COMPARISON OF SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' OPINIONS OF STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

By

MARC CECIL EVANS

Bachelor of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1979

Master of Science
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma
1990

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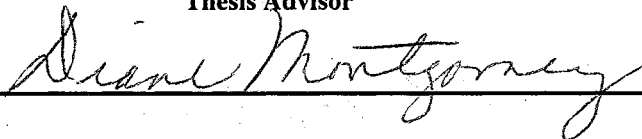of the requirements
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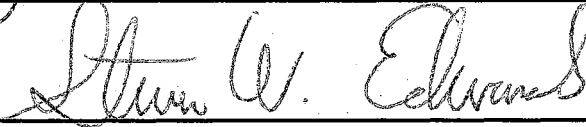### OF STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS
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Thesis Approved:

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Thesis Advisor

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Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), Public Law 101-

476 (1990), originally titled Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), provides a

definition for Serious Emotional Disturbance (SED) as a category of disability to

qualify children for special education services (Texas Education Agency, 1996).

Serious emotional disturbance is defined as follows:

   I. The term means a condition exhibiting one or more of the following
       characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree that
       adversely affects a child's educational performance--
       A. an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory,
          or health factors;
       B. an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships
          with peers and teachers;
       C. inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
       D. a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
       E. a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with
          personal or school problems.
   II. The term includes schizophrenia. The term does not apply to children who
       are socially maladjusted, unless it is determined that they have a serious
       emotional disturbance (Page 22).

Under IDEA in the 1994-95 school year, almost half a million children nationwide

between the ages of 6 and 21 were eligible for special education services under the

category of SED. Children with SED comprised approximately 8.5 percent of

those in special education in 1994-95 (Ing & Tewey, 1994). In Texas, of the

almost 33,000 students who were identified as students with serious emotional

disturbance, only 6% were served full-time in general education classrooms

(Texas Education Agency, 1997).

Federal law in the United States requires that students with disabilities be

educated with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible (U.S.

Department of Education Report, 1994). Therefore, many students with

disabilities spend a portion of their school day in general education classrooms.

Inclusionary settings and integrated practices are the strategies of choice for

today's schools. Today, a school district's decision to place a student in a

segregated setting will be upheld by courts only if school officials can show that

they did so in good faith after inclusion had failed or if they have strong evidence

to support a contention that inclusionary settings will not be satisfactory (Osborne

& Dimattia, 1995). The number of disabled students in general education

classrooms will likely increase as more and more schools accept inclusion as part

of their strategies to teach these students.

General education teachers will be asked for more input in the placement

process. This should increase collaboration between special education and general

education teachers, and also co-planning and co-teaching will ensue (Fulk &

Hirth, 1994). For the sake of the students, special education and general education

teachers' opinions should agree on what it takes to succeed in the general

education classroom environment. Fad and Reyser (1993) reported that the

opinions of teachers can significantly impact the student's success. This was noted

by Good and Brophy (1978) when they reported that teachers' opinions about students greatly influence the students' academic performance and behavior. Coben and Zigmond (1986) suggested that social/behavioral skills are critical in determining whether or not peers and teachers accept students with disabilities. Algozzine (1976), and later Wood, Lazzari, and Reeves (1993) stated that general education teachers appear to have less tolerance than special education teachers regarding disturbing behavior displayed by some students with disabilities.

Problems currently arise concerning decisions for placement in general education classes of students with SED when there is a lack of collaboration between special education and general education staff (Giangreco, Baumgart, & Doyle, 1995). There may be differences of opinions between special education and general education teachers concerning requirements for these students to function successfully in the general education environment (Lloyd, Kauffman, & Kupersmidt, 1990). These differences of opinion may be based on several different reasons, such as the aforementioned difference in tolerance levels of the teachers. It could possibly be the lack of knowledge and experience of working with students with SED (Kirk, 1998). Differences in ethnicity may also be a factor (Dembo, 1988; Fad, 1989; & Frisby, 1992). Lack of knowledge and experience of the special education teachers concerning working in a general education classroom may impact their opinions.

Purpose of the Study

The first purpose of this study was to examine the difference between special education teachers' and general education teachers' opinions regarding the ability of students with SED to function in inclusive general education classroom settings according to their social/behavioral skills. The following constitutes the social/behavioral skills: a) work habits; b) coping skills; c) peer relationships; and d) emotional maturity. The second purpose was to determine whether differences exist in teachers' opinions of the students' ability to function in general education classroom settings according to their social/behavioral skills based on the ethnicity of the students and teachers. The following constitutes the variables: a) type of teaching, either general education or special education; b) ethnicity of the teacher; and c) ethnicity of the student. The ethnicity of the students and teachers will be considered either Anglo or minority.

Statement of the Problem

The decision to place a student with serious emotional disturbance in a general education classroom is made by teachers (Giangreco et al., 1995). Special education and general education teachers need to reach a consensus on what is necessary for the student with SED to function in a general education classroom (Lloyd et al., 1990). Therefore, if special education and general education teachers do not agree, this may affect the student's programming, individual education plans, specifically the skills to be taught, and also the evaluation of his/her class-room performance (Campos, 1996). Therefore, a comparison of

special education and general education teachers' opinions of students with SED is

needed.

Hypotheses

Based on research conducted and reported by Fad and Reyser (1993);

Campos (1996); Lloyd et al. (1990); Gresham (1996, 1997); Dembo (1988);

Algozzine, Christianson, and Ysseldyke (1982); Fabre and Walker (1987); and

Good and Brophy (1978), the following hypotheses were formulated:

1. There are no significant differences between the opinions of special
   education teachers and general education teachers as to the potential for
   successful inclusion of students with serious emotional disturbance in
   general education classrooms according to the students' social/behavioral
   skills.

2. There is no significant difference based on ethnicity between the opinions
   of teachers, either special education or general education, regarding the
   social/behavioral skills of students with SED as to the potential for success
   in the inclusive classroom.

Significance of the Study

Inclusion is the strategy of choice for schools in educating students with

SED. Schools should have evidence that inclusion has not been, or will not be

successful with a student if they choose not to place a student with SED in a

general education setting (Osborne & Dimattia, 1995). Therefore, the number of

students with SED in general education classrooms will increase. A teacher's

opinion of a student influences how the teacher interacts with the student and can

impact the student's performance (Campos, 1996). A student's social skills and

behavior affect the teacher's opinion of him or her (Fad & Reyser, 1993; Gresham,

1997), and therefore affects the student's programming. Teachers' opinions of students may also be influenced by the student's ethnicity. Teachers may view the social skills of some minorities as inappropriate (Feng & Cartledge, 1996).

Since special education and general education teachers will share the responsibility of decision-making concerning the placement of students with serious emotional disturbance in inclusive classrooms, it is important to compare their opinions concerning the social skills of students with SED.

This study attempted to provide pertinent information concerning the inclusion of students with SED. This information will hopefully contribute to research in the social skills of students with disabilities and the prediction of those students' potential for successful inclusion. The study also provided practical information concerning the use of the Scales for Predicting Successful Inclusion (SPSI) as a tool for making decisions about a student's educational placement. Another possible practical contribution of this study was the indication for cultural awareness training of teachers.

Assumptions Underlying the Study

Four basic assumptions were involved in the rationale for this study. First, according to Coben and Zigmond (1986), social/behavioral skills are critical in determining whether or not peers and teachers accept a student with disabilities. Secondly, the opinions of teachers can significantly impact a student's success as reported by Fad and Reyser (1993) and Good and Brophy (1986). Special education and general education teachers should be able to come to a consensus on

what it takes to succeed in the general education environment (Fad & Reyser).

Third, general education teachers tend to be less tolerant than special education

teachers regarding maladaptive classroom behaviors exhibited by some students

with disabilities (Wood et al., 1993). Fourth, teachers' opinions of students are

often based on ethnicity. Dembo (1988), and later Campos (1996), reported that

teachers tend to have more negative opinions of minority students than students

who are white. Larsen (1975) reported that the students' ethnicity greatly

influenced the teachers' opinions of the students.

Limitations of the Study

Academic success of students with SED was not included as a factor in this

research project. The study focused on teachers' opinions of the social/behavioral

skills of students with SED. This may be considered a possible limitation.

Students were selected for this study who have no other handicapping conditions

that might affect their academic achievement (i.e. specific learning disability,

mental retardation, visually impaired, or other health impaired). The students

selected for this study were categorized only as SED. This negated the impact of

academic achievement on the student's ability to be successful in an inclusionary

setting of a general education classroom.

