

Teacher Attitudes Toward Inclusion Practices

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TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION PRACTICES

ABSTRACT

Students in Nova Scotia are taught in inclusive classrooms, meaning that students with special needs learn alongside their typically developing peers. The purpose of this study was to identify the attitudes of teachers in Nova Scotia's French-language school board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), toward inclusion practices and to examine the factors that influence these attitudes. CSAP teachers were invited to respond to an online questionnaire to share their views on inclusion. Findings revealed a combination of positive and negative attitudes toward inclusion. Teachers' attitudes were found to be related to their beliefs regarding school factors, including support from administration and access to adequate professional development. Furthermore, teachers' attitudes were found to be more positive when teachers had greater knowledge and training. Positive attitudes toward inclusion were more common among teachers in elementary and P-12 schools than teachers in high schools.

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Introduction

Teachers have the unique privilege of spending months at a time getting to know the students who make up their classes, with all their abilities, talents, strengths and needs. One of the joys of my teaching career has been to witness the way the fabric of a class dynamic is woven from the range of abilities of my students. It has been my experience that the diversity of children's abilities brings richness to their relationships with each other and with their teacher, making each class unique and interesting in its own way. Teaching students with an array of abilities has taught me a great deal about the potential of children to overcome challenges and to come to the assistance of their friends. The power of the friendships forged between the typically developing students and the students with special needs in my classroom initially formed the basis for my belief in the value of inclusive education. I believe in the importance of learning to work with others; as such, students in my classroom were regularly encouraged to work with a partner or in groups, with instruction as to how to make these relationships fun and productive. I also believe that all students should be involved in the life of the classroom and involved in partner and group work, so I continually sought means to include students with special needs by giving them roles to fulfill and ensuring their participation in partner and group work. Many of my typically developing students were consistently attuned to the needs of their classmates and would often suggest roles in the classroom and in groups for themselves and their peers with special needs. Friendships would often develop from these roles. The depth of learning of students with a wide range of abilities in my classes further supported my view.

In my experience, having a positive perspective on inclusive education framed my

approach to the teaching of students with special needs in my classroom. The influence of my own beliefs led me to the research questions that form the basis for this study. I began to wonder to what extent my personal views shaped the classroom experience of my students. I further wondered about the classroom experience of students whose teachers had not had the benefit of my positive experience and whose attitude toward inclusive education might therefore be a more negative one. I have therefore chosen to study the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education since both my experience and eventually my review of literature in the field suggest that this factor can be significant to the success or failure of inclusion.

The inclusion of students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom is a widespread and growing practice in education. The purpose of this research study is to investigate the attitudes held by teachers toward inclusion practices. Although information is available about teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices in some Canadian provinces and in various areas throughout the United States and around the world, a literature review found no research yet conducted on the attitudes of teachers serving the French-speaking community in Nova Scotia toward inclusion practices. Teachers employed by the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), Nova Scotia's only French-language school board, were therefore invited to participate in the study.

In Canada, responsibility for education is under the purview of the ten provinces and three territories. Nova Scotia is home to nine school boards. The CSAP is unique in that it is the only Nova Scotian board to function entirely in French and to cover schools throughout the province. It was created in 1996 in response to pressure from parents who wanted their children to be educated in their mother tongue. The CSAP has established an

agreement with the provincial Department of Education under which it develops its own curriculum documents, subject to departmental approval and in accordance with the guidelines for public school programming, including the special education policy.

The results of this study will serve to increase the body of knowledge on teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices in Canada in general and in Nova Scotia's French-language schools in particular.

A Review of the Literature on Inclusion

This study is one of many devoted to the field of inclusive education in Canada and around the world. This chapter presents the historical context of inclusion, as well as current policies and practices. It concludes with a description of some of the research into teacher attitudes on inclusion practices that informed this study.

Historical Context of Inclusion in Canada, the US and the UK

Inclusion has its roots in the push for education of children with disabilities in the regular classroom, which began in Canada in the early 1980s (Porter, 2008). For many years, it was common practice in Western countries for students with special needs to be schooled in separate classrooms or institutions. However, in the late 1960s and the 1970s, new educational theories developed which led to the integration of students who had traditionally received their education separately from their typically developing peers (Bélanger & Gougeon, 2009). This movement was initially known as integration or mainstreaming, and indeed such terms are still used in some regions.

When the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms took effect in 1985, it supported the drive for equal access to educational opportunities in regular classrooms at a time when students with special needs were often educated in special classrooms or separate schools. Much of the push for inclusive education has stemmed from the argument that placing students in separate special education classrooms or schools violates their rights. While also viewing inclusive education as a student's right, many proponents further argue that inclusion is more effective than special education in terms of academic and social outcomes for students (Lindsay, 2007). Other authors maintain

that the issue of effectiveness is a separate concern and should not come into play at all, as the basic right to a free, appropriate education for all must be the overriding concern (see Thomazet, 2009, for a deeper discussion of this argument).

In Nova Scotia, inclusive education practices became widespread starting in 1996 when the Department of Education and Culture released the first Special Education Policy Manual. This manual states that “[t]he goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation and learning of all students in school programs and activities” (Special Education Policy Manual, 1996, p. 13). This manual and the guidelines set out therein immediately led to a significant shift in practice in Nova Scotian schools (King & Edmunds, 2001). Students who had previously been educated mainly in special education classrooms by resource teachers were integrated into classrooms where they were taught by regular classroom teachers with, according to the policy manual, support as required from resource teachers, school psychologists, teacher assistants and others.

The terms “integration” and “mainstreaming” are also used when referring to inclusive education practices. These terms have been replaced by “inclusion” in many regions (Porter, 2008), such as Nova Scotia, but “integration” continues to be used to refer to the placement of students with disabilities in the regular classroom in Ontario and other regions (Jordan & Stanovich, 2004). Indeed, the shift to the term “inclusion” also sometimes implies a change in practice and perception. As Porter (2008) explains,

“When this movement started, the word most commonly used was "integration", but for many, integration implied a less bold vision, limited to the presence of the child in the classroom. Today we understand inclusion to be about how we create environments in which all students can be successful, regardless of ability” (p. 63).

Because of the close relationship between Canada and the United States, a look at

the history of inclusion in Canada would not be complete without an overview of its history in the US. The inclusion movement in the United States began at around the same time as it began in Canada. The first steps of the movement took the form of a law passed by the US Congress in 1975 called *The Education for All Handicapped Children Act*, known as EHA. This law declared that all children, regardless of disability, were entitled to “free, appropriate education in an environment as close as possible to normal schooling” (Thomazet, 2009, p. 555). From these beginnings eventually came the creation of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) in the fall of 1990 (Thomazet, 2009). IDEA was amended in 1997, and then a major reauthorization and revision took place in 2004 (Ross-Hill, 2009). Inclusive classrooms began to spread across the US as a result of the enactment of IDEA. Another piece of American legislation which contributes to the shift toward inclusive education is the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLBA) of 2001, which was designed to eliminate the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority children and their peers (Ross-Hill, 2009). Although IDEA does not make specific reference to inclusion, it mandates that students be taught in the least restrictive environment possible (Thomazet, 2009; Burke & Sutherland, 2004); the NCLBA requires that students be taught by the most qualified teacher in each subject, which promotes inclusion because special education teachers cannot be experts in all subjects (Kilanowski-Press, Foote & Rinaldo, 2010). As such, it is currently a widespread practice in both the US and Canada for students with special needs to be taught in the regular classroom in most cases.

Mirroring developments in Canada and the US, in the United Kingdom, “inclusion” and “inclusive education” have for the most part replaced “integration,” which also

indicates a shift in meaning. Where integration could be seen as adaptation by the child to the classroom environment, inclusion could refer to changes made to the school environment to respond to the child's needs (Lindsay, 2007).

Inclusion: Definitions and Policies

A major factor contributing to the various meanings attributed to the term "inclusion" is whether it is considered to be a teaching model in which students with special needs are educated in a regular classroom or a set of values according to which schools must adapt instruction and the regular classroom environment to meet the needs of all students. There is some disagreement in the literature on inclusive education as to which view is more appropriate and this disagreement is further reflected in the implementation of inclusion in schools.

Lindsay (2007) notes that challenges in establishing a definition of inclusion include the range of disabilities and degree of severity, and indeed an understanding of what constitutes a disability. In their 2007 study, Dworet and Maich found that Canadian school boards often seem concerned that categorization is inconsistent with the philosophy of inclusion, while some researchers, including Dworet and Maich, contend that the two are not incompatible. Dworet and Maich (2007) looked specifically at emotional/behavioural disorders (EBD) and found no consistent definition of EBD across Canadian provincial and territorial departments of education, reflecting the trend toward avoiding categorization of students with special needs. In fact, in 2006, Quebec established a law "abolish[ing] the 'coding' of students with learning disabilities" (Thomazet, 2009, p. 560), with a view to basing learning plans for such students on their

educational requirements rather than preconceived notions associated with a particular label.

One way in which school boards are attempting to navigate the dilemmas associated with designating students as having special needs in the context of inclusive education is to create definitions for general categories of special needs with the goal of providing support and funding for students who fall into those categories, rather than assigning labels to students. This is indicative of a trend toward increased emphasis on heterogeneous classrooms and individual support (Dworet & Maich, 2007). This trend is reflected in classroom composition and support for diverse learners in the CSAP. Students with special needs are placed in the regular classroom with very few exceptions and instruction is generally provided primarily by the classroom teacher, with further support from the student services team as needed. Such additional support could include one-on-one sessions with a resource teacher, help from a teaching assistant, or sessions with a speech pathologist, among other services.

In Smith's 1997 study of teachers' perspectives on high school inclusion, staff within a single school were observed to attribute various meanings to the word inclusion; most teachers in this study perceived inclusion as referring to placing students with disabilities and students at a high risk of dropping out in regular classrooms with appropriate support (Smith, 1997).

Some authors argue for a broader definition of inclusion. For instance, Slee (2001) maintains that "inclusive education is not about special needs, it is about all students" (p. 116). In this sense, his definition resembles that of the Nova Scotia Department of Education. Slee (2001) goes on to suggest that we must question the idea of designating

children as having special needs. He further notes that researchers and participants in research must set out their own ideas of what inclusion means, while challenging the meanings that others attribute to the word (Slee, 2001). Similarly, Thomazet (2009) notes the need for a paradigmatic shift associated with inclusion, transferring “responsibility for the difficulties and special needs from the individual pupil to the school. In this perspective, the difficulty and the disability are function[s] of the social and physical environment” (p. 556). This paradigmatic change places the emphasis on the school’s requirement to include all children and meet their individual needs; this shift is line with the guiding principles outlined in the Framework for Action that supports the Salamanca Statement. In this research project, teachers are asked about their ability to meet the individual needs of their students. The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF)

“defines disability as an umbrella term for impairments, activity limitations and participation restrictions. Disability is the interaction between individuals with a health condition (e.g. cerebral palsy, Down syndrome and depression) and personal and environmental factors (e.g. negative attitudes, inaccessible transportation and public buildings, and limited social supports)” (online document).

