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Assessing the effects of cooperative learning on student opinions of mainstreamed special education students.

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**ASSESSING THE EFFECTS OF COOPERATIVE LEARNING ON
STUDENT OPINIONS OF MAINSTREAMED SPECIAL EDUCATION
STUDENTS**

A Field Project

Presented to the

Faculty of the Graduate College

University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Specialist in Educational Administration

University of Nebraska

by

Dave Kaslon

1995

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

Accepted for the faculty of the Graduate College, University of
Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Specialist in Education, University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Supervisory Committee

Name	Department
<u>Blaine E. Ward</u>	<u>Ed Administration</u>
<u>Tom Falvo</u>	<u>Special Educ + Com Dis</u>
	<u>James Petric</u>
	Chairman
	<u>July 13 1995</u>
	Date

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The major thrust of special education in the 1980's has been to provide educational services to handicapped students in the regular education classroom with non-handicapped students. How successful has the attempt been? In 1973 when Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and in 1975 when the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142 that mandated an appropriate education for all handicapped children the term "mainstreaming" was present, but people had no idea what was appropriate mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming for some individual handicapped students meant being in the same school with non-handicapped students while for others mainstreaming meant possibly eating with or riding the same bus as non-handicapped students. The mainstreaming movement for handicapped students at the early stages encountered some of the same resistance as did the social minorities in their search for equality (Bogdan, 1983).

In the 1990's, mainstreaming is still viewed from different

perspectives by personnel in various educational systems. In some school districts, the mildly handicapped students are taught by the regular classroom teacher as a part of the regular education classroom. They receive supportive services from the special education teacher for a majority, if not their entire school day. On the other hand, in some school districts, if a student qualifies for special education services, they are served mainly by the special education teacher for their handicapping condition in a "pull out" program. There are few figures to show a comparison of how many handicapped students are served in either type of program. However, improving educational programs to enhance education for all students should be the ultimate goal of the 1990's.

The passage of Public Law 94-142 in 1975 required free, appropriate education for the handicapped in the least restrictive environment. Fulfilling this requirement to most educators and parents meant placing the handicapped student into the regular classroom to learn academics as well as social skills. However, studies by Gresham, 1982, Shumaker, Pederson, Hazel, and Meyen, 1983 have shown that handicapped students interact very little with their non-handicapped peers. In fact, many times the interaction is of a negative rather than a

positive nature. These studies would suggest that the handicapped student is not learning appropriate skills from the modeling of their peers in a mainstreamed situation.

At the present time, resource room programs are reported to be the most widely used educational service delivery system for mildly handicapped students (March, Price and Smith, 1983; Mercer and Mercer, 1981). Regular education teachers often felt they did not possess the technical skills to work with the handicapped students. They also felt that handicapped students would take up too much of their time, thus affecting the education of the non-handicapped students (Williams & Algozzine, 1979). Thus the "Pull out" model of working with handicapped students in the resource room continues to be widely used in the majority of school districts.

Although Public Law 94-142 legislates that all handicapped students receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive environment (LRE), some professionals believe that the law intended to emphasize LRE placements for the mildly handicapped students. These professionals believe that the mildly handicapped students would be able to receive all of their education in the regular classroom as opposed to the "pull out" resource method. It is the judgement of these

advocates that “pull out” programs are unnecessary. The parental and professional initiative to limit usage of special placements has come to be known as the Regular Education Initiative (REI).

In taking the REI movement to its fullest meaning, a complete “merger” between regular education and special education programs has been suggested. The “merger”, according to Stainback and Stainback (1984), is needed because education should meet the needs of all students. Thus a dual system is not needed. The dual system only creates an “artificial barrier” between people and the resources needed to carry out the educational function.