Another possible limitation of this study involved the unequal ratio of

special education teachers to general education teachers. There are very few

special education teachers per campus when compared to general education

teachers. Therefore, an appropriately comparative sample was difficult to attain.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter is to better understand the issues of inclusion, and specifically how it relates to the students considered seriously emotionally disturbed (SED). Previous literature and research have indicated some pertinent issues and variables. Included in this chapter will be discussions concerning inclusion, social skills, teachers' opinions, and the decisions about SED students being placed in general education classes.

In 1975, Public Law 94-142 mandated the education of all handicapped students. IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, 1994) reiterated this mandate. An important section of this law addressed the issues of least restrictive environment (LRE). It states that:

> ...to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily ... (Section 612(5) of P.L. 94-142).

Through the impact of advocacy groups and litigation, progression toward mainstreaming or inclusion has been made throughout the 1970's and 1980's.

Inclusion has become one of the hottest topics of special education in recent years (Yell, 1995a). Smith (1997) reported that Congress has supported inclusion through funding. She further noted that the courts have made it reasonably clear that inclusion is a right, not a privilege for a select few. This point was also supported by Yell, when he noted that inclusion should be the right, and the first option, for placement decisions concerning students with disabilities.

Inclusion was described simply by Schruggs and Mastropieri (1996) as the process of integrating students with disabilities in general education classrooms in order to address the requirements of LRE. Bender, Vail, and Scott (1995) suggested defining inclusion as full-time placement in mainstream general education classes of students with disabilities with appropriate special education support. In another writing, Yell (1995b) supported inclusion on an individual basis and not as a mandate for blanket inclusion decisions for all students with disabilities. Although many definitions of inclusion exist, the underlying premise is that all students with disabilities, including students with SED, should be educated in a general education classroom to the maximum extent appropriate by general education and special education teachers.

Many teachers and professionals in education believe that the traditional service delivery model of instruction is not effective for these students and will not succeed. Janney, Snell, Beers, and Raynes (1995) reported from reviews of researchers' work in the 1990's that inclusion can produce desirable results for children and schools.

Students with SED and Inclusion

To better understand the issues of inclusion for students categorized as

SED, a brief explanation of evaluation and placement procedures is pertinent.

McConaughy, Mattison, and Peterson (1994) reported that states differ on methods

for identifying SED students. They suggested the use of multi-disciplinary teams

(MDT), including school psychologists who evaluate behavior concerns.

McConaughy further cited research by Achenbach and McConaughy (1987),

Gresham (1985), McConaughy (1992, 1993a), and McConaughy and Achenbach

(1989, 1990). She noted that they support using the MDT's with multi-method

approaches, including teacher ratings, which she noted are the best predictors of

student behavior. Texas requires that a multi-disciplinary team conduct

comprehensive assessment and evaluation of health, academics, achievement,

intelligence and behavior of the student, and strongly urges parental input (Texas

Education Agency, 1997). Using this information, an Admission, Review and

Dismissal (ARD) committee makes decisions on qualifying students for placement

and programming. The ARD meetings are held at least annually.

Although violating some tenets of the idea of full inclusion, some schools

create artificial mechanisms requiring students to earn their way into general

education classes by allowing students access only after they achieve a certain

level of achievement academically and/or behaviorally (Giangreco et al., 1995).

This puts the burden of the decision to place identified students with SED in

general education classes on the teachers. In many cases, a point system or level

system is incorporated so that special education teachers can track and document the student's behavior (Gilliam, 1992; Hendrick, 1995).

This brings forth the issue of special education and general education teachers agreeing that: a) the student's performance in special education is a reasonable approximation of what is expected and tolerated in general education classes; b) general education teachers can build and improve on social skills and academic skills in general education classes; c) demonstrating group social skills and academic skills in general education classes is a positive model for the students that is expected; d) integration is begun on a partial basis and increased as students are judged successful; e) clearly designated behavioral problems are sufficient to trigger a student's return to the special education classes until the problems are resolved; and f) special education and general education teachers jointly evaluate the outcomes of inclusion (Lloyd et al., 1990).

Teachers and Inclusion

A student's success in a general education classroom is determined by many factors. One of the most critical factors in a student's education is his/her teacher (Campos, 1996). Teachers can significantly impact a student's academic and behavioral success. Gresham (1997) reported that the standard expectations and tolerance that teachers hold for the student's social behavior function to influence teaching behavior as well as peer interaction in the classroom. Inclusion will affect the function of teachers in general education classrooms who may tend to work individually without the benefit of interaction with their peers. Giangreco et

al. (1995) reported that inclusion helps open classroom doors and change staffing patterns so that teachers can build collaborative alliances with other teachers and support personnel in order to have ongoing opportunities to engage in professional dialogue, problem solving, and various forms of co-teaching.

From an extensive review of research on inclusion by Schruggs and Mastropieri (1996), it was found that less than one-third of the teachers surveyed supported mainstreaming or inclusion of students with social-emotional disabilities. From the surveys they researched, approximately one-half of the general education teachers and two-thirds of the special education teachers said that some degree of mainstreaming could provide some benefits, but only a small minority thought full inclusion could produce social or academic benefits relative to resource room or special class placements. Schruggs and Mastropieri further reported that general education teachers did not feel that they had enough time for inclusion, and that they do not feel any more prepared for inclusion than they did twenty years ago.

The attitude of general education teachers toward special education students affects the success or failure of inclusion. Many times it appears that general education teachers are not ready to accept students with special needs (Kirk, 1998). Many general education teachers do not feel they are prepared to provide meaningful instruction to students with disabilities, and therefore doubt the potential success or need for inclusion. Research by Bassett, Jackson, Ferrell, Luckner, Hagerty, Bunsen, and MacIsaac (1996) noted considerable resistance of

general education teachers for inclusion of SED students. These teachers appeared to have less tolerance than special education teachers, and they did not expect the students to succeed. For inclusion to work, school personnel most responsible for success, that being the general education teachers, need to be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion (Schruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). For inclusion to be successful, the special education teacher should attempt to build rapport and provide support to general education teachers so they feel that they can choose to participate and may be more positive toward inclusion (Janney et al., 1995).

Special education teachers have been found to be less demanding than general education teachers. In other words, special education teachers appear to be more tolerant and have lower expectations for appropriate behavior (Lloyd et al., 1990). The authors further cited research by Lewin, Nelson, and Tollefson (1983) that noted general education teachers rated a student's behavior as significantly more maladjusted, and that this was due in part to discrepancies in expectations for student conduct in general education and special education classes. An issue that comes forth in the literature is that special education teachers' expectations, knowledge of what is considered appropriate behavior, and tolerance of inappropriate behavior are different from the expectations of general education teachers.

In an attempt to support the idea of inclusion to general education teachers, Nelson (1997) reported that segregated placements, expulsions, and suspensions

have the effect of removing students from an environment where they can learn useful skills, model behavior of pro-social peers, and be exposed to caring adults.

Social Skills

The way a student behaves in school affects his/her possibilities for successful adjustment. These necessary behaviors are often termed "social skills" (Fad, 1989). Gresham (1992) reported from a review of pertinent literature that the student's ability to attain peer acceptance, teacher and parental acceptance, and school adjustment were considered important social skills for the student. Gresham (1997) later noted that the IDEA definition of SED suggests that these students' major difficulties are in the realms of social competence and inter-personal relationships. He further reports that teachers consider behavior to be appropriate if it: a) facilitated academic performance (e.g., listening to the teacher, completing tasks, and complying with teacher instructions); and b) is marked by the absence of disruptive or unusual behaviors that challenge the teacher's authority and disrupt the classroom ecology. Since inappropriate behavior and poor social skills are at the crux of the problems students with SED have, these students are at a disadvantage before they ever enter the general education classroom.

Schultz and Carpenter (1995) defined social skills as "those behaviors needed to be successful in the presence of others or to affect the behaviors of others. Crucial behaviors and interaction with others include following social

rules, taking cues from others, initiating interaction, and responding appropriately"
(p. 293).

Gresham and Elliott (1989) simply classified social skills for students as the absence of interfering problem behaviors or ones that impede successful functioning in the schools. Fad and Reyser (1993) reported research that once students master social skills and behavior competencies, their chances for success in general education classes improve. Gilliam and McConnell (1997) labeled the four areas of social skills for students as work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, and emotional maturity.

