

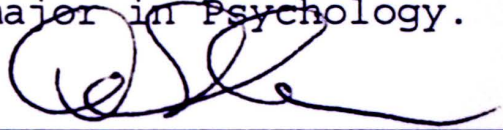
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CHANGING ATTITUDES TOWARDS INDIVIDUALS WITH LEARNING
DISABILITIES

ROXANNE R. BANKS

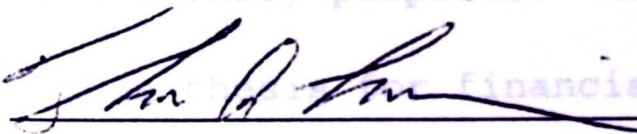
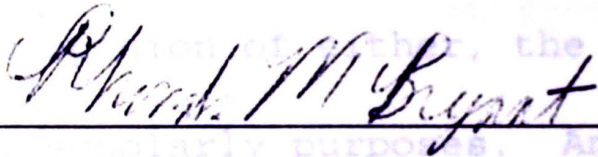
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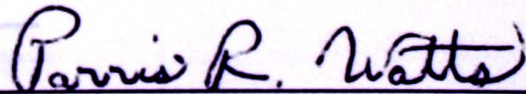


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Changing Attitudes Towards Individuals with Learning Disabilities

A Thesis
Presented for the
Master of Arts
Degree
Austin Peay State University

Roxanne R. Banks

April 2001

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether a person's attitude could be affected by gaining information pertaining to learning disabilities. Eighty-nine female and twenty-six male college students, ages 18 to 46, participated in the study. The participants were randomly divided into three groups. Control group one viewed 45 minutes of a video about Colorado, control group two viewed a 35 minute video about people with physical disabilities and computers, and the experimental group viewed a 47 minute video on learning disabilities. The participants were then given a questionnaire to assess attitudes toward college students with learning disabilities. The results of the experiment failed to support the hypothesis that gaining information on learning disabilities through a structured method, i.e., the video tape, could have a significantly positive impact on the participants' attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities. The participants in all three groups responded in a very positive manner towards students with learning disabilities regardless of what video they viewed. Further research to investigate the factors contributing to the results should be considered.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---------|--|------|
| I. | INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| II. | LITERATURE REVIEW | 2 |
| | History | 2 |
| | Attitudes toward individuals with disabilities | 5 |
| | Attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities | 10 |
| | Modification of attitudes | 13 |
| | Summary | 20 |
| | Hypothesis | 21 |
| III. | METHOD | 22 |
| | Participants | 22 |
| | Instrument | 23 |
| | Procedure | 25 |
| IV. | RESULTS | 27 |
| | Table 1 | 28 |
| V. | DISCUSSION | 29 |
| | REFERENCES | 34 |
| | VITA | 41 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study examined student attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities. Attitudes towards individuals with learning disabilities are extremely important in an educational setting because this group is by far the largest and fastest growing group within the population of individuals with disabilities (Henderson, 1995; Smith, 1998; Stage & Milne, 1996). The number of college students identified as having learning disabilities has actually tripled since the end of the 1970s (Henderson, 1995). According to Henderson, in 1994 there were 45,654 students attending college in the United States who were identified as having learning disabilities. Henderson also notes students with learning disabilities make up approximately 32% of the population of college students with disabilities.

LITERATURE REVIEW

History

According to Krishef (1983), attitudes toward individuals with disabilities and the treatment of individuals with disabilities has varied greatly over time and between various societies. In early history, individuals who had disabilities were often assumed to have evil spirits and were left to die (Krishef, 1983). The early Egyptians were one of the first people to attempt to help individuals with disabilities, whereas the Romans and Spartans either abandoned severely disabled individuals or kept individuals who were mentally retarded for entertainment purposes.

Krishef (1983) gives examples of how the treatment of individuals with disabilities continued to change throughout history. For example, the use of individuals with disabilities as entertainment was widespread and not limited to the early Romans; it took place all over the world from the Aztecs to European rulers. The mistreatment of individuals with disabilities was not limited to individuals

with mental retardation or individuals who were insane and used as jesters. Individuals with other types of disabilities were at times also viewed as entertainment.

