THE EFFECTS OF INCLUSION ON THE ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF
REGULAR EDUCATION STUDENTS

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CHAPTER I

Background

Brief History of Special Education Legislation
**Statement of the Problem**

Federal laws, such as Public Law 94-142 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 have required educators to provide special education students with services that are free, appropriate, and least restrictive in nature. Public educators have served students in a wide array of educational settings. Students have been served in educational settings that isolate them in self-contained classrooms, mainstream them into general education classrooms for brief periods of time throughout the school day, and integrating them into the general education classroom for a majority of the school day. There is a vast majority of research that has been completed on special education methodologies and their effect on special education student achievement.

Research has provided mixed results in terms of the effects of inclusion practices on the achievement of special education students in an inclusive setting. However, with the passage of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) many administrators have increased the amount of inclusive services they provide for special education students. Inclusive services provide students with a general education teacher, as well as a special education teacher in the same classroom. This model would provide the special education students with the best of both worlds, because they would have a general education teacher to provide them with the content knowledge for the course and a special education teacher to provide services/accommodations for their specific disability.

While there is an exceptional amount of research on teaching students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom, there is very little research regarding the general education students within the same inclusive setting.

*INSERT RESEARCH ON HS LEVEL*
Therefore, the focus of this study will be to investigate the effects of placement in an inclusive setting on the academic achievement of general education high school students.
Research Question

In order to research the effects of inclusion on the academic achievement of general education students placed in an inclusive classroom with special education students. This study will be directed by the following research question: What is the effect of inclusion on the academic achievement of general education students?

Also, there will be two secondary research questions:

1. To what extent do general education students in inclusive settings exhibit achievement in English as general education students not in inclusive settings?

2. To what extent do general education students in inclusive settings demonstrate similar academic achievement in English as general education students not in inclusive settings when race, gender, and attendance rates are introduced as factors?
Significance of the Study

The passage of NCLB has forced educators to continue to find useful strategies to increase the academic achievement of special education students. An inclusive classroom, which contains special education students, general education students, a general education teacher, and a special education teacher, has been effective in improving the academic performance of special education students. But is there a price to pay for using these types of inclusion services? Do the general education students and their academic achievement suffer as a result of being placed within an inclusive setting?

*INSERT PRIOR RESEARCH

This study will add to the research by focusing on the academic achievement of general education students in regents English in high school who are placed in inclusion classrooms. This study will also aid educators and administrators by supplying data on the effects of placement within inclusion classrooms on the academic achievement of general education students.
Procedures

Research Design

To discover the effects of placement within an inclusive setting on the academic achievement of general education students, the researcher will use a causal-comparative research study. For the purpose of this study, student achievement will be measured by the New York State English Regents exam. Causal-comparative research identifies the cause and effect between people.

The cause, as well as the independent variable in this case is student placement in an inclusion classroom. The effect and dependent variable would be student achievement. This study will also incorporate an ex-post facto research design because the research is focusing on causes that have already exerted their effects on the variable. The ex-post facto design will be used for several reasons. First, the research groups will be formed prior to the research being conducted. Second, influencing the inclusion classes will not be a possibility.

Sample and Sampling

This study will incorporate the use of convenience sampling to choose the sample population. The sample population will be taken from high school students on Long Island, New York. The sample group will consist of the total population of high school general education students placed in inclusive settings combined with general education students not placed in inclusive setting who are assigned to the same general education teacher. Students who met the criteria from each of the high schools during the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013
school years will be included in the sample. There will be approximately _________ students in the sample population.

All administrators from the high schools will be contracted via oral and written request for student information. The student information that will be requested are class roster for inclusion classes within the school, class rosters for general education teachers working in inclusion classes, and English Regents results for all general education students on the rosters. The researcher is not associated with any of the school districts associated with this study.