Work Habits

The area of work habits involves skills that many teachers value highly. Teachers value students who can follow directions, remain seated, and bring necessary materials to class (Stevens & Pihl, 1982). In 1989, Kauffman referred to academic survival skills or work habits as behaviors that teachers expect of students in the classroom instructional situation. Morgan and Jensen (1988) reported that good student work habits are critical for the students' success. Teachers expect students to attend to the work in the classroom and take advantage of academic learning time (Fad & Reyser, 1993). Poor work habits by the student can bring disapproval from the teacher and interfere with the student's ability to participate in the learning process (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997).

Coping Skills

The way students consistently react to stressful events is defined as their coping style (Gilliam, 1987). Research by Goldstein and Glick (1987) noted a direct relationship between poor coping skills and behavior problems in the school. Fad (1989), and Boyd and Johnson (1981) describe coping skills as the ability to manage environmental demands or conflicts, and internal and cognitive processes used to deal with presently occurring inter/intrapersonal problems. In 1984, Brenner simply described coping skills as the way students deal with stress. Important issues for students' coping skills in the schools are how they manage their stress, and how they behave when interacting with teachers and peers. The skills students develop and use in school involve considering choices, ascertaining reality and implications of situations, thinking rationally, and controlling negative emotions (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997).

Peer Relationships

Peer relationships are important to almost everyone, but possibly to no one so much as to high school students. Lloyd et al. (1990) maintain that since students develop appropriate skills from interacting with their peers, it is important for them to have as many opportunities as possible to do so. They further reported that support of peers in the form of social acceptance, companionship, or friendship may serve as a buffer for behavioral and emotional problems experienced by students.

The ability to build and maintain satisfactory relationships, have positive interactions with others, and be accepted in a group enhances the quality of our personal lives (Fad & Reyser, 1993). Fad and Reyser further noted that high social status and acceptable academic performance have been linked to positive peer relationships. Peer relationships are social skills that students use to get along with each other, develop friendships, and work cooperatively (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997). Coben and Zigmond (1986) expressed that positive peer relationships are essential to successful integration, yet they are often lacking in students with disabilities who have been placed in general education classes.

The inability to build and maintain interpersonal relationships is a common problem for many SED students. Research by Kistner and Gatlin (1989) and furthered by Fad and Reyser (1993), noted that peer rejection, inappropriate behaviors, and academic failure could go hand-in-hand. The lack of acceptance by peers can be a predictor of social difficulty and future problems for students in general education classes (Haager & Vaughn, 1995).

Emotional Maturity

The ability to manage, adapt, and respond appropriately to emotions and feelings determines one's emotional adjustment. This dimension is reflected in the student's behavior, self-concept, and overall personality development. Teachers, parents, and others often describe emotional adjustment as maturity (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997). Haager and Vaughn (1995) reported that self-concept and self-perception are important components of social competence. These researchers

reported from a study by Gresham and Elliott (1990) that cooperation, assertion, self-control, and empathy should be considered when assessing a student's social skills.

Although difficult for them to describe, the emotional maturity of students is evaluated by teachers. Emotionally well-adjusted students tend to be more successful in their interactions with teachers and their peers.

Ethnicity

Teachers may be influenced in their opinions of students according to their ethnicity. Teachers often hold different attitudes toward students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds (Fad, 1989). Dembo (1988) reported that teachers tend to have more negative opinions of minority students than students who are white. Frisby (1992) reported from research and reviews of the literature of ethnicity that it cannot be assumed that teachers view black and white students in the same way. He further cited evidence in his study suggesting that teachers view black and white students differently, which may lead to biased treatment of students. Frisby cautions that negative racial attitudes may diminish the teacher's objectivity or reduce the teacher's sense of personal efficacy. He further cautioned against the stereotyping of black children as poor, inner-city, one-parent family, low achieving, undisciplined, and uneducable. His warning has a high degree of salience throughout social science literature.

Feng and Cartledge (1996) reported research that teachers viewed African-American students as assertive and readily engaging in a lot of people oriented

behaviors. The authors further reported that teachers saw African-American students as having difficulty resisting peer oriented actions, possibly interfering with academic tasks. The authors further noted that teachers indicated the need for African-American students to exhibit more self-control and to develop more constructive means to deal with conflict. Feng and Cartledge noted that minority students reported more internalized perceptions that others have of them by feeling that they disproportionately receive more negative feedback from teachers about their behavior than other students in their class.

Mexican-American, African-American, and Native-American students often times may be treated differently by teachers who have developed inflexible expectations of them without regard to the students' racial and ethnic background (Larsen, 1975). If the students' behaviors are different due to their ethnicity when compared to the dominant culture group, teachers may misinterpret these as inappropriate behaviors. Mandell and Fiscus (1981) noted an example of African-American and Hispanic students failing to make eye contact with authority figures, because in their respective cultures it might be considered as defiant, whereas white teachers might interpret the same behavior as a lack of respect. Teachers' attitudes toward students of different ethnic backgrounds have surely changed in the last twenty years, but recent research cited in this study tends to support the notion that ethnicity is still an issue.

Teacher as Rater

Teacher rating scales have been shown to be useful aids in the diagnostic process for many children's psychological pathologies, particularly externalizing disorders which are often most salient in the classroom setting. Teacher ratings are based on professional judgments developed through extensive and ongoing contact with the students. When rating a student's behavior, teachers utilize observations carried out in normal school environments. Since it is based on contact with students over a longer period of time, they may provide information on low incidence but significant problem behaviors (Merrell, 1993).

Teachers constantly use ratings of the student's abilities and characteristics for making important educational decisions. They use ratings to decide how to place students in educational settings, how well students are comprehending what is taught, and whether or not the instruction and instructional setting should be changed to benefit the student (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997). McKinney and Feagans (1983) noted that many times placement decisions are based on a professional judgment or opinion of the teachers, and the teachers seem to be able to perceive behaviors accurately. Ysseldyke and Algozzine (1982) noted that teacher evaluations and judgments are critical in determining a student's eligibility for special education services, and rating scales are often a vehicle used to capture their evaluations and judgments. Since both special education and general education teachers will be making decisions about students with SED being placed

in inclusive settings, teacher ratings appear to be the preferred method for aiding

their decision making.

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Teachers' Opinions

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This study examines teachers' opinions of the social/behavioral skills of

students with SED. To clarify for this study, it is important to address the use of

the word "opinion."

In a thorough review of the literature pertinent to this study, very few of the

researchers used the word "opinion" except Campos (1996). Researchers instead

used the words "perceptions" (Haager & Vaughn, 1995; Fabre & Walker, 1986;

Lewin et al., 1983; McKinney & Feagans, 1983), "attitudes" (Bender et al., 1995;

Kirk, 1998; Lloyd et al., 1990), "expectations" (Kauffman, Wong, & Landrum,

1989), "judgments" (Gresham & Reschly, 1986), and "views" (Schultz &

Carpenter, 1995) to describe the results of teachers' ratings of students. Merriam

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary (Mish, 1994) was consulted to define these words

and find the word best suited for use in this study.

A careful review of these definitions found that these words share a

common element. Opinion was chosen for this study because it most closely

reflected that common element (Campos, 1996). Opinion is used throughout the

study to mean, "a view, judgment, or appraisal formed in the mind about a

particular matter...a generally shared view" (Mish, 1994). For the remainder of

this study, opinion means teachers' views, judgments, and appraisal of students.

<u>Summary</u>

The topics in this section of the literature review focus on the inclusion of students categorized as seriously emotionally disturbed in general education classrooms. Necessary social skills for successful inclusion of these students were identified as work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, and emotional maturity. Although social skills is not the only characteristic influencing successful inclusion, it may be the most important one for students with SED. Teachers make decisions concerning inclusion of students with SED in the general education classes. The purpose of this study is to explore whether differences exist between special and general education teachers' opinions of the social skills of students with SED. Moreover, this study seeks to determine whether differences exist among the special and general education teachers' opinions regarding the students' social skills based on the ethnicity of teachers and students.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology undertaken to accomplish the purposes of this study. The participants, instrumentation, procedure, research design and analyses will be discussed in this section.

Participants

The participants for this study were teachers of high school students with SED. The teachers were 48 general education teachers who teach academic core classes (i.e., English, mathematics, science, social studies, and reading) and 48 who teach special education classes. The 48 special education teachers were from a possible 54 who teach in the high schools, which should have provided reliable and stable estimation for this study. These teachers have students with SED and no other handicapping condition in their classes. The students with SED also receive special education services. The teachers, both general education and special education, had routinely completed the Scales for Predicting Successful Inclusion (SPSI) instruments on the students with SED. Using this criteria for this study, the 96 teachers represented the maximum number available. The ethnicity of the general education teachers was 30 Anglo and 18 minority. The ethnicity of the special education teachers was 22 Anglo and 26 minority. The ethnicity of the

students with SED was 16 Anglo and 32 minority. This is roughly commensurate with the ethnicity of the student and teacher population in the high schools.

