated in hospitals and institutions. In 1963, President Kennedy signed PL 88-164 into law (Horne, 1985). This law increased special education services for students with disabilities, including students who were categorized as emotionally disturbed. General educators had little contact with students with special needs at this time. Students with disabilities were educated in separate classrooms by special education teachers. In 1968, Lloyd Dunn questioned whether special education should occur separately from general education (Dunn, 1968, as cited in Kavale, 2000). Dunn sparked others to think along these lines and to question the practices of that time.

During the 1970s, mainstreaming of students with disabilities began (WEAC, 2001). Mainstreaming is the placement of students with disabilities into general

classrooms for certain class activities. For the remainder of the day, students with disabilities received special education services in a separate room.

PL 94-142 was signed into law in 1975. This was the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act, which required a free and appropriate public education for students with disabilities between the ages of 5-21. Students were required to have an IEP that mapped out their educational program in the LRE. Mainstreaming and PL 94-142 required general educators to become more involved with students who had disabilities in their classrooms. Mainstreaming was one way positive interactions could take place between students who were disabled and non-disabled in general educational settings.

In 1983, *A Nation at Risk* was published. This report promoted having all students in general education schools (Jobe, Rust, & Brissie, 1996). Inclusive programs were strengthened by the IDEA in 1990. In inclusive programs, children with disabilities are in the general classroom with the classroom and special education teachers have a shared responsibility in educating these students. In mainstreaming programs of the 1970s, the primary responsibility for students with disabilities was with the special education teacher in the resource room.

The last students with disabilities to be considered for inclusion were students with emotional disabilities (Hewitt, 2004). Students with emotional disabilities were difficult for people to understand since their disability was invisible and they generally looked like everyone else. According to Hewitt, knowledge about the integration of students with emotional disabilities was not given the same attention as other disabilities.

The U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Cedar Rapids Community School District v. Garrett F.* is an example where the courts issued a ruling in favor of inclusion for a

student with severe disabilities (Price, Mayfield, McFadden & Marsh, 2001). Court cases like this one helped support the inclusive movement in our schools. The term inclusion does not appear within the federal law, but one of the main components of the federal legislation is the LRE. The LRE calls for students to be placed in a program as close to general education class placement as possible. The LRE guidelines have become the basis for the increase in inclusion in the last few years.

Teachers' Perceptions Toward Inclusion

The teacher's attitude is important in determining the success of special education programs (Stoler, 1992). However, few studies have been done on how teachers feel about inclusion (Jobe et al., 1996).

A school district in Colorado was used in one study on 276 school staff's attitudes toward inclusion (Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992). The results indicated that males had significantly more negative attitudes about inclusion than female staff. A difference between general classroom teachers and special education teachers was also found; the special educators in Colorado had more positive attitudes toward inclusion. Overall, survey results indicated resistance toward inclusion with school staff.

Another study that looked at teacher attitudes was conducted with 182 secondary teachers from nine high schools in 1992 (Stoler, 1992). The results showed teachers with different levels of education differed in their attitudes. More negative attitudes occurred with higher levels of education. However, the study also indicated that the more special education courses teachers completed the more positive their attitudes were on inclusion.

Other research indicated that teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities played a major part in the success of peer interactions (Horne, 1985). In 1979, Parish,

Dyck and Kappes as cited in Horne, did a study with two surveys that were completed by teachers in Kansas and attendees at a conference on learning disabilities (LD). The results were the same from both groups; perceptions toward having students with an emotional disturbance in their classrooms was negative. Another study on teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities was conducted by Williams and Algozzine, (1977) as cited in Horne, 1985. The results of this survey showed that teachers were more willing and better trained to deal with students who had physical handicaps and LDs than emotional disturbances. Students with emotional disturbances were the least favored disability group of teachers who had them included in their classrooms.

Many surveys conducted in the 1970s and 1980s indicated that a high percentage of general educators believed students with disabilities should remain in separate special education classrooms. One example of this would be the survey that was conducted by Ringleben and Price (1981, as cited in Hewitt, 2004). The results showed 30% of the teachers surveyed believed mainstreaming had negative effects on their attitudes toward teaching.

In the 1980s, there was an emphasis on school reform (Horne, 1985). The general education initiative (REI) was an effort to promote more inclusive placements with new teaching methods for students with disabilities. The REI was based on the following assumptions: a) students are more alike than different, so special instruction is not needed; b) good teachers can teach all students; all students can be provided with quality education; c) general education classrooms can manage all students without any segregation; and d) physically separate education was discriminatory. Many educators opposed the views of the REI and arguments against the REI occurred. Opponents felt

more competent teachers did not necessarily have more positive attitudes about students with disabilities (Kavale, 2000). Due to the involvement of the government with the REI, advocates for full inclusion influenced school policies and more students with disabilities were included in general education classes (Heflin & Bullock, 1999).

According to Heflin and Bullock (1999) teachers are resistant to inclusion due to their lack of ability to teach students with disabilities in the classroom. More and more requirements are being placed on the classroom teacher today, and inclusion adds to the demands. Many teachers are concerned about being able to meet the needs of students with disabilities along with their other general education students. Students with EBD require skilled professionals to support their needs. Teachers are concerned about dealing with severe behaviors exhibited by students with EBD in the classroom and their lack of training in dealing with this disability. Many general education teachers lack the necessary preparation to successfully work with students with emotional disabilities (Ochoa, 2003).

Inclusion Trends, IDEA, and No Child Left Behind

Including students with disabilities in general education classrooms continues to be debated (WEAC, 2001). IDEA stated that if state and local education agencies provided special education and related services to students with disabilities, they would receive federal funds. IDEA mandated that students with disabilities should be provided an appropriate education designed to meet their needs in a LRE. Inclusion was not mandated, but IDEA interpreted the LRE to be the general education classrooms. Special education services were provided for students ages 3 to 21 if they fit the eligibility criteria for one of the 13 categories of disability. Seriously emotionally disturbed was

included as one of the categories. Each student who was eligible for special education was to be provided a free, appropriate public education. Parental participation, along with notices and permissions, were required at different stages of the process, along with a comprehensive evaluation of the child's strengths and weaknesses. Every three years, a re-evaluation is required for each student with a disability who receives special education services. Parental rights, including mediation and due process hearings, were in IDEA.