Prior to the passage of late 20th century legislation, individuals with disabilities were often deprived of educational opportunities offered the general population (Smith, 1998). The major legislation was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, Section 504; Public Law 94-142 (1975) - the Education for all Handicapped Children's Act (EHA, 1990) later renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (Smith, 1998). The aforementioned legislation and numerous court cases have established that it is against the law in the United States to discriminate against individuals with disabilities in the work place or in an educational setting. However, the following review of the current literature reveals that attitudes and opinions contrary to the law about still remain.

The history of learning disabilities varies considerably from that of other disabilities in that it did not become an issue until the late 1800s and early 1900s when economies became more industrial and less agricultural.

According to Ashlock (1969) one of the earliest reports about what we now consider a learning disability was in 1896 by Morgan and Kerr. By the late 1940s and early 1950s there was a growing interest in learning disability research. Two pioneers in the field of learning disabilities were Straus and Lehtens (Dexter, 1977). Their 1947 hypothesis was formed by making psychological comparisons of children who had cerebral palsy, epilepsy, aphasia and exogenous mental retardation (Peters, 1965). The use of the term learning disabilities in the sense it is used today was coined by Kirk in 1963 (Smith, 1998).

Although there is evidence that attitudes specific to learning disabilities have changed considerably over the last 50 years, there are still many misconceptions. A prevalent attitude prior to the 1960s was that learning disabilities were caused by emotional problems (Greenblat, 1952; McGann, 1947). Greenblat refuted this attitude about reading disabilities and discussed the possibility that the students may have had emotional problems due to their difficulty learning to read rather than emotional problems causing reading difficulties. Although some researchers as early as 1952 appear to have suggested that learning it

disabilities are not caused by emotional disturbances, there are still negative connotations surrounding learning disabilities and education.

Attitudes toward individuals with disabilities

The question of attitudes toward individuals with disabilities has been studied from various viewpoints. Cloerkes and Neubert (1984) considered cultural and historical variations. They discussed what they termed, "a universal basic attitude towards exceptional people" (p. 339) which has variations brought about by cultural differences. In another study about attitudes towards individuals with disabilities, Walker (1983) considered student status. The study, which was conducted in Ghana, found college students had more favorable attitudes toward the value of educating individuals with disabilities and were less likely to blame the disability on the individual or their family. Alternatively, individuals who were not in post secondary education were more likely to attribute the cause of disability to either the individual with the disability or to their family.

Attitudes towards individuals with disabilities appear to be context specific. That is context specific as it

relates to social situations, intimate situations or other situations (Hampton, 1996; Stoval & Sedlacek, 1983).

Hampton (1996) compared white college students' attitudes about individuals in different social situations, using an individual's race and whether or not the person has a disability as variables for the study. Hampton found significant differences but the findings were not what were predicted. The study found that, depending on the situation, sometimes having a disability was a significant factor and sometimes not. Hampton's study considered four different social situations "threatening, intimate, socially conscious, and competitive" (p. 3). The study then compared the four social situations with four different circumstances "black, black wheelchair, non-race specific, and non-race specific wheelchair" (p. 3). Hampton found that participants were significantly less negative in the threatening situation than in the other three situations.

In the threatening situation, as predicted, Hampton (1996) found that participants reported being significantly less frightened by being on an elevator at night with a man in a wheelchair regardless of whether the man was black or white. In the intimate situation, participants responded contrary to what was predicted. Hampton predicted that white college students would have a more negative view of

sharing a dorm room with a student that was black and a wheelchair user than with a student who was black but did not have a disability. However, the study showed that white college students would rather have a roommate who was black and a wheelchair user than a roommate who was black but did not have a disability. In the socially conscious situation, Hampton predicted participants would be significantly more outraged when a store owner who was a wheelchair user was shot than when the store owner was not a wheelchair user. That hypothesis was not supported. Additionally, the issue of race did not have a significant effect regardless of the store owner being a wheelchair user or not. In the trials with competitive situation participants responded to losing a scholarship to someone with lower grades and test scores. The participants reported significantly less negative feelings when the person who got the scholarship was either a wheelchair user or was black.

