Teachers' Attitudes Towards Inclusion as Linked to Teachers' Sense of Efficacy

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ABSTRACT

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In Quebec, meeting the needs of students with special needs and including these children in the general education classroom, is believed to foster their learning and social competence. Teachers have often reported that they do not always feel prepared to teach students with special needs. The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and teachers' sense of self-efficacy and the quality of the student-teacher relationship. Thirty-four teachers from the region of Montreal, teaching students with special needs in the regular French immersion classroom, responded to four questionnaires and to two open-ended questions, and shared their views and attitudes toward inclusive education. Findings revealed that a positive attitude towards inclusion was related to positive teaching efficacy. Moreover, teachers' attitude varied across disabilities. More specifically, teachers' positive attitude was related to teaching students with academic difficulties and social maladjustments. Teachers' negative attitudes toward inclusion were related to teaching students with behaviour problems and physical disabilities. Teachers also suggested that a variety of resources such as teacher assistants, academic resources and a smaller student-teacher ratio would be beneficial toward successful inclusive practices.

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Introduction

In Quebec, meeting the needs of students with special needs has been a focus of the education system for many years. In 1979, the Ministère de l'Éducation stated the objective of providing high-quality education adapted to the needs of these students in as normal a setting as possible. However, it was not until 1988 that the Education Act required school boards to specify their orientations and standards concerning the organization of services for students with special needs. The Act also requires school principals, with the assistance of the students' parents, the staff providing services to the students, and the students, to establish an individualized education plan (IEP) for each student with particular needs. Schools are encouraged to focus on the educational needs of the students with special needs rather than on their weaknesses. In 1999, in the wake of the education reform and the new focus on enabling as many students as possible to achieve educational success, the basic orientation of the new Policy of Special Education was focused on helping students with handicaps, social maladjustments and/or learning disabilities to succeed in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications. Further, the Education Act sets the guidelines for the organization of services for students with special needs. Including a student with special needs in the regular classroom involves the evaluation of the student's needs and abilities. Such integration would foster the student's learning and social competencies, without constituting an excessive constraint or having a significant negative impact on the rights of the other typically developing students (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2005).

The actual implementation of these policies in the Canadian classrooms has been the focus of many studies. Smith and Lusthaus (1995) claim that full inclusion is achievable and desirable, and propose that both equality and quality are possible in education. They offer a model demonstrating that these constructs are not only compatible but mutually supportive and enhancing. They argue that equality or equity denotes fairness or justice. In the context of public schooling, it is often referred to as "equal educational opportunity or EEO" (p.384). EEO considers both similarities and differences among students and attempts to provide an appropriate education to all students. Finally, the authors suggested that "E-Quality education" (p.388) does not mean the same education, either in form or in content, for all students. Not all students need or want to learn exactly the same facts or skills, any more than they all have the same ambitions or desires. "E-Quality education happens when such diversity is accepted, and when curriculum and teaching methods are adapted to these individual needs" (p.388).

In addition, Smith and Lusthaus (1994) explored the meaning of EEO for students with disabilities in Canada, specifically with reference to the variance of rights across provinces and territories. Their purpose was to use a normative framework, based on five themes derived from the literature, to provide an analysis of where we are in Canada in relation to where we ought to be with respect to the provision of EEO rights to students with disabilities. This was done by empirical testing of various EEO constructs in the analysis of government policy concerning the EEO rights of students with special needs, as provided for by law in the twelve jurisdictions in Canada. The five themes are: non-discrimination, access, identification and placement, service delivery, and parental participation. The first theme is closely associated with equality. Access is