The IDEA was reauthorized with amendments (Council for Exceptional Children, 1997). Several changes were made to IDEA. The definition of serious emotional disturbance was changed to emotional disturbance. Supplemental aids and services, transition services, participation in assessment, determination of manifestation of disability, and reviewing existing data were some of the other additions to IDEA in 1997. After 1997, a general education teacher was now required to attend a child's IEP meeting. This is another example of general education teacher involvement with students who are disabled.

With inclusion, teachers have greater diversity in their classrooms. The inclusion of students with disabilities creates more challenges for general education teachers (Tournaki, 2003). Research indicates that teachers view social behavior in the classroom as more important than academic performance. Johnson-Fedoruk (1991, as cited in Tournaki), found kindergarten teachers tended to fail students more frequently based on poor social behavior more than any other student characteristic. Witek and Little (1996, as cited in Tournaki) found teachers perceived students with social behavioral problems to be a) more likely in need of special education, b) responsible for their behavior, and c) less likely to be successful in the future. Mamlin and Harris (1998, as cited in Tournaki)

indicated that in one school, most of the referrals for special education were due to emotional-behavioral problems.

According to Tournaki (2003), the results of the study titled *Effect of Student Characteristics on Teachers' Predictions of Student Success* indicated that student characteristics such as social behavior affected general education teachers' predictions of student's academic and social success. The findings demonstrated that when a student did not have a reading problem, but misbehaved, the teacher predicted academic failure despite the absence of a reading problem. Also, teachers predicted less social success for boys than girls, for uncooperative students versus cooperative students, and for inattentive students compared to attentive students. The study also showed that teachers use relevant and irrelevant information when predicting academic and social success. The use of irrelevant information by teachers may place students with disabilities at greater risk for failure in general education classrooms.

The Reauthorization of the Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), which is a federal law, took place on July 1, 2005, so more educational changes have occurred (Wisconsin DPI, 2006). At the present time, state policy-makers are coming into line with IDEA 2004. Some of the changes have included the following: a) transition planning begins at age 14 instead of 16; b) members on the IEP team may be excused upon the consent of both parties; c) a student with a disability can be removed from school more than 10 days. If school personnel want to seek a change in placement for more than 10 school days and the behavior was determined not to be related to their disability, the same disciplinary procedures can be used as student without a disability; d) new interim alternative placement options are also included in the changes; and e)

removal for more than 10 school days requires a continuation of services (students continue to receive services in an alternative placement) so a student can participate in the general education curriculum and progress toward their IEP goals. These changes in discipline procedures will likely affect the students with EBD in our schools.

Another change in education is No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), a federal law which took effect in 2002. Under NCLB, adequate yearly progress requires students to perform satisfactorily on standardized tests. The purpose of NCLB is to have all students reach academic standards and make schools more accountable in exchange for federal money (Sailor & Roger, 2005). Melton (as cited in Sailor and Roger) indicates that teachers report their class sizes are getting bigger and their workday has become longer but their pay has not increased. Many teachers feel overwhelmed and overworked. According to NCLB, schools failing to meet adequate yearly progress for more than four years have the option of replacing staff as one of their corrective actions.

The NCLB act does offer special education opportunities to continue with inclusion for students with disabilities (Sailor & Roger, 2005). NCLB states all children in public education are general education students. However, inclusion has often failed to get the support of general educators. Students with disabilities often slow down the teachers' rate of progression through the curriculum. Students with disabilities frequently fall behind their classmates, and teachers want help for them available elsewhere. Inclusion practices often include students with disabilities sitting in back of the classroom at separate tables receiving one-on-one help from teaching assistants(Sailor & Roger, 2005).

Inclusion Experiences and Teacher's Perceptions

The debate over inclusion versus full inclusion for students with disabilities continues. The attitudes of general educators play a major role in the success of students who are disabled and their educational programming. In the beginning stages of integration or inclusion, negative attitudes often existed among many general educators due their lack of knowledge and training in working with students with disabilities (Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Positive teacher attitudes were often also paired with concerns about the integration of students who were severely disabled. General education teachers were more in favor of inclusion when a student did not require additional responsibilities on the part of the teacher. When more was asked of the educator, resistance was more common. Positive attitudes that were promoted were often short lived.

According to Shapiro (1999), attitudes and beliefs from years ago continue to affect how society treats students with disabilities. For years, people with disabilities were often treated cruelly until the Americans with Disabilities Act came into affect. Persons with disabilities continue to be denied the same opportunities as a result of earlier attitudes and myths. The definition of attitude has three parts: behavior, emotional or affect, and a belief. A person can act positively or negatively based on their emotions. Isolating or separating students with disabilities from general education classes adds to making them appear different, leading to behaviors such as others shying away from them. Students with disabilities who are negatively looked upon can be affected by these attitudes. The self-esteem of individuals with disabilities could be affected as a result.

Negative attitudes can affect students' self-esteem. "A child who is the victim of prejudice experiences not only emotional pain and social and economic barriers, but also permanent damage to his or her confidence and sense of self-worth" (Brodkin, 1993, as cited in Shapiro, 1999, p. 75). Teachers need to promote acceptance and positive attitudes toward all students. The success of inclusion in schools depends greatly on how teachers view students with disabilities in their classrooms and promote a positive learning environment. Teachers set the stage to promote positive peer interaction and learning to take place. Educators prepare students to accept all individuals and respect their individual rights (Shapiro, 1999). Individuals' self worth can be influenced by the interactions they have with teachers, friends, and family. If an individual continues to have negative encounters, he/she will see herself or himself as abnormal or worthless.

Inclusion and Teacher Training

Teaching and working with students identified with EBD often can raise the anxiety of teachers more than any other issue in education. Students with EBD present teachers with the most disturbing behaviors which violate rules and social norms. The effects of students with EDB on inclusion should be considered (Landrum & Kauffman, 1992).

It is likely that education and training will help educators increase their positive attitudes toward students with disabilities. Personnel in inclusive schools need to provide guidance to teachers to promote their positive attitudes toward all students. Teachers need to be aware of the students' needs beyond just academic learning as they can make a difference in their students' lives by promoting positive attitudes (Gearheart, 1996). Teacher attitudes can have a large impact on the success of inclusive programs for

students with disabilities become (Larrivee & Cook, 1979; MacDonald & Hardman, 1989; Parrish, Nunn, & Hatstrup, 1982 as cited in Stoler, 1992).

Conclusion

Over the past two to three decades students with disabilities have been gradually included in the general education classrooms in our public schools. The last disability to be involved in inclusion programs were students with EBD (Hewitt, 2004).

