2004

Is inclusion working at one middle school in Iowa?

Brett Alan Fischels
University of Northern Iowa

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

Is inclusion working at one middle school in Iowa?

Abstract

This study investigated how the inclusive special education program was operating at Thompson Middle School in Southeast Iowa. Three conclusions were found. First, a majority of the teachers interviewed felt inclusive education was having a positive impact on all students. Second, most of interviewees felt the administrators needed to provide more resources to insure success. Finally, the more years teaching experience an educator possessed, the less they viewed inclusive education as having a positive impact. Recommendations are made to address these conclusions.

IS INCLUSION WORKING AT ONE MIDDLE SCHOOL IN IOWA?

A Graduate Research Paper

Submitted to the

Division of Middle Level Education

Department of Curriculum and Instruction

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN IOWA

by

Brett Alan Fischels

December 2004

This Research Paper by: Brett Alan Fischels

Titled: Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa?

has been approved as meeting the research requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

Donna Schumacher-Douglas

Sept. 9, 2004
Date Approved

_____
Graduate Faculty Reader

_9/9/2004_
Date Approved

_____
Graduate Faculty Reader

Greg P. Stefanich

_9/9/04_
Date Approved

_____
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

ABSTRACT

This study investigated how the inclusive special education program was operating at one middle school in Southeast Iowa. Interviews were used to discover the perceptions and opinions of teachers who instructed at that middle school regarding their inclusive education program. The collected information from the interviews was then evaluated and recommendations on how inclusive education should evolve at the school were made.

The three conclusions found after the interview sessions consisted of the following themes. First, a majority of the teachers interviewed at Thompson Middle School felt inclusive education was having a positive impact on all students in the building. Second, most of interviewees felt the administrators at Thompson Middle School needed to provide more resources to insure the success of the inclusive education program. Finally, the more years teaching experience an educator possessed at Thompson Middle School the less they viewed inclusive education as having a positive impact on the school.

Three recommendations were made after reviewing the collected interview data. First, the inclusive education program needs to be kept in its current format to continue making a positive academic impact on the students it serves. Second, the teachers and administrators need to open the lines of communication to improve the way resources are allotted to teachers with special needs students in their classrooms. Finally, efforts need to be made to improve the perceptions of the more experienced teachers by providing

them with the extra training and technology they need to serve special needs students in

their classrooms.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1

Although the idea of inclusive education in the regular education classroom is nothing new to public schools, some of its earliest roots date back to the first federal special education statutes in 1974, the practice is still a controversial topic among many educators. The idea of inclusive education is defined as the following: the policy of educating a special needs learner in the school, and whenever possible, in the class that the child would attend if she or he did not have a disability (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 189). Though there has been little argument by either the supporters or detractors of inclusive education that it has had a daily impact on how students are taught in the classroom, this fact has commonly been the one of the few points both sides will concede regarding the issue (Baines, Baines, & Masterson, 1994; Deno, Foegen, & Robinson, 1996; Hines, 2001).

Unfortunately, the number of points that supporters and detractors of inclusive education have disagreed upon in the past is quite numerous. Three of the most hotly contested issues regarding the inclusive education model are the amount of training general education teachers need to successfully educate special needs students in their classroom, what role regular education teachers and special education teachers should play in the inclusive education framework, and how well the inclusive education model meets the social and academic needs of special needs students (Baines et al., 1994; Heiman, 2001; Hines, 2001; Quigney, 1998; Staub & Peck, 1995).

Detractors and supporters of inclusive education have often clashed over what is the appropriate amount of training for regular education teachers to obtain before they have the necessary skills to successfully meet the intellectual and behavioral challenges of special needs students. Do general education teachers need intensive in-servicing before special needs students enter their class or should there be an ongoing program in place throughout the year to train teachers in regards to their students' needs (Cheney & Barringer, 1995; Heiman, 2001)? Educators have also had trouble deciding the proper role special education teachers should play in the regular education classroom. Should special education teachers play a central role in educating all students in the general education classroom or should they be used more as a resource for special needs students in the general education setting (Fishman & Goss, 1996; Quigney, 1998)?

Finally, some educators have had a difficult time agreeing on how much special needs students benefit from being educated in the general education -classroom. Supporters of inclusive education claim that special needs students learn faster in the general education classroom and the positive interaction with general education peers enhances their social skills (Duhaney, Garrick, & Salend, 2000; Hines, 2001; Kauffman & Pullen, 1996; Turner & Traxler, 1997). Detractors of inclusive education claim that the inclusion process slows down the instructional pace for general education students and create unnecessary behavior disruptions that pull regular education students away from their learning (Baines et al., 1994; Staub & Peck, 1994).

Purpose

This study was conducted to determine, based on teacher perceptions, how well inclusive education has worked for teachers who have taught students using this instruction model. Interviews of teachers were conducted to determine their perceptions about the following subjects: positive educational aspects, negative educational aspects, and improvement of the process of inclusion of special needs students in the regular education classroom.

Ten teachers at Thompson Middle School, who had at least one full year of classroom experience in the building, were asked to participate in an interview about inclusive education practices. The questions that the interviewees were asked were grouped into the following categories: teaching experience, special needs education training, perceptions about inclusion of special needs students in the regular education classroom, and the school administration's role in special education.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the collection of literature and the interview protocol: (a) What positive educational aspects do teachers encounter when instructing students in an inclusive education setting? (b) What negative educational aspects do teachers encounter when instructing students in an inclusive education setting? (c) How do teachers think inclusion of special needs students in the regular classroom can be improved?

Significance of the Study

The intent of this ethnographic study was to determine the attitudes of the staff at Thompson Middle School on the topic of inclusive education practices. The responses given by the interviewed teachers provided insight into the overall success or failure of the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School. The interviews also provided teacher perspective on where the program needed to go in the future to continue the success of all students in the program.

Definitions

In order for readers to have a common understanding of this topic, the following definitions will be used:

Collaborative teaching- the process where the special and general educator share responsibility for planning and instructing a heterogeneous group of students in the regular classroom (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 180).

Inclusion- the policy of educating a special needs learner in the school, and whenever possible, in the class that the child would have attended if she or he did not have a disability (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 304).

Inclusive education- The process of educating special needs students with their peers to the maximum extent possible in the regular classroom (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 189).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)- a Federal law that requires schools to accommodate students' special needs so that their educational

opportunities are maximized in the least restrictive learning environment (Cangelosi, 2004, p. 170).

Least restrict environment- where the student's educational needs are met, so far as reasonably possible, in the same environment as that of students in the general education population (Cangelosi, 2004, p. 171).

*Middle school-*a school organizational approach, usually grades 6 to 8 and sometimes grade 5, that addresses the educational and developmental needs of 10- to 14- (sometimes 15-) year-olds, commonly known as young adolescents (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 305).

Self-contained classroom- a classroom where students stay with one teacher all day and the teacher provides instruction in all subjects with the possible exception of art and music (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 306).

Special-needs student- a student who differs from other students in ways such as mental characteristics, sensory abilities, physical abilities, or multiple handicaps and who qualifies for specialized services from educators (Manning & Bucher, 2001, p. 306).

<div align="center">Limitations</div>

For the purpose of this study, the limited research will be based on the perceptions of the staff members who currently teach at Thompson Middle School in Southeast, Iowa. This research will also be limited due to the fact that ten teachers will be interviewed and not all the teachers on the staff. Due to these limitations the study will have some limited implications beyond Thompson Middle School.