related to the students' right to public schooling, compulsory attendance, expulsion and transportation. The third theme relates to the choice of schooling, assessment and appropriate placement. Service delivery relates to appropriate education, instructional services and special education services. Finally, parental participation includes collective participation, individual participation and general appeal mechanism. A high level of rights is associated with a higher number of these themes respected by provincial law and a low level of rights is associated with a lower number of the presented themes covered by provincial law. Overall, "four jurisdictions, the Yukon, Ontario, Québec and Saskatchewan, provide a relatively high level of rights. Four others, British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba and New Brunswick provide a middle level of rights, while the remaining four, Newfoundland, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and the Northwest Territories provide a relatively low level of rights. In these provinces, non-discrimination and access received the highest ratings, while parental participation, service delivery and identification/placement received considerably lower ratings" (p.66). If we put all five items together as converted scores, Québec is third with a score of 47%. Yukon is first with a score of 58% and the Northwest Territories come last with a low 18% (Smith & Lusthaus, 1994). The authors' analysis has shown a diversity in the level and type of rights provided for different jurisdictions in Canada, which may be useful in working seeking to inform decision-making for school improvement.

In another study, Pivik, McComas and Laflamme (2002), examined how inclusive our Canadian schools are after 25 years of educational reform. They studied barriers and facilitators to accessibility and inclusion within eight different school settings based on comments of 15 special needs students with mobility limitations and 12 of their parents. Four categories of barriers were identified. Environmental barriers

were identified, which include doors, passageways, elevators, washrooms, lockers, water fountains, and stairs and ramps that are not always appropriately adapted for them. The second barrier that was reported is intentional attitudinal barriers such as instances of isolation, physical or emotional bullying, condescending attitudes by teaching staff and being treated differently from other students. Another problem reported is the unintentional attitudinal barriers such as a lack of understanding by teachers and support staff. Finally, physical limitations that are related to the difficulties associated with their condition or disability. For instance, many students required a personal assistant or teaching aide for basic activities such as getting dressed for recess or personal care. The solutions proposed by the participants include modifying physical structures to improve accessibility, addressing negative attitudes through increased disability awareness programs, dealing with the lack of knowledge or understanding through increased inclusive education of teachers and staff, and finally, developing more inclusive education policies. Although this was a small scale study, it was interesting to note that the participants had the chance to voice their opinions about some recommendations concerning the changes required in their school. In the end, this could prove to be more valuable as students and their parents are the ones who will be directly affected by the implementation of these changes, in order to give them a chance for better service delivery.

While some researchers still debate about full inclusion as being an effective approach of teaching individuals with special needs (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994), others have investigated the circumstances in which inclusion occurs, as well as how certain factors can have a positive or negative effect on such practices (Forlin, 2001; Hastings &

Oakford, 2003; Rose, 2001; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Wall, 2002). The literature suggests that the achievement of full integration appears to be possible only through a better understanding of attitudes towards individuals with special needs (Klassen, 1994). Others claim that "if society is to move into an era of full inclusion, significant changes in people's attitudes must occur" (Lusthaus & Lusthaus, 1992, p.108). The literature also suggests that a good relationship between the teacher and the student is an important factor for successful inclusive practices (Pianta, 2004). Teachers serve as models for children to learn how to interact with students with disabilities and their behaviour often reflects their attitudes. Anderson and Anderson (1995) found several studies that indicated that teacher attitudes do influence eventual student outcomes in the areas of academic achievement, relationships with peers, and attitudes toward school. Other researchers even report that positive teacher attitudes towards inclusion represent the key factor in determining the success of inclusion (Bender, Vial, & Scott, 1995). For example, in one study, Rose (2001) conducted a small survey of 27 teachers and head teachers in primary schools to evaluate their opinions of the necessary conditions for greater inclusion. All participants mentioned the importance of classroom support and 9 of them regarded the provision of additional staff as a critical factor in enabling inclusion to succeed. They also believed that small classes with good levels of classroom support and teaching support were key factors for inclusion to be beneficial to children with special educational needs. Further, the need for additional training and concern for lack of personal and professional experience was a consistent theme expressed by teachers and head teachers. They believe that dealing with specific disabilities required specific training.

