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Assessing Children's Opinions About Mainstreamed Handicapped Students

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ASSESSING CHILDREN'S OPINIONS ABOUT
MAINSTREAMED HANDICAPPED STUDENTS

A Field Project
Presented to the
Department of Educational Administration
and the
Faculty of the Graduate College
University of Nebraska

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Specialist in Education
University of Nebraska at Omaha

by
Debra LaVoi Mackie

May, 1982

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FIELD PROJECT ACCEPTANCE

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

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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

John Dewey advocated that each child was ". . . entitled to equal opportunity of development of his own capacities, be they large or small in range . . ." (Dewey, 1937). Certainly equal educational opportunities have advanced in the time since 1937, but for the handicapped, the opportunities were not mandatory on a national level until the United States Congress passed Public Law 94-142 in 1975. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act requires all public schools to provide an appropriate education for all handicapped students. In essence, the themes of PL 94-142 are: Education is a civil right; a free, appropriate education will be provided for all school age students; each state will establish procedures for identification and evaluation of all handicapped children; each handicapped child will have an Individualized Educational Program; the educational program will be provided in the least restrictive setting and due process procedures must be established to protect the above rights (Rebore, 1980). The theme pertaining to "least restrictive setting" is the forerunner of the mainstreaming strategy. Oftentimes the regular classroom is the least restrictive setting for instruction of the handicapped child.

Much of the literature on mainstreaming deals with implementation and the regular classroom teacher. Literature on the student's role and mainstreaming is more limited. Educators have long been aware of

a student's need for peer acceptance and approval (Leyser & Gottlieb, 1980). If a mainstreamed student experiences rejection, discrimination and exclusion when placed in a classroom setting, the benefits a handicapped student may realize from mainstreaming are greatly impeded.

A frequent challenge is to integrate the resource student socially into the classroom. Feedback from mainstreamed students, classroom teachers and students, the school counselor, parents and personal observations confirms the need for special preparation for all involved, if the mainstreaming experience is to be positive. Many of the problems encountered when mainstreaming a student are rooted in peer acceptance, opinions, beliefs and understanding of the mainstreamed student (Enright & Sutterfield, 1979), rather than educational planning, student evaluation or lesson adaptation. An intervention program may be helpful in improving opinions students have about mainstreamed students.

Statement of the Problem

It will be the purpose of this study to assess the effectiveness of an intervention strategy to improve the opinions of classroom students from a Midwestern state toward mainstreamed students.

Statement of the Hypothesis

An intervention strategy consisting of role playing, simulations, discussions, visiting a special education room, a speaker, a film, a video-tape and peer tutoring will facilitate positive changes in opinions of students toward mainstreamed students.

Definition of Terms

1. Belief - cognitive idea that one possesses and holds to be true; "a level of acceptance of a proposition regarding the characteristics of an object or event" (Shaw & Wright, 1967).

2. Behaviorally impaired (BI) - a serious condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics in sufficient frequency, duration and intensity to require intervention for educational, social and emotional growth and development. (a) an inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers; (b) inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances; (c) a general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; and (d) a tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems. The behavioral impairment cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health factors (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51).

3. Educable mentally handicapped (EMH) - children of school age who, because of retarded intellectual development as determined by individual psychological examination and deficiencies in social judgment, require additional supportive services in order to function profitably within regular educational programming (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51).

4. Emotional/behavioral patterns - models of actions or conduct sometimes pertaining to reactions from strong feelings (Grosset Webster Dictionary, 1970).

5. Friendships - fellowships; close attachment (Grosset Webster Dictionary, 1970).

6. Handicapped - having a disadvantage, encumbrance (Grosset Webster Dictionary, 1970); in the present study, refers to SLD, BI and EMH students.

7. Mainstreamed students - refers to handicapped students spending a minimum of 50% of their day in a regular classroom.

8. Mainstreaming - a procedure to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children are educated with children who are not handicapped (Millard Public Schools Special Education Handbook, 1980); in the present study, refers to placement of handicapped students in regular classrooms for instruction.

9. Motivational drive - a special, sustained effort (Grosset Webster Dictionary, 1970).

10. Opinion - 1) "a belief that one holds to be true without emotional commitment or desire and to be open to re-evaluation, since the evidence is not affirmed to be convincing" (English & English, 1958); 2) in reference to improvement or change of opinion measured by the post survey, "opinion" is restricted to the following areas: motivational drive of mainstreamed students to succeed academically, the appropriateness of mainstreamed students receiving special attention or treatment by teachers or parents, the emotional/behavioral patterns of mainstreamed students and the attractiveness of friendships with mainstreamed students.

11. Regular classroom students - students who do not receive assistance from a special education program.

12. Regular classroom teacher - an instructor of curricula for regular classroom students and mainstreamed students.

13. Resource room - delivery unit that provides specialized instruction and behavioral monitoring of children verified as SLD, BI or EMH.

14. Resource student - a BI, SLD or EMH student who receives instruction both in the resource room and in the regular classroom.

15. Significant - in research means statistically significant, i.e., .05 or greater.

16. Specific learning disability (SLD) - children of school age who have a verified disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or using language, spoken or written, which disorder may manifest itself in an inability to listen, think, speak, write, spell or do mathematical calculations; such term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual, hearing or motor handicaps, of mental retardation, or emotional disturbance or of educational disadvantage (Nebraska Department of Education, Rule 51).