Laluvein (2008) states that “inclusion implies a whole school approach to social relations” (p. 44), putting the emphasis on both the participation of the whole school and the social component of inclusion. Lалуvein suggests that the notion that inclusion refers only to the placement of students with special needs in general education classrooms is too narrow. Inclusion, in Lалуvein’s opinion, is a broad concept that encompasses all members of the school community, including students, staff and parents, and reflects values such as compassion and equity.

Porter (2008) states that “[i]nclusive education means, simply, that all students,

including those with disabilities and other special needs, are educated in regular classrooms with their age peers in their community schools” (p. 63). It is this definition, which resembles that employed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education, which will be used in the context of this research.

The Nova Scotia Department of Education (NSDoE) defines inclusion as “an attitude and a value system that promotes the basic right of all students to receive appropriate and quality educational programming and services in the company of their peers” (*Inclusion*, Supporting Student Success fact sheet). The NSDoE goes on to say that “the goal of inclusive schooling is to facilitate the membership, participation and learning of all students in school programs and activities” (Special Education Policy, 2008, p. 5). The definitions established by the NSDoE, along with Nova Scotian provincial policies on inclusion, provide the framework for inclusive education as experienced by the teachers involved in this study.

Furthermore, this definition set out by the government of Nova Scotia represents the views currently held by some authors and practitioners who see inclusion as a philosophy that extends beyond the integration of students with special needs into the regular classroom—another accepted definition of inclusion—to a set of values that encompass the learning of all students. Indeed, as Barton and Armstrong (2003) write, “[i]nclusion is much more than merely the participation of disabled children and young people into mainstream schools. It is about the well-being of all pupils” (p. 47).

Over the course of its history, inclusion has been described as both a philosophy and a teaching model, and the wide range of ways in which it is interpreted and implemented can lead to frustration for classroom teachers, as well as creating challenges

for researchers. Slee (2001) speaks of “the dilemmas of generating a vocabulary for and theory of inclusive educational practice” (p. 113). The concept of inclusive education is evolving as its practice grows in schools throughout Canada and around the world. Indeed, the principles of an approach to education that “accommodate[s] all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions” (p. 6) formed the basis of the Salamanca Statement on Principles, Policy and Practice in Special Needs Education. This statement and the associated Framework for Action on Special Needs Education were endorsed by 92 governments and 25 international organizations in Spain in 1994. The Framework for Action sets out a plan for expanding and establishing inclusive schools throughout the world based on the guiding principle that

“all children should learn together, wherever possible, regardless of any difficulties or differences they may have. Inclusive schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students, accommodating both different styles and rates of learning and ensuring quality education to all through appropriate curricula, organizational arrangements, teaching strategies, resource use and partnerships with the communities” (p. 11-12).

While the authors acknowledge the enormous variety of situations present in countries around the world, the Statement and Framework for Action nevertheless represent a shift in policy with respect to the education of students with special needs toward a “child-centred pedagogy” (p. 7), noting that “[t]here is an emerging consensus that children and youth with special educational needs should be included in the educational arrangements made for the majority of children” (p. 6). Education policy in Nova Scotia is in line with this guiding principle.

In Nova Scotia, the provincial Department of Education sets out guidelines to which each school board must adhere. The Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP) is

the board examined in this study. The CSAP was created in 1996 in response to pressure from Acadian and francophone parents in Nova Scotia seeking to educate their children in French. It is the only school board in Nova Scotia to offer students an education in French as a first language, from primary to Grade 12. Unlike other Nova Scotian school boards, the CSAP is a provincial board composed of three regions: the northeast, central and southwest regions. The board is made up of 21 schools, attended by more than 4 000 students and staffed by approximately 600 employees throughout the province. Its mission is to offer Nova Scotian Acadians and francophones an excellent education in French as a first language, including classes in English as a first language, while respecting Nova Scotian Acadian identity and culture.

As Nova Scotia's only French-first-language school board, the CSAP must respect provincial policy while offering instruction and support to French-speaking learners in a primarily English-speaking province. As such, the CSAP has developed an agreement with the provincial Department of Education under which the board develops its own curriculum documents for approval by the province.

Current Inclusion Practices

Turning to current practice in the field of inclusive education, it is important to reiterate the challenges associated with research on inclusion, given the goals of this research project. Kilanowski-Press, Foote and Rinaldo (2010) assert that "it appears that the desire to measure and improve the quality of inclusive special education practices has been impeded by the need to provide a common understanding of what is meant by inclusion to facilitate communication and offer a starting point from which to measure

the success of inclusion efforts” (p. 44). Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) note that research on inclusive education must be interpreted with caution due to inconsistent definitions of what constitutes an inclusive program. Research on inclusive education is ongoing, as are efforts to establish a consistently and widely accepted definition. The issue of inclusive education remains somewhat controversial because of conflicting beliefs as to whether students with special needs benefit more from instruction in the regular classroom or in special education classrooms, and whether the presence of students with special needs in the regular classroom negatively impacts the learning of typically developing students (Porter, 2008), as well as the issue of the rights of students to a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment possible.

In the literature on inclusive education, teachers and researchers speak of students with disabilities, students with special educational needs and students with special needs, among other terms. For the purposes of this research, the term “students with special needs” will be used, in line with the terminology used by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

Research in the field of inclusive education in Canada suggests an inclusive model has been implemented in every province and territory, although segregated classrooms and schools do still exist (Dworet & Maich, 2007). In their 2007 look at Canadian school programs for students with emotional/behavioural disorders, Dworet and Maich found that the “movement toward inclusion now has a firm place as a dominant policy in all Canadian jurisdictions” (online document). This research project is being conducted in Nova Scotia, where inclusion has become an integral part of the education system.

While the focus of this study is the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education,

the conceptual framework notes that the goal of the education system is student success. Therefore, it is appropriate to touch on the degree of success of inclusive education as indicated by research. Indeed, studies conducted in Canada, the US and the UK on the effectiveness of inclusive education reveal mixed results. Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) reviewed a number of studies and found that “the impact of inclusion programs on the academic and social performance of students with disabilities is varied” (p. 123). Some studies indicate that inclusion has a positive effect on students with and without special needs, while other studies showed mixed or negative effects. Several factors were shown to be at play in these inconclusive results, but the quality of the inclusion program involved stood out as significant, as did the degree to which the specific requirements of students with special needs are addressed in the general education classroom (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999). Authors Burke and Sutherland (2004) suggest that successful inclusion depends on the attitude of the staff who work most closely with students. In light of this conclusion, the results of the current research project take on some significance for the board under study, the CSAP, as the results speak to factors contributing to student success.

In terms of the challenges associated with inclusive education, research suggests that they are numerous in inclusive classrooms, for both students and teachers. These challenges can take the form of difficult behaviour, insufficient and unpredictable administrative support such as scheduling and educational assistants, inadequate planning time, collaboration time and professional development, as well as difficulty in properly addressing students’ special needs, large class sizes, heavy workload and limited preparation in teacher training programs for the demands of the inclusive classroom

(Smith, 1997; Brackenreed, 2011; Blecker & Boakes, 2010; Dworet & Maich, 2007; Ross-Hill, 2009).

Research in Canada, the US and the UK also suggests that inclusive education is implemented in a wide variety of ways, which is consistent with researchers' observations regarding the range of existing definitions of inclusion. A study by Kilanowski-Press, Foote and Rinaldo (2010) of current practices in inclusion classrooms in New York found that consultant teaching support by a special education teacher was the most common form of support provided to general classroom teachers. The study also found that other forms of support were co-teaching, one-on-one or small group instruction by a special education teacher, the help of a teaching assistant and planning support. Interestingly, co-teaching, while considered by some as the form of support most in keeping with the philosophy of inclusion of students with special needs in the general learning classroom, was found to be the least common form of support reported in this study (Kilanowski-Press, Foote & Rinaldo, 2010).

The conclusions reached by various researchers in the field of inclusive education highlight the mixed results obtained through such research. While UK researcher Lindsay (2007) contends that "the evidence for the effectiveness of inclusive education is, at best, marginally in support of inclusive education" (p. 18), outcomes from other research show that students with and without special needs experience success in inclusive classrooms. In their 2012 review of 72 studies on inclusive practices, Alquraini and Gut found that many studies show benefits of inclusion for students with disabilities in the regular classroom, noting that this "is a successful approach for ensuring that those students develop skills in many different areas of academic achievement, social development, and

general communication” (p. 46).

Studies on Teacher Beliefs and Attitudes

As my study examines teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices, it was important for me to review existing research in this area. Research that looks into teacher beliefs and attitudes with respect to inclusion also reflects, to some degree, the mixed results of research into the implementation and effectiveness of inclusion. Teachers have been found to have varied reactions to inclusion. One significant factor influencing teachers’ perceptions seems to be their success in its implementation, which is itself affected by factors such as those outlined above, including scheduling support, available resources and appropriate training (Dworet & Maich, 2007). Research by Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) is consistent with this finding. In their review of a number of studies that examined the views of teachers, they also determined that the attitudes and responses of teachers to inclusion vary widely based on a range of factors. “Teachers’ perceptions of inclusion seem to be related to their success in implementing inclusion, to student characteristics, and to the availability of financial resources, instructional and ancillary supportive services, training, administrative support, and time to collaborate and communicate with others” (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999, p. 123). Teacher beliefs regarding the inclusion of students with special needs in the classroom may also be influenced by school board policies on inclusion, as well as the beliefs and practices of colleagues and the school culture itself (Jordan & Stanovich, 2004).

Authors Jordan and Stanovich (2004) note the methodological challenges inherent in studying beliefs, but also affirm the importance of this form of research. For example,

Jordan and Stanovich observe that specialized training in teaching students with special needs may influence teacher beliefs about inclusion, however teachers' own interests and beliefs may have led them to pursue such specialized training to begin with. They further speculate that personal experience may contribute to teachers' professional beliefs.

As a justification for the importance of research into teacher beliefs regarding inclusion, Jordan and Stanovich (2004) state that "differences in beliefs are associated with differences in practice" (p. 40), which in turn contributes to differences in student success. Jordan and Stanovich found anecdotal evidence to suggest that successful practices in inclusive classrooms can lead to changes in teacher beliefs regarding inclusion. They suggest that encouraging teachers to change their practices may lead them to modify their beliefs as a result of positive experiences, which would be an intriguing path for future study. Qualitative data from Smith's (1997) study into teachers' perspectives regarding high school inclusion supports Jordan and Stanovich's suggestion that successful inclusive practices can have a positive impact on teachers' beliefs about inclusion. Alquraini and Gut (2012) describe a range of successful practices as identified in numerous studies on inclusive education, including "effective instruction practices to improve access to core general curriculum, peer support for students with severe disabilities, assistive technology, and administrative support, professional development training for educators, and effective involvement and support of parents or families in inclusive settings" (p. 47).