The debate concerning inclusion continues, especially regarding students with EBD who pose more challenges for teachers in the classroom than other disabilities because of their severe behaviors and safety issues (Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker & Riedel, 1995, as cited in Chow et al., 1999). The attitudes of general educators play a major role on the success of students who are disabled and their educational programming.

Teachers are concerned about dealing with severe behaviors exhibited by students with EBD in the classroom and the lack of training in dealing with this disability and the behaviors they present (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). As more students with EBD are placed in general education classrooms, schools should offer training for teachers to deal effectively with behavior problems in the classroom (D'Alonzo, Giordano, & Van Leeuwen, 1997). Research indicates that teachers who have special education training feel more confident about teaching students with disabilities and are more positive about inclusion (Jackson, Ryndak, & Billingsley, 2000). Inclusion causes uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of classroom teachers without specific planning (Kockhlar, West, & Taymans, 2000). Many school districts do not provide training to their staff to help them understand and learn strategies to address the needs of students with EBD (Hewitt, 2004).

Based on IDEA and the NCLB federal mandate, teachers coming out of college are required to take courses dealing with students with disabilities. Veteran teachers often do not have the experience or training to deal with students with EBD. School districts need to provide training for teachers so they have the skills to teach students with EBD.

Chapter III: Methodology

This chapter consists of the research methodology, including how the sample was selected, a description of the sample, and the survey that was used to collect the data. Data collection and data analysis procedures also will be covered in Chapter III. The chapter will conclude with the methodological limitations of this study.

Subject Selection and Description

All certified teachers, grades kindergarten to 12th grade, currently employed with the Medford Area Public Schools District were given a survey. One hundred and sixty teachers were sent surveys. Special education and general education teachers were included in the sample. The selection process included using one rural school district in central Wisconsin and included the entire certified teaching staff in the Medford Area School District.

The Medford Area School District consists of two elementary schools, one middle school, a high school, an alternative high school and a virtual school. The district employs 160 teachers, 7 administrators and 37 instructional assistants. The enrollment for pre-kindergarten to 12th grade students in the Medford Area Public School District was 2,297 in year 2004. The students per teacher average is 15 and the state average is 14.

The population of Medford is approximately 4,200. Medford is located three hours west of Minneapolis and six hours north of Chicago. Medford is a rural community which has several large employers such as Tombstone Pizza, Hurd Window, Weathershield Windows, and Marathon Cheese. There is a large population of factory workers who work a variety of shifts. The researcher is employed by the same district and teaches students with EBD.

Instrumentation

The survey was designed by the researcher in May 2004. The items were based on the literature review and covered the research questions addressed in Chapter I. Since none of the existing instruments entirely met the purpose of this study, an original survey was constructed. The researcher used ideas from instruments that were already constructed. The survey is titled *Teachers' Perceptions Toward Including Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD) Students in Their Classrooms*. To increase the validation of the survey, the draft was submitted to six other professionals in the field prior to its use. The finalized survey for this study is located in Appendix B.

The survey asked four demographic questions such as the respondents' age, gender, years taught, and educational training. The instrument contained 26 questions regarding teachers' perceptions of having students with EBD in their classrooms. A Likert scale from 1 to 4 was used in the survey, with one representing strongly disagree to four representing strongly agree. The Likert scale questions pertained to different topics related to inclusion of students with EBD in their classrooms. The specific questions in the survey dealt with the teachers' knowledge of students with EBD, their attitudes and opinions toward having EBD students in their classes, their attitudes on the benefits of including students with EBD in their classrooms, and the type of support they received.

Data Collection Procedures

The surveys were distributed to each certified teacher by inter-school mail in the Medford Area Public School District. A return addressed envelope was provided for each respondent, along with a letter explaining the survey and consent to participate in the

study. The survey was completed by 105 certified teachers and all completed surveys were returned to the researcher. A deadline date for survey returns was included. After this date, the data collected was analyzed.

Data Analysis

Appropriate descriptive statistics were run on the data collected from the surveys. The results for each survey question were tabulated and displayed in tabular format. For the t-test and ANOVA comparison, a level of significance of .01 and .05 were adopted. Differences between general and special educators' responses were examined, along with the years of experience, age, gender, and educational training. Results were cross tabulated and compared. The data addressed both positive and negative teacher perceptions toward having students with EBD in their classrooms.

Limitations

A primary limitation of the study was only surveying teachers from one rural school district. Thus, caution should be applied when comparing the results with other schools. The findings of the study should only be considered for program improvements and developments with the EBD programs in the school district surveyed. Another limitation of the study is that the researcher was employed in the school system being surveyed. Her relationship with the respondents may have caused them not to answer openly and honestly.

Chapter IV: Results

The purpose of the study was to determine teachers' perceptions toward including students with EBD in their classrooms. Four research objectives were developed which addressed the impact of gender, years of experience, age, and formal training on the educators' attitudes. The results of the study will be used by the Medford Area School District, a medium-sized rural school district, to make decisions regarding support and/or in-service training for general education teachers, with the ultimate goal of providing improved services for students with EBD.

A survey was sent to 168 certified staff in the Medford Area School District. Descriptive data and percentiles were used to describe the attitudes and perceptions of the teachers on the survey items. A paired samples t-test and ANOVA analyses along with cross tabulation data were used with significance levels of .01 and .05. Out of 168 surveys, 105 were returned, yielding a return rate of 63%.

The survey asked the respondents to respond to four demographic questions. They were then asked to rate questions 5-31 on a Likert scale of 1 to 4. A rating of one was strongly disagree, two was agree, three was disagree, and four was strongly disagree.

Demographic Information

The participants of this study were 80 females and 25 males. Forty participants indicated having no training on working with students who have disabilities, while 25 participants reported they had attended in-service workshops. Forty participants indicated they had taken formal courses in special education. Table 1 displays the teaching experience of the participants; the largest group had been teaching for over 16 years. Table 2 shows the participants' ages.

Table 1

Participants' Years of Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percentage
1-5	17	16.1
6-10	17	16.1
11-15	25	23.8
16+	46	43.8

Table 2

Participants' Ages

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage
25-30	17	16.1
31-40	33	31.4
41-50	39	37.1
51+	16	15.2

Teacher's Perceptions

Tables 3 through 7 display the perceptions of the Medford Area Public School District's certified teachers toward including students with EBD in their general education classrooms. The participants were asked to respond to various items inquiring about their knowledge, skills, support and dispositions toward including students with EBD in their classrooms.

