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Secondary Special Educators' Attitudes and Sense of Self-Efficacy Toward Inclusive Education

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education

in

Educational Leadership

by

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Dedication

To my husband, Jeremy.

For your endless patience, support, and proofreading.

To my mother, Teresa.

For leading the way and laying out footsteps I am proud to follow in.

To my friends, Anna and Holly,

For the advice, encouragement, and comic relief on this journey.

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Educational Degrees

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Unpublished master's thesis, California State University San Marcos, San Marcos, CA.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

Secondary Special Educators' Attitudes and Sense of Self-Efficacy Toward Inclusive Education

by

Jacqueline Wood

Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership

University of California, 2017
California State University, San Marcos, 2017

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Since the 1970s there has been a growing legislative focus, in the United States and abroad, on providing inclusive education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment alongside their typical peers. However, this shift in policy has not resulted in a comparable shift in practice. Key factors shown to influence the success of implementing inclusive educational practices are teachers' attitudes and beliefs. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between secondary special education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities and their sense of self-efficacy related to supporting students with disabilities included in the general education classroom.

The mixed-methods design was grounded in the theories of planned behavior and self-efficacy. Quantitative data collection included a survey with questions regarding (a) demographic information and background of the teacher, (b) teachers' sense of self-efficacy regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities, and (c) teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. The qualitative portion of the design included individual

interviews regarding teachers' perceptions of their own efficacy with and attitudes towards inclusive education and the relationship between these factors. Teacher participants included secondary special educators in a large suburban school district undergoing a shift in special education service delivery practices toward increasing the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education.

The aim of this study was inform teacher training and professional development efforts. Among the key findings was the conclusion that the special education teachers in the district of study lacked a clear, shared understanding of inclusion as well as their roles and responsibilities in a more inclusive special education service delivery model. These special educators had an overall positive attitude toward the theory of inclusion, but held negative attitudes towards the actual practice of inclusion; specifically, teachers expressed a strong resistance to the elimination of self-contained special education classrooms. Similarly, special education teachers in this study reported high senses of self-efficacy for supporting students with disabilities overall, but had doubts about their abilities to apply these skills in the general education classroom. The results of this study will inform professional development efforts toward increasing the inclusion of students with disabilities, as well as areas of need for additional research. Limitations of the study, as well as implications for practice, are discussed.

Keywords: inclusive education, teacher self-efficacy, teacher attitudes toward inclusion

Chapter One: Introduction

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (2004), students with disabilities have the right to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The expectation is that students with disabilities remain in the general education classroom with their typical (or nondisabled) peers as long as they are able to access the curriculum with accommodations, modifications, and/or supplementary services. Experts on the issue of inclusive education argue that federal law sets a high standard for denying a student with disabilities access to the regular classroom (Falvey & Givner, 2005; Lipsky, 2005). In order to meet this significant threshold for excluding a student from general education, the decision-making team must first explore a wide range of supports and interventions to ensure the student has been provided every opportunity to receive an equitable education in an inclusive environment.

Presently, despite the rigorous requirement for interventions prior to removing students to segregated special education classrooms, federal data reveal that only about 55% of students with disabilities participate in general education classrooms for 80% or more of the school day (West & Schaefer Whilby, 2008). There are more than six million students in the United States with identified disabilities (US Department of Education, 2015). Approximately half of this population (more than three million students) is regularly removed from the general education classroom for part or all of their school day to receive special education instruction in segregated settings (West & Schaefer Whilby, 2008). Further, identification of students with disabilities is not evenly distributed across the population, with an overrepresentation of American Indian, Black, and male students receiving special education services and facing a greater risk of removal from the general education environment (US Department of Education, 2015).

Beyond the moral, ethical, and legal implications of the segregation of students with disabilities, another significant concern is the educational impact of exclusionary practices. Presently, there is an achievement gap between students with disabilities and their typical peers (West & Schaefer Wilby, 2008). According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), students with disabilities score lower than their typical peers in reading and mathematics in grades four, eight, and twelve, with the performance gap widening at each successive grade level (US Department of Education, 2015). Curriculum-based and basic skills assessments mirror this trend with students with disabilities consistently earning lower scores in reading and mathematics than nondisabled students (Schulte & Stevens, 2015; Shin, Davison, Long, Chan, & Heistad, 2013).

In addition to this academic achievement gap, there is also growing evidence of a social achievement gap between students with disabilities and their typical peers. Research in the area of social networking indicates that individuals with disabilities have less contact with friends and family; belong to fewer social groups; have weaker ties to organizations; and report less financial, social, and emotional support than their nondisabled counterparts (Mithen, Aitken, Ziersch, & Kavanagh, 2015). This exclusion then extends beyond the school walls and into the community where individuals with disabilities are often socially isolated and do not have the economic or emotional resources to engage in social networks (Chenoweth & Stehlik, 2004).

The nature of these academic and social gaps between students with disabilities and their typical peers is complex, with a variety of root causes, as well as a number of factors that perpetuate and worsen the divide. In the current special education system, students are frequently removed from the general education environment to receive specialized academic instruction, as well as specialized services such as speech therapy, counseling, and adapted

physical education. Many researchers have identified a relationship between the academic achievement gap and these segregated special education services that limit student access to the general curriculum, typical peers, and high expectations (Ferguson, 2008; Fisher, 2007; Griner & Stewart, 2012; Helmstetter, Curry, & Brennan, 1998; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walter-Thomas, 2002; Tremblay, 2013). Research indicates that these exclusionary practices are also at the root of the social achievement gap for students with disabilities with instruction provided in segregated special classes restricting students' social competence, social capital, and cultural capital (Kvalsund & Velsvik Bele, 2010).

In response to ample evidence of the relationship between educational exclusion and the achievement gap for students with disabilities, the focus of this study was to explore obstacles to implementing inclusive education practices. Specifically, this study examined demographic factors, such as age, gender, education, and teaching experience, as they relate to teachers' sense of self-efficacy with and attitudes toward inclusive practices. This study also examined the relationship between teachers' sense of self-efficacy with and attitudes toward inclusion. In the context of this study, self-efficacy referred to a teacher's perception of his or her own ability to support students with disabilities in the general education environment (as opposed to a self-contained special education classroom). Similarly, attitude referred to the teacher's beliefs about or feelings toward the practice of providing special education services in the inclusive general education environment, rather than a segregated special education setting. By assessing the relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes, as well as factors that impact these elements, the results of this study attempted to inform professional development efforts to promote teacher acceptance of and ability to include all students.

Purpose of the Study

Despite an abundance of research illustrating the advantages of educating all students in integrated environments, the inclusive education of students with disabilities has been slow to transition from theory to practice. Specifically, a growing body of research indicates a strong relationship between the success of inclusive education and general educators' sense of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom (McCray & Alvarez McHatton, 2011; Wilkins & Nietfeld, 2004). The inclusion of students with disabilities has several effects on the classroom environment and teaching responsibilities of the general education teacher. Inclusion requires the education of a more diverse population of students with a broader range of needs, as well as collaboration with other educational professionals such as special education teachers, speech language pathologists, and behavior specialists. In the face of these changes, general education teachers frequently report feeling unprepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Limited feelings of competence and confidence in accommodating the varied instructional or behavioral needs of students with disabilities negatively impacts general education teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education (Lombardi & Hunka, 2001; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998).

The transition toward increasingly inclusive practices in education also affects the roles, responsibilities, and teaching experiences of special educators. Traditionally, special educators have provided instruction to students with disabilities in segregated classrooms. The move toward inclusive education has shifted the roles of many special educators, who now serve as co-teachers or support teachers, collaborating with general educators to serve all students in the general education classroom (Fisher, Frey, & Thousand, 2003). Special education teachers face many new challenges, including: losing the autonomy of their own classroom; supporting students with rigorous general education curriculum outside of their credentialed area of

expertise; and increased responsibility for classroom management, differentiating instruction, and data collection in general education environments (Billingsley, 2005). Together, these challenges impact the sense of self-efficacy and the attitudes of special educators toward inclusion.

The sense of self-efficacy and attitudes of special educators are of particular importance because special educators are often the primary driving force behind the Individualized Education Program (IEP). The IEP is an individualized plan created for each student with an identified disability that determines the specialized services they receive, as well as their educational placement (in general and/or special education settings). Research indicates that the special education teacher has significant influence over the outcome of the IEP meeting and the development of the IEP document (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). Although the IEP team is legally required to include a general education teacher, general educators typically do not feel comfortable developing the IEP, and commonly defer to the recommendations of the special educator (Buell, Hallam, & Gamel-McCormick, 1999). Due to this inexperience or discomfort on behalf of the general educators, the special education teachers typically take responsibility for determining the educational program and placement of a student with disabilities, a decision that is impacted by the special educator's attitudes toward inclusion or feelings about their ability to support a student in an inclusive environment (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999).

In general, both teachers' sense of self-efficacy and teachers' attitudes have been identified as key factors that affect the success of inclusive education (Forlin et al., 2011; Savolainen et al., 2012; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2012). More specifically, a number of studies have explored the impact of self-efficacy and attitudes on inclusion in general education

teachers, elementary school teachers, and foreign teachers. The purpose of this study is to address a gap in the research by examining the relationship between the sense of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities, as well as the impact of demographic factors on teachers' self-efficacy with and attitudes towards inclusion.

Research Questions

1. What are the current attitudes of secondary special education teachers toward inclusive education?
2. What is the current state of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers with respect to inclusive education?
3. In what ways do demographic elements, education level, and/or teaching experience impact secondary special education teachers' sense of efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education?
4. What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education?

Research Methodology

The school district selected for this study was a large suburban district located in southern California. At the time of the study, schools in this district served over 22,000 students, more than 65% of which fell into the categories of English learners, low income, or foster youth. Approximately 13% of students in the district had identified disabilities, which was comparable to the state and federal averages (12% and 14%, respectively). The district was in the third year of a four-year implementation plan to promote inclusive education and emphasize the provision of special education services in the general education environment. Historically, a majority of

students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) in this school district received instruction in segregated special education classrooms. At the time of the study, more than 70% of students with disabilities received instruction in the general education environment with the support of special education teachers, instructional assistants, or other supplementary aides, services, and supports. Participants in this study included special education teachers from middle and high schools.

Phase one of this mixed methods design included a quantitative component based on a survey consisting of the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale, the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS), and a demographic questionnaire (Sharma et al., 2012; Gregory & Noto, 2012). Phase two involved a qualitative component in which a smaller subset of participants was invited to participate in semi-structured individual interviews to clarify and elaborate on quantitative survey data.

Significance of Study

This study was grounded in a social justice belief that all students have both a moral and a legal right to access an appropriate education with their typical peers. Despite research on the benefits of inclusion, many students with disabilities still receive segregated special education services outside the general education classroom. One source of resistance to the inclusive education movement is teachers, or more specifically, teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward inclusion (Connor & Ferri, 2007). The focus of this study was to examine the relationship between the sense of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities to inform professional development efforts. Through a better understanding of teachers' beliefs around inclusion, the aim was to have the

information to increase their sense of self-efficacy and improve their attitudes, with the ultimate goal of promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Chapter Two: Review of the Related Literature

Among educators, policymakers, parents, and students, there are myriad opinions regarding the provision of special education services for students with disabilities. Inclusion is an often controversial, emotionally charged subject and an individual's beliefs are shaped by powerful influences such as educational philosophy, personal experiences, and political leanings. The intent of this literature review is to move beyond anecdotes and opinions to explore the empirical research around the inclusive education movement. This review begins with a history and overview of special education. Building on this foundation, a definition of inclusive education is provided, followed by an overview of the educational and social benefits of inclusion for students both with and without disabilities. This overview of the advantages of inclusive programs is followed by an exploration of the disadvantages of inclusion. Comparing the significant advantages of inclusion to the nominal disadvantages, this review then examines common obstacles to creating inclusive schools, including teacher attitudes and sense of self-efficacy.

History of Special Education

In 1840, Rhode Island became the first state to legally require that children attend school. Other states followed this example and by 1918 compulsory education legislation was in place in all 50 states (Yell, Rogers, & Lodge Rodgers, 1998). Despite this legal decree, students with disabilities were still largely excluded from public schools. For most of the 19th and early 20th centuries, students with disabilities typically received instruction in private institutions (Winzer, 1993). Slowly, in response to increased pressure to comply with compulsory attendance laws, public schools began to supplant special facilities and asylums. These schools were unprepared to manage students with diverse educational and behavioral needs and, within their campuses,

segregated classes and programs developed to serve students with disabilities (Yell et al., 1998). Special classes were designed to educate students who were perceived to interfere with the learning environment, including students with intellectual disabilities and students who were blind or deaf (Winzer, 1993). By this point, students with mild-to-moderate special needs were no longer isolated to institutions, but were instead segregated in special programs on public school campuses.

A rise of parent advocacy campaigns in the 1930s began targeting the segregated educational system. Over the next 20 years, family groups across the United States protested the exclusion of students with disabilities and challenged the issue in court (Yell et al., 1998). One key piece of legislation that impacted the disability rights movement was the Supreme Court's decision in the case of Brown versus the Board of Education. The original decision found that the 14th Amendment guarantees students equal protection under the law and deemed racial segregation in schools unconstitutional (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954). Although this case originally addressed segregation by race, in the years that followed, disability rights groups argued that equal protection under the law should also apply to educational opportunities for students with disabilities.

Building on this 14th Amendment momentum, the first major anti-discrimination legislation for individuals with disabilities came in 1973 with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. This regulation prevented the exclusion of individuals with disabilities from any activity or organization receiving federal funding (Discrimination Prohibited, 1998). Following closely in 1975, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) became the first law specifically designed to protect the educational rights of students with disabilities and to allocate federal funding to this cause (Mostert & Crockett, 2010). The EAHCA is also well known as the

birthplace of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). An IEP details the educational supports and services designed for a student with disabilities (IDEA, 2004). In the decades since, the EAHCA has been reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990, the IDEA Amendments of 1997, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004. The central tenet of this federal law is the mandate that students with disabilities receive a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment, with their typical peers (IDEA, 2004). This evolving legislation has fueled the inclusive education reform movement and begun to transform the provision of special education services.

Overview of Special Education

The number of students in the United States between the ages of 3-21 with an identified disability has steadily grown over recent decades, with 4.7 million students (11% of the student population) in 1990-91 increasing to 6.5 million students (13% of the student population) in 2013-14 (US Department of Education, 2015). In order to qualify for special education services a student must have an identified disability. Also, this disability must have an adverse effect on the student's educational performance. Finally, the student must require special education services to access a free appropriate public education (Child with a Disability, 2012). Oftentimes, students may have a disability but may have also developed sufficient coping strategies or compensatory abilities such that they do not require additional supports or services to access the general curriculum. Special education is reserved for the students that exist at the intersection of both disability and educational need.

Students may qualify for special education services under one or more disability categories. The largest disability category is Specific Learning Disability, which accounts for 35% of students with special needs and is characterized by a psychological processing disorder

that impacts the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations (Eligibility Criteria, 2014). Twenty one percent of students with special needs qualify with a Speech or Language Impairment and 13% with Other Health Impairments (US Department of Education, 2015). The largest increase in identification has occurred with diagnoses of autism, which have increased from 4% in 2000 to 14% in 2012; experts attribute this spike to greater public awareness of autism, rather than actual increased prevalence (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2016). The remaining 17% of students with disabilities are distributed throughout the categories of deaf-blindness, deafness, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, intellectual disability, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, traumatic brain injury, and/or visual impairment.

Special education services for students with disabilities address a range of needs. The primary and most common special education service is Specially Designed Instruction (SDI). SDI involves adapting the content, instructional strategies, or delivery of instruction to meet the unique needs of the student (Special Education, 2012). This SDI may occur in a separate special education classroom or in the general education setting. In addition to SDI, students with special needs may also qualify for a range of related services, including adapted physical education, audiological services, counseling and guidance services, deaf and hard-of-hearing services, health services, physical and occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, transportation, vision services, and/or vocational education and career development (Related Services, 2012). The expectation is that staff provides these services in the general education setting to the greatest extent possible.

The importance of providing special education services in the general education environment is magnified when considering the social justice implications of denying students

access to educational opportunities. Complicating the issue of segregation by ability, there are additional concerns with the specific students that are identified as disabled. Since the dawn of special education, there has been a history of misdiagnosis and over identification of disability within select demographics and populations. Initially, disparities were identified in the overrepresentation of ethnic minorities in special education. For example, although the national average rate of identification for students with disabilities is 13%, 17% of American Indian students and 15% of Black students have been identified as having special needs. Similarly, within the specific category of Emotional Disturbance, 8% of Black students have been identified as compared to the 5% overall national average (US Department of Education, 2015).

