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**A STUDY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS OF
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AS PERCEIVED BY
SUPERVISORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION**

KENNETH WAYNE EDMISSON, JR.

A STUDY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS OF
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AS PERCEIVED BY
SUPERVISORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

An Abstract

Presented to the

Graduate and Research Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Education Specialist

by

Kenneth Wayne Edmisson, Jr.

May 1992

ABSTRACT

An instrument containing ten selected teacher characteristics (knowledge of content, alternate instructional methods, behavior management, school-family-community relations, organizational skills, wholistic approach, flexibility, motivation, genuine caring/concern for children, and communication skills) was mailed to randomly selected supervisors of special education across the State of Tennessee. They were asked to comparatively rank the ten and then to assess the depth of desire for each characteristic. The results were analyzed manually and via computer for rank order correlation coefficient, Spearman's rho (P_s).

Statistical analysis of the data observed resulted in the finding that of the ten characteristics studied, genuine caring/concern for children was the most desired of the ten and the most desired in depth. Motivation ranked second with a strong desire rating, organizational skills ranked third with a desire rating, behavior management ranked fourth with a strong desire rating, communication skills ranked fifth with a desire rating, and knowledge of content ranked sixth with a desire rating. The seventh ranked characteristic was flexibility with a strong desire rating, eighth was alternate instructional methods with a

desire rating, ninth was wholistic approach with a desire rating, and tenth was school-family-community relations with a desire rating.

CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS OF

EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AS PERCEIVED BY

SUPERVISORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

A Field Study

Presented to the

Graduate and Research Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Education Specialist

By


Kenneth Wayne Edmiston, Jr.

May 1962

To Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Field Study written by
Kenneth A STUDY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF TEACHERS OF
EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN AS PERCEIVED BY
SUPERVISORS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
the
final copy of this paper for form and content and I recom-
mend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist, with
a major in Education. A Field Study

Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University


Second Committee Member

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Education Specialist


Third Committee Member

by

Kenneth Wayne Edmisson, Jr.

May 1992


Dean of the Graduate School

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To Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting herewith a Field Study written by Kenneth Wayne Edmisson, Jr. entitled "A Study of Characteristics of Teachers of Exceptional Children as perceived by Supervisors of Special Education." I have examined the final copy of this paper for form and content and I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Educational Specialist, with a major in Education.

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This study also involved the cooperation of selected supervisors of Special Education of the districts and systems across the State of Tennessee. My thanks to all.

The author wishes to dedicate this study to Ms. Sara Phillips Caudill. It was through her encouragement, guidance, assistance, and concern that this author is in the field of serving children educationally. It is she who enabled this author to experience the personal and professional growth that the field of education has to offer. For these reasons, this study is dedicated to "Miss Sara." I extend my humble and sincere thanks to her.

I would like to quote and add my appreciation to Haim Ginott with the following poem published in Teacher and Child, publication date unknown.

"I have come to a frightening conclusion.
I am the decisive element in the classroom.
It is my personal approach that creates the climate.
It is my daily mood that makes the weather.
As a teacher, I possess tremendous power to make a child's
life miserable or joyous.
I can be a tool of torture or an instrument of inspiration.
I can humiliate or humor, hurt, or heal.
In all situations it is my response that decides whether a
crisis will be escalated or de-escalated and a child
humanized or de-humanized."

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

All educators, public and private, moved into a new set of relationships during the 1970s (Reynolds & Birch, 1982). These relationships were the achievement of a new "fit" between pupils and the schools and among professionals of different backgrounds based on careful reassessment of what each had to offer. These new relationships were made urgent by parent advocacy, by forward-thinking educators, and by the adjudications and legislation that reaffirmed the right to education for exceptional children in least restrictive environments according to individualized plans. For many, special education and related services were brought into the regular class by the end of the 1970s (Reynolds & Birch, 1982). Special and regular education teachers and administrators found themselves working together in the mainstream of the school to respond to a newly broadened public policy that emphasized inclusion rather than separation in the education of exceptional children.

The special educator's widened role was then forced to be recognized. The role called for the added preparation of advocates and consultants for all teachers and helpers for all children with any kind of exceptional condition that might generate social, personal, or academic problems.

The need to understand and increase the skills of all teachers and administrators to an adequate level so that they might accommodate exceptional children in the schools was also realized.

Experienced educators know that good teaching is neither simple nor easy. It is both complex and demanding, and it is difficult to completely eradicate the problems associated with introducing children who are blind, gifted, physically handicapped, mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, or speech handicapped along with their less exceptional brothers and sisters in the same schools. Yet, it is feasible to integrate all children, including those with disabilities, into everyday education settings and to do an effective job in teaching them. Integration has become a very dominant trend of modern education. However, to teach children effectively, including those who are exceptional, it is necessary to have more than "just a bag of tricks." Understanding the development of children, the background of special education and its philosophical, legal, and historical roots, and the comprehension of the principles and practices of individualized programming are all significant parts of that something "more." Nevertheless, there still exists that extra "something" that creates the ever-existing, impeccable teacher. As mentioned earlier, experienced educators know good teaching. Therefore, it is important to better define and study what good

teaching is and to be able to effectively address those characteristics when preparing teachers of tomorrow and inservicing those of today.

Significance of Study

While not all of the ten teacher characteristics of this study have been studied jointly, all have been studied singularly or in some partial combination. First, one might not necessarily consider the study of teacher characteristics as important for the classroom or in the teacher training programs. However, when considering what is to be offered and possibly gained in the public school system, it appears important to observe those who first-handedly provide that possibility - the teachers. What is even more important is the consideration of the numbers served.

Reynolds and Birch (1982) note the following:

1. About 5% of students receive one or more types of special services regularly for the entire school year.
2. About 10% of students receive specialized educational assistance on any one school day.
3. About 20% of students receive special services at some time during the school year.

