

PREPARING FUTURE EDUCATORS TO SUPPORT INCLUSION:
COLLEGE STUDENTS' ATTITUDES FOLLOWING
PRE-PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION

by

Emily J. Shier

A Research Paper

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the
Master of Science Degree
With a Major in
Education

Approved: Two Semester Credits

Investigation Advisor
Dr. Katherine Navarre

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
August 2002

The Graduate College
University of Wisconsin-Stout
Menomonie, WI 54751

ABSTRACT

Shier	Emily	J.
(Writer) (Last Name)	(First Name)	(Initial)
Preparing Future Educators to Support Inclusion: College Students' Attitudes Following Pre-professional Preparation		
(Title)		
Education	Dr. Katherine Navarre	August 2002
(Graduate Major)	(Research Advisor)	(Month/Year)
		(No. Of Pages)
American Psychological Association (APA) Publication Manual		
(Name of Style Manual Used in this Study)		

In an ongoing effort to improve quality of education for persons with disabilities, initiatives have been made to integrate children with exceptional needs into the regular education setting. The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of future educators regarding their experience with a pre-professional course in inclusion of students with exceptional needs, specifically their personal assessment of their own preparedness regarding inclusion. The study took place at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the spring of 2002.

Data was collected via a questionnaire given to all students who took SPED 430/630 "Inclusion of Students with Exceptional Needs" during the fall semester of 2001. Subjects were chosen as a cluster sample of 110 undergraduate and graduate education majors who were under the instruction of one professor, Lynn LaVenture. The requests for participation, instructions, and online link to the questionnaire were sent via electronic mail by the researcher. The data was collected by the UW-Stout Web-master within a two-week time period, and forwarded to the researcher.

The research examined the attitudes of future educators regarding their experience with a pre-professional course in inclusion of students with exceptional needs, specifically their personal assessment of their own preparedness regarding inclusion. The researcher found that, overall, future educators believed that the course prepared them to work with children with exceptional needs and that they completed the course equipped with resources they planned to utilize in their upcoming professions.

The results found in this study offered valuable information to evaluate inclusion curriculum and instruction for higher education administration, public school systems, future educators, and other parties advocating for the education of individuals with exceptional needs. It is hoped that this study will provide insight into the efforts currently being taken to improve and enhance inclusion in education and spark recommendations for continued initiatives.

Acknowledgement

This paper is dedicated to my mom, who knew I could accomplish graduate school long before I dreamed of it. The voice in my head- that drives me to succeed and comforts me when I falter- sounds curiously familiar to hers.

I would like to thank Dr. Anne Ramage for her unfaltering encouragement and steadfast support this past year and Ms. Lynn LaVenture for her commitment to preparing future educators for inclusion and for serving as a consistent advocate for children and adults with Exceptional Educational Needs.

My gratitude goes to the University of Wisconsin-Stout Student Research Fund, supported by the Student Access to Learning Fee and served by Dr. Julie Furst-Bowe, Associate Vice Chancellor, the Associate Dean for Research, and students nominated by the Stout Student Association and the Graduate Student Council, Jeremey Bucheger, Assistant Webmaster, for developing and maintaining the online version of my research instrument, and Dr. Katherine Navarre for serving as my Investigation Advisor.

Finally, thank you to my confidant, Benjamin Shier, who provides me with intellectual companionship and a sense of balance.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iv
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Research Hypotheses.....	4
Definition of Terms.....	5
Assumptions and Limitations.....	6
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	8
Introduction.....	8
Timing of Training.....	9
Target of Training.....	10
Source of Training.....	11
Description of Current Course.....	15
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	20
Introduction.....	20
Subject Selection and Description.....	20
Instrumentation.....	21
Data Collection.....	22
Data Analysis.....	22

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

Limitations.....	23
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	24
Introduction.....	24
Demographic Information.....	24
Research Questions.....	25
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	30
Summary.....	30
Results and Conclusions.....	30
Recommendations.....	33
REFERENCES.....	34
APPENDICES	
A Request for Participation	
B Questionnaire and Consent Form	
C Data Charts	
D Comments by Participants	
E Course Syllabus	
F Inclusion Portfolio Rubric	

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In an ongoing effort to improve quality of education for persons with disabilities, initiatives have been made to integrate children with exceptional needs into the regular education setting. In 1998 the U.S. Department of Education reported that, “the proportion of students with disabilities who spent greater than 79% of a typical school day in a general education classroom rose from 31.46% in 1989/1990 to 45.35% in 1995/1996” (cited in Cook, 2001, p. 203). From mainstreaming to a focus on the least restrictive environment, and then to full inclusion, we have altered the role of teachers, both in general education and special education.

Through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997, inclusion was transformed from a loose expectation to law, and teachers began to be held more strictly to the legalities of due process. However, additional training, support, or resources did not often accompany regulations. For example, special education teachers have struggled for decades to acquire educational assistants (formerly referred to as aides), adaptive technology, and other resources for their students. They have, however, been introduced to enough information and experience regarding students with disabilities to be somewhat ready to step foot into a classroom and deal with the diverse needs of such students. On the other hand, general education teachers, not having been prepared to accommodate many special needs, have been pressured to trouble-shoot problems by attending brief workshops, putting together last minute in-services, and supplementing potentially inadequate training with continuing education courses during their free time.

This system maintained a dangerous practice of leaving training up to the discretion of teachers and accommodating students inconsistently. There are many potential hazards with this concept, including how teachers vary in their professional integrity, their individual opportunities to access training resources, the level of financial and professional support they receive from their districts, and so on. For many years, this system created a disservice not only to students with disabilities, but also to those who served them.

Recently, colleges and universities have been pressured to design classes that will prepare undergraduate and graduate students for a newly designed profession of teaching in both general and special education. One such course is offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in Menomonie, Wisconsin. All students preparing to work as educators are required to take this course emphasizing inclusion of children with special needs in public education. The special education course, entitled Inclusion of Students with Exceptional Needs, has been offered by the Department of Education, School Counseling and School Psychology since 1997 (L. LaVenture, personal communication, December 10, 2001). It was designed to include, “laws, definitions, characteristics, adaptations, strategies, and transitional services that pertain to persons” identified as having cognitive disabilities, learning disabilities, attention deficit and/or hyperactivity disorders, emotional disabilities, autism, traumatic brain injury, speech and language disorders, visual and hearing loss, or physical and other health impairments, as well as those identified as being gifted and talented (UW-Stout Undergraduate Course Bulletin, 2000, p. 156). According to Lynn LaVenture, who has been teaching the course for twelve years, the class was entitled “Mainstreaming” prior to her initiating the more accurate,

updated name and focus in 1997 (L. LaVenture, personal communication, December 10, 2001).

The style of the course provides an opportunity to collaborate with one's peers, other future educators. It is not by accident that the course stresses collaboration, experience, and practice. According to Silberman in 1971, "teachers' attitudes of attachment, concern, indifference, and rejection have been found to directly and differentially impact students' educational experiences and opportunities" (cited in Cook, 2001, p. 204). This statement suggests that the role of teachers' attitudes strongly influences the potential success of their students. Considering this, it would be detrimental to both teachers and their students to wait to target teachers' attitudes until after they have entered the classroom. "Dev and Scruggs' (1997) and Gemmil-Crosby and Hanzik (1994) also reported that increased training and experience was associated with more positive overall attitudes" (cited in Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1998, p. 353).

Research from the past thirty years consistently leads toward a common suggestion: teachers need more training in order to be prepared to include students with disabilities in their classrooms. Success also requires collaboration among regular education teachers, special education teachers, administrators, support staff, parents, and the community.

In 1994, Idol, Nevin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb suggested, "general educators' attitudes and beliefs toward educating students with special needs are among the most critical influences, in implementing collaborative approaches" (cited in DeBettencourt, 1999, p. 28). Therefore, it is essential to offer future educators information and practical

experience with students with disabilities in order to improve their skills and, in turn, confidence in facilitating special education. It is also important to provide opportunities to practice collaboration with other teachers and/or future colleagues on behalf of the process of inclusion. This endeavor is consistent with many of the goals of UW-Stout's course in inclusion.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of future educators regarding their experience with a pre-professional course in inclusion of students with exceptional needs, specifically their personal assessment of their own preparedness regarding inclusion. The study took place at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the spring of 2002. Data was collected via a questionnaire given to students who have completed the course. Subjects were chosen as a cluster sample of 110 undergraduate and graduate education majors at UW-Stout.