The need for improved teacher training was mentioned in other studies. Kirk (1998) studied the link between a university course (The Psychology of Learning Encompassing the Exceptional Learner) and 59 pre-service teachers' attitudes towards students with special learning needs. At the beginning of the semester, the pre-service teachers completed a two-part survey. The survey included: (a) "Our attitudes and Beliefs About People with Disabilities (Jess, 1995) that provided quantitative data, and (b) Five Questions About Students With Special Needs (Kirk, 1996)" (Kirk, 1998, p.2) that provided qualitative data. At the end of the semester, pre-service teachers again took the two-part survey. Qualitative and quantitative data from pre-tests/post-tests were gathered and focus group discussions were also held with pre-service teachers. The results showed that the number of respondents who did not believe that people with disabilities were less capable than other people was 60% greater on post-test responses. Further, three times as many respondents stated they were amazed at the accomplishments of people with disabilities on the post-test than on the pre-test. Results from the qualitative analysis showed that pre-service teachers reported that they would either enjoy working with children with special needs, or they would be uncomfortable with exceptional students. However, on the post-test, a new category emerged: that working with children with special educational needs would be challenging and stressful, but also rewarding. By the end of the course, preservice teachers' attitudes were not significantly more positive and there was no change in their willingness to work with students with special needs. The study indicated that although this group of 59 future teachers became more aware, and more realistic about their career, training with one course in special needs did not have a positive impact on their attitudes. On the other hand, the course prepared the students to face their career's reality of instructional

adaptations and requirements of extra time and support. Comments emerging from the focus group discussions indicated that future teachers did not feel they could provide the attention and assistance needed by their students with special needs. Also, the groups expressed the fear that their skills in curriculum adaptation and instruction would be insufficient and that the regular education students would suffer. As a result, this concern showed that training alone was not a solution. It was suggested that reducing the number of students in a classroom would allow the teachers to give more quality time to individual students and that teachers wanted to ensure that they were prepared to teach all students.

Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) conducted a survey to evaluate 135 pre-service teachers' attitudes of toward the inclusion of children with special needs. This study showed that the participants who perceived themselves as competent enough to teach children with special needs, appeared to hold positive attitudes toward inclusion. The analysis revealed that these participants appeared to be positive towards the overall concept of inclusion. In addition, younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience were found to have more positive attitudes towards integrating special needs students in a regular classroom (e.g., Cornoldi, Terreni, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1998; Gilmore, Campbell, & Cuskelly, 2003; Olson, & Chalmers, 1997). This is not consistent with Forlin's (2001) work who reported that younger teachers and less experienced teachers reported greater stress about including students with special needs in a regular classroom, although this study did not examine teachers' reports of stress.

Forlin (2001) investigated the potential stressors for teachers teaching in an inclusive environment. The study reported findings from 571 elementary school teachers

who taught students with a moderate or severe intellectual disability in their regular inclusive classrooms. Seven items were identified as being the most stressful. These items were closely related to teachers' self-competence (self-efficacy) and the behaviour of the child. Teachers responded with the following issues: (a) they had a reduced ability to teach other students as effectively, (b) they were being held accountable for the child's educational outcome, (c) their students were physically attacking others, (d) they were sustaining an active learning environment for the child, (e) they had difficulty monitoring other students while attending to the student with special needs, (f) they did not have the time available for the other students and finally, (g) they were concerned that their students with special needs would disturb classmates. The results showed that the most stressful issues identified by regular teachers with regards to inclusion were related to two categories of stressors. The first category related to the teachers' perceived professional competence (self-efficacy). The highest levels of stress appeared to come from a teacher's personal commitment to maintaining effective teaching for all children in their classes. The second stressful issue identified by teachers was the behaviour of the child. Children physically "attacking" others seemed to be a concern shared by 86 % of the teachers. Levels of stress, however, improved with time and teachers who had been involved with inclusion for longer and who had formal training in teaching children with special needs were less stressed. Considering that about 70% of these teachers had received no formal training, this is an issue that needs to be addressed. Forlin (2001) concluded that the stressful issues could be addressed by improving pre-service and inservice training and emphasizing the importance of addressing the social skills of the children with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities who are now being included in regular classes.