The high schools are part of a large urban school district with a student population of approximately 50,000. The ethnicity of the teachers in the district high schools is Anglo/white 63%, African-American/black 26%, and Hispanic 6%. The ethnicity of the student population of the high schools in the school district is Anglo/white 17%, African-American/black 34%, and Hispanic 43%. The ethnicity of the students with SED in the high schools is Anglo/white 19%, African-American/black 52%, and Hispanic 19%.

Instrumentation

The dependent variable in this study consists of the teachers' ratings on a pencil and paper instrument. The instrument measures the teachers' opinions of the student's social/behavior skills.

Social Skills Instrument

The Skills for Predicting Successful Inclusion (SPSI) (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997) was used to measure the teachers' opinions of the social skills of the students with SED. The SPSI was designed to identify students with disabilities who have the potential to succeed in an inclusive education classroom. Teachers use the SPSI to identify average, at-risk, non-diagnosed, and other students who are not succeeding in a general education classroom. The SPSI is a 60-item instrument composed of four scales: Work Habits, Coping Skills, Peer Relationships, and Emotional Maturity. In five minutes, teachers can rate a

particular student's work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, and emotional maturity in comparison to the same age, normally developing students. Gilliam and McConnell defined these skills:

> **Work habits** are sometimes referred to as "academic survival skills." They are behaviors teachers expect of students in classroom instructional situations. **Coping skills** are the way students consistently react to stressful events. **Peer relationships** are social skills that students use to get along with each other, develop friendships, and work cooperatively. **Emotional maturity** is the ability to manage, adapt, and respond appropriately to emotions and feelings (Page 2).

Table I represents descriptions of items found in each of these scales.

Table I.
Items in the SPSI

Scale	Number	Description
Work Habits	1	Following Classroom Rules
	2	Promptly Following Teacher Requests
	3	Coming to Class Prepared to Work
	4	Staying on Task
	5	Using Class Time Effectively
	6	Working Independently
	7	Completing Classwork on Time
	8	Completing Homework Assignments on Time
	9	Listening Carefully During Direct Instruction
	10	Following Teachers' Verbal Directions
	11	Following Written Directions
	12	Paying Attention During Class Discussions
	13	Producing Work Commensurate with His/Her Ability
	14	Remaining in His/Her Seat in Class When Expected to Do So
	15	Listening Carefully to Teacher Directions
Coping Skills	16	Coping Successfully with Teasing
	17	Coping Successfully When Called a Derogatory Name
	18	Accepting Not Getting His/Her Own Way
	19	Accepting Responsibility for His/Her Behavior
	20	Accepting Constructive Criticism
	21	Handling Frustrations Effectively
	22	Coping with Others' Aggression in an Appropriate Way
	23	Coping in an Acceptable Manner if Someone Takes Something of His/Hers
	24	Avoiding Arguments When Someone Provokes Him/Her
	25	Expressing Anger Without Physical or Verbal Aggression
	26	Coping Appropriately When Someone Orders or Bosses Him/Her

Table I cont.

Scale	Number	Description
Coping Skills	27	Coping Effectively When Blamed for Something He/She Did Not Do
	28	Coping Appropriately When Someone is Upset with Him/Her
	29	Coping Effectively When Insulted
	30	Coping Effectively When Pressured to Do Something He/She Doesn't Want to Do
Peer Relationships	31	Making Friends Easily
	32	Being Included in Activities with Peers
	33	Being Actively Sought by Others
	34	Initiating Activities with Others
	35	Demonstrating Leadership in Activities
	36	Negotiating Compromises with Peers
	37	Easily Joining a Group Activity Already in Progress
	38	Skillfully Ending Conversations with Peers
	39	Developing and Maintaining Friendships with More Than One Person
	40	Maintaining Friendships over an Extended Period of Time
	41	Interacting Easily with Many Peers
	42	Asking for Help or a Favor from Peers Appropriately
	43	Sharing Laughter and Jokes with Peers
	44	Complimenting Others
	45	Expressing Feelings of Affection or Friendship Toward Peers
Emotional Maturity	46	Talking Optimistically about the Future
	47	Speaking to the Teacher Respectfully
	48	Accepting Blame When He/She Has Done Something Wrong
	49	Smiling and Laughing Appropriately
	50	Acknowledging His/Her Part in What Happens to Him/Her
	51	Expressing Sympathy Toward Peers Appropriately
	52	Concentrating on Tasks
	53	Expressing Empathy Toward Persons He/She Does Not Know Personally
	54	Expressing Confidence and Positive Feelings about the Future
	55	Making Positive Statements about Self
	56	Taking Pride in His/Her Accomplishments
	57	Expressing Realistic Expectations
	58	Discussing Plans or Goals for the Future
	59	Setting Goals for What to Do After Graduation
	60	Expressing Beliefs That What Happens to Him/Her is a Result of What He/She Does

Teachers rate students on a 9 point rating scale from poor (1-3) to average (4-6) to good (7-9). The scale is considered unintrusive, as it does not require direct exclusive observation or interaction with a student during the time the teacher is completing it.

Scores provided by the SPSI include raw scores, percentile, standard scores, and subtest standard scores that can be totaled and converted to a quotient. This is reported as a Successful Inclusion Quotient (SIQ). The authors report that the instrument has strong internal consistency reliability. Cronbach's (1951) coefficient alpha was used to investigate the internal consistency of the SPSI. The authors found that all four of the scales had a reliability coefficient exceeding .95.

The authors conducted a study that requested general education teachers use all items of the SPSI to rate students with disabilities in general education classes. The teachers also indicated the letter grade they would assign the students. Students who received A, B, or C were considered successful. Students who received a D or an F were considered unsuccessful. A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on the four scales, and statistically significant differences were found on all scales between the successful and unsuccessful students. The study was later replicated with general education teachers' ratings of the students with no known disabilities. Statistically significant differences were once again found between the successful and unsuccessful students.

The authors again reported from these studies a strong internal consistency reliability on the items of the four scales: work habits .91, coping skills .90, peer relationships .89, and emotional maturity .85.

The authors conducted concurrent validity studies to examine the relationship between the SPSI and the Conners' Teacher Rating Scales (Conners, 1990), the Adjustment Scales for Children and Adolescents (McDermott, 1994),

and the Comprehensive Scales of Student Abilities (Hammill & Hresko, 1994).

They reported that the behaviors rated on the SPSI relate well to the behaviors

rated on these three scales. The authors noted that the reported relationships

provide additional support of the validity of the SPSI for measuring important

characteristics and abilities of school age students.

Information Data Sheet

The Information Data Sheet was designed to elicit and chart data from the

SPSI, student, and teachers. The sheet was organized with the names of the

student, general education teacher, and special education teacher listed on the left-

hand side. The right-hand side has a place for a number, and the ethnicity of the

student and the teachers. The scores of the SPSI subscales and SIQ were listed in

line with the appropriate names on the left. After the Information Data Sheet was

completed, the left-hand side was torn off to remove the names of the student and

teachers to protect their confidentiality (see Appendix D).

Procedure

The special education counselors in the high schools were asked to fill out

the Information Data Sheets, and then remove the left side that contains the names

of the students and the teachers. They were provided written directions that

explained the criteria for gathering information for this research (see Appendix C).

The criteria for selection included students with SED who have no other

handicapping conditions; attended one or more general education academic core

classes (English language, social studies, science or mathematics), and were

provided services by a special education teacher; and have SPSI instruments completed by both a general education and special education teacher. The special education counselor was provided directions on how to access the information necessary to complete the data sheets. The SPSI instrument has an information section that includes the student's name, the teacher's name, and what class the teacher teaches. The front page of the SPSI has a score summary section with a list of the subscale scores and the SIQ score. The ethnicity of the students was accessed from the special education counselor's student files. The ethnicity of the teachers was accessed from the personnel rosters of the schools. After completing the Information Data Sheets, the special education counselors returned them to the researcher via an envelope that was provided.