In addition to the Hampton (1996) study, other studies have considered attitudes pertaining to the different types of disabilities. Esses, Beaufoy and Philipp (1993) studied attitudes towards individuals with amputations, AIDS and depression. They found attitudes toward amputees to be more

favorable than attitudes towards individuals with AIDS or with depression. The study revealed attribution of control over the situation to be an important determinant in the participants' attitudes towards the individuals with the disabilities. Participants indicated they felt depression to be more under the control of the individual than AIDS or amputations. Consequently participants viewed depression more negatively than AIDS or amputations.

Bond, Kerr, Dunstan and Thapar (1997) observed a negative attitude held by medical doctors in England regarding the care of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The doctors all agreed that individuals with intellectual disabilities required care equivalent to individuals without intellectual disabilities but a significant number of the doctors queried did not want to be the caregiver. Stovall and Sedlacek (1983) found significant differences in attitudes toward individuals who were blind and individuals who were wheelchair users. In situations involving close personal contact, students held a more positive attitude toward individuals who were blind than individuals who were wheelchair users. In an academic setting, students were generally more sympathetic towards individuals with physical disabilities.

setting, students maintained a more positive attitude toward individuals who were wheelchair users.

Newman (1976) found that faculty attitudes toward individuals with disabilities varied by the type of disability. The study asked professors about problems with the admission of students with disabilities to their department and he found that 48 percent of the professors that responded felt there would be problems. Professors were queried about eight specific disabilities; blindness, deafness, cerebral palsy, amputation, paralysis, muscular dystrophy, skin disorders and body deformation. Of the eight conditions, the professors viewed blindness and deafness as requiring the most restrictions on admission to their department. Thirteen of the 464 responding professors thought that a skin disorder should require admission restrictions.

Several studies examined gender differences in attitudes toward individuals with disabilities and it was found that females generally have a more positive attitude towards individuals with disabilities. For example, Stovall and Sedlacek (1983) found female college students were generally more sympathetic towards individuals with

disabilities regardless of the nature of the disability. Baggett (1994) found that female faculty members had a more positive attitude toward students with disabilities than male faculty members. Aksamit, et al. (1987) found female faculty and support personnel held a more positive attitude toward students with learning disabilities than did male faculty and support personnel and they also had a greater knowledge about students with learning disabilities. In their study, Esses, et al. (1993) found males had a less favorable attitude toward individuals with depression than females but did not find a significant gender difference in attitude toward individuals with AIDS or individuals with amputated limbs.

Attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities

A survey of the literature reveals numerous studies specifically addressing attitudes about learning disabilities. In a study conducted at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, Baggett (1994) found the majority of professors who had experience with students with disabilities had done so with students with learning disabilities. Despite having the most experience with students with learning disabilities they reported being most

accepting of individuals who used wheelchairs or had hearing impairments.

In a study comparing attitudes of college staff and faculty toward students with learning disabilities, Farrell and Hackham (1988) found college staff held a significantly more positive attitude than did faculty. In another study of faculty attitudes, Minner and Prater (1984) found professors held the opinion that students without learning disabilities would do better academically regardless of their past school history even when compared to a student with a learning disability who was described as having an outstanding high school history. The professors in the sample also rated their ability to work with students having learning disabilities lower than students without a learning disability, again regardless of prior school history. In a 1989 survey of faculty attitudes about students with disabilities, Leyser found that 80% to 90% of faculty members had a positive attitude about educating students with visual impairments, hearing loss or a physical impairment, but only 57% of the faculty held a positive attitude about students with learning disabilities, and 69% college students with learning disabilities.

of them specified only students with mild learning disabilities.