Research Hypotheses

There are three hypotheses this research is aimed at addressing. They are:

1. There will be a positive reaction toward completing the components of the course and notion of preparedness to work with persons with disabilities.
2. There will be a positive reaction toward completing the components of the course and feelings of preparedness to collaborate with colleagues.
3. There will be a positive reaction from completing the components of the course in regard to perceived competency to facilitate inclusion upon entrance into education professions.

Definition of Terms

For clarity and understanding, the following terms are identified:

Cognitive disabilities borderline: Developmental disabilities or mental retardation with an intelligence quotient between 55 and 70, often characterized by generally low achievement, difficulty in abstract thinking, and lack of independence.

Cognitive disabilities severe: Developmental disabilities or mental retardation with an intelligence quotient between 0 and 55, often characterized by complete lack of independence, gross and fine motor skill deficits, speech and language difficulties, and, typically, associated health problems.

Educational assistant: A paraprofessional staff person hired to assist students within the school setting

Exceptional Educational Need (EEN): Need that must be fulfilled in order to prepare an environment in which one may learn

General education: Education geared toward the average student population.

Individualized Education Program (IEP): A plan that “directs and monitors all aspects of a student’s special education program. The document [or plan] describes the educational needs of a student, the goals and objectives that direct his or her program, the educational programming and placement, and the evaluation and measurement criteria that were developed during the IEP creation process” (Drasgow, Yell, & Robinson, 2001, p. 359).

Inclusion: “Integrating students with disabilities into the same classrooms, community activities and resources, and home settings as students without disabilities”

(Turnbull et al., 1999, p. 13). The term may also be used to name the special education course SPED 430/630, offered at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

Individual learning opportunity: (ILO) A component of the curriculum for SPED 430/630, consisting of the student observing and working with his or her choice of persons with disabilities for a minimum of twenty hours.

M-Team: A multidisciplinary team required by law to complete a formal reevaluation of children every three years, and accredited by the Director of Special Education or other designee for the school district. M-team evaluation means “an examination of a child conducted under s. PI 11.04 to determine whether the child is a child with EEN” (The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 2002, online).

Special education: Education designed to include services that accommodate the unique needs of students with disabilities and gifted and talented students, not typically available through regular education.

Team teaching: “Two teachers working together to develop, plan, and teach a lesson” (Hammeken, 1995, p. 138).

For the purpose of this study, the terms *disability* and *exceptionality* are used interchangeably, as are the terms *general education* and *regular education*.

Assumptions and Limitations

For the purposes of this study, the researcher will assume that the subjects were actively engaged in their pre-professional education program. In addition, it is assumed that those students enrolled in UW-Stout’s teacher education program will enter into the teaching profession, predominantly into public education.

The conclusions of this study should be interpreted with some caution related to the limitations associated with the study. First, the study included a small sample at only one university. The student body at UW-Stout is fairly homogenous in regard to ethnic and socio-economic status, as well as other aspects of diversity. The university is located in a small mid-western community, not necessarily representative of the diverse environments or the general population of future educators. In addition, only the education programs that UW-Stout offers (and the characteristics indicative of these six specific certification programs) will be represented.

Second, the study does not account for the variety of individual learning opportunities (ILOs) that the students choose to undertake. This experience is assumed to be one of the most powerful indicators of growth and development within the course; but students have significant autonomy to choose their own environment and format to practice inclusion.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The following literature review will explore in some detail the importance of teachers' attitudes and their collaborative efforts toward inclusion, the potential effects and characteristics of teacher education training programs geared at indoctrinating teachers in the philosophy and practice of inclusion, and an extensive description of one such inclusion-related course.

Introduction

Inclusion of children with special needs into regular education has been a fervently discussed and thoroughly researched controversy for several years. Despite mandates like the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act of 1997, educators differ greatly in their attitudes toward persons with disabilities as well as their ability and enthusiasm regarding inclusion. Attitudes of teachers, as well as administrators, parents, community members, students, and other invested parties have been suggested as key predictors of success in inclusion programs.

It is natural, then, to inquire as to the origin of teachers' attitudes. Although a comprehensive, complete list of variables that affect teachers' attitudes may not exist, several factors have been suggested, including, but not limited to formal training, past professional experience, close personal experience, and continuing education. Studies of teachers have indicated that formal training up to this point has been lacking. General consensus of individuals actively involved in the education of students with exceptional needs has called for specific training of general education teachers in conjunction with general education prerequisite instruction.

Although courses have been mandated for prospective regular education teachers for some time, questions regarding the effectiveness of such courses have yet to be explored sufficiently. Specifically, as attitudes appear to be strongly linked with the success of the inclusion process, it seems necessary to determine whether pre-professional college courses aimed at teaching inclusion do, in fact, positively affect the attitudes of our new generation of teachers. Once a program is found to fulfill this need, we may reassess teachers' attitudes (based on potentially improved self-confidence, stronger knowledge base, etc.) and the bearing such attitudes have on the realization of inclusion's multi-faceted objectives.

In discussing the effect of training on teachers' attitudes, there are three questions that must be answered. They are as follows: When is the most productive, effective time to train future teachers on the subject and practice of inclusion? Who needs training most (in terms of teachers)? How should training be designed and administered? These inquiries will be reviewed in the order they have been presented herein.

Timing of Training

A common cliché, "timing is everything", is actually quite meaningful when it comes to considering the most appropriate timing for training in inclusion. Although in-services and college credit earned through continuing education are invaluable in terms of maintaining and updating professional wisdom, they are not likely to accomplish the goals of pre-professional training. Through her survey of teachers, "Aksamit found that 60% of the secondary and 66% of the primary teachers did not have a preservice program in their undergraduate training dealing with special education students" (cited in Sage, 1992, p. 14). Although training practices have been altered in order to focus more on

educating professionals prior to their licensure, the benefits of early timing have not been universally realized. With inclusion, it is crucial to recognize the difference between being prepared and trying to become prepared after entering a new situation. “Traditional university approaches were positive in changing teachers’ perceptions and increasing their knowledge on all variables examined”, while in-services appeared to be significantly less effective (Hudson et al., cited in Sage, 1992, p. 16).

Target of Training

Another familiar cliché, “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” can be heard echoing through the halls of most schools. In a study conducted by Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, and Mastropieri, “teachers 40 years or younger reported significantly more positive attitudes than teachers over 40 years old” (1998, p. 352). Although experienced teachers cannot be generalized as a hopeless group of educators, unable or unwilling to explore changing attitudes and practices in inclusion, a case can be made for proactively educating new teachers before they ground themselves in habits that may not be in sync with the philosophy and maintenance of inclusion. This approach is simply preventative, rather than reactionary. This decision regarding timing could have countless effects. Just to name a few, this approach may save schools and communities a great deal of money and time, prevent districts and teachers from potential risk and liability, prevent teachers from avoidable burnout, and most importantly, provide all students with a meaningful, equitable education (rather than waiting for teachers to learn how to serve them).

The concept of prevention has become less of an option and more of an expectation due to changes in licensure requirements. It may be in the best interests of public and higher education to seek out opportunities to prepare future teachers, rather

than conform to such standards once they are set into place. Although systems do not need to be highly complex, they do take time and effort to put smoothly into place. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) publicized a list of ten standards that must be fulfilled in order to receive licensure from approved colleges and universities. One of these standards reads, “the teacher understands how children with broad ranges of ability learn and provides instruction that supports their intellectual, personal, and social development” (2001, On-line). Although it is not explicitly stated, this goal relates directly to inclusion.