More importantly, Reynolds and Birch estimate that educators share in the educational responsibilities for about 10% to 12% of all children at any given time. If highly gifted students are included, the figure would be higher, perhaps as high as 15% (Reynolds & Birch, 1982).

As a further indication of the need for increasing a professional knowledge base for those providing education to special populations, Rubin and Balow (1971) found that of students followed from Kindergarten through grade six, about 40% of elementary school children were found to need special service at some time. When the above longitudinal study was extended into the secondary years, the need continued to rise above the 40% level.

This study investigated the perception of characteristics of teachers involved in the education of special populations. Specifically, this research assessed supervisors of special education perceptions of ten selected characteristics indicative of promoting success in today's public school systems. In attempting to determine what makes a successful teacher of exceptional children, this study sought to examine the characteristics of teachers as viewed by their supervisors. The study provides a starting point for further research in this area. It is evident via the intuitive intellect that the ten teacher characteristics are all relevant and significantly important, but the degree to which they are and their levels of importance are of primary interests in this study. Based on the literature review in Chapter 2, it is apparent that there exists a great need for more research in the area of teacher characteristics studies and it is hoped that the findings

from this study will aid in information needed in the professional literature.

Research Questions

The following ten teacher characteristics were investigated in this study:

1. Knowledge of Content
2. Alternate Instructional Methods
3. Behavior Management
4. School-Family-Community Relations
5. Organizational Skills
6. Wholistic Approach
7. Flexibility
8. Motivation
9. Genuine Caring/Concern for Children
10. Communication Skills

The following research questions were investigated:

1. Which of the teacher characteristics are more desired than others?
2. For each teacher characteristic studied, to what extent is it desired?
3. What is the biographical/demographical background of the special education supervisor?

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

One of the major challenges facing education today is the identification of those "things" that make a good teacher. This challenge is not a new one. Researchers have for years sought to identify the special, yet illusive, qualities of teachers.

Special education instruction might possibly require more, different, or a distinct combination of those qualities which lead to a conducive teaching and learning situation. The following is a culmination of the review of the professional literature which supports this study's list of characteristics of teachers of exceptional students which have been found to be conducive to successful educational outcomes.

Knowledge of Content

The Tennessee State Department of Education earlier sought to effect a change in its educational delivery system and did so in its conception of the Tennessee Instructional Model (TIM). In its development, the State Department searched, reviewed, and tested the literature in its "Effective Teaching Research" and arrived at several conclusions. One of those conclusions is the discovery

that superior knowledge of subject matter by teachers has a positive correlation with student achievement. Superior knowledge of subject matter was defined as the teacher having better subject mastery in the subject(s) taught.

Barbara Clark, in Growing Up Gifted (1983), indicated that depth and breadth of knowledge on the teacher's part enhanced the effectiveness and efficiency of learning on the students' part. The depth and breadth of knowledge referred to by Clark was that both in general educational practices and in the content specific to that to which they teach. The knowledge of what to teach (knowledge of content) typifies what many educators traditionally have said good teaching is partially about (Balassi, 1968).

Alternate Instructional Methods

Across students and programs, no single instructional technique appears to be clearly superior. In all cases, however, effective procedures seem to be those which allow students to practice the academic task (Hall, Delquadri, Greenwood, & Thurston, 1982). These researchers state that effective educators must adapt varying instructional methodologies to each student in order to maximize the outcomes of the educational process, and they continue to elude to this fact throughout their writings.

White, Wyne, Stuck, and Coop (1983) recently reviewed the currently accepted "best teaching practices" of effective teaching. White et al. stated that while individual

and isolated studies have investigated the effectiveness of a wide range of teaching practices, good research suggests that an effective teacher has as one of his or her skills the mastery of instructional presentation. They summarized instructional presentation as follows:

1. Teacher prepares instructionally relevant lessons that match the students' current level of understanding of the topic.

2. Teacher reviews lesson content for the students.

3. Teacher presents lesson content and instructional tasks clearly.

4. Teacher make instructional transitions quickly, smoothly, and effectively.

5. Teacher presents instruction at an appropriately brisk rate. (pp. 18-19)

TIM also addresses alternate instructional methods in a variety of criteria. The specific criteria significant to alternate instructional methods are (a) modeling (the teacher models what is to be taught), (b) questioning (the teacher uses easy questions with a high success rate intended and directs questions to specific students, not volunteers), (c) mastery (the teacher does not "move on" until the material in a unit is learned), and (d) ample opportunity to learn criterion material (material covered in class provides a functional curriculum that matches curriculum guides and testing program). If considered

jointly, it is immediately evident that these criteria together form many instructional methodologies, or alternate instructional methods. How to teach, according to Balassi (1968), is one basic characteristic of teachers that is conducive to good teaching.

Behavior Management

Another basic characteristic of teachers that is conducive to good teaching is behavior management (White et al., 1983). These researchers state that the management of student behavior is one of the five basic skills that teachers should have. They defined the management of student behavior as follows:

1. Teacher instructs students in a clear set of rules and procedures for classroom behavior.

2. Teacher observes student behavior continuously and stops inappropriate behavior promptly and consistently.

(p. 21)

Concern for student behavior management at the state level is exemplified via the Florida Accountability Act of 1976. The Florida Beginning Teacher Project, an outcome of this 1976 Florida legislative act, states several general competencies of teachers in Florida. The Project stated that the teachers of Florida would demonstrate basic behavior standards as well as the application of various behavioral techniques necessary in the management of student behavior. The Project has, as one of its general

competencies, management techniques. It should be noted that the management techniques identified here are not those commonly thought to be associated with behavior management. Instead, they refer to those educational practices used by many educators throughout the country, such as classroom organization, time management, task assignments and promptness, and adherence to educational/administrative protocol. Also mentioned in its management techniques is the use of various resources by teachers to stimulate students to incorporate various organizational skills into their everyday lives.