CHAPTER 2

Methodology

Due to the fact that inclusive education has had a daily impact on the way students are taught in the general education classroom it is important to get feedback from teachers who have taught in inclusive education settings. Teachers are able to provide valuable insights to the strengths and weaknesses of inclusive education because they are the ones who interact with students on a daily basis. Educator input has helped fine tune inclusive education techniques in the areas of curriculum delivery and behavior management to increase the academic achievement of all students in the classroom (Blum, Lipsett, & Yocom, 2002; Gross & Ortiz, 1994; Jenkins, et al., 1994; Tanner, Linscott, & Galis, 1996; Heiman, 2001). Teachers with inclusive education classroom experience have also provided guidance in the creating of successful instructional models that have efficiently divided the amount of labor assigned to the general education teacher and the special education teacher in the general education classroom (Quigney, 1998; Schulte, Osborne, & McKinney, 1990). Finally, experienced inclusive education classroom instructors have been useful resources as troubleshooters in determining why certain inclusive education strategies have been successful in the classroom and where other potential teaching strategies have needed to be improved to have a positive impact on student achievement (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Staub & Peck, 1994).

Subjects

The participants in the interview sessions had to meet a set list of criteria before they would be allowed to take part in the research project. All of the participants needed

to volunteer and be employed at Thompson Middle School in Southeast, Iowa as a teacher (pseudonyms are used for school, town, and teacher names). All participants also needed to hold a valid Iowa Teachers License and to have taught at Thompson Middle School for at least one complete school year.

Instruments Employed

An interview protocol based on the study's research questions was used to elicit responses from ten teachers at Thompson Middle School in Southeast, Iowa. The purpose of the interviews was to gain their insights on inclusive education practices. All selected participants were asked to answer questions regarding the following three research inquiries: what positive educational aspects do teachers encounter when instructing students in an inclusive education setting? What negative educational aspects do teachers encounter when instructing students in an inclusive education setting? How do teachers think the inclusion of special needs students in the regular education classroom can be improved?

Research Design and Procedures

Contact letters were sent to all eligible employees at Thompson Middle School to solicit volunteers for the interview protocol. All personal contact letters were sent to potential participants via envelopes placed in their school mailbox. Participant privacy was respected during the recruitment phase and no public release of names of those who received a recruitment letter was disclosed. All interested participants replied back to the researcher regarding their willingness to take part in the interview protocol. No coercion or appearance of coercion was used to enlist participants to take part in the research

project. From the pool of 19 teachers who volunteered, ten participants were selected based on a representative population of males, females, and degree of knowledge of the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School.

The benefit of this research project to society was enhanced knowledge of inclusive education practices with the ultimate goal being the improvement of education for all students. The selected and non-selected volunteers were notified in writing in regards to their on-going status in the research project. All participants were interviewed in videotaped sessions that lasted from 40 to 60 minutes in length. The questions in the interview protocol came from the study's three research questions (see interview protocol in Appendix A). The risk for participants included some psychological risk in that participants were asked to share personal reasons why they believed inclusive education practices were successful or unsuccessful. No deception or withholding of complete information was used during the interview protocol to elicit responses from the participating subjects.

A human participant review was completed and approved on May 15, 2003 (See appendix B for complete form). Identities were protected in the final report and interview procedure by the use of pseudonyms. Participants collaborated with the researcher to create a sufficient level of anonymity. Access to the video recordings of participant interviews was limited to the principal investigator and videos were secured in a locked file cabinet for participant protection.

All participants were given the opportunity to review the data regarding their interviews and correct or eliminate any information they did not want reported. The

interview participants were also given the chance to discontinue their participation in the research project if at any time they felt their anonymity has been compromised or they felt uncomfortable with the interview protocols.

Participant interviews were analyzed by the researcher for common themes or trends in the participants' experience with inclusive education practices. The researcher used quotes and story summaries to explain and clarify the meaning of the themes generated by the participants' responses. The researcher then took the gathered data and made recommendations for the improvement of inclusive education at Thompson Middle School based on the information collected at the teacher interviews.

CHAPTER 3

Literature Review

Due to the significant role that inclusive education practices have played over the last twenty-five years in public schools it is important to examine the effect they have had on classroom instructional methods. This literature review provides a systematic way to examine the successes and failures of inclusive education. It will also serve as a source of information for comparison to the middle school in this study. This literature review provided the researcher with the necessary background information to understand all the terminology and teaching practices used in the implementation of inclusive education.

Literature concerning the importance of inclusive education was not all of one opinion and, depending on the author of the literature, a number of different conclusions could be drawn from the available published data. The overall tone of the body of research indicated that inclusive education has had a positive influence on the educational development of most students who have been taught in that type of setting. This is not to say that all studies or authors felt that inclusive education was a completely positive influence on students' academic development or instructors' teaching methods. There was only one theme that could be found that was common to both the promoters and detractors statements concerning inclusive education practices. This common theme stated that improvements to inclusive education still needed to be implemented in most classrooms to fully optimize school resources and students' academic performances.

<u>Opponents</u>

The authors and studies that stated that inclusive education is not a productive way to educate regular and special needs students tended to concentrate on two main themes. First, opponents of inclusive education claimed that regular classroom teachers do not have the educational training or the physical support systems in place to accommodate the demands of special needs students in the general education classroom (Baines et al., 1994; Blum et al., 2002; Cheney & Barringer, 1995; Deno et al., 1996; Elliott & McKenny, 1998; Heiman, 2001; Hines, 2001; Quigney, 1998). The education of special needs students in many cases required the classroom instructor be provided with extra instructional training, modifications to the physical structure of the classroom, and extra educational personnel to facilitate the learning requirements of some disabled students. Critics of inclusive education argued that in too many instances special needs students were simply placed in the regular education classroom without the needed safeguards of these vital resources being provided to the regular classroom teacher. The failure of some schools to provide these protective safeguards put students, teachers, and school staff in situations that could have been potentially dangerous to their physical safety (Baines et al., 1994; Cheney & Barringer, 1995; Elliott & McKenny, 1998; Kauffman & Pullen, 1996). Opponents of inclusive education argued that until basic educational training and physical support systems are implemented, inclusive education strategies are not worth the academic or physical risks they presented to the classroom environment (Baines et al., 1994; Wright, 1999).

Another argument made by individuals who opposed inclusive education addressed the complex and sometimes overlapping roles of the general and special education teacher in the inclusive education classroom. They claimed that the regular education and special education teachers were often given inadequate training to be able to work effectively with one another in the general education classroom (Deno et al., 1996; Quigney, 1998; Schulte et al., 1990). This lack of effective training was an obstacle to an effective partnership in the regular education classroom. For the relationship between the regular and special education teacher to be successful, they needed some sort of instruction in collaborative teaching methods. This type of training needed to be offered to both teachers before they started to instruct together in the inclusive education classroom. Critics of inclusive education insisted that the collaborative training program needed to contain proven successful educational components like effective classroom models that show each teacher what roles they needed to fulfill for students and communication tools that effectively let them share their areas of teaching expertise. Opponents of inclusive education argued that until these much needed reforms were implemented into the inclusive education classroom this type of program model would never really meet the academic needs of all the students within the classroom (Quigney, 1998).

