General Education And Learning Disabled High School Student Ratings Of Teacher Effectiveness

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GENERAL EDUCATION AND LEARNING DISABLED HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT RATINGS OF TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

BY

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Of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Education
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2001
To my family for their love and support.
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Background

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was reauthorized in 1997 and is now referred to as IDEA '97. The revisions are intended to assist the 5.8 million disabled children in America's public schools, of which, the number of disabled students included in regular education classes has increased 20% between the 1985-1986 and 1995-1996 academic years (USDOE, 1999a). That figure means that increasingly, learning disabled (LD) students are being taught by general education (GE) teachers who did not originally choose to work with learning disabled students, and more importantly, did not receive formal training on how to meet the needs of learning disabled students.

The lack of formalized training may be more detrimental to students as they progress in grades. At the secondary level, teachers expressed a strong belief that expectations and evaluative criteria should be the same for students with LD as for GE students (Schumm, Vaughn, Haager, McDowell, Rothlein & Saumell, 1995). Their beliefs may be contrary to the individualized accommodations and adaptations that are outlined in an LD student's Individualized Education Program (IEP).

High School teachers, unlike most elementary school teachers, are departmentalized. They are focused on the curriculum and content within their chosen discipline. Students are expected to master the objectives of each course as a prerequisite
to continued study within that discipline. Schumm et al. (1995), in their study of 12 GE teachers perceived by others as effective with LD students, found that GE secondary teachers do not feel they are aware of which students understood a concept or lesson. Not surprisingly, they also noted that there was little evidence of adjustment by the teachers in methods, materials, or student assessment. If GE secondary teachers lack the ability to assess LD students' level of understanding and do not adjust instruction or assessment, it is unclear how they would determine whether or not their efforts are effective for LD students.

Prior to 1997, the law did not specifically address general curriculum involvement of disabled students. IDEA '97 shifts the focus to improved teaching and learning (USDOE, 1999b). LD student needs are addressed in their Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP identifies specific accommodations and modifications that must be provided for a LD student. It is developed by a team of educators who are familiar with the student, including the student’s GE teacher. The challenge presented by IDEA '97 is to find a way for secondary level GE teachers to overcome their lack of formalized training and focus on content so they can effectively participate on an IEP team by identifying and implementing appropriate modifications.

At the secondary level it is imperative to provide instruction in the content areas in such a manner that the unique learning needs of the LD student are accommodated. This requires knowledge of both content and instruction. Lipsky and Gartner (1998) state:

Special education teachers often report their lack of knowledge about the general education curriculum, whereas general education teachers often report their lack
of knowledge about individualizing instruction. However, after a year of collaboration, both report greater knowledge and comfort in these areas. They use many of the same instructional strategies in the inclusive education classroom that are effective for students in general classrooms (p 81).

Developing varied instructional and assessment strategies is clearly beneficial to both LD and GE teachers because improvement in instructional strategies benefits all students.

At the White House IDEA ’97 Signing Ceremony, Joshua Bailey, a class of 1999 student at Columbia Central High School in Tennessee, spoke on behalf of all students with disabilities. He spoke of his teachers’ lack of understanding of LD students’ abilities and shared his experience with school personnel not having high expectations for LD students. He also spoke of his realization that “teachers and others are willing to learn. They have good hearts and they want to help—they just need to know how” (Bailey, 1997). To assist his teachers, he held an inservice for GE teachers. He was able to share his perceptions of effective teaching at that inservice.

Purpose of the Study

Joshua Bailey received instruction in classes where LD students and GE students were included in the same classes. Were his perceptions of effective teaching the same as those held by his non-disabled peers? Were their perceptions of the academic and social growth they made as a result of their teachers’ efforts similar? Did they have the same perceptions of their course assignments and assessments? A comparison of their perceptions could provide valuable feedback to both teachers and administrators.

This study examines feedback provided by LD and GE students through student ratings of instruction. A comparison of LD and GE student ratings of instruction could
determine if both LD and GE students in an inclusion environment feel socially accepted, are benefiting from differentiated instruction and are able to establish a positive relationship with their teachers. Differences in LD and GE student perceptions would highlight social or academic needs by LD or GE students that are not being met in the inclusive environment. This feedback could provide a clearer understanding of inclusion classes and be utilized by GE teachers to guide their efforts to meet LD and GE students’ needs. In addition, the feedback could also provide administrators with specific skills to target when planning staff development for GE teachers. If utilized for these purposes, this information could lead to improved instruction for LD and GE students and allow teachers to focus on how LD students receive instruction in addition to where they receive instruction.

Statement of the Problem

Reform efforts to improve instruction and provide positive learning outcomes for LD students included in GE classes will ultimately depend on the interaction between the student and the teacher, the classroom environment, and teachers’ beliefs. Differentiated instruction and assessment is outlined within a student’s IEP, but there is little evidence that it is actually occurring at the secondary level. According to the findings of Schumm et al., (1995):

It is imperative to familiarize teachers with instructional activities that promote student engagement and concept understanding for all students within the content area curriculum. If the interventions we develop for general education teachers’ use with students with learning disabilities require preplanning, and the
interventions cannot be used for the class as a whole, they are unlikely to be successful (p. 349).

Student ratings of instruction could result in assisting educators with the identification of interventions that are effective for both LD and GE students. This feedback could provide GE teachers with strategies and accommodations that they could implement within their classroom or suggest when participating in the development of an IEP as part of the IEP team, and might ultimately improve the interaction between the teacher and LD and GE students.

Although the use of student ratings of instruction is not prevalent in secondary schools, studies by Martin (1988) and Daly (1990) indicate that secondary students would be capable evaluators of instruction. Student ratings of instruction include student ratings of the teacher, the course, and their perceptions of the social and academic progress they made as a result of the course. To identify effective instructional practices that enhance student learning and to determine if the goals of IDEA '97 are being met, teachers could utilize data from the student ratings of instruction.

*The research question.*

Are there differences in perceptions of teacher effectiveness between learning disabled and general education high school students?

*Subsidiary questions.*

1. Are there significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness?
2. Are there significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of their level of academic and social progress?

3. Are there significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perception of course requirements?

Hypotheses.

1. No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

2. No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of level of academic and social progress.

3. No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of course requirements.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the data relevant to the research questions. The sample size and conclusions are limited to the GE and LD students included in the ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade GE English classes at one New Jersey high school. N.J.A.C. 6A:14-4.3 requires a full continuum of alternative placements be available to meet the needs of LD students. It can be assumed that the LD students included in this study have mild learning disabilities because their academic needs were met within a GE class without having to modify the GE curriculum. The results therefore, cannot be generalized to all LD students in the school.
Definition of Terms

District Factor Group (DFG): The DFG reflects the socioeconomic status of the residents in each school district in New Jersey. Factors in the DFG include income, educational attainment of adults, poverty level and occupations. The range for DFG is from A, the lowest socioeconomic district, to J, the highest socioeconomic district.

General Education (GE) Student: General education students in this study are students in grades 9 through 12 who do not have a learning disability and are not eligible for special education and related services according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 or 3.6.

IDEA: The Instructional Development and Effectiveness Assessment is a student rating of instruction system developed by the Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development at Kansas State University.

IDEA '97: The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act reauthorized in 1997.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): An individualized written plan for students with learning disabilities. The plan includes performance levels and measurable annual goals. Individual instructional activities, modifications and the related services necessary to achieve the learning goals are also included (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3).

IEP Team: “The group of individuals who are responsible for the development, review and revision of, the student’s individualized educational program” (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3).

Learning Disabled (LD) Student: Learning disabled students in this study are students in grades 9 through 12 who have been determined to be eligible for special
education and related services according to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-3.5 or 3.6 and are required to meet the GE curriculum objectives as indicated in their IEP.

**Special Education:** “Specially designed instruction to meet the educational needs of students with disabilities including, but not limited to, subject matter instruction, physical education and vocational training” (N.J.A.C. 6A:14-1.3).