TIM also addresses behavior management, specifically in two of its modules. Complimenting Balassi (1968), TIM states that to establish and maintain appropriate classroom behavior, the teacher should first generate rules, procedures, consequences, and incentives for the appropriate behavior desired. The TIM does place a stated desire for behavior management and indicates that the possessing of this criterion is indicative of probable success in the classroom. Balassi also states that student behavior management, sometimes an art of human interaction finesse, is suggestive of positive student outcomes.

School-Family-Community Relations

In Balassi's book Focus on Teaching (1968), he states that skill in human relations typifies what many educators traditionally have said good teaching is all about. Human

relations is all communications that take place involving the child and the school. Some of those communications might be a newsletter to parents, parent-teacher conferences, the communicative process during the M-Team proceedings, social involvement within the community, and many others.

Bronfenbrenner's (1974) research shows that the family is the most effective, as well as the most economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child. Further, Bronfenbrenner states that parents and others responsible for the child must work at establishing a cooperative relationship and developing a coordinated plan for teaching the child.

Stiles, Cole, and Gardner (1979) point out that in programs for handicapped children:

1. Parents are in strategic positions because they know their children better than anyone else and spend more time with their youngster over an extended period.
2. Parents can compensate for shortages of professional services or personnel, such as the lack of one-to-one services.
3. Parents can reduce costs of instruction and other services.
4. Parents can solve time and distance problems, particularly in rural areas. (p. 53)

Parents are partners with teachers, insist Reynolds and Birch (1982). While they find that instructional planning and implementation are at the heart of education, parents have contributions to make in both planning and implementation. Here, once again, we see that relations with family are most vital in the educational process. Reynolds and Birch continue to state that until recently, few teachers received preparation in relating to parents and that most parents know little more about elementary and secondary schools than what they remembered from being pupils themselves. Their role as partners was a passive one in school affairs. However, they add that in recent years, parents are more informed and their role grows more active. They take a direct part in the daily activities of the schools in many ways. This newly created organizational participation - parents with the schools and schools with the parents - has lent much to the success of their students.

Organizational Skills

Teachers who are organized are preferred more than those who are not organized, according to Barber and Renzulli (1981). Their first study was of students' preferences. The second was implemented as a follow-up study of the first in which the researchers further defined the teachers' organization (i.e., promptness, orderly lecture, immediate recall, and access of materials, etc.). Balassi

(1968) also discovered that organizational skills proved to be indicative of one of those "best teaching practices" and also incorporated it into the management of the physical environment.

The Tennessee Instructional Model (TIM) has identified three criteria that are considered to be organizational in nature. They are classroom management, seatwork, and planning. Planning, where the teacher used detailed lesson plans with a wide variety of activities to assure high time-on-task, was found to have the second highest correlation with respect to student achievement compared with the twenty criteria used in the "Effective Teaching Research." Classroom management is defined by TIM as the teacher spending less time on consequencing inappropriate behavior and more time on exhibiting, teaching, and complimenting appropriate behavior. Seatwork is defined as the teacher using less seatwork but monitoring closely what is given.

TIM also delegates a significant portion of its content to task analysis and the instructional process. In TIM, task analysis is defined as a process used to factor out the essential enroute learnings in a long range objective, and the instructional process is divided into three components: (a) teaching, (b) monitoring and adjusting, and (c) supervised practice. These three components are all inclusive of teaching the whole child.

Wholistic Approach

Lerner, Mardell-Czudnowski, and Goldenberg (1987) state that there are several key principles for curriculum planning in early childhood special education. First on their list is "Plan for teaching the 'whole' child." They further define this principle through stating that the curriculum should be balanced with emphasis on the child's, general growth and development, including the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and language aspects of child development.

Educational opportunities for children and youth with handicapping conditions have expanded greatly in recent years according to Hardman, Drew, and Egan (1984). The right to a free and appropriate education in the public school has been reaffirmed by the courts as well as by state and federal legislation. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142), in conjunction with state mandatory special education laws, clearly establishes society's intent to provide for the exceptional needs of the exceptional individual. The federal government has also provided funding incentives, according to Hardman et al. (1984), for libraries, colleges and universities, technical schools, and other related institutions, to make their physical facilities and curriculum offerings more available to handicapped individuals. It is readily

apparent that wholistic, prescriptive educational methodologies are intended by the federal and state governments.

Hewett and Forness (1974), after reviewing the work of Kirk and Dunn, concluded that the focus of special education is on (a) developing basic academic skills, (b) social competence, (c) personal adjustment, and (d) occupational adequacy.

Flexibility

It is evident that in order to address the child's total needs, the teacher must be versatile and flexible. Flexibility is one of the highest rated personal behaviors of teachers of special education, desired by both students and by the students' parents (Kathnelson & Colley, 1982; Lindsey, 1980). A teacher who is compatible to the need for flexibility is a critical factor in teachers of exceptional children according to Whitmore (1980).

Clark (1983) states that one of the abilities a teacher must incorporate to be effective with gifted learners is the ability to develop a flexible, individualized, enriching curriculum. While Clark's statement primarily focuses on gifted individuals, they, too, are exceptional learners.

Motivation

Enthusiasm is a critical aspect of the "best teaching practices" of teachers of exceptional learners (Balassi, 1968). In his definition of enthusiasm, Balassi does

mention that a part of enthusiasm is the ability to motivate those whom they teach.

Motivation, as defined by TIM, is a principle of learning which affects the degree and rate of student learning. TIM further adds to this definition by stating that motivation is also a state of need or desire that activates the person to do something that will satisfy that need or desire. Included in TIM's description of motivation, praise is a key method of motivating students. The use of praise is stressed rather than the teacher more frequently using criticism.

