A Survey of Teacher Attitudes Toward Co-Teaching and Inclusion

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Abstract

In order to service students with special needs within the general education classrooms, schools have been using co-teaching models as a service delivery model. The success of any program relies on the attitudes of those who are responsible for the implementation of the program (McCann, 2008). Therefore in order to understand teacher attitudes, a survey investigation will be sent to 4,000 teachers. As technology has increased, researchers have begun emailing surveys to participants instead of using postal mail, however response rates have been lower than those received in previous years when surveys were sent out using postal mail. Therefore as second aspect of this study will involve looking at the response rates using email and postal mail. Surveys will be emailed to 2,000 participants and the other 2,000 surveys will be sent using postal mail. Surveys will be sent to general education and special education teachers. Interviews will be conducted with 30% of the participants who agree to participate in interviews. Data will be analyzed using quantitative and qualitative analysis procedures.
A Survey of Teacher Attitudes Toward Co-Teaching and Inclusion

The focus of educating students with disabilities has changed from accessing special education services to accessing services in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The LRE for students who receive special education may be in the general education classroom with special education support services, which is known as inclusion. In order to meet the demands of all students in the inclusion model, co-teaching has begun to be implemented in many schools. Co-teaching requires a general and special education teacher to work together to teach all the students in the classroom. Teacher attitudes toward inclusion and co-teaching can impact the effectiveness of the teaching and learning taking place within a classroom.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study is to investigate the attitudes of general education and special education teachers toward co-teaching and inclusion, specifically examining the overall differences in attitudes of both groups of educators. Additionally this study will investigate the differences in response rates based on the delivery of the survey. The following research questions will be investigated:

1. Is there a relationship between teachers’ attitudes toward co-teaching and teachers’ attitudes toward inclusion?
2. What are the attitudes of general education teachers and special education teachers regarding co-teaching?
3. What are the attitudes of general education teachers and special education teachers regarding inclusion?
4. Are the demographic variables of age, gender, education level, years of teaching experience and ethnicity related factors in teachers’ attitudes toward co-teaching and inclusion?

5. Are there differences in survey response rates between those sent using email and regular postal mail?

So you actually have two overall purposes here, the inclusion/co-teaching survey, and the return rate question. Ok, but usually researchers do one or the other at a time

Method

Design

A survey research design will be used to collect data. This design is being used in order to facilitate generalization from the sample to the general population. The survey will only be implemented one time. The survey will be designed to determine the attitudes of teachers and whether differences exist between attitudes of general education and special education teachers. The survey will be collected electronically and via postal mail. Follow-up telephone interviews will be conducted with 30% of those respondents willing to be interviewed.

Participants and Setting

Four thousand teacher names will be obtained from Market Data retrieval (MDR), a national school database. Half of the participants will be general education teachers and the other half will be special education teachers. The sample will be randomly selected from MDR. MDR does the random selection The following sample restrictions will be provided to MDR: (a) include teachers at the elementary level (50%) and middle and high school level (50%) and (b) within the elementary and secondary level (middle and high
school), the sample should be divided into 2,000 regular educators and 2,000 special educators. No demographic restrictions will be placed on the sample. One thousand regular and special educators (2,000 total) will be randomly selected to receive the study through regular postal mail delivery with the other half receiving the survey through email.

Data Sources

Multiple data sources will be used to strengthen conclusions that will be drawn. Data sources will include an attitude scale, open-ended questions, and formal, unstructured interviews.

Instrumentation

An attitude inventory will be used which was constructed by McCann (2008) for the purpose of gathering data on teachers’ attitudes toward co-teaching and inclusion. The informed consent form will detail the optional nature of the study as well as the researchers goal to maintain confidentiality. The survey that is mailed to participants will contain an informed consent form to be signed and returned to the researcher. Teachers who fill out the survey on-line will be asked to check that they have read the consent form and agree to participate in the study. The survey will contain directions for the completion of the each section along with the definitions for the major terminology of co-teaching and inclusion. The participants will be asked to complete all questions in the survey.