**Organization of the Study**

The framework of this study will consist of five chapters. Chapter I is an introduction to the inclusion of LD students in GE classes and student ratings of instruction, followed by details of the research problem. Chapter II is a review of the literature related to the study. The laws that have mandated educating LD students in the least restrictive environment, and the resulting changes for GE teachers, is essential as a basis for understanding the challenges faced by LD and GE students in an inclusive environment. Chapter III details the methods used for collecting and analyzing the data. Chapter IV is a presentation of the research findings. Chapter V provides a discussion of the findings and includes conclusions drawn from the findings based on the literature review. The study concludes with recommendations for further research.
Chapter II

Review of the Literature

The Law

In 1975, Public Law 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was signed into law. This law was designed to ensure that all handicapped children receive a free and appropriate education and to the maximum extent appropriate be educated with their peers who are not disabled in the least restrictive environment (LRE). P.L. 94-142 resulted from a heightened awareness of the lack of basic educational rights afforded the handicapped that was brought to light by parents and advocates for the handicapped. These advocacy groups pointed to the poor outcomes for handicapped students.

In 1986, then assistant secretary to the U.S. Department of Education Madeleine Will, introduced the Regular Education Initiative (REI). She called for schools to have general education teachers and special education teachers work together to implement the LRE mandate of P.L. 94-142 by including LD students in the GE classroom (Will, 1986). This initial call for inclusion was based upon "proponents optimism for (a) successful outcomes without the stigma associated with segregated programs, (b) widespread benefits to all students, and (c) greater cost efficiency through a merger of all school resources into one unified effort" (Houck & Rogers, 1994, p.435).
In 1990, P.L. 94-142 was renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. The 1990 revisions to P.L. 94-142 included a change in terminology from handicapped to children with disabilities. In 1997, Congress amended the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and it is now referred to as IDEA '97. Lipsky and Gartner (1998) noted:

Culminating a two-year process, the reauthorized IDEA emphasizes two major principles: The education of students with disabilities should produce outcomes akin to those expected for students in general, and students with disabilities should be educated with their nondisabled peers (p. 78).

Gantwerk (1999b) stated:

Although this requirement has been included in Part B of the IDEA since 1975, consistent understanding and direction have emerged more recently through federal court decisions, the amendments of IDEA '97, and the final federal regulations that were published on March 12, 1999. In the Oberti decision of May 1993, the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit established a three prong test for determining placement in the regular classroom. Because New Jersey is part of the Third Circuit, the Oberti decision with its three prong test is the standard for the state (p. 1).

IDEA '97 requirements “demonstrate clearly the preference for educating students with disabilities in the regular classroom” (Gantwerk, 1999b, p. 2). The requirements do however also mandate a full continuum of services be available if the IEP team determines that placement in the regular class is not appropriate.
Congress, in developing the original 1975 Act, viewed the regular classroom as the optimal setting but acknowledged that schools must offer instruction in multiple environments to appropriately meet individual needs. In 1997, when amending the statute, Congress similarly recognized that schools must base decisions for students with disabilities on individual need but justify their decision in the Individual Education Program (IEP) if they recommend an alternative placement to regular classes (Crockett & Kauffman, 1998, p. 76).

Inclusion

Educators and parents must now decide where LD students should be educated in addition to how they should receive instruction. The decision of whether or not to include an LD student in the regular class with differentiated instruction and curriculum modifications, or if warranted by the disability, limit or exclude the student from instruction in the regular class and consider an alternate more restrictive placement, is made with consideration given to both the academic and social needs of the LD student. Inclusion versus full inclusion of LD students into general education classes continues to be a topic of considerable debate. Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) point out the differences between the two positions:

First, for inclusionists, the primary objective of schooling is to help children master skills and knowledge necessary for future successes in and out of school. Full inclusionists believe schools are most important for the opportunities they provide for friendship making, changing stereotypic thinking about disabilities, and strengthening socialization skills. Second, full inclusionists claim that the proper place for literally all children is the regular classroom. Inclusionists, by
contrast, insist that a continuum of special education placements is necessary. Third, and implicit in the prior point, inclusionists believe that whereas regular classrooms can and should be made more accommodating of diversity, there is a limit on what one realistically can expect of such settings. Full inclusionists, on the other hand, believe all things are possible (p. 312).

Advocacy groups such as the Learning Disabilities Association (1993) and the Council for Exceptional Children (1997) do not support full inclusion. They do not support mandating general education placement for all students but rather support placements based on the needs of each individual student.

Studies have found that the needs of individual students are not considered in general education classes. Researchers noted that instruction for LD students is not differentiated and that adaptations that are made by GE teachers are group oriented (see, for example, Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, and Lee, 1993; and Schumm et al., 1995). Of these, the study by Schumm et al. sheds the brightest light on LD secondary level students. They found little evidence of adaptations in methods, materials, or assessment of LD students. Guterman (1995) in a study that investigated the effects of special education placement from the perspective of nine LD high school students found similar results. Guterman (1995) states:

In the experiences of the group, general education teachers rarely had adjusted curricula, instruction, or requirements to accommodate their individual needs. All nine believed that subject content drives high school general education classrooms. The establishment of state proficiency tests strengthened that notion. None of the nine thought that it was reasonable under present circumstances to
expect general classroom teachers to make adjustments for individual differences (p. 116).

Results of studies also reflect the philosophical views of the researchers. For example, Zigmond et al. (1995) in their study of the academic progress demonstrated in reading by LD students included in GE classes concluded that the students did not make significant progress in the GE classroom. These findings reflect the authors opposition to the full inclusion philosophy. Waldo and McLeskey (1998) replicated and expanded the Zigmond et al. (1995) study. Their conclusions reflect their full inclusion philosophy:

In contrast to Zigmond et al. (1995), we find the outcomes of both their investigation and ours to be very encouraging. Indeed, the results of these investigations demonstrate that when students with LD are educated in well-developed inclusive settings, approximately one half of these students make progress that is comparable to or greater than the progress made by grade-level peers (p.402).

Researchers have also found that LD students report that activities in the special education resource room are fun and less difficult (Vaughn and Klingner, 1998) and that the low-level instruction had not helped them academically (Guterman, 1995). The research does not definitively explain whether the academic rigor of the GE classroom is too difficult or whether the academic challenges presented in special education settings are less difficult, yet appropriate to the needs of the LD students. If the instruction in the special education settings is indeed too easy, LD students may experience success but may actually not be placed in the setting that would produce the greatest academic
growth. The question of whether or not these students would demonstrate greater academic growth if exposed to the increased rigor of the general education classroom remains unanswered. If LD students are accustomed to work that is fun and not challenging perhaps the work presented by the GE teachers would have to be differentiated to meet the level of work presented in the special education classes but not truly need to be differentiated to meet the academic needs of the LD students.

It is difficult to conclude the most appropriate placement for LD students due to the conflicting conclusions in research studying the educational setting. In addition, the impact of the limitations of GE classes as well as the resource room need further investigation. If the lack of differentiation in the GE classroom is resulting in a less than optimal educational experience, and the alternative resource room setting is lacking in academic rigor, then it is essential to identify the professional development opportunities that would address the concerns in both settings.

Teacher-Student Relationship

Studies have shown that LD and GE students are not equal participants in the GE classroom. McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager and Lee (1993) in a study of 60 K-12 GE teachers’ classrooms that included LD students found that LD students are not engaged in the learning and are not encouraged by their GE teachers to become engaged. Evidence of this was noted by LD students’ lower rate of participation in teacher-directed activities, the infrequency of their requests for help, and their apparent unwillingness to answer teacher posed questions. The limited interaction between LD students and GE teachers may impact student-teacher relations as well as student motivation.
Kruse (2000) in a study of the academic experiences of students in public and private schools reported that students who participated in seven student focus groups identified quality teachers as those who are concerned with student progress and their attention to classroom activity. The participants stated that a good teacher makes them learn more and work harder at school. Their definition of caring “includes three equally important areas of concern: (a) concern for the student at a personal level, (b) concern for the academic progress of students, and (c) concern for the persistence of student effort” (p. 78). Similarly, Foote, Vermette, Wisniewski, Agnello, and Pagano (2000) in their study of perceptions of high school administrators, teachers, parents, and students also reported that high school teachers described as “bad,” do not interact with students or seem uncaring when they do. Together, these studies indicate that quality teachers interact with students and that this interaction does not occur between teachers and LD students.