Genuine Caring/Concern for Children

Maddox, Samples-Lachmann, and Cummings (1985) surveyed gifted children and found that the students valued personal-social characteristics over cognitive characteristics of their teachers. The researchers' study further found that, of the students surveyed, a more comfortable feeling was experienced by those whose teachers exhibited a concern for the students.

Student-centered teachers were the stated preferences of the students surveyed by Barber and Renzulli (1981). Barber and Renzulli noted that the students stated that they felt a purpose for the teachers' presence, one that was more than merely "doing the job."

A student's honest feeling of a teacher's concern is positively correlated to the student's academic success

(Hall, Delquadri, Greenwood, & Thurston, 1982). The teacher has been ranked as the most important factor in a survey made regarding teachers in a gifted program for the use of identifying key features in programs for the gifted (Renzulli, 1968). Renzulli further concludes that this concern by the teachers, whether verbal or non-verbal, was apparently effectively communicated to the students, and was genuinely felt by them.

Communication Skills

The Florida Accountability Act of 1976 mandated the Florida Beginning Teacher Project. In 1985, the Project identified as a general competency area oral/written communication. The Project further stated that all teachers in Florida would demonstrate their use of this skill, particularly those involved with the education of those exceptional students.

Balassi's (1968) book Focus on Teaching states that an effective teacher will have skill in human relations and effective voice and good speech habits as two of his or her basic characteristics. TIM has also identified communication skills as one of its criterion for teachers to have in their repertoire of skills. TIM has found this criterion to be positively correlated with student achievement.

Reynolds and Birch (1982) state that the teacher is usually in the best position to communicate credibility with parents for three primary reasons. First, they say,

parents will want to have direct and final recourse to the teacher, and they should see the teachers as having central control over what happens with their child in school.

Secondly, the teacher usually best knows the child, the parents, and other professionals in the situation; thus, the teacher is in the logical position to assert coordination of the communicative process. Finally, the teacher is the person who will have to live with and use the results of consultations and assessments and who, ultimately, will be accountable for the child's educational progress.

Conclusions

The facilitation of learning is the teacher's most fundamental task, and an understanding of the learning process and the ability to use effective techniques to enhance it are essential (Wolery, Bailey, & Sugai, 1988). Skinner (1968) defined teaching as the expediting of learning. Clearly, teaching is a complex activity requiring an array of personal and technical skills. What is found in the professional literature are various teacher characteristics which have all been proven effective and conducive to student learning.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Subjects

The subjects for this study were 38 Supervisors of Special Education as identified by the Tennessee State Department of Education's School Systems and Districts of the State of Tennessee. All subjects are employed in the State of Tennessee in a public educational system and in a supervisory capacity. The group was composed of 16 males and 22 females.

Surveys for the study were sent to sixty randomly selected supervisors of special education soliciting their participation. The complete survey consisted of a cover letter explaining the study, its purpose, and the instructions for completing it (see Appendix A), the instrument used for ranking and rating the teacher characteristics (see Appendix B), and the biographical/demographic information response form (see Appendix C). Also included with these materials was an Addendum which provided the participants a choice of receiving the outcomes of this study (see Appendix D) and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to be used to return their completed forms of the survey used for this study. Approximately sixty-seven percent (forty participants) returned the completed forms.

Procedure

The participants of this study were requested to complete the survey which consisted of the instrument for their response of preferences for teacher characteristics and a biographical/demographic form. Based on current research found in the professional literature previously discussed, as well as the ideological debates of intellectuals within the education community, the ten teacher characteristics discussed previously in the literature review were selected for study (Balassi, 1968; White, et al., 1983; Maddox, et al., 1985).

The instructions for ranking and rating the teacher characteristics were provided. Standard ranking criteria were used where each participant would rank the most desired teacher characteristic with a one (1), the next most desired teacher characteristic with a two (2), and so on in descending order until the least desired teacher characteristic was given a ranking of ten (10). The participants were instructed to rate each teacher characteristic with respect to their depth of desire for each where a rating of one (1) indicated a strong desire for the stated teacher characteristic, a rating of two (2) indicated a desire for the stated teacher characteristic, a rating of three (3) indicated a less desire for the stated teacher characteristic, and a rating of four (4) indicated least desire for the stated teacher characteristic.

The second portion of the survey, the biographical/demographic information response section, requested the participant to answer the following questions:

1. Name:
2. School System:
3. Position/Title:
4. Degrees Held:
5. Majors of Degrees Held:
6. Endorsement(s):
7. Number of Years in Current Position:
8. Number of Years in Special Education:
9. Number of Years in Non-special Education:
10. Number of Years in Other Positions:
11. Total Enrollment in School System:
12. Total Enrollment in Special Education:
13. Number of Teachers in Special Education:

The ranks and rates of the teacher characteristics were compared item by item and cumulative average of rankings and ratings for each teacher characteristic were obtained.

Description of the Instrument

The instrument used in this study was a culmination of the review of the characteristics that have for many years been observed in teachers who are considered successful. The instrument was developed with the intent to provide educators - both in the public school systems and on the

college and university level - and others involved in the betterment of professional education, with the information observed by this study. Also, the knowledge of this information will aid in the future study of characteristics of teachers deemed to be important in professional growth and probable success in the classroom.

Limitations

The size of the sample utilized for this study was first limited to the supervisors of special education in the school systems and districts in the state of Tennessee. The size was further limited to the return rate observed in the study. However, it should be noted that forty of sixty surveys were returned, as well as the fact that these forty represent a cross-sectional representation across the state.

Note should also be taken that while every effort was made to stress the importance that sincere and honest information be reported by the participant, the data obtained was somewhat subjective in nature regardless of the professional integrity in the individuals' response.