A second significant problem that detractors saw with the current relationship between the regular and special education teachers in inclusive education was the lack of time that educators got to spend planning lessons with each other. They claimed that the regular and special education instructors needed common planning time together during

the school day to be able to create daily lessons, make needed academic modifications, and discuss individual student's instructional needs (Deno et al., 1990). Without this necessary planning time, educators often did not have the expertise or educational resources available to meet the unique needs of all the students within their classroom. This shortfall not only lead to some special education students' academic needs not being satisfied, but also put an unfair burden on both the teachers to try and address the entire classes' appropriate level of educational achievement. Opponents of inclusive education have insisted that the failure to provide enough preparation time to the general and special educator to plan properly for inclusive education practices is a sure way to insure it will never satisfy the needs of any of the students it was intended to address (Quigney, 1998).

Proponents.

Proponents of inclusive education tended to base their belief in inclusive education on the conviction that this type of instruction helped special needs students improve their academic and social skills when compared to those students who remained in the resource or self-contained special education classroom (Jenkins et al., 1994; Kilgore, Griffin, Sindelar, & Webb, 2001; Ritter, Michel, & Irby, 1999; Rothenberg, 1995; Staub & Peck, 1994; Turner & Traxler, 1997). Many proponents of inclusive education have admitted that the system is far from being perfect but insisted that including special needs students in the general education classroom was the morally correct route for public education to proceed with in the future (Hines & Johnston, 1996). The supporters of inclusive education often pointed out the academic successes that

special needs students have had in inclusive education settings compared to their academic counterparts left solely in special education classrooms. One area proponents of inclusive education liked to highlight were the documented successes that many special needs students have had in the disciplines of reading and language arts (Anderson, 2000; Blum et al., 2002; Campoy, 1997; Jenkins et al., 1994; Schmidt, Rozendale, & Greenman, 2002). Special needs students who were exposed to different instructional techniques in inclusive education settings like cross-age and peer tutoring from non-disabled peers were able to improve such skills as vocabulary comprehension, reading fluency, and general writing skills compared to their counterparts who did not receive such assistance (Jenkins et al., 1994; Schmidt et al., 2002). A second important academic reason why proponents stressed including special needs students in the regular education setting was for the general education students to model appropriate classroom skills to their disabled peers. Many experts argued that without the proper classroom skills being modeled to special needs students they would have had a very difficult time learning the appropriate academic skills to help make them successful in the public school setting (Kauffman & Pullen, 1996; Miller, Fullmer, & Walls, 1996; Turner & Traxler, 1997).

Experts who supported inclusive education also believed that special needs students learned important personal and social skills in the inclusive education setting. Two of the most commonly mentioned benefits were an increase in self-confidence and the ablility to successfully socially interact with individuals who were different from them (Duhaney & Salend, 2000; Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Hines, 2001; Kilgore et al., 2001 Ritter et al., 1999; Staub & Peck, 1994). The increased self-confidence lead

disabled students to try new tasks that before they would have considered much too difficult to even attempt (Ritter et al., 1999). The learning of appropriate social behaviors when dealing with others helped the special needs student obtain interpersonal skills that would be valuable to them when they were outside the school environment (Petersen & Swan, 1997; Turner & Traxler, 1997). Each important skill, proponents argued, helped special needs students become more successfully integrated into our diverse society and helped them lead more socially fulfilling lives (Ritter et al., 1999).

Conclusion

The literature review was a valuable informational tool that helped shape and give a general conceptual framework to the main questions asked in this research project. It helped the author of the study understand the main goals and practices that are thought to be central to a successful inclusive education program. It also helped the author comprehend where problems have occurred and why they might have happened when a program is judged to be unsuccessful. The literature review gave the author a history of where the inclusive education movement has been and where proponents hope it will progress to in the future. Finally, the review helped the author understand different teachers' perspectives on the inclusive education process and why a teacher may agree or disagree with the goals of this instructional practice.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The purpose of this study was to discover how well inclusive education was working at Thompson Middle School in Southeast, Iowa. The method used to determine perspectives about how effective inclusive education has been in educating students were interview sessions with ten teachers who have worked at Thompson Middle School for at least one full school year. All the participants who were interviewed on videotape for this study were volunteers who currently hold a valid Iowa Teachers License. All participants' identities were kept anonymous through the use of pseudonyms and joint collaboration between the researcher and the study participants. Every participant in the study had the right to review their responses to questions and correct any answers they felt were incorrectly recorded by the interviewer. No deception or withholding of information was used on the study participants during the interview process to elicit responses and the potential for psychological risk to interview participants was kept to a minimum.

Data review procedures. Once the interview sessions were completed the researcher then went back and began to review and take new notes over the recorded video sessions. The reviewing and the additional note taking of the video taped interview sessions along with the field notes taken during the question and answer sessions provided the researcher with a basic database for this study. The database was then used by the researcher to conclude how much success teachers' perceived inclusive education practices were having in positively influencing such educational issues as classroom

instructional practices and student academic achievement in inclusive education classrooms.

The first three questions in the interview process dealt with the issue of determining how many years of classroom experience each participant had obtained and if they had had any type of career outside the field of education. The range in years of total teaching experience extended from thirty years to three years with an average of sixteen years of teaching experience. The range in the number of years teaching middle school students extended from thirty years to three years with an average of twelve years of working with middle school students. The range in years taught at Thompson Middle School extended from thirty years to two years with an average of ten years employment at Thompson Middle School. Four of the teachers interviewed had been employed in jobs other than education before they began employment at Thompson. These careers varied in nature from construction to the banking industry.

The interviewees represented all the core academic areas at Thompson Middle School including language arts, reading, math, social studies, and science. Interviewees also included teachers from the exploratory subject areas and the Special Education Department. The mean amount of time each participant had been teaching in his or her current subject area averaged eleven years. Half of the participants had taught in other subject areas than the subject area they were currently teaching. Three of ten interviewees had formal training in the field of Special Education. Eight out of the ten participants had some experience teaching in an inclusive education environment with the average amount of involvement being eight years.

Six of the ten participants questioned on the whole tended to have a more positive perception of inclusive education teaching practices than they did a negative perception of inclusive education teaching practices. Interviewees who had a positive disposition towards inclusive education felt it helped students and teachers in numerous classroom applications. First, they felt that having higher academic expectations placed on special needs students increased their academic growth and increased their self-concept by not singling them out with a pullout special education program. One teacher stated that "My special education students are able to see other students be successful in class and that helps them believe they can also succeed in class." Advocates went on to say that special needs students gained intellectually by being placed in diverse peer learning groups and having successful learning skills modeled to them by their non-disabled peers. This point was reinforced by a teacher who commented that "Special needs students learn more in the inclusive classroom because they want to be more like normal students." Second, inclusive education supporters said that regular education students benefited in the inclusive education model because it taught non-disabled students how to deal constructively with people from different backgrounds and taught them how to appreciate different types of learning styles and talents. A teacher commented that "The regular education students were pleasantly surprised to discover that special needs students have gifts and talents they can contribute to the classroom." Finally, inclusive education supporters said that having an inclusive education classroom has many benefits for improving a teacher's classroom instruction practices. The advocates claimed inclusive education forced teachers to think more creatively, be more flexible in instruction

methods, handle diversity more productively, and more fully utilize the talents of fellow teachers. One teacher said, "Planning for special education students in my classroom taught me how to modify lesson plans for all my students and not just the average performers."