Until the development of programs such as Cooperative Learning and Peer-Mediated Intervention, little has been done within the general education setting to help reduce the need for segregated special education services. The cooperative learning strategy is designed to make the integration of special education and regular education more manageable and it can be used to help develop improved social acceptance among students (Parker, 1984). The classroom is structured in such a way that cooperation is required by students in the group in order to attain a common goal. The challenge is to integrate the resource student intellectually and socially into the classroom. Few of

the problems encountered when mainstreaming a student are outcomes of attitude acceptance, opinions, beliefs and understanding of the mainstreamed student (Enright & Sutterfield, 1979). The problems are found in educational planning, student evaluation, or lesson adaptations. Feedback from mainstreamed students, classroom teachers, regular students, the school counselor, and personal observations confirms the need for inclusive special student experiences to occur if mainstreaming is to be positive. An intervention process such as cooperative learning appears to be helpful in improving this inclusiveness and opinions students have about mainstreamed students.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to find out if there was a significant difference in the perceptions of regular education students toward special education students in cooperative learning classrooms as compared to the perceptions of students toward their special education peers in non-cooperative learning classrooms.

Statement of the Hypothesis

It was hypothesized that student opinions of special education peers will be significantly more positive in cooperative learning

classrooms than student opinions of special education peers in non-cooperative learning classrooms.

Definition of Terms

Behavioral Disorder (BD) - A condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of time and to a marked degree, which adversely affects the child's educational performance. (A) an inability to learn which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors; (B) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (C) inappropriate types of behaviors or feelings under normal circumstances; (D) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or (E) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems (Nebraska Department of Education (Rule 51).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) shall mean the educational placement of a handicapped child, to the maximum extent appropriate, in an environment with children who are not handicapped.

Mainstreaming - Handicapped students are educated with non-handicapped students to the maximum extent appropriate.

Mental Disability - A condition in which a person has significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behaviors and manifested during the developmental period, which adversely affects a child's development or educational performances (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51).

Pull Out Program - Special Education classes that disabled students attend to receive help in specific disability area outside of the regular classroom.

Regular Classroom Students - Students who do not receive assistance from a special education program.

Regular Classroom Teacher - An instructor of curricula for regular classroom students and mainstreamed students.

Regular Education Initiative (REI) - A system of integrated planning, delivery, and evaluation of the effects of services to all students.

Resource Room - Delivery unit that provides specialized instruction and behavioral monitoring of children verified as SLD, BD, and Mentally Disabled.

Resource Student - A BD, SLD, Mentally Disabled student who receives instruction both in the resource room and in the regular classroom.

Special Education shall mean specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a verified handicapped child.

Special Learning Disability (SLD) - A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or to do mathematical calculations. The term includes such conditions as perceptual disability, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction,

dyslexia , and developmental aphasia (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51).

Delimitations

This study will assess the change in opinions of approximately 150 fourth grade students enrolled in a midwestern, mostly middle-class, rural, public, elementary school toward mainstreamed students. Conclusions drawn from the study will be generalized only for groups with similar demographics.

It should also be noted sometimes increased awareness and sensitivity may not always affect one's behavior (Enright & Sutterfield, 1979).

Procedures and Organization

A survey instrument was used to assess students opinions of mainstreamed special education students in the treatment for mainstreamed students, emotional and behavioral patterns and the friendships with mainstreamed students. The instrument contains some adapted statements from the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP), Form B (Yuker, Block, & Young, 1966). The format of the survey includes a Likert type scale.

The survey served as a pre and post interventional program

measure of student opinions.

The intervention program of cooperative learning was used by the staff in the regular classroom for 18 weeks of instruction.

A test was performed with the data to assess the effectiveness of the intervention program, 0.05 was used to indicate significant changes.

Within this first chapter, the problem has been stated as well as the procedures adopted and significance of the study. Succeeding chapters will include a review of related literature, information about the methodology involved with the survey, an analysis of the data gathered, and finally a summary of the results and recommendations.

Significance of the Study

This study will help to determine if an educational teaching method (cooperative learning) can provide an effective method for positively influencing students opinions toward disabled students.

The result of this project may be utilized in a variety of ways. Administrators could arrange for staff inservice to discuss cooperative learning and how this would help facilitate the integration and mainstreaming of special education students in their classes. In addition individual building Multi-Disciplinary Teams are often presented with classroom problems related to the integration of students into the

classes. The administrator and classroom teacher who are often members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team, may chose to implement cooperative learning in a particular classroom as a means to recognize problems such as discipline or possible social rejection.