Table 3 shows the percentage of agreement on each survey item that was completed by the teachers. Sixteen out of 27 items on the survey had an agreement of 50% or higher from the respondents. The respondents were asked to rate whether they strongly agreed, agreed, disagreed, or strongly disagreed with items regarding teachers' perceptions toward having students with EBD in their classrooms. The results (found in Table 3) indicated that the teachers agreed strongly on several items. The item which received the strongest agreement from the respondents (item 14) stated, "Students with EBD can benefit from inclusion" (87.7%). In addition, 84.7% of the respondents indicated that they believe general education students benefit from EBD inclusion. Item 19, "I am willing to attend additional training to increase my knowledge about students with EBD," (84.8%) also received strong endorsement by the teachers.

The lowest percentage of agreement, by far, (2.9%) was on item 27. This item stated, "I expect most of the students with EBD to fail my class." The item with the next lowest agreement (13.4%) stated, "Working with students who have EBD requires too much planning."

Table 3

Percentage of Agreement by Item

Item	Agree	Strongly Agree	Cumulative Agreement
5: Adequate Instructional Background	27.6	6.7	34.3
6: EBD Should Not Be Included	13.3	1.9	15.2
7: Requires Too Much Planning	12.4	1.0	13.4
8: EBD Should Not Be Graded Same	33.3	7.6	40.9
9: Adequate Support	53.3	22.9	76.2
10: EBD Can Function in General Ed	69.5	13.3	82.8
11: Including EBD in Classroom Is Positive	54.3	6.7	61.0
12: I Am Able To Manage	61.0	8.6	69.6
13: Adequate Instructional Materials	35.2	10.5	45.7
14: EBD Students Can Benefit From Inclusion	66.7	21.0	87.7
15: Social Rejection of EBD	31.4	8.6	40.0
16: I Am Effective with EBD	69.5	14.3	83.8
17: EBD Usually Have Disruptive Behavior	29.5	2.9	32.4
18: Adequate Time to Prepare	28.6	00.0	28.6
19: Willing to Have Additional Training	66.7	18.1	84.8

Table 3 Continued

Item	Agree	Strongly Agree	Cumulative Agreement
20: Collaboration Takes Place	23.8	5.90	82.8
21: EBD Has Negative Impact	26.7	2.9	29.6
22: I Receive Support from EBD Parents	36.2	2.9	39.1
23: My Attitude Affects Teaching EBD	49.5	22.9	72.4
24: My Attitude Toward EBD Is Positive	64.8	17.1	81.9
25: EBD Produce Late or Incomplete Work	54.3	14.3	68.6
26: EBD Have Poor Attendance	23.8	1.9	25.7
27: I Expect EBD to Fail My Class	1.0	1.9	2.9
28: Support from School Psychologist	46.7	5.7	52.4
29: EBD Receive Adequate Counseling Services	49.5	4.8	54.3
30: General Education Students Benefit	67.6	17.1	84.7
From EBD Inclusion			
31: I Can Manage Withdrawn EBD Students	63.8	5.7	69.5

Note. Refer to Appendix A for specific wording of survey items.

Table 4 reports on the differences between the gender of the respondent on each survey item. A higher percentage of females responded due to the greater population of female teachers in the Medford Area School District. The data also indicated that the

majority of the items received similar ratings from both the male and female respondents. The overall results showed that both genders had primarily positive responses to students with EBD. However, on three items, there was a significant difference at the .05 level, and on one item, there was a significant difference at the .01 level. “Students with disruptive behavior are usually those who have been diagnosed with EBD” (item 17) was significant at a level of .01. This result indicates the males in the study were more likely to disagree with this item than the females.

There also was a significant difference between males and females on item 5: “I have the instructional background to teach students with EBD.” The males had a lower mean, indicating they were more likely to disagree with this statement. A significant difference based on gender also occurred on was item 19. Responses to this item indicated that the females were significantly more likely to attend additional training to increase their knowledge about students with EBD. Item 26 was the last item that produced a significant difference at the .05 level. It stated “Students with EBD have poor attendance in my classroom.” The female respondents were more likely to disagree more with this item than the males.

Table 4

Mean Differences by Gender

Questions	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>			<i>t</i> values
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
5	1.76	0.879	25	2.2	0.92	80	-2.109*
6	2.12	0.833	25	1.82	0.643	77	1.891
7	2.04	0.611	25	2	0.538	77	0.312
8	2.24	0.831	25	2.47	0.739	76	-1.33
9	2.84	0.624	25	3.03	0.838	75	-1.022
10	2.88	0.726	25	2.99	0.546	78	-0.679
11	2.68	0.69	25	2.75	0.579	71	-0.469
12	2.84	0.554	25	2.8	0.641	74	0.298
13	2.32	0.945	25	2.5	0.825	76	-0.913
14	3.08	0.64	25	3.16	0.494	75	-0.649
15	2.4	0.816	25	2.42	0.771	76	-0.117
16	2.96	0.676	25	3.05	0.462	75	-0.642
17	2	0.5	25	2.37	0.69	76	-2.889**
18	2.04	0.706	23	2.07	0.759	75	-0.13
19	2.72	0.737	25	3.1	0.616	78	-2.575*
20	3	0.764	25	3.09	0.672	77	-0.568
21	2.24	0.723	25	2.26	0.65	72	1.891
22	2.25	0.737	24	2.41	0.714	69	-0.913
23	2.92	0.572	25	2.99	0.836	74	-0.369

Table 4 Continued

Questions	Male			Female			<i>t</i> values
	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	
24	2.92	0.493	25	3.08	0.587	75	-1.225
25	2.96	0.624	24	2.85	0.725	72	0.672
26	2.42	0.584	24	2.03	0.731	72	2.364*
27	1.46	0.588	24	1.57	0.64	75	-0.78
28	2.5	0.722	24	2.6	0.73	70	-0.58
29	2.68	0.646	22	2.69	0.696	61	-0.039
30	3.08	0.702	25	3.03	0.537	77	0.404
31	2.75	0.109	24	2.79	0.069	75	-0.268

Note. Refer to Appendix A for survey questions. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 5 displays results relating to whether the years teachers have taught impacts their attitudes toward students with EBD. This data indicated that the years taught did not impact the teachers' attitudes toward students with EBD on the majority of aspects. Item 29, which stated that students with EBD receive adequate counseling services at school, was the only item for which a significant difference based on years taught was found. The 1-5 year group agreed most with this statement with a mean rating of 3.07. The mean agreement rating for 16+ year group was 2.72, followed by the 11-15 year group (2.52), and the 6-10 year category disagreed most with a mean of 2.42.