Disruptions. Four participants interviewed tended to have a much more negative perception of inclusive education than they did a positive one. They cited a number of reasons why they felt inclusive education teaching practices detracted from the classroom-learning environment. First, regular education teachers saw having the special needs students in their classroom as a disruption to the everyday learning process. They saw inclusive education as nothing more then the special education teacher giving the answers to the special needs students instead of having them learn the required content material. One opponent to inclusive education stated, "Students can't learn when they are fed the answers in class and don't have to master the material." They also felt special needs students' behavior caused too many interruptions to the instructional environment for non-disabled students to be able to learn effectively. One teacher commented, "Special needs students distract the teacher's attention away from teaching and toward behavior problems." The opponents went on to say they felt that special needs students did not get enough of the one-on-one attention they deserved from the special education teacher due to the larger number of students found in inclusive education classes. A teacher stated, "It is nearly impossible to serve anybody's individual needs in my inclusion class because there are close to thirty students in my room."

Second, the objectors felt that inclusive education practices hurt non-disabled students academic progress. All of the detractors interviewed mentioned that in their inclusive education classes they couldn't cover the same amount of subject area material they could in a non-inclusive setting. They felt it was unfair to the regular education student to have to slow down the class pace so the special needs students could keep up with the rest of the class. One teacher asked, "How can you modify for some students without changing the content for everybody in the classroom?"

Finally, the opponents listed a number of instructor related problems they felt inclusive education brought into their classrooms. They claimed that inclusive education practices cause them unnecessary extra work and stress due to a lack of adequate planning time and the difficulty of trying to meet the needs of so many diverse ablility levels. One opponent remarked, "Inclusion is a big headache that isn't worth all the extra stress."

The ten interviewees disagreed on the merits of inclusive education in the regular education classroom, but their responses on how to improve the inclusive education program for the future were almost uniform. In all three questions dealing with the improvement of the inclusive education program for special needs students, regular education students, and classroom teachers the responses could be grouped into three general types of responses. A majority of the interviewees felt that teachers needed to be given more time to prepare adequate lessons to meet the diverse needs of all students in the classroom. One interviewee asked, "How are the regular and special education teacher suppose to plan together if they never see one another outside the classroom?" A

majority of respondents also felt that students needed to be grouped more into heterogeneous settings to take full advantage of all students' gifts and abilities. One participant said, "It's hard to get my students to appreciate diversity when they are never exposed to it." The last universal suggestion made by the respondents was for better lines of communication to be opened up between the regular education teachers and the special education teachers when instructing together in an inclusive education classroom. One interviewee replied, "Communication between the regular and special education teacher will improve only after each group understands what the other does."

The study participants were also in general agreement in terms of what role the general and special education teacher should play while interacting together within the inclusive education classroom. The consensus view concerning the role of the special education teacher was one of a co-teacher and the person responsible for modifying lessons to address individual student abilities. One comment made was, "The special education teacher needs to take the content area material and present it in way that is understandable to the special needs student." To a lesser degree the idea of the special education teacher modifying the grading process was discussed as an area to explore for possible future implementation. The role of the general education teacher was described as the person who would be the expert in the curriculum area presented to the class and as a resource for the special education teacher. Another role the general education teacher was responsible for was pace setter and evaluator of class progress. One teacher responded, "The role of the regular education teacher in the classroom is to set the standard and the pace for the room."

The last four questions in the survey explored the teachers' perceptions regarding the role of administrators at Thompson Middle School in the special needs inclusive education program. Eight teachers responded, "No," when asked if they felt that Thompson's' staff had had enough training to make the inclusive education program successful for all students in the school building. One teacher responded, "I need more information on how to modify the curriculum to meet my students' needs." Six teachers replied, "No," when asked if they felt that the staff at Thompson received enough training to make them feel comfortable teaching inclusive education classes. One teacher said, "I want more information on how inclusion works."

When asked what the administration in the Thompson school building could do to make the inclusive education program more successful in the building a number of different answers were given. The most numerous responses given by teachers were (1) more modeling of inclusive education instruction practices for classroom teachers and (2) sufficient release time to go visit and observe other schools that have inclusive education classrooms. One teacher stated, "My comfort level would rise if I could see how other schools made inclusion work in their school." Another common reply as to how the administration could promote inclusive education was for regular education teachers and special education teachers to share a common preparation period during the normal school day. This common preparation time could then be used by teachers to co-plan lessons and work out any problems they may be encountering in trying to meet the academic needs of all students in the classroom. An interviewee remarked, "Teachers need time together to combine their strengths so they can teach effectively."

The last question asked of the participants was whether they felt the Thompson school administrators were willing to listen to suggestions from teachers to improve the inclusive education program. Nine of the teachers responded, "Yes," to this question but three qualified their answers with conditions. Two of the respondents said the administration would listen to teacher input, but take no action on the suggestions. The other teacher who answered affirmatively with a qualification responded by saying that "The only way we will get our administrators to act is if we can do it for free." The only teacher who responded negatively felt the school administration was not interested in hearing any negative input regarding inclusive education at Thompson Middle School.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Due to the fact that inclusive education has an impact on the way students are

taught in the classroom the manner in which it is used needs to be productive and

effective. One way to insure that inclusive education is efficiently used in the classroom

is through the suggestions and ideas of teachers who use the practice daily. This

information once analyzed can be used to reach conclusions and make recommendations

on how the inclusive education program is currently working and how it can be improved

for the future.

Positive impact. When examining data the results of the information collected

from the study at Thompson Middle School, a number of different conclusions can be

reached in regards to the impact the inclusive education program is having on the

students and staff at the school: even though there is not a complete consensus among the

teaching staff about the effectiveness of the inclusive education program at Thompson

Middle School, the sampling of teachers interviewed for the study seemed to indicate to

the author that a majority of the teachers at the school feel the program is having a

positive impact on students' lives. The supporters of the inclusive education program

mentioned a number of different social and academic benefits they felt improved the

quality of school life for all the students and staff at Thompson Middle School.

Benefits. A short list of the most mentioned benefits would include the improved

self-esteem of special needs and regular education students, improved academic

achievement among special needs students, and the opportunity for all students to learn

how to cooperatively work with others who have different skills and talents than themselves. One teacher commented, "Inclusive education makes special needs students feel normal and they learn faster being around their peers." The collected data additionally indicated that the supporters of the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School felt that if students with special needs are kept in pullout type special education programs and not placed in inclusive types of educational settings they will not grow as quickly socially or academically as they possibly could if they were removed from these pullout environments. In closing, the proponents of inclusive education at Thompson Middle School sound similar to much of the contemporary literature on the subject of inclusive education in that they believe inclusive educational practices are what promote the most academic and social growth for all students in the classroom (Hines & Johnston, 1996; Ritter et al., 1999; Staub & Peck, 1994; Turner & Traxler, 1997).