Burke and Sutherland (2004) found that giving teachers enough training to prepare them to work with students with special needs in inclusive classrooms helps foster positive attitudes toward inclusion and makes teachers feel prepared to teach in this

setting. Furthermore, their research shows that knowledge and experience with students with special needs contributes to positive attitudes on the part of teachers and principals. Burke and Sutherland's (2004) research suggests that negative attitudes toward inclusion may come from a perceived lack of knowledge on the part of teachers.

In Horne and Timmons' (2009) study, teachers on Prince Edward Island (PEI) largely demonstrated positive views regarding the inclusion of students with special needs in the regular classroom. Horne and Timmons speculated that this support, stronger than that reflected in other research, could be due to the fact that teachers on PEI often live in the communities where they teach and build strong ties with the families of their students. However, teachers in this study did express a need for greater assistance, in the form of training, resources, smaller class sizes and additional planning time, in order to meet the requirements of their students with special needs.

Research into the beliefs of teachers about inclusion is important because beliefs impact practices and therefore student success (Jordan & Stanovich, 2004). As Canadian provinces and territories move to implement inclusive education practices in their schools, current research efforts must support teachers and students in identifying the beliefs and practices associated with successful implementation of inclusion. The goal of this study is to contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field. Accordingly, I drew on the work of the many researchers who have explored the various fascinating aspects of inclusive education in designing a questionnaire aimed at probing teachers on their attitudes and practices. In particular, I have sought to investigate the degree to which the teachers who implement the practices of inclusive education as set out by the CSAP and the NSDoE endorse the principles of inclusion. A number of items on the

questionnaire address potential challenges cited by different researchers as affecting attitudes toward inclusion, including insufficient administrative support, access to educational assistants, and inadequate professional development, among others. The existing research also informed the design of questionnaire items that look at teachers' personal experiences, professional experiences and knowledge. The work performed by these researchers has enabled me to gain an understanding of the context of my own study by shedding light on factors that influence teachers' attitudes and the challenges associated with this type of research. It has further shaped my study by clarifying the elements to explore, as well as helping attribute meaning to the results because it has allowed me to compare my findings with those of other researchers looking at similar issues. In many cases, the results of existing research confirm my own experiences as a classroom teacher. For example, on a daily basis, I had to decide which items took priority during my limited preparation time, meaning that some days, I was forced to choose between preparing materials for my students with individual program plans (IPPs) and adaptations or assessing work, communicating with parents, planning lessons, and all the other responsibilities that are part of a teacher's workday. It is a constant balancing act to meet the needs of our students while following the curriculum. I have lived the experience identified by researchers of having too little time for too many demands. On the other hand, I have also personally experienced the benefit of proper professional development aimed at meeting student needs, which research has recognized as key to successful inclusion. All our students come to us with their own set of experiences and needs. Where those needs fall into the category of those requiring additional support, knowledge and training, it can be difficult to maintain that balance of meeting needs and

respecting curriculum without help from colleagues, the administration and the board. As such, it is unsurprising to me that teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education are shaped by their experience of it. It is my hope that in identifying the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive practices in the CSAP, as well as the factors that influence those attitudes in this specific context, this study will lead to suggestions for actions aimed at supporting teachers and their students.

Conceptual Framework and Research Questions

This study was conceived in the context of the numerous factors that can impact the way teachers view inclusion. In that light, I developed a conceptual framework (see Figure 1 below) to represent an overview of the factors related to the attitude of teachers toward inclusion practices. Once the conceptual framework was established, I situated my research questions in relation to the elements in the framework. Table 1, later in this chapter, indicates the relationship between the items in the questionnaire and the conceptual framework. It is organized into a list of constructs from the conceptual framework, such as teacher beliefs regarding school factors, and the specific questionnaire items associated with each construct. Table 2 lays out the relationship between the constructs in the conceptual framework and the research questions.

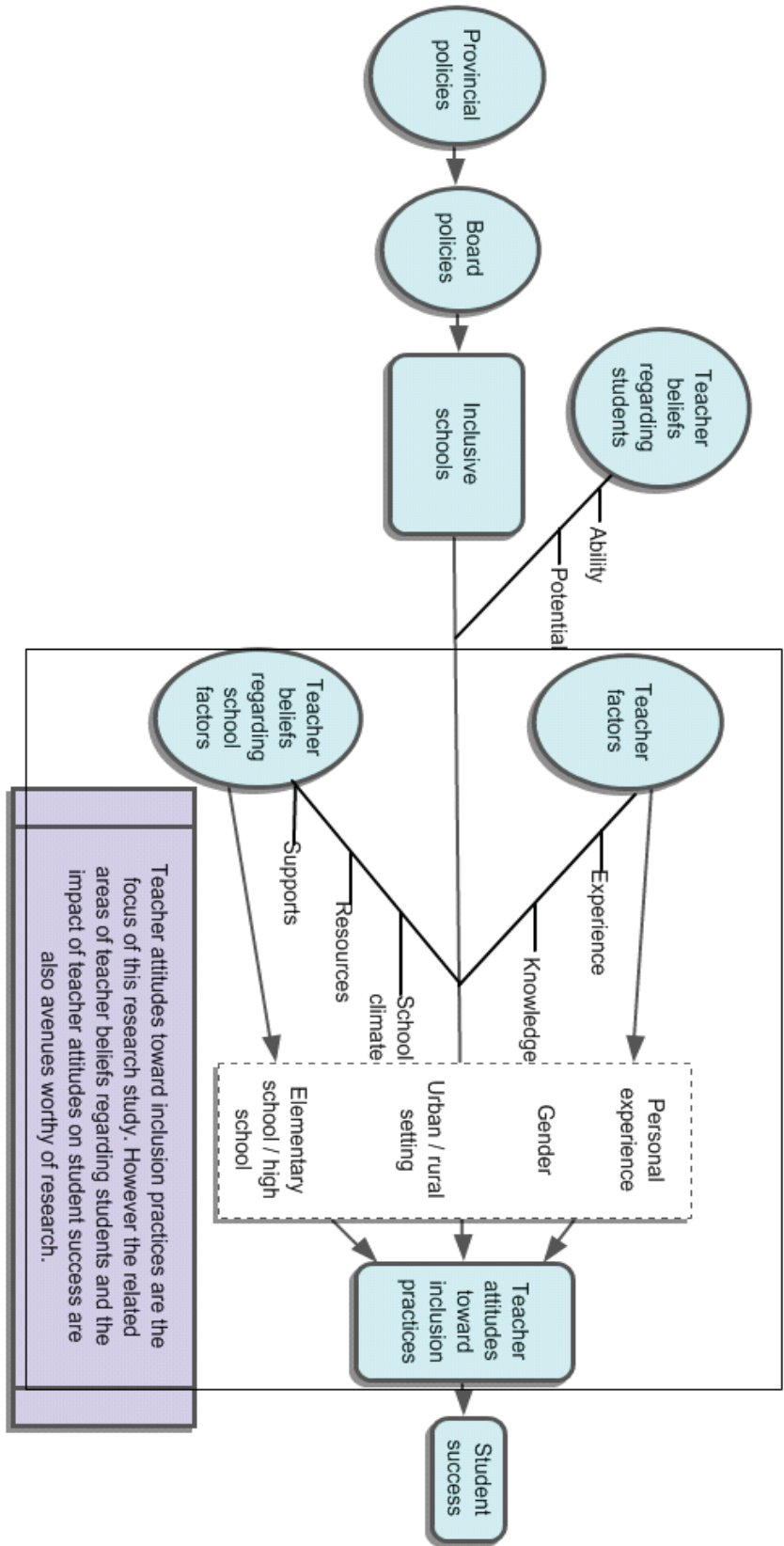


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Research Questions

In order to guide my study, I developed the research questions listed below, which form the basis for this thesis. Inspiration for the research questions came from different sources. The main research question was one that I had been reflecting on personally during my years as a teacher and even more so once I began my graduate studies. Once I had decided on the focus of my thesis project, I began to review the available literature in order to learn what other researchers had examined during the course of their studies. I thought that it was likely that school-related factors, such as time pressures, would influence teacher attitudes. The extant literature confirmed this idea and led me to other factors that also impact teacher attitudes, which was helpful in designing the items on the questionnaire associated with this question. With the assistance of my thesis committee members, we determined that this idea is best represented by teacher beliefs about such school factors. I also speculated that teachers' experience in the classroom and knowledge, derived from professional development and pre-service training, might contribute to the establishment of views regarding inclusion. On that basis, I developed a research question on that issue.

In collaboration with my thesis supervisor, we devised a research question related to teacher's personal experiences, which we hypothesized might have an impact on their beliefs regarding inclusion. In discussion with my thesis committee members, we wondered whether gender might play a role in the establishment of such attitudes; I was particularly intrigued by this question since existing research offered inconsistent findings on this issue. I therefore formulated a research question to that effect.

Given the unique structure of the CSAP, I was curious whether its particularities

might contribute to the establishment of teacher attitudes in the population under study. As such, I formulated two research questions with respect to features of this board: the urban and rural locations of its schools and the various structures of its schools, i.e. elementary, secondary and Primary to 12. Ultimately, I performed data collection and analysis with a view to answering the principal question and the six associated questions, as listed below:

What are the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion practices?

- (a) To what extent does a relationship exist between teacher factors (experience and knowledge) and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?
- (b) To what extent does a relationship exist between teacher beliefs regarding school factors (school climate, resources, supports) and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?
- (c) To what extent does a relationship exist between teachers' personal experiences and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?
- (d) To what extent do teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices differ based on the school's location (i.e. urban or rural)?
- (e) To what extent do teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices differ based on the gender of the teacher?
- (f) To what extent do teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices differ based on the school structure (i.e. elementary school, high school or Primary to Grade 12)?

Research Questions and the Conceptual Framework Constructs

As the conceptual framework diagram suggests, teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices are shaped by many factors, some personal and some organizational. Teachers in Nova Scotian schools must abide by the policies set out by the province and their board, which dictate to some degree the structure of inclusive education in these schools. Teacher attitudes are further shaped by their beliefs regarding students' abilities and potential. These factors, while not insignificant, do not fall within the parameters of this research project, which focuses on the following constructs: teacher factors, specifically experience and knowledge; teacher beliefs regarding school factors, specifically school climate, resources and supports; teachers' personal experience; school setting, specifically urban or rural; gender of the teacher; and school structure, specifically elementary, primary to Grade 12, or high school. Each construct is associated with a research question in the study.

Another construct related to the study of inclusive education but which falls outside the scope of this research project is the concept of student success. For the purposes of this study, student success is defined as the achievement by a student of learning goals set out for a given time period, and participation by a student in educationally meaningful activities.