These negative attitudes have even led one researcher, Coughlin (1997), to examine the concept of persons with learning disabilities as being minority group members. Coughlin discusses the possible pitfalls for individuals seen as minority group members, and individuals with learning disabilities. The pitfalls of both groups include; self esteem problems, unsuitable reactions to being different, avoidance or withdrawal, and even "delinquency, violence or suicide." (Coughlin, 1997 p. 573) Coughlin described similarities in the reaction of individuals who are not members of a minority toward individuals who are perceived to be members of a minority group and the reaction of individuals without a learning disability toward individuals with a learning disability.

Not all of the learning disability literature surveyed was entirely negative. Aksamit, Morris, and Leuenberger (1987) found that although support staff had a more positive attitude and a greater knowledge about learning disabilities than did faculty, both groups were generally positive toward college students with learning disabilities. also examined

Modification of attitudes

A review of current literature shows several studies about modifying attitudes towards persons with disabilities. Evans (1976) conducted a study comparing attitude changes brought about by either increasing contact with individuals with disabilities or the dissemination of information about individuals with disabilities. In the literature review, Evans examined and briefly discussed three dissertation studies and one journal article. These studies examined the relationship of attitude towards individuals with disabilities and the amount and type of contact the subjects had with individuals with disabilities.

All of the contacts in the cited studies were unstructured even though the situations in which the interaction occurred were varied. The interactions were unstructured in that the subjects came into contact with individuals with disabilities and were allowed to interact with those individuals but the interaction was not controlled. In two of these unstructured situations there was no significant change, in one there was a negative change, and in one study involving children there was a positive change. In the study, Evans (1976) also examined

the theories behind attitude change and designed his experiment based on a theory presented by Lewin in 1948. The design incorporated confederates who were blind to interact in a structured manner with the subjects. The confederate imparted information designed to put the subjects at ease as well as disseminate information about blindness. It was found that individuals with disabilities can significantly change the attitudes of other individuals by interacting in a structured manner. This structure included disseminating information about disabilities designed to set the individual at ease and at the same time educate the individual.

Evans' findings support the later findings of Donaldson (1980). Donaldson reviewed 24 studies about the modification of attitudes towards individuals with disabilities. Of the 24 studies, 14 studies had a positive change after treatment, 6 had no change, and 4 actually had a negative change. Donaldson determined that in all of the studies shown to have a positive change of attitude, the subjects underwent a structured experience with an individual with a disability or viewed a structured

presentation (such as a video tape) of an individual with a disability.

Pernice and Lyse (1996) considered the findings of Evans (1976) and Donaldson (1980) in the design of their research on changing attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. Two groups of university students participated in the study. One group was composed of the students enrolled in rehabilitation studies and the other group was composed of agricultural students. Both groups attended a 28 week long course. The course included one hour of personal contact with individuals with disabilities per week, lectures, class discussions of textbooks, and field trips to agencies that work with individuals who have disabilities. The course also included a wheelchair simulation exercise and concentrated on coping strategies. Both groups were given an attitudinal survey prior to the beginning of the study and then again after the study was over. The results of the research indicated a significant increase from the pretreatment and post treatment scores of both groups. The study also showed rehabilitation students had a significantly more positive attitude in both the attitude of graduate students towards individuals with

pretreatment and post treatment scores than did the agricultural students.

In their research with gifted 8 year old children, Lazar, et al. (1971) found a significant difference in the attitudes about individuals with disabilities between the experimental and control groups. Both groups attended a 4 week workshop for gifted children but the curriculum of the experimental group included dissemination of information related to disabilities. The information was presented in several ways to include discussion of famous individuals with disabilities, discussion of different types of the disabilities, and structured interaction with individuals with disabilities. At the end of the workshop the attitude of the treatment group was significantly more positive towards individuals with disabilities than their pretreatment attitude. Their attitude toward individuals with disabilities was also more positive than the attitudes of the control group both in the pretest and in the post-test. The experimental group held a significantly more

In a later study using a pre-post test design, Lazar, et al. (1976) found a significant positive change in the attitude of graduate students towards individuals with

disabilities after attending a special education course designed to change student attitudes. Although Lazar et al. did not specify the exact content of their course the researchers did state it included lectures, discussion and reports on student assignments.