Source of Training

Another cliché emphasizes additional benefits of early timing as it relates to inclusion training. “You never get a second chance to make a first impression” sums up the advantage that recipients of pre-service training (teachers and their students, as well as the surrounding educational community) have in forming positive, healthy relationships. Teachers who enter their classroom knowledgeable of their responsibilities and practiced in their skills will have more opportunity to focus on building strong relationships with their students and creating safe, industrious environments. They will not have to take valuable time to research general characteristics of all disabilities when they enter a class or a new student joins their community, but may use their time to learn about the unique needs and interests of individuals, as is practice with the general student population. Good timing in this area has immeasurable affects in shaping the overall quality of relationships within the classroom.

To address the second question posed, we must make a decision about which teachers need training. Based on the discussion of the previous question, it has been

determined that although all teachers might benefit from training in inclusion, “soon-to-be” teachers are one of the most important target groups. Although special education majors already receive extensive training toward inclusion of persons with disabilities, it is important to include them with general education majors in inclusion education courses. Even if special education teachers may initially go into the profession because they already have an interest or competency working with persons with disabilities, “special education teachers are relied on to ‘sell’ inclusion to general education teachers” (Fox & Ysseldyke, cited in Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999, p. 200). In addition, “despite the relative scarcity of research on these educators, their attitudes appear to be critical determinants of the success of inclusion reforms” (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999, p. 200). Therefore they should not be neglected in the structuring of pre-professional inclusion courses.

Regarding attitudes toward inclusion, “previous literature has been relatively consistent in documenting that general education teachers are relatively less supportive than special education teachers” (Davis & Maheady, 1991; Garvar-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989; Schmelkin, 1981) (cited in Cook Semmel, & Gerber, 1999, p. 206). This may explain why in many cases students continue to be better served by the special education setting rather than the mainstream, despite the long list of benefits of inclusion. It is unlikely that future teachers will seek many extra elective courses while earning their initial teaching degrees. They may be unaware of the complexity of integrating diverse needs and abilities into a classroom. However, they seem to clearly understand the importance of learning some information about educating students with exceptional needs. “Ninety-five percent of regular education students surveyed by Aksamit indicated

that one or more required courses in special education should be taken by prospective teachers while in college” (cited in Sage, 1992, p. 15).

The final question addresses how future educators should be trained. Curriculum must aim at providing knowledge, experience, practice, and self-reflection to prospective teachers before they are expected to manage a classroom independently. A knowledge base should be developed that includes knowledge of disabilities and laws, as well as specific expectations teachers will be held to in the day-to-day activity of their jobs. In 1987 Yanito et al. shared that “one way in which teachers become supportive of mainstreaming is through education to increase teachers’ knowledge of the laws and rights protecting people with handicaps” (cited in Sage, 1992, p. 12).

It is equally (if not more) important to provide teachers with strategies for accommodating students with diverse needs and making adaptations in instruction and curriculum. Inclusive educators “employ a broad array of teaching (e.g., co-teaching, teacher assistance teams) and learning structures (e.g., peer tutoring, cooperative learning) to facilitate learning and foster relationships among students (Bauwens & Hourcade; Downing; McCormick et al.; Walther-Thomas, Bryant & Land; cited in Tapasak & Walther-Thomas, 1999).

Experience is a characteristic that will vary among all present, as well as future educators. College courses in inclusion may offer some basic structure for the provision of a consistent, minimum opportunity for experience.

Clearly, pre-service programs...must provide both general and special educators with appropriate instruction and supervised experience to ensure that they develop appropriate skills and attitudes to address the unique learning needs of students

with disabilities and other students who are at risk for school failure (O'Shea & O'Shea, cited in Tapasak & Walther-Thomas, 1999, p. 223)

A final cliché speaks to the benefit of experience on a continued basis over time. "Practice makes perfect" epitomizes the need for as much clinical experience as can be provided. "Leyson and Abrams (1984), Thousand et al. (1987), and Francis (1988) suggested that the most effective training consisted of providing teachers with a combination of information, experience, or opportunities to practice, receive feedback, and get support from others" (Sage, 1992, p. 13). Practice allows college students to synthesize what they are learning in theory in the college classroom and apply it to reality. Literature and practice show that collaboration is perhaps the key to successful partnerships, and therefore service delivery regarding inclusion. "Modeling collaboration at the university level, with methods courses, may be a good beginning" (DeBettencourt, 1999, p. 34). Depending on how it is designed, a course in inclusion may offer a chance for future educators to cooperate with classmates as well as educators in the community. Networking that begins before a work relationship is developed can be advantageous to prospective teachers as well as school districts.

If special education and general education majors work collaboratively from the start, anxiety may be reduced and the relationship might become stronger. Furthermore, by restructuring professional preparation programs in this manner, graduates no longer would get the message that they are separate systems of education. Instead, they would have the disposition and skills to work collaboratively and creatively with others to merge their unique areas of expertise in order to instruct a diverse student body (Villa, Thousand & Chapple, 1996, p. 43).

This system is taking time to be activated. “The biggest change for educators is in deciding to share the role that has traditionally been individual: to share the goals, decisions, classroom instruction, responsibility for students, assessment of student learning, problem solving, and classroom management” (Ripley, 1997). Collaboration as a way to train future educators needs to be emphasized in the design of college curriculum and teacher education programs.

In addition, when they are not team-teaching, future teachers will need to become somewhat independent in their classrooms. They will spend a great deal of time as the leader, and perhaps the only adult, in their classroom environments. For this reason, they will need to continually assess their own skills and efforts to maintain inclusion. Pre-professional courses might integrate a component of how to self-reflect, especially in regard to inclusion. One way to achieve this might be to facilitate brainstorming among future educators, teaching them to think of ways to integrate inclusion, to think of ways to evaluate their own progress, and to observe the effectiveness of their own inclusion efforts until this becomes a natural process.

Description of Current Course

The preceding review described several characteristics for ideal pre-professional training. The combination and coordination of these in practice is a complex one and may be best understood when revealed through example. The following is a description of the current course that the University of Wisconsin-Stout requires of all students seeking education degrees and certification to teach public school in the state of Wisconsin. According to the syllabus for the course, objectives are as follows:

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. List and explain major provisions and implications of state and federal law pertaining to exceptional education.
2. Explain the (a) composition, (b) responsibilities, and (c) legally required procedures of the M-Team and IEP.
3. List (a) distinguishing characteristics, (b) unique educational needs, and (c) appropriate general educational modifications for each of the following categories of atypical learners:
 - a. Physical impairment (orthopedic, chronic health condition, traumatic brain injury)
 - b. Below average ability (CDB, CDS)
 - c. Experiential differences and/or deprivation
 - d. Emotional-social maladjustment
 - e. Receptive, integrative, or expressive deficiencies (LD), speech, language, and communication impairments (autism)
 - f. Visual impairment
 - g. Auditory impairment
 - h. Attention deficit disorder/Attention
 - i. Gifted and talented
4. Interpret an IEP-Team report in terms of the implications of the evaluation for the regular classroom teacher and anticipate the educational modifications that the classroom teacher will need to make in keeping with the M-Team and IEP for that individual.

5. Choose, adapt, and/or develop appropriate educational plans, materials, and procedures from the perspective of his/her major and/or grade level orientation.
6. Plan and/or demonstrate strategies for dealing with inappropriate classroom behaviors.
7. Plan barrier removal to accommodate specific atypical learners.
8. Plan and/or demonstrate evaluation methods and procedures for use with certain specific atypical learners for the purposes of instruction and grading.
9. Demonstrate acceptance of the atypical learner.
10. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively a growing understanding of, and concern for, the atypical learner.
11. Demonstrate an understanding that children with developmental disabilities are included in the “at risk” population.

** See Appendix E for the full course syllabus.

These objectives are evaluated in several ways, including peer assessment, self-assessment, group quizzes, individual quizzes, group projects, papers, and presentations, individual projects, take-home exams, group exams, and informal assessment by the instructor. By using such a variety of assessments, students have several opportunities to succeed and the instructor demonstrates, by example, the virtues of variety in response to unique learning styles and assessment strategies.