17. SLN student - an acronym developed by this writer, stands for special learning needs; SLN students need special help while learning--a different book, help from a special teacher, extra help from the classroom teacher or a special place to work (term is used in the survey).

18. Special treatment - a unique or different manner of dealing (Grosset Webster Dictionary, 1970).

19. T-test - a statistical test to determine whether the average scores for two groups of subjects are different enough to permit ruling out chance as a likely cause of the difference (Wrightman, 1972).

Delimitations

This study will be concerned with the change in opinions of fourth grade students enrolled in a midwestern, mostly middle-class, suburban, public, elementary school toward mainstreamed students. Conclusions drawn from the study will be applicable to the above group.

It should also be noted sometimes increased awareness and sensitivity does not affect one's behavior (Enright & Sutterfield, 1979), therefore this project will be limited to the cognitive aspects of student opinion change measurable on written surveys, not necessarily behavioral change.

In reviewing related literature toward mainstreaming and peer acceptance, no attempt was made to exclude studies citing "attitudes" and mainstreaming. Much of the literature reviewed refers to altering attitudes rather than opinions, the target of this field work project. Clarification is needed. Research on attitudes and opinions is plentiful. It seems that definitions and distinctions of attitude and opinion parallel the number of writers. Remmers (1954) considers the terms as interchangeable. Other definitions suggest attitudes are more complex and have more emotional content than opinions (Goldberg, 1955). This field work project is limited to measuring change in opinions as defined in this paper.

Procedures and Organization

A survey instrument was developed to assess student opinions of mainstreamed students in the areas of motivational drive of mainstreamed students, the appropriateness of special treatment for mainstreamed students, mainstreamed students' emotional/behavioral

patterns and the attractiveness of friendship with mainstreamed students. The instrument contains some adapted statements from the Attitude Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP), Form B (Yuker, Block & Young, 1966) survey and additional statements that are representative of the areas listed above. The format of the survey is a Likert's scale. Validity and reliability of the survey were established. Results appear in Chapter III.

The survey served as a pre- and post-intervention program measure of student opinions. The intervention program, ten sessions approximately 30 to 40 minutes in length, was a mixture of role playing, simulations, discussions, visiting a special education room, a speaker, a film, a video-tape and cross-age tutoring.

A t-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 the related literature, more specific information about the methodology involved with the survey and intervention program, an analysis of the data gathered, and finally a chapter summarizing results and recommendations.

Significance of the Study

This study will help to determine if an intervention program, which is short in length and requires no unique or expensive materials to implement, can provide an effective method to influence student opinions positively toward individual differences, in this case opinions of regular class students toward mainstreamed students.

The results of this project may be utilized in a variety of ways. On a district-wide level, Pupil Personnel Services and the Curriculum Department may work to incorporate treatment strategies into instructional units in classrooms. These units perhaps could be used as a part of the social studies curriculum.

Secondly, administrators on a building level have a commitment toward staff development. Administrators may arrange for staff inservice on the intervention strategies and discussion of mainstreaming problems and solutions. Teacher performance during inservice units may provide helpful information for making placement decisions for handicapped students.

Another use would be for the building Multi-Disciplinary Team. Multi-Disciplinary Teams are often presented with classroom problems related to mainstreamed students. The administrator and classroom teacher, as members of the Multi-Disciplinary Team, may choose to implement a treatment strategy in a particular classroom as a means to reconcile presenting problems such as discipline or social rejection.

In short, utilization of the intervention strategies whether district-wide, building level or in individual classrooms is expected to provide greater understanding of individual differences, as well as methods for problem solving.

Chapter II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

It is the intent of this project to influence and improve student opinions toward handicapped, mainstreamed students through an intervention program. In this chapter, an effort will be made to present some background about opinions/attitudes in regard to handicapped students. This will be followed by a presentation of research addressing techniques and programs designed to alter opinions/attitudes in a positive fashion. Lastly, information about learning disabled students, and their differences socially from regular students, will be given. This information relates to this project in two ways: (a) the overwhelming majority of mainstreamed students attending classes in the elementary school setting for this project are verified as having specific learning disabilities; and (b) because of differences present in some learning disabled students, it may not be reasonable to assume specific remedial programs in social skills for learning disabled students will, by themselves, provide solutions for their social problems. An effort must be made with the regular population to become more accepting of individual differences. The treatment program of this project has that goal in mind.

Opinions/Attitudes Toward Handicapped

With the implementation of PL 94-142, more and more handicapped students are being placed in regular classrooms. Assuming students with handicaps, like other students, seek approval and acceptance, does mainstreaming provide for these needs? The above was Woodward's concern in her research with ninth and tenth graders (Woodward, 1980). One hundred students responded to a questionnaire designed to gauge attitudes toward and experience with mainstreaming. Fifteen of the students had visually noticeable handicaps. Responses indicated little evidence of overt prejudice, but many indications of a subtle prejudice. For example, regular students indicated they would not mind having handicapped students in their classes, if the handicapped student would perform normally and keep up with other students. As far as having a handicapped teacher, students felt it would be acceptable, if the handicapped teacher were like other teachers. The expectancy was for handicapped individuals to conform and be normal. Generally, on a surface level, classroom acceptance of handicapped students was adequate, but it was noted social acceptance of the mainstreamed handicapped would be much harder to gain.