Administrators' role. The second conclusion that be reached from the collected information is that the teachers at Thompson Middle School believe the school administrators could provide more resources to improve the quality of the inclusive education program. Seven out of the ten teachers questioned did not think the school administration had done an adequate job of preparing teachers to instruct in an inclusive education setting. Additionally, ten out of eight teachers responded they felt the staff had not had enough training to make inclusive education teaching a successful learning experience for all students at Thompson Middle School. One teacher stated, "I need more then two hours worth of in-service training to make this work." This strong

negative response to these two questions indicated to the interviewer that there is a significant gap in the amount of in-service training teachers feel they should receive and what the administration is willing or able to offer them. This point was reinforced when looking through participant responses on the question regarding what the Thompson administration could do to improve inclusive education program at the school. Many of the teachers responded to this question by asking for more in-service training on practical classroom instruction techniques when in classrooms full of diverse learners. The teachers additionally wanted more release time to visit other schools and attend workshops that address problems concerned with behavior management, curriculum modification, methods that streamlined the co-instructing process, and stress management. One teacher said, "It sure would be nice to have someone model what I'm supposed to do." The extent to which the teachers felt they needed more training than the administration was not really shocking when comparing the progression the inclusive education program had taken at Thompson Middle School to other schools that have made significant modifications to the way they try to educate special needs students. Research concerning the perceptions that teachers and administrators have concerning the inclusive education implementation process finds that most school administrators were less concerned with the integration problems of inclusive education programs than teachers (Tanner et al., 1996).

Length of school service. The last conclusion that can be discovered in the research data is not as obvious as the other two, but one that is striking nonetheless. When taking a close look at who responded negatively and who responded positively to

the idea of inclusive education the number of years of teaching experience seemed to play a role in how the participants viewed the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School. All of the interviewees who were not in favor of the inclusive education program had ten or more years of teaching experience. One teacher asked, "Why can't they train special education teachers better so they can teach these subjects?" In contrast everyone who had less than ten years of classroom experience were in favor of the program. The pattern concerning years teaching experience effecting the teacher's perception of the inclusive education program stayed consistent even when factoring in the age of the responding participant compared to their number of years teaching experience. There were two exceptions to the rule regarding those who were in favor of the inclusive education program, but had over ten years of teaching experience. A special education teacher and a teacher who had a special needs student who attended Thompson Middle School were in favor of an inclusive education program.

On the whole though, the more years teaching experience the instructor had the more they viewed the inclusive education program as a classroom distraction and an impediment to how quickly they were able to cover subject area material. They also as a group felt less trained and less able to meet the unique requirements of special needs students in comparison to the instructors who had less than ten years teaching experience. Finally, the more years the teacher had in the classroom the less likely they were to feel that the Thompson school administration would listen to their concerns in terms of improving the inclusive education program. The researcher found no similar instances of this type of phenomenon in the research literature but attributes the difference in attitudes

to less exposure to special needs students in the past and a feeling of neglect by the

school administration on the part of the teachers.

<div align="center">Recommendations</div>

Current format. The first recommendation for the Thompson Middle School

inclusive education program would be to keep it in place in its current format. The

program seems to have the support of the majority of the instructional staff. The

supporters of the inclusive education program were vocal about their commitment to the

program and the reasons why they felt it was in the best interests of the entire population

at Thompson Middle School. One teacher commented, "The inclusive program is the

best chance special needs students have to be successful in school." It is recommended

that the entire staff examine and brainstorm how to solve some of the most prevalent

problems that were mentioned during the study's interviews. These suggestions should

include developing ideas for maintaining an academically challenging classroom pace for

non-disabled students, while at the same time presenting content area material at a

reasonable rate for special needs students (Fishman & Goss, 1996). Creating enough

usable preparation time during the school day so the regular education teacher and the

special education teacher can plan and design lesson they both feel comfortable co-

teaching (Deno et al., 1990; Quigney, 1998). Finally, creating an educational

environment schoolwide that utilizes all the skills, talents, and diversity of the student

body so that each student at Thompson Middle School is seen as a contributing member

of the learning community (Staub & Peck, 1995). Once these suggestions are

implemented it should increase the effectiveness of the inclusive education program at

Thompson Middle School and produce a student body, which is better prepared to contribute to society after they leave the school.

Communication. A second recommendation I would make concerning the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School would be to improve communication between the administration and the teachers in regards to how training and resources are distributed to educators with special needs students. The teachers' responses in regard to how well they thought the school administrators had prepared the staff for teaching in inclusive education classrooms were troubling. One teacher stated, "They may listen but they don't act on what we say." It is suggested that both parties open a dialogue to address this concern and try to find some workable solutions. These solutions might include more school in-service time being devoted to professional development about inclusive education teaching practices, more release time for teachers to make site visits of other schools that have similar successful inclusive education programs, a restructuring of preparation time so teachers who co-instruct can plan together, and the creation of a joint committee of teachers and administrators to problem solve difficulties as they arise during the school year. The administrators might also want to take a more active role in seeking out teacher views and opinions on an informal basis so they are more in touch with teachers' concerns and experiences throughout the school year. A failure to put into place some of these reforms may result in unnecessary teacher stress and an inadequate distribution of school resources (Baines et al., 1994; Tanner et al., 1996). Once an open line of communication has been established between the teachers and administrators, it will likely decrease the amount of teacher discontent

concerning the issue of instructor training and provide an outlet for future problem solving ventures relating to inclusive education.

       <u>Perceptions</u>. The final recommendation suggested to improve the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle School would be to make a concentrated effort to try and improve the perception about inclusive education programs among the teachers with ten years or more of classroom experience at Thompson Middle School. Teacher advocates of the inclusive education program and the school administrators can attempt to meet this goal in a variety of ways. The data collected from the survey indicated teachers with more classroom experience felt less prepared to teach special needs students compared to the newer classroom teachers. One older teacher commented, "How do I teach to all the different levels in my classroom?" This perception difference could be addressed by providing ongoing in-service training and a support team of fellow teachers or "coaches" to provide assistance to instructors when they requested or needed it (Cheney & Barringer, 1995). Providing the experienced teachers with the specialized materials and technology services they require in their classrooms to meet the requirements of their special needs students or assigning the experienced teachers a special education teacher who shares similar educational philosophies to help assist them in modifying curriculum and planning lessons (Hines & Johnston, 1996), may be two options. Finally, the school administration should take extra care to make sure the lines of communication are open between themselves and the more experienced teachers to insure these individuals feel their input and concerns are being considered in terms of

improving the inclusive education program for all students at Thompson Middle School

(Tanner et al., 1996).

Once these reforms are put into place it is hoped that the teachers with more than

ten years of classroom teaching experience would feel more comfortable educating

students with special needs in their classroom and their attitudes toward the inclusive

education program at Thompson Middle School would take on a more positive outlook.

Summary

Although the concept of educating students with special needs in the regular

education classroom is not a new idea in public education, it still remains a controversial

issue. Proponents and opponents of the practice both make charges and countercharges

regarding the effectiveness of the process on the academic and social development of

students. It is important to understand the perceptions of classroom teachers who

regularly interact with inclusive education programs to see how they feel these practices

are working in the classroom and determine alternatives for improvement. This study

was conducted at Thompson Middle School to evaluate the impact of that school's

inclusive education program on student achievement through the procedure of teacher

interviews.

In using the process of video taped interviews to discuss and document teacher

feelings and opinions concerning the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle

School three main themes were discovered. The most important theme found was that a

majority of the teachers supported the inclusive education program at Thompson Middle

School and felt strongly that it benefited all the students and teachers in the school

building. Additionally, proponents felt that pullout special education programs retarded the academic and social growth of special needs students. The second theme present in the interviews was a disconnect between the Thompson Middle School teaching staff and school administration regarding the proper level of training needed to successfully educate students in an inclusive education classroom setting. The teachers felt they needed more in-service training, more opportunities to make on-site visits to other schools operating similar successful inclusive education programs, and more preparation time so teachers who were co-instructing could create daily lesson plans together. The final theme present in the interview data was a seeming reluctance of the more experienced Thompson Middle School classroom teachers to have a more positive perception of inclusive education as did the younger teachers. Experienced educators felt less prepared and less listened to by the school administration in terms of improving the inclusive education program.