Table 5

Mean Differences by Years Taught

Items	<u>1-5</u>			<u>6-10</u>			<u>11-15</u>			<u>16+</u>			Sig.
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	
5	2.12	0.781	17	2.29	1.16	17	2.12	0.927	25	2	0.894	46	0.735
6	1.56	0.629	16	1.94	0.68	16	1.92	0.759	25	1.98	0.69	45	0.232
7	1.88	0.485	17	1.94	0.556	17	1.96	0.464	24	2.11	0.618	44	0.41
8	2.5	0.73	16	2.35	0.702	17	2.33	0.868	24	2.45	0.761	44	0.877
9	3.13	0.5	16	3.06	0.748	17	2.83	0.963	24	2.98	0.801	43	0.681
10	3.06	0.443	16	3.12	0.6	17	2.88	0.726	25	2.91	0.557	45	0.492
11	2.85	0.376	13	2.8	0.676	15	2.88	0.612	24	2.59	0.622	44	0.226
12	2.71	0.611	14	2.82	0.728	17	2.96	0.464	24	2.75	0.651	44	0.549
13	2.47	0.624	17	2.56	0.964	16	2.71	0.806	24	2.27	0.899	44	0.226
14	3.31	0.479	16	3.18	0.636	17	3.13	0.448	24	3.07	0.552	43	0.476
15	2.56	0.727	16	2.71	0.588	17	2.25	0.737	24	2.34	0.861	44	0.22
16	3	0.354	17	3	0.516	16	3.04	0.55	24	3.05	0.575	43	0.984
17	2.47	0.514	17	2.13	0.719	16	2.17	0.565	24	2.32	0.74	44	0.38
18	2.06	0.68	16	2.35	0.786	17	2	0.756	22	1.98	0.74	43	0.349
19	3.29	0.588	17	3.12	0.6	17	3.04	0.69	24	2.84	0.673	45	0.091
20	3.27	0.594	15	3	0.791	17	2.92	0.812	25	3.11	0.611	45	0.444
21	2.13	0.516	15	2.19	0.544	16	2.21	0.588	24	2.36	0.791	42	0.628
22	2.5	0.519	14	2.24	0.664	17	2.43	0.788	23	2.33	0.772	39	0.726

Table 5 Continued

Items	<u>1-5</u>			<u>6-10</u>			<u>11-15</u>			<u>16+</u>			Sig.
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	
23	2.75	0.577	16	3.06	0.929	16	3.04	0.859	24	2.98	0.74	43	0.638
24	3	0.365	16	3.06	0.659	17	3.21	0.588	24	2.95	0.575	43	0.364
25	2.57	0.646	14	3.25	0.447	16	2.78	0.85	23	2.88	0.662	43	0.051
26	1.88	0.5	16	2.19	0.655	16	1.92	0.654	24	2.33	0.797	40	0.062
27	1.5	0.516	16	1.71	0.985	17	1.39	0.499	23	1.58	0.545	43	0.441
28	2.86	0.535	14	2.53	0.717	17	2.52	0.79	23	2.53	0.751	40	0.482
29	3.07	0.475	14	2.42	0.793	12	2.52	0.75	21	2.72	0.615	36	.050*
30	3.18	0.393	17	3.18	0.728	17	3.08	0.572	25	2.91	0.57	43	0.234
31	2.73	0.458	15	2.82	0.636	17	2.87	0.548	23	2.73	0.624	44	0.783

Note. Refer to Appendix A for survey questions. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Table 6 represents the differences between the teachers' age groups. The age groups are divided into four categories: 25 to 30, 31 to 40, 41 to 50, and ages 51 and higher. Differences significant at the .05 level were found on two items (6 and 29), and differences at the .01 level were found on two items (21 and 26).

Item 6 stated, "Students with EBD should not be included in general education classes." The 25 to 30 year age group had the lowest mean on this item, indicating they disagreed with the statement more than the other age groups in the survey. The 51+ group indicated the strongest agreement with item 6. The item (29) assessing whether students with EBD receive adequate counseling services was significant for both age and years of service, as previously discussed. This result is understandable since years of service and

age included many of the participants in the same groups for both analyses. Teachers in the 31-40 age group (\bar{x} =2.44) and the 51+ age group (\bar{x} =2.46) disagreed most with this item. The 25 to 30 age group had the highest agreement on this item.

Item 21 stated “Students with EBD have a negative impact upon the learning environment in my classroom.” Overall, the results showed that younger teachers disagreed more with this statement than the older teachers. The mean ratings rose consistently as each age group increased, and means ranged from 2.06 (25-30 years) to 2.67 (51+ years). Item 26, which stated that EBD students have poorer attendance, found the most agreement with the 51+ group (\bar{x} =2.64), followed by the 41-50 group (\bar{x} =2.17). The highest disagreement was with the 31-40 group, with a mean of 1.87, followed by the 25-30 group at 2.06.

Table 6

Mean Differences by Age

Questions	<u>25-30</u>			<u>31-40</u>			<u>41-50</u>			<u>51+</u>			Sig.
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	
5	2.06	0.827	17	2.24	1.001	33	2.18	0.914	39	1.63	0.806	16	0.149
6	1.47	0.514	17	1.94	0.716	32	1.92	0.722	37	2.19	0.655	16	.025*
7	1.82	0.393	17	2.06	0.435	32	2.11	0.727	38	1.87	0.352	15	0.228
8	2.31	0.704	16	2.31	0.821	32	2.5	0.688	38	2.53	0.915	15	0.646
9	3.06	0.25	16	3.06	0.84	32	2.84	0.928	37	3.07	0.704	15	0.601
10	3.12	0.485	17	2.94	0.704	33	2.97	0.552	37	2.81	0.544	16	0.528
11	2.93	0.267	14	2.87	0.562	31	2.64	0.639	36	2.47	0.743	15	0.076
12	2.93	0.458	15	2.94	0.564	32	2.76	0.641	37	2.53	0.743	15	0.154