Research Design and Analyses

The research design used in this study was an ex post facto comparison group design. The research hypotheses in this study examined: a) whether there were differences between the opinions of teachers, either general education or special education, regarding the social skills of students with SED; b) whether there were differences in the opinions of teachers on the students' social skills based on the ethnicity of the teachers; and c) whether there were differences in the opinions of teachers on the students' social skills based on the ethnicity of the students with SED. The independent variables consisted of type of teaching, either general education or special education, the ethnicity of the teacher, and the ethnicity of the student. The teachers' opinions on the ratings of the SPSI (Gilliam

& McConnell, 1997) were considered separately for each of the scales as the dependent variables, and will be reported as the four subscales of work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, emotional maturity, and also the Successful Inclusion Quotient (SIQ).

> **Hypothesis #1:** There are no significant differences between the opinions of special education teachers and general education teachers as to the potential for successful inclusion of students with serious emotional disturbance in general education classrooms according to the students' social/behavioral skills.

> **Hypothesis #2:** There is no significant difference based on ethnicity between the opinions of teachers, either special education or general education, regarding the social/behavioral skills of students with SED as to the potential for success in the inclusive classroom.

The hypotheses were assessed by conducting a three-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with alpha level set at $p < .05$. Huck, Cormier, & Bounds (1974) defined ANOVA as an inferential statistical procedure, which allows one to compare the means of more than two groups (Page 58). The purpose of using a three-factor ANOVA was to allow each independent variable to have sub-groups. This 2x2x2 design had the type of teaching, either special education or general education, as two of the factors, ethnicity of teacher, either Anglo or minority, as two of the factors, and the ethnicity of the students, either Anglo or minority, was the other two factors. The three-factor ANOVA determined whether there were differences in the special education teachers' and general education teachers' opinions of the social skills of students with SED based on the ethnicity of the teachers and students.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study sought to determine whether there were differences between special education teachers' and general education teachers' opinions regarding the ability of students with SED to function in inclusive general education settings according to their social/behavioral skills. The following constitute the social/behavioral skills: a) work habits, b) coping skills, c) peer relationships, and d) emotional maturity. The second purpose was to determine whether differences exist in teachers' opinions of students' ability to function in a general education classroom setting according to their social/behavioral skills based on the ethnicity of students and teachers. The results of the study are presented in five sections: work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, emotional maturity, and Successful Inclusion Quotient (SIQ). The summary of the results concludes this chapter. The null hypotheses examined were:

> **Hypothesis #1:** There are no significant differences between the opinions of special education teachers and general education teachers as to the potential for successful inclusion of students with serious emotional disturbance in general education classrooms according to the students' social/behavioral skills.

> **Hypothesis #2:** There is no significant difference based on ethnicity between the opinions of teachers, either special education or general

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education, regarding the social/behavioral skills of students with SED as to the potential for success in the inclusive classroom.

The hypotheses were tested by conducting a three-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the alpha level set at p<.05. In the Analysis of Variance tables that follow, the sources are: a) factor A=teacher, special education teachers or general education teachers, b) factor B=teacher ethnicity, Anglo teachers or minority teachers, and c) factor C=student ethnicity, Anglo students or minority students.

Work Habits

The main effect of special education to general education teachers yielded no significant difference when using the subscale of work habits of the SPSI as the dependent variable.

As shown in Table II, the analysis yielded one F-ratio which was statistically significant—the main effect for teacher ethnicity (F=5.88, p=.017). This would indicate that Anglo teachers, in both general education and special education, rated students with SED lower in the social/behavioral skill of work habits (mean=9.73) when compared to the minority teachers (mean=11.27). To assess the strength of the effect of teacher ethnicity an omega square was conducted. The results indicated about 5% of the variability in the ratings of work habits was accounted for by teacher ethnicity.

Note in Table II, the analysis yielded no other F-ratios which were statistically significant in either the main effect of student ethnicity or the

interactions of special education or general education teachers, Anglo or minority, to student ethnicity.

TABLE II

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR WORK HABITS

Analysis of Variance

A=Teacher
B=Teacher ethnicity
C=Student ethnicity

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
A	1.03	1	1.03	0.11	.740
B	54.78	1	54.78	5.88	.017*
C	0.08	1	0.08	0.01	.925
A x B	8.31	1	8.31	0.89	.348
A x C	0.11	1	0.11	0.01	.914
B x C	0.76	1	0.76	0.08	.776
A x B x C	2.16	1	2.16	0.23	.631
Error	819.83	88	9.32		

*p<.05

Means

Teachers	Anglo Students			Minority Students			Total		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Special Education	16	10.44	2.34	32	10.50	2.83	48	10.48	2.65
Anglo	8	10.00	2.77	14	9.86	3.26	22	9.91	3.02
Minority	8	10.88	1.89	18	11.00	2.43	26	10.96	2.24
General Education	16	10.06	3.62	32	10.56	3.40	48	10.40	3.44
Anglo	11	9.18	3.37	19	9.84	3.13	30	9.60	3.18
Minority	5	12.00	3.74	13	11.62	3.62	18	11.72	3.55
Total	32	10.25	3.01	64	10.53	3.10	96	10.44	3.06
Anglo	19	9.53	3.08	33	9.85	3.13	52	9.73	3.09
Minority	13	11.31	2.66	31	11.26	2.94	44	11.27	2.83

<u>Coping Skills</u>

As shown in Table III, the main effect of special education to general education teachers yielded no significant difference when using the subscale of coping skills on the SPSI as the dependent variable.

Note in Table III, the analysis yielded no other F-ratios which were statistically significant in either the main effect of teacher ethnicity, student ethnicity, or the interactions of special education or general education teachers, either Anglo or minority, to student ethnicity.

TABLE III

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM ANALYSIS
OF VARIANCE FOR COPING SKILLS

Analysis of Variance

A=Teacher
B=Teacher ethnicity
C=Student ethnicity

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
A	8.78	1	8.78	1.03	.314
B	23.60	1	23.60	2.76	.100
C	0.01	1	0.01	0.00	.980
A x B	3.62	1	3.62	0.42	.517
A x C	0.80	1	0.80	0.09	.761
B x C	1.22	1	1.22	0.14	.706
A x B x C	5.80	1	5.80	0.68	.412
Error	752.63	88	8.55		

Means

Teachers	Anglo Students			Minority Students			Total		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Special Education	16	10.44	2.34	32	10.31	3.50	48	10.35	3.13
Anglo	8	10.50	2.45	14	9.50	4.07	22	9.86	3.54
Minority	8	10.38	2.39	18	10.94	2.94	26	10.77	2.75
General Education	16	10.56	2.50	32	10.97	2.77	48	10.83	2.66
Anglo	11	10.00	1.61	19	10.47	2.82	30	10/30	2.42
Minority	5	11.80	3.77	13	11.69	2.63	18	11.72	2.87
Total	32	10.50	2.38	64	10.64	3.14	96	10.59	2.90
Anglo	19	10.21	1.96	33	10.06	3.38	52	10.12	2.92
Minority	13	10.92	2.93	31	11.26	2.79	44	11.16	2.80

Peer Relationships

As shown in Table IV, the main effect of special education to general education yielded no significant difference when using the subscale of peer relationships on the SPSI as the dependent variable.

Note in Table IV, the analysis yielded no other F-ratios which were statistically significant in either the main effect of teacher ethnicity, student ethnicity, or the interactions of special education or general education teachers, Anglo or minority, to student ethnicity.

TABLE IV

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Analysis of Variance

A=Teacher
B=Teacher ethnicity
C=Student ethnicity

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
A	9.28	1	9.28	0.92	.339
B	0.32	1	0.32	0.03	.858
C	23.92	1	23.92	2.38	.127
A x B	7.42	1	7.42	0.74	.393
A x C	0.65	1	0.65	0.07	.800
B x C	9.60	1	9.60	0.96	.331
A x B x C	9.89	1	9.89	0.98	.324
Error	884.48	88	10.05		

Means

Teachers	Anglo Students			Minority Students			Total		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Special Education	16	9.69	3.42	32	10.66	2.98	48	10.33	3.13
Anglo	8	10.63	3.93	14	10.14	3.53	22	10.32	3.59
Minority	8	8.75	2.77	18	11.06	2.51	26	10.35	2.76
General Education	16	8.69	3.54	32	10.03	2.97	48	9.58	3.20
Anglo	11	8.46	3.62	19	9.74	2.86	30	9.27	3.16
Minority	5	9.20	3.70	13	10.46	3.18	18	10.11	3.27
Total	32	9.19	3.46	64	10.34	2.97	96	9.96	3.17
Anglo	19	9.37	3.80	33	9.91	3.12	52	9.71	3.36
Minority	13	8.92	3.01	31	10.81	2.77	44	10.25	2.94

Emotional Maturity

As shown in Table V, the main effect of special education and general education teachers yielded no significant difference when using the subscale of emotional maturity on the SPSI as a dependent variable.