The lack of student-teacher interaction may be attributed to both LD students and GE teachers. A review of empirical research by Gresham and MacMillan (1997) confirms the findings of McIntosh et al. (1993) who reported that LD students were found to interact with both the teacher and other students at a lower rate. Gresham and MacMillan’s findings indicate that “most students with mild disabilities are considered problematic based on difficulties in their teachability” (p. 382). They argue that LD student behavior “largely accounts for their referral to school study teams and subsequent placement in special education” (p. 400). If GE teachers perceive their efforts to be ineffective with LD students, they may limit their interactions with LD students in order to focus their efforts on the GE students who they perceive as benefiting from their
efforts. LD students may perceive GE teachers to be ineffective or uncaring as a result of the differences between the amount of time spent interacting with GE students compared with LD students.

Frymier and Houser (2000) in an investigation into whether communication skills are important to the teacher-student relationship found that communications skills were important to good teaching and communication between teachers and students is relational as well as content driven. Their results indicate that referential skill (explaining content effectively) and ego support (providing encouragement and confirmation) were significant predictors of learning and motivation. “Students look to teachers for more than information. Students want teachers to help them feel good about themselves and feel in control of their environment” (p. 217). These studies indicate that since there is diminished interaction between the GE teacher and LD students in inclusive settings, LD students may perceive GE teachers to be ineffective even though they have a stronger background in the content than special education teachers.

Although there are diminished interactions between GE teachers and LD students, a review of the literature indicates that GE teachers are not opposed to the concept of inclusion of LD students in GE classes. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) in their research synthesis of 10,560 teachers’ perceptions of mainstreaming/inclusion based on 28 reports published from 1958 to 1995 found that two-thirds agreed with the general concept. They also found that only one-quarter to one-third thought they had sufficient time, training, or resources to implement it effectively. The lack of confidence expressed by teachers regarding their ability to meet the needs of included students due to time, training, or resource constraints as well as the diminished interactions with included
students may be more accurately reflected in their attitude toward included students.

Cook (2001) stated:

> Based on consistent findings linking teachers’ attitudes toward their students with distinct and meaningful patterns of teacher-student interactions, it appears that teachers’ attitudes toward their included students, rather than toward the general concept of inclusion, constitute parsimonious predictors of quality educational opportunities for included students with disabilities (p. 204).

Relative Theory

Gresham and MacMillan’s (1997) conclusion that teachers find students with mild disabilities difficult to teach lends support to an instructional tolerance theory posited by Gerber (1988):

> There exists for human judges, laboring under the cognitive burden imposed by child variance, an instructional tolerance, a band of permissible error around teachers’ perceptions of what they regard to be the teachable, modal range of students in their classes. That is, within this band of tolerance, teachers are willing to treat students as a relatively homogenized representation of normality. Beyond the tolerance limit of each teacher and classroom context, a limit which incidentally has upper as well as lower bounds, children come to be viewed as intolerably unresponsive to instruction by a specific teacher in a specific classroom setting (p. 311).

This theory is aligned with the Fuchs and Fuchs (1998) description of the inclusionists belief that in the regular classroom, even with accommodations, there are limits to placements in that setting.
Cook, Tankersley, Cook, and Landrum (2000) in an investigation of the GE teachers' attitudes toward LD students included in their class predicted that, based on a theory of instructional tolerance, teachers hold different attitudes toward their included LD students in comparison to their nondisabled classmates. The study included 70 general education teachers from six Ohio school districts. The teachers were asked to nominate three of their students who represented the best answers to prompts corresponding with Silberman's (1969) four attitudinal categories (attachment, concern, indifference, rejection). They found that LD students were significantly underrepresented in the attitudinal category of attachment and significantly overrepresented in the concern and rejection categories. Cook (2001) in an investigation of whether teachers' attitudes toward their included students with disabilities differed according to the severity of the disability found that teachers tend to form different attitudes and expectations depending on the severity of the disability. He used the instructional tolerance theory and as well as the model of differential expectations (Cook & Semmel, 1999), that is teacher attitudes vary according to the severity of student disability, to explain his findings. The study utilized the data collected from Cook et. al. The variable used as the basis for determining differentiated expectations was the degree to which students' disabilities were recognized. The students with disabilities included 173 students categorized as students with hidden (mild) disabilities and 48 categorized as students with obvious (severe) disabilities. The results of the study found that students with obvious disabilities were significantly overrepresented among teachers' indifference nominations and students with hidden disabilities were significantly overrepresented in teachers' rejection nominations. Cook (2001) states:
The model of differential expectations can also parsimoniously explain the relatively high proportion of students with hidden disabilities nominated in the rejection category. Despite their disability label, teachers appear to hold modal or unadjusted expectations for these students due to the hidden nature of their disabilities. Students with mild or hidden disabilities are violating expectations and are rejected because they fall outside of teachers’ instructional tolerance and pose classroom management problems. In a sense, because they do not appear significantly different from nondisabled classmates, students with hidden disabilities are held responsible and are blamed for aberrant behavior and performance (p. 209).

These findings confirm the studies conducted by Silberman (1969) and Good and Brophy (1972) which found teachers differentiate their behavior towards students in the different attitude categories.

Together, these studies indicate that the greatest impact would be on students with mild disabilities included in the GE classroom since they are overrepresented in the rejection category. According to Good and Brophy (1972), “it is clear that teachers in this study rejected and avoided rejection students” (p. 623). The teachers in their study described the rejection students as “making illegitimate or overwhelming demands upon them” (p. 618). Instructional tolerance theory in conjunction with a model of differential expectations may help to also explain the diminished interaction between LD students and teachers reported by McIntosh et al. (1993) and lend support to Gresham and MacMillan’s (1997) conclusion that LD students are problematic due to their teachability. In addition, these studies cast doubt on the effectiveness of the learning environment LD
students with mild disabilities may encounter in some GE classes and supports the inclusionist belief that the GE classroom does not meet the needs of all included students.

*Inclusive Instructional Interventions*

Inclusion, regardless of whether all LD students are included full time or whether they are included for only part of the day, provides new instructional challenges for GE teachers. Gantwerk (1999a) stated:

> As a member of the IEP team, the regular education teacher must, to the extent appropriate, participate in the development, review and revision of the child’s IEP. This includes assisting in the determination of positive behavioral interventions and strategies for that child and assisting in the determination of supplementary aids and services, program modifications, and supports for school personnel that will be provided for the child. Therefore, the regular education teacher “must participate in the discussions and decisions about how to modify the general education curriculum in the regular classroom to ensure the child’s involvement and progress in the general curriculum and participating in the regular education environment (p. 2).

In order to meet the IDEA least restrictive environment requirement, GE teachers will need support. Identifying instructional best practices as well as teacher behaviors that enhance social and academic progress will be required in order to meet the needs of LD students included in the GE classes.

The research regarding appropriate interventions for LD students has identified interventions that produce positive student outcomes. Swanson and Hoskyn (1998) through the use of meta-analytic techniques to aggregate the research literature on
intervention from 1963 to 1997 were able to identify three instructional components (control of task difficulty, small interactive groups, and directed response/questioning) that produced the strongest impact on student learning. Vaughn, Gersten, and Chard (2000) summarized the findings of research syntheses, including three that used the Swanson and Hoskyn synthesis as "a major source and point of departure" (p. 100). They defined control of task difficulty as "sequencing examples and problems to maintain high levels of student success," small groups as "interactive groups of six or fewer," and directed response questioning as "the use of procedures that teach students to generate questions while reading or working on a scientific or mathematical problem" (p. 101). The meta-analyses reviewed described these three instructional components in conjunction with higher-order processing, written expression, and reading comprehension. Vaughn et al. noted that "descriptive research consistently reveals that a major reason many children with LD experience poor comprehension is due to a failure to read strategically and to spontaneously monitor their understanding of what is being read" (p. 105). The utilization of directed response questioning would allow students to monitor their understanding through the questions they generated. The syntheses also identified the best practices in expressive writing instruction as explicit teaching of the critical steps in the writing process, explicit teaching of the conventions of a writing genre, and guided feedback. These findings reinforce the findings of Swanson and Hoskyn (1998).