Literature Review

Theoretical Perspectives

A number of theoretical orientations such as Bandura's social learning theory and Ajzen's and Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development have been used to help researchers better understand and predict human behaviours. Both the ecology of human development and the social learning theory are interested in observing behaviours in natural settings while children are interacting with familiar adults over a period of time, as well as explaining human behaviour in terms of reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and emotional influences. The link between these three perspectives will help demonstrate how attitudes and sense of efficacy are translated into action.

In his theoretical model of the ecology of human development, Urie Bronfenbrenner (1979) described the importance of a child having a coherent picture of himself/herself as a whole, and a sense that his/her differences are being acknowledged and appreciated and not perceived as a source of conflict with people present in his close environment. This framework identifies the impact of different levels of environmental setting on human development. According to this model, a child is examined as part of a complex system. In this system, there is a dynamic, coherent and reciprocal relationship between his home environment (parents, siblings) and his school environment (teachers, principal, friends).

Bronfenbrenner believed that the key element which makes the difference for children at risk for special needs is a timely intervention, and concerted commitment by one dependable adult. The school microsystem would require the teachers to notice and listen to children beyond observing and interpreting their behaviour. It required an adult-

child relationship that is respectful and flexible in order for the child to feel free to express his emotions. The goal of inclusive education is to offer children with special needs the support of peers and teachers to help them improve academically, as well as socially. The teacher's relationship with a child may be influential in the success or failure of this approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). If this is true, one could wonder how a teacher's attitude towards including children with special needs in a regular classroom impacts on his/her relationship with his/her students. Should we expect teachers with a less favourable attitude towards inclusion to have a more difficult relationship with their students with special needs? It would be interesting to see how teachers view their relationships with their students with special needs. The implementation of inclusion may be related to the teachers' perception of the student-teacher relationship as affectionate or conflictual.

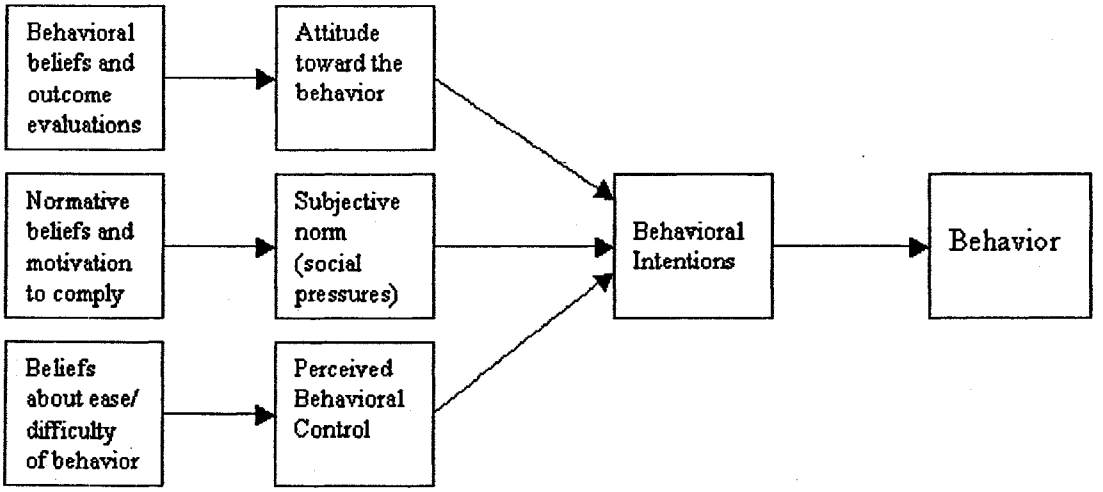
Furthermore, a positive adult-child relationship is beneficial to both children and adults involved. Bronfenbrenner also proposed a "blueprint" in which he sees the transformation of society into a model of bi-directional change and influence, which responds to the real needs of human being in all their diversity. Societal transformation would take place through a process known as empowerment, through the activities and the development of the people engaged in reciprocal relationships in all settings within the society. Empowerment can be defined as an intentional, ongoing process centred in a local community, involving mutual respect, critical reflection, caring, and group participation, through which people lacking an equal share of valued resources gain greater control over those resources.