More recent research has determined that disproportional representation in special education is not limited by race or nationality, but may also occur based on socioeconomic status, primary language, and other cultural characteristics (Education Commission of the States, 2009; Griner & Stewart, 2012). For instance, there is an imbalance by gender, with 16% of male students being identified as students with disabilities as compared to only 9% of female students. This over identification of underserved students for special education promotes the segregation of these populations, limiting their access to the general curriculum, typical peers, and high expectations. Social justice requires that schools review their procedures for identifying students with disabilities and their model for delivering special education services to these individuals to ensure they are not promoting discriminatory practices (USDE, 2007).

Definition of Inclusion

Borne of the tradition of segregated special education tracing back to the earliest institutions and asylums, there is a common misconception that special education services must be provided in a separate setting. The inclusive education movement is founded on the IDEA

2004 directive that, to the greatest extent possible, students receive their instruction in the general education setting with the necessary services and supports. Despite this expectation, in 2013-14, only 56.3% of students with disabilities in California were taught in regular education classrooms for 80% or more of their school day. Additionally, 23.6% of students with disabilities spent less than 40% of their day in regular classrooms. At the most restrictive end of the spectrum, 3.9% of students with disabilities received special education services in separate specialized schools or facilities (California Department of Education, 2015).

Within education, many terms are used interchangeably to describe this process of providing special education support in the general education classroom. Mainstreaming, integration, push-in, and inclusion are a few examples. The term inclusion is the most prevalent; however, within the field, inclusion is characterized in a number of different ways. In the literature, inclusion has been defined as (a) students with disabilities attending their home school of residence, as opposed to a special school; (b) students with disabilities spending part of their day in general education classes with typical peers; (c) students with mild-to-moderate disabilities spending their full day with typical peers; or (d) all students, regardless of the severity of their disability, spending their full day with typical peers (Boyle, Topping, Jindal-Snape, & Norwich, 2012; Copeland & Cosbey, 2008-2009; Florian & Black-Hawkins, 2011). There is research examining outcomes for students of all ages, with varying types and levels of disability, across this full spectrum of inclusion.

In the on-going discussion around inclusion, there is continual debate over the most appropriate educational environment for students with disabilities, particularly students with severe disabilities. Approximately 10% of students with disabilities (or 1% of the overall student population) have a significant cognitive and/or behavioral disability that requires alternate

learning objectives or modified curriculum (California Department of Education, 2015). However, it is important to note that an alternate learning objective does not necessitate an alternate learning environment. Many proponents of full inclusion adhere to a "zero reject" philosophy in which no student is excluded from general education, regardless of ability, and, instead, supports and services are brought to the student (Lilly, 1971). For the purpose of this discussion, which is grounded in a social justice-based belief that all students have a right to equitable educational opportunities, I have chosen to define inclusion as the participation of any student with a disability (regardless of type or severity) in the general education environment with typical (nondisabled) peers. This philosophy is based on a belief that general education is the preferred placement for all students and that services should be brought to the student rather the removing the student to a segregated environment to receive services (Villa & Thousand, 2003).

Benefits of Inclusion

Research indicates that inclusion has a range of positive influences on students. The benefits are both academic and social and affect students in both special and general education. In three separate meta-analyses reviewing a total of 74 studies on inclusive education, researchers found that each showed a small-to-moderate positive effect on student outcomes. Within these studies, beneficial results occurred across age ranges, grade levels, and disability types. Students universally benefitted, socially and academically, from inclusion in the general education classroom (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994-1995).

Educational impact. The provision of special education services in inclusive settings has been shown to increase the academic success of students with disabilities. In comparisons of matched groups, students receiving instruction in general education classrooms with special

education support had markedly more positive outcomes than students receiving instruction in segregated special education classrooms (Baker et al., 1994-1995; Daniel & King, 2001; Hunt, 1994; Sermier Dessemontet, Bless, & Morin, 2012). Students with disabilities in inclusive settings have been shown to earn higher grades, receive higher scores on basic skills tests in language and math, and have higher attendance rates than their counterparts in segregated special education classes (Rea et al., 2002). In turn, while students in inclusive classrooms demonstrated greater gains in reading and writing, comparable students in self-contained classes showed widening achievement gaps in these areas (Tremblay, 2013).

Specifically, larger proportions of time spent in general education classrooms correlate with improved academic outcomes for students with disabilities (Cosier, Causton-Theoharis, & Theoharis, 2013; Freeman & Alkin, 2000). For example, in a longitudinal study measuring the effects of inclusion on elementary students, a positive relationship was found between the amount of time students with disabilities spent in general education and their reading and mathematics achievement scores. On average, students' reading scale scores increased by 0.5 points for every hour in general education and their math scale scores increased an average of 0.37 for every hour in general education (Cosier et al., 2013).

There are several possible explanations for the increased academic performance of students with disabilities who receive instruction in inclusive settings. In a study examining use of class time, the average percentage of total time spent on instruction in special education classrooms was 42%, as compared to 65% in general education classrooms. The lost instructional time in the special education classrooms was spent on transitions between activities, non-academic activities, and idle time while students waited for the teacher to assist other learners (Helmstetter et al., 1998). Additionally, students included in general education received

a greater amount of their instruction from a general education teacher, whereas students in special education classrooms typically received instruction from a special educator or instructional assistant. Contrary to common belief, the amount of one-on-one instructional time was comparable in the special and general education classrooms (Helmstetter et al., 1998). Essentially, in the general education setting, students experience a greater amount of instructional time, receive instruction from a highly qualified teacher, have access to social modeling from typical peers, and obtain the same amount of individual attention. One or more of these elements of the inclusive classroom may explain the improved academic achievement of students with disabilities.

Social impact. Greater amounts of time spent in general education also correlate with positive social outcomes for students with disabilities (Freeman & Alkin, 2000; Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995; Hunt, 1994). Students included in the general education environment have been shown to have higher social adjustment, engage in more reciprocal interactions with typical peers, make more social contacts, demonstrate greater social competence, receive and provide more social support, report a greater number of friends, and have social networks composed of a higher proportion of typical peers (Freeman & Alkin, 2000; Fryxell & Kennedy, 1995). Inclusion in the regular classroom with typical peers creates a sense of belonging for students with disabilities, communicating that they are a part of both the school and the larger community. This sense of belonging directly promotes a number of positive social effects. Students with a strong sense of belonging feel a greater sense of competence, greater enjoyment at school, and stronger engagement in their learning. In contrast, students with a lower sense of belonging have more behavioral problems, lower achievement and engagement, and lower school completion rates (Prince & Hadwin, 2013).

There are several possible explanations for the improved social outcomes of included students. The first and most simple explanation is that students included in general education settings have more contact with typical peers. Receiving instruction in the general education classroom provides students with disabilities physical access to nondisabled peers and increased opportunities for social interactions. The second explanation is modeling. Inclusion surrounds students with disabilities with typical peers who can model social skills and pro-social behavior. Third and finally, the research reveals that students included in general education tend to have higher quality Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) with a greater focus on social development. A comparison of matched students revealed that students in inclusive programs had IEPs with a greater number of objectives targeting interaction with typical peers; more of their day engaged in academic activities and less time alone; a focus on social skill development; and comparable time for vocational, community, and recreation-leisure skills (Hunt, 1994; Hunt & Farron-Davis, 1992).

Impact on typical students. Inclusive educational practices have also been shown to influence the typical students educated alongside students with disabilities. In several cases, the research has shown inclusive education to have a neutral effect on nondisabled students. A series of quantitative studies on the inclusion of elementary students with significant cognitive impairment showed no impact on the academic achievement, standardized test scores, reading level, grades, or behavior of their typical peers (Ruijs, Van der Veen, & Peetsma, 2010; Sermier Dessemontet & Bless, 2013; Sharpe, York, & Knight, 1994). Still other studies have shown inclusive education to have positive effects on typical students. In a comparison of elementary school programs, typical students made greater progress in reading and math in inclusive

classrooms than their typical counterparts in traditional, non-inclusive classrooms (Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004).

The proposed explanation for this increased growth is that inclusive classrooms provide general education students access to additional resources such as special education staff, assistive technology, and differentiated materials. In a three-year study monitoring the implementation of a new inclusion program, researchers observed unintended benefits of inclusive practices for at-risk general education students. Typical students, with low academic skills but without identified disabilities, received instruction in inclusive classrooms where they had access to the adapted content and delivery intended to support students with special needs. These nondisabled students subsequently showed increased achievement scores in math and reading (Huber, Rosenfeld, & Fiorello, 2001). There are many students in need of assistance who do not formally qualify for special education services (Fisher, 2007). Although Specially Designed Instruction is typically crafted to promote access for students with disabilities, it is available to support all students in the inclusive classroom.

In a meta-analysis of studies examining inclusive education, several themes emerged regarding the effects on typical students (Staub & Peck, 1994-1995). Findings indicate that the presence of students with disabilities does not reduce the academic progress of typical children, does not lessen teacher time or attention for other students, and does not increase the rate of challenging behavior in typical students. The research shows that typical students in inclusive classrooms show greater acceptance of people with disabilities, experience less fear of difference, and have increased self-esteem. The inclusion of students with disabilities also helped typical students develop moral and ethical principles, including advocacy skills, and create diverse friendships (Kvalsund & Velsvik Bele, 2010; Staub & Peck, 1994-1995).

Disadvantages of Inclusion

While there is a wealth of research documenting the benefits of inclusive education for students with and without disabilities, there are also areas of concern that arise in the literature. Overall, very few studies show negative effects of inclusion (Baker et al., 1994-1995). In a meta-analysis of 71 findings across 26 studies, researchers found 81% of outcomes for students were positive or neutral (Kalambouka, Farrell, Dyson, & Kaplan, 2007). The remaining negative effects can be grouped into three major themes: demand on limited resources, low self-concept among students with disabilities, and limited social preference of students with disabilities.

Demand on resources. One challenge of inclusion is grounded in tolerance theory, or the idea that a classroom can accommodate only a certain range of student ability or need before exhausting the available resources (Huber et al., 2001). Inclusion often widens the breadth of student characteristics in the classroom and can create additional demand on the existing resources. In a three-year study monitoring the math and reading achievement of gifted students, children with high-level skills taught in inclusive classrooms did not make as significant gains as comparable students educated in non-inclusive classes (Huber et al., 2001). Similarly, in a study examining typical students' perceptions of diverse classrooms, high-achieving children felt that teachers slowed their pace to meet the academic and behavioral needs of struggling students (Litvack, Ritchie, & Shore, 2011). In classrooms with diverse learners and varied needs, a one-size-fits-all approach to instruction typically targets students in the middle and fails to meet the needs of either low- or high-performing students.

Opponents of inclusion commonly cite the limited resources in the general education classroom as a reason to exclude students with disabilities (Ferguson, 2008). However, the aforementioned problems described by tolerance theory are rooted in the nature of the instruction

rather than the nature of the students. Both the limited growth of gifted students and the perceived teacher focus on struggling learners can be redressed through differentiated instruction (project-based learning, multimodal instruction, authentic assessment, etc.) and creative use of resources (special education staff, peer tutors, technology, etc.). It is unnecessary in either case to remove students with disabilities from the general education environment in order to meet the needs of typical students.

Low self-concept of students with disabilities. Another common argument against inclusive education is the concern that exposing students with disabilities to challenging curriculum or high-achieving peers may have a negative effect on their self-esteem. In one study, students in segregated special education classes reported higher self-concept scores than low-performing students in general education classes. The researchers posited that self-esteem may decrease when struggling students compare themselves to higher-performing peers (Coleman, 1983). However, this finding is confounded by abundant research showing that, in general, students with disabilities have low self-concept regarding their academic ability regardless of their educational setting (Cooley & Ayres, 1988; Vaughn, Elbaum, & Schumm, 1996; Winne, Woodlands, & Wong, 1982).

Low self-concept in students with disabilities reflects a larger systemic issue of the heavy emphasis our educational system places on language arts and mathematics. According to the theory of multiple intelligences, human cognition is based on a complex interplay between many different aptitudes and every individual possesses unique strengths and weakness within each area. The manner in which students learn, understand, and perform depends on their own individual intelligence profile (Gardner, 1983). Students with strengths in linguistic, logical-mathematical, and/or interpersonal intelligences often experience high rates of success in school

and have high academic self-concept (Tafti, Heidarzadeh, & Khademi, 2014; Winne et al., 1982). Unfortunately, students with learning disabilities have been found to have relative weaknesses in these same areas of intelligence, which are the ones traditionally utilized in school. Instead, students with disabilities typically have spatial intelligence scores that are considerably higher than those of their typical peers (Tafti et al., 2014). Spatial intelligence often manifests as an interest in the arts and sciences, as well as an aptitude for technical or hands-on tasks; these areas and activities are not usually emphasized in the general curriculum (Beam, 2009). Due to this mismatch, students with disabilities have limited opportunities to experience feelings of success in school and subsequently develop low self-concepts (Hearne & Stone, 1995; Nolen, 2003).

While students with disabilities may experience low self-concept, this does not warrant their removal from the general education environment. Instead, small-scale solutions include the use of scaffolded, differentiated learning opportunities that allow all students to experience success and develop self-confidence. Large-scale solutions would require a shift in mindset and practice to a school system that values multiple intelligences and develops the aptitudes of diverse learners. Rather than sheltering students with disabilities from general education to protect their self-esteem, inclusive schools should build on the strengths of all students to promote success and build self-concept.

Limited social preference of students with disabilities. Finally, there are a number of studies indicating that students with disabilities are less well liked by peers than typical students (Freeman & Alkin, 2000; Vaughn et al., 1996). Fortunately, several factors have been shown to minimize or eliminate this social preference gap. Students with disabilities who have been isolated in separate special education classrooms may be unfamiliar to their general education

peers and all students require time to adjust to the changes of integration. In a study examining the implementation of a new inclusive special education service delivery model at the elementary level, their typical peers initially gave students with disabilities lower social preference ratings. However, ratings of social alienation decreased over the course of the school year and the number of reciprocal friendships significantly increased (Vaughn et al., 1996).

Additionally, educating all students about individual differences, including ability or disability, has been shown to level the social preference playing field. In programs that provided peer training on ability awareness, students with autism included in the general education classroom had the same level of social preference as their typical peers, were as visible as their typical peers, and were able to develop social networks (Boutot & Bryant, 2005). Students with disabilities need not be excluded from general education to protect them from social rejection. Instead, all students benefit from culturally responsive pedagogy that builds awareness of diversity and the opportunity to build varied peer relationships.

Obstacles to Inclusive Schools

Despite the abundance of research illustrating the advantages of educating all students in integrated environments, inclusive education has been slow to make the transition from theory to practice. A review of the research reveals a number of obstacles impeding the effort to include students with disabilities. Although there are technical and logistical challenges to inclusion, negative attitudes, beliefs, or expectations are among the most significant barriers to the successful inclusion of students with disabilities (Sokal & Sharma, 2013).

Teacher attitudes. An attitude may be defined as a belief, feeling, or behavioral tendency towards a socially significant object or symbol, such as inclusive education (Hogg & Vaughan, 2014). Attitudes are significant to the implementation of inclusive education because,

according to the theory of planned behavior, attitudes predict behaviors (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The theory of planned behavior specifically predicts that teachers will implement new practices if three elements are in place: (1) a favorable attitude toward the practice; (2) perceived social pressure to engage in the practice; and (3) confidence in their ability to successfully implement the practice (Ajzen, 1985, 1991). It would then follow that positive attitudes towards inclusion may lead to a greater willingness to welcome students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Brownell & Pajares, 1999; Cook, 2002; Silverman, 2007; Soodak & Podell, 1993; Soodak et al., 1998).

Research indicates that teachers' attitudes are a critical factor in the implementation of inclusion of students with disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin, Earle, Loremann, & Sharma 2011). Unfortunately, some of the greatest reluctance to embrace inclusive reform efforts can be found among educators (Connor & Ferri, 2007). Teachers often express negative attitudes regarding logistical concerns associated with inclusive practices, including the belief that students with disabilities draw a disproportional amount of the teacher's time, that students with disabilities require specialized teaching strategies, and that general education staff do not possess the skills necessary to work with students with special needs (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995; Jordan, et al., 2009; Norwich & Nash, 2011). Research also indicates that teachers demonstrate increasingly negative attitudes toward inclusion when required to include students with increasingly severe disabilities (Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Forlin, Hattie, & Douglas, 1996; Ellins & Porter, 2005).