Table 1 sets out the constructs from the conceptual framework and indicates the questionnaire items associated with each one.

Table 1: Conceptual Framework Constructs and Questionnaire Items

Conceptual Framework Constructs	Questionnaire Items
Teacher beliefs regarding school factors	2, 7, 14, 15, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24
Teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices	1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, 12
Teacher factors (experience and knowledge)	6, 8, 13, 16, 27, 30, 31
Teacher factors (personal experience, gender, urban/rural setting, elementary/high school)	9, 25, 26, 28, 29

Teacher factors, specifically teachers' experiences with inclusive education and their knowledge of this field, were included in this research project because they have been identified as contributing to the establishment of teacher attitudes toward inclusive education in existing research, such as that conducted by Burke and Sutherland in 2004. They found a relationship between teachers' experience and perceived knowledge and their attitudes toward inclusive education. Seven items on the questionnaire completed by participants in this research study relate to teacher factors, including items asking teachers about the highest degree they have completed and the location of the institution.

Teacher beliefs regarding school factors, such as school climate, resources and supports, were also investigated in this research project. Through their research on inclusive education, Salend and Garrick Duhaney in 1999 and Dworet and Maich in 2007 identified teacher beliefs regarding school factors as playing a role in the establishment of teacher attitudes. Twelve items on the questionnaire completed by participants in this research study relate to teacher beliefs regarding school factors.

A further set of teacher factors were also investigated during this research study. Jordan and Stanovich (2004) found a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education and their personal experiences. This factor was therefore included in the study. I also investigated two additional constructs relating specifically to the structure of the CSAP: an urban setting versus a rural setting for a teacher's school, and the organization of the school, whether elementary, secondary or Primary to 12. The gender of the teacher was also included as a potential factor influencing attitudes toward inclusive education. Five items on the questionnaire are related to this set of teacher factors. Although the literature on inclusive education in Canada and around the world has highlighted class size as a factor contributing to teacher attitudes and experiences, this factor was not studied explicitly in the context of this study. Due to the small size of the school board participating in the study, if teachers were to indicate the number of students in their classrooms, they could potentially reveal identifying information about themselves, thereby negatively impacting confidentiality and the anonymity assured to participants.

Each research question is associated with constructs from the conceptual framework. Table 2 indicates the conceptual framework concepts for each research question. My goal was to determine whether a relationship exists between these constructs and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion.

Table 2: Research Questions and Conceptual Framework Constructs

Research Questions	Conceptual Framework Constructs
(a)	Teacher factors (experience and knowledge)
(b)	Teacher beliefs regarding school factors (school climate, resources, supports)
(c)	Teachers' personal experience
(d)	Urban/rural setting
(e)	Gender
(f)	Elementary/high school

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION PRACTICES

Method

Sample

The population of interest for this study was the teaching staff employed by the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial [Acadian Provincial School Board] (CSAP) throughout Nova Scotia. As far as my review of the literature could determine, this population has been under-represented in investigations that have been conducted into the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion in Atlantic Canada. In collaboration with the school board, all teachers working in CSAP schools were invited to respond to the online questionnaire. All teachers who work for the CSAP work in a French-language environment, therefore the survey was administered in French.

The results of this questionnaire represent the attitudes held by teachers working for this French-language school board in Nova Scotia, a province where the majority language is English. The study sample represents the population of interest, but this is limited to teachers employed by the CSAP in Nova Scotia. However, generalizability beyond the CSAP is not a goal for this study; rather the purpose is to gain a deeper understanding of the views held by teachers with respect to inclusion practices within this school board¹.

Procedure

With the help of the school board employing the teachers in the population of

¹ For more information on the CSAP, please see page 12.

interest, an invitation to participate in the survey was sent out via email. All teachers employed by the CSAP were invited to participate. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their questionnaire responses and were informed that participation in the study was voluntary. Participants were further assured that they could withdraw from the study at any point during the questionnaire. (See Appendix B, page 84.)

At the end of the 8-week period during which the questionnaire was available in April and May 2013, online participation ended and the results were analyzed. A reminder of the invitation was sent to all teachers in the board after the survey questionnaire had been available for five weeks.²

A total of 38 complete responses were received in response to the invitation to participate in the survey. Approximately 400 teachers are employed by the CSAP, meaning that the 38 complete responses represent about 10% of the teaching staff in the board. Table 3 below shows the gender of the respondents and the location of the school in which they work.

² To support the CSAP, a report on survey results will be shared with the school board and all interested participants may contact the school board to receive a copy of the report.

Table 3: Gender by School Location

	Rural	Urban	Undisclosed	Totals
Male	6	2	0	8
Female	16	11	0	27
Undisclosed	2	0	1	2
Total	24	13	1	38

With respect to their level of education, 15 teachers stated they hold a Bachelor's degree in Education, while 12 teachers have a Master's degree and 3 have other degrees. Seven teachers chose not to indicate their level of education.

Instrument design

The instrument used in this study is a questionnaire that I developed based on my examination of other similar instruments. I drew on extant surveys on teacher attitudes in order to design a questionnaire, while making sure to use terms familiar to CSAP teachers. It contains 24 items that are rated on a 4-point Likert-type response format where 1="strongly agree" and 4="strongly disagree" or 1= "all the time" and 4="rarely" or 1="always" and 4="never" and there is no neutral point. Respondents indicated the degree of their agreement with statements such as "Students in my classroom learn at their own pace." The questionnaire contains a further seven items that require either a

short answer, i.e.: “Your age,” or a choice between a small number of options, i.e. “Is your school rural or urban?” The instrument was administered through an online format that allowed participants to answer anonymously. All the responses were reverse-coded for analysis, such that 4 represents the strongest level of agreement or most frequent, to allow for ease in interpretation. The questionnaire is provided in Appendix A.

In conducting the data analysis, two constructs were developed to answer the research questions. The first construct, “Teacher Belief,” was based on the items in Table 4 (see below). This construct relates to the beliefs teachers hold with respect to school factors. Cronbach’s Alpha results (0.89) show that the construct has a very high internal consistency. The individual items were averaged to develop the Teacher Belief construct. The second was a Teacher Attitude construct based on the items in Table 5 (see below), related to the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion practices. Cronbach’s Alpha results (0.86) show a very high internal consistency. The individual items were averaged to develop the Teacher Attitude construct.

Table 4: Teacher Belief Items

-
- Q7 The number of students in my classroom is reasonable.
- Q14 I have access to the teaching resources I need in order to teach students with special needs in my classroom.
- Q15 The climate at my school supports the inclusion of students with special needs.
- Q17 I receive sufficient support from the administration of my school with respect to students with diverse needs in my classroom.
- Q18 I receive sufficient professional development activities with respect to students with special needs in my classroom.
- Q19 Teachers in my school tend to work by themselves.
- Q20 In my school, classroom teachers and resource teachers work together collaboratively.
- Q21 I have access to my students' adaptation documents.
- Q22 I have access to my students' IPP documents.
- Q23 A teaching assistant is available to support students with special needs in my classroom.
- Q24 Teachers in my school work in collaboration with the parents of students with special needs.
-

Table 5: Teacher Attitude Items

Q1	Students with special needs belong in the classroom alongside their typically developing peers.
Q3	Students with special needs belong in learning centres alongside peers with special needs.
Q4	Students with special needs benefit from friendships with students in the classroom.
Q5	Typically developing students benefit from friendships with students with special needs.
Q11	Adaptation documents are useful tools.
Q12	IPP documents are useful tools.

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION PRACTICES

Results

Attitudes Toward Inclusion Practices

The main research question in this study was: What are the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion practices? A subset of six research questions guided the study in order to provide specific, detailed answers to the main research question. By examining the relationships between teacher attitudes and the experience and knowledge of teachers, as well as between teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices and teacher beliefs regarding school factors, the study offers a window into elements that may influence these attitudes. The relationship between teachers' personal experiences and their attitudes toward inclusion practices was also explored. The attitudes of teachers toward inclusion practices were also examined for differences based on school location (i.e. urban or rural), the teacher's gender and the school structure (i.e. elementary school, high school or Primary to Grade 12).

Teacher attitudes and teacher experience and knowledge. I conducted analyses in response to research question (a): To what extent does a relationship exist between teacher factors (experience and knowledge) and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?

The first item addressed related to whether students learn at their own pace in the respondent's classroom. (Q6: "Students in my classroom learn at their own pace.") In response to this item, 5 teachers stated that they do this sometimes, 25 said often and 8 said always. I then compared teachers' responses to this item to the Teacher Attitude

construct, as seen in Table 6.

Table 6: Question 6 in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Students learn at their own pace	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Always	8	3.11	.88
Often	25	2.96	.61
Sometimes	5	2.65	.28

The Teacher Attitude construct is based on a scale of 1 to 4, with 4 representing a very positive attitude towards inclusion. This construct includes the questionnaire items designed to determine the attitudes that teachers hold toward inclusion (see Table 3). As the table shows, teachers who stated that students always and often progress at their own pace in their classroom had more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those who indicated that students in their class only sometimes progress at their own pace.

The second item addressed in response to research question (a) dealt with the teacher's experience in teaching students with special needs. (Q8: "I have experience teaching students with special needs.") In response to this item, 19 teachers completely agree, 15 agree and 5 disagree. Teachers' responses to this item were then compared to the Teacher Attitude construct.

Table 7: Question 8 in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Experience teaching students with special needs	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Completely Agree	19	2.99	.64
Agree	14	2.70	.66
Disagree	5	3.34	.31

Table 7 above shows that teachers have generally positive attitudes towards inclusion whether they completely agree, agree or disagree with item 8. Teachers' experience teaching students with special needs has no notable relationship with their attitudes toward inclusive practices. Even those respondents who indicated that they had no such teaching experience demonstrated relatively positive attitudes. The third item related to question (a) regarding teacher knowledge and experience focused on the use of differentiation methods in pedagogical practice. (Q13: "I use differentiation methods in my instruction.") In response to this item, 14 teachers completely agree, 21 agree and 3 disagree. Teachers' responses to this item were compared to the Teacher Attitude construct. The following table shows the descriptive statistics related to this item and the teacher attitude construct.

Table 8: Question 13 in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

I use differentiation methods	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Completely Agree	14	2.75	.92
Agree	21	3.03	.38
Disagree	3	3.01	.61

Table 8 above shows that teachers have positive attitudes towards inclusion whether they completely agree, agree or disagree with question 13. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicate that they use differentiation methods in their teaching, a practice that enables teachers to target their students' needs. Only three teachers stated that they do not differentiate their instruction; however, the attitudes of all respondents toward inclusion practices remain generally positive toward inclusion regardless of their response to this item. The fourth item associated with research question (a) dealt with whether respondents offer students in their classrooms at different learning levels a variety of learning activities. (Q16: "I offer students at different learning levels in my classroom a variety of learning activities.") There was a range of responses to this item: 7 teachers completely agree, 22 agree, 6 disagree, and 2 completely disagree. I compared teachers' responses to this item to the Teacher Attitude construct. The following table shows the descriptive statistics related to this item and the Teacher Attitude construct.