Chapter II

Literature Review

A need to provide educational services for those students who have not had the opportunity for an appropriate education prompted the federal government to mandate special education services for students. Special education as defined by Title 92, Nebraska Administrative Code Chapter 51 “shall mean specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a verified handicapped child.” The following terms are used to categorize the handicapping condition:

Autism

Behaviorally Disordered

Deaf, Blindness

Hearing Impairments

Mentally Handicapped: Mild

Mentally Handicapped: Moderate

Mentally Handicapped: Severe/Profound

Multiple Impairments

Orthopedically Impairments

Other Health Impairments

Specific Learning Disabilities

Speech/Language Impairment: Language
Speech/Language Impairment: Articulation
Speech/Language Impairment: Voice
Speech/Language Impairment: Fluency
Traumatic Brain Injury
Visual Impairments: Blind
Visual Impairments: Legally Blind
Visual Impairments: Partially Sighted

To help understand the evolution of special education services, the history of education must be reviewed. Providing services to children with learning problems actually dates back to nearly 200 years (Kirk & Chalfant, 1984). Kirk and Chalfant imply the initial thrust came from neurologists who were involved with the study of brain disorders and behavior. These studies led to the development of tests and various remedial programs.

1910's

During the 1910's, compulsory schools had its beginning. Immigrants were moving into the country at a rapid rate, there was a need for compulsory education. The country was in an assembly line

mentality and schools followed this same type of assembly-line education. In fact, such terms as school plant and the superintendent of schools were the results of this thinking. As soon as children were taught in the assembly line fashion, people recognized that some students did not function well. In the 1910's, pull-out mentality was in place. Thus special education had its beginning (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989).

1920'S - 1940's

The Client system was introduced during this era. Indirect services became popular in mental health agencies because of the large number of individuals having to be served for stress caused by the industrialization of the country. Indirect services were used because more individuals were identified as needing assistance than could be serviced by available personnel. The consultation model is thus brought into education (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989).

1950's

During the 1950's society was starting to question the "Pull Out Programs" for the lower academic (slower) students. The severe and profound students were not in the schools yet as most were in

institutions. The Civil Rights movement also had its beginning at this time (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989).

Because of the continued persistence of parents in the 50's to have their child receive public school services, the state and federal government finally became involved (Kirk & Chalfant, 1984).

1960's

In the 1960's, widespread questioning of pull-out programs in education was discussed. The Civil Rights movement now had education "all stirred up" (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989).

1970's

In 1973, the United States Congress became a political partner with state legislatures in the effort to appropriately educate all handicapped children when it passed Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act and in 1975 when it passed Public Law 94-142. These federal laws combined to provide civil rights protection for the special education programs. LRE was present, but people couldn't make it happen (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989). The term "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE) according to Rule 51 means "the educational placement of a handicapped child to

the maximum extent appropriate to be in an environment with children who are not handicapped.”

1980's

The thrust for the 1980's was to integrate services for all students (M. Friend, personal communication, September 21, 1989). Issues such as the Regular Education Initiative in which teachers adapt the regular school environment to meet the needs of mildly handicapped children in the regular classroom as opposed to the pull-out programs in which students are placed in segregated rooms to be taught are being looked at very closely. Public Law 94-142 (the Education for all handicapped Children Act of 1975) that mandated the rights of all students to an education in the “least restricted environment” is the main goal of the 90's. Madeline Will, the Assistant Secretary of Education for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, committed the Federal Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services to removing the barriers between regular and special education and the barriers to full integration of persons with disabilities into a heterogeneous society (Will, 1986).

Would the merger of regular education and special education programs even be possible? While looking at the organizational

arrangements of school programs, Stainback and Stainback (1984) talk about a “merger” between special education and regular education to meet the needs of all students. Gilhool (1976) talked about a merger when he said:

We are approaching the day when, for each child the law will require that the schooling fit the child, his needs, his capacities, and his wishes; not the child fit the school.

Thus special education may become general and general education, special.

A merger according to Stainback and Stainback (1984) is needed because the instructional needs of the regular education student and the special education student does not warrant a dual operation system. Individualized services should not be for only special education. If individualization is good, it should be used for all students who need it.