In a 1984 study, Elliot and Byrd showed a film to college students that was produced by the American Foundation for the Blind that was both humorous and informative. They found a significant positive change in student attitudes toward blindness as measured by the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons Scale (ATDP). All of the participants in the study were male college students who lived in the residence hall and volunteered to participate.

In a more elaborate experiment, Eichinger, Rizzo, and Sirotnik (1991) gave a ten week course to university students which included lectures, discussion, media and speakers with disabilities as well as classroom observations of special education classes. They found at the end of the course the experimental group held a significantly more positive attitude than did the control group. In their research, Aksamit, et al. (1987) found previous exposure to students with learning disabilities and the more information

faculty and staff had about students with learning disabilities the more positive attitude they had toward the students with learning disabilities. They also noted that of the two variables, prior exposure and information, information had the greater influence on the attitudes professors and staff had about students with learning disabilities.

As one segment of a grant funded learning disabilities program, Klas (1992) instituted a learning disability awareness component for middle school students and high school students approaching college. In a pre-treatment survey, Klas found misunderstandings and confusion about learning disabilities both by students with learning disabilities and students without learning disabilities. The awareness component was conducted by a university student with a learning disability. The university student defined learning disabilities, gave personal experiences of how learning disabilities affected his life, showed a video and answered questions. After the treatment the students showed a significant positive change in their post test scores.

Several of the studies previously mentioned indicate treatments which include the dissemination of information can significantly effect attitudes toward individuals with disabilities. How the information is disseminated has also been shown to be relevant. For example two studies, Croft, Stimpson, Ross, Bray, & Breglio, (1969) and Donaldson, (1976) specifically address the means by which the information is presented to the subjects. Both studies found that a live presentation had a stronger effect on attitudinal change than a video taped or audio taped presentations. However, in both studies video taped presentations did have a significant effect. In their study, Croft et al. (1969) had two experimental groups and one control group. The first experimental group was given a live presentation designed to change attitudes towards college sports and the second experimental group saw the same presentation recorded.

Donaldson (1976) presented information to subjects in three modalities; live, video, and auditory. The live presentation consisted of a panel of three individuals, each with a visible disability. One individual was blind, one individual was a wheelchair user and one individual had

cerebral palsy. The panel gave a 50 minute presentation emphasizing individuals with disabilities are not different from individuals who do not have disabilities. They discussed their feelings, goals and values. The video presentation was simply the same presentation video taped and the audio presentation was a tape recording of the presentation. Donaldson found both the live and video taped presentation had a significant effect on modifying the attitude of the subjects whereas the audio tape did not have a significant effect.

Summary

The purpose of the present study was to examine whether a person's attitude toward individuals with learning disabilities could be affected by gaining information through watching an informative video tape on learning disabilities. Historically the treatment of individuals with disabilities has varied greatly from society to society and over time (Krishef, 1983). As previously mentioned in the review of the literature, attitudes towards individuals with disabilities are also extremely varied depending on the type of disability and the population examined. The majority of the literature reviewed reflected a more

positive attitude toward individuals who had a physical disability than individuals who had a mental or learning disability. The preponderance of the literature pertaining to positive attitude changes towards individuals with disabilities indicates knowledge is the most influential variable. The literature also supports structured experiences with individuals with disabilities is the most likely method to significantly impact attitudes. Structured interaction refers to experiences that are not simply random contacts with individuals with disabilities but rather that are directed to impart knowledge in a positive manner. Furthermore, the presentation of knowledge through the use of video tapes has also been shown to significantly effect attitudes.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was that gaining information on learning disabilities through a structured method, i.e., the video tape, could have a significantly positive impact on the participants' attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities.

METHOD

Participants

There were 115 participants who were recruited from psychology classes at Austin Peay State University. Of the 115 there were 89 females and 26 males, 104 of the participants were full time students and 11 were part time students. The age of the students ranged from 18 to 46 with the mean age of 23.3. The ethnic make up of the participants was as follows; 82 were white, 22 were African American, 3 were Hispanic, 2 were Asian, 1 was American Indian, 2 responded to the "Other" category and 3 did not respond to the item.