Swanson and Hoskyn (1998) concluded that "a combined model that includes components of direct instruction and strategy instruction is a viable heuristic for instructing students with learning disabilities" (p. 308). Fisher, Schumaker and Deshler
(1995) reviewed 29 studies describing 14 different validated inclusive practices. Some of the identified practices, such as teaching devices, content enhancement routines, and strategies instruction are practices that combine direct instruction and strategy instruction. The studies reviewed on teaching devices focused on graphic organizers and study guides. The authors concluded that the studies supported the use of teaching devices at the secondary level for students with and without learning disabilities. The findings were based on teaching devices supplied by the researchers. There is no indication of whether or not teachers would take the time to create and utilize teaching devices not readily available. Content enhancement routines combine "an interactive instructional sequence with a teaching device" (p. 9). The studies examined by Fisher et al. showed that content enhancement routines did improve the achievement of LD students and most studies found them to also improve the performance of students without learning disabilities. The use of content enhancement routines alone was not enough for all students to receive passing grades. Strategy instruction also was found to improve the academic performance of students with and without learning disabilities. Teachers recognized the importance of strategy instruction but they did not feel that they could cover their content and implement strategy instruction.

In light of the research on the inclusion of LD students, it is evident that although placement in GE classes alone does not improve academic achievement, there are instructional components and models combining direct and strategy instruction that do produce positive academic outcomes for LD students as well as GE students. Vaughn et al. (2000) noted:
Research on effective instructional interventions for students with LD has had a significant influence on both general and special education. In all cases where interventions have demonstrated significant positive effects for students with LD, they have resulted in at least as high (and most often higher) effect sizes for all other students in the class, including average and high-achieving students (p. 108).

The identification of strategies effective for both LD and GE students would lessen the need to differentiate for LD students by allowing the GE teacher to implement a strategy effective for both groups. This may help LD students to fall within the GE teachers' instructional range.

*Student Ratings of Instruction*

Although researchers point out the need for multiple supports for inclusive teachers, including time for collaboration with special educators, inservice training, and administrative supports (Snyder, 1999), feedback from LD and GE students through student ratings of instruction may provide insight into which areas these efforts should focus on. The studies that have been conducted on student ratings of instruction at the secondary level are positive. Mertler (1997) found that teachers who voluntarily participated in a student rating of instruction by their secondary students, representing seven high schools from two school districts in the central portion of Florida, indicated they valued the experience. Students rated teachers on two occasions during the fall of 1995. He reported that the process was seen as "something done for teachers, rather than against them" (p. 17). Teacher acceptance of student ratings of instruction by high school
students would facilitate the integration of the feedback into the teachers' instructional practices.

Studies by Martin (1988) and Daly (1990) indicate that secondary students would be capable evaluators of instructions. Martin conducted a study involving six high school student teachers. The students in their classes were asked to rate the student teachers at the conclusion of the fourteenth week of the 1986 winter semester. The student teachers were also videotaped during the first, seventh, and fourteenth week of the semester. The student teachers and their advisors compared the results of the student ratings with the videotapes. The results "suggested that pupil ratings of their student teachers can provide useful information to identify characteristics and teaching behaviors of student teachers perceived to be most effective and least effective" (p. 6). Daly (1990) studied the results of 864 high school students' ratings of teacher effectiveness regarding 54 classes and 27 teachers. His results found "no significant differences in student perceptions of teacher effectiveness based on gender, age, grade, and ability level of the 864 student subjects participating in the study" (p. 132).

Studies by Freeman (1994) and Cashin (1990) support the finding that student ratings of teachers are not effected by gender. Feldman (1993) concluded that differences in ratings between male and female instructors may be a reflection of better teaching rather than bias. On the other hand, Centra and Gaubatz (2000) noted that "studies that have investigated gender bias have thus far produced conflicting results" (p. 18). They found studies reporting no, or extremely small, differences between the evaluation of female and male instructors as well as studies in which male students rated female instructors less favorably than male instructors. They also noted studies which found
evidence of gender related differences in regard to student-instructor relationships. They conducted a study of 741 classes in an effort to address the issue of gender bias. They found that while male instructors received equal ratings by male and female students, female instructors received higher ratings from female students on six of eight variables. Centra and Gaubatz (2000) noted:

Other differences indicate that female students, relative to male students in the same classes, saw female instructors as better organized, better communicators, more interactive, and providing higher quality exams, assignments, and feedback to students. On the other hand, for the Course Outcomes scale, there were no same- or cross-gender differences. Although this scale does not measure actual student learning or achievement, it does at least measure student perceptions of the amount and type of learning they received in the course. Thus, considering the first definition of bias—that bias is when a characteristic such as gender affects evaluations systematically but does not affect learning—we would conclude that there is favor of female instructors by female students (p. 30).

The literature regarding gender bias is conflicting. Although this variable may not be the most significant variable regarding high school student ratings of instruction, it takes on greater importance when comparing GE and LD high school student ratings because the percentage of female LD students is less than the percentage of female GE students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1997) profiles of students with disabilities identified in NELS: 88 were more likely than their nondisabled counterparts to be male (60.8 percent versus 49.7 percent).
Studies indicate that student motivation is related to student ratings of instruction. A study by Smith and Brown (1976) of 436 students in grades seven through twelve at the Florida State University Developmental Research School examined the correlation among student attitudes toward school, course difficulty, class characteristics and their evaluation of instructors. They found that "the attitudes of students toward school and teachers, as well as their specific opinions regarding course difficulty, their enjoyment of the subject and the grade they expect to receive, are strongly related to their ratings of teachers" (p. 27). At the secondary level teachers could expect to receive more favorable results from students who are enrolled in an elective course as opposed to a mandatory course. When choosing an elective course, students would be more likely to choose a course they were interested in and would expect to be successful in. These students would be more motivated and would provide favorable ratings of instruction for the teacher and the course. Cashin (1995) in a summary of related literature recommends taking into consideration student motivation when interpreting student ratings. "Student motivation tends to show higher correlation with other student rating items than any other variable" (p. 2). He also recommends deciding on how to treat student ratings from different course levels and from different academic fields when interpreting the ratings. These findings reinforce the findings of Smith and Brown at the secondary level.

Greenwald and Gillmore (1997) in a study of 200 undergraduate courses at the University of Washington during the Autumn 1993, Winter 1994, and Spring 1994 sessions also found that student ratings are sensitive to grading leniency (see also Marsh, 1984). Marsh and Roche (2000) conducted an investigation to address the issue of workload and grading leniency bias. Using a construct validity approach, they reviewed
previous research, reanalyzed recently published data, and presented new analyses based on student evaluations of teaching (SET). They found a small positive correlation of about .20 between global student evaluations of teaching and expected grades. They disagreed with Greenwald and Gillmore's conclusion that grading leniency explains the relation. Marsh and Roche (2000) concluded that, "grading leniency explains only a very small portion of a very small grade-SET relation" (p. 224). They argue that controlling for perceived learning eliminates the grade-SET relation and therefore higher grades associated with higher SETs may actually reflect student learning. They also found that the workload-SET relation is positive. "Indeed, courses demanding the least amount of work tend to receive lower ratings—not higher ratings—and the grade-SET function is relatively flat for grades that are above the mean grade" (p. 226).