Attitude as a psychological construct is a complex phenomenon and the results of studies on the influence of various factors on teachers' attitudes are largely mixed. While several studies reported no significant effect of teachers' age on inclusive attitudes (Avramidis & Norwich,

2002; Ellins & Porter, 2005), another suggested different effects of training in inclusive practices on attitudes by teacher age (Forlin et al., 2009). Similarly, while female teachers reported greater tolerance in implementing inclusive education in one instance (Ellins & Porter, 2005, Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000), other studies reported no effect of teachers' sex on attitudes toward inclusion (Alghazo, Dodeen, & Algaryouti, 2003; Van Reusen, Shoho, & Barker, 2000). Finally, while one study found that teachers' exposure to individuals with disabilities promoted openness to inclusion (Subban & Sharma, 2006), another study found no influence of prior exposure to disability on teachers' attitudes (Alghazo et al., 2003). Despite mixed results on the effects of the above factors, the research consistently identifies formal education or training as one of the main factors in promoting inclusive attitudes (Bender et al, 1995; Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006).

A majority of the research to date has focused on the attitudes of general education teachers toward inclusive education. However, sense of self-efficacy and attitudes in special educators are of particular importance because special educators are frequently the primary driving force behind students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). Research indicates that the special education teacher has significant influence over the IEP meeting and the development of the IEP document (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). There are no formal criteria for determining a student's placement, including whether a student should receive services in a special or general education classroom. Instead, a student's educational placement is determined through consensus by a team of stakeholders who examine the required learning objectives, evaluate student skill and need, design appropriate services, and then determine educational placement. However, in practice, parents, general education teachers, and school administrators commonly defer to the recommendations of the special educator (Buell, Hallam, & Gamel-

McCormick, 1999). If attitudes do indeed drive behaviors, it is likely that a special educator's attitude toward inclusion may shape their recommendations in designing a student's IEP (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005).

Teacher efficacy. In addition to teacher attitudes, another key factor that influences the successful implementation of inclusive education is teacher efficacy. Bandura (1977, 1986, 1993) defines efficacy expectations as a person's belief that they can successfully perform a behavior, complete a task, or produce an outcome. In turn, outcome expectations involve a person's degree of confidence that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome. Together, these two elements create a person's sense of self-efficacy. For example, a person may believe that a behavior will lead to an outcome while still not believing that they are capable of successfully performing said behavior.

Teacher efficacy is a form of self-efficacy. It is defined as an individual teacher's expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Teacher efficacy in the context of this study refers to special educators' perceptions of their ability to support students with disabilities included in the general education classroom. The definition in the context of education is consistent with the "personal efficacy" construct in other research arenas (Ashton & Webb, 1982; Gibson & Dembo, 1984). In general, teacher efficacy is a critical factor in teaching and learning. For example, research indicates that teacher efficacy relates to instructional decisions, such as the use of time or choice of classroom management strategies (Gibson & Dembo, 1984; Saklofske, Michayluk, & Randhawa, 1988; Woolfolk, Rosoff, & Hoy, 1990). Teachers with a higher sense of self-efficacy also hold more positive attitudes towards, exert greater effort for, and cope better with the challenges of educational

reforms, such as the inclusive education movement (Bandura, 1997; DeMesquita & Drake, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Pajares, 1996).

Research in the area of inclusive education indicates associations between high self-efficacy in teachers and openness to differentiating instruction to meet the needs of all students, including those with learning difficulties (Chester & Beaudin, 1996). Teachers with higher self-efficacy include children with disabilities more effectively in regular classrooms (Friend & Bursuck, 2009; Sharma et al., 2012) and have more positive attitudes toward inclusive education (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Soodak et al., 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006). In turn, teachers with low self-efficacy are more likely to attribute learning difficulties to internal characteristics of the student and are less willing to adjust their instruction (Brady & Woolfson, 2008; Cook, Tankersley, Cook, & Landrum, 2000; Jordan, Lindsay, & Stanovich, 1997). Teachers with low self-efficacy are also more likely to refer these difficult-to-teach students, particularly students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, for special education evaluation (Soodak & Podell, 1993).

There is ample research into the sense of self-efficacy of general education teachers for inclusive practices. General educators often report having limited knowledgeable of special education policy and practices, as well as low sense of self-efficacy with respect to supporting students with disabilities (Liasidou & Antoniou, 2013; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007). The limited research on self-efficacy in special educators primarily focuses on special educators' experience in the general education classroom. Specifically, research indicates that special educators have limited experience with general education curriculum, general education students, and the roles/responsibilities of a general education classroom teacher (Liasidou & Antoniou, 2013; Scruggs et al., 2007). Limited self-efficacy in special educators with respect to inclusive

practices and roles may lead to fear-based avoidance behaviors. Individuals who believe they will fail tend to avoid expending effort because failure after expending effort threatens self-esteem (Schunk, 1981). Therefore, this limited experience and knowledge base may result in low self-efficacy in special education teachers and create resistance to educating students with disabilities in the general education classroom.

The special educator plays a central role in designing the educational programs of students with disabilities and their sense of self-efficacy around the education of students with disabilities has an equally significant impact on the successful implementation of inclusive education. Special education teachers are unique in that they (1) are likely to have a greater amount of formal education or training in special education pedagogy and a greater amount of experience working with individuals with disabilities than their general education peers; (2) have greater exposure to individuals with disabilities across multiple settings; and (3) typically engage in a greater degree of collaboration with parents, students, and related service providers. The goal of this study is to fill a gap in the research on teacher self-efficacy with respect to inclusive practices, which typically focus on general educators, by now examining attitudes and self-efficacy in special education teachers.

Relationship between attitudes and efficacy. Attitudes and efficacy are both dynamic, complex constructs with multiple definitions across various contexts. With respect to inclusion, teachers' attitudes have been deconstructed into several key components, including educators' beliefs about teaching students with disabilities in general education classrooms, professional roles and responsibilities, and overall effectiveness or impact of inclusive education (Cullen, Gregory, & Noto, 2010). Similarly, the idea of an educator's sense of self-efficacy has been specified in the area of inclusion to include the teacher's belief in their ability to provide

instruction in an inclusive classroom, collaborate with others in inclusive settings, and manage the behavior of students with disabilities (Sharma et al., 2012). These components of attitude and efficacy become particularly important for the success of inclusive education when considered within the framework of models for complex change.

Experts in the field of inclusive education reform have identified several key components required to achieve complex organizational change on the scale of educating all students with disabilities in the general education environment. According to Fullan's (1993) model for managing complex change, five elements must be in place in order to create lasting organizational change: vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan. These components can be shown to include the categories of teacher efficacy and attitudes.

For example, the area of efficacy addresses teachers' skills, including the ability to respond to student needs, both behavioral and academic. Self-efficacy for inclusion also requires collaboration between professionals with complementary skill sets to serve all students (Thousand & Villa, 2005). With respect to teacher attitudes, successful inclusion requires an inclusive vision with a belief that all children can learn and that the educational community is responsible for the learning of all children (Thousand & Villa, 2005). Also regarding attitudes, inclusion requires incentives, such as the intrinsic incentive of a belief in the efficacy of inclusion for providing equitable learning opportunities for all students. Finally, pro-inclusion attitudes provide resources for complex change in the form of an understanding of and willingness to redefine professional roles and responsibilities. Together, teachers' sense of self-efficacy (skills) and attitudes (vision, incentives, resources) encompass the elements necessary for large-scale organizational change such as inclusive education reform.

To date, only a few studies have explored the relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and their attitude toward inclusion of students with disabilities. One study of elementary school teachers in Israel (Weisel & Dror, 2006) and another of general educators in New York (Soodak, et al., 1998) both found teacher's self-efficacy as the single best predictor of their attitudes. Another study of elementary and middle school teachers in China found that teachers' self-efficacy, particularly in the area of collaboration, significantly predicted their attitudes toward inclusion (Malinen, Savolainen, & Xu, 2012). Several studies have demonstrated that sense of self-efficacy as an experienced teacher positively influences teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of students with disabilities (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Sharma, Loreman, & Forlin, 2011; Soodak et al., 1998; Weisel & Dror, 2006). Given that many teachers report feeling unprepared to teach children with diverse needs (Forlin, Keen, & Barrett, 2008; Glazzard, 2011), it stands to reason that these teachers may demonstrate a reluctance to teach in inclusive settings (Jordan et al., 2009) and will continue to impede progress in schools toward inclusive education (Forlin et al., 2009). This study aims to add to this body of research by examining the relationship between self-efficacy and attitudes of secondary special educators with respect to inclusive education.

Chapter Three: Methodology

Problem and Purpose

Research indicates that inclusive education has a range of positive influences on students. The benefits are both academic and social and affect students in both special and general education (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994-1995). Despite ample evidence showing positive effects on students, inclusion's shift from theory to practice has been slow. Among the obstacles to inclusive education are teacher attitudes and feelings of self-efficacy. Research shows that sense of self-efficacy is closely related to teacher willingness to implement innovative teaching practices, including inclusive education (Hasazi, Johnson, Ligget, & Schattman, 1994). Teachers who report a high level of self-efficacy place a higher value on innovative practices and find them less difficult to execute than their colleagues with a lower sense of self-efficacy (Ghaith & Yagji, 1997). The focus of this study was to explore the connection between special education teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusion. This study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the current attitudes of secondary special education teachers toward inclusive education?
2. What is the current state of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers with respect to inclusive education?
3. In what ways do demographic elements, education level, and teaching experience impact secondary special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education?
4. What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education?

Research Design and Rationale

This study was based on a body of research addressing the relationship between teacher sense of self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion. There have been a number of studies examining these relationships in educators. However, past research has focused on elementary school teachers (Montgomery & Mirenda, 2014; Urton, Wilbert, & Hennemann, 2014), general education teachers (Esposito, Guarino, & Caywood, 2007), or teachers outside of the United States (Forlin, Sharma, & Loreman, 2014; Hofman & Kilimo, 2014; Tasnuba & Tsokova, 2015). This study was designed to address a gap in the research around sense of self-efficacy and attitudes towards inclusive education among secondary special education teachers in the United States.

For the purpose of this study a mixed-methods approach was used to explore the complex interactions between teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education. The mixed-method design capitalized on the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative methods. Self-efficacy is a complex construct that is influenced by behavior, personal factors, and the environment. Due to these complex relationships many researchers exploring the issue of self-efficacy choose to utilize a mixed-methods approach (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy, & Hoy, 1998). Specifically, this study utilized an explanatory sequential design, beginning with the collection of quantitative data in phase one, followed by the collection of qualitative data during phase two to help explain the quantitative results (Creswell, 2012).

During phase one a survey design was used with the goal of identifying trends within a large population. The survey method was ideal for collecting information with respect to beliefs, opinions, and attitudes, allowing participants to self-report internal states (Creswell, 2012). Specifically, this study used a cross-sectional survey design involving two instruments: one to

capture special educators' current sense of self-efficacy and another to capture their present attitudes toward inclusive education.

Phase two involved a smaller qualitative study driven by the quantitative survey results. Data collection included individual interviews of a small subset of participants drawn from the larger population of teachers who completed the survey in phase one. These interviews allowed for elaboration on the factors that contribute to teachers' feelings of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusion, while also providing additional information on the relationship between these two variables.

Sample and Population

Site Selection. The district selected for this study was a large suburban district located in southern California. At the time of the study, the district served more than 22,000 students from preschool to 12th grade. Within this population, the district served more than 3,000 students with disabilities. Twenty four percent of the students were English Learners and 58% qualified for free or reduced-price lunch. The district employed more than 1,000 teachers across more than 30 campuses. The district, at that time, experienced a relatively low rate of teacher attrition and it was common for school sites to have an even balance of teachers with fewer than 3 years of experience and teachers with more than 20 years of experience.

The district under study was in year three of a four-year implementation plan for a new service delivery model focusing on the provision of special education services in the least restrictive environment. This district had historically provided special education services to students with mild-to-moderate disabilities in self-contained special education classrooms taught by special education teachers. The new service delivery model included a focus on co-teaching, with a greater number of students with disabilities receiving instruction in general education with

the additional support of a special education teacher. Over the course of implementation, the number of students with disabilities in general education for 80% or more of their day had increased from 45.6% to 68.1% at the time of this study (CDE, 2016).

This particular district was selected because implementation of the new service delivery model had resulted in "growing pains" for many stakeholders, including special education teachers who were exploring their new roles in a more inclusive model. The changes associated with the new service delivery model had brought the issues of self-efficacy, attitudes, and inclusion to the forefront for many educators in this district.

Population Selection. Participant selection included secondary (middle and high school) special education teachers from the district who served students with mild to severe disabilities. These educators taught grades 6-12 in both general and/or special education classrooms. The number of possible respondents was approximately 90 teachers, based on the number of secondary special education teaching positions in the district at the time of the study. The target number of respondents for quantitative data collection was at least 45 special education teachers, or 50% of the population. The actual response rate was 47 special education teachers for the quantitative portion of this study.

During phase one, after obtaining district-level and site-level administrative approval to conduct this study, the researcher provided the special education department chair at each site with information about the study. The email included an introduction of the researcher, the purpose of the study, and information on the delivery of the questionnaire (Appendix A). In this email, each department chair was invited to have their teachers participate in the study and, if interested, was asked to provide a date and time for survey distribution.

At the agreed upon date and time, the researcher met with the special education department at each site and invited teachers to participate in the study. The researcher provided each special educator with a paper copy of the consent packet, which included detailed information about the study and a request for a signature for consent to participate in the study (Appendix B). Participants were informed orally and in writing of their right to stop the survey at any point. The researcher then provided participants with a paper copy of the questionnaire (Appendix C). Pages one through three included the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices and the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students instruments. Page four included a demographic questionnaire. Page five included five open-ended short response questions about teachers' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive education. Page six provided participants with information on an optional follow-up interview opportunity along with space for interested educators to provide their name, phone number, and email address. Participants were given 15 minutes to complete the questionnaire and the researcher collected completed packets. Participants were also given the option of taking the questionnaire home and submitting it to the researcher via a pre-addressed envelope.

Phase two began in May 2017. The researcher used the demographic questionnaire to label each interview volunteer as middle or high school and as teaching in a mild-moderate or moderate-severe special education position. The researcher then detached the interview volunteer form to render the questionnaire responses anonymous. Interview volunteer sheets were then sorted into the aforementioned four categories and three teachers were selected from each group at random. An invitation and consent form was sent to each of these 12 teachers (Appendix D). Eight of the twelve teachers contacted were still interested in and available to participate in individual interviews.

Data Collection Methods

Phase one of data collection took place between January and April 2017 at special education department meetings at individual school sites. The survey was presented in paper form to maximize feelings of anonymity and promote candid, honest responses (Ong & Weiss, 2000; Whelan, 2007). Data collection procedures followed the guidelines and protocols set forth by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) with the complete consent of the participants (Appendix B). The researcher transferred data from the paper questionnaire to a secure Qualtrics account that required a username and password, and was accessed from a personal, password-protected computer. The paper questionnaires were then stored in a locked filing cabinet.

Phase two of the data collection process began in May 2017. Eight teachers participated in 30-minute individual interviews. The primary researcher conducted these interviews, offering participants the choice of completing the interview at their school site or meeting off-campus at a neutral location, such as a library or coffee shop. These interviews were audio recorded (see Appendix E for Recording Consent Form). Data was transcribed and coded. The researcher then identified themes. The researcher represented the data for reporting, interpreted the results, and explored validity of the findings (Creswell, 2012). Data and subsequent analyses were saved to a personal, password-protected computer.

Instruments

Phase one data collection utilized two instruments. The first instrument used was the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students scale or the ATTAS (Gregory & Noto, 2012). The ATTAS was designed to use three components of attitude to measure teachers' disposition towards the inclusion of students with disabilities. This instrument addressed the cognitive component of attitude, or a teacher's thought and beliefs about inclusion. It also captured the

affective component of attitude, or the emotional response around the inclusion of students with disabilities. Finally, the ATTAS examined the behavioral component of attitude, or the likelihood of acting on these attitudes toward inclusion. Based on these components, the nine-item scale is divided into three questions addressing teacher attitudes with respect to believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms, three questions about developing personal and professional relationships, and three questions pertaining to creating an accepting environment for all students to learn (Gregory & Noto, 2012). A request was submitted to Dr. Jess Gregory of the University of Bridgeport for permission to use the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS) on September 6, 2016. Dr. Gregory granted permission to use the ATTAS on November 15, 2016.

The second survey was the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (Sharma et al., 2012). The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale (TEIP) was drawn from research on inclusion as well as existing instruments, such as the Teacher Efficacy Scale (Hoy & Woolfolk, 1990). The TEIP scale was based on three core areas that are required to effectively implement inclusion: knowledge of content and pedagogy, classroom/behavior management, and collaboration skills with parents and other staff members. Results from this instrument were grouped by Efficacy in Inclusive Instruction (6 questions), Efficacy in Collaboration (6 questions), and Efficacy in Managing Behavior (6 questions). A request was submitted to Dr. Umesh Sharma of Monash University on September 6, 2016 for permission to use this instrument. Dr. Sharma granted permission to use the scale on September 6, 2016.