In addition, students leave the class with a portfolio, a resource they may choose to use in their professional future and one that specifically reflects their own experience, understanding, and interpretation with EEN. Throughout the semester, students are

expected to maintain their own portfolios, including all work and assessment materials (not including peer assessments, which are kept confidential by the professor). The work samples include (but are not limited to) written outlines of the text book's chapters on history, laws, and current news in special education, a copy of a group paper and all information gathered in conjunction with this assignment, notes and professional journal articles on each of the twelve categories of exceptionalities according to the IDEA Act plus the category of Gifted and Talented, a section on transition (school to work/higher education/community/independence), and a log and reflection paper on the Individual Learning Opportunity (ILO) experience along with official verification of hours volunteered. See Appendix F for the full course outline of expectations and items to be included in the portfolio.

The ILO is considered one of the most important components of the course and is the *only* pre-professional encounter many education majors have with people with EEN. It requires students to arrange fifteen hours of volunteer work with a person or persons with some form of exceptional need. They must then log a description of activities engaged in for each date and time volunteered, on a form provided by the instructor and signed by the volunteer supervisor. Finally, each student is required to submit a written report detailing what kind of work was accomplished, a description of the individual(s) assisted, a narrative reflecting how the individual's disability affects him or her, a statement concerning the future teacher's competence in teaching students with EEN, and a general reaction statement including projections and/or implications for future EEN teaching experiences.

Each quiz is designed differently, from creative writing, to multiple-choice, to arranging informational index cards in chronological order. Some quizzes are taken in cohort groups (assigned at the beginning of the semester and continued through other learning opportunities such as team teaching and group research papers), some are taken in groups assigned on the spot, and some are taken individually. The final exam is administered to and graded by cohort groups who must choose an exam format together, from choices provided in advance from the instructor. They may choose to orally present a prepared case study or to orally field questions on one area of disability, assigned in advance, in front of the other members of their cohort group.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter will include important aspects of methodology used in the study, including sample selection, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis. This is a descriptive study of the perspectives of future teachers regarding their training to work with students with exceptional educational needs.

Subject Selection and Description

Approximately 110 undergraduate and graduate students attending a state university were asked to participate in the study. Subjects were chosen from a sample of undergraduate and graduate education majors at UW-Stout, specifically all students who completed Lynn LaVenture's SPED 430/630 "Inclusion of Students with Exceptional Needs" during the fall of 2001. The names and campus electronic mail addresses were released to the researcher by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Registrar, in response to written requests from the researcher, the investigation advisor, and the instructor of selected courses. The subjects included males and females of various ages, experiences, and interests.

Instrumentation

A questionnaire measuring future educators' attitudes toward students with disabilities and inclusion was used. The questionnaire was sent via electronic mail to every student who completed the course during the previous semester, accompanied by a statement and request from the researcher. The statement explained the reasons for the study and the request outlined an invitation to complete the questionnaire and return it to

the researcher via electronic mail. The individual tests were not coded for individual comparison and were therefore anonymous. These attempts toward validity were significant, but limited. Although the sample is not large, the 110 subjects were more apt to answer honestly, knowing that their surveys could not be traced individually back to each source. Reliability and validity are discussed under the section entitled “Limitations”.

The researcher included seven biographical questions to determine demographic information such as past experience with persons with exceptional needs, concentration of academic program, formal instruction received, and the age level of students the future educator intends to serve. Following these questions were a series of nine subjective statements that the participants were asked to respond to, described according to a range of Likert-type reactions. The last question was a statement that invited participants to share comments regarding the course. The online format allowed for up to 250 words from each respondent.

The Likert scale was used due to its resourcefulness in assessing personal attitudes and value clarification. Rensis Likert, a psychologist who studied organizational behavior, created the scale. He suggested that the degree of agreement with an intentionally polarized statement (such as “Strongly Agree” for the attitudinal object) provides a measurement regarding attitude about said attitudinal object (Likert, 1967).

The questionnaire was designed specifically for this study and the questions were distinctly correlated with the overall objectives of the course, which have been approved

by the University of Wisconsin-Stout Department of Education and the State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction.

Data collection

The questionnaire was given to the University of Wisconsin-Stout Assistant to the Webmaster to put online in a web-based format. Once this was completed, the researcher sent one electronic mail message to each subject requesting participation. The request explained the purpose and nature of the study (See Appendix A) and referred participants to an online link controlled by the web master (See Appendix B). Following the questions and space for comments was a consent form, again explaining the purpose and nature of the study. Upon completion of the questionnaire and following (under) the consent form, participants chose whether or not to submit their responses by clicking “Submit” or “Reset”. The questionnaire took approximately five minutes to complete, based on trials exercised by the researcher and the web master’s assistant. Once submitted, the responses were sent to the web master. At the end of a two-week period, all responses were forwarded to the researcher and the link was made inactive.

Data analysis

Due to the descriptive nature of the ordinal data, the researcher utilized frequencies and percentages in the process of data analysis. The data was also checked for reoccurring patterns among responses. Responses to the fundamental categories were compared to the research hypotheses, compared and contrasted with the demographic categories of the subjects, and cross-referenced. Specifically, frequencies were used to obtain frequency counts and percentages for questions 1-16. The five response choices

(“Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) were weighted with scores of 1 through 5 for the purpose of simplifying the calculations. See Appendix C for data charts.

Limitations

First, the subjects’ responses to the questionnaire may have been reflected by their desire to answer according to societal expectations rather than their actual opinions and reactions to questions. Second, administering the questionnaire via electronic mail was a somewhat passive mode of communication. Subjects may have been more apt to delete the electronic mail message and questionnaire than they might have been if they were approached over the telephone or in person. Finally, the questionnaire was designed by the researcher to closely resemble the objectives of the course, and according to these objectives and the literature, has strong face validity. Although statistical data discussed in the following chapter will show significant reliability of the instrument, it should be tested with other populations to highlight reliability.

CHAPTER 4

Results

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of future educators regarding their experience with a pre-professional course in inclusion of students with exceptional needs, specifically their personal assessment of their own preparedness regarding inclusion.

Demographic Information

Of the 110 subjects who were sent the questionnaire, forty-six students (or forty-two percent) responded. Approximately eighty-nine percent were undergraduate students and eleven percent declared graduate status. An overwhelming percent (approximately half of all the subjects) were Family & Consumer Science Education majors. Over half of the participants responded that they planned to teach children at the secondary level and approximately twenty-eight percent indicated that they planned to teach pre-school through third grade. Approximately eleven percent responded that they intended to serve students at the elementary level, while the remaining participants answered “middle school”, “adult”, or “undecided”.

When asked how much formal instruction relating to special education they have had, eighty percent claimed to have taken one or more college courses. About four percent indicated that they had received none, while approximately seven percent checked that they had a “short special education unit as part of a broader course or workshop in special education”, and about nine percent marked “other”.

When asked, “How would you rate your hands-on experience in special education?” the majority answered, “limited.” In response to the question, “How frequent is your personal contact with persons with disabilities?” the responses were distributed more evenly, with 32.6 % answering “less than once per month”, 32.6% answering “once per month”, 23.9 % answering “once per week”, and 10.9 % answering “almost daily.”

The participants indicated higher levels of *professional* contact with persons with disabilities than *personal* interaction. Over thirty-one percent revealed working with persons with disabilities “almost daily”.

This demographic information will be discussed further in chapter five and may be viewed in Appendix C. The following results are based on the responses to the nine core research questions posed. Although the questions are written in statement form, they are, for the purposes of this study, to be considered questions, as respondents were asked to mark their choice of reaction to each of the nine statements. Choices included “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Neutral,” “Disagree” and “Strongly Disagree.” Please see Appendix C for a complete break down of data.

Research Questions

Question 8: *If it were not for taking the Inclusion course, I would not have had adequate experience with persons with disabilities upon entering the teaching profession.*

Sixty-three percent of responses were agreeable (32.6% Agree; 30.4% Strongly Agree) with this statement, with 8.7% strongly disagreeing and 15.2% disagreeing. Thirteen percent remained neutral regarding this statement.

Question 9: *The Individual Learning Opportunity (15 Hours with a person/persons with disabilities) helped prepare me to teach students with disabilities.*

Over forty-one percent responded that they agreed, and 21.7% that they strongly agreed with this statement. Almost 22% indicated that they were neutral. About 11% disagreed with this remark and 4.3% strongly disagreed.