Marsh and Roche (1997) state that the reliance on student evaluations "stems in part from the lack of support for the validity of any other indicators of effective teaching" (p. 1190). Verbal and nonverbal teaching behaviors, indicating physical or psychological closeness and caring, have been identified by researchers as indicators of effective teaching by students. Teven and McCroskey (1996) in a study to determine perceived competence, trustworthiness, and caring of teachers by 235 students enrolled in communication classes at an Eastern university found the correlation of perceived caring with evaluation of the instructor was $r = .81$ ($p < .0001$). The correlation between perceived caring and reported learning loss was $r = .65$ ($p < .0001$). They concluded that the results of their study "clearly support the theory that perceived caring generates more positive teacher evaluations and influences levels of learning of both affective and cognitive learning in a positive way" (p. 8). This study lends support to previous studies
(Abrami, d'Apollonia, & Cohen, 1990; Marsh, 1984) that associated positive ratings by students with teacher warmth, supportiveness, dominance, and confidence.

Research supporting the use student ratings to measure teacher effectiveness is vast. Cashin (1995) reports that “there are probably more studies of student ratings than all of the other data used to evaluate college teaching combined” (p. 6). Determining the validity and reliability of these measures comes from comparing student ratings with other indicators. D'Apollonia & Abrami (1997) noted:

One important criterion for the validity of student ratings of instruction is that the teaching processes reflected in student rating forms should cause (or at least predict) student learning. That is, if student ratings measure instructional effectiveness, students whose instructors are judged most effective also should learn more (p. 1201).

Researchers have found that teachers with high ratings from students do positively influence the cognitive achievement of their students (Cohen, 1981; d'Apollonia & Abrami, 1997; Marsh & Roche, 1997). Cohen (1981), after conducting a meta-analysis of 41 independent validity studies reporting on 68 separate multisection courses relating student rating to student achievement, concluded that “students do a pretty good job of distinguishing among teachers on the basis of how much they have learned” (p. 305).

Overall and Marsh (1980) investigated the long-term stability of students' evaluations of instructional effectiveness. They conducted a study of 1374 undergraduate and graduate business administration majors from 100 different classes at a comprehensive state university between 1974 and 1977. Students were surveyed regarding instructional effectiveness after course completion and then again one year
after graduation (one to three years after course completion). Overall and Marsh (1980) stated:

The results of this study provide strong support for the assumed stability of students' evaluations of their courses and instructors and suggest that this stability does not vary systematically with course level or content. The large and statistically significant correlation obtained between end-of-term and retrospective ratings indicate that after a period of time for reflection, students do not change their initial evaluative judgments, at least in a relative sense (p. 324).

Researchers point out the lesser amount of research on secondary student evaluations (Daly, 1990; Mertler, 1997, Smith & Brown, 1976). One reason for the lack of research may be found in the perceptions of their effectiveness by principals. Since principals are currently responsible for teacher evaluations, they would have to consider an alternative method of evaluation viable in order to implement the change. Research suggests that they may not perceive student evaluations as credible. Savage and McCord (1986) conducted a study to determine differences in assessment of teacher competence when student evaluation data was added to supervisor evaluations. Participants were 51 principals from elementary, middle school, junior high school, and high schools from urban, suburban, and rural schools across the state of Texas who were attending a summer institute. Savage and McCord found that the students' evaluations were not taken into consideration by the principals. The principals based their assessments on the evaluations written by the teachers' supervisors. They concluded that "if student evaluation is a valid source of data about teaching performance, and a review of the
literature suggests that it is, then a great deal of education is needed to convince school administrators of the validity of students evaluations” (p.8).

Cashin (1995) in his review of studies regarding the use of student rating data pointed out that “writers on faculty evaluation are almost universal in recommending the use of multiple sources of data. No single source of data—including student rating data—provides sufficient information to make a valid judgement about overall teaching effectiveness” (p. 1). Daly (1990) concurred with Savage and McCord (1986) who recommended including student evaluations along with other forms of evaluations in a teacher portfolio. The development of a professional portfolio would provide the teachers with an opportunity to reflect on their teaching practices. The student evaluations would represent one of the many artifacts used to identify effective teaching practices. Secondary school principals, who traditionally have based their identification of indicators of effective teaching on a primary source, their classroom observations of teachers, may begin to recognize the effectiveness of student ratings of instruction by reviewing multiple measures of teacher effectiveness in a professional portfolio.

Summary

The review of literature presented highlights the emphasis on educating LD students with their nondisabled peers in the GE classroom. Proponents of inclusion conclude that LD students can be successful in GE classrooms with differentiated instruction. Researchers opposed to full inclusion note studies showing that LD students are not receiving differentiated instruction in the GE classroom.

The literature also points out that while GE teachers are not opposed to the concept of the inclusion of LD students in GE classes, they do not feel confident in their
ability to meet the needs of LD students. In addition, interaction between LD students and GE teachers is limited. Teacher lack of confidence and diminished interaction between LD students and GE teachers may be due to the teachers' attitudes regarding the teachability of LD students. LD student needs may extend beyond the instructional tolerance of the GE teacher. Instructional tolerance theory in conjunction with the model of differentiated expectations implies that LD students with mild disabilities experience rejection by GE teachers more frequently than their nondisabled peers.

Studies indicate that secondary students would be capable evaluators of instruction. Student ratings of instruction have been found to be valid and reliable. Results indicate that secondary students, and postsecondary students, do not vary their ratings of teachers based on gender, age, grade, or ability level. Student ratings of instruction are influenced by motivation, grade expectation, and student perception of teacher caring. Student ratings of instruction should be evaluated along with many other measurements to determine teacher effectiveness as no one tool provides an effective measurement.

Studies on student ratings of instruction did not include students who were classified as learning disabled. Perceptions of classified students regarding significant variables, such as communication, may differ from regular education students. It is clear that examinations of student ratings of instruction need to include learning disabled students in order to effectively measure variables such as student-teacher interactions in inclusive classrooms. In addition, since LD students are inactive learners, the information provided to GE teachers by LD and GE students may provide valuable
feedback for GE teachers in their effort to identify indicators of effective teaching and as well as effective learning environments.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences in perceptions of teacher effectiveness between learning disabled and general education high school students in their ratings of instruction. The intent was to focus on both GE and LD student perceptions of teacher effectiveness, academic and social growth, and course features of the required high school English class.
Chapter III

Method

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there are differences in perceptions of teacher effectiveness between learning disabled and general education high school students. The independent variable for this study was student type: general education or learning disabled. Comparisons of the ratings of instruction given by these two groups of students will be conducted for each of the research questions in the study. The IDEA Form H was utilized for the student ratings of instruction. Daly (1990) utilized the IDEA Form H for high school student ratings of instruction.

Subjects

The subjects in this study were from a public high school in central New Jersey. The high school is one of four schools within the K-12 district. The District Factor Group (DFG) is CD, indicating the district falls within the lowest third of the districts in the state in regards to its socioeconomic status. Its K-12 enrollment group includes districts with a student enrollment range of 0-1800.

The subjects in this study were students enrolled in grades 9 through 12. The subjects (n = 243) were general education students (n = 212) and learning disabled students (n = 31) enrolled in English 9, 10, 11, and 12 classes. To control for the effect of motivation on ratings, English classes were chosen because English is a required (non-elective) course and classes (excluding honors level classes) are heterogeneously grouped
according to grade level. Students enrolled in honors level classes are not included in this study. The 243 students are comprised of 65 freshmen, 61 sophomores, 60 juniors, and 57 seniors.

The LD students in the school who were enrolled in the GE English classes received instruction in the GE classes from a GE teacher or from a GE teacher with support from a special education teacher. LD students in the GE classes, both with and without support, were required to meet the GE curriculum requirements for the grade and subject being taught and were therefore considered to have mild disabilities. LD students in a replacement resource program have the GE curriculum modified in accordance with the IEP. The LD students receiving instruction in the resource room instead of GE classes were therefore not included in this study.