References

Anderson, P. L. (May, 2000). Using literature to teach social skills to adolescents with

L.D. *Intervention in School and Clinic, 35*(5), 271-279.

Baines, L., Baines, C., & Masterson, C. (September, 1994). Mainstreaming: One school's

reality. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(1), 39-53.

Blum, T. H., Lipsett, L. R., & Yocom, D.J. (March/April, 2002). Literature circles: A tool

for self-determination in one middle school inclusive classroom. *Remedial and

Special Education, 23*(2), 99-108.

Campoy, R. W. (Summer, 1997). Creating a moral curriculum: How to teach values using

children's literature and metacognitive strategies. *Reading Improvement, 34*(2),

54-65.

Cangelosi, J. S. (2004). *Classroom management strategies: Gaining and maintaining

students' cooperation.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Cheney, D. & Barringer, C. (July, 1995). Teacher competence, student diversity, and staff

training for the inclusion of middle school students with emotional and behavioral

disorders. *Journal of Emotional and Behavioral Disorders, 3*(3), 174-182.

Deno, S. L., Foegen, A., & Robinson S. (Fall, 1996). Commentary: Facing the realities of

inclusion for students with mild disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education,

30*(3), 345-357.

Duhaney, L. M. G., & Salend, S. (March/April, 2000). Parental perceptions of inclusive

educational placements. *Remedial and Special Education, 21*(2), 121-128.

Elliott, Dori., & McKenney, Merry. (March/April, 1998). Four inclusion models that

 work. *Teaching Exceptional Children, 30*(4), 54-58.

Fishman, J. M., & Goss, B. M. (March, 1996). Inclusion in an urban middle school.

 Middle School Journal, 27(4), 24-28.

Fox, N. E. & Ysseldyke, J. E. (Fall, 1997). Implementing inclusion at the middle school

 level: Lessons from a negative example. *Council for Exceptional Children, 64*(1),

 81-99.

Gross, A. L., & Ortiz, L. W. (March, 1994). Using children's literature to facilitate

 inclusion in kindergarten and primary grades. *Young Children, 49*(3), 32-35.

Heiman, T. (2001). Inclusive schooling-middle school teachers' perceptions. *School

 Psychology International, 22*(4), 451-462.

Hines, R. A. (December, 2001). *Inclusion in middle schools* [Online]. Available:

 http://www.ldonline.org/ld_indepth/special_education/hines_middle_

 inclusion.pdf [2002, November 6].

Hines, R. A., & Johnston, J. H. (February/March, 1996). Inclusive classrooms the

 principal's role in promoting success. *Schools In The Middle, 5*(3), 6-11.

Jenkins, J. R., Jewell, M., Leicester, N., O'Connor, R. E., Jenkins, L. M., & Troutner, N.

 M. (February, 1994). Accommodations for individual differences without

 classroom ability groups: an experiment in school restructuring. *Exceptional

 Children, 60*(4), 344--358.

Kauffman, J. M., & Pullen P. L. (January, 1996). Eight myths of special education.

 Focus on Exceptional Children, 28(5), 1-12.

Kilgore, K., Griffin, C. C., Sindelar, P. T., & Webb, R. B. (2001). Restructuring for inclusion: A story of middle school renewal (part 1). *Middle School Journal, 33*(2), 44-51.

Manning, M. L., & Bucher K. (2001). *Teaching in the middle school.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Miller, K. J., Fullmer, S. L., & Walls, R. T. (1996). Reflections on "a dozen years of mainstreaming literature: a content analysis. *Exceptionality, 6*(2), 129-131.

Petersen, M. D., & Swan, W. W. (1997). Middle school principal's tasks and strategies to facilitate inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classes. *Research in Middle Level Education Quarterly, 20*(2), 65-89.

Quigney, T. (1998). Collaborative teacher training for special and general educators: rationale and recurring themes. *British Columbia Journal of Special Education, 21*(3), 20-32.

Ritter, C. L., Michel, C.S., & Irby, B. (1999). Concerning inclusion: Perceptions of middle school students, their parents, and teachers. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, 18*(2), 10-16.

Rothenberg, D. (September, 1995). Inclusion in the middle school: An update. *Middle School Journal, 27*(1), 56-58.

Schulte, A.C., Osborne, S. S., & McKinney, J. D. (October/November, 1990). Academic outcomes for students with learning disabilities in consultation and resource programs. *Exceptional Children, 57*(2), 162-173.

Schmidt, R. J., Rozendal, M. S., & Greenman, G. G. (May/June, 2002). Reading

   instruction in the inclusion classroom: researched-based practices. *Remedial and*

   Special Education, 23(3), 130-140.

Staub, D., & Peck, C. P. (December/Janaury, 1994/1995). What are the outcomes for

   nondisabled students. *Educational Leadership, 52*(4), 37-40.

Tanner, C. K., Linscott, D. J. V., & Galis, S. A. (1996). Inclusive education in the united

   states: Beliefs and practices among middle school principals and teachers.

   Educational Policy Analysis Archives, 4(19), 1-30.

Turner, N. D., & Traxler, M. (December, 1997). Children's literature for the primary

   inclusive classroom: increasing understanding of children with hearing

   impairments. *American Annals of the Deaf, 141*(5), 350-355.

Wright, E. B. (January, 1999). Full inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular

   classroom: Is it the only answer? *Social Work in Education, 21*(1), 11-22.

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa Questionnaire?

The following questions will be the focus of this research study:

How long have you been a teacher?

1. How long have you taught Middle School Students?

2. How long have you taught at Thompson Middle School?

3. Have you ever had any other occupation besides teaching, and if yes what?

What subject do you teach?

1. How long have you taught that subject?

2. Have you ever taught any other subjects, and if yes what?

3. Do you have any sort of training in the area of Special Education?

How long have you taught students in an inclusion classroom setting?

1. What do you feel is positive about the inclusion program at Thompson in the following areas?

    a. Special needs students

    b. Regular education students

    c. Teachers

2. What do you feel is negative about the inclusion program at Thompson in the following areas?

    a. Special needs students

    b. Regular education students

    c. Teachers

3. If you could improve the inclusion program at Thompson how would you do it in the following areas?

    a. Special needs student

    b. Regular education students

    c. Teachers

4. Do you feel the staff at Thompson has had enough training to make inclusion teaching a successful educational experience for all students?

5. Do you feel the staff at Thompson has had enough training to help them feel comfortable teaching inclusion classes?

6. What do you feel the role of the Special Education teacher in an inclusion classroom should be?

7. What do you feel the role of the regular classroom teacher in an inclusion classroom should be?

Do you think the administration has done a good job of preparing teachers to instruct in an inclusion classroom?