Table 9: Question 16 in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Variety of learning activities	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Completely Agree	7	2.75	.85
Agree	22	3.12	.42
Disagree	6	2.56	.43
Completely Disagree	2	2.17	1.65

As the table shows, teachers who answered “completely agree” and “agree” to this question had more positive attitudes towards inclusion than those who disagreed. Respondents who indicated that they do not offer a variety of learning activities to students at different learning levels, or only do so rarely, had more negative views of inclusive practices.

The fifth and final item related to research question (a) for which statistical analysis could be performed was on years of experience. Teachers’ experience ranged from 2 to 30 years of experience. Years of experience were divided into 4-year groups. Table 10 below illustrates that there is little to no difference between teachers’ years of experience and their responses to items in the Teacher Attitudes construct.

Table 10: Years of Experience in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Years of Experience	n	Mean	St. Dev.
0-5	8	3.02	.41
6-10	8	2.52	.99
11-15	9	3.04	.58
16-20	3	3.07	.21
21-25	7	3.14	.51
26-30	2	2.92	.82

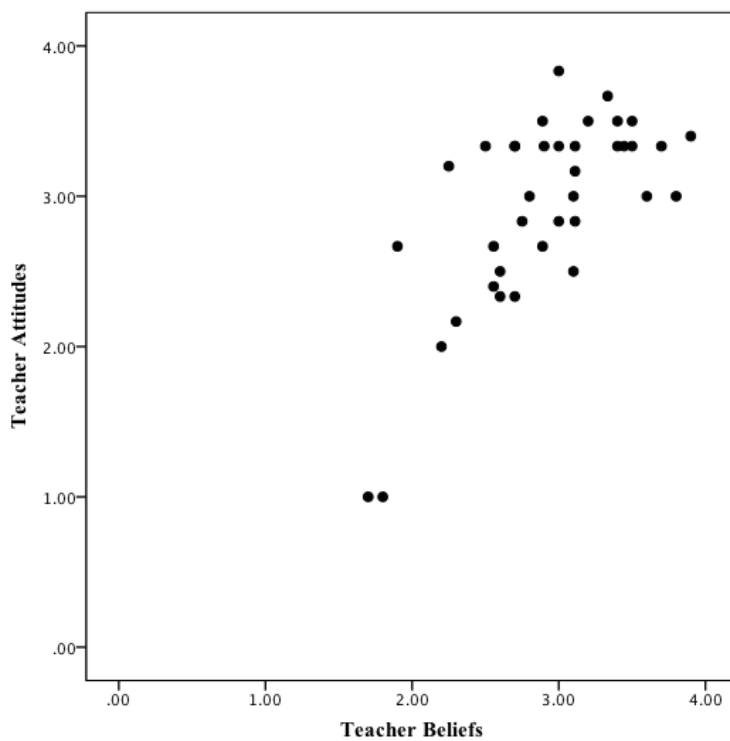
As the table shows, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion vary little based on years of experience. A slight difference was found in the group of teachers who have between 6 and 10 years of experience, who showed slightly less positive attitudes toward inclusion practices than their colleagues with both less and more experience. Overall, attitudes of teachers toward inclusion practices are comparable regardless of years of experience.

In the questionnaire, I invited respondents to offer comments on the learning activities they offer to students at different learning levels in their classrooms. Three comments were entered. Comments from respondents will be addressed in the discussion section.

Teacher attitudes and teacher beliefs regarding school factors. I then explored the relationship between teacher attitudes toward inclusion and their beliefs with respect

to school factors such as the school climate, in order to answer research question (b): To what extent does a relationship exist between teacher beliefs regarding school factors (school climate, resources, supports) and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?

The correlation between Teacher Beliefs and Teacher Attitudes was significant $r(36)=.70$, $p<0.001$. This means that there is a correlation between teachers' beliefs regarding school factors, such as support from their administration, and teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The following scatter plot visually shows the relationship between teacher attitudes and beliefs.



Respondents were invited to comment on the teaching resources that they find useful and those that they would like to have. Nine comments were entered. Comments from respondents will be addressed in the discussion section.

Teacher attitudes and teachers' personal experiences. Another possible relationship that I examined was the connection between teacher attitudes toward inclusion and experiences in their personal lives, in response to research question (c): To what extent does a relationship exist between teachers' personal experiences and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices?

The following table represents the descriptive statistics associated with teacher attitudes on inclusion practices and item 9 related to teachers' personal experiences that prepared them to teach students with special needs. (Q9: "Personal experiences in my life, such as experiences with family members or close friends, have helped prepare me to teach students with special needs.") For this item, 5 teachers completely agree, 14 agree, 13 disagree, and 2 completely disagree. I compared teachers' responses to this item with the Teacher Attitude construct. The following table shows the descriptive statistics related to this item and the Teacher Attitude construct.

Table 11: Question 9 in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Personal experiences prepared me	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Completely Agree	5	2.80	1.10
Agree	14	2.87	.75
Disagree	13	2.94	.38
Completely Disagree	2	3.33	0

As the table shows, teachers' attitudes toward inclusion vary little based on personal experience. Respondents who did not report having had personal experiences that prepared them to teach students with special needs were shown to have slightly more positive attitudes toward inclusion.

Teachers were also invited to comment on personal experiences that they felt prepared them for teaching students with special needs. Two respondents chose to offer comments, which will be addressed in the discussion section.

Teacher attitudes and school location. In order to answer research question (d), I examined whether teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices differ based on the location (i.e. urban or rural) of the school in which they teach.

There were more respondents from rural schools (25) than from urban schools (13). A single respondent chose not to disclose the school location.

The following table provides descriptive statistics on teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices in relation to school location.

Rural or urban school	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Rural	25	2.96	.59
Urban	13	2.85	.74

As indicated in the table, there is no difference in teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices based on the location of their school.

Teacher attitudes and gender. I also studied the data in order to determine whether there is a relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their gender. This enabled me to answer research question (e).

There were more female respondents (27) than male respondents (8). The following table illustrates educators' attitudes disaggregated by gender.

Table 13: Gender in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

Gender	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Female	27	3.06	.45
Male	8	2.37	.96

As Table 13 shows, female respondents were more likely than male respondents to hold positive attitudes toward inclusion practices. However, the large difference between sample sizes violates equal distributions, and the small sample of male respondents violates the normality assumptions needed to perform a t-test for statistical significance. As such, no t-test could be performed.

Teacher attitudes and school structure. Another aspect that I analyzed was the possibility of a connection between the school structure (i.e. elementary school, high school or Primary to Grade 12) and teachers' attitudes, in response to research question (f).

There were a similar number of respondents from each school structure: 13 teachers were from elementary schools, 12 from secondary schools and 14 from P-12 schools.

Table 14: School Structure in Relation to Teacher Attitudes

School Structure	n	Mean	St. Dev.
Elementary	13	3.13	.45
Secondary	11	2.42	.86
P-12	14	3.14	.31

As seen in Table 14, teachers from secondary schools were less likely than their colleagues in elementary and P-12 schools to have positive attitudes toward inclusion practices. Respondents from elementary and P-12 schools showed a mean response of close to 3 (“agree”) on items in the Teacher Attitude construct. However, respondents from secondary schools had a mean response of 2.42, closer to “disagree,” indicating a more negative view of inclusion practices. I will address this difference in the next chapter.

Discussion

Context of the study

The goal of this study was to identify the attitudes of teachers in Nova Scotia's French-language school board toward inclusion practices. The intent of the research questions and, by extension, the design of the questionnaire, was to determine whether certain factors more than others might contribute to the establishment of these attitudes. Authors Burke and Sutherland (2004) state that the success of inclusive education is contingent on the attitudes of those who work directly with students. As such, this study on the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion takes on significance, particularly for proponents of inclusive education. The ultimate purpose of the study was to contribute to the body of knowledge on teacher attitudes toward inclusive education practices and thereby also contribute to increased student success in inclusive classrooms, which are found in the majority of Nova Scotian schools. This study is of particular personal significance to me, as an employee of the school board, the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial (CSAP), whose teachers completed the questionnaire. I have experienced many of the situations outlined in the questionnaire. Furthermore, I have a personal connection to teachers and students in the board and therefore I hope to be able to use the results of this study to their benefit. During the course of this thesis project, I have taken on a new role within the CSAP: as a curriculum consultant, I am now in a position to recommend action in the form of resource procurement and professional development activities in light of the results of my research.

Having worked with many students during my years as a teacher, all of whom presented a range of needs and abilities, I can easily understand how teachers' attitudes

toward inclusive practices could be influenced by their experiences of inclusion. I can further attest to the powerful effect of support from administration and proper professional development when it comes to meeting the needs of our students. I was fortunate enough to receive significant support from my colleagues and adequate training in order to feel comfortable teaching my students with special needs. However, I can imagine that my experience would have been quite different without those supports, and indeed the results of my study reflect that reality. As I will discuss in greater detail in this chapter, I found that when teachers believe they do not have the backing of their administration or the resources, time and training they require to support their students with special needs, they are more likely to hold negative attitudes toward inclusion. It is that type of situation that I hope to remediate through this research study. For example, imagine an elementary school teacher in a CSAP school who welcomes a student into her classroom one year with an individual program plan (IPP) in most subjects, along with several students with adaptation in various subjects. For example, one student may need her teacher to read her the questions on math assessments, while another may require specially formatted notes in social studies. One student may require that all reading assessments be reformatted to have less text on each page. I am sharing the results of my study with the board and its administrators in the hopes that a teacher like the one in this example is offered the support she needs in the form of planning and preparation time, both independently and with resource staff, as well as training on the needs of her students that led to the establishment of the IPP and the adaptations. Both teacher and students would benefit.

Research into inclusive education poses certain challenges, as highlighted by

Kilanowski-Press, Foote and Rinaldo in 2010. The range of meanings attributed to the term inclusion can render it difficult to make definitive interpretations of some results. Authors Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) also recommend interpreting results with caution because of the inconsistent definitions of the language of inclusive education. With that in mind, I formulated statements in my questionnaire that would not require the respondent to rely on a personal understanding of the term inclusion, or other similar terms. The terminology used in the study is consistent with that which is used in CSAP schools.