Bronfenbrenner (1972) presented a collection of research papers reflecting the study of human development and behaviour. One of the studies presented was conducted

by Brophy and Good (1972). They applied the method of classroom interaction analysis to identify and document differential teacher behaviour communicating different teacher expectations to individual children. This research was conducted in four first-grade classrooms in a small Texas school district. In each class, three boys and three girls academically high on the teacher's list (highs) and three boys and three girls academically low on the teacher's list (lows) were selected for observational study. These students were selected based on the teacher's evaluation of the students' academic competencies. The data regarding interactions initiated or controlled by the teachers showed a tendency for the teachers to initiate more contacts with the lows than with the highs. Perhaps the highs created more response opportunities for themselves than the lows and teachers may have compensated for this by calling on the lows more frequently. Furthermore, boys were higher than girls on all measures of teacher-initiated contacts, specifically for work-related interactions and behavioural criticisms. Significant group differences suggested that the teachers were systematically, although not necessarily consciously, treating one group more favourably than the other. The highs were given more praise, and less criticisms by the teachers than the lows. The most obvious differences between the two groups (highs and lows) were that regardless of the group in which the students belonged, interaction occurred with teacher criticisms and disapproval directed much more frequently at boys. The study concluded that the major differences among student-teacher interaction were related to the students' gender and achievement levels. Therefore, teachers' attitudes and expectations of student behaviour may influence student outcomes. The relationship between teacher behaviours and teachers' attitudes can be further explored using planned behaviour theory.

Ajzen's (1991) widely used planned behaviour theory stated that the performance of any behaviour is determined by three conceptually interdependent factors: the person's attitudes toward the behaviour, the subjective norm surrounding the performance of the behaviour, and the amount of perceived behavioural control the person has over the behaviour in question.

Figure 1. *Planned behaviour theory.*



Rather than taking attitudes as the determining factor in our behaviour, Ajzen focused on behavioural intentions. According to this theory, individuals formed intentions to do something; these intentions comprised indications of how hard someone is willing to try to do something and what effort they are willing to put into the behaviour. At an appropriate time, these behavioural intentions are translated into action. Intentions are derived from attitudes, but two other important elements were also involved: subjective norms and perceived behavioural control, which will be explained in more detail later on. It is worth clarifying here what exactly we mean by attitudes and beliefs. Ajzen described attitudes as an individual's affective and evaluative response to something, while beliefs were cognitive and reflected the knowledge or information we may have about something. According to Ajzen, our behavioural beliefs determined our attitudes.

The behavioural beliefs consisted of an individual's view of the likely consequence or outcome of an action (positive or negative). In other words, behavioural beliefs lead to attitude toward the behaviour that leads to action. Ajzen's (1991) perceptions about attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioural control may be facilitative or may interfere with action. The balance between them is believed to vary from situation to situation, though as a general rule, Ajzen believed that the more an action was regarded as being under volitional control the more likely individuals were to carry out an action. This opened up interesting aspects of cultural influence on individuals' perceptions of the extent they believed they have control over their actions. It would appear that a reasonable and achievable goal for teacher education programs would be to put more emphasis on the development of positive attitudes toward children in candidates who initially expressed somewhat negative or pessimistic attitudes (Anderson & Anderson, 1995; Kirk, 1998).

In the next three sections, planned behaviour theory (Ajzen, 1991) will be used to consider three critical factors and how they may be applied to education. For instance, the person's attitudes toward a behaviour may be associated with teachers' attitudes toward the behaviour they must adopt in order to implement successful inclusion in their classroom. In this first part, we must consider the various factors affecting teachers' attitudes (children and teacher characteristics). Secondly, the subjective norm surrounding the performance of a behaviour, will be associated with how principals and colleagues' attitudes toward inclusion may affect teachers' own attitudes towards inclusion. Finally, the perceived behavioural control the person has over a behaviour may be associated with teachers' self-efficacy, that is, the teachers' beliefs in his or her

capabilities to organize and execute appropriate behaviour and implement successful inclusion in his/her classroom.