1. What could the administration do to help inclusion teaching be more? successful at Thompson?

2. Do you feel the administration is willing to listen to suggestions to improve the inclusion program at Thompson?

APPENDIX B

Office Use Only: Protocol # _____

University of Northern Iowa
Human Participants Review Committee Application

Note: Before Completing Application, Investigators Must Read **Information for Investigators**
(http://www.grad.uni.edu/research/policy.asp)

All items must be completed and the form must be typed or printed electronically. Submit 3 hard copies to the Human Participants Review Committee, Graduate College, 122 Lang Hall, 0135

Title of proposal: **Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa?**

Project Type(s):   ☐ Faculty/Staff Research   ☐ Class Project   ☐ Thesis/Dissertation   X Indep Study

☐ Grant/Contract   ☐ Other, Specify   _____

Name of Principal Investigator(s) (PI):   **Brett Fischels**

Status: ☐ Faculty   ☐ Undergraduate Student   X Graduate Student   ☐ Staff

PI Department: **Curriculum & Instruction**   Faculty Advisor Dept (if different

PI Phone: **641-683-7578**   PI Email: **fischelsb@aea15.k12.ia.us**

PI Campus Mailing Address/Mail Code _____

Source of Funding: **Student funded**

Agency's Number (if assigned): _____

Data collection dates: Beginning   **4/15/03**   Through   **6/5/03**

Project Status: ☐ X New   ☐ Renewal   ☐   ☐ Grant-Compet. Renewal   ☐ Grant-Non-compet.Renew

----

Has the PI and faculty sponsor (if applicable) completed IRB training/certification in Human
Participants Issues?   PI   ☐ YES   DATE_____ X NO
                       FACULTY SPONSOR ☐ YES   DATE_____ X NO

SIGNATURES: The undersigned acknowledge that: 1. this application represents an accurate and complete description of the proposed research; 2. the research will be conducted in compliance with the recommendations of and only after approval has been received from the UNI IRB. The PI is responsible for reporting any serious adverse events or problems to the IRB, for requesting prior IRB approval for modifications, and for requesting continuing review and approval.

Principal Investigator(s):   **Brett Fischels**   3/7/03

          TYPED NAME PLUS SIGNATURE   DATE

Faculty sponsor (required for all student projects):   **Dr. Donna Schumacher-Douglas**

          TYPED NAME PLUS SIGNATURE   DATE

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITY. In **lay language**, answer in spaces provided (add numbered and referenced sheets when necessary). Do not refer to an accompanying grant or contract proposal.

A. PURPOSE OF RESEARCH. Explain **1)** why this research is important and what the primary purposes are, and **2)** what question(s) or hypotheses this activity is designed to answer, and **3)** if this is a class project, explain whether and how the data will be used or presented outside the classroom.

1)   Importance of Study: Inclusion of special needs students in regular education classrooms has a daily impact how students are instructed at school. Since teachers are the ones in charge of delivering instruction it essential that teachers provide quality education to all students.

The primary purpose of this study is to determine (1) what positives do teachers encounter with inclusion teaching, (2) what negatives do they encounter with inclusion teaching, and (3) how do educators think inclusion teaching can be improved.

3) This study will contribute to the knowledge base by informing current educators what types of instructional practices teachers believe work with inclusion classrooms, do not work with inclusion classrooms, and improve instructional delivery to students in inclusion classrooms.

B. RESEARCH PROCEDURES INVOLVED. 1. Provide a complete description of: a. the study design, and b. all study procedures that will be performed (e.g., presentation of stimuli, description of activity required, topic of questionnaire or interview, name of psychological test). Provide this information for each phase of the study (pilot, screening, intervention and follow-up). Attach study flow sheet, if desired.

Attach questionnaires, interview questions/topic areas, scales, and/or examples of stimuli to be presented to participants.

An interview protocol based on the research questions will be used to interview ten teachers at ▆▆▆▆ Middle School in Ottumwa, Iowa. The purpose of the interviews will be to gain their insights on Inclusion teaching practices. Respondents will all be teachers at ▆▆▆▆ Middle School.

To participate in this study, participants must be employed at ▆▆▆▆ Middle School as a teacher. They must hold a valid teacher's license and have taught at ▆▆▆▆ for at least one year. Ten teachers will be interviewed to learn their views on inclusion teaching models. Those persons who volunteer, but are not selected, will be notified in writing.

Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa?
Questionnaire for Interviews

The following Questions will be the focus of this research study:

How long have you been a teacher?

    1. How long have you taught Middle School Students?

    2. How long have you taught at ███ Middle School?

    3. Have you ever had any other occupation besides teaching, and if yes what?

What subject do you teach?

    1. How long have you taught that subject?

    2. Have you ever taught any other subjects, and if yes what?

    3. Do you have any sort of training in the area of Special Education?

How long have you taught students in an inclusion classroom setting?

    1. What do you feel is positive about the inclusion program at ███ in the following areas?

        a. Special needs students

        b. Regular education students

        c. Teachers

    2. What do you feel is negative about the inclusion program at ███ in the following areas?

        a. Special needs students

        b. Regular education students

        c. Teachers

3. If you could improve the inclusion program at ▮▮▮ how would you do it in the following areas?

    a. Special needs student

    b. Regular education students

    c. Teachers

4. Do you feel the staff at ▮▮▮ has had enough training to make inclusion teaching a successful educational experience for all students?

5. Do you feel the staff at ▮▮▮ has had enough training to help them feel comfortable teaching inclusion classes?

6. What do you feel the role of the Special Education teacher in an inclusion classroom should be?

7. What do you feel the role of the regular classroom teacher in an inclusion classroom should be?

Do you think the administration has done a good job of preparing teachers to instruct in an inclusion classroom?

1. What could the administration do to help inclusion teaching be more successful at ▮▮▮?

2. Do you feel the administration is willing to listen to suggestions to improve the inclusion program at ▮▮▮?

Methodology

If selected participants will be notified in writing. Participants will be interviewed in a video-taped session for approximately 45 minutes to an hour. The questions asked during the interview will be derived from the research questions presented above.

Participant identity will be protected. Participants will collaborate with the researcher to create a sufficient level of anonymity for their responses. When completed interview data will be made available to participants for correction, elimination, or clarification of responses.

All responses will be analyzed by the researcher for common themes. Quotes and story summaries from the interviews will be used to explain and clarify the meaning of the themes generated.

The results of this study will not be used for academic journals or presented at scholarly conferences.

C. DECEPTION: If any deception or withholding of complete information is required for this activity, explain why this is necessary and attach a protocol explaining if, how, when, and by whom participants will be debriefed.

```
No deception is planned
```

D. PARTICIPANTS

1. Approximately how many participants will you need to **complete** this study?

   Number _____ 8-10 _____ Age Range(s) 23-65

2. What characteristics (inclusion criteria) must participants have to be in this study? (Answer for each participant group, if different.)

```
     The participants will all be employed at ███ Middle
School as teachers.  They must hold a valid teacher's
license and have taught in the building for at least one
complete school year.  They must be aged 23 to 65 years
old.
```

3. Describe how you will recruit your participants and who will be directly involved in the recruitment. (<u>Attach advertisements, flyers, contact letters, telephone contact protocols, scripts, web site template, etc.</u>)

```
     Contact letters will be sent to eligible employees at
███ Middle School to solicit volunteers. Of those
volunteers, ten participants will be selected primarily
based on a representative population of males, females,
and degree of knowledge of the inclusion program at the
school.
```

4. How will you protect participants' privacy during recruitment? (<u>Attach letters of cooperation & agreement from any and all agencies, institutions or others involved in participant recruitment.</u>)

```
     Personal Contact letters will be sent out to each
eligible person.  Participant privacy will be respected
during the recruitment phase and no public release of
names of those who receive recruitment letters allowed.
```

5. Explain what steps you will take during the recruitment process to minimize potential coercion or the appearance of coercion.

```
     Subjects will reply back to the researcher if they
want more information about their participation or if they
```

are willing to be considered as subjects for interviews.
No coercion or the appearance of coercion is expected to
take place. Potential participants identities will be
kept anonymous and all interviewees will have the option
to discontinue participation at any time if they feel
uncomfortable with the interview protocols. It is hoped
that these safeguards will prevent coercion or the
appearance of coercion during the study.

