

**ATTITUDES OF REGULAR EDUCATION STUDENTS
TOWARD
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

KATHERINE ANDERSON DEPRIEST

To the Graduate Committee:

I am submitting herewith a field study written by Katherine Anderson DePriest entitled "Attitudes of Regular Education Students Towards Students With Disabilities." I have examined the final copy of this field study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Special Education.

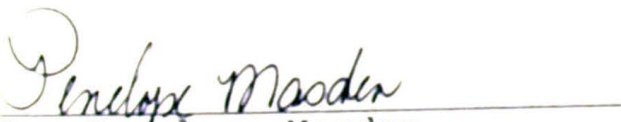


Dr. Larry Lowrance,
Major Professor

We have read this field study
and recommend its acceptance:

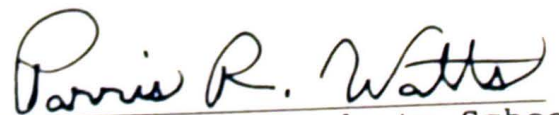


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ATTITUDES OF REGULAR EDUCATION STUDENTS
TOWARD
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Field Study Presented for the
Educational Specialist Degree
Austin Peay State University

Katherine Anderson DePriest

May 2, 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This research was designed to determine if regular education students would exhibit more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities after participating as peer tutors to special education students in an integrated art class.

The study group was composed of 77 secondary education non-disabled students involved in an inclusive non-academic classroom program under the auspices of the art grant, Outside the Box. The participants completed two survey instruments designed to measure attitudes toward persons with disabilities and one demographic instrument. Analysis of the data revealed that there was some significant data to support the hypothesis that when children with disabilities work in inclusive settings with non-disabled students, changes do occur in attitudes of the non-disabled students.

Conclusions, generated from the study, suggest that the direction of the changes in attitude of the non-disabled children toward students with disabilities depends on a number of variables. These may include expression of teacher attitudes, teacher behavior toward students, age and maturity of students who are normally developing and the level of severity, to include behaviors of the students with disabilities. Even when students had quite positive views of persons with disabilities, significant improvements were made as they worked directly with their peers who were less able during this study.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER

PAGE

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
	Nature and Purpose of the Study.....	1
	Statement of the Problem.....	2
	Hypothesis.....	2
	Importance of the Problem.....	2
	Relationship of Study to the Problem.....	3
	Definition of Terms.....	3
	Limitations.....	3
II.	REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	5
III.	METHODOLOGY.....	12
	Sample.....	12
	Research Instrumentation.....	12
	Procedures.....	13
IV.	ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESPONSES.....	15
V.	SUMMARY OF FINDINGS.....	28
	Conclusions.....	29
	Recommendations.....	30
	LIST OF REFERENCES.....	31
	APPENDICES.....	34
	A. Letters of Consent.....	35
	B. Letters of Consent.(FCS).....	37
	C. Student Assent Forms.(FCS).....	38
	D. Letters of Consent.(CMCS).....	39
	E. Letters of Approval to Conduct Research.....	40
	F. Demographic Survey.....	44
	G. Survey of Attitudes.....	45
	VITA.....	48

Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

Nature and Purpose of the Study

In 1975, Congress passed a law titled the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, or PL 94-142. This law stated that children with handicaps must be educated in the least restrictive environment. That meant that handicapped children should be placed or mainstreamed into a regular education classroom when appropriate. Public Law 94-142 was the forerunner for a dramatic change in the way students with disabilities were educated.

The passage of the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA) amendments of 1990 was a significant event. The amendments formed a new law, titled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (PL 101-476). The law changed all references in the previous law (PL 94-142) from handicapped children to children with disabilities. New categories of disabilities were added to the definition of children with disabilities, rehabilitation counseling and social work services were added to the core of related services to be provided as special education, and it also defines transition services and mandates their inclusion in IEPs (Moon & Inge, 1993).

Including children with disabilities and special needs in the regular classroom substantially reduces segregation and isolation of these individuals while making them a part of the world. Research has shown that the manner in which the classroom teacher responds to the needs of the special child can determine the success of mainstreaming. A teacher's feelings (attitudes), whether positive or negative, can have a great impact on

individual success or failure of any inclusion program (deBettencourt, 1999).

Much can be gained from inclusion. Not only can academic knowledge be enhanced, but language, communication, and social skills can be developed. Another positive side effect of mainstreaming is that it can have a great effect on the regular classroom population. They are exposed to these special people and learn how to interact with them in all aspects (Stainback & Stainback, 1995). In order for all these things to happen, there must be a great deal of training, planning, cooperation among staff, and a great measure of positive attitude (deBettencourt, 1999).

Statement of the Problem

Typically, regular education students view students with disabilities in a negative way. A positive attitude of regular-education students and educators toward students with disabilities is vital to the success of inclusive instructional programs.

Hypothesis

There will be an improvement from the pre-survey to the post-survey in the mean scores of attitude from the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons(ATDP) Scale of non-handicapped students who were peer tutors in an integrated art class.

Importance of the problem

Inclusion of the special-education students into general-education classes is occurring in many educational settings today. The goal is to include the special-education students into the entire learning community. Inclusion of the special needs students into the regular educational setting is beneficial to regular education students as well as the special education

students (Stainback & Stainback, 1995). Success of any inclusion program is based upon the attitudes of the participants.

Relationship of My Study to the Problem

The major importance of this study was after regular-education and special-education students worked together in an inclusive non-academic classroom under the auspices of the art grant, Outside the Box, regular-education students would exhibit more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities. Each participant in the grant was surveyed at the beginning and at the end of the art grant project to see if there was an increase of acceptance of people with disabilities.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are used throughout this study in the stated context:

Inclusion: An educational philosophy based on the belief that all students are entitled to fully participate in the school community. Inclusion encompasses students whose mental or physical abilities are below, above, or at-risk of the established norms. McCarthy, 1994 (as cited in Sucharski, 1998)

Negative attitudes: Attitudes developed opposing the student with a disability.

Positive attitudes: Attitudes developed supporting the student with a disability.

General-education student: Students whose placement and success in a classroom is not based upon any particular mental, physical, or learning disability.

Limitations

Several limiting factors existed in the study. The subjects were all confined to classes participating in the art grant,

Outside the Box. Time was a limiting factor. A longitudinal study on the effects of full inclusion on the attitudes of regular-education students would provide more credible results. Due to time and expenses however, a longer study was not feasible. All the subjects were students of secondary school age ranging from 13 to 18 years old.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Existing literature related to the attitudes of regular-education secondary students toward students with disabilities is limited; however, there is ample research regarding the measurement of attitudes of regular education students, teachers, and parents toward placement in inclusion settings. Attitudes toward persons with disabilities is a factor in each of the articles reviewed.

In a study by Li and Moore (1998), subjects were randomly selected persons with various disabilities who were actively involved in state-provided vocational rehabilitation services in three northern states. Questionnaires were mailed to persons in the sample group along with informed consent forms and return envelopes. The questionnaire was a ten-item, abbreviated version of Linkowski's Acceptance of Disability Scale (AD) and an adapted twelve-item scale developed by Link, Cullen, Struening, Shrout, and Dohrenwend in 1989. The purpose of the questionnaire was to assess the belief of devaluation or discrimination against a person with a history of psychiatric treatment. The focus of the investigation was to examine relationships between acceptance of disability and its correlates. One outcome was that perceived social discrimination against people with disabilities was strongly related to acceptance of disability. Wright, (as cited in Li & Moore, 1998) observed that traditionally, people with disabilities are isolated and segregated from society. Societal integration for people with disabilities requires self-empowerment in addition to mastery of the problems posed by external

discrimination. Li and Moore found a strong relationship between self-esteem and acceptance of disability, revealing that the extent of acceptance of disability is significantly related to general self-image. Summarized by a simple definition, self-esteem is the summation of positive self-attitudes and competencies. The emphasis of competencies over limitations and of abilities over disabilities leads to conscious, positive attitudes of self. DeLoach & Greer's study (as cited in Li and Moore, 1998) concluded that good adjustment includes not only acceptance of one's disability but also the ability to merge into society. Self-acceptance allows a person with a disability to identify more strongly with the larger constituency of persons with disabilities. This process of self-acceptance may be necessary for empowerment and full integration into society (Li & Moore, 1998).