Another limiting factor is the fact that, as mentioned previously, the ten selected teacher characteristics have not been studied jointly. Thus, there exists no supporting data as to their joint importance. However, while this is to be taken into consideration, an important significance

of this study is to establish and provide a stepping stone for beginning research in teacher characteristic studies.

Finally, as forty participants returned the surveys, only thirty-eight were used in this study. One survey incorrectly rated the teacher characteristics (i.e., assigned more than one teacher characteristic to same rate), and another survey failed to rate the teacher characteristics.

CHAPTER 4

Results

The data for this study were of two groups: one for ranking the order of preference for the stated teacher characteristic, and one for the rating of the degree of desire for the stated teacher characteristic. The data were analyzed in the following sequence. The ranking and rating scores reported were totaled for each teacher characteristic separately. Arithmetic means, approximated to three decimal places, were then obtained. Variances and standard deviations were computed according to techniques reported by Mueller, Schuessler, and Costner (1977). Rank order was determined for the ten selected teacher characteristics using score totals to assign rank order where the teacher characteristic with the lowest score total was assigned a rank of one (1), the teacher characteristic with the next lowest score total was assigned a rank of two (2), and so on until the teacher characteristic with the highest score total received a rank order of ten (10). Finally, the degree of desire for the ten selected teacher characteristics was determined. This was done by using standard rounding techniques applied to the means computed for each teacher characteristic (Mueller et al., 1977). Each mean was then rounded to the nearest whole number. This whole

number was reported as the rate or desire for the stated teacher characteristic.

The raw scores for this study were computed using the rank order correlation coefficient, Spearman's rho (ρ_s), to compare the thirty-eight (38) utilized returned ranks and ratings from the participants (see Appendix E). The computer program utilized was Statistics with Daisy (Killian, 1981). The F-critical was selected from a standard F table included in Mueller et al. (1977) and Kleinbaum and Kupper (1978). However, it should also be noted here that while the rank order correlation coefficient analyses were performed on the data obtained in this study, there currently exists no correlative data in the professional literature for comparative purposes. Finally, the rankings and ratings of the teacher characteristics were obtained (see Appendix F).

Research Questions

1. Which of the teacher characteristics are more desired than others?
2. For each teacher characteristic studies, to what extent is the desire?

The teacher characteristic observed to be the most desired of the ten used in this study was that of Genuine Caring/Concern for Children. This characteristic was also supported as having the most desired depth or rating.

The teacher characteristic observed to be second most desired was Motivation and it received a desire rating of strong desire. The third most desired was organizational Skills receiving a depth rating of desire. Fourth in comparison was Behavior Management which received a strong desire rating.

Communication Skills was ranked fifth of the ten teacher characteristics studied and received a rating of desire. The sixth ranked characteristic was Knowledge of Content. It received a desire rating. Flexibility was ranked seventh, and rated with desire. Alternate Instructional Methods received a ranking of eighth and a rating of desire. Ninth ranked was Wholistic Approach. It received a rating of desire.

The characteristic observed to be ranked tenth of the ten teacher characteristics in this study was that of School-Family-Community Relations. It received a rating average of two, being only desired.

3. What is the biographical/demographical background of the special education supervisor?

The data obtained from the supervisors of special education concerning their biographical/demographical background were computed using standard rounding techniques (Mueller et al., 1977). Totals and means were obtained for this data.

Analysis of Data

Results of statistical analysis via rank order correlation coefficient (p_r) revealed that there is no significant difference between the ranked scores, nor in the rated scores provided by the supervisors, at the 0.05 level ($p_r < 0.05$). Because the rankings found in this study are ordinal measures, the association between ranks were measured for the association of ordinal data. The measurement of the correlation between ranks were made using the rank order correlation coefficient, more commonly known as the product-moment correlation coefficient (Mueller et al., 1977).

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

Summary

The studies reviewed in the related professional literature had explored the characteristics of teachers. The teachers studied were considered to be indicative of those teachers who promote success in the classroom. These studies reported each characteristic's significance in effective teaching methodology. Each characteristic has been researched and tested many times. In addition, several have been jointly studied. The basis of this study was to determine the relationship between characteristics of teachers and their perceived effects on success with exceptional children as viewed (desired) by the teachers' supervisors. Professional literature supporting the resultant data in this study was observed early on to be sparse. Therefore, a secondary basis of this study was to lend a better data base and support for teacher characteristic studies and to provide a steppingstone for further research in this area.

Discussion

The purpose of the analyses within this study was for three main aspects. First, it was to determine the most

desired teacher characteristics of the ten studied. Secondly, it sought to determine with what degree each characteristic was desired. And finally, this study sought to provide baseline information of supervisors of special education. While all the characteristics used in this study are significant in the field of education and its practices, this study yielded some surprising results.

Interestingly, the teacher characteristic observed to be the most desired of the ten used in this study was that of Genuine Caring/Concern for Children. This characteristic, above all others, is one which the schools of higher education as well as the employing boards of education cannot instill in its teachers and teacher candidates. This characteristic also was supported as having the most desired depth or rating.

Flexibility was ranked seventh of the ten teacher characteristics. Whereas all of the characteristics are important in education, flexibility is commonly an emphasized teacher ability in special education (Kathnelson & Colley, 1982; Lindsey, 1980; Whitmore, 1980; Clark, 1983). It also only received a rating of desire. It is quite surprising that while special education teachers are supposed to be able to adapt their timeframe to the population within the classroom, the supervisors of special education only desire this characteristic and ranked it in the bottom 50% of those studied. The special education curriculum

should be flexible, permitting teachers to take advantage of selective teaching techniques, materials, and methods to meet and solve the varied demands of handicapped children. Because the special education curriculum must meet the needs of many different kinds of handicapped children, its curriculum is varied. Certain handicaps require unique adaptations and techniques.