The participants were randomly assigned to one of three groups. The groups were control group one (C1) which had 27 participants, control group two (C2) which had 56 participants and the experimental group (E) which had 32 participants. The data from three individuals was eliminated because they stated they had learning disabilities and the data from one student was eliminated because the individual claimed not to understand the

questions explaining that English was not their native language.

Instrument

A 28-item instrument developed by Farrell and Hackham (1988) to assess attitudes toward college students with learning disabilities was used with the written permission of the author. The instrument was originally administered to staff and faculty and had a split-half reliability of .80 and .75 respectively. Farrell and Hackham computed a Spearman rank correlation and identified five items that correlated below .40 with the whole scale and removed them from the data set. The revised instrument has a split-half reliability of .89 for staff and .77 for faculty. There was no reliability coefficient of the instrument available when used with a student population. However, the instrument had been used with a student population by Vander-Poutten (1993) in a study conducted at Sonoma State University. Vander-Poutten used a two-sample Mann-Whitney to analyze pre-survey and post-survey data. There was no mention of any internal reliability in the study or any reference to the use of the instrument with a population of students rather than the population of faculty for which it was originally designed.

since the instrument being used was originally designed for use on a different population a Chronbach's Alpha was performed on the data to measure the internal consistency of the items. One item, question 20, was deleted because it was negatively correlated with the other items and the alpha was shown to increase from .8229 to .8463 if it were deleted. Each of the remaining questions was assigned a numerical value from one to seven, with seven indicating strong agreement with the item. In the analysis of the data a high score on an item indicated a positive attitude towards individuals with learning disabilities. Any items that were written in a reverse manner were transformed to reflect the proper numerical value.

Two additional questions, "Do you have a learning disability?" and "Do You have a relative or close friend who has a learning disability?" (Anderson & Antonak, 1997) were added as part of the demographic information. Three participants responded affirmatively to having a learning disability and were not included in the study. Forty-six participants responded affirmatively to having a relative or a friend with a learning disability. However, they were not disqualified from the study. The responses from the

participants who responded affirmatively were not found to be significantly different than the participants who responded negatively about having a relative or a friend with a learning disability (see results and discussion section).

Procedure

The participants volunteered for one of 11 time slots. Prior to the study beginning each time slot was randomly designated control group one, control group two or the experimental group using a Latin-Square Design. The participants were given basic information about the study and a consent form to sign. Control group one viewed 45 minutes of a 60 minute video, Explore Colorado produced by Finley-Holiday Film Corporation (1987). Control group one only viewed the first 45 minutes of the video to make the length equivalent to the length of the video tapes of the other two groups viewed. The Explore Colorado video tape was set up in segments that have clearly defined endings and it was turned off at a point where it would not be confusing to the participants. Control group two viewed a 35 minute video, People With Disabilities and Computers with the Flying Karamazor Brothers, produced by Krauthamer & Bolnik,

(1999) which is a video that discusses individuals with physical disabilities and the use of computers. The experimental group viewed a 47 minute video on learning disabilities Transitions to Postsecondary Learning produced by Tabata (1998). Each group viewed their film and then was given the questionnaire and a demographic information sheet to be completed before leaving.

RESULTS

The response to each question was given a value from one to seven with a higher number representing a more positive attitude. An overall mean score, containing only those items to which the participant responded, was then calculated and subjected to statistical analysis. An alpha level of .05 was used for all statistical analyses. The overall scores of the two control groups ($N_1 = 27$, $N_2 = 54$) were compared and then the groups were combined as there was no significant difference, $t(79) = -.90$, $p > .05$. The overall scores of the combined control group ($N = 81$) were then compared to the experimental group ($N = 30$). The comparison showed no significant difference, $t(109) = -.58$, $p > .05$.

The differences in responses associated with gender, age, race, and prior knowledge (as determined by a positive response in the demographic section to the question, "Do you have a relative or close friend who has a learning disability?") were also examined. Table 1 summarizes these results.