Beattie, Anderson, and Antonak (1997) completed one study with significant instrumentation and resulting data. The first hypothesis of their study was that prospective educators would express more favorable attitudes toward students with disabilities after viewing videotapes that presented positive portrayals of persons with disabilities in typical settings than would prospective educators who did not view the videotapes. The second hypothesis was that prospective educators who completed an introductory special education course taught by a professor with a visible physical disability would express more favorable attitudes toward students with disabilities and toward their integration into regular classrooms than would prospective educators who completed the course taught by a professor without a physical disability. Two instruments were used. The first was a 24-item

summated Scale of Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (SADP) developed by Antonak in 1982 to measure attitudes toward students with disabilities. The second was a modified 30-item Opinions Relative to Mainstreaming Scale (ORM), developed by Larrivee & Cook in 1979. The instruments were utilized to measure attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities into regular classrooms (Beatie, Anderson, & Antonak, 1997).

The results revealed that there were no systematic differences in the students' evaluations of the professors of the two sections of the course. Neither the videotapes alone nor the disability characteristics of the professor of the course alone were related to the expression of more favorable attitudes toward students with disabilities among the prospective educators in the four groups. Beatie et al. (1997) concluded that the findings were consistent with the conclusions of Yuker (1988), who provided a review of 318 comparisons obtained in 274 research studies of the effects of contact on attitude toward persons with disabilities.

The attitudes of teachers was the focus of one study conducted by Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover (1997). Their premise was teachers with an established reputation for working well with integrated students are found in most schools. Why are some seen as successful when others are not? Olson et al. (1997) asked the question, do themes of attitude tie these individuals together? Ten teachers were nominated by special education teachers and principals to participate in the survey. Seven themes emerged from the survey. Teachers who were successful in inclusion classes described their own personalities as tolerant, reflective, and flexible. They accept responsibility for all students, and

their primary inclusionary attitude was showing interpersonal warmth and acceptance in their interactions with students. One question arose during the course of the study: teachers should be asked about their emphasis on academic achievements versus social outcomes (Olson et al. 1997). Limitations of the study were the sample size. Recommendations were made that replication of the study on a larger scale would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Putnam, Markovchick, Johnson, and Johnson (1996) assert that there are considerable risks involved when students with learning disabilities and students without learning disabilities share a classroom. Possible outcomes include (a) prejudice, stereotyping, discrimination, rejection, hostility, teasing, harassment, and destructive forms of conflict or (b) personalization, acceptance, support, caring, and friendship, depending on the structure of the interaction between the two groups. One of the questions addressed in their study was, is it possible that the inclusion of students with learning disabilities in regular-education classroom causes the perceptions of their peers who do not have learning disabilities to become increasingly negative during the year? One of several hypotheses about why students with learning disabilities tend to be rejected by their peers who do not have learning disabilities is that they are perceived as being low in intelligence and are unable to do the academic work that is required. Another hypothesis is that special-education students are rejected because their behavior disrupts others' learning. Little support exists for either of these hypotheses (Putnam et al. 1996).

In the study, eight teachers volunteered to use cooperative learning in an experimental class that included students with

learning disabilities. The study lasted for eight months. Students were pre- and post-measured using a sociometric method. The students rated each classmate on a 5-point scale that ranged from "no, not at all" (1), "to yes, very much" (5), according to how much they would like to work with that person. The teachers were provided with instructions and scripts for administering the peer-rating instrument. The findings for regular-education students were reported that there was a significantly more positive change in desire to work with a classmate between October and May in the cooperative condition than in either of the two competitive conditions. The peer ratings by the regular-education students in the traditional classroom tended to remain relatively fixed. In the cooperative learning situation, the regular-education student's peer ratings tended not to become more negative over the course of the year. Students' perceptions of special education classmates became significantly more positive during the eight-month study in the cooperative condition. In this study, both the special-education students and the teachers viewed inclusion positively when it occurred in the context of cooperative learning.

Student attitudes regarding friendship and offering help were the basis of a study by Weiserbs and Gottlieb (1995). They predicted that children without disabilities would be more likely to express positive attitudes toward children with physical disabilities under circumstances that were seen as distant rather than imminent. Five hundred and ten students ranging in age from 8 to 19 were randomly selected and told that a child who was unable to walk was coming to their school and would likely be placed in their class. The students were asked to select the word that best

described their willingness either to help or to befriend the classmate with the physical disabilities. The children responded on a 6-point Likert-type scale ranging from "definitely" (1) to "definitely not" (6). The lower score indicated a greater willingness to befriend or help. The results of the investigation showed that attitudes toward friendship were consistently more negative than attitudes toward help, but that, in most cases, attitudes toward friendship became more favorable over time; whereas, attitudes toward willingness to help children with physical disabilities became more negative over time. The author concluded that helping behavior should be encouraged rather than friendships. Furman's study (as cited in Weiserbs, 1995) concluded that helping creates interaction and increases the chances for realistic information and greater understanding among peers. Helping can lead to friendships because social proximity is generally acknowledged as one of the prerequisites for friendship development (Weiserbs & Gottlieb, 1995).

Summary

The review of literature provides a basis for the evaluation of attitude toward students with disabilities. The studies that examined attitudes toward persons with disabilities have focused attention on the effects of teaching methods and student behavior as factors in the attitudes of regular education students toward inclusion.

Many of the studies concluded that attitude changed in a more positive direction as a result of contact with students with disabilities, teacher attitude and preparedness, and structured cooperative learning environments versus competitive learning environments. These factors appeared to be important in the

increase in positive attitude toward persons with disabilities. Inclusion classes are one means to provide opportunity for positive change in attitude.

Evidence presented in the literature supports the hypothesis that there will be an improvement in attitude from the Attitude Toward Disabled People Scale of non-disabled students who were peer tutors in an integrated art class.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The Sample

The sample was composed of two groups: one class of non-disabled middle school students and four classes of non-disabled high school students involved in the inclusive non-academic classroom program under the auspices of the art grant, Outside the Box. The sample was selected from grant recipients who competed for their classes to participate in an art grant in which students produced artwork for an exhibit for the visually impaired. The participants were from two designated school systems in one community located in the northern portion of a southeastern state. The students in the sample were heterogeneously comprised of non-disabled children of different ages from a culturally diverse and highly transient military community. There appeared to be no identifiable risks to the subjects associated with the study. The potential benefit of the study was that students would become more aware and tolerant of persons with disabilities.

Research Instrumentation

The rating scale that was completed by the evaluators was the Attitude Toward Disabled People (ATDP) scale. It attempts to measure attitudes toward persons with disabilities in general (Yuker, Block, and Campbell, 1960). Each statement in the instrument suggested that persons with disabilities are either the same as or different from physically normal people. Approximately half of the items refer to similarities or differences in personality characteristics; whereas, the other half deal with the question of special treatment for the disabled. Items were

selected on the basis of item analysis.