Ranked eighth was Alternate Instructional Methods. Hall et al. (1982) stated that, across students and programs, there exists no single instructional technique to be clearly superior. Balassi (1968) found that alternate instructional methods are a basic characteristic of teachers and are conducive to good teaching. If alternate instructional methods are so significantly important, why did these supervisors only rank it eighth? According to Reynolds and Birch (1982), a classroom that is always conducted in the same way for all students is certain to serve some students poorly. Teachers need not expect to offer all approaches at all times, or even to know each one well. They can expect their partners in special education or fellow staff members to help them require skills in the particular options that are needed to meet particular needs.

It is imperative that special education teachers be able to present their content and teach skills in a variety of ways. Therefore, students with different learning

styles would have the greatest advantage in possibly acquiring that content and skill competence. Taking this approach one step further, it would be advantageous for special education teachers to test in a variety of ways. Thus, the exceptional child would have the greatest opportunity to demonstrate their ability. It is evident that exceptional students have a variety of needs and must be served in a variety of ways, one of which is altering the approach to which material is presented to them.

The wholistic approach has been a key feature in the advancement of special education for a number of years (Hardman et al., 1984). It stresses the bringing together of all the realms affecting the exceptional student and his or her needs, for we as individuals do not only grow in one aspect of our lives, but in many. How can the special educator attempt to teach a profoundly physically and mentally retarded child to write when the child cannot grasp the pencil? The wholistic approach was ranked ninth with only a rating of desire. It appears that special education supervisors desire a more organized, methodical teacher rather than one who can present the content in a way in which the child can comprehend it. Serious implications may result if the data in this study prove to be true across the realm of special education. The low ranking of wholistic approach suggests that only the handicapped student's deficiencies are merely being addressed. This

patchwork attempt is a completely antagonistic approach toward today's concept of special education. The major purpose of special education is to meet the needs of atypical children by taking into account their individual differences. Also, the special education curriculum must provide a balanced program that considers all aspects of a child's growth and welfare.

Finally, School-Family-Community Relations was ranked last and with only a desire rating. Bronfenbrenner (1974) indicates that the family is the most effective as well as the most economical system for fostering and sustaining the development of the child. It is continuously pointed out to educators of today that communication with the family is of utmost importance for cultivating a conducive learning experience for the exceptional child. How would the teacher know what some of the child's needs are or how would the parent(s) know what is being provided the child if school and family communication is not present? Additionally, community resources are not to be overlooked. Much is provided the educational system via the community.

The results observed in this study are quite informative and astonishing. It is important to know the preference of characteristics of teachers of special education and to what extent they are preferred. The importance is necessary in that supervisors of special education are interested in knowing what abilities are necessary for

invoking an effective and efficient means of teaching exceptional students and who has those abilities. Also important to the supervisors is knowing which of those abilities are more important than others. Teacher educators also are interested in teacher characteristic data. What remains astonishing is the fact that, of the teacher characteristics studied, many that have been traditionally vital to special education have been selectively lower ranked than others. This indicates that teacher characteristic studies must be disseminated more effectively to those making educational decisions. The results in this study also suggest that either the supervisors of special education are not accurately aware of the current proven methods of effective and efficient teacher performance abilities or are not utilizing these proven methods and abilities.

Recommendations

First, there appears to be ample supporting evidence that each of the selected teacher characteristics is intricately important in the successful teaching of exceptional children in today's classrooms. Therefore, researchers in the field of education, particularly in the field of special education, should increase study of the attributes of teachers in the classroom. Of special emphasis are the teacher characteristics which have been proven to be indicative of success for those who exhibit these

characteristics. Secondly, as each characteristic has been studied in-depth independently, groups of characteristics should be studied jointly to determine if a multiplicative relationship exists.

Expanding the above two recommendations, a major undertaking recommended is the methods in which researchers select and define the teacher characteristics which are to be studied. Explicit and distinct delineation must be made in order that the research most assuredly is aware of what is actually being studied as well as the educational community to which the data are to be distributed.

Additionally, measurement must be taken into consideration. How are the teacher characteristics to be measured? At present, the literature suggests that there exists no quantitative means by which to evaluate qualitative data. Also to be acknowledged is the fact that various methods of teaching are effective for teachers. Therefore, as all children are unique, all teachers are unique too. It also must be stated that there be some criteria to, at least, estimate as closely as possible the probable success of future teachers based on the performance of current teachers. It would be of immense importance that methods of measurement for subjective data be further explored.

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State Special Education Supervisor

currently completing at State University

Administration. In the

past several years, I have

been involved in the

development of the

State Special Education

Program. I have

been involved in the

APPENDIX A

Dear Special Education Supervisor:

I am currently completing my Specialist in Education degree at Austin Peay State University with an emphasis in Special Education/Administration. In completing my research, I have found that I need your help. I would sincerely appreciate your honesty and promptness in completing the enclosed survey and in returning it to me by Friday, May 5, 1989. A self-addressed, stamped envelope is enclosed.

Please understand that no individual or school system's name will be used in the study. Statistical areas will be used and individuals and school systems have been designated by a code number for the purpose of this study. Therefore, again, I strongly urge you to complete the survey and return it to me as soon as possible by the deadline date.

Page 1 contains ten (10) teacher characteristics. First, please rank the teacher characteristics from 1 to 10 in order of your preference for them, where 1 = the most desired and 10 = the least desired. Next, assess the depth of desire for each teacher characteristic by assigning each characteristic a value where 1 = strong desire for the stated characteristic, 2 = desire for the stated characteristic, 3 = less desire for the stated characteristic, and 4 = least desire for the stated characteristic.

Pages 2 and 3 contain biographical/demographical questions. It is important that all of these questions be completed.