If a merger between regular education and special education programs occurred, instructional materials could be used by all student for regular education and special education classes. Gardner (1977) states, “There are no unique methods for one with exceptional children that differ in kind from those used with normal children.” The dual system as noted by Stainback and Stainback (1984) creates an “artificial

barrier” between people and resources needed to carry out the educational function. By modifying the mainstream in this case, regular and special education for all students would be facilitated.

As the Stainbacks talk of a “merger: of Special and Regular Education in the October (1984) issue of *Exceptional Children*, others such as John Messinger and Lawrence Lieberman (1985) discuss how little pressure from the U.S. Supreme Court is being placed on schools to live up to the mandate the Stainbacks “assert” Public Law 94-142 requires.

In commenting on the Stainbacks article “A Rationale for the Merger of Special and Regular Education”, Messinger (1985) looks at clinical observations which indicate educational problems relating to the diversity of human behavior in adults as well as teachers variance in abilities to cope, manage, and teach groups of diverse intensity. The high attrition rate of those that work with Emotionally Disturbed is proof of this. Messinger (1985) feels that the “merger” of regular education and special education is not a reality at this time because he sees no “evidence of a drastic improvement in regular educational teacher training and professional practice in the public schools.”

A wedding without the bride, an invitation to matrimony by the

groom who didn't even ask the bride--these are some of the analogies used by Lawrence Lieberman in his article "Special Education and Regular Education: A Merger made in heaven?" the bride, of course, is the regular educator who has in some cases been dragged "kicking and screaming" into a merger with special education. Regular educators must feel that a merger is in their own best interest before there is any chance of a productive special education/regular education merger. Lieberman (1985) comments on the Stainbacks merger article (1984) in which he explains that a merger into one unified system will never result in the attainment of those goals listed in the article "A Nation at Risk" (1983) because he feels that underlying them is "clearly a direction away from the individual."

At the present time, resource room programs are reported to be the most widely used educational service delivery system for mildly handicapped (Marsh, Price, & Smith, 1983; Mercer & Mercer, 1981). These programs, according to Friend and McMutt (1984) are defined as "instructional arrangements in which handicapped students receive some special education assistance, but the majority of their instruction occurs in a regular education setting." (p. 150)

When mainstreaming occurs in the resource programs, the majority

of the responsibility lies with the regular education teacher. The National Education Association and the American Federation of Teachers have expressed favor with handicapped student mainstreamed into the regular classroom but with the following cautions: "that mainstreaming is not used as a device for reducing the cost of education; that teachers receive adequate assistance from supportive personnel; that teachers receive training prior to implementation; and that modifications be made in class size and scheduling" (Mori, 1979, p. 243).

In a study by Williams and Algozzine (1979), teachers who did not participate in mainstreaming did so for two major reasons: 1) they felt they did not possess the "technical abilities" to work with the handicapped; and 2) they felt that handicapped children would take up too much time, thus affecting the education of the non-handicapped students. In an experiment conducted by Ivance, Hogue, and Brulle (1984), the purpose was to observe the time teachers spent assisting individuals with learning disabilities as compared to nondisabled peers in the mainstreamed setting. In their experiment at the secondary level (50 minute class period), teachers averaged 2.4% of their time with handicapped students as compared to 1.4% with non-labeled students.

This was not significant, ($p=.0694$). In their experiment at the elementary level with learning disabled students, teachers spent 86 seconds per child with the handicapped students as compared to 34 seconds with each non-labeled child. Again the figures were not statistically significant.

The results of their experiment can be judged from two viewpoints. One that the time spent with handicapped students is no greater than that of non-handicapped students; thus regular teachers are meeting the needs of the students and that special educators are accurate in knowing what classes students can be mainstreamed with adequate support services from the resource teacher. On the other hand, the result may indicate that regular education teachers are not responding to the needs of the handicapped students in their classroom. Ivance, Hogue, and Brulle (1984) go on to say that the purpose of their study was not to look at those issues but merely to report what was currently happening.