Shaw and Wright (1967) state that the ATDP scale has reasonably good content validity, and additional evidence is provided by correlation of ATDP scores with other scales. Significant correlations were found between ATDP and semantic differential scores ($-.266$) and between scores on a job satisfaction scale ($+.252$). Nonsignificant correlations were found between ATDP and the following: Attitude toward Intellectualism (Block and Yuker, unpublished), the F scale, the Machiavellianism Scale (Christie, 1956), the IPAT Self Analysis Forms (Cattell, 1957), and the Attitudes toward Old People Scale (Block and Yuker, unpublished) as cited by Shaw and Wright (1967). Over time, the ATDP has provided accurate measures of attitude.

The demographic survey was composed of questions of an impersonal nature related to classroom experiences. Questions such as age, gender, and whether or not the subject has ever known or been in contact with someone with a disability were included on the instrument. The demographic survey was structured for the participant to answer utilizing a multiple choice format.

The Procedure

A letter requesting permission for the completion of the proposed field study in the two targeted school systems was submitted to the current directors of schools and building administrators. Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Human Subjects Committee of Austin Peay State University. Participants for the study were selected based upon inclusionary settings for the accomplishment of fulfilling the requirements of the art grant. A letter explaining the proposed field study, the art grant, and parental consent forms outlining voluntary

participation were distributed to the parents of each potential participant in the study. After permission was obtained from the parents of participants, a pre-test of ATDP scale was given to each participant in the sample groups.

The participants were requested to complete two survey instruments designed to measure attitude and one demographic instrument. The ATDP scale was administered to all peer tutors prior to an integrated art class; their responses were hand scored and averaged. A post-participation ATDP survey was administered to all peer tutors at the end of the six weeks period after the integrated art class ended. Responses again were hand scored and averaged. The utilization of clear appropriate directions for the instruments and assurance of anonymity helped insure instrument validity. The students were instructed to respond to the survey by rating how they actually felt, not how they thought they should feel or how the instructor thought they should respond to the statement.

The data generated was quantitative in nature. The attitudes of the two groups were described with mean total attitude scores. The statistical significance of the differences between the mean scores of the groups was figured by using the t -test. Standard deviations were also derived. The two main groups were broken into similar groups for comparison. Utilization of standard deviations, averages, variances, maximum and minimum scores, and ranges were used to compare similar groups. The data is presented in a tabular format.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF SURVEY RESPONSES

The instruments utilized for the purpose of this study included a demographic survey and an attitude survey. The demographic survey was utilized to present an overview of the characteristics of the students participating in the study.

Respondents consisted of forty-two male and thirty-five female students attending two different schools from separate school systems in the same community. Tabulation of the data revealed that over half of the students reported that they knew or had been in contact with someone with a disability before the study was introduced (Table 1).

TABLE 1

VARIABLES	RESULTS
1. Gender	
A. Male	54
B. Female	45
2. Age	
A. 11	0
B. 12	0
C. 13	16
D. 14	3
E. 15	3
F. 16	23
G. 17	19
H. 18	12

NOTE: For interpretive purposes results reported in percentiles

TABLE 1 (continued)

VARIABLES	RESULTS
A. White	57
B. Black	14
C. Hispanic	6
D. Asian	6
E. Native American	1
F. Other	14
4. Did student know someone with a disability	
A. Yes	54
B. No	45
5. How long has student lived in this area	
A. One year or less	18
B. Two - Five Years	48
C. Six - Ten Years	23
D. Eleven - Eighteen Years	10

NOTE: For interpretive purposes results reported in percentiles

The data generated in this study consisted of the pre-attitude and post-attitude raw score from the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) Scale. The statements in the survey suggest that people with disabilities are either the same as or different from people who are physically normal. Approximately half of the items refer to similarities or differences in personality characteristics. The other half deal with the question of special treatment for persons with disabilities. Twelve of the thirty statements were favorably stated, while the other eighteen items were stated negatively. The students were instructed to mark each statement according to how much they

agreed or disagreed with it. The answers ranged from +3 to -3. A +3 indicated that a student agreed very much with the statement. A -3 indicated that the respondent disagreed very much with the statement. The responses were scored on a six-point Likert scale. Negative three was given a zero rating and progressed to positive 3 rated as a 5 on the scale. The pre-attitude survey was conducted the day before the four-week inclusion project Outside The Box started and again at the completion of the project according to instrument directions. The pre- and post-test scores were individually tabulated and a mean score was calculated. Overall pre-and post-scores of student responses were averaged and compared. A t-test for the difference of means for dependent samples was applied to the raw scores of each group to see if relationships existed between the scores generated on the pre- and post-attitude instruments.

The data from all five groups was averaged into an overall score. The scores of one class of gifted students who worked as peer tutors to students with disabilities and one class of middle school students were tabulated individually as well as with the overall results.

Questions number 26 and 28 were dropped from the tabulation of the results because of a typographical error. One question was inadvertently duplicated and the students responded differently to the question both times it was presented, so the question was dropped from the tabulation.

Summary of the Data

Six statements of the remaining twenty-eight item questionnaire were found to have significant findings. The first item was statement number one: *Disabled people are often*

unfriendly was shown to have a significant difference between the pre- and post-survey results among the gifted students at the high school. A significant t -value of -2.28 was calculated.

According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the gifted group is significantly different from the pre-attitude survey for this item. The two tests for difference of means compared the pre- and post-attitude scores for this group and yielded t -values that are significant at the .05 level. This information would indicate a change in student attitudes that was more than could be explained by chance occurred since the beginning of the inclusion project. The interpretation of this result is that the more the gifted students worked with the students with disabilities, the less they agreed with this negative statement (Table 2).