Teachers' Perceptions Toward Children with Special Needs

The literature presents the children's characteristics such as the nature and the severity of the disabilities as "stressors" or at least as a variable that has a direct effect on the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Forlin, 1995; Hastings, & Oakford, 2003; Klassen, 1994; Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit, 1997; Wall, 2002; Wilczenski, 1992). Although regular education teachers differed in their perception of children, whose disabling condition affected their attitudes toward inclusion, an important consideration in the literature on mainstreaming is the evaluation of the disability with regard to its effect upon learning rather than its total effect upon the life of the individual. It has been argued that the effect on learning of all students in the classroom appears to have more critical consequences than for a single student (Berryman, 1988).

Klassen's (1994) reported that 166 randomly selected teachers in the Montreal area indicated that classroom teachers and principals both considered themselves as moderately in favour of mainstreaming (inclusion). Attitudes varied according to handicapping condition. For instance, teachers were more in favour of mainstreaming slightly mentally handicapped, partial hearing youngsters and children with visual problems. Based on Ajzen's theory, teachers' view of the likely consequence of mainstreaming those children in a regular classroom was more positive than teaching severely handicapped students who were believed to require more teacher training and resources. Teachers' perceptions of inclusion varied depending upon whether the performance outcome was positive (student's academic success, student socializing with

peers) or negative (student failure or student isolated) and whether the students involved were of high or low ability (Guskfy, 1987). Teachers also perceived learning as being exclusively academic, not encompassing the learning of social behaviours from which students with special needs could benefit (Berryman, 1988).

In another study, Hastings and Oakford (2003) measured pre-teachers' attitudes, using the IIQ (Impact of Inclusion Questionnaire), which was developed to allow comparisons between different groups of students with special needs. The questionnaire included four impact domains: the child with special needs, the typically developing child, the teacher, and the school environment. The authors studied the impact of special needs category (intellectual disabilities versus emotional and behavioural problems) and student teachers' training (being trained to work with either younger or older children) on 93 university students' attitudes towards inclusion. The participants were in a teacher-training program, and 31 of them had previous experience of working with children with special needs. The results confirmed that pre-service teachers' attitudes were affected by the nature of the "special needs" of the children in a regular class. For instance, teachers had a more positive attitude toward including a student with intellectual disability and a more negative attitude toward including a student with emotional and behavioural problems. As supported by previous research (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000), children with emotional and behavioural problems were also rated as more likely to have a negative impact on other children, the teacher, and the school and classroom environment. The authors also found that children with less severe special needs, such as mild learning disabilities, were regarded as less demanding in terms of teacher's input, and were generally viewed more positively than their peers

with more severe disabilities such as Down Syndrome, severe mental handicaps or autism.

Wilczenski (1992) developed the ATIES (Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale) based on the Berryman's (1988) conceptual framework. The ATIES recorded positive and negative attitudes toward integrating children with various disabilities into inclusive classes. This instrument differed from others by having items describing exclusively the child's characteristics (such as social, physical, academic, and behavioural problems) that may adversely affect functioning in the classroom. In this study, 445 general education teachers from urban, suburban, and rural school districts across New Hampshire were surveyed. After pilot testing, four statements for each category were kept in the final form of the scale. Wilczenski found that teachers reported better attitudes towards students with language and speech disorders and expected inclusion to be more beneficial to them, and as having the opportunity to interact with their classmates who can be role models for them. On the other hand, teachers held more negative attitudes towards including students who displayed physical aggression or disruptive behaviour. Again, consistent with Ajzen's theory, the teachers' view of the consequence of including students with aggressive behaviour in a classroom was negative. Therefore, their behavioural beliefs may have had a negative influence on their attitude toward the mainstreaming of children with aggressive behaviour.