Mainstreaming is occurring in different stages at various school districts throughout the country. Successful programs include "fitting" into already established programs (Bogdan, 1983). Change is not an easy task, but people are becoming more sensitive to the needs and

rights of disabled people. They are finally being treated as people endowed with “human rights.”

Some educators are still resisting the mainstreaming movement for handicapped students as they were for the poor and social minorities (Bogdan, 1983). Based on current research findings, it is imperative that further research be undertaken to examine mainstreaming. Evidence is needed to further support total mainstreaming in all programs.

While looking at both successful and unsuccessful mainstreaming programs, Bogdan (1983) concluded:

We have come to understand them (mainstreaming failures) not as indications that disabled children are inherently incapable of success in mainstream classrooms. Rather, these supposed failures of mainstreaming are problems of organizational arrangements, internecine politics, and a lack of will and skills of school personnel.

Over the past eight to ten years, a teaching technique used quite often by teachers to help bridge the social barrier between special education students and regular education students is cooperative learning. Smith (1986) advocates cooperative learning because the method helps improve student’s attitudes toward school, learning, and

toward classmates. Students who have been involved in cooperative learning groups indicated that they enjoyed time together, cared more about the members of the group and felt that the projects they turned out were of high quality (Smith, 1986). Small groups like those provided a “safe place” for low achieving students to become actively involved in the learning process. With this encouragement, these lower achieving students are no longer left to fail on their own (Parker, 1985).

In a recent study conducted by York, Vandercook, and MacDonald (1992) in which students with severe disabilities were integrated into general education classes and methods such as cooperative learning and peer tutoring were used, the results were quite positive from the perspective of the regular educators, special educators, and the regular education students. The special educators felt that the best aspect of this integration was the acceptance of the students with disabilities by their classmates without disabilities. Several friendships emerged as a result of this integration. The regular educators felt that the best aspect of this project was the positive reactions of the classmates without disabilities. The regular education students indicated that they learned that their peers with disabilities were more alike than different from themselves.

In a similar study conducted by Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) in which teachers were asked to describe their experiences of working with a severely disabled student in their class, reactions changed from initial negative reactions to a more positive nature once they experienced the students in their classroom. Even though most of the educators supported the inclusion of most students with disabilities in their general education classes, some questioned the appropriateness of severely disabled students in their programs. Even though teachers feared that they did not have the necessary "special" materials to work with a student with severe disabilities at first, they found that the most common approach was to "treat him like any other kid in the class." Again in this study, teachers felt that having a child with severe disabilities had a very positive impact on the child with disabilities as well as on the child's classmates. Although the experience was not universal, several children with disabilities had classmates without disabilities who could be categorized as their "best buddies."

Now with the educational focus in special education on integration or inclusion, we need to continually look at what Stainback, Stainback, and East (1994) define the goal of inclusion to be "the goal of

inclusion in schools is to create a world in which all people are knowledgeable about and supportive of all other people.” (p. 487). As this issue continues to be hotly debated, we must ensure that students have the opportunity to form new friendships among themselves and with their peers.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Obtaining Subjects

The purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of an intervention strategy (cooperative learning) to improve the opinions of classroom peers from a rural school in a midwestern state toward mainstreamed students. It was hypothesized that student opinions of special education peers will be significantly more positive in cooperative learning classrooms than student opinions of special education peers in non-cooperative learning classrooms. To test the hypothesis, a study was designed in which fourth grade students were selected because this is the first grade level in which all fourth grade students were in one school building. Prior to this, students were in three different elementary schools and cooperative learning was not used as a teaching technique. Students in most cases had not had the experience of working cooperatively with students who were mentally disabled. After reviewing the fourth grade class lists, an experimental group and a control group was established. The experimental group consisted of two fourth grade classes that had six mentally and six learning disabled students. The control group consisted of two fourth grade classes that had six specific

learning disabled students and two behaviorally disordered students as part of the class. The teachers of the experimental group agreed to form cooperative learning groups in each class in which a mentally disabled student was part of each sub-group, each student in the experimental group would have the experience of working directly with a mentally disabled student. Staff in the control group agreed to administer the survey. The experimental group had a combined total of 48 students, the control group had 49 students. All four teachers of the experimental group and the control group had gone through a two day training in cooperative learning three years prior to this experiment and had been actively using that technique in their class. Prior to this study, students who were mentally disabled were generally not part of the cooperative learning groups - they were sent to the special education resource room for educational assistance. The experimental group had agreed to use the cooperative learning teaching technique in their class for a minimum of two times per instructional day for eighteen weeks.