Table 6 Continued

Questions	25-30			31-40			41-50			51+			Sig.
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	
13	2.53	0.514	17	2.59	0.916	32	2.43	0.867	37	2.33	1.047	15	0.911
14	3.25	0.447	16	3.16	0.448	32	3.08	0.595	37	3.13	0.64	15	0.766
15	2.5	0.632	16	2.22	0.706	32	2.53	0.862	38	2.47	0.834	15	0.385
16	3	0.354	17	3.06	0.359	31	3	0.615	38	3.07	0.73	14	0.941
17	2.35	0.493	17	2.34	0.787	32	2.24	0.641	37	2.13	0.64	15	0.726
18	2.25	0.638	16	2.13	0.681	30	2.08	0.759	37	1.67	0.816	15	0.134
19	3.21	0.6	17	3.06	0.716	32	2.97	0.537	39	2.38	0.915	15	0.698
20	3.33	0.488	15	3.03	0.728	33	3.03	0.707	39	3	0.756	15	0.466
21	2.06	0.443	16	2.03	0.556	30	2.36	0.683	36	2.67	0.816	15	.008**
22	2.47	0.516	15	2.41	0.628	29	2.41	0.783	34	2.07	0.884	15	0.372
23	2.81	0.655	16	3	0.842	32	2.92	0.841	36	3.2	0.561	15	0.539
24	3.06	0.443	16	3.16	0.583	31	3.03	0.592	38	2.8	0.561	15	0.247
25	2.69	0.704	16	2.9	0.772	29	2.83	0.655	36	3.13	0.64	15	0.345
26	2.06	0.443	16	1.87	0.67	31	2.17	0.785	35	2.64	0.633	14	.007**
27	1.5	0.516	16	1.48	0.811	31	1.62	0.545	37	1.53	0.516	15	0.822
28	2.8	0.561	15	2.52	0.738	29	2.57	0.778	35	2.47	0.743	15	0.587
29	3	0.408	13	2.44	0.751	27	2.87	0.629	30	2.46	0.66	13	.018*
30	3.29	0.47	17	3	0.433	33	3.05	0.613	38	2.79	0.802	14	0.103
31	2.73	0.458	15	2.87	0.499	31	2.84	0.594	38	2.47	0.743	15	0.129

Note. Refer to Appendix A for survey questions. *p<.05. **p<.01.

Participants were also compared by the type of training they have had on working with students who have EBD. Results are shown in Table 7. Three categories were used on the survey: formal college courses, in-service training, and no training. There were two items with differences significant at the .05 level (13 and 14), and two that were significant at the .01 level (5 and 6).

On item 13, teachers who had formal college courses on working with students with EBD agreed the most with having adequate instructional materials for teaching students with EBD. The teachers who did not have any training with students with EBD disagreed the most with having adequate instructional materials and the teachers who had in-service training were in between the two groups. Item 14 was also significant at the .05 level and stated, "In my opinion, students with EBD benefit from being included in my classroom." The data indicated that the three groups all agreed or came very closely to agreeing (\bar{x} =2.96 to 3.31) with the statement that students with EBD would benefit inclusion within their general education classrooms. The college courses group yielded the highest mean for this item, followed by those with no training, and, finally, those with in-service training.

Item 5 asked whether teachers thought they had an adequate background to teach students with EBD. Not surprisingly, those with no training felt the least prepared, followed by those who had in-service training. Those who had taken college courses in this area felt the most prepared. Item 6 stated that students with EBD should not be included in general education classes. The group with no training agreed the most with a 2.15 mean rating, followed by those who had in-service training (\bar{x} =1.96). The group with college courses disagreed the most with a mean rating of 1.58.

Table 7

Mean Differences by Training

Items	<u>None</u>			<u>In-service</u>			<u>Courses</u>			Sig.
	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	Mean	SD	n	
5	1.48	.716	40	2.00	.577	25	2.78	.832	40	.000
6	2.15	.745	39	1.96	.676	25	1.58	.552	38	.001
7	2.11	.516	37	2.00	.408	25	1.93	.656	40	.352
8	2.46	.836	37	2.28	.737	25	2.46	.720	39	.597
9	2.91	.742	35	3.28	.458	25	2.38	.949	40	.085
10	2.79	.695	39	3.00	.500	25	3.10	.502	39	.066
11	2.64	.593	36	2.67	.637	24	2.86	.593	36	.254
12	2.69	.668	36	2.80	.500	25	2.92	.632	38	.290
13	2.22	.854	37	2.32	.852	25	2.77	.777	39	.011
14	3.08	.500	36	2.96	.455	25	3.31	.569	39	.027
15	2.39	.766	36	2.36	.860	25	2.48	.751	40	.820
16	3.00	.577	37	2.92	.408	24	3.13	.522	39	.270
17	2.16	.553	37	2.40	.764	25	2.31	.694	39	.364
18	2.00	.804	35	2.20	.577	25	2.03	.788	38	.556
19	2.97	.788	38	2.92	.759	25	3.10	.441	40	.525
20	3.08	.749	38	3.16	.473	25	3.00	.761	39	.666
21	2.31	.624	36	2.12	.726	25	2.31	.668	36	.491
22	2.33	.802	30	2.44	.583	25	2.34	.745	38	.835
23	2.89	.832	35	2.84	.624	25	3.13	.801	39	.256
24	2.92	.604	36	2.96	.539	25	3.21	.522	39	.062
25	2.88	.686	34	2.80	.645	25	2.92	.759	37	.807
26	2.15	.610	34	1.88	.666	25	2.27	.804	37	.105
27	1.68	.684	34	1.64	.700	25	1.38	.490	40	.081
28	2.50	.803	32	2.64	.638	25	2.59	.725	37	.756
29	2.80	.645	25	2.78	.600	23	2.54	.741	35	.259
30	3.03	.545	38	2.88	.526	25	3.15	.630	39	.180
31	2.69	.538	35	2.76	.436	25	2.87	.656	39	.387

Note. Refer to Appendix A for survey questions. *p<.05. **p<.01.

Summary

Table 3 displayed the percentage of agreement by the respondents on each survey item. The data reported that 16 out of 27 items on the survey had an agreement ratio of 50% or higher from the respondents. The item with the highest percentage of agreement was the item that asked whether the respondents agreed that students with EBD can benefit from inclusion. The item receiving the lowest agreement dealt with the expectation for students with EBD to fail their classes.

Following is a summary of the results in terms of the research objectives outlined in Chapter I.