Note in Table V, the analysis yielded no other F-ratios which were statistically significant in either the main effect of teacher ethnicity, student ethnicity, or the interactions of special education or general education teachers, Anglo or minority, to student ethnicity.

TABLE V

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR EMOTIONAL MATURITY

Analysis of Variance

A=Teacher
B=Teacher ethnicity
C=Student ethnicity

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
A	5.31	1	5.31	0.57	.453
B	14.66	1	14.66	1.57	.214
C	8.40	1	8.40	0.90	.346
A x B	9.94	1	9.94	1.06	.306
A x C	2.51	1	2.51	0.27	.606
B x C	0.15	1	0.15	0.02	.899
A x B x C	6.39	1	6.39	0.68	.411
Error	823.85	88	9.36		

Means

Teachers	Anglo Students			Minority Students			Total		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Special Education	16	10.25	3.59	32	10.59	2.54	48	10.48	2.90
Anglo	8	10.50	3.42	14	10.14	3.09	22	10.27	3.14
Minority	8	10.00	3.96	18	10.94	2.04	26	10.65	2.73
General Education	16	9.00	2.99	32	10.28	3.25	48	9.85	3.09
Anglo	11	8.36	2.73	19	9.84	3.15	30	9.30	3.04
Minority	5	10.40	3.36	13	10.92	3.40	18	10.78	3.30
Total	32	9.63	3.31	64	10.44	2.89	96	10.17	3.05
Anglo	19	9.26	3.14	33	9.97	3.08	52	9.71	3.09
Minority	13	10.15	3.60	31	10.94	2.65	44	10.71	2.94

Successful Inclusion Quotient

As shown in Table VI, the main effect of special education to general education teaching yielded no significant difference when using the Successful Inclusion Quotient (SIQ) of the SPSI as the dependent variable.

Note in Table VI, the analysis yielded no other F-ratios which were statistically significant in either the main effect of teacher ethnicity, student ethnicity, or the interactions of special education or general education teachers, Anglo or minority, to student ethnicity.

TABLE VI

RESULTS OBTAINED FROM ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE
FOR SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION QUOTIENT

Analysis of Variance

A=Teacher
B=Teacher ethnicity
C=Student ethnicity

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	p
A	15.91	1	15.91	0.05	.823
B	741.35	1	741.35	2.36	.128
C	156.22	1	156.22	0.50	.483
A x B	321.86	1	321.86	1.02	.314
A x C	38.08	1	38.08	0.12	.729
B x C	67.59	1	67.59	0.22	.644
A x B x C	319.10	1	319.10	1.02	.317
Error	27675.81	88	314.50		

Means

Teachers	Anglo Students			Minority Students			Total		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Special Education	16	101.75	16.67	32	103.66	18.60	48	103.02	17.83
Anglo	8	103.63	21.20	14	99.21	22.64	22	100.82	21.72
Minority	8	99.88	11.74	18	107.11	14.50	26	104.89	13.90
General Education	16	97.19	17.02	32	102.91	17.95	48	101.00	17.67
Anglo	11	93.36	14.31	19	99.68	17.10	30	97.37	16.17
Minority	5	105.60	21.13	13	107.62	18.79	18	107.06	18.84
Total	32	99.47	16.73	64	103.28	18.14	96	102.01	17.68
Anglo	19	97.68	17.76	33	99.49	19.31	52	98.83	18.60
Minority	13	102.08	15.41	31	107.32	16.14	44	105.77	15.93

Summary of the Results

A three-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was conducted on the data to examine whether there were differences among the special education and general education teachers' opinions of the students' social skills. The ethnicity of the teachers and ethnicity of the students were each considered variables. The teachers' opinions were represented from ratings of the SPSI, and scores were derived from subscales of work habits, peer relationships, coping skills, emotional maturity, and Successful Inclusion Quotient (SIQ). The analyses revealed no significant difference between the opinions of special education and general education teachers of the social/behavioral skills of students with SED. The statistically significant difference found when comparing the teachers' opinions was that of ethnicity of the teachers according to their opinions of the students' work habits. No other statistical differences were found among the variables, either main effects or interactions. Therefore, hypothesis #1 was not rejected. Inasmuch, as hypothesis #1 was not rejected, the following interpretation appears to be warranted: there are no statistically significant differences between the opinions of special education and general education teachers regarding the potential for successful inclusion of students with serious emotional disturbance in general education classroom settings according to students' social/behavioral skills.

Hypothesis #2 was partially rejected. The following interpretation appears to be warranted: there is a significant difference based on ethnicity between the

opinions of teachers, either special education or general education, regarding the social/behavioral skill of work habits of students with SED as to the potential for success in the inclusive classroom. Furthermore, there are no other significant differences based on ethnicity between the opinions of teachers, either special education or general education, regarding the social/behavioral skills of students with SED as to the potential for success in the inclusive classroom. The results and practical implications of this analysis are discussed in Chapter V.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY

Federal law in the United States requires that students with disabilities be educated with non-disabled peers to the maximum extent possible (U.S. Department of Education Report, 1994). Many students with serious emotional disturbance (SED) will spend part of their day in general education classrooms as more schools accept inclusion as part of their strategies to teach these students. General education teachers will be asked for more input in the placement process of these students with SED. For the sake of these students, special education and general education teachers' opinions should agree on what it takes to be successful in the general education classroom setting. Fad and Reyser (1993) and Good and Brophy (1978) reported that the opinions of teachers can impact and greatly influence students' academic performance and behavior. Students' social/behavioral skills are critical in determining whether or not their peers and teachers accept them in a general education setting (Coben & Zigmond, 1986). Algozzine (1976), and later Wood et al. (1993), stated that general education teachers appear to have less tolerance than special education teachers regarding disturbing behavior displayed by some students with disabilities.

Problems currently arise concerning decisions for placement in general education classes of students with SED when there is a lack of collaboration between special education and general education staff (Giangreco et al., 1995). There may be differences of opinion between special education and general education teachers concerning requirements for these students to function successfully in the general education environment (Lloyd et al., 1990). These differences of opinion may be based on different reasons, such as the difference in tolerance levels of the teachers or the difference in ethnicity of the teachers and students (Dembo, 1988; Fad, 1989; & Frisby, 1992). The present study was designed to address the possible differences of opinions and the possibility that these differences were partly based on the ethnicity of the teachers and students. This chapter includes the summary and discussion of the study, purpose of the study, methodology, results, limitations of the study, future research, and conclusions.

Purpose of the Study

Special education and general education teachers make decisions to place a student with SED in a general education classroom (Giangreco et al., 1995). A consensus on what is necessary for the student with SED to function in a general education classroom should be reached by these teachers (Lloyd et al., 1990). If special education and general education teachers do not agree, this may adversely affect the student's programming, individual education plans, the specific skills to be taught, and also the evaluation of his or her classroom performance (Campos,

1996). Therefore, a comparison of special education and general education teachers' opinions of students with SED is needed.

Teachers' opinions of students may also be influenced by a student's ethnicity because the teachers may view the social skills of some minorities as inappropriate (Feng & Cartledge, 1996). Since special education and general education teachers will share the responsibility of decision-making concerning the placement of students with serious emotional disturbance in inclusive classrooms, it is important to compare their opinions concerning the social skills of students with SED. This study attempted to provide pertinent information concerning the inclusion of students with SED. This information contributes to the research on social skills of students with disabilities and the prediction of those students' potential for successful inclusion. This study also provides practical information concerning the use of the Scales for Predicting Successful Inclusion (SPSI) as a tool for making decisions about students' educational placement.

The first purpose of the study was to examine the difference between special education teachers' and general education teachers' opinions regarding the ability of students with SED to function in inclusive general education classroom settings according to their social/behavioral skills. The following constitute the social/behavioral skills: a) work habits, b) coping skills, c) peer relationships, and d) emotional maturity. The second purpose was to determine whether differences exist in teachers' opinions of students' ability to function in a general classroom setting according to their social/behavioral skills based on the ethnicity of the

students and teachers. The following constitute those variables: a) teaching, either special education or general education, b) ethnicity of the teacher, and c) ethnicity of the student. The ethnicity of the students and teachers will be considered either Anglo or minority. In order to examine these variables, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There are no significant differences between the opinions of special education teachers and general education teachers as to the potential for successful inclusion of students with serious emotional disturbance in general education classrooms according to the students' social/behavioral skills.