A range of attitudes

One interesting result of the study was the divergence in attitudes toward inclusion practices among the respondents. While this finding is consistent with existing research on the topic of inclusive education (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999; Jordan & Stanovich, 2004), it remains a noteworthy result because it speaks to the conflicting experiences of teachers, and therefore students, in inclusive education. For a variety of reasons, as outlined below and earlier in the review of the literature, teachers experience inclusion very differently depending on their pre-service preparation and their ongoing professional development, as well as the support they receive in their school in terms of time and assistance. Two teachers in inclusive classrooms in different schools may have substantially different experiences. For example, say that Teacher A has a principal who is aware of the demands of the inclusive classroom and has created a schedule that includes adequate time to collaborate with colleagues and prepare materials, while Teacher B's administration does not take into account the need for collaboration during

the school day. Imagine that Teacher A has had professional development sessions around the needs of students in her school, while Teacher B has mostly had professional development sessions on topics not directly related to her students. These two teachers would clearly have dissimilar experiences in their inclusive classrooms.

On the two items regarding the best environment for students with special needs, responses were almost evenly split between the attitude that the regular classroom is the best environment for such students and the attitude that a special classroom or learning centre is best. This disparity of views was reflected in some other items relating to teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices. However, one interesting exception was the items on friendships. An overwhelming majority of teachers responding to the study indicated that both students with special needs and their typically developing peers mutually benefit from friendships between these two groups. Given the difference of opinion regarding the best learning environment for students with special needs, it seems that the source of disagreement is the learning setting rather than the social side of inclusion. This was an unexpected finding and an intriguing one. In my view, this finding is consistent with other results in this study and in other research studies that suggest that the determining factors in teacher attitudes toward inclusive practices are the various supports that they receive—or do not receive—in order to meet their students' needs (Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 1999; Burke & Sutherland, 2004). By indicating that they believe that both students with special needs and their typically developing peers mutually benefit from friendships, I believe that teachers are tacitly saying that students with diverse needs should be educated in the same schools as their peers where they can interact socially. This leads me to conclude therefore that it is their views on how such

students should be educated within that school and in what setting that are divergent.

Respondents were also divided on the issue of the documents used to support diverse learners. While the majority of respondents for whom it was applicable indicated that they do consult Individual Program Plans (IPPs), there was no consensus on the value of these documents, as well as adaptation documents, as useful tools. However, slightly more respondents indicated that they found them useful than not. My survey does not delve into the reasons behind teachers' opinions regarding support documents; it would be an intriguing avenue for future research, given the widespread nature and potential usefulness of such documents. It would also be worthwhile for the school board to pursue this particular finding among its staff in order to identify the strengths and weaknesses of these documents and thereby improve their efficacy.

Experience and knowledge

One of my research questions focused on how teachers' experience and knowledge affect their attitudes toward inclusion practices. As expected, teachers had a range of experiences and knowledge. In general, most respondents held fairly positive views of inclusion, regardless of their degree of experience. One item dealt specifically with experience teaching students with special needs. Teachers' responses to this item were not associated with any difference in attitude toward inclusion. The majority of respondents indicated having had experience teaching students with special needs, but there was little difference in attitude between those with experience and those without. Teachers without experience teaching students with special needs had slightly more positive attitudes toward inclusive education; however, there were so few respondents

who indicated having no experience that I am hesitant to speculate on this difference. I would be quite curious to follow up on this finding in order to determine if experience teaching students with special needs actually leads teachers to form more negative views. Some other findings in my study suggest that this can be possible, as I will explore later in this chapter.

In terms of years of experience, teacher attitudes varied little. Respondents had a wide range of experience, from two years to thirty, but this had little impact on their attitudes toward inclusive education. The only exception I found was in the group of teachers with six to ten years of teaching experience. This group had slightly more negative views than their colleagues with both less and more experience. This finding is not consistent with other similar studies, and may be attributable to the small sample size. In their 2002 review of multiple studies on teacher attitudes toward inclusion, Avramidis and Norwich wrote that several studies found that younger teachers and teachers with fewer years of experience tended to have more positive attitudes toward inclusion, while their older, more experienced colleagues had more negative attitudes. One study reviewed by Avramidis and Norwich noted a decrease in acceptance of inclusion among teachers with over six years of experience. In another study reviewed by Avramidis and Norwich, authors Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) found that “teachers’ receptivity toward including students with learning disabilities diminishes with experience” (p. 492). They went on to speculate on a possible “powerful negative effect of experience on teachers’ response to inclusion” (p. 493).

With respect to the items that touched on teacher knowledge, I found that teachers who incorporated inclusive practices in their instruction on a regular basis were more

likely to hold positive views of inclusion. However, this finding was not consistent across all items related to teacher knowledge. In terms of differentiating instruction based on student needs, a strong majority of respondents indicated that this is part of their practice. Implementing differentiation had no impact on teachers' attitudes toward inclusion, which were generally positive in relation to this item.

Other aspects of teaching practice were associated with differences in views toward inclusion. Teachers who indicated that their students learn at their own pace at all times or often were more likely to have positive views of inclusion than those who said that this only happens sometimes. Teachers who stated that they offer a variety of learning activities to students at different learning levels had more positive attitudes toward inclusion than their colleagues who do not. It is possible that teachers who make it part of their teaching practice to adapt instructional activities to their students' learning levels may do so because they hold positive views on diversity. This is a value that is at the heart of inclusion.

School factors and their impact on teacher attitudes

In this study, teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices have been shown to differ widely. It therefore becomes useful to explore the subset of research questions aimed at breaking down the factors that might impact these attitudes. One important set of elements that other researchers, such as Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999), have shown to affect teacher attitudes on inclusion practices are teacher beliefs regarding school factors. As noted above, the way teachers feel about inclusion is often tied to the climate at their school and the support they feel that they receive from their administration.

Indeed, as Plaisance and Schneider found in their 2007 case study of a private Catholic school in Paris, a school principal can be a driving force behind the establishment of a school climate that facilitates successful inclusion. In my study, teachers were asked about factors such as pedagogical resources, support from administration, professional development activities and availability of educational assistants, among others. An overwhelming majority indicated that their school climate supports inclusion and that they have access to adaptation documents where applicable. However, on most other aspects, there was no consensus. There was a marked split in perceived support from administration, with slightly over half of the respondents indicating that they strongly agree or agree that they have the support of their administration, while just under half disagreed or strongly disagreed with that statement. A slight majority of respondents indicated that they do not feel that they have the teaching resources that they need in order to teach the students with special needs in their classrooms. Similarly, a slight majority of respondents indicated that they do not believe that they receive adequate professional development opportunities with respect to their students with special needs. In terms of these results, my study is consistent with research conducted in Prince Edward Island by Horne and Timmons in 2009, in which teachers expressed the need for further training and resources to support their students with special needs. These findings are also consistent with the research synthesis conducted by Scruggs and Mastropieri in 1996, which examined 28 studies on perceptions of inclusion. Scruggs and Mastropieri found that only one quarter of teachers surveyed felt that they had adequate time, training and resources in order to implement inclusion successfully.

Discussion of open-ended questions

As part of the questionnaire items, I invited participants to share comments on three items. One question asked teachers about personal experiences, such as experiences with family members or close friends, that prepared them to teach students with special needs. In order to find out more about how these experiences may have shaped their attitudes, I asked respondents to explain their answer, if they so chose. I also wondered about the teaching resources that participants found useful and therefore invited them to comment on them in response to the questionnaire item on availability of teaching resources. Finally, one questionnaire item asked respondents whether they offer students at different learning levels a variety of learning activities. Teachers had the opportunity to give examples to support their answer to this item.

Comments from some respondents illustrate the challenges faced by certain CSAP teachers with respect to pedagogical resources, both for students with special needs and in general. One respondent notes that new initiatives introduced at the provincial and board levels are not always accompanied by the material needed for full implementation or by sufficient training. Another commenter observes that there is a lack of materials for students with special needs and also a shortage of time to prepare materials in the absence of any provided by the board or Department of Education. One respondent points out that teachers who are experiencing time pressures are more likely to offer adaptations only to students who are struggling, to the detriment of strong students who would benefit from more challenging material. In such a situation as described by the commenter, the lack of greater support or a more accommodating schedule forces teachers to prioritize their students' needs to the extent that some students' needs simply are not met. Finally, in

response to the questionnaire item regarding offering varied activities to students at different learning levels, one commenter notes that increased demands and paperwork mean less time to prepare a variety of activities.

As further support for the importance of appropriate professional development activities to help teachers meet the needs of their students, researchers Burke and Sutherland (2004) found that sufficient training helps promote positive attitudes toward inclusion. They further state that negative attitudes on the part of teachers may stem from a perceived lack of knowledge, which more professional development could mitigate. These findings, coupled with the results of my study and illustrated by comments from respondents, speak to the need for increased training opportunities for CSAP teachers to help them support their students with special needs, as well as more time and materials.

On a related note, one theme that arose from comments added by teachers to their questionnaire responses was the need for increased training on meeting student needs in university courses. Respondents noted the disparity between what is taught in some university classes and the realities of the classroom. One respondent also commented on the increasing demands on teachers due to the presence of students with special needs in the regular classroom. The commenter also notes that, in his or her experience, university courses for teachers do not focus adequately on preparing teachers to meet the diverse range of needs they will encounter in the classroom. This was an unexpected finding, and one that was not targeted by any particular questionnaire items, so it is difficult to generalize further, particularly as it was only revealed through respondent comments. However, it presents an interesting avenue for future study.

Teachers working together

On items relating to teamwork, collaboration among classroom teachers and resource teachers as well as between classroom teachers and parents of students with special needs was identified as a consistent feature in many respondents' schools. This stands out when contrasted with the finding that approximately half of respondents do not feel that they have the support of their administration. It suggests that at times a better working relationship exists between teaching staff members than between teaching staff and administrators. Another finding of note was that almost 50% of respondents indicated that teachers at their schools work alone, suggesting that respondents were making the distinction between collaboration between classroom teachers and collaboration between classroom and resource teachers. The slight inconsistency of these findings makes it difficult to draw definitive conclusions, however, an increased focus on collaboration in CSAP schools would seem to be beneficial. This suggestion is consistent with findings by Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) who found that when teachers have the opportunity to collaborate with their colleagues, they hold more positive views toward inclusion.

When asked whether they have access to educational assistants where necessary, a small majority of respondents indicated that such assistants are not available. This finding suggests a perceived need on the part of teachers for support in their classrooms.

Statistical analysis of responses associated with teacher beliefs regarding school factors showed a strong correlation between such beliefs and teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices. In this respect, the results of my study are consistent with the results of research conducted by Salend and Garrick Duhaney in 1999, which also found a significant relationship between teachers' perception of school factors and their attitudes

toward inclusion. One such factor is simply time: time to collaborate with colleagues and time to prepare the necessary resources to meet student needs. Indeed, this point is brought home by a comment made a respondent to my questionnaire who notes that the limited time available to make adaptations could lead to teachers being hesitant to implement them. Another commenter observed that it is very difficult to find time to develop pedagogical resources adapted to student needs, implying that such resources are rarely provided and must be created by individual teachers. It is easy to see how such circumstances could lead a teacher to feel more negatively toward inclusion practices and how student success could be affected.