Survey Development and Validity

A version of statements from the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP), form B, was selected for this survey. Only statements pertaining to the areas of special treatment, behavior/social, motivation,

and friendship were selected. The statements were rephrased to be in a suitable vocabulary for a fourth grade population of students. The format of the survey was 20 statements using Likert's method of summated ratings as the response mode to indicate the degree of agreement with a statement.

The example of the survey was shared with the school superintendent, the school principal, the psychologist, and the four teachers involved with administering the survey. Each member was asked to review the survey specifically for validity and also to make recommendations in regards to any aspect of the survey. Meetings with each individual yielded valuable comments about the survey that were applied. The survey was changed to reflect its present state (See Appendix). Some of the recommendations and comments included:

1. Watch for value statements that may cause parents to react.
2. Changing some words so they are more understandable for fourth graders.
3. Change the reference from special education students to students with special needs.

Survey Reliability

Test / re-test reliability of the instrument. Ten teachers were asked

for their responses on the survey, the most negative opinions of the mainstreamed students possible. Four weeks later, the same group of teachers were again asked to indicate the most negative opinions toward the mainstreamed students. A numerical value of 1 to 5 was assigned to each response.

Example:

Students with special needs feel sorry for themselves.

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Seldom	Never	
(-)	1	2	3	4	5	(+)

The responses were tallied for each question. Data from the responses on the first and second administrations were used to compute a test/re-test reliability coefficient of .60.

Survey Administration

The survey was administered to the experimental and control groups of fourth grade students before and after 18 weeks in which cooperative learning was used as a technique in each experimental class for a minimum of two times per instructional day. A standard protocol was used to help the students understand the survey both times of administration.

Statistical Treatment

The Likert scale response method is representative of interval data. A t-test is an appropriate statistical treatment of interval data (Nunnally, 1978). Data obtained from both the pre and post surveys for the control and experimental groups were compiled. Each student response was assigned a numeral, one to five, to indicate degrees of negative to positive opinions about each survey statement. The numerals were added to yield one score for each survey. These scores were entered into a statistical analysis program called SPSS/PC+.

Specifically, the program was a t-test which tested significance of difference between similar groups.

One t-test was run to compare the pre- and post- survey results for the experimental group, and another was computed for comparison of the pre and post survey results for the control group.

Chapter IV

Findings, Conclusion, and Recommendations

Findings

Results of the t-test comparing pre and post surveys for the experimental group showed no significant change. The mean score of the experimental groups climbed from 3.3592 on the pre-survey to 3.4643 on the post-survey. That is interpreted as only a slight positive change in student opinions toward students with special needs.

The t-test comparing the pre- and post- surveys for the control group yielded no significant change. The mean score for both the pre- and post- surveys were recorded as 3.4573 and 3.5277 respectively, indicating that student opinion towards students with special needs were changed positively only slightly.

Table 1

COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST- SURVEYS
FOR EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

<u>Survey</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Pre	49	3.3592	.425
Post	49	3.4643	.342
T = -1.35	DF = 96	P = .133	
F (Var) = 1.55	DF = 91.75		

Table 2

COMPARISON OF PRE- AND POST- SURVEYS
FOR CONTROL GROUP

<u>Survey</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Pre	48	3.4573	.343
Post	48	3.5277	.349
T = -.99		DF = 93	P = .910
F (Var) = 1.03		DF = 92.87	

Table 3

COMPARISON OF POST SURVEYS FOR EXPERIMENTAL
AND CONTROL GROUPS

<u>Survey</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>Post Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>
Experimental	49	3.4643	.342
Control	49	3.5277	.349
F = .193		P = .168	

To test the hypothesis that student opinions of special education peers would be significantly more positive in cooperative learning groups as compared to student opinions of special education peers in non-cooperative learning groups, a t-test was administered on the post mean of the experimental and the post mean of the control groups. This test revealed no significant differences between the two groups (see

Table 3). For this reason our hypothesis is rejected.