Instrument

The IDEA Form H was utilized for the student ratings of instruction (Appendix A). The IDEA Form H was developed by the Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development at Kansas State University for use by high school students in 1981. Permission to reprint Form H for this study was granted by the Individual Development and Educational Assessment Center at Kansas State University (Appendix B). Cashin (1995) reports median reliabilities for the IDEA system items are .69 for 10 raters; .83 for 20 raters; .88 for 30 raters, and .91 for 40 raters.

IDEA Form H includes five parts with a total of 50 items. Part I, items 1 – 9, focus on social and academic progress by the student. Part II, items 10-13, focus on homework, tests, and other features of the course. Part III, items 14-18, focus on student attitude towards learning. Part IV, items 19-26, focus on the learning environment of the
class. Part V, items 27-50, focus on teacher behaviors, which included 24 areas related to instruction. Parts I, II, and V were relevant to this study because they focused on teacher behaviors and student outcomes resulting from teacher behaviors. Parts III and IV, which focused on student attitudes and the learning environment, were not relevant to this study. The participants completed all five sections of Form H, but only the items in Parts I, II, and V were analyzed for statistical significance and included in this study.

Procedure

All students included in the study were asked to complete the IDEA Form H during their regular English class on the same day in the final month of the academic year. Students were given a copy of the IDEA Form H and an answer grid. To avoid possible bias, Cashin (1995) recommends that the instructor not be present while the ratings are being completed and collected and that the students be instructed to not sign their names. To insure this anonymity, guidance counselors administered the IDEA Form H and English teachers were not present. Students were directed to not identify their name or the name of their teacher. Students were asked to grid his or her student ID number on the direction sheet. This allowed the counselors to separate the general education and learning disabled student responses and maintain student anonymity on the student answer grids. Responses were aggregated so the results were not influenced by ratings of individual teachers. Upon completion of the IDEA Form H by each of the classes, the surveys and the answer grids were collected and sorted by the counselors and then returned to the researcher. The data from the surveys was entered into a computer and SPSS 10.0 was used to complete the statistical analysis.
Statistical Analysis

To test the null hypotheses in this research study, the following statistical operations were performed using SPSS 10.0. First, means and standard deviations were calculated for both GE and LD student responses. Second, t tests were performed to compare the means for each group. Third, reliability coefficients were calculated for Parts I, II, and V of the IDEA Form H.

Part V of the IDEA Form H addressed the first null hypothesis. Responses to items 27 through 50 were tabulated and GE student response means were compared to LD student response means. A t test for two independent samples was conducted to test the null hypothesis and to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level. Differences in items 27, 30, 34, 45 and 50 of Part V would illustrate differences in the rapport established between the students and the teacher. Differences between LD and GE student responses to item 49 would show whether or not the teachers were differentiating instruction for LD students, GE students, or all students to meet their academic needs. Results of items 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 46, 47, and 48 would highlight which instructional skills and techniques are viewed as effective by both LD and GE students. Results of the analysis of Part V items are presented in Chapter IV.

Part I of the IDEA Form H addressed the second null hypothesis. Responses to items one through nine were tabulated and GE student response means were compared to LD student response means. A t test for two independent samples was conducted to test
the null hypothesis and to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of their level of academic and social progress resulting from this course. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level. Differences in items 1 through 5 would highlight a lack of academic growth for LD or GE students. Lower ratings by LD students would indicate the need for additional differentiation and lower ratings by GE students would indicate that the course is not challenging enough for GE students. Differences in items 6 through 9 would highlight a lack of social growth for LD or GE students. The data provided by analysis of Part I would demonstrate the need to include additional modifications in student IEPs and/or the need to focus on social acceptance of differences by students. Results of the analysis of Part I items are presented in Chapter IV.

Part II of the IDEA Form H addressed the third null hypothesis. Responses to items 10 through 13 were tabulated and GE student response means were compared to LD student response means. A \( t \) test for two independent samples was conducted to test the null hypothesis and to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of homework, tests, and other features of the course. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level. Differences in items 10 through 13 would highlight the effectiveness of the modifications outlined in the IEPs. If LD students rated these items lower and GE students it would indicate the need to include additional modifications for these students in the IEPs. Results of the analysis of Part II items are presented in Chapter IV.
Chapter IV

Results

This chapter presents the results of a comparison of GE and LD student ratings of instruction. Three null hypotheses were tested to determine if there were any significant differences in the perceptions of teacher effectiveness by GE and LD students enrolled in the same high school English classes. The statistical data and results of each null hypothesis as well as the reliability coefficients are presented.

Research Question

Are there differences in perceptions of teacher effectiveness between learning disabled and general education high school students?

Null Hypothesis I

No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness.

Test of Null Hypothesis I

To test the first null hypothesis Part V of the IDEA Form H asked the students to rate their teachers using survey items 27 through 50. Means and standard deviations were calculated for GE and LD student ratings on each of the Part V survey items. Table 1 presents the results of the comparison of GE and LD ratings for Part V of the survey. The comparison indicates that GE students rated their teachers more favorably than did the LD students.
Table 1

Mean Ratings of Instruction on Part V Teacher Behaviors

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<td>Item 49</td>
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</table>
A t test for two independent samples was then conducted to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level. Table 2 presents the results of the t test on Part V of the survey.

The results show that there were significant differences in the ratings of instruction on 18 of the 24 items included in Part V. Five of the items included in Part V, items 27, 30, 34, 45 and 50, focused on the rapport established between the students and the teacher. LD students rated the teachers lower on all five items. The differences between the ratings were statistically significant for items 27, 30, 34, and 50. The difference was not significant for item 45. One item included in Part V, item 49, focused on the teachers' efforts to differentiate instruction when students have trouble learning. The LD students rated the teachers lower on item 49 and the difference was statistically significant. The remaining 18 items included in Part V focused on instructional behaviors and strategies utilized by the teachers. The LD students rated the teachers lower on all 18 items. The difference between the ratings were statistically significant for items 28, 29, 31, 33, 35, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 44, 46, and 47. The difference between the ratings was not significant for items 32, 37, 40, 43, and 48. Based on these results, Null Hypothesis I, that no significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness, is rejected.
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<td>Item 29</td>
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</table>
Null Hypothesis II

No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of level of academic and social progress.

Test of Null Hypothesis II

To test the second null hypothesis Part I of the IDEA Form H asked the students to rate their teachers using survey items 1 through 9. Means and standard deviations were calculated for GE and LD student ratings on each of the Part I survey items. Table 3 presents the results of the comparison of GE and LD ratings for Part I of the survey.
Table 3

Mean Ratings of Instruction on Part I Academic and Social Progress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<td>GE</td>
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<td>Item 6</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>GE</td>
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<td>3.5498</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A *t* test for two independent samples was then conducted to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of the academic and social progress made as a result of this course. Table 4 presents the results of the *t* test on Part I of the survey. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level.

Part I included nine items regarding student perceptions of academic and social growth gained as a result of the course. Items 1 through 5 focused on academic growth. The results indicate that there are no significant differences between the LD and GE students' perceptions of academic growth resulting from the course. Items 6 through 9 focused on social growth. The results indicate that there are no significant differences between the LD and GE students' perceptions of social growth resulting from the course. Based on these results, Null Hypothesis II is retained. Table 4 presents the results of the comparison of GE and LD ratings for Part I of the survey.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
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<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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</tr>
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<td>Item 3</td>
<td>-.013</td>
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<td>Item 9</td>
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</table>
Null Hypothesis III

No significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of the course requirements.

Test of Null Hypothesis III

To test the third null hypothesis Part II of the IDEA Form H asked the students to rate their teachers using survey items 10 through 13. Means and standard deviations were calculated for GE and LD student ratings on each of the Part II survey items. Table 5 presents the results of the comparison of GE and LD ratings for Part II of the survey.
Table 5

Mean Ratings of Instruction on Part II Course Requirements

<table>
<thead>
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<th>SD</th>
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</thead>
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<td>3.3726</td>
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<td>Item 12</td>
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</tr>
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<td>GE</td>
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<td>3.0283</td>
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<td>Item 13</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>3.1290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GE</td>
<td>212</td>
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<td>.7144</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A t test for two independent samples was then conducted to determine if there were significant differences between learning disabled and general education high school students' perceptions of the course requirements. Table 6 presents the results of the t test on Part II of the survey. Differences were considered to be significant at the .05 level.