2. There is no significant difference based on ethnicity between the opinions of teachers, either special education or general education, regarding the social/behavioral skills of students with SED as to the potential for success in the inclusive classroom.

Methodology

This section summarizes the organization and design of this study. A more complete description of the methodology is presented in Chapter III. The statistical procedures are described in Chapter IV. Included here is a brief synopsis of the participants, procedure, research design and analyses.

Participants

The participants for this study were teachers of high school students with SED. The teachers were 48 general education teachers who teach academic core classes (i.e., English, mathematics, science, social studies, and reading) and 48 who teach special education classes. The 48 special education teachers were from a possible 54 who teach in the high schools, which should have provided a reliable

and stable estimation for this study. These teachers have students with SED and no other handicapping condition in their classes. The students with SED also receive special education services. The teachers, both general education and special education, had routinely completed the Scales for Predicting Successful Inclusion (SPSI) instruments on the students with SED. Using the criteria for this study, the 96 teachers represented the maximum number available. The ethnicity of the general education teachers was 30 Anglo and 18 minority. The ethnicity of the special education teachers was 22 Anglo and 26 minority. The ethnicity of the students with SED was 16 Anglo and 32 minority. This is roughly commensurate with the ethnicity of the student and teacher population in the high schools.

Procedure

The special education counselors in the high schools were asked to fill out the Information Data Sheets, and then remove the left side that contains the names of the students and the teachers. The Information Data Sheet included the ethnicity of the teachers and students and also the scores from the SPSI. The Information Data Sheet was then returned to the researcher in an envelope. The criteria for selection included students with SED who had no other handicapping conditions; attended one or more general education academic core classes (English language, social studies, science or mathematics), and were provided services by a special education teacher; and had SPSI instruments completed by both a general education and special education teacher.

Research Design and Analyses

The statistical analysis performed to test the hypotheses of interest in the study has been discussed and results presented in Chapter IV. This explanation is a brief description. The hypotheses were assessed by conducting a three-factor Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with the alpha level set at $p<.05$. The purpose of using a three-factor ANOVA was to allow each independent variable to have sub-groups (type of teaching, either special education or general education; ethnicity of the teacher, either Anglo or minority; and ethnicity of the student, either Anglo or minority). The three-factor ANOVA was used to determine whether there are differences in the special education teachers' and general education teachers' opinions of the social skills of students with SED based on the ethnicity of the teachers and students. The subscale scores of work habits, coping skills, peer relationships, and the SIQ of the SPSI were used as the dependent variable in the analyses.

Results

The results of the ANOVA revealed that the ethnicity of the teachers was significant with the alpha level set at $p<.05$ when comparing their opinions of students' work habits ($F=5.88$; $p=.017$). This would indicate that Anglo teachers, in both general education and special education, rated students lower according to the social/behavioral skill of work habits when compared to minority teachers. This agrees in part with previous research by Dembo (1988), Frisby (1992), and Feng and Cartledge (1996) in regard to ethnicity affecting teachers' opinions of

students. The results also support studies by Fad and Reyser (1993) and Gilliam and McConnell (1997) concerning work habits of students being important to teachers.

The results of the ANOVA revealed no other significant differences among the variables of teaching either special or general education, or the ethnicity of the students with SED. This is in contrast to research by Lewin et al. (1983), Lloyd et al. (1990), and Wood et al. (1993) that reported that general and special education teachers' opinions differ concerning students with disabilities. Furthermore, the results of the study were also in contrast to Larsen (1975) and Dembo (1988) who reported that the student's ethnicity influenced teachers' opinions of the students.

Implications

The SPSI (Gilliam & McConnell, 1997) appears to be a useful tool for school personnel in helping them make decisions concerning the inclusion of students with SED. The results of the study indicate that teachers rated the students reasonably equally when comparing the four subscales and SIQ scores. The SPSI did pick up subtle discrepancies in the different group scores as evidenced by the Anglo teachers' scores on work habits (see Table II) and Anglo general education teachers' scores on the SIQ (see Table VI).

Many teachers in this school district have completed the SPSI ratings on students with SED. The high rate (48 of 54) of special education teachers who were included as participants in this study attests to this. The special education

counselors who collected the data for this study reported positive comments from the teachers about the SPSI. They also noted that teachers expressed interest in learning the information obtained from the SPSI. The SPSI should be a valuable instrument for the inclusion of students with SED.

The results of this study would further indicate that general education and special education teachers agree on the necessary social/behavioral skills for students with SED to succeed in inclusionary settings in this school district. The results are contrary to previous research by Lewis et al. (1983), Lloyd et al. (1990), and Wood et al. (1993) who reported that general and special education teachers' opinions differ concerning students with disabilities. Caution is warranted when considering generalizing the results of this study to other school districts. The results may indicate that workshops and inservices have been successful in educating teachers concerning inclusion.

This study also implies that students with SED in this school district are functioning reasonably well in inclusionary settings when considering their social/behavioral skills. As the results of the study indicated (see Table VI), all the groups' mean scores of the SIQ (Anglo special education mean=100.82, minority special education mean=104.89, Anglo general education mean=97.37, and minority general education mean=107.06) were in the average range, or probable for successful inclusion. This would possibly show that special education teachers understood the expectations of the general education teachers for necessary social/behavioral skills. It may also indicate that the students have

been able to transfer the social/behavioral skills they have learned in special education to inclusionary settings.

Further implications from this study would include that ethnicity of the students is not a significant factor. When teachers considered the social/behavioral skills of students with SED concerning the students' success in inclusionary settings, the ethnicity of the students did not appear to be an issue. This information will be useful when teachers are planning programs and making placement decisions in this school district.

Although not statistically significant in the analyses of this study, a possible concern was noted. The Anglo general education teachers rated Anglo students lower (mean SIQ=93.36) than the minority students (mean SIQ=99.68 - see Table VI, page 42). This is in contrast to research reported by Dembo (1988) that noted the tendency of teachers to have more negative opinions of minority students than students who are white. Frisby (1992) cautioned that negative racial attitudes may diminish teacher objectivity and further noted that teachers may expect black students to be low achieving or uneducable. This raises the question of whether the Anglo teachers expect less of the minority students and therefore do not rate them as negatively as they do the Anglo students. In other words, the Anglo teachers hold the Anglo students to a higher standard than the minority students.

Grantham (1998) reported research that lower teacher expectations of black students was a factor in these students being under represented in gifted and talented programs. Feng and Cartledge (1996) and Tettegah (1996) noted that

previous perceptions about minority students can impact the expectations of teachers concerning these students. There is no way to make accurate judgments about teacher expectations from this study. If Anglo teachers do have lower expectations for minority students, it would be a cause for alarm. If teachers have lower expectations, they will likely be less demanding of the students and themselves.

The Limitations of the Study

The academic success of the students with SED was not included as a factor in this research project. The study focused on teachers' opinions of social/behavioral skills of students with SED. This may be considered a possible limitation. Students were selected for this study who had no other handicapping condition that might affect their academic achievement and were only categorized as SED. There may have been a broad range of intellectual and academic abilities in this group of students. These differences were not accounted for in this study. This factor also holds true, though, for the students' non-disabled peers in the general education classroom and therefore should not have greatly influenced the teachers' opinions concerning their social/behavioral skills.

Another limitation of the study was obtaining an appropriately comparative sample. The sample was representative in ratio comparison to the school's population both in student and teacher ethnicity. The small number of special education teachers per campus, coupled with lower numbers of Anglo students with SED that were rated, made getting comparative numbers very difficult. This

made statistical analysis difficult and threatened the validity of the statistical

conclusions.

Suggestions for Future Research

The results of this research suggest further studies in several areas of

interest. One such area might be researching the social/behavioral skills of work

habits. The Anglo teachers, both general education and special education, rated

the students with SED lower in this area than their minority counterparts. This

would indicate a need for further information about the teachers' opinions of the

work habits of students. An item analysis of the work habits subscale of the SPSI

(Gilliam & McConnell, 1997) of the surveys the teachers previously filled out may

provide pertinent information. The need for training or inservice with special

education teachers concerning specific work habits may be indicated from this

research.

Another area of interest that may be pertinent is whether teachers of

vocational/career, or on-the-job-training programs who have students with SED in

their respective classes have differences of opinions concerning the

social/behavioral skills of these students when compared to the special education

teachers. Many of the students with SED in the high schools where this study was

conducted are enrolled in these types of programs. These students were not in any

general education core academic classes and were not included in the study. It is

possible that these students were placed in these programs due to previous

difficulties in academic core classes. These difficulties may have included either

deficits in social/behavioral skills or academic skills. The students' social/behavioral skills may have kept them from being enrolled in academic core classes. This kind of teaching might have affected this study concerning the difference between general education and special education teachers' opinions of students with SED social/behavioral skills.