Acceptance of handicapped students was found to be linked to certain factors in a research project involving 2,392 children in second through sixth grades (Voeltz, 1980). Responses of a survey were factor analyzed and revealed factors underlying attitudes toward handicapped students included amount of actual contact with handicapped persons, the amount of deviance of the handicapped student, and the

amount of social-contact willingness on the part of students. The most acceptable attitudes were identified in upper elementary age children, girls and children in schools that offered the most contact with handicapped students.

Similar research involved seventh and eighth grade students. The students represented two settings. In one setting no mainstreaming was involved, and in the other setting physically handicapped students were mainstreamed every day. The researchers used the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP) scale for assessment. They found students in mainstreamed classrooms had significantly more positive attitudes toward disabled students than students in the setting where no mainstreaming occurred. Also, females in both settings were more accepting of differences than males (Smith & Larson, 1980).

A few years after the ATDP had been in use, the authors of the scale conducted a review of the students that had utilized the ATDP and concluded more positive attitudes were related to close personal, social, educational and employment contact with disabled persons (Smith & Larson, 1980).

Evidence that children have more positive attitudes toward physically disabled students than mentally deviant students was presented by Gottlieb and Gottlieb (1977). Fifty-six junior high pupils responded to questionnaires about attitudes toward mentally retarded and crippled children. Attitudes were more favorable toward the crippled than the mentally retarded children.

A few studies have sought to determine student attitudes toward learning disabled students. The person most involved in this area of

study, thus far, has been Tanis Bryan. Bryan (1974) reported an extensive sociometric study of third, fourth and fifth grade learning disabled students. There were 84 SLD students studied, and they were represented in 62 different classrooms. Students in each class participated in rating classmates on scales of Social Rejection and scales of Social Attraction. The SLD students received more votes on the rejection scale and less votes on the attraction scale.

A year later, a follow-up study was performed (Bryan, 1976). At that time, only 25 of the original SLD subjects were available and were in 20 classrooms. A combination of sociometric techniques was used. Students labeled classmates for categories such as friends, neighbors, invitees to a birthday party, not friends, not neighbors, not invitees to a birthday party, persons who cannot sit still, persons who are handsome (pretty), and persons who are scared or worried. Children were assured their answers would not be revealed. Again, the SLD students showed more rejection and less attraction than other students in class. After one year and a 75% change in classmates, the social status of the SLD student was not changed. Bryan offered several theories explaining the rejection of SLD students, which will be addressed later in this chapter.

Siperstein, Bopp and Bak (1978) also studied the social status of SLD students. A sociometric instrument was given to 177 fifth and sixth grade students. Again, the results indicated the learning disabled students were less popular than other students. The study did indicate three factors to indicate popularity: athletic ability, academic ability and appearance. According to the above, it might be

assumed the status of a learning disabled student might be tempered, if the student exhibits attributes such as athletic and academic strengths or weaknesses.

Hutton and Polo (1976) were interested in the ratio of SLD students in the classroom and its effect on the social status of SLD students. Eighteen, fourth grade classrooms, each having approximately half SLD and half "regular" students, were involved. Each student was individually administered a sociometric instrument. The researchers found: (a) non-SLD children have a higher sociometric status in the classroom, even when there are an equal number of SLD and non-SLD students; (b) fourth grade boys were more accepting of SLD boys than the fourth grade girls were accepting of SLD girls; and (c) individualized academic programs appear not to improve the social acceptance of SLD children.

A similar finding, SLD students are significantly less socially acceptable than other classmates, was reported by Bruninks (1978).

The importance of attitudes about the SLD student and the role of the school psychologist is emphasized by Horne (1982). Horne believes school psychologists must understand attitudes toward SLD students, so they may assist others in development of various strategies to be used in attitude modification programs. Attitudes of teachers and classmates, Horne believes, may affect the SLD student's ultimate adjustment and performance.

Intervention Strategies to Alter Attitudes

The notion that positive peer interactions may be facilitated is widely supported. There are a limited number of reports available that

deal specifically with learning disabled or behaviorally impaired children, however, programs designed to develop acceptance of a variety of exceptionalities will be productive in identification of methods likely to be successful in promoting positive attitudes toward these two populations, as well as EMH students. Therefore, the literature presented will represent many intervention approaches that contribute information about positively influencing student attitudes toward handicapped, mainstreamed students, as defined in this paper.

Many intervention strategies combine giving children information and experience. The St. Charles Public Schools in Missouri developed such a plan--a program of guest speakers, audio-visual materials and simulations of handicapping conditions was implemented in all nine elementary buildings in the district. Special education staff members were in charge of the program in each building. Regular classroom teachers participated to whatever degree they deemed appropriate. Participants reported the most popular aspect of the program was simulations of handicapping conditions. The most successfully received speakers were handicapped students. The program was judged successful by observations of informal signs of acceptance by non-handicapped students of the handicapped population. Parents of handicapped students also reported acceptance and increased socialization with neighbors. The social studies curriculum committee formally included the program as a part of the regular social studies curriculum (Dewar, 1982).