Part II included four items regarding student perceptions of the course requirements. Item 11 asked students' to rate the number of tests. There were no
significant differences between the LD and GE student perceptions of the number of tests included in the course. Item 12 focused on the difficulty of the reading required in the course and item 13 on the difficulty of the course. There were no significant differences between the LD and GE student perceptions of the difficulty of the reading or the difficulty of the course. Item 10 focused on the amount of homework required for the course. There was a significant difference between the LD and GE student perceptions of the amount of homework required for the course. Based on the results of item 10 in Part II, Null Hypothesis III, that no significant differences exist between learning disabled and general education high school students in their perceptions of the course features, is rejected.

Table 6

\emph{t}-test for Equality of Means on Part II Course Requirements

<table>
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<th>Sig.</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Item 11</td>
<td>.778</td>
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<td>.437</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item 12</td>
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<td>Item 13</td>
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<td>241</td>
<td>.248</td>
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Reliability analysis for each part of the IDEA Form H that was utilized in this study is presented in Table 7.
### Table 7

Reliability Coefficients

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<th>N of Items</th>
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<td>Part II (Items 10 – 13)</td>
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Chapter V

Summary, Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

This chapter contains a summary, discussion of the findings in relation to the literature, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to examine feedback provided by LD and GE students through student ratings of instruction to determine if there were differences in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness. Chapter I contained an introduction and background on IDEA '97 and inclusion. The research problem, question, and three hypotheses were stated. Chapter II reviewed the related literature regarding Public Law 94-142, the inclusion movement and practices in public schools. The review also included the related literature regarding student ratings of instruction and the variables related to student ratings of instruction. Chapter III described the subjects, methods, the instrument used, and the statistical procedures used to analyze the data. Chapter IV presented the results of the three hypotheses that were tested to determine if there were differences between LD and GE student perceptions of teacher effectiveness. The results indicated that there were no differences between LD and GE student perceptions of their academic and social growth. Results also indicated that there were significant differences between LD and GE students on their ratings of teacher effectiveness and course features.
In addition to this summary, Chapter V contains discussion of the findings in relation to the literature, conclusions, and recommendations for future research.

*Discussion*

The results of Part V of the IDEA Form H, used to test Hypothesis I, showed that there are significant differences between LD and GE high school students in their perceptions of teacher effectiveness. LD students rated their teachers lower on all 24 of the Part V items. Of the 24 items, the difference in the ratings between GE and LD students were significant for 18. Analysis of the 18 items reveals significant differences in perceptions of LD student-teacher interaction as well as perceptions of effective instructional strategies.

McIntosh, Vaughn, Schummm, Haager and Lee (1993) found that LD students are not engaged in the learning and are not encouraged by their GE teachers to become engaged. Statistically significant differences between GE and LD student ratings on items 27 (understands student ideas and questions), 30 (cares about students as people), and 34 (shows interest in student ideas) supports that finding. It is evident that the LD students’ lower ratings on all of these items are the result from the lack of interaction between the LD students and the teachers. Frymier and Houser (2000) found that communications skills were important to good teaching and communication between teachers and students is relational as well as content driven. Their results indicate that referential skill (explaining content effectively) and ego support (providing encouragement and confirmation) were significant predictors of learning and motivation. The statistically significant lower ratings by LD students on item 28 (expresses interesting and challenging ideas about the subject) and item 31 (gives understandable
explanations of course materials) indicates that LD students do not perceive the GE teachers' referential skills as effective. In addition, item 38 (makes helpful comments about student work), item 45 (is sensitive to student feelings about the subject), and item 47 (identifies strong points of student work) indicates that LD students do not feel that GE teachers provide effective ego support. The significantly lower ratings by LD students on these items is also supported by Teven and McCroskey (1996) who concluded that perceived caring generates more positive teacher evaluations. Diminished interaction would therefore result in more negative teacher evaluations.

The results of item 49 (tries different ways of teaching when students have trouble learning) indicates that the LD high school students included in the study are not benefiting from differentiated instruction. The lack of differentiation for the LD students in the GE classes corroborates the findings of previous research (Fuchs and Fuchs, 1995; McIntosh et al. 1993; and Schumm et al. 1995) that found little evidence of differentiated instruction for LD students. Although this study did not include the collection of data on GE teachers regarding implementation of student IEPs, the Schumm et al. (1995) finding that secondary teachers have a strong belief that expectations and evaluative criteria be the same for LD and GE students might provide an explanation for their instructional choices.

The results from Part V also indicate that the best inclusive practices identified by Swanson and Hoskyn (1998) and Fisher, Schumaker and Deshler (1995) are not being implemented in the GE classes. For example, the findings by Fisher, Schumaker and Deshler supported the use of graphic organizers and study guides. There was a significant difference between the GE and LD students' ratings on item 39 (reviews
material in ways that help students remember it), item 42 (makes helpful suggestions about what kinds of things to study for a test) and item 46 (provides helpful instructional materials (such as worksheets, study questions, unit objectives). Using graphic organizers and study guides would address the need identified by the LD students and would, as Fisher, Schumaker and Deshler noted, also be beneficial to the GE students.

The results of Part I of the IDEA Form H, used to test Hypothesis II, showed that there are no significant differences between LD and GE high school students in their perceptions of the academic and social growth resulting from the course. Although these findings appear to support the idea that outcomes for LD students in an inclusive environment are akin to those for GE students, one cannot make that conclusion based on self reported academic progress without supporting data such as grades and standardized test scores. The similarity of the self reported ratings of social growth do tend to demonstrate support for the full inclusionist claim that inclusion strengthens socialization skills (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998).

The results of Part II of the IDEA Form H, used to test Hypothesis III, showed that there is one significant difference between LD and GE high school students in their perceptions of the features of the course. The mean score on item 10 regarding homework was 3.16 for GE students and 3.54 for LD students. This finding implies that homework is also not differentiated for LD students since their mean is tending toward a rating of too much. The IEP for all LD students outlines instructional adaptations for homework and other methods, materials, and assessments. LD students in this study provide evidence that the GE teachers are not implementing these adaptations or are not including them in the IEP. The findings once again support the existing literature (Fuchs
& Fuchs, 1995; McIntosh et al., 1993; and Schumm et al., 1995) on the lack of differentiation for LD students included in GE classes.

Conclusions

The findings from this study provide evidence that there are differences in student perceptions of teacher effectiveness between learning disabled and general education high school students. Although the literature regarding student ratings of instruction did not include LD students, one might predict that there would be no differences in the ratings of instruction by LD and GE students included in this study because previous studies determined that ability level is not a significant variable in student ratings of instruction. The findings of this study suggest that teacher attitude, not student ability level, may be the important variable to consider. Although Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) reported that two-thirds of teachers agreed with the general concept of inclusion, they also noted their concern regarding their ability to meet LD student needs. MacMillan (1997) noted that teachers described students with mild disabilities as more difficult to teach. These findings support the findings of research that identified teacher warmth, supportiveness, dominance, and confidence as associated with positive student ratings of instruction (Abrami, d’Apollonia, & Cohen, 1990; Marsh, 1984).