The demographic questionnaire was designed to collect information on personal factors that may impact teachers' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy related to inclusion. The demographic form included closed-ended questions or statements designed to gather information

on the participant's sex, age, educational background, years of teaching experience, current teaching assignment, and amount of special education training. The demographic questionnaire was followed by an open-ended short response questionnaire with questions on attitudes toward inclusion, strengths related to inclusion, and collaboration with general educators and other professionals. Overall, the entire survey (efficacy instrument, attitudes instrument, demographic data, and short responses) took participants approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Phase two qualitative data collection involved eight middle and high school educators teaching in a range of mild-to-severe special education programs. Interview questions focused on the relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. Participants were asked to describe their experiences with inclusive practices and factors that contributed to their feelings of success or failure (Appendix F). The interviews were scheduled according to participant availability for 30 minutes and included ten questions with time for clarifying questions, if needed.

Data Analysis

The researcher uploaded phase one quantitative survey data into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software (Version 24) and completed statistical analysis. The researcher also reviewed short responses and interview transcripts and used a combination of in vivo and descriptive coding to organize and group the data at a basic level (Saldana, 2009). The researcher then used pattern coding as a method of second cycle coding to identify key themes relating to sense of self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion. The final step in data analysis was the integration of the collected quantitative and qualitative data. Themes, patterns, and findings from the qualitative data analysis were compared to the quantitative data to identify commonalities or contradictions. Together, quantitative and qualitative data were triangulated

within the framework of the current literature to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research findings.

Issues of Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

The Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS) scale has been found to be a valid and reliable measure of teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Gregory & Noto, 2012). Gregory and Noto (2012) reported reliability coefficients for each of the three factors: believing all students can succeed in general education classrooms (r = .720), developing personal and professional relationships (r = .928), and creating an accepting environment for all students to learn (r = .837). These three subscales were all determined to have acceptable reliability, with an overall Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of .833 for the ATTAS instrument (Gregory & Noto, 2012).

Similarly, the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) instrument has been found to be a valid and reliable measure of teachers' sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive education. Sharma et al. (2011) reported reliability coefficients for each of the three factors: efficacy in inclusive instruction (r = .93), efficacy in collaboration (r = .85), and efficacy in managing behavior (r = .85). The overall reliability coefficient for the TEIP was r = .89 (Sharma et al., 2011). The authors designed the scale with the goal of identifying specific strengths and needs of educators with respect to inclusive education to guide professional development and training efforts.

Ethical Issues and Role of the Researcher

As the researcher, I acknowledge my position of authority as an administrator in the participating school district. I attempted to minimize conflict of interest and positionality by ensuring confidentiality of survey respondents. Although I served as a site administrator in the

district, I did not directly supervise or evaluate any of the participating teachers. While conducting the interviews I reminded participants that I was not their professional evaluator and that the goal of the research project was to inform professional development efforts to support all teachers.

Chapter Four: Results

This study examined the attitudes and feelings of self-efficacy of secondary special educators with respect to inclusive education. Within this overarching research focus, there were two additional areas of inquiry: (1) In what ways do demographic elements, education level, and/or teaching experience impact secondary special education teachers' attitudes toward and sense of self-efficacy regarding inclusive education? (2) What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education? This chapter addresses these research questions through a synthesis of quantitative and qualitative data organized by both major and minor themes.

Participants

A total of 47 special educators completed the questionnaire portion of this study (Table 1). Forty-one of these participants were female and six were male. Participants were age 21 and older, with the largest group in the 51-60 year old range. All participants had attained at least a bachelor's degree, with 38 participants also holding a master's degree. Similarly, while all participants held a special education teaching credential, 21 teachers also had a Multiple Subjects teaching credential, seven had a Single Subject teaching credential, and two had an Administrative Services credential. The teachers also ranged across the spectrum of experience, with new and veteran teachers making up the two largest groups. Specifically, 19.1% of the respondents were in their first five years of teaching and 31.9% had more than 17 years of experience. Regardless of teaching experience, all teachers reported a wealth of training in special education, predominantly through post-secondary institutions and their employing school district. Finally, with respect to current teaching assignments, the average amount of time spent in general education classes across respondents was 29.6% of their workday. Teachers reported

Table 1. *Summary of Demographic Data for Questionnaire Respondents*

		# of People	% of Sample
Gender	Female	41	87.2%
	Male	6	12.8%
Age Range	21-30	8	17.4%
	31-40	10	21.7%
	41-50	9	19.6%
	51-60	13	28.3%
	61+	6	13.0%
Highest Degree	Bachelors	9	19.1%
	Masters	38	80.9%
	Doctorate	0	0%
Credentials	Special Education	47	100%
	General Education – Multiple Subjects	21	44.7%
	General Education – Single Subject	7	14.9%
	Administrative Services	2	4.3%
# of Years Taught	<1	1	2.1%
	1-5	8	17.0%
	6-9	6	12.8%
	10-13	5	10.6%
	14-17	12	25.5%
	>17	15	31.9%
Special Education Training Completed	Coursework Embedded in Credential Program	36	76.6%
	Graduate Level Coursework	37	78.7%
	BTSA	29	61.7%
	Site-based Professional Development	32	68.1%
	District-provided Professional Development	34	72.3%
	SELPA-provided Professional Development	27	57.4%
	County-provided Professional Development	14	29.8%
% of Teaching Day Spent in Inclusive General Education Environment	0% of Day	22	46.8%
	1-33% of Day	4	8.5%
	34-66% of Day	14	29.8%
	67-99% of Day	5	10.6%

that their time outside of general education was spent teaching self-contained special education classes, holding IEP meetings, consulting with students and other professionals, or completing paperwork.

Eight special educators volunteered to participate in follow-up interviews (Table 2). These participants spanned the spectrum of age (21-50+ years) and teaching experience (1-17+ years). All participants were female, due to the predominantly female pool of questionnaire respondents from which interviewees were drawn. At the time of the study, five of the interviewees were employed at the middle school level and three were working at the high school level. Participants were selected from both mild/moderate and moderate/severe programs, including programs supporting students with autism and emotional disturbance.

Table 2. *Summary of Demographics for Interview Participants*

	Gender	Age Range	Years Teaching	Current Assignment
Interviewee 1	F	41-50	14-17	High School - Mild/Moderate
Interviewee 2	F	31-40	10-13	Middle School - Moderate/Severe
Interviewee 3	F	21-30	6-9	Middle School - Mild/Moderate
Interviewee 4	F	51-60	>17	High School - Mild/Moderate
Interviewee 5	F	31-40	6-9	High School Moderate/Severe
Interviewee 6	F	41-50	10-13	Middle School - Mild/Moderate
Interviewee 7	F	21-30	<1	Middle School - Moderate/Severe
Interviewee 8	F	21-30	1-5	Middle School - Moderate/Severe

Lack of a Shared Framework for Inclusion

Before exploring the research questions' central issues, attitude and self-efficacy, it is necessary to first address the finding that among secondary special educators in this unified school district, there was no clear, consistent definition of inclusion or its parameters. Across survey responses, short answers, and interviews, teachers demonstrated significant variation in

their understanding of inclusive education. Teachers differed in their opinions on which students should be included, to what extent, and for what purpose.

For example, with respect to which students with disabilities should be included in general education, teachers supported inclusion for anywhere from a "small percentage" of students to "most" or a "majority" of students. Although in disagreement over the proportion of students that should have access to general education, most special educators in this study agreed that inclusion is more appropriate for students at the "mild-to-moderate" end of the disability spectrum. Only one respondent out of 47 expressed a belief in some level of inclusion for "all" students. Teachers also differed in their opinions on the degree to which students with disabilities should be included in general education. Most responses were vague, ranging from "whenever possible" to "when appropriate," with one exception advocating that students be "fully included."

In addition to the divergent definitions of inclusion, respondents in this study also lacked a shared philosophy behind the purpose of inclusion. Each teacher expressed a unique objective for including students with disabilities in general education, with largely vague or subjective descriptions of the expected impact. For example, a majority of the special education teachers made broad references to students with disabilities finding "benefit" or "success" in general education, without elaborating on what these outcomes entailed. Other teachers cited the goal of inclusion as "expos[ure]" to the curriculum or "good scores on testing." Teachers who provided specific details on the anticipated results of inclusion focused largely on the social benefits of providing students with disabilities access to the general education environment where "students learn from their peers" and have access to "social interactions and positive peer modeling." There was a lack of consensus among the respondents on the definition, parameters, and purpose

of inclusion; a factor likely related to the variation in attitude and feelings of self-efficacy toward inclusive practices among secondary special educators in this study.

Secondary Special Educators' Attitudes towards Inclusion

In this mixed-methods study, the researcher used both quantitative and qualitative measures to gain a thorough perspective on special education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities. Quantitatively, this study employed the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS) scale. According to the developers of the scale, the ATTAS has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .833 (Gregory & Noto, 2012). In the current study, the instrument also demonstrated good internal consistency with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .771. Each item in this instrument included a positively-worded statement supporting the inclusion of students with disabilities. As an overall measure of attitudes towards inclusion, special educators in this study reported an average score of 4.91 (SD = 1.42), equating to a statement of "somewhat agree" on dimensions of inclusive attitude (Table 3).

Creating an accepting environment. Within the factors measured by the ATTAS, teachers reported the most positive attitudes in the area of Creating an Accepting Environment for All Students to Learn (M = 6.04, SD = .635). These teachers reported high levels of confidence in their ability to create a welcoming environment for students with disabilities (M = 6.62, SD = .739), which paralleled trends in the short answer responses and interviews.

Throughout their responses, many teachers addressed the issue of student ownership, an idea central to creating an accepting environment for all students. Specifically, teachers focused on which teacher, the general or special educator, has proprietary rights over, or ultimate responsibility for, students with disabilities. For example, special educators repeatedly made

reference to "our students" or "my students" or "my kids" to indicate that the students belonged to the special education department. Only two special education teachers used "our students" to indicate shared ownership with their general education colleagues. In those instances the

Table 3. *Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (N = 47)*

	Item	Mean	SD
Believing All Students Can Succeed in General Education Classrooms (M = 3.25, SD = .841)	Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild/moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	2.43	1.778
	Students with mild/moderate disabilities should be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will not require too much of the teacher's time.	3.21	1.680
	Students with mild/moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	4.11	1.564
Developing Personal/ Professional Relationships (M = 5.45, SD = .702)	I would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction.	4.70	1.988
	I want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions.	6.09	1.139
	I believe including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular education classrooms is effective because they can learn the social skills necessary for success.	5.57	1.175
Creating an Accepting Environment for All Students to Learn (M = 6.04, SD = .635)	I would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom environment for students with mild/moderate disabilities.	6.62	.739
	Students with mild/moderate disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the general education classroom.	6.13	1.096
	All students with mild/moderate disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms with nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible.	5.36	1.552

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Disagree Somewhat, 4 = Neither, 5 = Somewhat Agree, 6 = Agree, 7 Strongly Agree

teachers cited a cooperative, healthy co-teaching relationship, which was reflected in their use of inclusive terminology. In contrast, three other teachers used "our" sardonically to indicate a lack of shared ownership of students and reflecting a tension between general and special educators that will be addressed in future sections. One respondent captured a sentiment shared repeatedly

by special educators in this study, explaining that general educators "seem to think kiddos with IEPs are 'ours' and not 'theirs'."

This idea of student ownership, or students with disabilities belonging to a teacher or program, also arose with respondents' repeated descriptions of students "coming back" to special education. In one case, the student "came back" to the teacher's self-contained special education class after participating in an inclusive general education class. In another case, the teacher described the trial-and-error nature of inclusion where her students "either make it" in general education classes or else "they're coming back to me." Both statements captured a recurring theme among special education teachers who see their classrooms as a "home base" for students with disabilities. This expression of "coming back" implied that the natural state for students with disabilities was with their special education teacher or in a self-contained special education classroom and that inclusion in general education was temporary or transient.

While special educators demonstrated a caring attitude toward students with disabilities, their interest in creating an accepting environment did not typically extend into the general education classroom. On the ATTAS instrument, a majority of the teachers disagreed with the statement that "most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild/moderate disabilities should be eliminated." Overall, the special educators in this study did not support a full inclusion model of special education and stressed the need for alternatives to an inclusive environment. These teachers emphasized the importance of self-contained special education classrooms with several teachers stressing that special education can offer "smaller classrooms with less distractions" or "slower-paced classrooms."

Most proponents of self-contained special education in this study identified these classes as a location where students with disabilities can "develop skills," with one teacher arguing that

"the special education population is truly never going to get it unless they can have it in a small group." Several teachers saw special education as a training ground and promoted a gradual release method of inclusion. These teachers viewed self-contained classes as a space where students can build "confidence" and become "empowered" before "being able to actually be mainstreamed." So, while special education teachers in this study reported positive attitudes toward creating accepting environments for students with disabilities, a majority preferred to create these environments in self-contained special education classrooms.

Developing personal and professional relationships. The second highest attitude ratings on the ATTAS were in the area of Developing Personal and Professional Relationships. Teachers reported a strong interest in emulating other educators who are successful in designing academic interventions (M = 6.09, SD = 1.139), however, they were considerably less interested in actually being mentored by those teachers who effectively differentiate instruction (M= 4.70, SD = 1.988). This finding correlated with the strained collegial relationships between special and general education teachers reported in the short answer and interview responses.

One factor impacting professional relationships was special educators' perception of resistance to inclusion from general educators. A majority of special education teachers reported at least one occurrence of feeling that a general educator was unwilling to include students with disabilities. Special education teachers reported feeling that many general educators lack "patience for some of the learning difficulties" and demonstrate a limited willingness to "deal with . . . uncomfortable behaviors." Respondents described feeling that general educators have a "negative view" of students with disabilities and made repeated reference to the subsequent impact on inclusion. Special educators reported holding unfavorable attitudes toward general education environments where all students were not welcome.

Special education teachers provided multiple examples of general educator resistance to inclusion, explaining that "general education teachers do not want our kids in there" and "all they want you to do is take them out." One special educator shared an experience with a general education teacher who "said he had no idea why the student was in his class and he demanded that we get him out." Another anecdote echoed this sentiment as a general educator told the special education teacher, "I don't want any more [special education] kids . . . I've had my fill." In response to this resistance, special education teachers reported feeling as though they are engaged in a constant "battle" in which they often feel powerless. Despite the reality of general educators' beliefs about inclusion, special educators reported a perceived opposition that negatively impacted their attitudes toward supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Believing all students can succeed. Finally, teachers in this study reported significantly low attitudes in the area of Believing All Students Can Succeed in General Education ($M = 3.25$, $SD = .841$). Throughout their responses, teachers' descriptions of their students revealed a shared belief among special educators that there is something inherently different about a student with disabilities that distinguishes them from their typical peers. Most of the special education teachers in this study made generalizations about students with disabilities, in reference to their academic abilities and/or behavioral patterns. For example, one teacher explained that "students with special needs really need really tight structure and boundaries" and that these students are not capable of creating "structure themselves as a general ed student would." Another teacher made the sweeping statement that students with disabilities "don't know how to read. They don't know how to solve math. They don't know how to comprehend on their own." These statements failed to distinguish the wide range and diverse nature of ability. While students may

qualify for special education due to speech difficulties, learning disabilities, visual impairments, and more, these generalized statements acted to lump students into a single category: *disabled*.

Specifically, the generalizations made about students with disabilities commonly focused on deficits. Teachers stressed the importance of "identify[ing] the weaknesses" of students for remediation and concluded that "not every student is capable of gen ed" and "not all students can function effectively." By far the most common term used, with 11 distinct utterances, to describe the ability of students with special needs was "low." Students were described as "low learners" and "so low" and "really low." However, teachers did not typically quantify this quality of being "low." This descriptor was not mapped onto specific skills or scores. The few individuals who provided context for the concept of "low" equated it to grade level, explaining that "low" students with disabilities were "7-8 years below grade level." One teacher summarized the impact of this mindset, explaining that "some of them are so low that inclusion . . . is not beneficial to them." Not only does this deficit mindset provide a very narrow portrait of student ability, this attitude also serves as a major obstacle to inclusion when special educators' feel that student "academic level is impeding inclusion."