TABLE 2

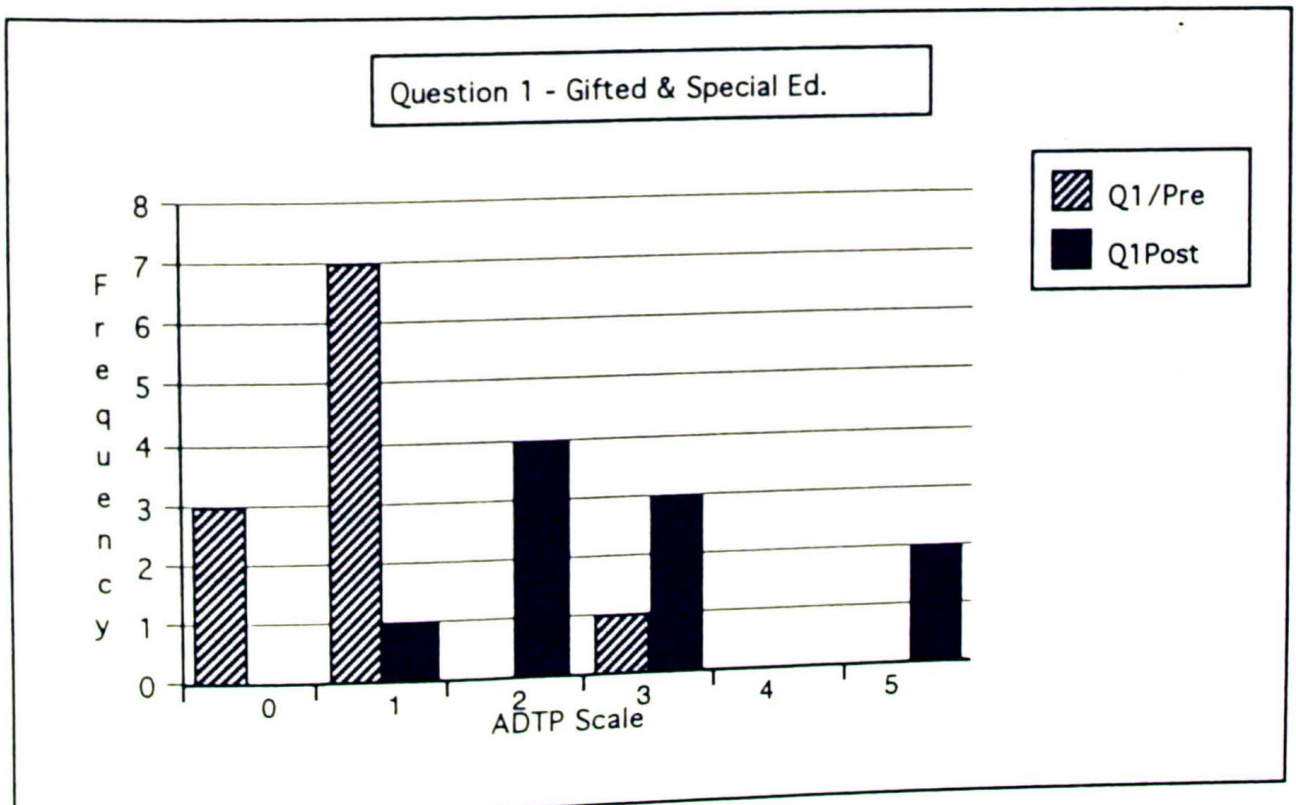


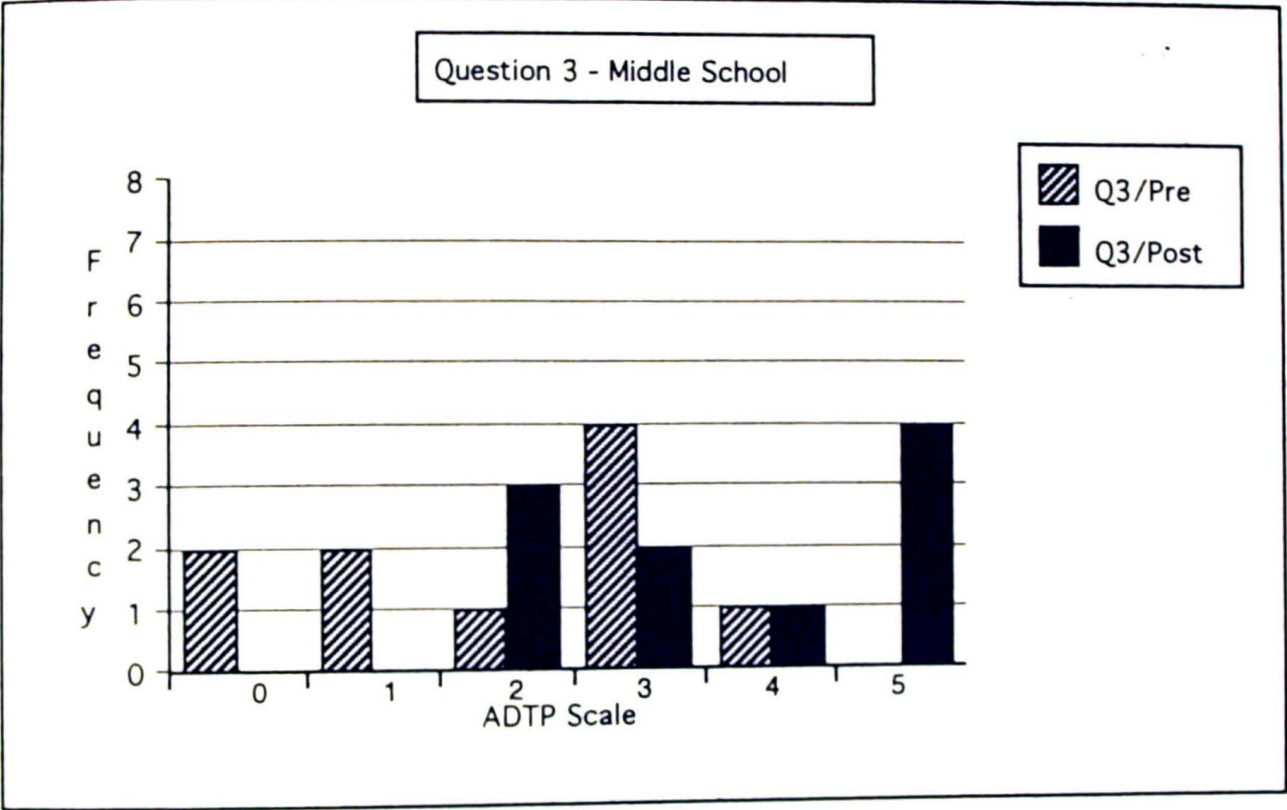
TABLE 2 (continued)

Notes:

	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	0.909	0.272	-0.636
Std			
Dev	0.831	0.467	0.278
t-value			-2.28
CV			-1.812

The second item found to have a significant change of attitude was statement number three: *Disabled people are more emotional than other people*. It was shown to have a significant difference between the pre- and post-survey results among the middle school students. A t -value of 2.95 was calculated. According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the middle school group is significantly different from the pre-attitude survey. The two tests for difference of means compared the pre- and post-attitude scores for this group and yielded t -values that are significant at the .05 level. This information would indicate a significant change in student attitudes occurred since the beginning of the inclusion project. The interpretation of this outcome is that after the middle school students worked with students with disabilities, the more they agreed with the negative statement that persons with disabilities are more emotional. This is not the result that was anticipated, but it is a significant finding (see Table 3).

TABLE 3



	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	2	3.6	1.6
SD	1.41	1.34	0.54
t		2.95	
CV		-1.833	

The third item found to have significance for the middle school students was statement number five: *We should expect just as much from disabled as from non-disabled persons*. A t -value of -2.66 was calculated. According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the middle school group is significant at the .05 level. This information indicates a significant change in student attitudes occurred since the beginning of the inclusion project. The interpretation of this outcome is that after the regular-education middle school students worked with students with disabilities, the more they agreed with the negative statement. This is not the anticipated result, but it is a significant finding (see Table 4).