Results from this study lend support to the instructional tolerance theory posited by Gerber (1988). GE teachers have a range of students’ whose needs they can meet given their personal and classroom resources. LD students do not fall within the GE teachers’ range of instructional tolerance. That is why they were referred for special education services initially. The lower ratings by LD students may be a reflection of the attitude of the teachers toward the LD students. Although the teachers in this study were
not asked to nominate students to each of the four attitudinal categories identified by Silberman (1969), one could hypothesize based on Cook (2001) and Good and Brophy (1972) that the LD students in this study would be overrepresented in the rejection category. Since the LD students included in this study were students with mild disabilities, the findings are further supported by the model of differentiated expectations (Cook and Semmel, 1999). The GE teachers may have rejected the LD students with mild disabilities because their disabilities were not always apparent causing the teachers to hold unadjusted expectations for them. Thus the severity of the disability of the LD students included in this study (mild) may help to explain the significant differences between LD and GE students’ ratings. LD student responses may also have been influenced by their previous academic experiences within a general education and/or special education setting. Examining the impact of previous school experiences by LD students was outside the scope of this investigation. Future researchers should recognize this potential variable and attempt to isolate it so its impact can be determined.

The effect of gender bias on the results must also be considered. The ratings by GE and LD students included in this study were not aggregated according to gender so comparisons of the ratings by male and female GE and LD students were not possible. The LD student population of the school is predominately male, mirroring the national LD population (NCES, 1997). Centra and Gaubatz (2000) concluded that there is favor of female instructors by female students. Even if the differences are small, the LD female student population compared to the greater GE female student population may also have contributed to the statistically lower ratings by LD students.
The findings from this study also suggest that both the GE and LD secondary students included in this study were capable evaluators of instruction. Previous findings by Martin (1988) and Daly (1990) found that GE secondary students provided useful information through student ratings of instruction. The ratings by the LD students in this study agree with previous research on student ratings of instruction as well as the inclusion of LD students in GE classrooms. Based on these findings it can be concluded that the data garnered through student ratings of instruction would be useful for GE teachers when making recommendations to the IEP team for LD students and highlight areas of focus for GE teachers' professional development.

The results from this study add to the existing debate on the inclusion of LD students into GE classes. There were no significant differences between GE and LD student ratings of their social and academic growth, which supports the full inclusionist point of view. However, the fact that the differences on the items regarding the student-teacher relationship were statistically lower for LD students lends support to the inclusionist point of view which emphasizes that the GE classroom may not be appropriate for all LD students. Since Frymier and Houser (2000) found that teacher-student communication skills are relational and are significant predictors of learning and motivation, the LD students' significantly lower ratings on these items casts doubt on the full inclusionists claim that the GE classroom is the proper placement for all students. It can be concluded that the LD students included in this study were not exposed to the optimum learning environment. It must also be noted that it can not be concluded that the GE classroom is an inappropriate placement, rather the need to address the teacher-student relationship within the GE classroom is highlighted. It is clear that changes in
teacher attitudes, as well as behaviors, will be necessary to provide the optimum inclusive learning environment for LD students.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for future research as a result of the findings and limitations of this study:

1. Feedback from student ratings of instruction should be used to identify professional growth and development opportunities for GE teachers. Research is needed to identify validated practices to extend the instructional tolerance range of GE inclusion teachers.

2. The impact of the professional growth opportunities for GE teachers to extend their instructional tolerance range should be studied to determine if there is a significant difference in student ratings of instruction as a result.

3. Further research is needed to investigate the finding that there were no significant differences between LD and GE students in their perceptions of the level of academic progress resulting from the course. Studies of LD student perceptions of academic growth should include other achievement data to determine if there are significant differences.

4. The inclusion of severely disabled students should be studied to determine if the level of disability has an impact on student ratings of instruction as suggested by the model of differentiated expectations.

5. Student ratings of instruction from inclusion classes in other high schools should be studied to examine the impact of an increased sample size to determine if the results can be generalized to all high schools in the state with the identical DFG.
6. Further research is needed to determine if gender bias is a significant variable due to the increased percentage of male students within the LD student population. This would provide information for future researchers so they can control for gender if need be.

7. Methods to increase GE teachers’ awareness of the needs of LD students with mild disabilities should be studied. General education teachers’ may hold unrealistic expectations for students with mild disabilities. Heightening their awareness may allow them to set realistic expectations and ultimately increase student-teacher interactions.
References


Appendixes
Appendix A

Student Reaction to Course and Teacher: IDEA Form H
IDEA
STUDENT REACTION TO COURSE AND TEACHER: IDEA FORM II

Your honest and thoughtful answers to the questions on this form can help your teacher improve this course and his/her teaching methods. Record all your responses on the separate answer card. Do not write your name on either this form or on the answer card. Your teacher will receive a summary of the responses of all students in your class, but should not know how any individual person answered.

Part I. Some of the things that students learn in school are listed below. For each, rate the amount of progress you have made in this course by marking the numeral of the most suitable response.

1 = None
2 = Little
3 = Medium
4 = Much
5 = Great
6 = Exceptional

1. Gaining factual information (such as learning definitions, dates, vocabulary).
2. Understanding and applying principles, ideas, and theories.
3. Improving my learning skills (such as listening, reading, note-taking).
4. Improving my writing skills.
5. Improving my speaking skills.
6. Gaining skills and habits useful in everyday life or on a job.
7. Developing good feelings about myself (more acceptance of myself, more self-confidence).
8. Discovering or realizing my own interests, aptitudes, beliefs, and values.
9. Getting along with most other people.

Part II. For each of the following features of the course, fill in the numeral that best describes your reaction.

1 = Definitely not enough
2 = Not enough
3 = About right
4 = Too much
5 = Definitely too much

10. Amount of homework.
11. Number of tests.
12. Difficulty of reading.
13. Difficulty of course.

Part III. Describe your attitudes, feelings, and behaviors by filling in the appropriate numeral for each of the following statements.

1 = Definitely false
2 = More false than true
3 = In between
4 = More true than false
5 = Definitely true

15. I am very glad it was this teacher who taught this course.
16. I try very hard to learn in all of my courses.
17. As a result of taking this course, I like this subject more.
18. I really wanted to take this course regardless of who taught it.

Part IV. Indicate how well each of the following statements describes the students in this class by blackening the proper numeral.

1 = Definitely false
2 = More false than true
3 = In between
4 = More true than false
5 = Definitely true

The students in this class:
19. Enjoy working together.
20. Are angry about grades.
21. Use their mistakes as opportunities to learn.
22. Take responsibility for their own learning.
23. Think they are wasting their time.
25. Have interesting and useful discussions.
26. Are rude and out of control.

Part V. Indicate how well each of the following statements describes your teacher by blackening the most suitable numeral.

1 = Definitely false
2 = More false than true
3 = In between
4 = More true than false
5 = Definitely true

This teacher:
27. Understands student ideas and questions.
28. Expresses interesting and challenging ideas about the subject.
29. Uses tests, papers, projects, etc., that closely relate to the course purposes.
30. Cares about students as people.
32. Asks interesting and stimulating questions.
33. Gives tests, projects, etc., that cover the important points of the course.
34. Shows interest in student ideas.
35. Speaks in an understandable voice.
36. Suggests clearer ways for students to express their ideas.
37. Gives quizzes, papers, projects, etc., that help students to learn.
38. Makes helpful comments about student work.
39. Reviews material in ways that help students remember it.
40. Gives projects, tests, or assignments that require original or creative thinking.
41. Creates opportunities for students to use the material they learn.
42. Makes helpful suggestions about what kinds of things to study for a test.
43. Shows how the subject relates to other areas of knowledge.
44. Speaks with expressiveness and variety.
45. Is sensitive to student feelings about the subject.
46. Provides helpful instructional materials (such as worksheets, study questions, unit objectives).
47. Identifies strong points of student work.
48. Uses good examples and illustrations.
49. Tries different ways of teaching when students have trouble learning.
50. Seems to enjoy teaching.
Appendix B

Permission to Reprint IDEA Form H
February 24, 2000

Kathleen Monks
12 Murphy Drive
Bridgewater, NJ 08807

Dear Ms. Monks:

This is to respond to your e-mail of February 23, 2000. On behalf of this Center, you are given permission to reprint Form H. This permission is given under the following conditions:

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We look forward to learning about your research findings.

Sincerely yours,

William H. Pallett, Ph.D.
Director