Spectrum of special educators' attitudes. Special educator attitudes toward inclusion in this study varied across a range of sentiments. At one end, there was a small group of teachers who were decidedly anti-inclusion. These teachers expressed a variety of concerns, including the belief that inclusion is a "disservice to those students who can barely read." Several teachers echoed this concern for students with below-average academic skills placed in general education where they "struggle" and "feel useless." The perception of inclusion for these teachers was that students with disabilities do not "benefit from an inclusion model" where they are merely "sitting in a general education classroom" or being "housed for a period." Opponents to inclusion felt

that many students with disabilities in general education classrooms were "not accessing the material" and "not accomplishing much." These teachers also went a step further to express concern with the impact of inclusion on general education students. One teacher was emphatic, stressing that "we are providing a disservice to general ed kids, because our kids are out of control and if teacher has to spend all of their energy teaching one, what happens to the other thirty some odd students in their room?"

At the opposite end of the spectrum, a small group of teachers were emphatically pro-inclusion. These few teachers differed from those with negative or ambivalent attitudes in several ways. First, these teachers expressed a belief that inclusion is "beneficial for *all* students" from "mild disabilities all the way to severely handicapped" and for "general and special education alike." Second, these teachers focused on more clear-cut outcomes for students included in general education, specifically "coping skills and strategies" for not just academics but also to "function in the real world" after high school. One of the most enthusiastic respondents insisted, "Inclusion works! Academic areas improve! Self-esteem improves! Attitude towards self and school improves!" Third and finally, these teachers demonstrated a belief in student capacity for growth that was absent in those educators with a deficit mindset. One teacher eloquently captured the intersection between growth mindset and inclusion by explaining:

> [With inclusion] everyone has equal opportunity. Everybody can experience learning. Every student has the ability to grow. If you put a cap on them, how do you know what they are capable of? I've been surprised more than once . . . now I always keep an open mind for these students and that they can achieve. You have to have the mentality that all students can. *All students can!*

In contrast to these more extreme views, a majority of the respondents in the study expressed mixed attitudes and were conditionally supportive of the idea of inclusion. Each

teacher in this range expressed a positive attitude toward inclusion but then qualified with a caveat. These teachers all agreed that inclusion is ideal "in theory," but is not appropriate for all students at all times. Arguments against full inclusion were frequently based on the perceived importance of "specialized academic instruction" and insistence that inclusion "not replace the mild/mod [special education] program." These teachers expressing ambivalence typically focused on finding a "balance" between self-contained special education classrooms and inclusion in general education.

Secondary Special Educators' Sense of Self-Efficacy for Inclusive Education

The Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale was designed to measure teachers' self-efficacy with respect to inclusive education (Sharma et al., 2012). According to Sharma et al. (2012), the TEIP scale has good internal consistency, with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of .890. In the current study, the Cronbach alpha coefficient was .874. The TEIP provided one measure of special educators' sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive practices (Table 4), with an average overall sense of self-efficacy of 4.97 (SD = .330), which is considered a "relatively high level of perceived teaching efficacy towards inclusive education" (Ahsan, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012, p. 10). The qualitative data in this study paralleled these findings with several teachers expressing high levels of overall confidence, describing themselves as "extremely capable of supporting students in the gen ed classroom" and "highly qualified to teach and support all students."

Inclusive instructional practices. Within the domains captured by the TEIP, teachers reported the highest sense of self-efficacy in the area of Efficacy with Inclusive Instruction with an average score of 5.05 (SD = .213). Within this domain, their greatest feelings of self-efficacy

Table 4. *Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices Average Scores*

	Item	Mean	SD
Efficacy with Inclusive Instruction (M = 5.05, SD = .213)	I can accurately gauge student comprehension of the general education curriculum.	4.85	.834
	I can provide appropriate challenges for very capable students.	4.91	.855
	I am confident in designing learning tasks that accommodate the individual needs of students with disabilities.	5.34	.700
	I am confident in my ability to get students to work together in pairs or small groups.	4.85	.884
	I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessments).	4.98	1.011
	I am able to provide an alternate explanation of example when students are confused with general education curriculum.	5.34	.635
Efficacy with Managing Behavior (M = 4.90, SD = .132)	I can make my expectations clear about student behavior in the general education classroom.	4.77	.983
	I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy.	4.91	.855
	I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the general education classroom before it occurs.	4.85	1.042
	I can control disruptive behavior in the general education classroom.	4.79	.999
	I am able to get students to follow classroom rules.	5.17	.702
	I am confident when dealing with students with aggressive behaviors.	4.89	.961
Efficacy with Collaboration (M = 4.96, SD = .484)	I can make parents feel comfortable coming to school.	5.36	.705
	I can assist families in helping their children do well in school.	5.04	.721
	I am confident in my ability to get parents of students with disabilities involved in school activities.	3.91	1.265
	I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g., general education teachers, speech pathologists, etc) in designing educational plans for students with disabilities.	5.26	.943
	I am able to work jointly with other professionals and staff (e.g., aides, other teachers, etc.) to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom.	5.17	.916
	I am confident in informing others who know little about laws and policies relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities.	5.00	.780

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Disagree Somewhat, 4 = Somewhat Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree

were in the areas of designing learning tasks that accommodate varied learning needs and providing alternate examples for students struggling with the general curriculum. These findings paralleled teacher reports in the short answer survey responses in which many special educators reported strengths in differentiation, accommodation, and scaffolding. In contrast, the lowest area of self-efficacy within the domain of inclusive instruction was teachers' ability to gauge student comprehension of the general education curriculum (M= 4.85, SD = .834), which aligned with many teachers' reports of limited feelings of content area expertise.

Although their own reports of self-efficacy were high, many teachers expressed doubts in the efficacy of special educators as a whole, citing a lack of subject area knowledge, limited provision of support to general educators, and inability to provide direct instruction to all students in the general education setting. Repeatedly, in both the surveys and interviews, respondents reported concern over their special education colleagues' level of content mastery. These teachers stressed the importance of comfort with the course material and that limited curriculum mastery on the part of the special educator may leave the "gen ed teacher frustrated" and feeling as though they have to "babysit" or "always teach" the special education teacher. Another teacher built on this idea, explaining that it is critical for her special education colleagues to "present themselves as equals," stressing that they cannot behave as "another kid in the room."

Collaboration. The second highest-rated area for self-efficacy for special educators in this study was Efficacy with Collaboration (M= 4.96, SD = .484). While teachers felt confident in their abilities to make parents feel comfortable at school (M=5.36, SD = .705), they expressed limited confidence in their ability to get these same parents involved in their child's education (M = 3.91, SD = 1.265). Although the TEIP measured a high-sense of self-efficacy in the ability

to collaborate with other professionals to support students with disabilities in general education (M = 5.26, SD = .943), this finding conflicts with the sentiments special educators expressed in the short answer portion of the survey. This contradiction may stem from the fact that the item in the TEIP asks about "collaboration with other professionals" and does not delineate between instructional assistants, general education teachers, school psychologists, etc.

Special education teachers reported a high sense of self-efficacy in collaborating with other special education staff. According to the short answer and interview responses, special educators collaborated most frequently with instructional assistants. Teachers reported daily contact with aides as a source of updates on "assignments" and "student progress." Many teachers described a relationship where the instructional assistant served as a middleman between special and general education teachers. The special educators "communicate the needs of students" to the instructional assistants assigned to support specific students or classes and in turn "rely on those aides to provide . . . information on specific students" in the general education setting. Special educators also expressed comfort in collaborating with school psychologists and speech pathologists both in the classroom and through the IEP process.

In contrast, special educators admitted that they "generally don't collaborate with general educat[ors]," with the exception of those teachers engaged in co-teaching. The communication between special and general educators occurred predominantly by email, followed by shared electronic documents, text messaging, and phone calls. Special educators attribute this limited collaboration and personal communication between general and special educators to time constraints; however, there was evidence in respondents' comments that this unsuccessful collaboration was rooted in strained personal and professional relationships.

A majority of the special education teachers in this study indicated, explicitly through their surveys and interviews or implicitly through word choice, an imbalance of power with their general education colleagues. At the subtler end of the spectrum, several teachers explained that the general education teachers "allow" them to contribute in the classroom. The use of the word "*allow"* suggests that the general educator holds a superior position and that the special educator requires permission to act in the general education classroom. Other respondents reported feeling helpless in response to general educators who "refuse" their support and that they have "little say as to what was going on in the classroom." This perceived imbalance of power is further reflected in the comments of one participant who explained, "If the general ed teacher supports [inclusion], it's great. If they don't there is nothing I can do to make it work."

Beyond a passive power imbalance, many other respondents described an openly hostile environment between general and special educators. These special education teachers reported having difficulty with supporting students in inclusive classrooms where the general educator was "unwilling to give up some control." Another teacher echoed this sentiment, describing "tension" in the classroom when the general educator does not want the special educator to "interfere," resulting in the special education teacher feeling "ineffective." These negative relationships impact both successful collaboration and the student experience, with one teacher complaining that "when teams don't treat each other with respect, the students suffer."

Another reflection of the power dynamics between special and general educators is the prevalence of the phrase "glorified aide." In contrast to classrooms where partners had a healthy co-teaching relationship characterized by equality, many teachers made reference to their limited status and level of responsibility in the general education classroom. One teacher reported feeling like a "well-credentialed instructional assistant" in general education classes, while

another described being "an aide on the side." Although there were complex underlying causes, the recurring theme was a sense that "[they are] the teacher and I am an aide."

Special educators reported using several approaches to influence the dynamics with their general education peers in an attempt to increase their sense of self-efficacy. Most of the strategies reported were of an indirect nature, reinforcing the idea that special and general educators are not on equal footing. Special education teachers reported trying to create a "positive rapport" with general education teachers so "they listen to [their] suggestions." Others described using "positive feedback" with general education teachers to promote their acceptance and "support" of special education students. Special educators described a receptive rather than productive role in the general education classroom, where they typically "listen to and support [the] ideas" of their general education counterparts. One teacher specifically expressed appreciation for a lone general educator who accepted input without "taking personally any suggestions," implying that others are frequently put off by feedback.

Other teachers described battling feelings of inefficacy by focusing on advocacy for students with disabilities and becoming special education watchdogs. These teachers described a decidedly combative tone between general and special education where special educators are unable to do anything "unless [specifically] indicated in the IEP." These teachers who did not feel they had an instructional role in the classroom focused their efforts on ensuring "supports are being implemented" by general educators and that "accommodations are in place." There was an underlying current of distrust where special educators described their responsibility to ensure that general education teachers were honoring the IEP.

The only examples of positive power dynamics between special and general educators in this study originated in co-taught classrooms. Special educators who had had positive

experiences co-teaching with general educators described partnerships where they felt like a "united front." These teachers repeatedly made reference to "equality:" both equal responsibility and equal power. They also described relationships based on "similar philosophies" that resulted in "shared planning, power, [and] ideas." In these healthy co-teaching environments, special education teachers spoke of having "equal power with students" where the class saw the pair as simply "two teachers." These teachers reported feeling empowered to teach and had the unfettered "ability to adjust" instruction in response to student needs. One teacher captured the impact of power dynamics on efficacy, explaining inclusion is "easy if the relationship is strong."

Managing behavior. Finally, the lowest area of reported self-efficacy was in the domain of Efficacy with Managing Behavior (M= 4.90, SD = .132), though it is important to note that this area is still in the relatively high range of perceived self-efficacy overall. Teachers in this study reported confidence with getting students to follow classroom rules (M=5.17), but slightly less surety in establishing clear behavioral expectations (M=4.77, SD = .983) and controlling disruptive behavior (M= 4.79, SD = .999) in the general education classroom. These patterns also closely mirrored the themes that arose in the short responses and interviews. Special educators in this study reported feeling confident in their abilities with behavior management and classroom management but to differing degrees, depending on the environment.

Self-efficacy as a function of setting. An interesting pattern emerged through analysis of specific areas in which the teachers in this study felt they were making a contribution to including students with disabilities in the general education classroom (Table 5). The majority of special educator confidence in the general education setting was with consultation roles. For example, the greatest area of self-reported strength for special educators in this study was in

Table 5. *Special Educators' Self-Reported Roles in Supporting Inclusive Education*

	Role or Responsibility	# of Respondents
Lesson Preparation	Differentiate Instruction	22
	Assist with Lesson Planning	13
	Scaffold	8
Support in General Education Classroom	Provide Accommodations/Modifications	25
	Behavior/Classroom Management	18
	Provide Instruction in General Education Classroom	3
	Ask Questions in General Education Class as a Student	2
Support Outside of General Education Classroom	Provide General Education Teachers Information About Students	18
	Social-emotional Support for Students	9
	Manage the IEP	5
	Manage Instructional Assistants	2
Self-Contained Special Education "Study Skills" Class	Re-teaching/Pre-teaching	11
	Monitor Student Assignment Completion	9
	Teach Students Learning Strategies	6

providing support to general educators in creating lesson plans and activities that were accessible to students with disabilities. Special education teachers made more than 43 references to their confidence in their ability to help general educators "adapt activities" or differentiate "lesson plans, assessments, or projects" to meet students' needs. In the general education setting, 25 teachers (out of 47) described their primary strengths as providing accommodations or modifications for students with disabilities. These teachers were confident in their ability to ensure students received "extended time on assignments" or were allowed "flexible settings for testing." Many also spoke of confidence in their role of designing and monitoring students' IEPs.

The remaining self-reported contributions of special educators to inclusion all occurred outside of the general education classroom. Thirty-six special educators stressed the importance of their work in teaching self-contained special education support classes. The district under study offers an elective course taught by special educators and open solely to students with disabilities. In this class, special educators reported feeling confident in their ability to pre-teach

and re-teach the general education curriculum, teach students learning strategies, and monitor student progress on general education assignments. While 77% percent of special educators in this study emphasized their confidence in providing valuable instruction in these self-contained special education support classes, only two special education teachers reported a high sense of self-efficacy with providing direct, whole-group instruction in the general education setting. In addition to the low level of confidence in subject area knowledge mentioned previously, one special educator articulated feeling she "cannot remediate in a gen ed classroom" but rather stressed that she is more comfortable providing students with disabilities support in her own self-contained classroom.

Factors that Impact Attitudes and Sense of Self-Efficacy for Inclusion

Using SPSS software, the researcher calculated total efficacy scores, as measured by the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices (TEIP) scale and total attitude scores, as measured by the Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students (ATTAS) scale for each respondent. Independent samples t-tests were conducted to compare the total attitude and efficacy scores with single categorical independent variables, including gender and highest educational degree attained. One-way between-groups analysis of variance was conducted to explore the impact of demographic elements with more than 3 distinct categories per independent variable, including age range and years of teaching experience.

Demographic factors. Within these t-tests and ANOVAs, only two statistically significant relationships were identified (Table 6). First, an independent-samples t-test comparing overall attitude by credential type revealed a significant difference between the attitudes of teachers with an administrative services credential ($M = 32.5$, $SD = 2.12$) and those without ($M = 44.7$, $SD = 7.56$). Teachers with an administrative services credential reported

Table 6. *Special Educators' ATTAS Scores as a Function of Demographic Factors*

Age	21-30 years M = 49.9 SD = 2.71	31-40 years M = 43.2 SD = 4.55	41-50 years M = 37.7 SD = 4.47	51-60 years M = 45.3 |SD = 9.11	61 years + M = 46.0 SD = 7.95	F (4, 41) = 3.59, p = .013	Statistically significant difference between groups 21-30 & 41-50
Gender	Male M = 42.5, SD = 7.94		Female M = 44.5, SD = 7.86		t(47) = .571, p = .562, two-tailed		No significant difference
Highest Degree Obtained	Bachelors M = 47, SD = 9.86		Masters M = 43.6, SD = 7.25		t(47) = 1.20, p = .238, two-tailed		No significant difference
Multiple Subjects Credential	Sped Only M = 42.4, SD = 7.65		Sped & Multiple Subjects M = 46.4, SD = 7.61		t(47) = -1.79, p = .080, two-tailed		No significant difference
Single Subject Credential	Sped Only M = 44.5, SD = 7.72		Sped & Single Subject M = 42.9, SD = 8.86		t(47) = .494, p = .624, two-tailed		No significant difference
Admin. Credential	Sped Only M = 44.7, SD = 7.56		Sped & Admin. Services M = 32.5, SD = 2.12		t(47) = 2.62, p = .029, two-tailed		Statistically significant difference
Years of Teaching Experience	1-5 years M = 46.4 SD = 7.05	6-9 years M = 43.7 SD = 10.7	10-13 years M = 44.0 SD = 6.96	14-17 years M = 41.6 SD = 8.60	>17 years M = 45.3 SD = 7.27	F(5, 41) = .445, p = .815	No significant difference

significantly lower attitude scores, at $p < .05$ levels, with a moderate effect size (eta squared = .055). Second, the one-way between-groups analysis of variance conducted to explore the impact of age on overall attitudes towards inclusion revealed a statistically significant difference between teachers in the age range of 21-30 years old and teachers aged 41-50. The younger teachers demonstrated a significantly more positive (M=49.9, SD = 2.71) attitude towards inclusion than their middle-aged colleagues (M = 37.7, SD = 4.47). This difference was at the $p < .05$ level with a large effect size of .259, calculated using eta squared. No statistically significant relationships were found between overall efficacy scores and demographic factors (Table 7).