TABLE 1

COMPARISON OF OVERALL SCORES BY DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP

| | <u>t</u> | df | |
|---|----------|-----|-------------|
| Male vs Female | -2.05 | 109 | $p < .05^a$ |
| 18-25 years vs ≥ 26 years | -3.00 | 109 | $p < .05^a$ |
| White vs African American | 1.62 | 99 | |
| Friend or Family with a LD vs No Friends or Family with a LD | 1.32 | 109 | |

Note^a: Bonferroni correction used.

As can be seen in Table 1, Female participants exhibited a more positive attitude ($M = 5.62$) toward individuals with a learning disability than male participants ($M = 5.34$). Older participants ($M = 5.95$) were also significantly more positive toward individuals with learning disabilities than the younger participants ($M = 5.59$). There was no significant difference between the average age of female participants ($N = 85$) and male participants ($N = 26$), $t(109) = .20$, $p > .05$. Further analysis showed that as the participants' age increased, their attitude became more positive, $r(110) = .216$, $p < .05$.

DISCUSSION

The results of the experiment failed to support the hypothesis that exposure to the Transitions to Postsecondary Learning video would alter attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities. No significant difference was obtained between the scores of the experimental group and the scores of the control group.

Possible explanations for this could include that participants may have chosen the politically correct answers to the questions, that college students in general are accepting of students with disabilities, or that the instrument, which was originally designed for a different population, may not have been totally suitable for the population. The possibility that participants answered the questions in a way that was politically correct or socially desirable is one explanation. Levin (1979, p.139) discusses the "socially desirable" effect where individuals respond in a manner they perceive will cause the researcher to think well of them. Closely related is the "expectancy effect" (Nairne, 1999, p. 56) where participants answer in a way

they think the researcher expects. Either alone or in combination, these effects are strong possible explanations for the overall positive response to the questionnaire.

The students who participated in the research were all volunteers and may have thought they were helping the researcher by guessing what the researcher wanted to hear. They may also have felt a strong impulse to answer in a positive manner because they felt it was the "correct" way to respond. The fact that all of the participants were students enrolled in psychology courses indicates they have had at least some exposure to information pertaining to research as well as to the "correct" or "expected" response to a person with a disability.

There is also evidence that college students in general are more accepting of individuals with disabilities (Walker, 1983). The high overall scores of the participants may be reflective of their general acceptance of students with disabilities.

The third possibility is that the instrument might be unsuitable for the population. The viewpoint of a college student and a professor may vary widely. For example, one item on the questionnaire stated, "The college should not

have to make special accommodations for the learning disabled student." Another stated, "Excessive work is required by faculty and staff when learning disabled students are admitted to the University." A student would not be the one who has to make any accommodations for an individual with a learning disability and consequently may underestimate the amount of work a faculty member must do for a student with a learning disability.

The study did have two significant findings. Female participants responded in a more positive manner than males. The findings that females answered in a more positive manner is in agreement with the majority of the literature comparing attitudinal differences between males and females. The reason(s) the participants responded in a positive manner are not apparent from this study, but those reasons may be studied and identified with further research.

In addition, as the age of the participants increased attitudes became more positive. There are several possibilities. One of which is that older students have a more positive attitude overall. Another possibility is they have more contact with students with disabilities (both structured and unstructured) and have learned tolerance.

The fact that participants' attitudes became more positive as their age increased is another area for further investigation.

A third area for further investigation is the hypothesis that college students are more positive than the general population towards individuals with learning disabilities. As discussed in the literature review, college students are more positive in their attitude towards individuals with disabilities in general which leads to many important questions. The question as to why college students are more positive is one example. Another example question is, can individuals who are not college students reap the same benefits?

In conclusion the original hypothesis stated: "Gaining information on learning disabilities through a structured method, i.e., the video tape, would have a significantly positive impact on the participants' attitudes toward individuals with learning disabilities." This was not supported, and was contradicted in this study's findings. The contradictions were displayed in the consistency of the participant responses; no significant differences in attitude were identified. Points of note were:

(1) Participants of all ages were very positive in their responses to the questionnaire.

(2) The responses of the female participants were more positive than the responses of the male participants.

(3) Participants' attitudes became more positive as their age increased.

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