Another factor is training. Sufficient professional development can mean the difference between a teacher who feels comfortable and competent when she teaches a student with special needs and a teacher who feels overwhelmed and unprepared when faced with the same student. Once again, there is a clear link between the negative experience of the teacher who feels inadequate to the task before her and a correspondingly negative attitude toward the practice of including such a student in the regular classroom.

A self-perpetuating cycle

It seems that the way in which teachers are prepared and supported with respect to teaching students with special needs in inclusive classrooms can, to a certain extent, create a vicious circle—or indeed a virtuous circle, depending on the quality and adequacy of the preparation and support. Teachers who are given ample time and resources, as well as proper professional development, be it pre-service or in-service, are

more likely to feel positively toward inclusion and as such, experience greater success. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found support for this idea in a number of studies that they reviewed in their research synthesis. They noted that some studies showed increasingly positive attitudes toward inclusion as teachers received extended training. Conversely, negative expectations that arise from a lack of appropriate training, time pressures and other such factors can, in some cases, become a self-fulfilling prophecy. Teachers who expect that their inclusive practices will be unsuccessful are more likely to see those expectations met.

Furthermore, the majority of respondents stated that they can only meet the needs of the students in their classrooms sometimes, while over 20% stated that they can rarely meet the needs of their students. This is a striking finding that highlights the importance of taking action. The message to administrators and indeed to teachers is that in order to improve attitudes toward inclusion practices, an important step is increasing support for teachers in several respects: a supportive administration, greater access to teaching resources designed to meet specific student needs, increased professional development to enable teachers to meet their students' needs, increased support for collaboration and greater access to educational assistants. Research such as that conducted by Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) and Dworet and Maich (2007) has shown that teachers who experience success in inclusive classrooms are more likely to feel positively about inclusion. In another illustration of the potential to create a virtuous circle, teachers in the CSAP who currently demonstrate negative views of inclusive practices might therefore have a change of heart if they had time in their week to collaborate with the resource teacher, for example, or a professional development session around that needs that are

present in their school, or access to an educational assistant to support students with special needs in their classes. It would be helpful to base professional development opportunities within the board on needs expressed by teachers, rather than needs identified at the provincial or board level. In their 2001 study of a school in Nova Scotia, King and Edmunds suggest that “the philosophy of professional development change so that teachers’ needs for inclusion drive the topic determination process instead of other factors usually determined by board or provincial decision-makers” (p. 21). I believe that this recommendation is applicable for the population under study here.

A strong majority of respondents indicated that the number of students in their classroom is reasonable. However, seven respondents completely disagreed with the statement that the number of students in their classroom is reasonable, suggesting that, while the challenge is not widespread, certain teachers face a considerable obstacle in terms of class size.

Teachers’ personal experiences

Another factor that I examined as a possible influence on teachers’ attitudes was their personal experiences. I wondered whether teachers who had or have family members or close friends with special needs might view inclusive education differently. Actually, I suspected that such teachers might hold more positive views of inclusion. What I found was that a teacher’s personal experiences have little bearing on his or her attitudes toward inclusive practices. In fact, teachers who reported having no personal experiences that prepared them to teach students with special needs had slightly more positive views toward inclusion. Although it was not a significant difference, this was a

surprising finding. I cannot draw any definitive conclusions from this; I tend to think that there may have been a weakness in the formulation of the item related to personal experience that led to a slight distortion of the data that I gathered. I would be very interested in seeing further research conducted in relation to this factor.

School location

The CSAP is a unique body in Nova Scotia in that it is a provincial board, with schools located from the southwest to the northeast of the province. Some schools are found in urban areas, such as Bedford and Dartmouth, while others are found in very small communities, such as Pubnico. I was curious whether the location of a school might influence teachers' attitudes toward inclusion practices. In their study conducted on Prince Edward Island, Horne and Timmons (2009) found that teachers largely demonstrated positive attitudes toward inclusive education and they speculated that this might be partly due to the fact that teachers in PEI tend to live in the communities where they teach and have ties to their students and their families. I wondered whether this might be the case in Nova Scotia's CSAP schools. However, I found no correlation between school location and teacher attitudes in my study. It may be that school location does not impact teachers' attitudes toward inclusion because their views are established before they come to teach in a rural or urban area. Alternatively, it may be that school location simply does not play a significant role in the day-to-day experiences of teachers in their classrooms and their schools, which do in fact contribute a great deal to the establishment of attitudes toward inclusion.

Influence of gender

My research study examined whether teachers' attitudes were influenced by their gender. Though no statistically significant relationship was found between gender and attitudes toward inclusion practices, I cannot conclude with certainty that there is no connection. While my study does not show a relationship between these factors, the low number of male respondents was a limiting factor, making it impossible to draw any conclusions. When looking at individual responses to questionnaire items, there are differences between answers by males and females. However, the small sample size prevents us from identifying gender as the correlating factor. This aspect of the study would make an interesting avenue for a future, larger-scale research project. This is particularly the case since evidence in other studies appears inconsistent. In their research synthesis from 2002, Avramidis and Norwich found that some studies showed that female teachers were somewhat more receptive to inclusive education than male teachers, while other studies, such as that of Van Reusen, Shoho and Barker in 2001, found no relationship between gender and attitudes toward inclusive education.

A variety of school structures

As I mentioned earlier, the CSAP is unique in Nova Scotia in that it is responsible for schools throughout the province, rather than in one region. As such, the CSAP is home to a variety of schools in both rural and urban areas, which results in different school structures, depending on the number of students. In the urban areas of the Halifax Regional Municipality, for example, there are enough French-speaking students to warrant two secondary schools (Grades 7 to 12 and 6 to 12) and three elementary schools.

In some other areas of Nova Scotia, the number of French-speaking students means that one school for Grades Primary to 12 is more appropriate. When I developed my study, I was curious whether the structure of a teacher's school, be it elementary, secondary or P-12, would have an impact on attitudes toward inclusive practices. Indeed, there does appear to be a link. Teachers in elementary schools and P-12 schools were found to have more positive views of inclusion than their colleagues who teach in secondary schools. The difference was fairly notable, with the views of elementary and P-12 teachers being generally positive and the views of high school teachers generally negative. To my mind, there are a number of reasons that could motivate this disparity.

Elementary school teachers spend more of the day with their students than their colleagues at the high school level. It may not be appropriate to say that inclusion is easier at the elementary level, but it is true that there are more opportunities to interact with students throughout the course of the day. This enables elementary teachers to get to know their students well and become very familiar with their needs, which is key to successful inclusion. Furthermore, elementary teachers generally teach fewer students than their high school colleagues. It is therefore unsurprising to me that elementary school teachers would view inclusive practices more favourably than high school teachers.

The situation of the Primary to 12 school is interesting. As to why teachers in this school structure would have more positive views of inclusion, I can conceive of a number of possibilities. It could be that more elementary level teachers than secondary teachers responded to the invitation to participate in the study. It could also be that teachers in the P-12 schools have more opportunity than their colleagues at the high school level to get

to know students because students spend more years in the same school, and there tend to be fewer students in these schools. They would also have more opportunities to consult with colleagues who have taught their students for information as to how best to meet their needs. This is a finding that the school board may wish to pursue. For example, it could be useful to invite teachers at elementary and P-12 schools to share ideas and strategies for implementing inclusion successfully with high school teachers. Another possibility could be to look into opportunities to offer greater support to high school teachers in order to address the challenges highlighted in this study, such as time constraints and professional development needs.

In terms of the findings in response to this research question, my results are consistent with other similar studies. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found that a number of studies into teacher attitudes toward inclusion reported that secondary teachers were generally less positive toward inclusive practices than their elementary school colleagues. This finding is echoed in Bender, Vail and Scott's 1995 study that found that teachers at higher grade levels had less positive attitudes toward inclusion than their colleagues at lower grade levels.

Ongoing challenges for teachers

In their research synthesis conducted in 1996, Scruggs and Mastropieri found that there was no increase in positive attitudes toward inclusive practices over time. They had examined 28 studies conducted over a 20-year period but saw that there was no notable rise in teachers' perceptions of inclusion practices. It seems that there had been therefore no improvement in terms of how teacher education programs prepared teachers to teach

students with special needs in the regular classroom. A number of years have passed since these authors published their research synthesis, so hopefully progress has since been made. However, the same themes with respect to challenges faced by teachers are present in current research, including my own, suggesting that a great deal of work has yet to be done by universities and school boards in preparing and supporting teachers.

Limitations

The small number of teachers who responded to the invitation to participate in this study limits the generalizability of the results. School board representatives expressed that this population is frequently solicited to participate in research studies. As such, there may be a certain degree of reluctance on the part of teachers to devote more time to participating in research. Furthermore, many teachers carry a heavy workload and may simply not have the time or energy to devote to activities outside of the requirements of their classroom. Additionally, the fact that such a small number of male teachers responded to the invitation to participate in the study is a limitation, as it becomes difficult to compare results between male and female respondents.

A further limitation is the self-selection of participants. It is possible that teachers who are interested in inclusive education are more drawn to participating in a study on this topic. The group of respondents therefore may not thoroughly represent the population from which they were drawn.

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Conclusion

This study has offered me a fascinating window into the attitudes and beliefs of teachers in the CSAP. In many cases, the results of my study are consistent with existing research, as well as my own experience and anecdotal evidence from my years of teaching. On other fronts, results were surprising and by times enlightening or intriguing, offering possibilities for future research. The small number of respondents was a disappointment, as it means that my results do not carry as much weight as I would have liked. It was my hope to offer avenues of solution to the board. I believe that this is still possible, that the findings outlined here represent to a certain degree the realities of CSAP classrooms and, as such, the suggestions for action could benefit both teachers and students.

The more I read about teacher attitudes toward inclusion and inclusion in general, the more I found that a disconnect exists between research and the classroom. From studies dating back twenty years to studies conducted within the past two years, there are recurrent themes. Many recommendations have been made with the goal of increasing teacher satisfaction with inclusive practices and thereby, ultimately, improving the school experience of students in inclusive classrooms. But in many cases, it seems that these recommendations have not been followed. King and Edmunds (2001) stated that “decision-makers should pay closer attention to the voices of teachers directly responsible for implementing inclusion” (p. 20). My review of the literature and my own research study have led me to the conclusion that the best way to improve teacher attitudes toward inclusion is to listen to teachers and to act on the needs they have

expressed. After all, teachers speak not only for themselves; they are also the voice of their students.