Table 7. *Special Educators' TEIP Scores as a Function of Demographic Factors*							
Age	21-30 years M = 87.4 SD = 7.89	31-40 years M = 85.8, SD = 9.46	41-50 years M = 89.4 SD = 10.9	51-60 years M = 91.2 SD = 9.55	61+ years M = 93.7 SD = 5.47	F (4, 41) = .901, p = .472	No significant difference
Gender	Male M = 93.5, SD = 9.18		Female M = 88.8, SD = 7.42		t(47) = -1.12, p = .239, two-tailed		No significant difference
Highest Degree Obtained	Bachelors M = 89.6, SD = 8.02		Masters M = 89.4, SD = 9.36		t(47) = .055, p = .956, two-tailed		No significant difference
Multiple Subjects Credential	Sped Only M = 88.5, SD = 9.03		Sped & Multiple Subjects M = 90.6, SD = 9.14		t(47) = -.792, p = .432, two-tailed		No significant difference
Single Subject Credential	Sped Only M = 88.7, SD = 8.94		Sped & Single Subject M = 93.4, SD = 9.22		t(47) = -1.29, p = .205 , two-tailed		No significant difference
Admin. Credential	Sped Only M = 89.8, SD = 8.80		Sped & Admin. Services M = 79.5, SD = 12.0		t(47) = 1.61, p = .114, two-tailed		No significant difference
Years of Teaching Experience	1-5 years M = 86 SD = 9.55	6-9 years M = 84.2 SD = 7.70	10-13 years M = 85.8 SD = 6.94	14-17 years M = 90.9 SD = 10.2	>17 years M = 94 SD = 7.10	F (5, 41) = .2.13, p = .081	No significant difference

Beyond the statistical analysis of quantitative survey data, several demographic patterns emerged in the short answer and interview responses. For one, female teachers in the 26-30-year-old range that possessed a master's degree and had been teaching fewer than 5 years expressed a majority of strongly pro-inclusion sentiments. In contrast, female teachers in the 41-45-year-old range that possessed a master's degree and had been teaching more than 14 years made the most anti-inclusion statements. This aligns with statistical finding that younger special education teachers in this study held more positive attitudes toward inclusion than their middle-aged colleagues. The other pattern that emerged through analysis of the qualitative data was that the special educators who had the most negative perspectives regarding their own self-efficacy due to the negative power dynamics with their general education teaching partners were in the

41-50-year-old range, had been teaching for at least 14 years, and spent less than 40% of their day in inclusive general education classrooms.

One of the key factors that appeared to influence a teacher's sense of self-efficacy for inclusive practices was their level of experience. Many teachers attributed their level of comfort with supporting students in general education to their "years of experience." One teacher proudly cited her "29 years" of service and the positive impact on her ability to work with both teachers and students in general education. Another teacher described her confidence in her ability to "differentiate for each student which took years to learn." Additionally, a teacher who expressed a high level of self-efficacy attributed her confidence to her varied experience teaching across "K-12" and her ample preparation through "classes and training."

The special education teachers in this study who possessed single subject credentials or advanced level degrees were critical of their special education colleagues who lacked subject area expertise. One such educator stressed that success with inclusion requires that students with disabilities "be taught subject matter from instructors who have academic credentials in that subject;" meaning both special and general education teachers. One teacher explained that "special ed[ucation] teachers have to know the content" otherwise "they're not on the right playing field, they don't have equal tools."

Many special education teachers also cited the need for additional training for their general education counterparts. The special educators expressed a belief that they would be more efficacious in inclusive education if their general education partners were better prepared for co-teaching, had "more education about working with [special education] students," and received "behavior training." Many teachers also recommended training to increase the efficacy

of their special education colleagues, including a focus on "expertise in working with students with autism" and "knowledge of [the] subject matter."

Systemic factors. Beyond the characteristics unique to each special educator, there were also larger systems factors that appear to affect special educators' sense of self-efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion. These factors include time and scheduling constraints, logistics of collaboration with general education, and larger issues around philosophy and mindset.

Nearly every teacher stressed the insufficiency of time as a factor that impacted his or her sense of self-efficacy and attitude toward inclusion. These teachers felt the need for "time to collaborate" with other professionals and time for "more contact" with students. As secondary special educators, these teachers described stress and feelings of inefficacy from being spread thin across multiple periods, classrooms, and subject areas. These teachers felt unable to collaborate with the large number of general education teachers they were assigned to support and unable to make consistent contact with the students on their caseloads.

Special education teachers reported feeling hampered by the lack of consistency between general education teachers. Due to the need to support students in multiple grade levels across all subject areas, special education teachers reported being pulled in many different directions. Several teachers cited additional difficulty when general education teachers were each implementing different curricula at a different pace. One special education teacher summarized, explaining that when special education teachers are not in touch with general education and "don't know what's next, what they're working on, what they're doing . . . it adds to the stress of my role."

The teachers with the strongest pro-inclusion attitudes often tied their beliefs to underlying social justice issues. Several of these teachers addressed the social isolation that

comes along with self-contained special education programs. These teachers emphasized that inclusion is "absolutely necessary" and "should be required across all grade levels and schools." Acknowledging the typically well-intentioned nature of special education programs, one teacher recognized that special educators "care about these kids and want to protect them" but are "doing more of a disservice by separating . . . and segregating them." Another teacher echoed this emotional undercurrent, sharing her experience of working with "a lot of students that were not included" and the sadness it caused her. Most powerfully, one teacher shared a story of her experience working in a 'communicatively handicapped' self-contained classroom" where students with disabilities spent "all day in one room for all academics merely because they had a cleft palate or stuttered." This teacher's disgust with the system came through when she exclaimed, "How terribly wrong-how immoral!" The teachers with an attitude motivated by social justice viewed themselves as advocates for the rights of students with disabilities, as captured by one teacher who insisted, "we do have to fight for these kids. I have to fight for them!"

Conditions for inclusion. Not all of the factors impacting attitudes and sense of self-efficacy for inclusion were related to the teacher. The special educators in this study that were conditionally supportive of inclusion identified student factors they felt were necessary in order for successful inclusion, including pre-requisite skill sets and disability categories.

By far the most common conditional parameter identified by teachers affecting their attitudes toward inclusion was student ability level. A majority of the teachers were preoccupied with the concept of student performance by grade level, though there was no agreement between respondents as to how large a gap precludes the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. At the lowest end, one teacher asserted that inclusion is inappropriate

for students with below "2nd grade abilities" while the next argued for a "minimum of 5th grade level skills in ELA and mathematics." Three teachers expressed concern with the inclusion of students with "skills greater than 3 years below" grade level, while another argued that students "5 years of more below grade level" should have the "option of a slower-paced classroom." One special educator took a more extreme stance, deeming inclusion appropriate only for students who "can complete grade level material." As a rationale for this attitude, this teacher explained that "if a student is functioning multiple grade levels below current grade level it's difficult to provide instruction during gen ed class."

Beyond grade level, many of the teachers in this study were focused on specific skills as obstacles for the inclusion of students with disabilities. Some teachers focused on fundamentals. These teachers identified a threshold for inclusion around mastery of "basic concepts" or "core skills," requiring that students have "high enough basic skills to understand the material." Another teacher identified "academic and study skills" as a prerequisite to successful inclusion. The most common requisite skills identified by special educators in this study were "reading, writing, and critical thinking," with the greatest emphasis placed on reading. Several teachers argued that inclusion was a "disservice to those students who can barely read and have a limited understanding of math." Teachers expressed concern for "3rd and 4th grade readers" who are "never going to be successful in high school" because they "can't read the history, science or math." Instead, many of these teachers argued for placement of students with disabilities in a self-contained special education setting where they can "develop basic reading, writing, and math skills" and "be prepared to mainstream as soon as they . . . have the foundation built strong enough to go." These teachers expressed a negative attitude towards inclusion. They failed to see the value of a "student reading at a 3rd or 4th grade level" who is "sitting in an 8th grade

literature class." These teachers argued that some students are "so low that inclusion in math and [language arts] is not beneficial to them."

Finally, many teachers with an ambivalent attitude toward inclusion provided social, emotional, and behavioral conditions –both internal and external to the student- as requirements for the inclusion of students with disabilities. For example, in order for students with disabilities to be included in the general education classroom, teachers argued that they must be "motivated" and "not have significant behavioral concerns." Students cannot have "social/emotional" issues that "impede their learning" and must be "able to focus on the academics." Students with disabilities in the general education environment cannot be "too far behind their peers" and must be "ready for the amount of content." Successful inclusion depends on "parent support" and is appropriate "as long as the student is able to be successful."

In addition to student characteristics, many of the teachers also expressed the belief that inclusion should be conditional upon student labels. A majority of the teachers specified that inclusion is "[beneficial] for the upper end of the special ed spectrum" or those classified as having "mild-to-moderate disabilities." Others more specifically focused students' candidacy for inclusion based on their "type of disability," arguing that including students in general education classes that correspond to their "area of disability can be sticky and questionable." Aside from the one respondent who insisted on the benefits of inclusion for "all students," none of the special educators in this study addressed the possibility of including students with severe cognitive disabilities in the general education environment.

Relationship Between Teachers' Attitudes and Sense of Self-Efficacy for Inclusion

The relationship between efficacy for inclusive practices (as measured by the TEIP) and attitudes toward inclusion (as measured by ATTAS) was investigated using the Pearson product-

Table 8. *Correlation Between Attitude and Self-Efficacy Scale Items*

	Attitudes: I would like to be mentored by a teacher effective in differentiation.	Attitudes: I would like people to think I can create a welcoming environ. for SWDs	Attitudes: SWDs can be trusted with responsibilities in the gen ed classroom.	Attitudes: All SWDs should be educated in gen ed to the fullest extent possible.
Efficacy: I can make expectations clear about student behavior in the gen ed classroom.	.328*	.439**	.203	.493**
	.024	.002	.171	.000
Efficacy: I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy.	.364*	.439**	.154	.221
	.012	.002	.302	.136
Efficacy: I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in gen ed.	.183	.302*	-.047	-.021
	.217	.039	.751	.888
Efficacy : I can control disruptive behavior in the gen ed classroom.	.238	.366*	.005	.105
	.108	.011	.973	.483
Efficacy : I can collaborate with other professionals to design ed plans for SWDs.	.040	.159	.331*	.262
	.789	.286	.023	.075
Efficacy: I am able to work with other professionals to teach SWDs	.184	.392**	.387**	.194
	.215	.006	.007	.191
Efficacy: I am confident in my ability to get students to work together.	.248	.377**	.277	.087
	.093	.009	.060	.559

Note.
* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

moment correlation coefficient (Table 8). Preliminary analyses were performed to ensure there were no violations of assumptions of normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. There was extremely limited correlation between the two variables, $r = .012$, $n = 47$, $p < .935$, with no clear association between overall feelings of efficacy and overall attitude toward inclusion. However, once these constructs were broken down into individual elements, there were several areas of correlation between efficacy and attitudes with respect to inclusive education.

There was a medium strength, positive correlation between teachers' interest in being mentored by other educators that are effective with differentiated instruction and their sense of efficacy with both establishing clear behavioral expectations in the general education setting ($r = .328$, $n = 47$, $p < 0.01$) and their ability to calm disruptive students ($r = .364$, $n = 47$, $p < 0.01$). There was also a medium strength positive correlation between teachers' desire to create a welcoming environment for students with disabilities and their ability to set clear behavioral expectations ($r = .439$, $p < o.01$), calm disruptive students ($r = .439$, $p < 0.01$), prevent disruptive behavior ($r = .302$, $p < 0.05$), control disruptive behavior ($r = .366$, $p < 0.05$), get students to work in groups ($r = .377$, $p < 0.05$), and to collaborate with other professionals ($r = .392$, $p < 0.05$).

Additionally, teachers' larger attitudes toward inclusion showed correlations with factors of self-efficacy. For example, there was a medium strength, positive correlation between teachers' beliefs that students with disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in general education and their sense of self-efficacy with collaboration around designing educational plans for students with disabilities ($r = .331$, $p < 0.05$) and collaboration for instruction ($r = .387$, $p < 0.01$). The strongest correlation arose between teachers' beliefs that students should be educated

in general education to the fullest extent possible and their sense of self-efficacy for communicating clear behavioral expectations ($r = .493$, $p < 0.01$).

Chapter Five: Discussion

> We will not successfully restructure schools to be effective until we stop seeing diversity in students as a problem. Our challenge is not one of getting "special" students to better adjust to the usual schoolwork, the usual teacher pace, or the usual tests. The challenge of schooling remains what it has been since the modern era began two centuries ago: ensuring that *all* students receive their entitlement. They have the *right* to thought-provoking and enabling schoolwork, so that they might use their minds well and discover the joy therein to willingly push themselves farther. They have the *right* to instruction that obligates the teacher, like the doctor, to change tactics when progress fails to occur. They have the *right* to assessment that provides students and teachers with insight into real-world standards, usable feedback, the opportunity to self-assess, and the chance to have dialogue with, or even to challenge, the assessor—also a *right* in a democratic culture. Until such a time, we will have no insight into human potential. Until the challenge is met, schools will continue to reward the lucky or the already-equipped and weed out the poor performers (Villa & Thousand, 2005, p. xv–xvi).

Purpose of the Study

In 1992 Grant Wiggins made this impassioned call for inclusive education reform in his foreword to Villa, Thousand, and Stainback's *Restructuring for Caring and Effective Education*. In the 25 years since then there has been limited progress in the movement to implement the inclusion of students with disabilities. Like the opinion expressed by Wiggins, this study was grounded in a social justice belief that all students have both a moral and legal right to access an appropriate education with their typical peers. This study was also grounded in a body of research documenting the advantages of educating all students in integrated environments. The research indicates that inclusive education has a range of positive influences, with both academic and social benefits for students in both special and general education (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994-1995). However, despite the philosophical and research-based arguments for inclusion, many students with disabilities still receive segregated special education services outside the general education classroom.

Among the obstacles to inclusive education are teacher attitudes and feelings of self-efficacy (Connor & Ferri, 2007). The research indicates that teachers' beliefs and sense of self-efficacy are closely related to their willingness to implement innovative teaching practices, such as inclusive education (Hasazi, Johnson, Ligget, & Schattman, 1994). The sense of self-efficacy and attitudes of special educators are of particular importance because special educators have significant influence over the educational program and placement of students with disabilities (Blackwell & Rossetti, 2014). These decisions may be impacted by the special educator's attitudes toward inclusion or feelings about their ability to support a student in an inclusive environment (Fox & Ysseldyke, 1997; Cook et al., 1999).

The focus of this study was on examining the sense of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers and their attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities to inform professional development efforts. Through a better understanding of teachers' beliefs around inclusion, the aim is to increase their sense of self-efficacy and improve their attitudes, with the ultimate goal of promoting the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Summary of Key Findings

1. What are the current attitudes of secondary special education teachers toward inclusive education?

A synthesis of the data revealed that special educators' in the district of study did not hold a shared definition of inclusion. The teachers lacked a common understanding of which students should be included in general education, for what length of time, or for what purpose. Collectively, these special educators were largely ambivalent about the practice of inclusive education, expressing lukewarm attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education that were further tempered by caveats and conditions for said inclusion.

One key element of this finding was confusion over special educators' roles and responsibilities in the shifting model of special education. Teachers expressed conflict over the concept of student ownership as students with disabilities spent increasing amounts of time with general educators. These teachers also expressed frustration with losing influence over lesson design and teaching decisions, feeling compelled to defer to the general educators while in the general education setting. Special educators in this study were navigating the loss of control over students and instruction that they traditionally would have had in their own self-contained special education classrooms. This struggle for autonomy was further reflected in frequent references to the feeling of demotion to the role of a "glorified aide."

Overall, the most common theme in attitudes toward inclusion was special educator resistance to the elimination of self-contained special education classrooms. While many of the special education teachers in this study believed in inclusion in theory, in practice the teachers were not yet ready to commit. Teachers varied in the motivation behind their negative attitudes toward supplanting segregated special education classes with inclusive options. They described doubts, not only about student readiness, but also about their own preparedness for participating in the general education classroom. There was also evidence of reluctance to forfeit the autonomy of their own classroom, as well as fear of the content expertise and classroom management demands of teaching in general education. Despite the cause, the majority of special educators in this study had yet to embrace the replacement of segregated special education service provision with the equity of full inclusion.