Other researchers presented the severity of the disabilities as an important factor influencing teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. For instance, Wall (2002) surveyed three groups of general education teachers in Manitoba who had different amounts of interaction with students with special needs. He presented the severity of the disability as an important factor affecting teachers' attitudes toward their students with special

needs. He found that when the severity of the handicapping condition increased, teachers' positive attitude decreased. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) added that teachers were often not trained to meet the needs of students with significant disabilities and that the severity of the disability condition may have determined their attitudes toward integration. According to Avramidis et al., the majority of teachers believed that students with mild disabilities were more likely to benefit from inclusion whereas students with a severe disability (a child with Down Syndrome or an autistic child), regardless of its nature, would benefit more from special classes, where they would get more attention and more specialized intervention. Teachers often felt that their lack of time as well as their lack of training greatly affected the manner in which students were educated. Overall, the placement of students with more severe disabilities in general education classrooms was not seen by teachers as socially or academically beneficial to both typically developing and students with special needs (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly, 2003; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Wall, 2002; Wilczenski, 1995).

Another line of research reveals that educators may have varying attitudes toward and mixed reactions to inclusion according to their years of experience, their training and their beliefs about their own self-efficacy (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Forlin, 2001; Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly, 2003; Hastings & Oakford, 2003; Wall, 2002; Wilczenski, 1995). Studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education have generally found that despite overall support for the concept of inclusion, the majority of the teachers felt that the regular classroom is not the best option for children with disabilities and their views of inclusion became less positive with increasing years of teaching experience (Gilmore, Campbell & Cuskelly, 2003). The same authors studied

developmental expectations, personality stereotypes and attitudes towards including children with Down Syndrome in regular classes. Two thousand fifty-three members of the Australian community as well as 538 experienced teachers with a range of 1-41 years of experience (M= 14.8) participated in this study. The authors found that there was a significant difference in teachers' choices of the best setting and whether or not they had previous classroom experience with children with special needs. Among those teachers who reported having taught a child with special needs, 33% believed that regular classrooms were the best educational option for those children, while only 20% of the teachers without previous contact saw inclusive classrooms as the best choice. Although these percentages are low, this finding may show that having experiences with children with Down Syndrome may lead to an understanding of differences and a sense of self-efficacy. These teachers may have thought that they have a greater degree of control over the success of inclusive education in their class. In addition, early childhood teachers were more likely to choose the regular classroom option (34%) compared with only 24% of elementary teachers and 22% of high school teachers. The majority of respondents in both groups reported that there were educational, social and emotional benefits for including students with Down Syndrome in a regular education classroom. Only 20% of each group saw education in a regular classroom setting with same-age peers as the best option.

Gender differences have also been reported in terms of teachers' tolerance and stress levels when working with children with special needs. Avramidis et al. (2000) found female prospective teachers reported a greater tolerance for having children with special needs in their class. However, Forlin's research (2001) found that female teachers reported significantly greater stress and difficulties in perceived professional

competency than their male counterparts. In another study, Soodak, Podell and Lehman (1998) surveyed 134 elementary, 34 middle, and 20 high school general education teachers concerning their affective responses to inclusion, as well as the factors that related to these responses. They studied teachers' affective responses to inclusion, by distinguishing two types of responses: hostility/receptivity and anxiety/calmness. Their findings indicated that teachers responded in many different ways based on students' classifications and school-based conditions. Teachers who reported lower teaching efficacy (teachers' beliefs about the impact of their teaching), who lacked experience in teaching, and who did not use differentiated teaching practices were found to be less receptive to inclusion. Forlin (2001) who studied potential stressors for teachers found that one of the most stressful issues for regular class teachers related to teachers' perceived professional competence. The levels of stress were, however, improved when teachers reported having been involved with inclusion and formal training in teaching children with special needs.

Finally, Salend and Garrick Duhaney (1999) reviewed 32 studies examining inclusion programs of students with and without special needs and their teachers. They looked at academic and social outcomes on students from both groups, as well as the educators' attitudes toward inclusion. The authors found that general education and special education teachers believed that collaborative consultation, co-teaching partnerships, shared accountability for educational outcomes, the level of preservice and inservice training and administrative support were robust predictors of positive attitudes toward inclusion of all students with special educational needs in general education classrooms. In addition, the training and administrative support had a direct positive

effect on academic and social outcomes on students with special needs, as well as on the typically developing students.