1. Is there a difference in perceptions toward including students with EBD according to the gender of the teacher?

Both genders had primarily positive responses to students with EBD. Their responses differed significantly at the .05 level for three items. Results indicated that males felt less confident that their instructional background prepared them to teach students with EBD. Females were more willing to attend additional training to increase their knowledge about students with EBD. Finally, males agreed more strongly that students with EBD have poor attendance in their classrooms.

2. Do years of teaching experience impact teacher's attitudes toward the inclusion of students with EBD?

A significant difference based on years of teaching was only found on the perception of whether students with EBD received adequate counseling services. Teachers who had 6-10 years of teaching experience disagreed the most with the statement that students with EBD receive adequate counseling services in their school.

The 1-5 year group was the only group whose mean rating was in the “agree” category at 3.07. This data indicated that the years taught did not significantly impact the teachers’ attitudes toward students with EBD being included in their general education classes.

3. Does the age of teachers impact their attitudes toward including students with EBD in their classrooms?

Four items were statistically significant on the basis of age. As with the previous objective, a significant difference was found for the item regarding adequate counseling services for students with EBD. Younger teachers were more satisfied with the counseling services provided to students with EBD. Older teachers were more likely to agree that students with EBD should not be included in general education classes, they have poor attendance, and they have a negative impact on the classroom. However, their responses still indicated that they disagreed with these statements. On the statistically significant items, the responses of the younger teachers indicated that they were more accepting and positive toward students with EBD.

4. Do teachers who have educational training in dealing with students with EBD have more positive attitudes toward inclusion than teachers without such training?

As expected, teachers who had formal college courses in this area were more likely to agree they had adequate instructional materials for teaching students with EBD. Those with the least amount of training were less likely to agree with this item. Interestingly, those with more education agreed more strongly that students with EBD should be in general education classes while those with less education or training were more likely to agree.

Chapter V: Discussion

This chapter will review the purpose, methodological procedures, and findings of the study. The limitations and recommendations for future research will also be discussed.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine teacher perceptions toward including students with EBD in their classrooms. The demographic data collected was used to determine if years of experience, age, gender, and educational training had any impact on teachers' attitudes. The results of the study will be used by the Medford Area School District, a medium-sized rural school district, to make decisions regarding support and/or in-service needs for general education teachers, with the ultimate goal of providing improved services for students.

Methodological Procedures

All certified teachers, kindergarten to 12th grade, currently employed with the Medford Area Public Schools District were given a survey to complete. One hundred and sixty teachers were sent surveys. The surveys were sent out through inter-school mail to each respondent. A letter was included with the survey to explain the purpose of the study and that their participation was voluntary along with giving consent. The return rate was 63%. Descriptive statistics including frequency counts and percentages along with t-values, analysis of the variance techniques, and cross tabulations were used to analyze the data.

Major Findings

Participants were asked to respond to four demographic questions and 27 items in which they indicated their level of agreement on opinion statements. A scale from 1 to 4 was used on the survey. A rating of one was strongly disagree to a rating of four being strongly agree. The survey dealt with teachers' perceptions toward including students with EBD in their classrooms. Four research objectives were examined in the study.

Respondents were asked a variety of questions pertaining to their knowledge, skills, and dispositions. The percentage of agreement on each survey item was examined. The results of the survey revealed that agreements of at least 50% or higher on 16 of 27 items. In addition, the data showed that 84.7% of the respondents agreed that students without disabilities can benefit from being in inclusive classrooms with students who have been diagnosed as EBD. The survey item, "I expect most of the students with EBD to fail my class," had the lowest percentage of agreement.

The results are summarized based on the four research objectives. The first area compared the perceptions of teachers toward students with EBD based on their gender. The results indicated that there was a significant difference between males and females on their willingness to attend additional training to increase their knowledge about students with EBD. Female teachers were more in agreement that they would be willing to attend further training. In addition, males agreed more strongly that students with EBD have poor attendance in their classrooms. The overall data showed that a majority of males and females had positive responses to students with EBD.

The next research objective examined if the years of teaching experience impacted teachers' attitudes toward inclusion of students with EBD. The data suggested

that on 26 out of 27 survey items, the difference between years of experience was only significant for the one item assessing the adequacy of counseling services provided to students with EBD. Teachers who had 6 to 10 years of teaching experience were more likely to disagree the most that students with EBD received adequate counseling services in the Medford Area School District. This result was followed closely by teachers with 11-15 years of experience, whereas the newest teachers were more likely to agree that students receive adequate counseling services.

On the third objective, the age of teachers was cross tabulated to determine if age impacts teachers' attitudes toward students with EBD. A significant difference was shown in the results concerning if students with EBD should be included in general classrooms. Teachers in the age group of 25-30 strongly disagreed with a statement indicating that students with EBD should not be included in their classrooms while teachers in the 51+ age group were slightly more likely to agree; although both groups' responses still fell in the strongly disagree/disagree range, the difference was statistically significant. In addition, while the responses of the teachers in the 25-30 year old group indicated that they were more likely to agree that students with EBD received adequate counseling services, the average responses of the other groups were in the "disagree" category, with the 31-40 year old category having the lowest mean, followed very closely by the 51+ group.

The last objective examined if teachers who had educational training with students with EBD had a more positive attitude than teachers who did not have training. Teachers with no training, those who had attended in-service workshops, and those who took formal college courses were examined. Results indicated that teachers with more

training were more receptive toward having students with EBD being included in their classrooms. As expected, those with more training believed that they had a more adequate instructional background and materials; however, the means for all groups were in the disagree category. Overall, the study revealed that majority of the Medford Area School District's teachers had positive attitudes toward having students with EBD in their classrooms, but even those with training did not feel very prepared to teach them adequately.

Critical Analysis

As stated in the literature review in Chapter II, students with EBD have posed many challenges for educators in general education classrooms. Before the 1970s students with EBD were educated in separate classrooms and general educators had little to do with these students (Cheney & Muscott, 1996). In 1975, PL 94-142 or the Education of All Handicapped Children's Act was signed into law. IDEA of 1990 continued to strengthen inclusive programs for students with disabilities. All of this legislation caused general educators' involvement with students with EBD in their classrooms to increase.

The literature review from previous studies (Jobe et al., 1996) indicated that teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities was more negative than in the current study completed by the Medford Area School District's teachers. Several of the studies cited in Chapter II took place many years ago, which may indicate that teachers' attitudes have improved over the years toward inclusion of students with disabilities.