2. What is the current state of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers regarding inclusive education?

Special educators in this study produced mixed results with respect to sense of self-efficacy. On the Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices scale, the teachers rated themselves at a high overall sense of self-efficacy. However, a more nuanced review of their short answer and interview responses revealed that this high sense of self-efficacy was context-specific, frequently limited to working in special education settings or with special education staff. For example, teachers rated themselves high in the area of efficacy for collaboration. Further analysis, though, revealed that most reports of effective collaboration occurred between special educators and aides, school psychologists, or speech pathologists. Few of the special education teachers were confident in their ability to collaborate successfully with general education teachers, which is arguably the most important collaborative relationship in inclusive practices.

The special educators in this study also reported high sense of self-efficacy with supporting students in general education, but this was primarily while in the role of a consultant. Overall, these teachers expressed confidence in their ability to differentiate general education lesson plans for students with disabilities and to advise general educators on appropriate accommodations or modifications to activities. However, special educators reported low sense of self-efficacy with the general education curriculum and with providing direct instruction in the general education classroom. Special education teachers experienced difficulty adapting their skill sets and areas of expertise to the general education environment.

3. In what ways do demographic elements, education level, and/or teaching experience impact secondary special education teachers' sense of efficacy and attitudes toward inclusive education?

This study neither conclusively confirmed nor challenged the findings in previous studies around the influence of demographic factors on attitudes and sense of self-efficacy with respect

to inclusive education. This study found limited indications of correlation between demographic factors and teachers' beliefs about inclusion or their own ability to support students with disabilities in general education. However, an unexpected finding in this area was that educators who held administrative services credentials, in addition to special education credentials, had more negative attitudes toward inclusion. Previous research indicates that administrators typically hold more positive attitudes toward inclusion than teachers (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999; Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996). However, it is important to note that, though they held Administrative Services Credentials, the respondents were not employed in administrative roles at the time of the study. This was also a small sample size, with only 2 of 47 respondents holding administrative credentials.

Another key finding that stood out regarding factors that impact secondary special educators' attitudes and sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusion was the commonly held belief by respondents in this study that there are conditions a student with disabilities must meet to gain entrance to the general education classroom. Special education teachers identified a range of prerequisites, including basic skill mastery, minimum grade level proficiency in the areas of reading and math, and appropriate behavioral or social skills. At a philosophical level and contrary to these beliefs, prominent researchers in the field of inclusive education argue that it is a fundamental misconception to believe that a student must earn their way into general education (Villa & Thousand, 2005). At a practical level, the special educators' in this study relied on anecdotal evidence or personal belief that smaller, self-contained special education classes accelerate or improve student learning as compared to the general education environment. However, empirical evidence indicates the opposite, with increased time spent in

general education correlated with improved performance in reading and math for students with disabilities (Cosier et al., 2013).

4. What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education?

Statistical analysis revealed no clear correlations between secondary special educators' attitudes toward and their sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive education. This was an unexpected finding, in light of the research indicating that people generally hold positive attitudes towards areas in which they feel skilled (Bandura, 1997; DeMesquita & Drake, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Pajares, 1996). Teachers in this study rated their sense of self-efficacy high on the TEIP scale and, with such high self-efficacy scores, I would have anticipated higher attitude scores toward inclusion.

One possible explanation is self-reporting error, in which teachers overestimated their sense of self-efficacy. This overestimation could have resulted from a number of complications, ranging from limited self-awareness to a desire to please the researcher. Another possible explanation is that the educators in this study actually felt a high sense of self-efficacy, but the other challenges they faced in the new inclusive special education model, including time constraints and poor relationships with general education colleagues, had an overall negative impact on their attitudes towards including students with disabilities.

Connections to the Literature and Theory

Despite the abundance of research illustrating the advantages of educating all students in integrated environments, inclusive education has been slow to make the transition from theory to practice. A review of the research reveals a number of obstacles impeding the effort to include students with disabilities. Although there are technical and logistical challenges to inclusion,

negative attitudes, beliefs, or expectations are among the most significant barriers to the successful inclusion of students with disabilities (Sokal & Sharma, 2013).

Teacher attitudes. Research indicates that teachers' attitudes are a critical factor in the implementation of inclusion of students with disabilities (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Forlin et al., 2011). Attitudes are critical because, according to the theory of planned behavior, they predict behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005). The theory of planned behavior specifically predicts that teachers will implement new practices if three elements are in place: (1) a favorable attitude toward the practice; (2) perceived social pressure to engage in the practice; and (3) confidence in their ability to successfully implement the practice (Ajzen, 1985, 1988, 1991). Special education teachers' attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in this study can be examined through the three elements of the theory of planned behavior.

The first element of the theory of planned behavior, regarding implementation of inclusive education, is the possession of a favorable attitude toward inclusion. As discussed in previous sections, special educators in the district of study can be described, at most, as ambivalent toward inclusion. The teachers held multiple concerns about inclusion, including student preparedness for general education and the challenge of building relationships with general educators. Very few of the teachers in this study held positive attitudes towards inclusion, with a majority instead arguing against the phase-out of self-contained special education classrooms.

The second element required by the theory of planned behavior in order to successfully implement inclusive education is the perception of social pressure to engage in inclusion. In the district of study, policy around co-teaching and the dissolution of a majority of self-contained special education classrooms created political and professional pressure to engage in inclusive

practices. However, the evidence in this study suggests that these district mandates comprised the extent of the social pressure toward inclusion. Only a few secondary special educators in this study demonstrated pro-inclusion attitudes. No other voices appeared through the experiences of special educators in this study, in the form of general educators, students, parents, or administrators, promoting the move toward inclusion.

Of the three elements of the theory of planned behavior, confidence in their ability to successfully implement inclusion was the only component at least partially observed in the district of study. As mentioned previously, teachers in this study rated their own sense of self-efficacy for inclusive practices as high, as measured by the TEIP scale. However, as discussed above, this high sense of self-efficacy was not universal across settings. Special educators in this study were more confident in their abilities to support students with disabilities in their own self-contained special education classrooms or in a consultant role in the general education setting.

According to the theory of planned behavior, attitudes drive behaviors. In the case of secondary special educators in this study, two of the three required elements are missing in order to successfully implement the inclusive education of students with disabilities. Based on this theory and the current state of attitude toward inclusion, it is reasonable to conclude that secondary special educators' beliefs about inclusive education are currently acting as an obstacle to the successful implementation of inclusion.

Teacher efficacy. In addition to teacher attitudes, another key factor that influences the successful implementation of inclusive education is sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997; DeMesquita & Drake, 1994; Guskey, 1988; Pajares, 1996). Self-efficacy is composed of two elements: efficacy expectations and outcome expectations (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1993). Efficacy expectations are a person's belief that they can successfully perform a behavior,

complete a task, or produce an outcome. In turn, outcome expectations involve a person's degree of confidence that a given behavior will lead to a certain outcome. In the context of education, self-efficacy is typically defined as an individual teacher's expectation that he or she will be able to bring about student learning (Soodak & Podell, 1996). Teacher efficacy in the context of this study refers to special educators' perceptions of their ability to support students with disabilities included in the general education classroom.

Special educators in this study rated themselves at a high overall sense of self-efficacy on the TEIP scale. However, an analysis of teachers' short answer and interview responses revealed that they held higher efficacy expectations for supporting students with disabilities in self-contained special education settings than in general education settings. In the general education classroom, special educators in this study reported the highest efficacy expectations while serving in a support or consultant role to the general education teacher. The special educators in this study reported low efficacy expectations for their mastery of the general education curriculum and the provision of direct instruction in the general education classroom. Overall, special educators in this study held medium-to-high efficacy expectations for their ability to support students with disabilities.

The special education teachers in this study had low outcome expectations for the inclusion of students with disabilities. They anticipated a variety of outcomes for students with disabilities included in general education. These teachers worried that struggling readers or students below grade level would fall farther behind if included in general education. They argued that the challenge of general education classes would have a negative impact on the self-esteem of students with disabilities. Teachers worried that including students with disabilities

would impede the progress of their general education peers. Few teachers in this study identified positive outcomes from the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education.

Overall, educators in this study possessed half of the components required for high self-efficacy. They had a high level of confidence in their ability to support students with disabilities in inclusive settings but lacked positive outcome expectations, or a belief in the benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities. The conflicting components negatively impacted the self-efficacy of special educators in this study and subsequently serve as an obstacle for the successful implementation of inclusive education.

Implications for Practice

Experts in the field of inclusive education reform have identified several key components required to achieve complex organizational change on the scale of educating all students with disabilities in the general education environment. According to Fullan's (1993) model for managing complex change, five elements must be in place in order to create lasting organizational change: vision, skills, incentives, resources, and an action plan.

Vision. As mentioned in the results section, the secondary special education teachers in the district of study lacked a shared vision or understanding of inclusive education. Next steps for the district may include the development of a comprehensive mission, vision, and values statement built upon the foundation of inclusive education. An effective mission, vision, and values statement should, ideally, incorporate input from all stakeholders (Nanus, 1992). District leadership should incorporate insight from not only special educators, but also general educators, administrators, support staff, parents, students, and community members.

Once the district establishes a clear and cohesive mission, vision, and values statement, it is critical that all stakeholders be informed of this common goal (Rogus, 1990). As a part of this

communication, special educators in this district should develop a shared understanding of inclusion, including which students should be included in general education, for what amount of time, and with what purpose in mind. In addition to generating and communicating an inclusive vision, successful organization change requires that stakeholders internalize these beliefs and take ownership of the mission (Villa & Thousand, 2017). The lack of perceived social pressure to engage in inclusive education is a critical missing component according to the theory of planned behavior. In order to successfully produce the target behavior, the stakeholders in the district of study must develop and embrace the vision of creating an inclusive environment where all children can learn.

Skills. Analysis of the findings in this study revealed the need for a great deal of staff training on the implementation of inclusive practices. Special educators in the district of study require training in the general education curriculum. While they do not necessarily need to be content area experts, secondary special educators must have an understanding of the material that is adequate to allow them to support students in accessing the curriculum. Special educators in this district would also benefit from additional training in strategies for supporting students with disabilities *in the general education classroom*. Special educators in this study possessed a wealth of skills for working with students with disabilities, but were struggling to generalize this knowledge to the general education classroom. Teachers in this study also requested additional training, primarily for general education teachers, in ability awareness and differentiated instruction. Educators could be offered a wide variety of training options, including workshops, online courses, book studies, conferences, and more (Villa & Thousand, 2017).

Beyond content-based training, the teachers in this study expressed interest in more dynamic, responsive professional development opportunities. According to their ratings on the

TEIP instrument, the special educators in this district were interested in emulating the actions of colleagues and peers effective at differentiating instruction. These teachers would likely benefit from peer mentoring, personalized coaching, and professional learning communities. This district had an existing model of peer coaching in departments such as math and science through a "teacher on special assignment" or TOSA. The TOSA is a full-time position that allows the coach to work with teachers in their classrooms to collaborate, teach model lessons, and provide feedback. This same model, utilizing an Inclusion TOSA, could be implemented in inclusive environments to coach individual teachers or teaching partners on the elements of successful co-teaching, differentiating instruction, and supporting students with diverse needs.

Incentives. The primary incentive for inclusive education is the benefit for students. Inclusion has a range of academic and social benefits for both students with and without an identified disability. If teachers are aware of the research on the benefits of inclusion for all students, this information should serve as a strong incentive for implementing inclusive education. Another incentive is the social justice motivation of providing students with disabilities access to the academic and social opportunities afforded to their typical peers in general education settings.

Beyond the motivators associated with social justice for students, inclusion also provides the incentive of additional adult support. In the district of study, inclusion of students with disabilities is supported with co-teaching, instructional assistants, behavior specialists, and designated service providers. In theory, many teachers may be motivated by the opportunity to work with their colleagues to support students. In practice, however, the relationships between general and special educators are too strained at the time of this study for the potential for collaboration to serve as an incentive. The district could improve these relationships and re-

incentivize collaboration through clear definition and communication of general and special educator roles and responsibilities in inclusive settings; training for all teachers on strategies for supporting students with disabilities in general education; and team-building activities between staff members.

Resources. Special educators in the district of study possessed many of the resources necessary to successfully implement inclusive education. Specifically, these teachers had a high sense of self-efficacy in supporting students with disabilities, including differentiating instruction, designing accommodations, and scaffolding the curriculum. The secondary special educators in this study also had a wealth of professional resources to draw upon including instructional assistants, school psychologists, speech pathologists, social workers, and behavior specialists.

Regarding needs, the special educators in this district reported needing more time to complete their work and greater access to the students on their special education caseload. These needs could be met through a revision of the master schedule. General and special education teaching partners should be assigned a common planning period. Special education teachers should be assigned to support in general education classes in alignment with the students on their caseloads. Special educators should also be assigned to support in a single subject area, ideally an area where they possess an aptitude or interest. Special educators also expressed a desire for professional development around the general education curriculum and strategies for supporting students with disabilities in general education. Finally, the special educators in this study requested support, in the form of professional development and/or administrative intervention, in developing productive relationships with their general education colleagues.

Action Plan. At the time of this study, the participating district was in the third year of a 4-year roll out of a new special education service delivery model focused on minimizing self-contained special education classrooms in favor of educating students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. The initial plan focused on co-teaching and concentrated professional development in this area. Now nearing the end of this 4-year implementation plan, the district will take into consideration the findings of this study, along with additional stakeholder feedback, to revise and extend the implementation plan.

One of the key findings in this study that deeply resonates with me as a leader in education is the importance of not allowing adult issues to impact students. Teachers in this study expressed a range of concerns, frustrations, and fears around inclusion. These included negative relationships with general education teachers; undefined roles and responsibilities in a changing special education service delivery model; limited content area knowledge in the general education curriculum; a deficit mindset toward student ability; and many more. These are all adult or teacher issues. The educational opportunities for a student should never be limited by the beliefs, fears, or preferences of the school professionals. Providing professional development in growth mindset, ability awareness, and inclusive instructional practices is crucial to keep the limitations of adults from becoming barriers for students.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study was the relatively small sample size drawn from a single school district. Generalizability of the results would be increased by collecting data for a larger number of teachers from diverse districts. There was also a risk of self-selection bias because participants volunteered to complete the survey and the follow-up interview. Validity of these results was dependent on both teachers' awareness of their own self-efficacy and attitudes,

as well as their comfort with providing honest, candid responses. It is also important to consider that the survey and interview data in this study provided only a single 'snapshot,' rather than an extended examination of the teachers' attitudes and efficacy over time.

Recommendations for Future Research

The findings in this study provoked additional questions and areas for further research. First, this study revealed a disconnect between special educators' self-reports of attitude and efficacy on the quantitative survey instruments as compared to their comments in the short answer and interview segments. It is possible that the discrepancies are a result of demand characteristics and/or limitations in self-awareness. Additional research could use additional data points to measure teacher attitudes and sense of self-efficacy, such as through classroom observations or ratings from third-party stakeholders such as students, parents, colleagues, or supervisors.

Additional research could also focus on expanding the scope of the study and on remediation of the limitations mentioned above. The district of study was in a suburban area with a large range of service options. It would be interesting to examine the impact of restrictions experienced by schools in rural settings on teacher attitudes and sense of self-efficacy. Also, this study had a small proportion of male respondents, which limited the meaningfulness of data on the impact of gender on attitudes and sense of self-efficacy. Future studies could aim to draw from a larger, more diverse population.

Finally, as the aim of this study was to inform professional development efforts to improve the attitudes and increase the sense of self-efficacy of secondary special educators' with respect to inclusive education. Additional research could, in turn, examine the impact of this

professional development. Research design could compare different types of professional development or use pre- and post-measures to examine the effectiveness of various interventions.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Invitation to Participate Email

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Dear VUSD Secondary Special Education Teachers,

I am currently a doctoral student in the Educational Leadership program at UCSD. For my dissertation project, I am interested in exploring the professional development needs of special educators supporting students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, I am looking at special educators' feelings of self-efficacy with inclusive practices and attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

I am inviting you to participate in this research study because I believe your experiences can be of great value in informing this work. The initial survey will include: (a) a consent form, (b) Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices, (c) Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students, (d) open-ended questions, and (e) a demographic questionnaire. This survey should take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. At the end of the survey there will be a space to include your name and contact information if you would like to volunteer to participate in an optional follow-up interview portion of the study. The interview questions will address your experiences supporting students in general education.

I will be carrying out this study as a researcher from the University of California, San Diego. This research has no connection to your school or Vista Unified School District. Your decision to participate in this study has no bearing on your employment status.

The initial survey responses will remain anonymous. Provision of your name for the follow-up interview is strictly voluntary and all interview data will be kept strictly confidential. I will never use your name, the name of your school, or the name of the school district in any presentation or publication. I will safeguard any risk of loss of confidentiality by using pseudonyms for all research participants, schools, and the district. All data will be stored on a password-protected computer in an encrypted and password-protected folder accessible only to me.