Furthermore, the vocational/career, or on-the-job training programs are a viable inclusion option for students with SED. There may be a lot of variation in teacher expectations between teachers of these classes compared to the teachers of academic core classes. The way students are expected to function in the vocational, career, and on-the-job program classes is typically quite different than the expectations in the academic core classes. Usually less lecture and fewer academic assignments are required in these classes. These teachers may rate the students differently than academic core class teachers in the social/behavioral skill areas of work habits, peer relationships, coping skills, and emotional maturity. Therefore, it seems pertinent to study whether there are differences in the opinions of these two groups of teachers with respect to the social/behavioral skills of students with SED.

Another area of interest to study would involve a further breakdown in the ethnicity of the teachers and students, specifically the minorities. By further dividing the minority group into African-American, Hispanic and Asian, information concerning comparisons of teachers' opinions of these groups may prove interesting. There appears to be an over representation of African-American

students with SED when compared to the general student population. Africian-American students make up 34% of the general education population of the district, but are represented by 52% of the population of students with SED. In contrast, the Hispanic students are 43% of the general population and only 19% of the students with SED. This would indicate a possible discrepancy in teachers' opinions when comparing African-American students to Hispanic students. A study of this comparison may be difficult to obtain due to the representative numbers of teachers from these groups in certain areas of teaching. A study of this type may involve gathering information from several large school districts.

Another suggestion for future research is to compare the opinions of teachers with respect to the schools where they teach. While collecting data for this study, a difference was noted between the schools in the number of students that met the criteria to be included in spite of the fact that the student population in the schools is roughly commensurate. This would indicate that there may be a difference in the total number of students with SED in the respective schools. Another possibility is that fewer students with SED are being included in general education core classes in some schools. Overall school climate may be a variable that impacts teachers' opinions of students with SED. It would be interesting to examine whether teachers' opinions differ significantly on the basis of school climate and the philosphy of discipline in the schools.

Conclusions

The results of this research study imply that special education and general education teachers agree on what social/behavioral skills are needed for students with SED to succeed in the general education classroom. When considering the ethnicity of the teachers, the only area of significance was the work habits of these students. The Anglo teachers, both special and general education, rated students with SED lower in the social/behavioral skill of work habits when compared to the minority teachers.

Teachers need to be able to reach a consensus concerning decisions about students with SED. Continued efforts to collaborate and share strategies should foster the potential for successful inclusion for these students in general education classrooms. Knowing that special education and general education teachers agree on what social/behavioral skills are needed by students with SED is an important step. The fact that ethnicity does not appear to greatly impact the teachers' opinions of students removes a potential obstacle in their efforts to reach a consensus. The future looks brighter for students with SED if these factors continue to hold true or improve.

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ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

14910 Aldine-Westfield Road • Houston, Texas 77032-3099 • (281) 449-1011

September 25, 1998

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This letter authorizes Marc Evans to conduct research, on his own time, in the Aldine Independent School District. Mr. Evans has assured me that all information concerning school personnel and students will remain anonymous and confidential. He has further assured me that he will conduct the research in a professional manner and at no time will anyone be at any risk. His research will entail accessing existing archival information, and therefore will not involve direct interaction with school personnel or students.

Sincerely,

M. B. Donaldson
Superintendent of Schools

APPENDIX B

ALDINE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE ANNEX
1617 Lauder Road • Houston, Texas 77039-3098 • (713) 985-6370

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter authorizes Marc Evans to conduct research in the Aldine Independent School District. Mr. Evans has assured me that all information concerning school personnel and students will remain anonymous and confidential. He has further assured me that he will conduct the research in a professional manner and at no time will anyone be at any risk. His research will entail accessing existing archival information, and therefore will not involve direct treatment with school personnel or students.

Yours truly,

Dr. Joye H. Thorne
Director of Special Education
Aldine Independent School District

cc: Mr. M.B. Donaldson
    Superintendent
    Aldine Independent School District

cc: Dr. Paul Warden
    Oklahoma State University

APPENDIX C

Directions to Special Education Counselors

Please complete the Information Data Sheets, remove the names by tearing along the dotted line, and return them to Marc Evans in the envelope provided.

1. Please compile a list of high school students with SED and no other handicapping conditions.

2. From that list, determine students who are attending at least one general education core academic class and receiving special education services from a special education teacher.

3. Then by searching your student files, access the SPSI instruments previously completed by both a general education teacher and the special education teacher.

4. The identifying information in Section I on the front page of the SPSI will provide the student's name, the teacher's name, and the teacher's position.

5. Use the Section II Score Summary to obtain the subscale standard scores and the SIQ.

6. The ethnicity of the students is from your student files and the ethnicity of the teachers can be accessed from the personnel rosters. Note this on the Information Data Sheet.

APPENDIX D

INFORMATION DATA SHEET

	Tear ⦙ Here	
	Ethnicity	**Number**

Student's Name_____   _____   _____

		WH	CS	PR	EM	SIQ
General Education Teacher's Name_____	_____	—	—	—	—	—
Special Education Teacher's Name_____	_____	—	—	—	—	—

SPSI

Scales for Predicting Successful Inclusion

Summary/Response Form

Section I. Identifying Information

Student's Name _____

Male _____ Female _____ Grade _____

School or Address _____

Rater's Name _____

Rater's Position _____

	Year	Month
Date of Rating	_____	_____
Date of Birth	_____	_____
Chronological Age	_____	_____

Section II. Score Summary

Scales	Raw Score	Standard Score	Percentile Rank	SEM	Probability Rating for Success in General Education
Work Habits	_____	_____	_____	1	_____
Coping Skills	_____	_____	_____	1	_____
Peer Relationships	_____	_____	_____	1	_____
Emotional Maturity	_____	_____	_____	1	_____
Sum of Standard Scores	_____				
Successful Inclusion Quotient	_____	_____		3	_____

Section III. Profile of Scores

Standard Score	Work Habits	Coping Skills	Peer Relationships	Emotional Maturity	Successful Inclusion Quotient
	•	•	•	•	• 160
	•	•	•	•	• 155
20	•	•	•	•	• 150
19	•	•	•	•	• 145
18	•	•	•	•	• 140
17	•	•	•	•	• 135
16	•	•	•	•	• 130
15	•	•	•	•	• 125
14	•	•	•	•	• 120
13	•	•	•	•	• 115
12	•	•	•	•	• 110
11	•	•	•	•	• 105
10	•	•	•	•	• 100
9	•	•	•	•	• 95
8	•	•	•	•	• 90
7	•	•	•	•	• 85
6	•	•	•	•	• 80
5	•	•	•	•	• 75
4	•	•	•	•	• 70
3	•	•	•	•	• 65
2	•	•	•	•	• 60
1	•	•	•	•	• 55

APPENDIX F

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: 10-20-98   IRB #: ED-99-036

Proposal Title: COMPARISON OF SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION
TEACHERS' OPINION OF STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS EMOTIONAL
DISTURBANCE

Principal Investigator(s): Paul Warden, Marc Evans, Jerry Jordan

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

Signature: Date: October 22, 1998

Carol Olson (sc)

Carol Olson, Director of University Research Compliance
cc: Marc Evans

VITA

Marc C. Evans

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: COMPARISON OF SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS' OPINIONS OF STUDENTS WITH SERIOUS EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

Major Field: Applied Behavioral Studies in Education

Area of Emphasis: School Psychology

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Midland, Arkansas on July 23, 1957, the son of Patricia Louise Evans and Damon Cecil Evans.

Education: Graduated from Kiowa High School, Kiowa, Oklahoma, 1975. Received a Bachelor of Science degree in special education in 1979 from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. Received a Master of Science degree in Applied Behavioral Studies from Oklahoma State University in August 1990. Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Behavioral Studies in Education at Oklahoma State University in December, 1998.

Professional Experience: Teacher, August 1979-1991, Oklahoma Public Schools; Regional Coordinator, Early Intervention, Oklahoma State Department of Education, October 1991 - July 1994; Graduate Teaching Assistant, Applied Behavioral Studies Department, Oklahoma State University, January 1992 to December 1993; School Psychologist, Aldine Independent School District, August 1994 - Present.

Professional Organizations: Nationally Certified School Psychologist and a Texas Licensed Specialist in School Psychology. Member of the National Association of School Psychologists and the Texas Association of School Psychologists.