Past research completed in a school district in Colorado (Pearman et al., 1992) indicated that male teachers had significantly more negative attitudes than females toward inclusion. In the current study, results indicate the female respondents were more willing to take additional training to gain more knowledge concerning students with EBD than the males but the overall data from this study shows that majority of the males and female teachers had positive attitudes toward students with EBD.

Another study on teacher attitudes toward students with disabilities was conducted by Williams and Algozzine (1977, as cited in Algozzine, 1990). The results of this survey showed that teachers were more willing and better trained to deal with students who had physical handicaps and LDs than emotional disturbances. Students with an emotional disturbance were the least favored disability group that teachers had mainstreamed in their classrooms. In the current study, most teachers agreed that students with EBD would benefit from being included in their classrooms. In addition, most respondents indicated they believed general education students benefit from EBD inclusion. The data indicated that the three training groups all agreed or came very closely to agreeing that students with EBD would benefit from inclusion in their general education classrooms. The mean for the college courses group was the highest, followed by those with no training, and, finally, those with in-service training. Therefore, results indicate that teachers with training indicated a more positive attitude toward students with EBD than in the previous studies cited.

The 1992 Stoler study indicated that the more special education courses a teacher completed, the more positive their attitudes were on inclusion. The current study supports the same findings. Teachers who had taken college courses had a higher mean score than

the teachers who only had workshops or no training at all. Ochoa (2003) stated that many general education teachers lack the necessary preparation to successfully work with students with EBD. In this study, only 40 certified teachers had completed formal training out of the 105 respondents, and 40 teachers had no training at all. The remaining 25 had attended a workshop or in-service training for students with EBD.

The results from this study showed that the teachers in the age group of 25 to 30 years were more accepting and positive toward students with EBD being included in their classrooms than the older teachers. This may be due to the public becoming more aware of people with disabilities and their characteristics. This result could also be due to recent changes in pre-service teacher training.

The results from this study will be presented to the Medford School District and may be used for future staff development training. Based on the data collected, it seems that teacher attitudes have improved over the years. The results indicated that 81.9% of the teachers believed that their attitudes toward students with EBD were positive.

Recommendations

At least 40% of the teachers in the Medford Area School District have never had training in dealing with students with EBD. The district may want to include staff training on students with disabilities during one of their staff in-service days. The survey results indicated that 84.8% of the respondents are willing to have additional training pertaining to students with EBD, suggesting that such an in-service would be well-attended.

Also, the district may want to look at the other services the school offers to the students with EBD such as the counseling services. It appears that not all teachers agreed

that students with EBD receive adequate counseling services. In addition, another area to examine would be to increase planning time between general and special education teachers.

In the future, a follow-up study could be conducted after staff in-servicing occurs in the Medford School District to determine if the training had a positive impact on teachers' attitudes. A statewide study could also be conducted to see if there is a difference in teachers' attitudes from rural and urban schools or whether there is a difference in teachers' attitudes from district to district within the state.

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Appendix A: Survey Instrument

Teacher's Perceptions Toward Including Emotional Behavioral Disability (EBD) Students in their Classrooms.

Please check or fill in the answer that best applies to you.

Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Teacher Position: General Education _____ Special Education _____

Age: 25-30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41-50 ___ 51- 60 ___ +61 ___

1. What level of students do you teach?

- a. ___ Pre-K- K
- b. ___ Elementary 1-4
- c. ___ Middle School 5-8
- d. ___ High School 9-12

2. How many years have you taught school?

- a. ___ 1-5 years
- b. ___ 6-10 years
- c. ___ 11-15 years
- d. ___ + 16

3. How much formal training have you had related to teaching students with EBD?

- a. ___ None
- b. ___ An in-service workshop as a part of a broader course dealing with students of disabilities.
- c. ___ 1-4 formal courses dealing with educating students with EBD
- d. ___ 5 or more formal courses dealing with educating students with EBD.

4. What percentage of students that you teach each year are typically students diagnosed as EBD?

- e. ___ None
 - f. ___ 4%
 - g. ___ 5-10%
 - h. ___ More than 10%
-

Please indicate your level of agreement on the following statements of opinion by using the scale:

1= strongly disagree 2= disagree 3= agree 4= strongly agree

4. I have the instructional background to teach students with EBD.
1 2 3 4
5. Students with EBD should not be included in regular classrooms.
1 2 3 4
7. Having students with EBD in my classroom requires too much extra planning.
1 2 3 4
8. Students with EBD should not be graded the same as their peers.
1 2 3 4
9. I believe I have adequate support from the EBD teacher.
1 2 3 4
10. Students with EBD can function successfully within the regular classroom.
1 2 3 4
11. In my opinion, having students with EBD in my classroom is a positive thing.
1 2 3 4
12. I believe that I am able to manage the behavior of students with EBD in my classroom who have acting out behavior types.
1 2 3 4
13. I believe I have adequate instructional materials for teaching students with EBD.
1 2 3 4
14. In my opinion, students with EBD benefit from being included in my classroom.
1 2 3 4
15. Other classmates socially reject students with EBD.
1 2 3 4
16. I can be effective with students with EBD in my classroom.
1 2 3 4
17. Students with disruptive behavior are usually those who have been diagnosed with EBD.
1 2 3 4
18. I have adequate time to prepare for students with EBD placed in my room.
1 2 3 4

19. I am willing to attend additional training to increase my knowledge about students with EBD.

1 2 3 4

20. Collaboration generally takes place between regular and special education teachers in my school.

1 2 3 4

21. Students with EBD have a negative impact upon the learning environment in my classroom.

1 2 3 4

22. I receive family support from the parents of my students with EBD.

1 2 3 4

23. I believe my attitude toward students with EBD impacts my teaching.

1 2 3 4

24. I have a positive attitude toward having students with EBD in my classroom.

1 2 3 4

25. Students with EBD often produce late or incomplete assignments.

1 2 3 4

26. Students with EBD have poor attendance in my classroom.

1 2 3 4

27. I expect most of the students with EBD to fail my class.

1 2 3 4

28. I receive adequate consultative support from the school psychologist in dealing with students diagnosed as EBD.

1 2 3 4

29. Students with EBD in my classroom receive adequate counseling services at my school.

1 2 3 4

30. Students without a disability can benefit from being in inclusive classrooms with students who have been diagnosed as EBD.

1 2 3 4

31. I believe I am able to manage the behavior of students with EBD in my classroom who exhibit withdrawn behavior.

1 2 3 4