CONCLUSIONS

The results of the study showed no significant change before, after, and between the experimental and control groups, because of this our hypothesis is rejected.

The question of why was there no significant change between the two groups needs to be examined: Was there interaction between members of the experimental and control groups? Both groups were in the same building - discussion could have occurred, influencing the results.

Attitudes of both groups about special need students were quite high (positive), students could have felt pretty comfortable with the special needs students and found that cooperative learning was not a big change to our present inclusion practices. We have been working with the teaching concept of class within a class model in which the teacher or para-educator will teach or work with the classroom teacher then helping the special needs students in the class rather than using the pull-out program.

Slavin (1991) reviewed sixty-seven studies in which the achievement outcomes for experimental and control groups were

compared using the same measures. Sixty-one percent of the studies showed that students in the experimental cooperative learning classroom scored higher academically than those in the control class that did not use cooperative learning. Slavin concludes "two elements must be present if cooperative learning is to be effective: group goals and individual accountability." Should we have identified group goals?

McGonagill (1993) stated that change begins to occur as someone in an organization senses things are not as they should be, this applies to this study as well in that change did not occur because students already had a positive attitude toward special needs students - things are what they should be.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study even though not significantly effective are encouraging. Further recommendations are as follows:

1. Train teachers in the other K-3 elementary schools in Cooperative Learning and replicate the study in their elementary schools.
Compare the results.
2. Assess what other teaching techniques teachers have been trained in that might effect student attitudes toward each other - Quest - Skills for Growing, Etc.

3. The study should be replicated, observations should be conducted to determine the extent to which cooperative learning methodologies were used.
4. The study should be replicated, but control and experimental groups should be in different buildings.

APPENDIX

Survey

Opinions about Students with Special Needs

- | | | | | | | |
|------|--|--------|---------|-----------|--------|-------|
| 1.* | Students with special needs are easier to get along with than other students. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 2.. | Students with special needs feel sorry for themselves. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 3. | Students with special needs should be given more privileges than other students. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 4.* | Students with special needs work as hard as other students. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 5. | The way students with special needs act bothers me. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 6.* | Students with special needs are friendly. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 7.* | Students with special needs have to work harder than other students. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 8. | Students with special needs should go to school in special schools. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 9. | Most students with special needs worry a lot. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |
| 10.* | Students with special needs have as many friends as other students. | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Seldom | Never |

11. Students with special needs give up easily.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
12. You can't expect students with special needs to do as well as other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
13. Students with special needs want more attention than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
- 14.* Students with special needs are fun to play with.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
15. Students with special needs ask for help when they don't need it.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
16. Students with special needs should get F's if they can't do their work.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
- 17.* Students with special needs are as happy as other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
18. Students with special needs get into trouble at school more than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
19. Students with special needs are more easily upset than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
- 20.* Students with special needs act like other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

* Items with an asterisk are negatively scored.

Outline

- I. Introduction of myself
- II. Explanation of terms and survey
 I will be with you for around 30 minutes. I need your help to complete a survey.
 A survey - is a way of measuring what people think
 Ex. Blue - How many students like blue - raise your hand
Red - How many students like red - raise your hand
- Opinion - What you think
- I will be asking your opinion about students who have Special Needs
- Special Needs are students that would need help to do something. It does not mean people cannot do things, it means that they can do things but it may take longer.
- Example - Student in a wheelchair - can get around but may need to do it differently
 Some students learn faster some slower, but they all learn.
- III. Distribution of survey and explanation
 On your survey you have 5 words under each questions: Always, Usually, Sometimes, Seldom, and Never.
Always - Every time you see it it's the same - The sun will always come up in the East.
Usually - The weather in December is usually cold.
Sometimes - Rare - One some occasions.
 Sometimes we have fish for dinner.
Seldom - Not Often - I seldom go to a Nebraska football game.
Never - 0

I will read each question and give you time to respond.

Names were not used on the survey, instead students were given an identification number on the pre and post surveys, so correlated responses would be possible.

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