Question 10: *Team-teaching a lesson with an assigned partner prepared me to initiate team-teaching experiences in my career.*

Almost 33% of the participants agreed with this statement. Almost 22% strongly agreed, about 22% marked “Neutral” 15.2% disagreed, and 8.7% strongly disagreed with the statement.

Question 11: *Prior to taking “Inclusion”, I experienced feelings that I consider negative (discomfort, fear, guilt, etc.) when in the presence of persons with disabilities.*

Over 17% of the college students questioned strongly disagreed with this statement and 28.3% disagreed. Participants who indicated neutral feelings composed 21.7% of the responses. Over 30% agreed and 2.2% strongly agreed with question 11.

Question 12: *Taking “Inclusion” had neither a negative nor no impact on my attitudes about or perceptions of persons with disabilities.*

This question appeared to confuse students who participated. One participant did not respond to this statement and no participants indicated “Strongly Agree.” A cumulative percent of 88.9% disagreed or strongly disagreed (split equally) with the

statement. A valid percent of 4.4% marked “Neutral” and a valid percent of 6.7% agreed with the statement.

Question 13: *Due to the group exercises in “Inclusion” such as a team paper, group quizzes, and a group exam, I am more likely to collaborate with other teachers in the future.*

Fifty percent of respondents selected “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” for this statement (split between 37% and 13% respectively). The “Disagree” response was chosen by 19.6% of the participants, while 6.5% chose “Strongly Disagree.” Almost 24% remained neutral with their answers.

Question 14: *I will utilize the resources I collected (portfolio, handouts, etc.) from this course to facilitate inclusion as an educator.*

Over 76% of contributors either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Equal numbers (2 each) responded that they disagreed or strongly disagreed with this claim, resulting in a total of 8.6%. Neutral responses made up 15.2% of the scores. One comment in Item 17 (Comment section) was in direct response to this question. The participant wrote, “Lynn’s class was very beneficial to me. I really liked all of the handouts and information that she gave us for each unit. The portfolio will definitely be very helpful to me in my teaching career.”

Question 15: *I feel prepared to successfully implement and practice inclusion in the future.*

Over sixty-five percent of answers were positive (50% of which indicated “Agree”). Almost 24% responded neutrally. Approximately nine percent slightly

disagreed with this assertion and one respondent (or 2.2%) indicated that he or she strongly disagreed.

Question 16: *Taking this course is a significant contributor to my confidence regarding the concept of including students with disabilities in my teaching practices.*

No participants indicated that they strongly disagreed with this statement. Fewer than 9% disagreed and 17.4% marked “Neutral”. Almost 48% answered, “Agree” and over 26% responded that they strongly agreed with the statement. One subject remarked, “The class of inclusion really helped me understand where many students that have disabilities are coming from and what I might be able to help them in the classroom to be successful.” Another participant commented with, “This class was very effective in the additional information about inclusion and other disabilities or disorders that I have not been encountered with.” One additional comment shared was, “Inclusion gave me the information needed to effectively teach students, and what to do in situations which I may not have previously anticipated.”

Question 17: *Additional comments you would like to share:*

Eleven participants utilized the comment portion (Question 17) to remark on the course; no one commented on the questionnaire itself. The comments ranged from positive statements regarding resources collected, confidence developed, perspectives deepened, and knowledge formed to negative statements and constructive criticism including the following: future teachers should be required more training than this course alone, “...just another hoop to jump through,” “would be more beneficial to students if the instruction came exclusively from the teacher [assuming, rather than peers and gust

speakers],” concern about quality of effort in group work, and the suggestion that more volunteer hours be required, either to replace or supplement some contents of the course.

See Appendix D for a complete report of comments quoted by participants.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions, & Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the attitudes of future educators regarding their experience with a pre-professional course in inclusion of students with exceptional needs, specifically their personal assessment of their own preparedness regarding inclusion. The study took place at the University of Wisconsin-Stout in the spring of 2002. Data was collected via a questionnaire given to students who have completed the course. Subjects were chosen as a cluster sample of 110 undergraduate and graduate education majors at UW-Stout.

Results and Conclusions

The first hypothesis the researcher posed was that there would be a positive reaction toward completing the components of the course and notion of preparedness to work with persons with disabilities. Responses to questions 8,9, and 16 supported this hypothesis. Within these statements, the majority of subjects agreed (or strongly agreed) that they would not have been prepared to work with people with disabilities without having taken the course, that the ILO helped them to teach students with disabilities, and that the course significantly contributed to their confidence regarding the concept of including students with disabilities in their teaching practices.

Hypothesis 2 stated that there would be a positive reaction toward completing the components of the course and feelings of preparedness to collaborate with colleagues. Reactions to questions 10 and 13 indicated that less than 26% disagreed (or strongly disagreed) with the statements, "Team-teaching a lesson with my assigned partner

prepared me to initiate team-teaching experiences in my career” and “Due to the group exercises in ‘inclusion’, such as a team paper, group quizzes, and a group exam, I am more likely to collaborate with other teachers in the future.”

Hypothesis 3 was, “There will be a positive reaction from completing the components of the course in regard to perceived competency to facilitate inclusion upon entrance into education professions.” Specifically, this hypothesis was upheld by subjects’ reactions to questions 14 and 15. Over 76% of responses were agreeable to the statement, “I will utilize the resources I collected...from this course to facilitate inclusion as an educator.” Only five respondents indicated that they did not feel prepared to successfully implement and practice inclusion in the future.

Because a significant number, nine percent, marked, “other” when asked how much formal special education instruction they have had, the options given seem to be less comprehensive than the subjects’ diversity warranted. Although they had the option to comment on this at the end, many alternatives could be assumed. It is possible that the participants considered personal, professional, or other hands-on experience as formal instruction, opting to bypass the college instruction options by picking “other”. This is difficult to assess, and inconclusive when compared to the data from the questions that follow, regarding personal, professional, or other hands-on experience.

In addition, the questionnaire was only sent to students who had taken Inclusion, a formal college class on special education. It is not evident why two participants indicated “none” and three indicated only a “short special education unit” when given the alternative choice of “one or more college courses specific to the field of special

education”, unless they believed that the researcher intended for them to respond based on their level of experience *prior* to taking the course.

An alternative, yet unlikely possibility may be that these five subjects were enrolled in Inclusion but did not complete the course and therefore did not consider their “one course” of formal instruction complete. This is unlikely because the subjects’ names (those who were enrolled in the course under the instruction of Lynn LaVenture) were given to the researcher three months after the fall semester grades were submitted; changes to the registrar’s records after such a significant lapse in time are rare, especially in an occurrence of a cumulative 11.1 percent.

When compared to the responses to Question 8, “If it were not for taking the Inclusion course, I would not have had adequate experience with persons with disabilities upon entering the teaching profession,” it appears that the majority of participants did credit the course for the bulk of their experience.

Questions 9, 10, 11, 13, and 15 each shared ten to eleven neutral responses, perhaps a general occurrence due to respondents feeling objective about certain categories. It is possible that the same ten participants chose “Neutral” repeatedly, for any number of reasons, from apathy toward the course or questionnaire to difficulty assessing themselves or their future practices.

Overall, the research concluded that the future educators questioned had a positive attitude toward their preparedness to facilitate inclusion of students with exceptional educational needs.

Recommendations

The results of this study were based on one pre-professional course geared for future educators in a small, rural, public university setting. Considering the results and conclusions of this project, the researcher suggests some ideas for changes in the aforementioned research and ideas for continued studies. First, it may be beneficial to conduct this study at a few similar state of Wisconsin universities to gauge additional subjects' responses to the curriculum and instruction mandated by the Department of Public Instruction and by their own institutions of higher education.

Next, retesting the same subjects once they have entered the field of education as professionals would allow for a broader perspective of their own abilities and competencies, and usefulness or effectiveness of their pre-professional training.

Furthermore, one could conduct the study in two segments, using a pre-test/post-test method, rather than a self-assessment method (to test whether the self-assessment instrumentation skewed responses).