TABLE 4

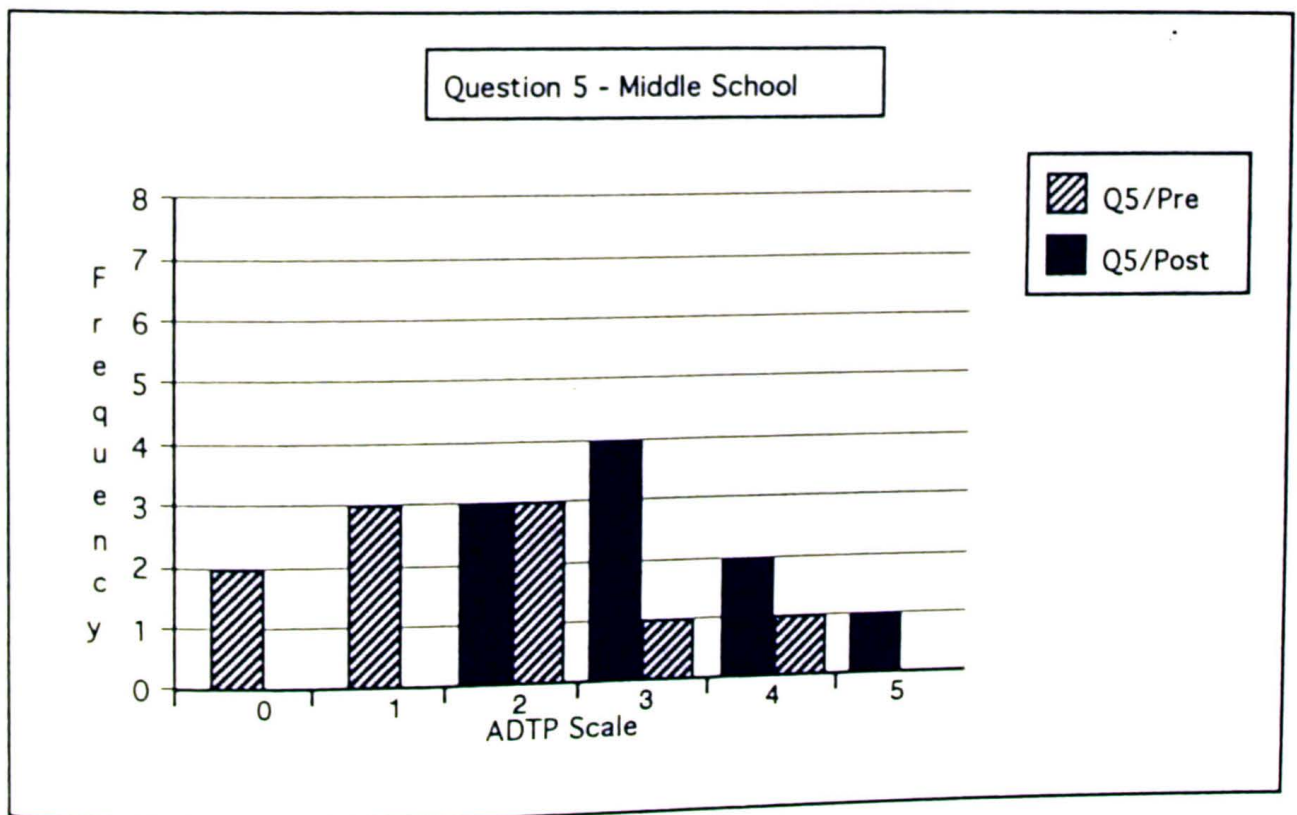
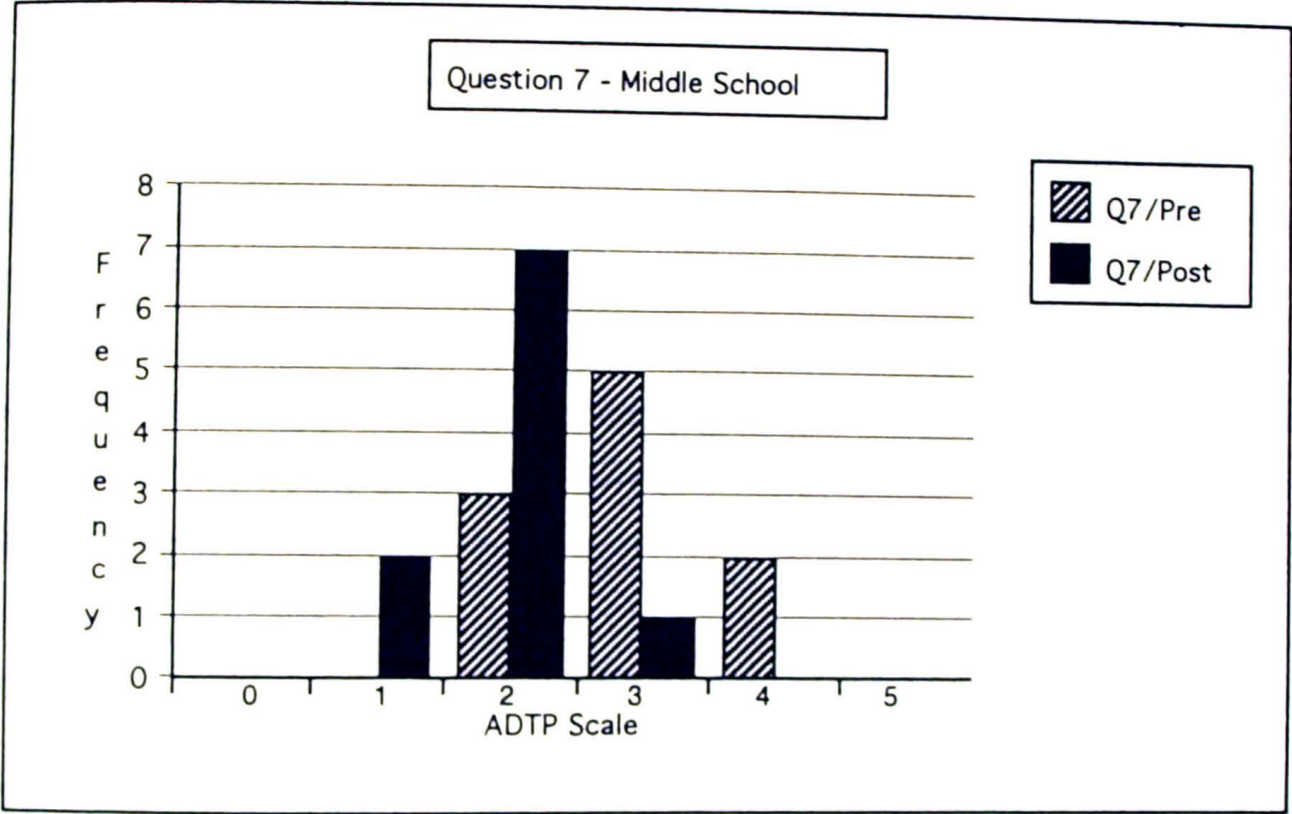


TABLE 4 (continued)

Notes:

	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	3.1	1.6	-1.5
Std Dev	0.99	1.26	0.56
t		-2.66	
CV		1.833	

The fourth item found to have significance for the middle school students was statement number seven: *Disabled people usually do not make much of a contribution to society*. A t -value of -3 was calculated. According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the middle school group is significantly different from the pre-attitude survey. The two tests for difference of means compared the pre- and post-attitude scores for this group and yielded t -values that are significant at the .05 level. This information would indicate a significant change in student attitudes occurred since the onset of the inclusion project. The interpretation of this outcome is that after the middle school students worked with students with disabilities, the more they disagreed with the negative statement (see Table 5).



	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	2.9	1.9	-1
SD	0.73	0.56	0.33
t		-3	
CV		-1.833	

The fifth item found to have significance for all students surveyed was statement number ten: *Disabled persons are usually more sensitive than other people.* The overall finding of this outcome is that the more the overall groups worked with children with disabilities, the more they agreed with this statement. This showed an change in the attitude of the overall sample group. A t -value of -2.52 was calculated. According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the overall group is significantly different from the pre-attitude scores for this group and yielded t -values that are significant at the .05 level. This information indicates a significant change in student attitudes occurred since the beginning of the inclusion project (see Table 6).