Simpson, Parrish and Cook (1976) used a similar treatment program in two experiments. The curriculum portion of the treatment included literature, filmstrips and lectures about handicapped persons. Some

subjects were also included in a type of controlled integrational activity with handicapped students such as lunch, small group entertainment, music, art or a sharing period. The ATDP scale was adapted slightly in language and response method, i.e., six variations of smiling and frowning faces, for use in both experiments.

The first experiment involved second and third graders. They were pre-tested on the ATDP and then entered a four-week training sequence of one hour daily. Only the curriculum treatment was initiated.


The second experiment used fifth graders. One experimental group received informational material (curriculum treatment plus a visit to an empty special education room) one time per week for four weeks. Another experimental group received all of the above plus the integrational activities. Again, subjects were pre- and post-tested using the ATDP over a four week time span.

The results of both experiments reported partial success in influencing attitudes. In experiment I, post ATDP scores between the control and experimental groups were not significantly different, but there was a significant change in the pre- and post-experimental group's ADPT scores. In the second experiment with fifth graders, the various strategies did not cause a significant change in attitudes toward children in special education. Generally, females had a more positive attitude than males independently of the treatments administered. It was reported, however, teachers observed positive changes. Students appeared to have gained a sense of empathy that was voiced in discussions, and misconceptions and fears about handicapped students were replaced by more appropriate attitudes. Students

participating in both informational and integration activities seemed to be most positively affected.

Leyser and Gottlieb (1980) wished to determine whether experimental treatment in a regular classroom could improve the social position of rejected students. Results from the ten-week treatment program proved social position can be improved. Teachers were given instruction in strategies for dealing with rejected children. Continued consultation with the teachers was provided throughout the program. The teachers were instructed in the following strategies: sociometric grouping, student participating techniques, classroom discussions, cross-age tutoring, values clarification, role playing and behavioral intervention approaches. The four most rejected students in each class were identified by peer ratings of each student in the class-- friend, all right, not liked. Teachers were told the names of their four target (rejected) students and proceeded to apply the strategies they had learned. In the post-testing, the target students had increased in acceptance.

Jones, Sowell, Jones and Butler (1981) designed a study of 74 children seven to nine years of age. A five-hour program of activities to enable children to perceive and experience needs of handicapped people was given. Handicapped was defined as any observable physical or mental impairment. Activities included simulation, interactions with handicapped people and discussions. Post-testing indicated significantly positive changes in the children's perceptions of handicapped persons.



Another curricula-type intervention program was used in the Lazar, Gensley and Arpet (1971) study. The investigators chose the ATDP scale, showing that it could be used successfully with young children. They were interested in changing attitudes of mentally gifted children toward handicapped persons. An eight-year-old population, all having intelligence quotients in the range of 123 to 163, provided the subjects. The instructional program included units on creative Americans, whose handicaps were treated as incidental. A few persons studied were Thomas Edison--hearing impaired, Helen Keller--multiply handicapped, and Franklin Roosevelt--polio victim. Also weekly guests, special education teachers and disabled persons, participated. The post ATDP was given at the end of the four-week program and reported more positive attitudes among the subjects toward handicapped people.

A few studies have sought to involve handicapped children in activities with non-handicapped children to improve attitudes. Bradfield, Brown, Kaplan, Rickert and Stannard (1973) used cross age tutoring and charting of student progress on graph paper displayed in the room, as a means to integrate three EMR students recently mainstreamed in third and fourth grades. The authors reported both handicapped and non-handicapped students improved in academic skills, social behavior and attitude change. Ballard, Corman, Gottlieb and Kaufman (1977) also found the social status of mainstreamed handicapped students could be improved by involving the students in cooperative, non-academic tasks with non-handicapped students.

Csapo (1972) approached the social problems of mainstreamed students from a different perspective. The goal was to use non-handicapped students as models with a reward option to adapt the disruptive behavior of six mainstreamed, emotionally disturbed (BI) primary age students. Experienced observers identified target behaviors in the BI students in need of extinction. Teachers chose 12, non-handicapped, reliable, socially mature students to facilitate change. Six of the students became peer recorders. The other six children were paired 1:1 with the BI students as models. The 12 teacher-selected students were told about the experiment and their role in it. The BI students were told their peer model would help them learn new things. If the BI student forgot what the teacher wanted him to do, he should look at the peer model and try to do what the model did. The model student gave the BI student a token each time behavior was appropriate. The recorders kept a tally of each token received. The tokens had no exchange value, they just indicated progress and served as a social reinforcer. Findings made by observations of each BI student reported the number of inappropriate behaviors decreased and appropriate behaviors increased. A check, ten days after the pairing of the models and BI students was discontinued, reported inappropriate behaviors continued to decline. Outside the classroom, model students showed concern for their BI student, and relationships between the BI students and classmates improved.

Knight (1981) advocates "reverse mainstreaming" as one step in the integration of BI students back to the regular classroom. Reverse mainstreaming is defined as bringing regular students into the special

education classroom for academic instruction. An academic area is chosen, and a cooperative group in the regular classroom, that is at the same level of achievement as the BI student, attends that class in the special education room. The special education teacher then monitors the development of the students and returns the group to the regular classroom when acceptance of the BI student is established. Knight does caution that reverse mainstreaming must be done with administrative and parental approval.