The survey will contain three sections. The first section will collect demographic information from the participants such as years of teaching, certifications and endorsements held by the teacher, degree level, gender, and grade level taught. The
second section will contain 20 items, which will be responded to using a 5-point Likert scale with three open-ended questions regarding inclusion. Sample questions will include: I am adequately trained to implement curriculum in an inclusive classroom; I am provided the time to individualize for students with disabilities; Pullout programs provide the most benefit for students with disabilities; and I know how to modify curriculum/instruction for students with disabilities. The third section will contain 20 items, which will be responded to using a 5-point Likert scale with three open-ended questions regarding co-teaching. Sample questions will include: I am adequately trained to co-teach; Delivery instruction to the whole class is a shared responsibility of both teachers; and Planning for classes is a shared responsibility of both teachers; All students benefit academically from co-teaching. The open-ended questions at the end of the two sections will allow respondents to provide additional information about their personal views on the topics. The survey will also allow respondent to indicate if they would be willing to participate in a personal interview following completion of the survey. The survey will contain an area for respondents to provide contact information.

Questions on the Likert Scale sections and the open-ended questions of the survey will be divided into three subcategories. The three subcategories will focus on training, administrative support, and benefits to students. Also within the inclusion questions there will be an additional subcategory to focus on the shared responsibility between general and special education teachers. The follow-up interview questions will cover topics of benefits, challenges administrative support, shared responsibility training, appropriateness of inclusive practices, and desired change. These questions will deeper probe the respondents’ thoughts to determine emerging themes from the responses.
Procedures should be side heading

Consent and Human Subjects Participation

Permission to conduct the research will be obtained from George Mason University Human Subjects Review Board as well as the school district Human Subjects Review Board. Informed consent will also be obtained from all participants in the study. Signatures will be required on the surveys that are mailed to the participants and a box will be placed on the emailed surveys for participants to check.

Survey

The survey will be produced using Survey at Mason, a program available to George Mason University students, and placed onto the World Wide Web. Two thousand surveys will be mailed out to participants using regular postal mail. The other 2,000 participants will be sent an invitation to participate in the survey with a link to the survey website and they will be told that they will receive an email message with the link to the survey. Two weeks later an email will be sent out to all individuals who were randomly selected to participate in the email survey. The online survey will remain open for four weeks. A reminder postcard will be mailed to the participants who received the survey by postal mail two weeks after the survey was first mailed, asking them to complete the survey and mail it back to the researcher. Sounds like the mail survey will not have pre, post-notification? If so, type of survey is confounded with notification technique

Interviews

At the end of the survey, respondents will have the opportunity to indicate if they are willing to participate in a follow-up interview. If they are willing, respondents will be
asked to provide their email address so the researcher can contact them to schedule an interview. Thirty percent of those is there a minimum, maximum number? who are willing to be interviewed will be randomly selected to be interviewed by the researcher. Telephone interviews will be completed over a two-week period.

Interviews will be conducted using a semi-structured, open-ended manner in order for the participants to describe their opinions and feelings. There will be no set amount of time for the interviews. Sample questions will include… include, for example? Each interview will be digitally recorded and notes will be taken by the interviewer. Each recorded interview will be transcribed in order to conduct a qualitative analysis.

Proposed Data Analyses

After the surveys are returned, quantitative and qualitative analysis will be done on the results. Quantitative data analysis will be completed for the attitudinal scale section of the survey. Qualitative analysis will be completed on the written responses to the open-ended questions on the survey and the follow-up interview responses. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program will be used to prepare and describe the data and examine relationships between the variables. The respondent’s responses to the open-ended questions in the survey as well as the interviews will be transcribed and typed into a word document. A computer program such as NVivo will be used in order to analyze and sort the transcribed data. Description of software is less helpful than a description of specific data analytical techniques A list of five to seven themes or categories that have common characteristics will then be identified from the transcribed data. The themes will enable to researcher to organize and analyze the data. In
order to add rigor and insight into the study, the themes will be layered or interconnected based on the themes that develop.

How will you analyze the return rate data?
References