TABLE 6

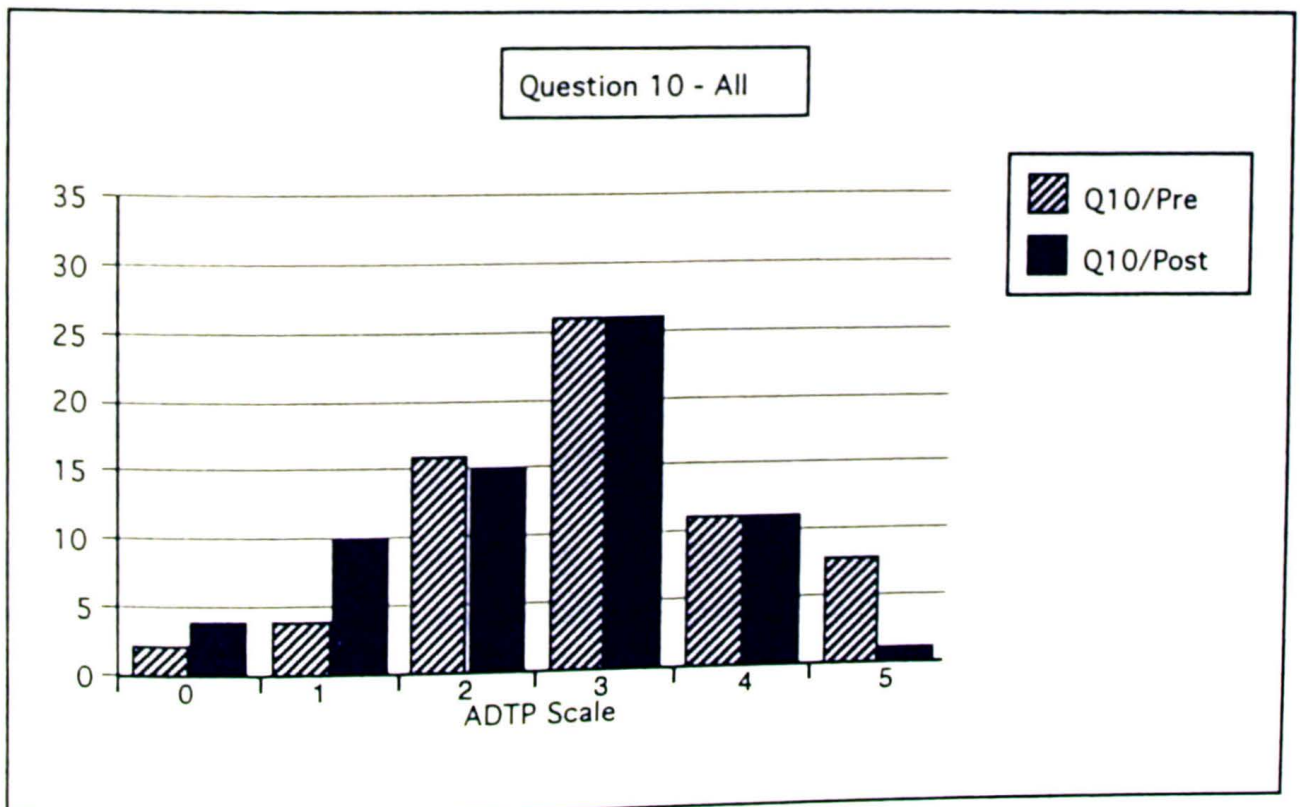


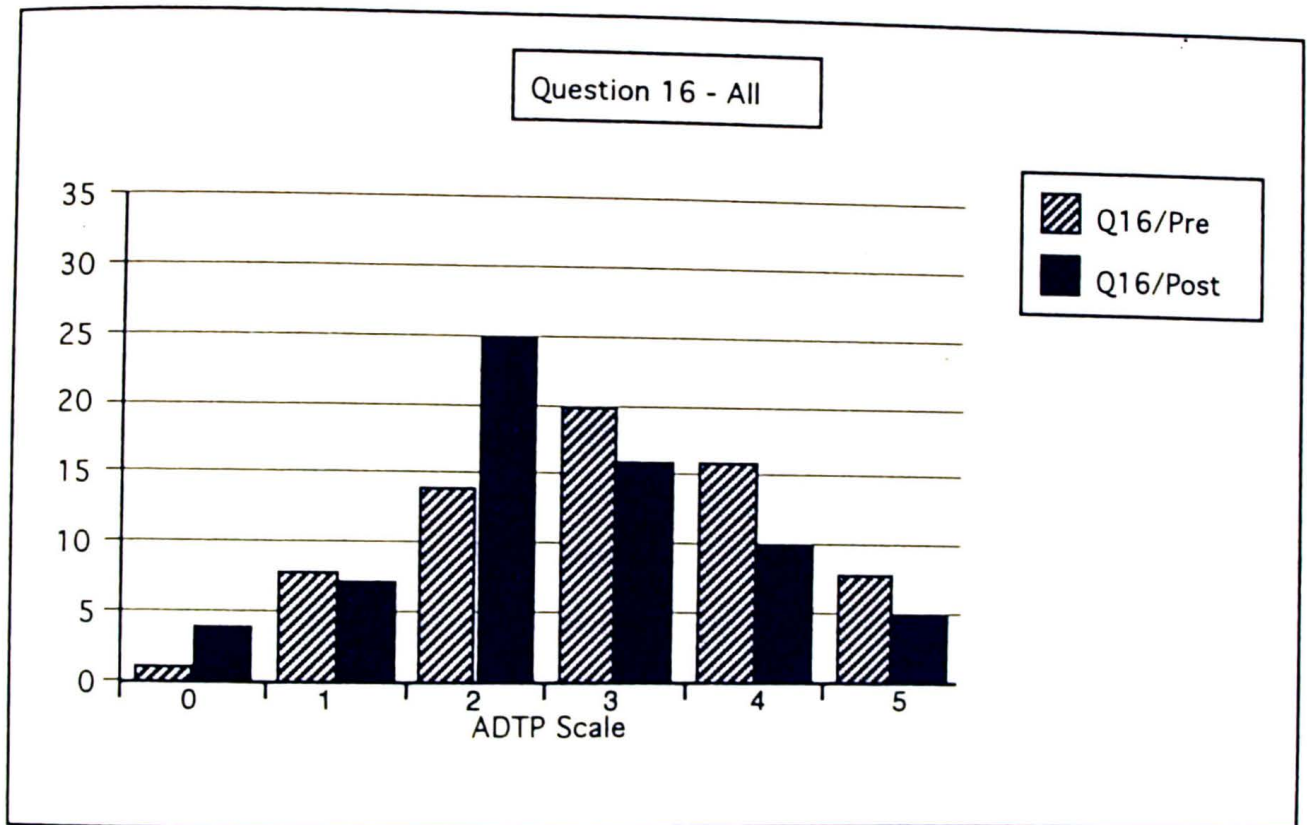
TABLE 6 (continued)

Notes:

	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	2.95	2.49	-0.46
SD	1.18	1.15	0.18
t		-2.52	
CV		-1.671	

The interpretation of this outcome is that after the overall groups worked with the students with disabilities, the more they agreed with the statement that persons with disabilities are usually more sensitive than other people. Agreement with this statement according to Yuker indicates a negative attitude (Yuker, Block, and Campbell, 1960).

The sixth item found to have a significant change of attitude for all students surveyed was statement number sixteen: *Severely disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.* The results indicated a significantly improved attitude of the overall sample group. A t -value of -2.10 was calculated. According to the conditions of the t -test, the mean score on the post-attitudinal survey for the overall group is significantly different from the pre-attitudinal survey. The two tests for difference of means compared the pre- and post-attitude scores for this group and yielded t -values that are significant at the .05 level (see Table 7).



	Pre	Post	Difference
Mean	2.98	2.5	-0.45
SD	1.24	1.25	0.21
t		-2.10	
CV		-1.671	

This information would indicate a significant change in student attitudes occurred that was more than could be explained by chance since the beginning of the inclusion project. The interpretation of this outcome is that after the overall groups worked with students with disabilities, the more they disagreed with this negative statement. This is a result that was anticipated in this research project.

An additional occurrence that may have influenced results among the middle school group happened one day before the post-attitudinal survey was to be given. A student with autism, mental retardation, and a severe behavior disorder struck the teacher. The teacher made the statement "That child belongs in a straight jacket" loud enough for the entire class to hear. This event was observed by the special-education teacher, the special education aide, and likely by the students in the class.

A similar incident occurred at the high school where a student with similar disabilities struck a peer tutor in the inclusion setting. The student with disabilities was quickly walked out of the classroom and returned to the Lifeskills classroom. The peer tutor was calmly asked by the instructor if she was all right and after reassurances were given, she returned to work on her art project. The following day the student with disabilities returned to the inclusion project setting and continued to work on the art project as usual.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if regular education students would exhibit more positive attitudes toward students with disabilities after participating as peer tutors to special education students in an integrated art class. Students involved in the study were from a high school on a military base whose students were all children of members of the armed forces and a public middle school in a nearby community. The use of the middle school art class permitted a comparison of younger students with similar characteristics with the high school students.