Thank you for your time, cooperation, and promptness in participating in this research.

Respectfully,

Ken W. Edmisson

1 - 10 Rating

- _____ Knowledge of subject
- _____ Attitude toward subject
- _____ Initiative displayed
- _____ School participation
- _____ Organizational ability
- _____ Wholesome appearance
- _____ Flexibility
- _____ Motivation
- _____ General Caringness
- _____ Children

APPENDIX B

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

<u>1 - 10 Rating</u>		<u>1 - 4 Rating</u>
_____	Knowledge of Content	_____
_____	Alternate Instructional Methods	_____
_____	Behavior Management	_____
_____	School-Family-Community Relations	_____
_____	Organizational Skills	_____
_____	Wholistic Approach	_____
_____	Flexibility	_____
_____	Motivation	_____
_____	Genuine Caring/Concern for Children	_____
_____	Communication Skills	_____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RANKING

1 - 10 Ranking: 1 = most desired & 10 = least desired

1 - 4 Ranking: 1 = strong desire for this characteristic

2 = desire for this characteristic

3 = less desire for this characteristic

4 = least desire for this characteristic

APPENDIX C

BIOGRAPHICAL/DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

NAME: _____

SCHOOL SYSTEM: _____

POSITION/TITLE: _____

AGE: _____

SEX: _____

DEGREEMAJOR

CERTIFICATION(S)/ENDORSEMENT(S)/LICENSURES(S):

Number of years and months in current position:

Number of years and months in special education teaching:

Number of years and months in non-special education
teaching:

Number of years and months in other positions (please
specify):

Total enrollment of school system:

Total enrollment in special education:

Number of teachers teaching in special education:

APPENDIX D

If you would like statistical breakdowns of this research, please complete the form below and include it with your survey upon its return.

APPENDIX D

ADDENDUM

If you would like statistical breakdowns of this research, please complete the form below and include it with your survey upon its return.

_____ Yes, I would like statistical breakdowns of Mr.
Ken W. Edmission's research on Teacher
Characteristics and Biographical/Demographical
Information.

Name: _____

School Address: _____

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS Raw Scores

Survey Number	Knowledge of Content		Alternate Instructional Methods	
	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	4	3	4	2
2.	5	3	2	3
3.	9	3	6	3
4.	7	3	1	3
5.	10	3	5	3
6.	1	4	3	4
7.	8	3	7	3
8.	3	4	8	3
9.	6	3	4	3
10.	2	4	2	3
11.	6	3	10	3
12.	1	4	9	3
13.	1	4	1	3
14.	1	4	1	3
15.	1	4	1	3
16.	1	4	1	3
17.	1	4	1	3
18.	1	4	1	3
19.	1	4	1	3
20.	1	4	1	3
21.	1	4	1	3
22.	1	4	1	3
23.	1	4	1	3
24.	1	4	1	3
25.	1	4	1	3
26.	1	4	1	3
27.	1	4	1	3
28.	1	4	1	3
29.	1	4	1	3
30.	1	4	1	3
31.	1	4	1	3
32.	1	4	1	3
33.	1	4	1	3
34.	1	4	1	3
35.	1	4	1	3
36.	1	4	1	3
37.	1	4	1	3
38.	1	4	1	3
39.	1	4	1	3
40.	1	4	1	3
41.	1	4	1	3
42.	1	4	1	3
43.	1	4	1	3
44.	1	4	1	3
45.	1	4	1	3
46.	1	4	1	3
47.	1	4	1	3
48.	1	4	1	3
49.	1	4	1	3
50.	1	4	1	3
51.	1	4	1	3
52.	1	4	1	3
53.	1	4	1	3
54.	1	4	1	3
55.	1	4	1	3
56.	1	4	1	3
57.	1	4	1	3
58.	1	4	1	3
59.	1	4	1	3
60.	1	4	1	3
61.	1	4	1	3
62.	1	4	1	3
63.	1	4	1	3
64.	1	4	1	3
65.	1	4	1	3
66.	1	4	1	3
67.	1	4	1	3
68.	1	4	1	3
69.	1	4	1	3
70.	1	4	1	3
71.	1	4	1	3
72.	1	4	1	3
73.	1	4	1	3
74.	1	4	1	3
75.	1	4	1	3
76.	1	4	1	3
77.	1	4	1	3
78.	1	4	1	3
79.	1	4	1	3
80.	1	4	1	3
81.	1	4	1	3
82.	1	4	1	3
83.	1	4	1	3
84.	1	4	1	3
85.	1	4	1	3
86.	1	4	1	3
87.	1	4	1	3
88.	1	4	1	3
89.	1	4	1	3
90.	1	4	1	3
91.	1	4	1	3
92.	1	4	1	3
93.	1	4	1	3
94.	1	4	1	3
95.	1	4	1	3
96.	1	4	1	3
97.	1	4	1	3
98.	1	4	1	3
99.	1	4	1	3
100.	1	4	1	3

APPENDIX E

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Raw Scores

Survey Number	Knowledge of Content		Alternate Instructional Methods	
Survey Number	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	4	1	9	2
2.	5	2	8	1
3.	5	1	6	1
4.	7	1	6	1
5.	10	2	6	1
6.	7	2	8	3
7.	8	1	9	1
8.	8	3	9	3
9.	8	2	9	2
10.	4	1	2	2
11.	6	2	10	3
12.	7	1	8	1
13.	9	1	10	1
14.	1	1	10	2
15.	1	1	8	2
16.	5	1	1	1
17.	9	2	3	2
18.	3	1	6	2
19.	8	1	3	2
20.	1	1	5	1
21.	8	2	9	2
22.	4	2	2	1
23.	3	1	6	2
24.	4	1	7	2
25.	3	1	6	2
26.	4	1	7	1
27.	9	2	10	3
28.	9	3	7	3
29.	7	1	9	1
30.	4	2	9	3
31.	6	3	7	4
32.	8	2	10	2
33.	2	1	4	2
34.	6	2	9	3
35.	5	2	9	2
36.	2	1	8	2
37.	1	1	1	1
38.	1	2	1	1