Risks associated with this study are minimal, however, since this is an investigational study, there may be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

If you have any questions regarding this project, or the survey, please feel free to contact me at (619) 861-1332 or wood064@cougars.csusm.edu and I will be happy to clarify.

Thank you very much,
Jackie Wood

Appendix B: Survey Consent Form

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Special Educators' Self-Efficacy and Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education

Who is conducting the study, why you have been asked to participate, how you were selected, and what is the approximate number of participants in the study?
Jacqueline Wood, doctoral candidate, is conducting a research study to investigate the sense of self-efficacy and attitudes of special educators with respect to the inclusion of students with disabilities. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a secondary special education teacher. There will be approximately 90 participants in this study.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive practices and their attitudes toward inclusion, with the ultimate goal of identifying ways to improve both by informing professional development efforts. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current state of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers with respect to inclusive education?
2. What are the current attitudes of secondary special education teachers toward inclusive education?
3. What factors (demographic elements, education level, teaching experience, etc.) support or inhibit secondary special educators' self-efficacy and attitudes with respect to the inclusion of students with disabilities?
4. What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education?

What will happen to you in this study and which procedures are standard of care and which are experimental?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 15-20 minute survey. The survey will include a consent form; 27 likert scale questions; and 5 opened-ended short answer questions addressing attitudes and sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusion. At the end of the survey, will have the option for including your name and contact information to volunteer for a follow-up 30-minute individual interview about your experiences supporting students with disabilities in general education. It is expected that 8-10 individuals will be interviewed.

How much time will each study procedure take, what is your total time commitment, and how long will the study last?

The total time required to complete the survey will be approximately 15-20 minutes. Individuals who volunteer and are selected to participate in the follow-up interviews, will engage in a conversation that will last up to 30 minutes.

What risks are associated with this study?

Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality, however, I have taken measures to minimize this risk. Only my university supervisor and I will have access to study information, the information will be kept in locked files and password protected computers, and will be kept under the confidential study ID number, not participant name. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. In addition to the researchers listed above, the UCSD Institutional Review Board may review research records. Research records will be destroyed at the end of the study.
2. A potential risk of emotional discomfort. The interview will include questions about your experiences with inclusion. There is the possibility that this may lead some participants to feel some mild emotional discomfort. Please be advised that you will be under no obligation to answer any question that makes you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and still remain in the study.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

What are the alternatives to participating in this study?

Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate. The alternatives to participation in this study are to choose not to participate.

What benefits can be reasonably expected?

There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating this study. Although your participation in this research study may be of little direct benefit to you, beyond personal reflection on your experiences, the data gathered in this study has the potential to inform professional development efforts and promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Can you choose to not participate or withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of benefits?

Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in an interview or on a questionnaire at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide that you no longer wish to continue in this study, you will be required to either call or email the researcher.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

Can you be withdrawn from the study without your consent?
The PI may remove you from the study without your consent if the PI feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given you by the study personnel.

Will you be compensated for participating in this study?
There are no monetary incentives for completing the survey. If you volunteer and are selected to participate in the follow-up interview, you will receive a $20 gift card to Starbucks at the end of the interview process.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There will be no cost to you for participating in this study.

Who can you call if you have questions?
Jacqueline Wood has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may contact the principal investigator, Jacqueline Wood (wood064@cougars.csusm.edu or (619) 861-1332) or Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Dissertation Supervisor (chofstetter@ucsd.edu or (858) 822-6688). You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Your Signature and Consent
You have received a copy of this consent document.
You agree to participate.

_____ _____
Subject's signature Date

Appendix C: Questionnaire

Teacher Efficacy for Inclusive Practices

This survey is designed to help understand the nature of factors influencing the success of routine classroom activities in creating an inclusive classroom environment. In an inclusive classroom, students from a wide range of diverse backgrounds and abilities learn together with necessary supports available to teachers and students.

Please circle the number that best represents your opinion about each of the statements.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree Somewhat	4 Agree Somewhat	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
	SD	D	DS	AS	A	SA
I can make my expectations clear about student behavior in the general education classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to calm a student who is disruptive or noisy.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can make parents feel comfortable coming to school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can assist families in helping their children do well in school.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can accurately gauge student comprehension of the general education curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can provide appropriate challenges for very capable students.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident in my ability to prevent disruptive behavior in the general education classroom before it occurs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can control disruptive behavior in the general education classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident in my ability to get parents of students with disabilities involved in school activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident in designing learning tasks that accommodate the individual needs of students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6

CONTINUED . . .	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree Somewhat	4 Agree Somewhat	5 Agree	6 Strongly Agree
I am able to get students to follow classroom rules.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can collaborate with other professionals (e.g., general education teachers, speech pathologists, etc.) in designing educational plans for students with disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to work jointly with other professionals and staff (e.g., aides, other teachers, etc.) to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident in my ability to get students to work together in pairs or small groups.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I can use a variety of assessment strategies (e.g., portfolio assessment, modified tests, performance-based assessments).	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident in informing others who know little about laws and policies relating to the inclusion of students with disabilities.	I	2	3	4	5	6
I am confident when dealing with students with aggressive behaviors.	1	2	3	4	5	6
I am able to provide an alternate explanation of example when students are confused with general education curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5	6

Attitudes Towards Teaching All Students

The purpose of this survey is to obtain an accurate and valid appraisal of your perceptions of teaching all students, including students identified with mild to moderate disabilities. Because there are not "right" or "wrong" answers to these items, please respond candidly.

	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Disagree Somewhat	4 Neither	5 Agree Somewhat	6 Agree	7 Strongly Agree
Most or all separate classrooms that exclusively serve students with mild/moderate disabilities should be eliminated.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Students with mild/moderate disabilities should be taught in regular classes with non-disabled students because they will not require too much of the teacher's time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Students with mild/moderate disabilities can be more effectively educated in regular classrooms as opposed to special education classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like to be mentored by a teacher who models effective differentiated instruction.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I want to emulate teachers who know how to design appropriate academic interventions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I believe including students with mild/moderate disabilities in regular education classrooms is effective because they can learn the social skills necessary for success.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I would like people to think I can create a welcoming classroom environment for students with mild/moderate disabilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Students with mild/moderate disabilities can be trusted with responsibilities in the general education classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
All students with mild/moderate disabilities should be educated in general education classrooms with nondisabled peers to the fullest extent possible.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Demographic Questionnaire

Directions: The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine factors that influence attitudes and efficacy for the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Because there are no "right" or "wrong" answers, please respond candidly.

1. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male

2. What is your age range?
   - 21-25 years
   - 26-30 years
   - 31-35 years
   - 36-40 years
   - 41-45 years
   - 46-50 years
   - 51-55 years
   - 56-60 years
   - 61 years or older

3. What is the highest degree you have completed?
   - Bachelors
   - Masters
   - Doctorate

4. Which credential(s) do you hold? Please mark all that apply:
   - Special Education
   - General Education, Multiple Subjects
   - General Education, Single Subject
   - Administrative Services Credential
   - Other: _____

5. What is your current teaching assignment? Please indicate how many class periods you work in the following settings:

_____ General Education Class
_____ Special Education Class

6. How many years have you taught?
   - <1 year
   - 1-5 years
   - 6-9 years
   - 10-13 years
   - 14-17 years
   - >17 years

7. What type(s) of training/education have you completed addressing inclusion of students with special needs?
   - Coursework embedded in credential program
   - Graduate level coursework
   - BTSA professional development
   - Site-provided professional development
   - District-provided professional development
   - NCCSE-provided professional development
   - SDCOE-provided professional development

Other
_____

8. How many higher education courses have you completed in special education?
   - None
   - 1-3
   - 4 or more

9. How long do you plan to teach?
   - Fewer than 5 years
   - 5-10 years
   - 11-20 years
   - Greater than 20 years

Open Response

This portion of the survey is designed to give you more freedom in expressing your thoughts on the issues around the inclusion of students with disabilities. Please feel free to use these questions to elaborate on your experiences with inclusion.

1. What are your attitudes towards or beliefs around educating students with disabilities in the general education environment?

2. What strengths or skills do you feel you have with respect to supporting students with disabilities in the general education environment?

3. In what ways do you collaborate with general educators to support students with disabilities in the general education environment?

4. In what ways do you collaborate with other professionals (aides, school psychologist, etc.) to support students with disabilities in the general education environment?

5. Is there anything else you would like to add about your attitudes toward inclusion or your confidence in your ability to support students with disabilities in general education?

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey. Your input will be valuable in better understanding special educators' current sense of efficacy and attitudes toward inclusion, as well as possible avenues for professional development to support the inclusion of students with disabilities.

If you are interested in participating in a follow-up interview to further discuss and explore the issues addressed in this survey, please include your contact information below. Participation is strictly voluntary. All responses will be kept strictly confidential and you may discontinue your participation at any time. The follow-up interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and participants will receive a $20 Starbucks gift card at the end of the interview for their time.

Again, only include your contact information below if you would like to volunteer to participate in a follow-up interview:

Name: _____

Preferred Phone Number: _____

Preferred Email: _____

Appendix D: Interview Invitation and Consent Form

Dear (NAME),

I am a student in the Joint Doctoral Program (JDP) in Educational Leadership with UC San Diego and Cal State San Marcos. At this point in the doctoral program I have formed my dissertation proposal and submitted an IRB for the study to UC San Diego and CSUSM. The topic I wish to research is the professional development needs of special educators supporting students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Specifically, I am looking at Education Specialists' feelings of self-efficacy with inclusive practices and attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting.

You are being contacted because you indicated in your initial survey that you are interested in discussing your experiences in supporting students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Hence, I want to ask if you might be interested and available for an individual interview to last approximately 30 minutes. You may choose to have the interview take place at a location near you, or on the campus, and it would of course be at your convenience. During the interview you will be asked to describe your experiences with supporting students with disabilities in general education settings and factors that you feel contributed to success or challenges. With your permission, the interview will be audio taped and transcribed. You will be provided with a transcript of the interview for checking and clarifying the information.

Your confidentiality will be respected throughout this process. You will be given the opportunity to review the transcribed interview and eliminate any comments or references you feel may be identifiable or have negative connotations. Your responses will not be linked to your name or address.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. I look forward to hearing from you and hope that you will choose to participate in the study. I hope to begin interviews for the study as soon as possible, so please respond to this email by May 8, 2017. Please let me know if you have any questions. I can be reached at the phone or e-mail address below.

Sincerely,
Jacqueline Wood
Doctoral Student, Educational Leadership
UC San Diego and CSU San Marcos
(619) 861-1332
wood064@cougars.csusm.edu

University of California, San Diego
Consent to Act as a Research Subject

Special Educators' Self-Efficacy and Attitudes Regarding Inclusive Education

Who is conducting the study, why you have been asked to participate, how you were selected, and what is the approximate number of participants in the study?
Jacqueline Wood, doctoral candidate, is conducting a research study to investigate the sense of self-efficacy and attitudes of special educators with respect to the inclusion of students with disabilities. You have been asked to participate in this study because you are a secondary special education teacher and you indicated that you were interested in participating in a discussion about your experiences supporting students with disabilities in inclusive settings. There will be approximately 8-10 participants in this portion of the study.

Why is this study being done?
The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between special education teachers' sense of self-efficacy with respect to inclusive practices and their attitudes toward inclusion, with the ultimate goal of identifying ways to improve both by informing professional development efforts. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the current state of self-efficacy of secondary special education teachers with respect to inclusive education?
2. What are the current attitudes of secondary special education teachers toward inclusive education?
3. What factors (demographic elements, education level, teaching experience, etc.) support or inhibit secondary special educators' self-efficacy and attitudes with respect to the inclusion of students with disabilities?
4. What is the relationship between special education teachers' sense of efficacy and their attitudes toward inclusive education?

What will happen to you in this study and which procedures are standard of care and which are experimental?
If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to participate in an individual interview approximately 30 minutes in length related to your experiences supporting students with disabilities in inclusive environments.

How much time will each study procedure take, what is your total time commitment, and how long will the study last?
Individuals who volunteer and are selected to participate in the follow-up interviews, will engage in a conversation that will last up to 30 minutes.

What risks are associated with this study?
Participation in this study may involve some added risks or discomforts. These include the following:

1. A potential for the loss of confidentiality, however, I have taken measures to minimize this risk. Only my university supervisor and I will have access to study information, the information will be kept in locked files and password protected computers, and will be kept under the confidential study ID number, not participant name. Research records will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law. In addition to the researchers listed above, research records may be reviewed by the UCSD Institutional Review Board. Research records will be destroyed at the end of the study.

2. A potential risk of emotional discomfort. The interview will include questions about your experiences with inclusion. There is the possibility that this may lead some participants to feel some mild emotional discomfort. Please be advised that you will be under no obligation to answer any question which makes you feel uncomfortable. You may choose not to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable and still remain in the study.

Because this is a research study, there may also be some unknown risks that are currently unforeseeable. You will be informed of any significant new findings.

What are the alternatives to participating in this study?
Your participation is entirely voluntary and may be withdrawn at any time. There are no consequences if you decide not to participate. The alternatives to participation in this study are to choose not to participate.

What benefits can be reasonably expected?
There may or may not be any direct benefit to you from participating this study. Although your participation in this research study may be of little direct benefit to you, beyond personal reflection on your experiences, the data gathered in this study has the potential to inform professional development efforts and promote the inclusion of students with disabilities.

Can you choose to not participate or withdraw from the study without penalty or loss of benefits?
Participation in research is entirely voluntary. You may refuse to participate or withdraw or refuse to answer specific questions in an interview or on a questionnaire at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If you decide that you no longer wish to continue in this study, you will be required to either call or email the researcher.

You will be told if any important new information is found during the course of this study that may affect your wanting to continue.

Can you be withdrawn from the study without your consent?
The PI may remove you from the study without your consent if the PI feels it is in your best interest or the best interest of the study. You may also be withdrawn from the study if you do not follow the instructions given you by the study personnel.

Will you be compensated for participating in this study?
If you volunteer and are selected to participate in the follow-up interview, you will receive a $20 gift card to Starbucks at the end of the interview process.

Are there any costs associated with participating in this study?
There will be no cost to you for participating in this study.

Who can you call if you have questions?
Jacqueline Wood has explained this study to you and answered your questions. If you have other questions or research-related problems, you may contact the principal investigator, Jacqueline Wood (wood064@cougars.csusm.edu or (619) 861-1332) or Dr. Carolyn Huie Hofstetter, Dissertation Supervisor (chofstetter@ucsd.edu or (858) 822-6688).

You may call the Human Research Protections Program Office at 858-246-HRPP (858-246-4777) to inquire about your rights as a research subject or to report research-related problems.

Your Signature and Consent
You have received a copy of this consent document.

You agree to participate.

_____ _____

Subject's signature Date

Appendix E: Audio Recording Consent Form

Jacqueline Wood
Education Studies
UCSD and CSUSM

As part of this project, an audio recording will take place during the interview. Please indicate below whether you consent to the use of audio recordings. This is completely voluntary and solely for the purpose of aiding the researcher in accurately capturing your responses. The audio file will not be identified by your name. You may request to stop the recording at any time or request to erase the recording, in part or full.

Please sign below to indicate you have read the above description and give your consent for the use of audio recording as indicated above.

_____		_____	
Signature	Date	Witness	Date

Appendix F: Interview Protocol

[*Introduction:* Begin with a few minutes of explaining the study, who I am, and the purpose of the study. Explain that while the interview will be taped, their responses are strictly confidential. Let them know if there is something they would like to say off tape, they can inform you and the recorder will be shut off for their comment. Inform them that they may choose to not answer any question they like and that they can stop the interview at any time. Also, let them know the approximate length of the interview and ask if they have any specific questions before beginning.]

Background

- Tell me about yourself and your experiences in special education.
- Please describe your current assignment/role.

Please tell me a little about your personal philosophy (or attitude) around the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education?

Experiences [probe as needed]

- Tell me about a time that you felt you had a successful experience supporting a student(s) in an inclusive environment?
    - What do you feel contributed to that success?
- Tell me about time that you felt unsuccessful in supporting a student(s) in an inclusive classroom?
    - What do you feel contributed to the challenge?
- Based on these experiences, what factors would you say *support* special education teachers' attitudes or efficacy around the inclusion of students with disabilities?
- Based on these experiences, what factors would you say *inhibit* special education teachers' attitudes or efficacy around the inclusion of students with disabilities?
- How efficacious do you feel with regard to inclusion?

Closing

- In thinking back over your experiences and planning ahead for your future work, what additional training or support do you feel would promote the success of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education?