The review of related research materials and literature supported the hypothesis that there would be an improvement in attitude of non-handicapped students who were peer tutors in an integrated art class. The studies concluded that some attitudes changed in a positive direction as a result of contact with students with disabilities, teacher attitude and preparedness, and learning environment. In each of these studies, these factors appeared to be important in the change of attitude toward persons with disabilities.

The initial plan of the field study proposal was to conduct the inclusion project with one class of twenty high school and one class of thirteen middle school students. There was a concern that small sample size would prevent results from being significant. For this reason, additional classes from the high school were added to the sample. Hence, the research was broadened to encompass five classes that would be working under the same inclusive conditions as the original proposal, (one middle school

art class, and four high school classes) with students who were not identified as disabled. One of the study groups in the high school was a gifted class. This sample size was large enough to yield significant results.

Conclusions

Based on the analysis of the data, the following conclusions, related to the relationship between pre- and post-attitudinal survey findings are drawn.

1. The initial attitudes were not as negative to begin with as the researcher anticipated.
2. Adults in inclusive settings should monitor their own attitudes and behaviors. If adults make extraneous comments in the presence of students they can influence the attitudes of the children/ subjects.
3. When children with disabilities work in inclusive settings with non-disabled children, changes do occur in attitudes of the non-disabled children.
4. The directions of these changes, whether they become more positive or more negative in their attitudes, depends on a number of variables. These may include expression of teacher attitudes, teacher behavior toward students, age and maturity of students who are normally developing and the level of severity, to include behaviors of the students with disabilities.
5. Even when students had quite positive views of persons with disabilities (gifted students on item number one), significant improvements were made as they worked directly with their peers who were less able during this study.
6. There seemed to be a general trend toward improved attitudes toward students with disabilities. Sixteen of twenty-eight

questions showed positive gains in attitude, even though only three were statistically significant. The three significant items that showed a negative trend occurred in the middle school where a contaminating variable occurred.

Recommendations

A longitudinal study on the effects of full inclusion on the attitudes of regular-education students would provide important results.

There may be a value in looking at demographics in a future study, noting how much experience the normally developing students have with disabilities and examining gains by those with more experience compared to those with less. The nature of data collection on this study, with students masked from their data, prevented this type of analysis. Future studies should control for this factor.

Caution should be taken in preparing teachers who work in inclusive settings so they become aware of the importance of their attitudes and behaviors toward students with disabilities and how much this influences the attitudes of their students. It may be the single most important thing that can be taught regular education teachers, more so than strategies of how to educate children with disabilities included in their classes. The language used and behavior of these teachers are carefully watched by their students.

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APPENDICES

LETTERS OF CONSENT

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S TEACHER

2050 York Road
Clarksville, TN 37042
6 January, 2000

Dear Parents,

The students in the Specialized Art Class, the General Art II Class, the Share Class, and the Lifeskills Class of Fort Campbell High School have been chosen to participate in the grant *Outside the Box*. The students in these classes will work together in an inclusive setting to produce art for the visually impaired. The program will begin on January 3, 2000. Once all the art projects are turned in from all the participants of the grant, the art work will be judged. Selected works will be displayed to the public at the Clarksville Museum as well as other sites throughout the country. At the completion of the tour, all works will be returned to the producing school.

We are excited to be chosen for this federally funded grant. The classes will receive \$500.00 worth of art materials to produce the art works as well as training for the teachers involved. We are anticipating a very exciting experience for all participants.

I have been working on my Educational Specialist Degree at Austin Peay State University. One of the degree requirements involves conducting a research study. I have chosen to research the attitudes of non-disabled students toward students with disabilities. The inclusion setting of the art grant *Outside the Box* will provide the environment for data collection on this project. Surveys will be given to participants and collected on the first and last day of the project. The data will be compiled and compared to determine if there has been a change in the attitude of the non-disabled student as a result of working together with students who are moderately to severely disabled in an inclusive setting.

The information from this study will be used for the completion of my degree at Austin Peay State University. The final product will be in the form of a written Field Study available to students through the Woodward Library at APSU. All identifying information will be turned over to my supervising professor, Dr. Larry Lowrance to store at Austin Peay State University.

Participation in the study will in no way influence participation in the grant program. Participants in the study may withdraw at any time during the study. If you have questions about either the grant program or the research project, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Katherine A. DePriest

CONSENT FORM

37

Project Title: Attitudes of regular-education students toward students with disabilities.

Description of purpose and explanation of procedures:

This study will evaluate the pre- and post-attitudes of regular-education students toward students with disabilities. The Field Study is a requirement necessary for the completion of an Education Specialist Degree, from Austin Peay State University by Katherine Anderson DePriest, Fort Campbell High School. Participants in the study will complete three short surveys.

The first is a short demographic survey of five questions which requires no more than check marks to answer and takes approximately two minutes to complete. The second is a pre-survey of Attitudes Toward Disabled People (ATDP). The ATDP consists of 30 questions which are answered utilizing a Likert Scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." The survey takes approximately five minutes to answer. The final survey is a post-survey of ATDP.

The surveys will be completed in total anonymity, at no time will your child's name appear on any forms or in any documentation related to this study. The data will be evaluated and conclusions developed. Results will be provided to the schools participating in the field study. Your child's classroom teacher will be provided a finished copy of the study if you would like to review the results of the study. Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you agree to let your child take part in this learning opportunity, please indicate and sign below. If you choose not to allow your child to participate in this research study, please indicate and sign. If your child chooses they can withdraw from the study at any time. They can also choose not to answer one or more of the questions. Their participation is totally voluntary.

-----YES

-----NO

Child's Name -----

Parent/Guardian signature -----

Date -----

STUDENT ASSENT FORM

38

I am doing a study on the attitudes of non-disabled students toward students with disabilities. Students who participate will complete three brief surveys. The first is a survey of five questions about previous exposure to persons with disabilities, age, ethnic identity, and how long students have lived in the region. This will require no more than check marks to answer and takes approximately two minutes to complete. This information will only be used for the purpose of analysis. The second survey is the Attitudes Toward Disabled People (ATDP) survey. The ATDP consists of 30 questions which are answered using a scale ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". The survey takes approximately five minutes to answer. It is important that you answer the questions with how you really feel, not how you think your teacher would like for you to answer. Your answers will be held completely confidential. At no time will you be identified, nor will anyone other than the investigators have access to your responses. Your participation is completely voluntary, and you are free to stop participation at any time without penalty. The final survey is a repeat of the ATDP after the time spent with students with disabilities.

Questions about research participants' rights can be directed to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044, (931) 221-7781.

I agree to participate in the study under the supervision of Dr. Larry Lowrance, a faculty member of the Department Of Education at Austin Peay State University. I have been informed, either orally or in writing about the procedures to be involved. The investigator has offered to answer further inquiries that I may have regarding this procedure. I understand that I am free to terminate participation at any time without penalty or prejudice and to have all data obtained withdrawn from the study and destroyed. I have also been told of any benefits that may result from participation.

Name _____ Signature _____
(Please Print)

Date _____

I choose not to participate in the study. Declining to participate in the study will not affect the grant award, my ability to participate in the grant program, or my grade in any way.

Name _____ Signature _____
(Please Print)

Date _____

Box 4545
APSU 37044
6 January, 2000

39

Dear Parents,

Regular education students, and the Lifeskills Class of Kenwood Middle School have been chosen to participate in the grant *Outside the Box*. The students in these classes will work together in an inclusive setting to produce art for the visually impaired. The program will begin on January 20, 2000. Once all the art projects are turned in from all the participants of the grant, the art work will be judged. Selected works will be displayed to the public at the Clarksville Museum as well as other sites throughout the country. At the completion of the tour, all works will be returned to the producing school.

We are excited to be chosen for this federally funded grant. The classes will receive \$500.00 worth of art materials to produce the art works as well as training for the teachers involved. We are anticipating a very exciting experience for all participants.