It should be noted that the study is focused on future educators' perceptions and experience; additional work should explore efforts that might be attempted to continue the progress made by this study. Future research will need to address whether the potential benefits of such courses are carried into classrooms and maintained. Interviews of parents and administrators might fulfill this valuable need. A re-examination of the impact of inclusion of students will also need to occur, taking into account the affects of recent changes in teacher education programs.

REFERENCES

- Cook, B.G. (2001). A comparison of teachers' attitudes toward their included students with mild and severe disabilities. *The Journal of Special Education, 34*(4), 203-213.
- Cook, B.G., Semmel, M.I., & Gerber, M.M. (1999). Attitudes of principals and special education teachers toward the inclusion of students with mild disabilities: Critical differences of opinion. *Remedial and Special Education, 20*, 199-207, 243.
- Cornoldi, C., Terreni, A., Scruggs, T.E., & Mastropieri, M.A. (1998). Teacher attitudes in Italy after twenty years of inclusion. *Remedial and Special Education, 19* (6), 350-356.
- DeBettencourt, L.U. (1999). General educators' attitudes toward students with mild disabilities and their use of instructional strategies: Implications for training. *Remedial and Special Education, 20* (1), 27-35.
- Drasgow, E., Yell, M.L., & Robinson, T.R. (2001). Developing legally correct and educationally appropriate IEPs. *Remedial & Special Education, 22* (6), 359-374.
- Hammeken, P.A. (1995). *Inclusion: 450 strategies for success*. Minnetonka, MN: Peytral Publications.
- Likert, R. (1967). *The human organization: Its management and value*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1985). *Measuring teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming*. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED 289 885).

- Ripley, S. (1997). *Collaboration between general and special education teachers*. (ERIC Clearinghouse on Teaching and Teacher Education Washington DC. No. ED409317).
- Sage, J. W. (1992). *Factors that assist teachers for integration of students with exceptional educational needs*. Unpublished master's thesis, University of Wisconsin-Stout, Menomonie.
- Tapasak, R.C., & Walther-Thomas, C.S. (1999). Evaluation of a first-year inclusion program. *Remedial and Special Education*, 20 (4), 216-225.
- Turnbull, A., Turnbull, R., Shank, M., & Leal, D. (1999). *Exceptional lives: Special education in today's schools*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- University of Wisconsin-Stout Undergraduate Course Bulletin. (2000). Retrieved December 10, 2001 from: http://www.uwstout.edu/ugbulletin/ugb_courses_01.pdf
- Villa, R.A., Thousand, J.S., & Chapple, J.W. (1996). Preparing teachers to support inclusion: Preservice and inservice programs. *Theory Into Practice*, 35 (1), 42-50.
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (1997). IDEA Complaint Investigations. *Special Education*. Retrieved April 1, 2002 from: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/een/com97022.html>
- Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. (2001). *Wisconsin Standards for Teacher Development and Licensure*. Retrieved December 9, 2001 from: <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlsis/tel/standards.html>

APPENDIX A
Request for Participation

Dear Future Educators,

As part of my master's thesis requirement, I am conducting a study regarding pre-professional training of educators in the area of inclusion. I have chosen to distribute a questionnaire to students who took Lynn LaVenture's Inclusion course in the Fall of 2001. Please take approximately 5 minutes to complete and submit the questionnaire at this link:

<http://www.uwstout.edu/survey/shiere/shier.htm>

Please understand that the basic nature of the study is to provide insight into the efforts currently taken to improve and enhance inclusion and to spark recommendations for continued initiatives; any potential risks to you as a participant are exceedingly small. Information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed.

Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Emily Shier, the researcher, at 232-5175 or Dr. Katherine Navarre, the research advisor, at 232-2569. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, 54751, (715) 232-1126.

Thank you for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Emily Shier

Emily Shier

M.S. Education Student, University of WI-Stout

APPENDIX B

Questionnaire and Consent Form

This questionnaire addresses the effectiveness of completing the components of the course "Inclusion". I am researching this topic as part of my master's thesis requirements to provide insight into the efforts currently taken to improve and enhance inclusion and to spark recommendations for continued initiatives. Please take approximately 5 minutes to complete and submit the questionnaire. Thank you!

Please check the answer that best applies to you.

1.	What is your classification?			
<input type="radio"/>	Undergraduate Student			
<input type="radio"/>	Graduate Student			
2.	What is your field of study?			<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	Family & consumer education, art education, technology education, or marketing education			
<input type="radio"/>	Early childhood education			
<input type="radio"/>	Vocational rehabilitation or special education			
<input type="radio"/>	Guidance and counseling			
<input type="radio"/>	Other			
3.	What level of student do you plan to serve?			<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/>	PreKindergarten-3rd Grade			
<input type="radio"/>	Elementary			
<input type="radio"/>	Middle School			
<input type="radio"/>	Secondary			

<input type="radio"/>	Adult			
<input type="radio"/>	Undecided			
4.	How much formal instruction have you had relating to special education?			
<input type="radio"/>	None			
<input type="radio"/>	Short special education unit as part of a broader course or workshop in special education			
<input type="radio"/>	One or more college courses specific to the field of special education			
<input type="radio"/>	Other			
5.	How would you rate your hands-on experience in special education?			
<input type="radio"/>	Very limited			
<input type="radio"/>	Limited			
<input type="radio"/>	Extensive			
<input type="radio"/>	Very extensive			
6.	How frequent is your <i>personal</i> contact with persons with disabilities?			
<input type="radio"/>	Less than once per month			
<input type="radio"/>	Approximately once per month			
<input type="radio"/>	Approximately once per week			
<input type="radio"/>	Almost daily			

7.	How frequent is your <i>professional</i> contact with persons with disabilities			
<input type="radio"/>	Less than once per month			
<input type="radio"/>	Approximately once per month			
<input type="radio"/>	Approximately once per week			
<input type="radio"/>	Almost daily			

Please answer the following questions based on your own opinion of your experience taking "Inclusion" (SPED 430/630). Circle only one answer for each question. Choose among five answers, Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Be as open and honest as you can.

8.	If it were not for taking the Inclusion course, I would not have had adequate experience with persons with disabilities upon entering the teaching profession.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
9.	The Individual Learning Opportunity (15 Hours with a person/persons with disabilities) helped prepare me to teach students with disabilities.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
10.	Team-teaching a lesson with an assigned partner prepared me to initiate team-teaching experiences in my career.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
11.	Prior to taking "Inclusion", I experienced feelings that I consider negative (discomfort, fear, guilt, etc.) when in the presence of persons with disabilities.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
12.	Taking "Inclusion" had either a negative or no impact on my attitudes about or perceptions of persons with disabilities.			
Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

13. Due to the group exercises in "Inclusion" such as a team paper, group quizzes, and a group exam, I am more likely to collaborate with other teachers in the future.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

14. I will utilize the resources I collected (portfolio, handouts, etc.) from this course to facilitate inclusion as an educator.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

15. I feel prepared to successfully implement and practice inclusion in the future.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

16. Taking this course is a significant contributor to my confidence regarding the concept of including students with disabilities in my teaching practices.

Strongly Agree ☐ Agree ☐ Neutral ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly Disagree ☐

17. Additional comments you would like to share:

I understand that by submitting this questionnaire, I am giving my informed consent as a participating volunteer in this study. I understand the basic nature of the study and agree that any potential risks are exceedingly small. I also understand the potential benefits that might be realized from the successful completion of this study. I am aware that the information is being sought in a specific manner so that only minimal identifiers are necessary and so that confidentiality is guaranteed. I realize that I have the right to refuse to participate and that my right to withdraw from participation at any time during the study will be respected with no coercion or prejudice.

NOTE: Questions or concerns about the research study should be addressed to Emily Shier, the researcher, at 232-5175 or Dr. Katherine Navarre, the research advisor, at 232-2569. Questions about the rights of research subjects can be addressed to Sue Foxwell, Human Protections Administrator, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 Harvey Hall, Menomonie, WI, 54751, (715) 232-1126.

*Note: Questionnaire was reduced in size and separated by pages when transferred from an online format to this document.