Instrument

The New York State English Regents exam scores will be used as a measure of academic achievement. The English Regents is designed to measure how successful students obtain, learn, and achieve the information and skills necessary to align with college and career readiness standards (King, Jr., 2010). Every high school student in the state of New York is required to take the English Regents exam at the conclusion of his or her junior year as a graduation requirement. General education students need to score a minimum of a 65 in order to achieve regent’s credit for graduation from high school, while special education students are able to score a 55 and gain local or RCT credit for graduation. For the purpose of this study, the results from the English Regents will be used to define student achievement.

Data Collection

Once school officials grant permission, data will be collected using the school system information database, Infinite Campus. Data will be collected directly from Infinite Campus with no student contact. Student names will be used for sorting data,
however, a new database will be created using numerical codes in place of student names. The researcher will then pair those codes with classroom assignments and New York State English Regents exam results.

Data Analysis

Limitations/Delimitations

Limitations

The population of this study will be limited to students in school districts on Long Island, New York. The sample of subjects within the school system will limit the ability to generalize the findings and may not be applicable to other school districts that vary in size, location, and demographics. Also, the instructional capabilities of the general education and special education teachers in the inclusion classroom could have an impact on the students overall achievement, as well as the ability to generalize the findings to other populations.

Assumptions

The researcher will be fair and unbiased when collecting and analyzing data. The assessment being used in this study is a reliable and valid tool. The methodology being used suggests the most rational and suitable design for this type of research.

Delimitations

The researcher will use scores from the New York State English Regents exam as a student achievement indicator. Student data will be collected for general education
students registered in courses with general education teachers who teach in inclusive settings at some point throughout the school day. The sample population will be pulled from high school students on Long Island, New York.

**Definition of Terms**

*Inclusion* –

*Mainstreaming* –

*Self-contained* –

*Public Law 94-192* –

*No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* –

*Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* –

*Infinite Campus* –

*New York State English Regents Exam* –

**Summary**

Research has proven mixed results on the academic achievement of special education students within an inclusive setting. While there is a wealth of research and data on educating students with disabilities in an inclusive setting, there is minimal research regarding educating general education students in a similar environment. The purpose of this research is to study the effect of inclusion placement on the academic achievement of general education high school students. A sample will be taken from high school students in several school districts on Long Island, New York. The sample group
will consist of the total population of high school general education students assigned to inclusion classes, as well as general education students placed on non-inclusion classes who are both assigned to the same general education teacher. Once permission is granted to collect data, English Regents results from students in both subgroups will be compared in order to determine the effects of inclusion practices on the academic achievement of general education students placed in inclusive and non-inclusive settings.

*INSERT INFO ON DATA ANALYSIS AND COLLECTION

Quantitative data will be analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Charts, tables, and other visual displays will be used to present the findings.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

Conceptual Framework

The illumination of themes, patterns and discrepancies comes from the interpretation of data. However, to give meaning to the collection of overwhelming and often unyielding data, a framework for the analysis is required. Below is a five-point framework (Hughes, 2006) that guides the analysis of this study:
Within the context of Hughes’ 5 C’s, the body of this report will aid us in identifying the defining characteristics of the effects of inclusive settings on the academic achievement of general education students, and finding ways in which the inclusive services are similar and unique from each other. The comparison will be used to allow us to gain perspective as to where we stand with regard to specific indicators as they relate to education and more importantly, the unique lens in which each subgroup experiences these indicators. Other variables will be examined to provide the context within which decisions may be made, and to construct meaning in the form of a plan of action.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

The focus of this study is to determine the effects of placement within an inclusive setting on the academic achievement of general education students versus those general education students not placed in inclusive settings. Undoubtedly, there is an abundant amount of research that has been completed on special education teaching strategies and their relationship on special education student’s achievement. While there is an excessive amount of research geared towards special education students, there is very little research concerning the achievement levels of general education students placed in an inclusive setting. The majority of the research that is available is qualitative in nature and focuses on the views and opinions of teachers, parents, and students toward their placement in an inclusion classroom. Through the use of interviews, focus groups, and observations qualitative research seek to discover themes and patterns in research. This study will use a quantitative research design to measure data and create a statistical relationship between the variables.

This section will review the studies research questions
REFERENCES