

Chapter 10

Practice-Based Educational Research: Void of Special Education Inclusion and Schlossberg's Transition Model Among Pre-Service Teachers

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ABSTRACT

Incoming PK12 general education teachers beginning their careers are not wanting to have individuals with intellectual disabilities in their classroom due to a lack of special education experience and knowledge. This practice-based qualitative narrative dissertation study explored student teacher individual perceptions and experiences on special education classroom behavior and inclusion for elementary public-school general education student teachers. The practice-based problem was the negative views pre-service K12 educators held for classroom inclusion and personal perceptions of individuals with intellectual disabilities. The study sample included 10 student teacher college students enrolled in one Texas early childhood program. Schlossberg's Transition Model was used as the practice-based conceptual framework and data were gathered from interviews and analyzed using Clandinin and Connelly's procedures for narrative analysis. The findings determined pre-service general education teachers are not always provided adequate inclusion training.

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INTRODUCTION

According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2014, about 59% of student with disabilities spent about 80% or more of their school day in the classroom with their typical peers (Mackey, 2014). In Texas, there are more than 450,000 students receiving special education services in over 9,000 campuses throughout the state (Texas Education Agency [TEA], 2018). Past researchers have reported student teachers who gain experiences both in special education and an inclusive setting can reduce their misperceptions towards inclusion (Swain et al., 2012). Inclusion provides the special education student the ability to be a part of the general education classroom and increase their socialization skills and is one practice that may not be favorable for some teachers (Haq & Mundia, 2012; Kirby, 2017). The focus of this practice-based dissertation research study was to determine the general education student teacher perceptions, attitudes, and knowledge before they head into these classrooms and to determine insights to better prepare them to be more aware and ready for classroom inclusion and students special education needs (Cohen, 2015).

The chapter illustrates the use of practice-based dissertation research to focus on the lack of special education inclusion from general education teachers due to negative perceptions and attitudes from the teachers. The lack also stems from absent professional development in the school system which then has an effect on the teachers being placed with inclusion in their classroom (Woodcock & Hardy, 2017). Students with intellectual disabilities are missing out on being mainstreamed in the general education classroom and are being disregarded by general education teachers due to lack of training and knowledge of special education. Research was conducted to find the root of the issues and concerns surrounding the negativity displayed by these teachers. The objective was to interview student teachers in their last semester of college before entering the work force and determining how negative impressions of special education were stemmed. The philosophy of inclusion supports that all individuals, regardless of their ability, may participate in the same environment with essential support and individualized consideration (Mackey, 2014), and successful teaching and learning in the inclusive classroom is largely predicated on teacher knowledge, skills, and dispositions; in turn, this is inconsistent with an inclusive paradigm (McCray & McHatton 2011). Meanwhile with barriers, another study highlighted several different barriers to differentiated instruction that are applicable to a classroom with inclusion. As teachers are being faced with new challenges, there are different barriers and concerns that are on the minds of these teachers (Tobin & Tippett, 2013).

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