APPENDIX C

Data Charts

Q 1 “What is your classification?”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 undergraduate	40	87.0	88.9	88.9
	2 graduate	5	10.9	11.1	100.0
	Total	45	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		46	100.0		

Q 2 “What is your field of study?”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 family-consumer	21	45.7	46.7	46.7
	2 early childhood	12	26.1	26.7	73.3
	3 voc rehab/special ed	6	13.0	13.3	86.7
	4 guidance & counseling	2	4.3	4.4	91.1
	5 other	4	8.7	8.9	100.0
	Total	45	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		46	100.0		

Q 3 “Level of student plan to serve”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 pre-school/K-3rd	13	28.3	28.3	28.3
	2 elementary	5	10.9	10.9	39.1
	3 middle school	2	4.3	4.3	43.5
	4 secondary	24	52.2	52.2	95.7
	5 adult	1	2.2	2.2	97.8
	6 undecided	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 4 “How much formal instruction?”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 none	2	4.3	4.4	4.4
	2 short spec educ unit	3	6.5	6.7	11.1
	3 one or more coll. courses	36	78.3	80.0	91.1
	4 other	4	8.7	8.9	100.0
	Total	45	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		46	100.0		

Q 5 “Rate your hands-on experience”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 very limited	5	10.9	10.9	10.9
	2 limited	28	60.9	60.9	71.7
	3 extensive	10	21.7	21.7	93.5
	4 very extensive	3	6.5	6.5	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 6 “Personal contact -persons w/dis”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 less than once/month	15	21.6	21.6	32.6
	2 once per month	15	32.6	32.6	65.2
	3 once per week	11	23.9	23.9	89.1
	4 almost daily	5	10.9	10.9	100.0
	Total	46	110.0	110.0	

Q 7 “Prof. contact -persons w/dis”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 less than once/month	13	28.3	28.9	28.9
	2 once per month	8	17.4	17.8	46.7
	3 once per week	10	21.7	22.2	68.9
	4 almost daily	14	30.4	31.1	100.0
	Total	45	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		46	100.0		

Q 8 “W/O Inclusion, no experience”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	8.7
	2 Disagree	7	15.2	15.2	15.2
	3 Neutral	6	13.0	13.0	37.0
	4 Agree	15	32.6	32.6	78.3
	5 Strongly Agree	14	30.4	30.4	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 9 “ILO prepared me to teach”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	2 Disagree	5	10.9	10.9	15.2
	3 Neutral	10	21.7	21.7	37.0
	4 Agree	19	41.3	41.3	78.3
	5 Strongly Agree	10	21.7	21.7	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 10 “Team teaching prepared me”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	8.7
	2 Disagree	7	15.2	15.2	23.9
	3 Neutral	10	21.7	21.7	45.7
	4 Agree	15	32.6	32.6	78.3
	5 Strongly Agree	10	21.7	21.7	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 11 “Prior to Incl. I had neg. feelings”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	8	17.4	17.4	17.4
	2 Disagree	13	28.3	28.3	45.7
	3 Neutral	10	21.7	21.7	67.4
	4 Agree	14	30.4	30.4	97.8
	5 Strongly Agree	1	2.2	2.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 12 “Incl had neg./no impact on me”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	20	43.5	44.4	44.4
	2 Disagree	20	43.5	44.4	88.9
	3 Neutral	2	4.3	4.4	93.3
	4 Agree	3	6.5	6.7	100.0
	5 Strongly Agree	0	0	0	100.0
	Total	45	97.8	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.2		
Total		46	100.0		

Q 13 “Due to group exerc., I can collab”		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	3	6.5	6.5	6.5
	2 Disagree	9	19.6	19.6	26.1
	3 Neutral	11	23.9	23.9	50.0
	4 Agree	17	37	37	87.0
	5 Strongly Agree	6	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 14 "I'll utilize the resources collected"		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	4.3
	2 Disagree	2	4.3	4.3	8.7
	3 Neutral	7	15.2	15.2	23.9
	4 Agree	19	41.3	41.3	65.2
	5 Strongly Agree	16	34.8	34.8	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 15 "I feel prepared to practice Inclus."		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	1	2.2	2.2	2.2
	2 Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	10.9
	3 Neutral	11	23.9	23.9	34.8
	4 Agree	23	50.0	50.0	84.8
	5 Strongly Agree	7	15.2	15.2	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

Q 16 "Course contributed to confidence"		Freq.	%	Valid %	Cum. %
Valid	1 Strongly Disagree	4	8.7	8.7	8.7
	2 Disagree	0	0	0	8.7
	3 Neutral	8	17.4	17.4	26.1
	4 Agree	22	47.8	47.8	73.9
	5 Strongly Agree	12	26.1	26.1	100.0
	Total	46	100.0	100.0	

APPENDIX D
Responses to Item 17: Comments by Participants

Lynn's class was very beneficial to me. I really liked all of the handouts and information that she gave us for each unit. The portfolio will definitely be very helpful to me in my teaching career!!

I thought the class was a lot of busy work and not very useful. I do not feel comfortable enough to successfully implement inclusion in my classroom. I feel that I gained a great UNDERSTANDING of what people with disabilities go through on a daily basis, but as for implementation, I would not go that far. The team paper, group exam, group quizzes are not something I would ever use in my classroom. Group exams and quizzes do not, in opinion, fully test an individual's knowledge and comprehension. The group serves as a crutch. Group work is appropriate in some instances. The team teaching paper, for instance, worked well, but having four people putting a group paper together was not appropriate, in my view. No matter how much educators try to justify it, one or two people end up doing all the work, and the people who end up doing most of it are the ones who care the most about the class, their grade, and their learning. The people who are not concerned about the above think "good enough" is ok. For others, "good enough" just doesn't cut it. In a group with four people, the standards are too different, and a paper, unless it is an in-class assignment, is not effective. My portfolio is nice, but I don't see it as being very useful in the future. In my experience, with the exception of kids with learning disabilities, all the other special education students have an aide with them in the classroom. More of a focus on learning disabilities and how to include these kids would have been useful because that is reality. I would like to know specifically how to encourage someone who struggles with reading to overcome and succeed. Assignments are assignments. I have expectations, and my students will be expected to meet and exceed those expectations. Reading is a lost art in many schools, and it negatively affects kids as they move on with their lives. No one likes extensive reading assignments, but if you don't plug away through them, you are never going to get better at it. How do I help kids with learning disabilities? They too will be faced with words and the need to make sense of them for the rest of their lives.

Inclusion gave me the information needed to effectively teach students, and what to do in situations I may not have previously anticipated.

Being a special education major I believe that students that are going into regular education need more than just this class to be prepared in teaching students with special needs.

Just like all of the other classes, Inclusion was just another hoop to jump through!

The class of inclusion really helped me understand where many students that have disabilities are coming from and what I might be able to help them in the classroom to be successful.

The course would be more beneficial to students if the instruction came exclusively from the teacher, rather than classmates. As a consumer of UW-Stout's services, I believe I am paying for the knowledge that credentialed instructors have to offer, not the typically vague and often incorrect musings of fellow classmates. For UW-Stout to deliver anything less is not ethical. Ms. LaVenture is a skilled and knowledgeable educator; I wish, as a student, I would have had more access to her expertise.

The team teaching and group assignments have shown me that if a quality effort is to be achieved, it should be done alone. The more contact I have with my peers, the more I worry about the future of education, especially in technology education and early childhood education. That is the primary reason why I would resist team teaching and group collaboration.

I felt that the inclusion class was helpful, but I don't feel that it had such a dramatic effect as to fully prepare for my teaching experience. I learned a lot and am glad that I took the course. Although, I do not feel that I am a better teacher because of it.

This class was very effective in the additional information about inclusion and other disabilities or disorders that I have not been encountered with. I feel that the class would have been more effective if there were more observation hours other than the 15 that were required. There are so many opportunities in this area.

I have had other classes in special education, which may bias my opinion more towards the Inclusion class. The class helped by explaining the different disabilities there are, but that is all it did. I feel that the class should show ways to include these students in your teaching and how specifically you would work with the special education teacher. Also, as a part of the portfolio we were assigned to do worksheets about the number of cases, etc. about the specific disability. I do not feel that this was beneficial. I am sure, like many others, I just copied parts from the text not really knowing what it meant.