Enright and Sutterfield (1979) are supporters of Kohlberg's cognitive school of thought. Cognitive theorists believe children misbehave, because they do not understand some aspect of the situation where the misbehavior occurred, for example, a child who constantly makes fun of others may not understand the feelings of others. The authors refer to the Selman studies which provided evidence children with behavioral problems are not as accomplished in understanding both moral and interpersonal relationships as well behaved children. Case studies by Selman report, as a child improves in moral and interpersonal development, the child's behavior improves. It was reported adult modeling of a higher stage of moral development on the Kohlberg model and presentation of dilemmas to act out as practice may produce moral and interpersonal development growth.

The Enright and Sutterfield study involved sixth grade students reading dilemmas to first grade students. The sixth graders developed the dilemma situations and shared them with adults for input on presentation mode and clarification of higher level moral conceptions to the problems. This experience, according to the authors, was a

valuable method to provide growth in the sixth graders. It was recommended regular children be put in helping situations for handicapped students. Hypothetical dilemmas about teasing with the focus on the teased child's feelings and on the unfairness of teasing were advocated.

Gresham (1982) presented a well-documented case to support a program of social skills training with handicapped students. He explains the concept of mainstreaming is based on the faulty assumption physical presence of handicapped students in regular classrooms will result in social interaction and acceptance. Gresham also does not believe handicapped students will model behavior of non-handicapped students by increased exposure. Therefore, Gresham recommends a program of social skills training for the handicapped student. The program would include regular students giving social initiations, sociodramatics, game playing activities and reinforcement contingent on interacting and cooperating with classmates.

One may see, ideas on strategies to alter attitudes and intervention programs are quite varied, but do report positive gains.

Ideas on the SLD Child's Social Problems

Intervention strategies included curriculum modification, interactional activities with handicapped youth, simulations of handicapping conditions, modeling approaches and social training for the mainstreamed student. This writer's personal belief is mainstreamed students and teachers must be prepared and supported by the special education teacher prior to and during mainstreaming, however, it is also important to work with regular students to aid in acceptance of the mainstreamed student and the differences some of the mainstreamed

students will exhibit. It is well known by special education teachers the success of social training of handicapped students differs to a large extent with students. Some students will continue to experience difficulties socially and will be recognizable as deviant. An accepting environment will enhance the probability of success for these children. Gronlung (1959) found a positive relationship between a child's peer status and academic achievement. This last section of the literature review will present research on SLD children's social problems and theories offered as possible explanations of these problems. This section will attempt to provide information supportive for the combined approach to mainstreaming, i.e., prepare the handicapped student and prospective teacher and attempt to facilitate acceptance of individual differences by classmates of the mainstreamed student.

It has previously been reported SLD students are significantly less socially acceptable than regular classmates. Bruninks (1978) also found SLD students were less accurate than classmates in assessing their own social status in the group. Wiig and Semel (1976) also reported poor social perception is characteristic of SLD students. Misperception of social status may impede social growth. Adjustment of an individual to a group may be affected according to the individual's perception of the status of group members and self-status (Ausubel, Schiff & Gasser, 1952).

A series of experiments sought to evaluate SLD students' comprehension of nonverbal communication and the communication patterns of SLD students. Bryan (1977) used SLD and non-SLD subjects to view a

film and listen to a scrambled audiotape. The activities had 40 segments of a female expressing positive or negative effects with dominant or submissive expressions, e.g., positive/submissive - expression of gratitude; positive/dominant - expression of motherly love. The subjects were asked which of two statements best described the scenario. Non-SLD students were more accurate than the SLD subjects in comprehending the nonverbal communication.

Bryan, Wheeler, Felcan and Henek (1976) predicted social attraction and rejection patterns in children were related to type of statements made by a child and the responses of other children. Observation techniques were established to record children's spontaneous conversations. Statements were categorized into eight types: rejection, informational source, self-image, cooperation, competition, helping, consideration and intrusiveness. Results were based on the frequency of responses in each category. SLD children emitted significantly more competitive statements. Non-SLD students gave significantly more consideration statements. No other statements reached a significant level. The authors concluded SLD children's communication differed in content from non-SLD children.

In a review of research by Bryan (1978), the author next hypothesized SLD students' communication differed in content and also in the amount of information communicated and syntactic complexity of statements. A group of fourth and fifth graders were taught a bowling game and asked to teach the game to a student similar in age and a kindergarten student. It was expected non-SLD students would shift language styles to a simplified set of instructions for the kindergarten

students and SLD students would not. Teaching sessions were videotaped. In the male population non-SLD students used more complex language with classmates and simplified language with kindergarten students. SLD males used less complex language with both classmates and kindergarten students. SLD females responded like the non-SLD males, and non-SLD females used complex language with both classmates and kindergarten students. It was interpreted non-SLD females used their "best" language while assuming a teacher role. Even though the study failed to detect differences in SLD and non-SLD students in communicating a message, there was support for the idea language delay may be a problem at least for male SLD students, and this certainly could have an effect on social interactions.