Another consideration related to both inclusive education and professional development is financial resources. Finances are never far from the minds of administrators in the school system, and proper allocation of financial resources is a constant concern. Therefore, a strong argument could be made that there should be a greater effort to base professional development opportunities on needs identified by teachers, as a means of getting the most value in the classroom per dollar spent. Teachers who receive the training they have asked for are more likely to implement inclusion practices effectively. This would increase their satisfaction with their inclusive classrooms and ultimately improve the experience of students, which is the goal of administrators when they plan their budgets. Another possibility raised by current research on inclusion (Kilanowski-Press, Foote & Rinaldo, 2010) is the potential for co-teaching as a means of meeting student needs and supporting teachers. This practice is rare, likely due to the costs associated with it, but given the potential to offer strong support to both students and teachers, this is an option worth considering, particularly where there is a drive within school cultures to move toward greater collaboration. Along similar lines, budgetary constraints can sometimes limit the presence of teaching assistants, who could provide another potential avenue of support for teachers and students in inclusive classrooms.

Teachers have a demanding and inspiring job. I am grateful to the CSAP teachers from across the province who took time from their hectic schedules to share their views with me. Nova Scotia and indeed Canada as a whole have embraced inclusive education.

I believe that this is a reflection of our national respect for diversity and a natural and appropriate step toward equality for all citizens. I further believe that it is the responsibility of educators and administrators to ensure that the needs of all students are met. I hope that the information and ideas laid out in this document can be used to help fulfill that essential mandate.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire on Inclusion Practices

(to be completed by participants in French; French version follows)

The following statements pertain to the inclusion of children with special needs in the classroom. Inclusion refers to the practice of having students with special needs spend all or most of the day learning alongside other students in the regular classroom.

Part 1. The following statements relate to students:

1. Students with special needs belong in the classroom alongside their typically developing peers. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
2. I am able to meet the needs of the all the students in my classroom. (all the time, most of the time, sometimes, rarely)
3. Students with special needs belong in learning centres alongside peers with special needs. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
4. Students with special needs benefit from friendships with students in the classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
5. Typically developing students benefit from friendships with students with special needs. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
6. Students in my classroom learn at their own pace. (all the time, most of the time, sometimes, rarely)
7. The number of students in my classroom is reasonable. (strongly agree, somewhat

8. agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)

Part 2. The following statements relate to teaching practices and personal experience:

9. I have experience teaching students with special needs. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
10. Personal experiences in my life, such as experiences with family members or close friends, have helped prepare me to teach students with special needs. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)

If you would like to explain, please do so here:

11. Regular consultation of IPP documents is part of my teaching practice. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
12. Adaptation documents are useful tools. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
13. IPP documents are useful tools. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
14. I use differentiation methods in my instruction. (all the time, most of the time, sometimes, rarely)
15. I have access to the teaching resources I need in order to teach students with special needs in my classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)

Please give examples of some resources you find useful:

What are some resources you would like to have?

Part 3. The following statements relate to school structure and practices:

16. The climate at my school supports the inclusion of students with special needs in the classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
17. I offer students at different learning levels in my classroom a variety of learning activities. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)

If possible, could you give examples?
18. I receive sufficient support from the administration of my school with respect to students with diverse needs in my classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
19. I receive sufficient professional development activities with respect to students with special needs in my classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
20. Teachers in my school tend to work by themselves. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree)
21. In my school, classroom teachers and resource teachers work together collaboratively. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
22. I have access to my students' adaptation documents. (always, sometimes, rarely, never, not applicable)
23. I have access to my students' IPP documents. (always, sometimes, rarely, never,

- not applicable)
24. A teaching assistant is available to support students with special needs in my classroom. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)
25. Teachers in my school work in collaboration with the parents of students with special needs. (strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree, strongly disagree, not applicable)

Answering the following questions is optional, but very helpful.

25. Your age:
26. Your gender:
27. Please indicate the total number of years you have been teaching:
28. Is your school rural or urban?
29. Is your school an elementary school, a high school or a Primary to 12 school?
30. In what year did you complete your initial teacher training and where?
31. What is the highest degree you hold?

Questionnaire au sujet des pratiques inclusives

Les questions suivantes portent sur l'inclusion d'enfants ayant des besoins particuliers dans la salle de classe. Le terme « inclusion » fait référence à la pratique selon laquelle les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers passent une partie de la journée ou toute la journée en situation d'apprentissage avec les autres élèves dans la salle de classe.

Les énoncés suivants portent sur les élèves.

1. Le meilleur environnement d'apprentissage pour les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers est la salle de classe avec leurs pairs sans besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
2. Il m'est possible de répondre aux besoins de tous mes élèves. (toujours, souvent, parfois, rarement)
3. Le meilleur environnement d'apprentissage pour les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers est le centre d'apprentissage. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
4. Les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers bénéficient d'amitiés avec les autres élèves dans la salle de classe. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
5. Les élèves sans besoins particuliers bénéficient d'amitiés avec les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
6. Mes élèves apprennent selon leur propre rythme. (toujours, souvent, parfois, rarement)

7. Le nombre d'élèves dans ma classe/mes classes est raisonnable. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)

Les énoncés suivants portent sur les pratiques pédagogiques et les expériences personnelles.

8. J'ai de l'expérience en enseignement aux élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
9. Les expériences personnelles dans ma vie, telles que des expériences avec la famille ou les proches, m'ont préparé(e) pour l'enseignement aux élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)

Si vous voulez expliquer davantage votre réponse, vous pouvez le faire ici :

10. La consultation des documents de PPI fait partie de mes pratiques pédagogiques courantes. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
11. Les documents d'adaptations sont des outils pratiques. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
12. Les documents de PPI sont des outils pratiques. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
13. J'emploie des méthodes de différenciation dans mon enseignement. (toujours, souvent, parfois, rarement)
14. J'ai à ma disposition les ressources pédagogiques dont j'ai besoin pour enseigner à mes élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas

d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)

Veillez donner des exemples de ressources utiles :

Quelles ressources aimeriez-vous avoir?

Les énoncés suivants portent sur la structure scolaire et les pratiques au niveau de l'école.

15. Le climat à mon école appuie l'inclusion d'élèves ayant des besoins particuliers dans la salle de classe. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
16. Je fournis aux élèves à des niveaux d'apprentissage divers une variété d'activités d'apprentissage. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet).

Si possible, veuillez s'il vous plait donner des exemples :

17. Je reçois un appui suffisant de la part de l'administration de mon école en ce qui concerne les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
18. Je reçois suffisamment de formation qui porte sur les besoins particuliers de mes élèves. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
19. Les enseignantes et les enseignants dans mon école travaillent souvent seuls. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord)
20. À mon école, les enseignant(e)s travaillent en collaboration avec les enseignant(e)s ressources. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du

- tout d'accord, sans objet)
21. J'ai accès aux documents d'adaptations de mes élèves. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
22. J'ai accès aux documents de PPI de mes élèves. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
23. Un(e) aide-enseignant(e) est disponible afin d'appuyer les élèves ayant des besoins particuliers à qui j'enseigne. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, sans objet)
24. Les enseignant(e)s à mon école travaillent en collaboration avec les parents des élèves ayant des besoins particuliers. (tout à fait d'accord, d'accord, pas d'accord, pas du tout d'accord, je ne sais pas, sans objet)

Les questions suivantes sont facultatives, mais vos réponses seraient utiles.

25. Votre âge :
26. Êtes-vous un homme ou une femme?
27. Veuillez préciser depuis combien d'années vous enseignez :
28. Votre école se trouve-t-elle dans un milieu rural ou urbain?
29. Votre école est-elle :
- une école élémentaire?
 - une école secondaire?
 - une école maternelle à 12?

30. En quelle année avez-vous terminé votre formation initiale en éducation et à quelle institution?

31. Quel est le plus haut diplôme ou certificat que vous avez obtenu?

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARD INCLUSION PRACTICES

Appendix B

Informed Consent

Inclusion Practices

What the study is about:

This research study is part of my Master's research program. The purpose of this study is to learn more about teacher attitudes toward inclusion practices.

What we will ask you to do:

If you agree to participate in the study, you will complete a 15-minute survey. The questions will be general so you don't need to refer to additional documentation.

Risks and benefits:

We do not anticipate any risk due to your participation in this study. We hope that what we learn in the study will benefit future students and teachers.

Taking part is voluntary:

Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time without consequence. If you decide to withdraw, the data collected from you up to the time you withdraw will be destroyed.

Your answers will be anonymous:

The records of this study will be kept private. Only statistics representing the responses of all participants will be used. In any report about the study, we will not include any information that could be used to identify you. Responses will be given anonymously and research records will be kept in a protected file; only the researchers will have access to the records.

How your information will be used:

The anonymous information you provide will be used for a Master's thesis, conference presentations and future publications for three years from the completion of the project. A report containing survey results may be provided to the Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

This research project has met the ethical standards of the University Research Ethics Board at Mount Saint Vincent University. If you have questions about how this study is being conducted and wish to speak with someone not involved in the study, you may contact the Chair of the University Research Ethics Board (UREB) c/o MSVU Research Office, at 457-6350 or via e-mail at research@msvu.ca.

Pratiques inclusives

But de l'enquête :

Cette enquête fait partie de ma maîtrise ès arts en éducation. Le but de cette enquête est d'apprendre davantage au sujet des attitudes du personnel enseignant à l'égard des pratiques inclusives.

Votre rôle :

Si vous acceptez de participer à cette enquête, votre participation consiste à répondre à un questionnaire qui durera à peu près 15 minutes. Les questions sont de nature générale donc vous ne serez pas obligé(e) de vous référer à des documents supplémentaires.

Risques et avantages :

Nous ne prévoyons aucun risque associé à votre participation à cette enquête. Nous espérons que de futurs élèves et enseignant(e)s bénéficieront de ce que nous apprendrons lors de cette enquête.

La participation est facultative :

Votre participation à cette enquête est entièrement facultative. Si vous décidez d'y participer, vous avez le droit de vous retirer à tout moment sans conséquence. Si vous décidez de vous retirer, les données que vous avez fournies seront détruites.

La confidentialité est assurée :

Les données recueillies demeureront confidentielles et anonymes. Seulement des tests statistiques qui regroupent les réponses de tous les participants seront utilisés. Aucun nom n'apparaîtra sur aucun document découlant de cette enquête. Vous répondrez au questionnaire de façon anonyme et les données seront conservées dans un fichier protégé auquel uniquement les chercheurs auront accès.

L'emploi des données :

Les réponses anonymes que vous fournirez seront utilisées dans le cadre d'un mémoire de maîtrise, des présentations de conférence et des publications futures pour une période de trois ans après la fin de l'enquête. Un rapport qui résume les résultats du questionnaire peut être soumis au Conseil scolaire acadien provincial.

Cette enquête est conforme aux exigences éthiques du comité d'éthique (University Research Ethics Board) de Mount Saint Vincent University. Si vous avez des questions au sujet du déroulement de cette enquête et vous désirez parler à quelqu'un qui n'est pas impliqué dans l'enquête, vous pouvez communiquer (en anglais seulement) avec le responsable du comité d'éthique (University Research Ethics Board) au 902.457.6350 et par courriel à research@msvu.ca.