We have chosen to research the attitudes of non-disabled students toward students with disabilities. The inclusion setting of the art grant *Outside the Box* will provide the environment for data collection on this project. Surveys will be given to participants and collected on the first and last day of the project. The data will be compiled and compared to determine if there has been a change in the attitude of the non-disabled student as a result of working together with students who are moderately to severely disabled in an inclusive setting.

The information from this study will be used for research purposes. The final product will be in the form of a written Field Study available to students through the Woodward Library at APSU. All identifying information will be turned over to my supervising professor, Dr. Larry Lowrance to store at Austin Peay State University.

Participation in the study will in no way influence participation in the grant program. Participants in the study may withdraw at any time during the study. If you have questions about either the grant program or the research project, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Larry Lowrance
(931)221-6153

Katherine A. DePriest
(931)431-5056

Mary M. Gulin
(931)431-5056

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
from the APSU IRB

40

**Austin Peay State University
Institutional Review Board**

January 25, 2000

Katherine Anderson DePriest
C/O Dr. Larry Lowrance
College of Education
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN 37044

RE: Your application dated November 30, 1999 regarding study number 00-023:
Attitudes of Regular-Education Students Toward Students with Disabilities
(APSU)

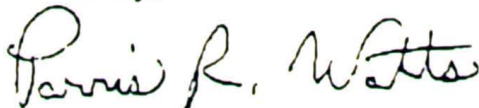
Dear Ms. DePriest:

Thank you for your response to requests from a prior review of your application for the new study listed above. This is to confirm that your application is now fully approved. The protocol is approved through one calendar year. The consent form as most recently revised is approved. You must obtain signed written consent from all subjects. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subjects research.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before December 3, 2000, unless closed before that date.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and reviewed. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Linda S. Freed or Sarah Lundin-Schiller (931-221-7881; fax 931-221-7304; email: grants@apsu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,



Dr. Parris R. Watts
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
From FCHS Central Office

41

Gulin, Mary

From: Adamkiewicz, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, December 06, 1999 2:05 PM
To: McMullen, Ray; Gulin, Mary
Cc: McMullen, Ray
Subject: Research Project

Dear Kathy,

Both Dr. McMullen and myself have reviewed your research proposal. We both believe that the research is well designed and interesting. There should be no problem with your proceeding as long as your university also grants approval. Please let us know when you will begin and end your research project. We would also wish to remind you that it is absolutely necessary to keep student confidentiality. No student names can be used for any reason. Good Luck!!!

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
from FCHS

42

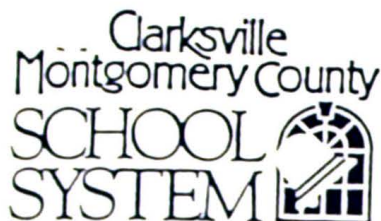
DePriest, Katherine

From: Killebrew, Ken
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2000 2:40 PM
To: DePriest, Katherine; Gulin, Mary
Subject: Field Study

You have my approval to conduct research at Ft. Campbell High School during the spring semester of 2000. It's my hope that this research will prove valuable to the special education programs at the high school.

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
from Clarksville Montgomery County School System

43



Frank M. Hodgson, Ed.D.
Director of Instructional Support
Research and Development
Board of Education 621 Gracey Avenue Clarksville, Tennessee 37040
931-920-7813 Fax: 931-920-9813 email: HodgsonF@ren-nash.ren.k12.tn.us

January 17, 2000

Dr. Larry Lowrance
Professor of Education
Department of Education
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN 37040

Dear Dr. Lowrance;

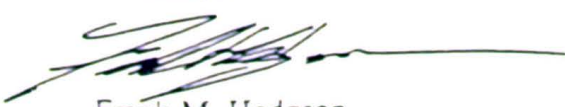
Your research, survey and/or research project title: The Effects of Inclusion on General And Special Education Students On Attitudes Toward Students With Disabilities And On The Improvement Of Social Skills In The Students With Disabilities has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was January 17, 2000.

Now that you have approval from the research committee, you may contact the principal for approval. According to Board Policy File IFA, the principal has the final authority and responsibility for approving or disapproving research conducted in his/her building.

Please read the Research Policy and Procedures Handbook for all information concerning research in the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools. Remember to provide my office with two (2) copies of the results of your research as required by the attached Board Policy File IFA.

If you have questions, please call my office at (931) 920-7813.

Sincerely,


Frank M. Hodgson

Attachment 1

cc: Rosalyn Evans, Principal
Kenwood Middle School
Research Committee
Evelyn Bryant, Secondary Supervisor
Debbie Nichols, Elementary supervisor
Diana Simmons, Elementary Special Ed. Supervisor
File

DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

44

Please answer the following:

Sex male_____ female_____

Age 11 and younger___ 12___ 13___ 14___ 15___ 16___ 17___ 18and older___

Ethnic Group White ___ Black___ Hispanic ___ Asian___ Native American ___ Other___

Do you know someone or is there anyone close to you or your family who has a disability?

Yes___ No___

How long have you lived in this area?

One year or less ___ Two - Five years ___ Six - Ten years ___ Eleven-Eighteen years ___

Attitude Toward Disabled People (ATDP) Scale

The statements below describe attitudes toward persons with disabilities. Mark each statement according to how much you agree or disagree with it. Please mark every one. There are no right or wrong answers, only opinions. Circle the number that corresponds to the alternative that is closest to the way you feel about the statement.

+3: I agree very much
+2: I agree pretty much
+1: I agree a little

-1: I disagree a little
-2: I disagree pretty much
-3: I disagree very much

- 1 Disabled people are often unfriendly.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 2 Disabled people should not have to compete for jobs with physically normal persons.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 3 Disabled people are more emotional than other people.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 4 Most disabled persons are more self-conscious than other people.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 5 We should expect just as much from disabled as from non-disabled persons.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 6 Disabled workers cannot be as successful as other workers.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 7 Disabled people usually do not make much of a contribution to society.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 8 Most non-disabled people would not want to marry anyone who is physically disabled.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3
- 9 Disabled people show as much enthusiasm as other people.
 +3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

- 10 Disabled persons are usually more sensitive than other people.
- 11 Severely disabled persons are usually untidy.
- 12 Most disabled people feel that they are as good as other people.
- 13 The driving test given to a disabled person should be more severe than the one given to the non-disabled people.
- 14 Disabled people are usually sociable.
- 15 Disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.
- 16 Severely disabled persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.
- 17 Most disabled persons are not dissatisfied with themselves.
- 18 There are more misfits among disabled persons than among non-disabled persons.
- 19 Most disabled persons do not get discouraged easily.
- 20 Most disabled persons resent physically normal people.
- 21 Disabled children should compete with physically normal children.

22 Most disabled persons can take care of themselves.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

23 It would be best if disabled persons would live and work with non-disabled persons.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

24 Most severely disabled people are just as ambitious as physically normal persons.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

25 Disabled people are just as self-confident as other people.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

26 Most disabled people are different from non-disabled people.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

27 Physically disabled persons are often less intelligent than non-disabled ones.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

28 Most disabled people are different from non-disabled people.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

29 Disabled persons don't want any more sympathy than other people.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

30 The way disabled people act is irritating.

+3 +2 +1 -1 -2 -3

VITA

Graduate School

Austin Peay State University

Name: Martha Katherine Anderson DePriest

Home Address: 2050 York Road, Clarksville, TN, 37042-6804

Education

I. Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Bachelor of Fine Arts, Magna Cum Laude, December 1976

Major: Art Education

II. Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Master of Arts , Magna Cum Laude, August 1978

Major: Curriculum and Instruction

Certificate

Kentucky State K-12 Teaching Certificate