It should be evident programs advocating only social skills training of handicapped students provide a partial solution to social problems resulting from mainstreaming. If many SLD students do have delays in language development, difficulty understanding nonverbal communication and misperceptions of themselves socially, treatments in social skills will not alter these problems. Again, this writer sees a strong need for intervention programs with the regular population designed to increase acceptance of individual differences.

Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

Obtaining Subjects

After a review of the literature, in particular intervention strategies to influence positively student opinions toward mainstreamed students, it was time to select the target population for this study. This writer felt an intervention program would be beneficial to implement on the third, fourth or fifth grade levels in the particular elementary school used for the study. The fourth grade population was favored, because of previous problems with teasing of resource students. Fortunately, the fourth grade teaching team was receptive to the idea and agreed to accommodate 10, 30- to 40-minute treatment sessions in the schedule. It was agreed this writer would be completely responsible for planning and implementation of treatment sessions, as well as student supervision. The teacher of the experimental group could choose to observe, participate in activities with the students or use the time as an extra planning period. Also discussed was the need to use homeroom classes for the experimental and control groups, because these groups represented a cross section of the fourth grade population in respect to multiple ability levels. There were three, fourth grade classes. Teachers were asked to indicate to the writer which class they wished to be the experimental group, which would be a control group and which would not be involved. The teachers selected

the experimental group on the basis of current displeasure with social behaviors of several students in that class. Both the experimental and control groups had 26 students.

Survey Development and Validity

A version of statements from the Attitudes Toward Disabled Persons (ATDP), Form B, scale were selected for inclusion in the survey. The review of related literature had yielded a few similar studies which used the ATDP as a means to measure change in attitudes. Only statements pertaining to the areas of special treatment, behavior/social, motivation and friendship (described earlier) were selected. The statements were rephrased to be suitable for this study and a fourth grade population, mixed in order and included in a first draft of the survey. An effort was made to have approximately an equal number of positively and negatively worded statements. The format of the survey was 20 statements using Likert's method of summated ratings as the response mode to indicate degree of agreement with a statement.

Next, the example survey was shared with four successful persons in the field of education. The persons were a director of pupil personnel services, a special education coordinator for elementary level services, a school psychologist and an elementary school principal all from the school district of the target population. Each was asked to review the survey specifically for content validity, but to make recommendations in regards to any aspect of the instrument. Meetings with each individual yielded valuable suggestions which were applied. The survey was altered to its present state. Recommendations included:

1. Make up an acronym to represent "handicapped students"
2. Alterations in language--delete words such as "very" which require judgments in degree of something
3. Under each statement, reprint the categories for agreement, i.e., never, seldom, sometimes, etc.
4. Give the survey to third graders first as an informal check on appropriateness in administration, language, understanding of response method, etc.
5. Change the wording of the question about grading
6. For clarification and ease of review, write each question under its area (exa., motivation) before presentation to other reviewers. In that way, reviewers could respond more easily to validity of each statement for an area and also sufficient number of questions in each area.
7. To get a general check on interpretation of the term SLN student, ask each student to indicate if (s)he felt (s)he was an SLN student. This was done by writing "yes" or "no" at the bottom of the survey sheet.

Reviewers agreed the survey appeared to be a valid instrument for measuring opinions about mainstreamed students.

Survey

Opinions about SLN Students

SLN stands for special learning needs. SLN students need special help while learning. They may need a different book, help from a special teacher, extra help from the classroom teacher or a special place to work.

1. SLN students are easier to get along with than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
2. SLN students feel sorry for themselves.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
3. Parents of SLN students should not be as strict as other parents.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
4. SLN students don't work as hard as other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
5. The way SLN students act bothers me.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
6. SLN students are friendly.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
7. SLN students have to work harder than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
8. SLN students should go to school in special schools.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
9. Most SLN students worry a lot.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
10. SLN students have as many friends as other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
11. SLN students give up easily.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
12. You can't expect SLN students to do as well as other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
13. SLN students want more attention than other students.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
14. SLN students are fun to play with.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
15. SLN students ask for help when they don't need it.
Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

16. SLN students should get 5's if they can't do their work.
 Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
17. SLN students are as happy as other students.
 Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
18. SLN students get into trouble at school more than other students.
 Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
19. SLN students are more easily upset than other students.
 Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never
20. SLN students act like other students.
 Always Usually Sometimes Seldom Never

Survey Reliability

Test/re-test reliability of the instrument was sought. Eight teachers were asked to indicate, through responses on the survey, the most negative opinions of mainstreamed students possible. Three weeks later, the same group of teachers again indicated the most negative opinions toward mainstreamed students.

A numerical value of one to five was assigned each response category for each statement.

Example

SLN students feel sorry for themselves.

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

Teacher responses, according to numerical value, were tallied for each question. Data from the responses on first and second administrations were used to compute a test/re-test reliability coefficient of .90.

Survey Administration

The opinion survey was administered to the experimental and control groups of fourth grade students before and after the intervention program. Each time the definition of "SLN students" was written

on the chalkboard and read aloud to the students. Students were read each statement and given time to respond. It was explained that students should answer what they thought. Names were not used on the survey. Instead, students were given an identification number to write on the pre- and post-surveys, so correlated comparisons would be possible. The classroom teachers kept a corresponding list of student names and numbers in the event a student forgot the number assigned when it was time to take the post-survey. Experience with administration of the survey to third graders indicated a need to clarify the meaning of "seldom" in the response mode. Assuming it was possible some fourth grade students may also be uncertain, terms and meanings for each response category were reviewed with students prior to each administration.