6. Will you give participants gifts, payments, services without charge, or course credit?

X No   ☐ Yes If yes, explain:

7. Where will the study procedures be carried out? If any procedures occur off-campus,
who is involved in conducting that research? (<u>Attach copies of IRB approvals or letters
of cooperation from non-UNI research sites if procedures will be carried out elsewhere.</u>)

☐ On campus   X Off campus ☐ Both on- and off-campus

Do offsite research collaborators have human participants protection training?
☐ No   ☐ Yes ☐ Don't know   X Not applicable – no offsite collaborators

E. RISKS AND BENEFITS

1. All research carries some social, economic, psychological, or physical risk. Describe
   the nature and degree of risk of possible <u>injury</u>, <u>stress</u>, <u>discomfort</u>, <u>invasion</u> of <u>privacy</u>,
   and other <u>side effects</u> from all study procedures, activities, and devices (standard and
   experimental), interviews and questionnaires. Include psychosocial risks as well as
   physical risks.

   The risks for participants to engage in this study
may include some psychological risk since they will be
asked to share personal reasons why they believe inclusion
is successful or unsuccessful. All participants will be
given pseudonyms. Other details of the participants'
positions and other identifying information will be
altered in collaboration with the participants so their
identity is given as much anonymity as each participant
finds comfortable. If the agreement between the
researcher and participants on the level of anonymity
cannot be reached, the participant's responses will not be
included in the study.

2. Explain what steps you will take to minimize risks of harm and to protect participants' confidentiality, rights and welfare. (If you will include protected groups of participants which include minors, fetuses in utero, prisoners, pregnant women, or cognitively impaired or economically or educationally disadvantaged participants, please identify the group(s) and answer this question for each group.)

> Participants will be given an opportunity to review the data regarding their interviews and correct or eliminate any information they do not want reported. The participants will not be harmed nor will their rights or welfare be impeded.

3. Study procedures often have the potential to lead to the unintended discovery of a participant's personal medical, psychological, and/or psycho-social conditions that could be considered to be a risk for that participant. Examples might include disease, genetic predispositions, suicidal behavior, substance use difficulties, interpersonal problems, legal problems or other private information. How will you handle such discoveries in a sensitive way if they occur?

```
Due to the use of the interview methodology, the reporting
of private information will be at the discretion of the
interviewee.  In addition, participants will be given an
opportunity to review the data regarding their personal
interviews and correct or eliminate any information they
do not want reported.
```

4. Describe the anticipated benefits of this research for individual participants in each participant group. If none, state "None."

```
     The individual participants will be contributing to
knowledge about inclusion classrooms by telling their own
stories.
```

5. Describe the anticipated benefits of this research for society, and explain how the benefits outweigh the risks.

```
     The benefits for society will be enhanced knowledge
about inclusion classrooms with the ultimate goal being
the improvement of education for all inclusion students.
```

F. CONFIDENTIALITY OF RESEARCH DATA

1. Will you record any direct participant identifiers (names, Social Security numbers, addresses, telephone numbers, locator information, etc.)

No X Yes   If yes, explain why recording identifiers is necessary and describe the coding system(s) you will use to protect against disclosure.

```
     All interviewees will be given pseudonyms.  Other
details of the participants' positions and other
```

identifying information will be altered in collaboration
with the participants so their identity is given as much
anonymity as the participants finds comfortable.

2. After data collection is complete, will you retain a link between study code numbers
and direct identifiers after the data collection is complete?

   X No ☐ Yes   If yes, explain why this is necessary and for how long you will
   keep this link.

3. Describe how you will protect data against disclosure to the public or to other
   researchers or non-researchers. Other than members of the research team, explain who
   will have access to data (e.g., sponsors, advisers, government agencies) and how long
   you intend to keep the data. If data will be collected via web or internet, please
   include information on security measures, use of passwords, encryption, access to
   servers, firewalls, etc.

   The Principal Investigator will be the only person
   with access to identifying data. The data will be secured
   in a closet. The data will be retained for five years and
   then destroyed.

4. Do you anticipate using any data (information, interview data, etc.) from this study for
   other studies in the future?

   X No ☐ Yes If "Yes," explain and include this information in the consent form.

G. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1. Will you need access to participants' medical, academic, or other personal records for
   screening purposes or during this study?

   X No ☐ Yes. If yes, specify types of records, what information you will take from
   the records and how you will use them.

2. Will you make sound or video recordings or photographs of study participants?

   ☐ No X Yes.   If yes, explain what type of recordings you will make, how long
   you will keep them, and if anyone other than the members of the
   research team will be able to see them.

Video recordings will be made during the interviews with approval from the interviewees. The Principal Investigator will be the only person with access to the recordings. The data will be retained for five years and then destroyed

H. CONSENT FORMS/PROCESS Check all that apply.

X **Written** (Attach a copy of all consent and assent forms for each participant group.)

☐ **Oral** (Attach a written script of oral consent and assent for each participant group and justification for waiver of documentation of consent)

☐ **Elements of Consent Provided via Letter or Electronic Display** (Attach written justification of waiver of documentation of consent along with text of consent for letter or display)

☐ **Waiver of Consent** (Attach written justification of waiver of consent process. Note that waiver of consent would only be granted if the consent process itself posed a greater risk to participants than did participation in the research)

University of Northern Iowa
Human Participant Review
Informed Consent

Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa?

Principal Investigator: Brett Fischels
Faculty Sponsor: Dr. Donna Schumacher-Douglas

() **Yes, I want to participate in your study.** I understand I will be interviewed for approximately one hour about my views on inclusion. I will complete the **"Agreement to Participate"** form and return it to Brett Fischels, room 114.

() **No, I do not want to participate in this project at any time.**

Agreement to Participate

() I hereby volunteer and agree to participate in the project "Is Inclusion Working at One Middle School in Iowa?"

() I have been told that my participation is completely voluntary. I have been advised that I am free to withdraw from participation at any time or choose not to participate at all, and that by doing so I will not be penalized or lose benefits to which I am otherwise entitled.

() I have been told that the investigator will answer any questions I have about my participation. I have been advised that if I desire information in the future regarding my participation or the study in general, I can contact Mr. Brett Fischels at 641-683-7578 or the principal investigator's faculty advisor, Dr. Donna Schumacher-Douglas, University of Northern Iowa in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at 319-273-5880. I can also contact the office of the Human Participant Coordinator, University of Northern Iowa, at 319-273-2748, for answers to questions about rights of research participants and the participants review process.

() I am fully aware of the nature and extent of my participation in this project as stated above and the possible risks arising from it.

() I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent statement.

() I am 18 years of age or older. My year of birth _____.

_____   _____
(Signature of participant)   (Signature of Principal Investigator)

_____   _____
(Printed name of participant)   (Printed name of Principal Investigator)

_____   _____
Date   Date