I think that more experience with the students is needed to better understand the actual workings of an IEP in the school setting.

I am currently intern teaching and I have found the Inclusion class to be extremely beneficial to my professional development as a teacher. I have at least five students in each of my classes that require special education. I modify my teaching on a daily basis to be more conducive to their learning and I am grateful that I took Lynn LaVenture's class. It's an instrumental part of my success as a teacher.

APPENDIX E
Course Syllabus

Inclusion of Students with Exceptional Needs
SPED-430/630
Fall, 2001

- I. Instructor: Lynn LaVenture
Office Hrs: Posted by office door
- II. Catalog Course Description: Inclusion of students with exceptional educational needs in the regular classroom setting. Laws, definition, characteristics, adaptations, strategies, and transitional services that pertain to persons identifies with: cognitive disability, learning disability, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional disability, autism, traumatic brain injury, speech and language disorders, visual and hearing loss, physical and other health impairments.
- III. Course Objectives: Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:
 1. List and explain major provisions and implications of state and federal law pertaining to exceptional education.
 2. Explain the (a) composition, (b) responsibilities, and (c) legally required procedures of the M-Team and IEP.
 3. List (a) distinguishing characteristics, (b) unique educational needs, and (c) appropriate general educational modifications for each of the following categories of atypical learners:
 - a. Physical impairment (orthopedic, chronic health condition, traumatic brain injury)
 - b. Below average ability (CDB, CDS)
 - c. Experiential differences and/or deprivation
 - d. Emotional-social maladjustment
 - e. Receptive, integrative, or expressive deficiencies (LD), speech, language, and communication impairments (autism)
 - f. Visual impairment
 - g. Auditory impairment
 - h. Attention deficit disorder/Attention
 - i. Gifted and talented
 4. Interpret an IEP-Team report in terms of the implications of the evaluation for the regular classroom teacher and anticipate the educational modifications that the classroom teacher will need to make in keeping with the M-Team and IEP for that individual.
 5. Choose, adapt, and/or develop appropriate educational plans, materials, and procedures from the perspective of his/her major and/or grade level orientation.
 6. Plan and/or demonstrate strategies for dealing with inappropriate classroom behaviors.
 7. Plan barrier removal to accommodate specific atypical learners.
 8. Plan and/or demonstrate evaluation methods and procedures for use with certain specific atypical learners for the purposes of instruction and grading.
 9. Demonstrate acceptance of the atypical learner.
 10. Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively a growing understanding of, and concern for, the atypical learner.

11. Demonstrate an understanding that children with developmental disabilities are included in the “at risk” population.
12. **(Graduate Students Only)** Conduct an independent learning activity which is consistent with the content and purpose of the course.

IV. Course Requirements: The student will be expected to read assigned material, participate in class and group discussions, and to complete assignments at a level of competency which is acceptable to the instructor. Unacceptable or minimally acceptable work may be redone at the instructor’s discretion. In addition to daily assignments, each student is required to develop a portfolio in compliance with instructor specifications, write a reflective paper on a topic of inclusion, complete an independent learning activity with a persons/s with an exceptionality and prepare a collaborative paper on a n aspect of inclusion in the classroom which will be team taught to the class.

V. Required Readings:

Turnbull, A., & Turnbull, H. (1998). Exceptional lives: Special education in today’s schools (Second Edition). New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.

VI. Evaluation and Methodology:

1. This course incorporates co-operative group learning. It is expected that you will participate and be a productive member of the group you are assigned to both during in-class activities and on out of class projects. Peer assessments will be given periodically throughout the semester.
2. The student will complete a variety of application assignments in class.
3. A team teaching presentation will be researched by you and a team member and presented in 15 minutes to the class. A 5 page formal paper is to be submitted at the time of your presentation. A peer evaluation of the cooperation of the team member and a self evaluation will also be required. Team teaching presentations will be given after a quiz each week. Each time a group presents and you are in class, you will receive 10 attendance points.
4. Eleven quizzes will be given on the dates specified. Each will be worth 20 points. Only ten will be counted toward your grade (200 pts.). (See XI.)
5. A formal paper on the topic of inclusion will be due on **October 5**. An additional handout will be provided. This will be a cooperative paper written by your group (90 pts).
6. The student is expected to organize and keep a portfolio of work for the class. It will be submitted for format on **September 28** and for final evaluation on **December 3**. An additional handout is provided (110 pts).
7. An independent learning opportunity with a person with an exceptionality is provided. Fifteen hours, a log, paper and verification of hours are to be completed by **November 19**. An additional handout is provided (75 pts).
8. A comprehensive mid-term take-home exam (50 pts) and a final exam (100 pts) will be given.

9. All formal papers will require using APA (American Psychological Association) style as stated in the Writing Standards of the Dept of Education; School Counseling; School Psychology. A handout will be provided.
- VII. Persons Missing a Quiz: You will have 24 hours to make it up. Contact the instructor for an appointment. If you have a pre-excused absence (Choir trips, field trips, etc.) with a letter from your instructor- you may (by appointment) take the quiz prior to the day it is given.
- VIII. Points: (10% each week) will be deducted on assignments received past the due date.
- IX. IF YOU NEED ANY ACCOMMODATIONS IN THE CLASSROOM OR AT THE TIME OF THE EVALUATIONS, PLEASE CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY.
- X. Attendance Policy: Attendance is expected; make-up work (due to unavoidable absence) will be permitted at the instructor's discretion.
- XI. Graduate Differentiation: In addition to the assignments required of all students, graduate students will be required with the instructor to do a special project or activity which is appropriate to the content and purpose of the course.
- XII. Undergraduate grades are assigned by the following schedule:

93 – 100% = A	80 – 82% = B-	67 - 69% = D+
90 – 92% = A-	77 – 79% = C+	63 – 66% = D
87 – 89% = B+	73 – 76% = C-	60 – 62% = D-
83 – 86% = B	70 – 72% = C-	0 – 59% = F

Graduate grades are assigned by a schedule adjusted to be compatible with the graduate grading procedures.

*Note: Remaining 4 pages of syllabus consist of readings by chapter, a calendar of subjects to be covered, and 3 pages of recommended readings (NOT PICTURED HERE).

APPENDIX F

INCLUSION PORTFOLIO RUBRIC Fall, 2001

Many students who have disabilities have a difficult time organizing materials for their classes. As an example of how to help them in your classroom, I am requiring you to keep a portfolio in the class. Follow this format for the portfolio. It will be submitted for format and final evaluation. You will, also, be required to bring it to class for a peer evaluation once during the semester. *A-J and G 1-12 all need dividers.*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- A. Self-Evaluation (will be given to you the day of peer portfolio evaluations).
- B. Syllabus
- C. History, Laws, Special Education Today (Chapter 1 & 2 outline)
- D. Inclusion and Paper (Chapter 3 outline)
- E. Team Teaching
 - Paper, class evaluation, handouts, information you gathered, self-evaluation & team evaluation.
 - All members of the team are to have a copy of the paper.
- F. Gifted and Talented
- G. Twelve categories of exceptionalities according to the IDEA Act
 - 1. Cognitive Disability- Mental Retardation
 - 2. Traumatic Brain Injury
 - 3. Severe & Multiple Disabilities
 - 4. Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder
 - 5. Learning Disabilities
 - 6. Emotional Disturbance
 - 7. Autism
 - 8. Speech & Language Disorder
 - 9. Physical Disabilities
 - 10. Hearing Impairment
 - 11. Blindness & Low Vision
 - 12. Other Health Impairments
- H. Transition
- I. Mid Term Case Study
- J. Independent Learning Opportunity
 - 1. Log, paper, verification of hours
- K. Final Evaluation and Self evaluation of portfolio.

Your portfolio will be evaluated this way:

Organization.....	25 pts.
(10 on September 28 and 15 on December 3)	
Class notes, text outlines.....	60 pts.
(10 on September 28 and 50 on December 3)	
Additional information.....	10 pts.
(December 3)	
Self evaluation.....	15 pts.
(December 3)	

TOTAL ... 110 pts.