Intervention Sessions

Following is a brief description of activities for each intervention session. For more information, refer to the Appendix.

Session 1. Task - demonstrate difficulty of memory work for some SLN students, material - visual and auditory memory portions of the Slingerland - using fifth and sixth grade levels (Slingerland Screening Tests for Identifying Children with Specific Language Disability, 1974).

Session 2. Task - film and discussion on accepting individual differences (Acceptance of Differences, SVE).

Session 3. Task - discussion of topics - famous persons with differences, grading and SLN students; material - What If You Couldn't? by Janet Kamien.

Session 4. Task - presentation of three dilemmas in role-playing format.

Session 5. Task - discussion of dilemmas presented in role-playing activity.

Session 6. Task - simulation of written expression/fine motor disability - copying exercise wearing gloves or mittens, writing with the non-dominant hand - discussion of effect of disability on performance, considerations.

Session 7. Task - special education teacher presentation - description of her students' strengths and weaknesses, remediation, tour of room - question/answer time.

Session 8. Task - watch a tape of a television program with a theme of accepting individual differences and featuring a handicapped person (Strawberry Squares, April 13, 1982).

Session 9. Task - tutoring of SLN student in special education room on how to play BINGO, playing a game of BINGO followed by singing with SLN students.

Session 10. Task - tutoring of SLN student in special education room on a dot-to-dot exercise, followed by singing with SLN students.

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 pre- and post-surveys for the experimental and control groups were compiled. Each student response was assigned a numeral, one to five, to indicate degrees of negative to positive opinions about the survey statement. The

numerals were added to yield one score for each survey. These scores were entered into a statistical analysis program for the Apple II computer. Specifically, the program was a t-test which tested significance of difference between two correlated samples. It is a part of the HSD STATS programs (Madigan & Laurence, 1981). 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. Due to absence of a student from the experimental group during post-testing, data from only 25 students were entered for that group.

Chapter IV

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Findings

Results of the t-test comparing pre- and post-surveys for the experimental group showed a change significantly greater than .05. The mean score of the groups climbed from 67 on the pre-survey to almost 76 on the post-survey. This is interpreted as a positive change in student opinions toward students with learning and behavioral style differences.

The t-test comparing the pre- and post-surveys for the control group yielded no significant change. In fact, the mean score for both the pre- and post-surveys remained at 68, indicating that student opinions toward students with learning and behavioral style differences were not changed over time.

Table 1
Comparison of Pre- and Post-Surveys
for Experimental Group

Sample	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Pre-survey	25	67.08	9.647
Post-survey	25	76.84	6.497
<u>T</u> = -4.706	<u>DF</u> = 24	<u>p</u> < .001	
<u>F</u> (Var) = 2.204	<u>DF</u> = 24, 24	<u>p</u> = .029	

Table 2
Comparison of Pre- and Post-Surveys
for Control Group

Sample	<u>N</u>	Mean	<u>SD</u>
Pre-survey	26	68.576	9.600
Post-survey	26	68.576	9.696
<u>T</u> = 0		<u>DF</u> = 50	<u>p</u> = n.s.
<u>F</u> (Var) = 1.019		<u>DF</u> = 25, 25	<u>p</u> = .480

Conclusions

The conclusions to be drawn from this study are as follows:

1. The only difference between the experimental and control groups was the experience of the experimental group participating in 10 activities designed to influence opinions toward students with exceptional learning and behavioral styles. It is concluded that participation in the activities is responsible for the positive change in opinions.

2. Student opinions toward mainstreamed students may be positively influenced by utilizing an intervention program that does not require a long time commitment for implementation.

3. The positive change in student opinions was reflected on a paper-and-pencil task, i.e., a survey. This indicates the change occurred on a cognitive basis. It cannot be automatically assumed the cognitive change will be reflected in a student's behavior toward exceptional students.

4. If informal student feedback is accepted as a means to evaluate success of an activity, it is concluded that the activities where students tutored exceptional students in games were most effective in influencing opinions toward exceptional students.

Recommendations

The findings of this study are encouraging. Further recommendations are as follows:

1. Re-administer the survey to the experimental group one month or longer after the original post-survey to see if the opinion change is sustained.

2. Arrange for further tutorial experiences pairing regular classroom students with exceptional students. Conduct more studies on regular classroom student opinions toward exceptional students, as well as changes in self-concept for both regular classroom student tutors and exceptional students being tutored. Experiment with tutoring options, e.g., tutoring in math followed by a math game.

3. Train resource teachers in other elementary schools in the district in the intervention strategies and replicate the study in their elementary schools. Compare the results.

4. Share the intervention strategies with elementary school teachers. The strategies may be helpful ways for the teachers to address problems stemming from mainstreaming of exceptional students.

5. If the results from #3 above are similar to the results of this study, i.e., significant improvement in student opinions, a meeting with the director of curriculum for the district is strongly recommended. Results from the studies should be shared and possibilities

explored for implementation of similar activities into the social studies curricula.