Survey Number	Behavior Management		School-Family-Community Relations	
	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	5	1	10	2
2.	6	1	9	2
3.	3	1	10	2
4.	8	1	4	1
5.	2	1	9	2
6.	3	1	10	3
7.	4	1	2	1
8.	6	3	3	1
9.	2	1	10	2
10.	5	2	10	4

11.	2	1	7	2
12.	6	1	9	1
13.	4	1	7	1
14.	4	1	6	2
15.	5	2	9	2
16.	2	1	10	2
17.	8	1	10	2
18.	4	1	9	2
19.	5	1	10	3
20.	6	1	9	2

21.	10	2	6	1
22.	3	1	9	2
23.	4	1	9	2
24.	2	1	8	2
25.	8	2	9	3
26.	5	1	10	2
27.	7	1	6	1
28.	8	3	5	4
29.	6	1	10	2
30.	5	2	7	2

31.	2	1	9	4
32.	4	1	9	3
33.	3	1	5	2
34.	8	1	7	3
35.	6	2	7	1
36.	7	1	9	2
37.	1	1	1	1
38.	1	1	2	2

Survey Number	Organizational Skills		Wholistic Approach	
	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	3	2	6	2
2.	7	1	3	2
3.	2	1	9	2
4.	2	1	10	4
5.	7	2	3	1
6.	1	1	9	3
7.	6	1	10	3
8.	5	2	10	4
9.	1	1	6	2
10.	5	3	7	1

11.	5	2	9	3
12.	4	1	5	1
13.	3	1	2	1
14.	8	2	9	4
15.	4	2	10	3
16.	6	1	3	1
17.	4	1	1	2
18.	8	2	10	3
19.	6	1	9	2
20.	10	2	8	2

21.	4	1	7	2
22.	6	1	10	2
23.	2	1	10	3
24.	6	2	9	2
25.	4	1	7	3
26.	6	1	9	1
27.	5	2	8	2
28.	6	3	10	3
29.	4	1	8	2
30.	3	2	10	3

31.	5	3	10	4
32.	7	2	5	2
33.	10	2	6	3
34.	4	1	10	2
35.	4	1	10	4
36.	6	1	10	3
37.	2	2	3	3
38.	1	1	1	3

Survey Number	Flexibility		Motivation	
	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	9	2	7	2
2.	10	2	2	1
3.	7	2	4	1
4.	5	1	9	1
5.	8	2	6	2
6.	4	1	2	1
7.	7	1	3	1
8.	7	2	4	1
9.	7	1	5	1
10.	9	3	8	4

11.	4	1	3	1
12.	1	1	2	1
13.	6	1	5	1
14.	5	2	3	1
15.	6	2	7	1
16.	7	1	4	1
17.	2	1	5	1
18.	5	2	1	1
19.	1	1	7	1
20.	7	2	2	1

21.	3	1	2	1
22.	7	1	5	1
23.	8	2	7	1
24.	5	1	3	1
25.	10	3	5	2
26.	8	1	3	1
27.	3	1	4	1
28.	3	4	2	4
29.	5	1	2	1
30.	8	3	1	1

31.	3	4	4	2
32.	3	2	2	1
33.	7	3	8	1
34.	5	2	2	1
35.	8	1	3	1
36.	5	1	4	1
37.	2	2	1	1
38.	1	1	1	1

Survey Number	Genuine Caring/Concern for Children		Communication Skills	
	Ranking	Rating	Ranking	Rating
1.	1	1	2	1
2.	1	1	4	1
3.	1	1	8	1
4.	1	1	3	1
5.	1	1	5	2
6.	5	2	6	2
7.	1	1	5	1
8.	1	1	2	1
9.	3	2	4	2
10.	1	1	6	3

11.	1	1	8	2
12.	3	1	10	1
13.	1	1	8	1
14.	2	1	7	2
15.	2	1	3	1
16.	8	1	9	2
17.	6	1	7	2
18.	2	1	7	1
19.	2	1	4	2
20.	4	1	3	1

21.	1	1	5	1
22.	1	1	8	2
23.	1	1	5	2
24.	1	1	10	2
25.	1	1	2	1
26.	2	1	1	1
27.	1	1	2	1
28.	1	4	4	4
29.	3	1	1	1
30.	2	1	6	2

31.	1	1	8	4
32.	1	1	6	2
33.	1	1	9	1
34.	1	1	3	2
35.	1	1	2	1
36.	1	1	3	1
37.	1	1	1	1
38.	1	1	2	2

APPENDIX E

THEORY OF THE

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APPENDIX F

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

1 - 10 Rating1 - 4 Rating

<u>6</u>	Knowledge of Content	<u>2</u>
<u>8</u>	Alternate Instructional Methods	<u>2</u>
<u>4</u>	Behavior Management	<u>1</u>
<u>10</u>	School-Family-Community Relations	<u>2</u>
<u>3</u>	Organizational Skills	<u>2</u>
<u>9</u>	Wholistic Approach	<u>2</u>
<u>7</u>	Flexibility	<u>2</u>
<u>2</u>	Motivation	<u>1</u>
<u>1</u>	Genuine Caring/Concern for Children	<u>1</u>
<u>5</u>	Communication Skills	<u>2</u>

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RANKING

1 - 10 Ranking: 1 = most desired & 10 = least desired

1 - 4 Ranking: 1 = strong desire for this characteristic

2 = desire for this characteristic

3 = less desire for this characteristic

4 = least desire for this characteristic