6. The study should be replicated, but this time pre- and post-evaluations should be conducted by an observation technique to determine if cognitive changes in opinion are reflected in student behavior changes.

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APPENDIX

Intervention Sessions

Session One

Objective - When presented with the visual memory cards and auditory memory exercises from the Slingerland, Level D, students will respond by writing responses from memory.

Discussion Questions:

Was it hard to remember each item?

How did you feel when you couldn't remember?

How would an SLN student feel when he couldn't remember directions or information from classroom discussions?

What effect would a memory problem have on taking tests?

How could teachers help?

Is it fair for SLN students to be graded differently from other students?

Session Two

Objective - After watching a film on famous Americans with individual differences, students will participate in a discussion.

Discussion Questions:

Who were the people in the film?

Did you know they had individual differences?

Several of the people had difficulty in school. Were they dumb?

Did they make contributions?

Do you think students that have learning problems have problems with all subjects?

Session Three

Objective - Read and discuss Chapter 7, "What If You Were Smart, But Couldn't Learn to Read?" from What If You Couldn't by Janet Kamien. Question students about their feelings, if they had the problems described. Ask if any students have had similar problems. Allow them to share experiences.

Read letter by Thomas Edison, age 19, page 76, same book. Ask students to critique the letter. Does it make sense? How would you grade the letter? Is this the way most 19 year olds write? Could you do a better job? Was Edison dumb? Why not? If you were Edison's teacher or friend, how would you act?

Session Four

Objective - Students will role play three dilemmas.

Divide the group into three subgroups. Read a dilemma to each group and assign role parts. Allow time for each group to plan and practice their skit. Each group performed their skit for the other two groups.

Dilemma 1 - A new student moves to the neighborhood and is in your class. The student is really smart in reading and spelling and is good on the soccer team, but just doesn't seem to catch on to the division you're doing in math class. You think he's an SLN student because most SLN students are good at some things and not at others. The student makes several 5's (F's) on daily work and on Friday there's going to be a test on division. On Thursday, in class, the math teacher hands back papers and again the student gets a 5. The student wads up the paper and throws it on the floor. He looks like he might cry. The teacher didn't see him. You know the teacher is going to help some kids after school on division. What do you do? Why?

Dilemma 2 - There's going to be a hard spelling test. The teacher promises a poster to any student who scores 100%. The teacher gives the test. One girl is sitting next to a SLN student and notices the SLN student made the cursive u in sugar like a cursive w. The word would be counted wrong. The girl knows the SLN student knows how to spell the word because they studied together. When the girl thought no one was looking she quietly whispered to the SLN student to look at the cursive letters in the word "sugar." The SLN student looks, sees what she did wrong and changes the cursive in the word before handing in the spelling test. Both girls got 100% and a poster. Was the girl right to help the SLN student?

Dilemma 3 - Students on two teams are competing in a running relay. One student, an SLN student, slips while running and uses up time. His team loses the relay. Two other students on the losing team start teasing the SLN student saying the SLN student made the team lose. The teasing continues. Another boy, a good athlete on the same team, gets tired of the two boys teasing the SLN student and calls the two boys bad sports and babies. The teasing continues and the good athlete, out of frustration, punches one of the teasers. A teacher sees this and sends all three boys to the principal. Were any of the boys right?

Session 5

Objective - Students will participate in further discussion of the dilemmas role played in Session 4.

Questions - Dilemma 1

- 1) Why did the student wad up the paper and throw it on the floor?
Was he right?
- 2) Would you try to help the student if you were good at division?
If you were good at division, but sometimes it was hard for you too?
- 3) Would you invite the student to stay after school with you for help even if you weren't at first planning to stay?

Questions - Dilemma 2

- 1) Would you have helped the SLN student?
- 2) What else could you have done?
- 3) What would you think if the teacher saw the girls and gave them both 0's?

Questions - Dilemma 3

- 1) What should the principal do?
- 2) What would you do?
- 3) How can you handle teasers?
- 4) Why do some people tease others?
- 5) What kind of people are the teasers?

Session 6

Objective - 1) Students will wear gloves while completing copying of a chart under a time limit. 2) Students will use their non-dominant hand in copying a chart.

Questions after tasks are completed:

What does it feel like?

Can you work as fast?

Do you write neatly?

What would a teacher say about the writing?

How would a problem with handwriting affect your work at school?

What could be done for students with this problem?

Session 7

Objective - Students will listen to a presentation by a special education teacher and later tour her room--time for questions.

Teacher discussed strengths and weaknesses of her students and special remedial techniques she uses with the students.

Session 8

Objective - Students will watch a taped TV program featuring a handicapped student playing games with non-handicapped students. After the tape--ask for student reaction and answer questions students might have.

Questions:

What did you think of the tape?

How did the handicapped student act?

How was he like other students?

How was he different?

How did the other students act?

Would you be friends with a handicapped student?

Sessions 9 and 10

Objective - Students will be paired with a student in the special education pre-primary class and assist the special education student in two new tasks--playing BINGO and a dot-to-dot tracing exercise with numbers 1 to 100.

Pairing was 2:1 ratio, randomly assigned two fourth graders to one pre-primary special education student.

Fourth graders explained the tasks and monitored the pre-primary student's performance. Afterwards, all students participated in singing and body movements to records--a fun experience.