The subjective norms reflected not only the individual's personal beliefs but what the individual believed others think about the behaviour concerned (Ajzen, 1991). "Others" may be individuals who have influence over the individual by their social or professional relationship. They may be colleagues, heads of departments, principals, ministry officials, parents and even students (Kennedy & Kennedy, 1996). When individuals believe important others are supportive of a behaviour, this is likely to have an important positive influence on an individual's intentions to carry out the behaviour. On the other hand, if such influential others are openly hostile towards the behaviour or simply not supportive, the influence to individuals' intentions will be negative. In inclusive education practices, the subjective norms could be conceptualized as principals' beliefs about inclusive practices, the principal being an important other. Again, principals demonstrating positive attitudes towards inclusion were likely to have a positive impact on teachers' intentions to carry out positive inclusive practices (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999). The colleagues and the principals' attitudes toward inclusion was an aspect of the school culture that seemed to be an important factor to consider. (Cook et al.,1999) used The Regular Education Initiative Teacher Survey (Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991) and measured the special education teachers and principals' attitudes toward the efficacy of included placements. The results showed that the majority of both principals and special education teachers agreed that "The special education teachers should assist in the instruction of both students with mild handicaps and other students experiencing learning difficulties" (Cook et al., p.202). Seventy-six

percent of special educators agreed that if students with mild handicaps are placed full time in the regular class, the currently mandated special education resources for their instruction must be protected. However, only 33% of the principals agreed with this, even though they were significantly more supportive of the general efficacy and academic outcomes of inclusion.

An interesting finding was that both principals and special education teachers disagreed with the fact that general education teachers have the instructional skills to teach all students, including those with mild disabilities (Cook et al., 1999). Also, both principals and special education teachers agreed with the statement that the time devoted to curriculum goals would decrease if students with mild handicaps were placed full time in a regular classroom. Further, it was found that 66% of special education teachers disagreed with the statement that inclusion would increase the achievement levels of students with mild disabilities, while only 22.4% of principals disagreed with this. Given these concerns, it is somewhat curious that the majority of principals agreed that inclusion is the most effective placement option for students with mild disabilities. It seems that principals responded in a more socially appropriate manner than may actually be the case in reality, as if inclusion was believed to be desirable, but not feasible. Although the findings were interesting, the small sample limited the generalizability of these findings.

Stanovich and Jordan (1998) emphasized the importance of the principal's role in establishing and communicating the goals of the school to teachers. They attempted to predict the performance of teachers' behaviours associated with effective teaching in inclusive classrooms from a set of variables which included teacher beliefs and attitudes,

principal beliefs and school norms, and teacher efficacy. They presented a measure of attitudes, which described one set of teacher beliefs and assumptions as lying along a continuum. One end of the continuum was characterized by the idea that any learning or behavioural problems a student exhibited existed within the child. This belief is labelled as "pathognomonic", which meant that the attitudes were derived from the assumption of the presence of a specific disease. This set of beliefs was also characterized by a search for pathology. Specific pathognomonic behaviours included limited or no intervention, little interaction with resource teachers, a lack of a demonstrated link between assessment and curriculum and minimal parental contact.

The Pathognomonic-interventionist interview (P-I interview) developed had a good internal consistency of .89 (Cronbach's alpha) and the mean correlation between components of the scale was .53. The teachers and principals participating in this study also had to respond to the Attitudes toward mainstreaming scale (ATMS), the Regular education initiative survey (REIS) and the teaching efficacy scale (TES). Classroom observations were also conducted to evaluate effective teaching behaviours. These primary variables were then correlated. The classroom observation measure of effective teaching behaviour was significantly and positively related with both the P-I interview and with the composite principal variable. The score on the TES significantly correlated with both questionnaire measures of ATMS and REIS, but did not correlate significantly with either the classroom observation or the P-I interview. They supported the use of the principal as a reporting source for school norm from which teachers derived their subjective norms. The principal's vision of what the school could be was likely the single most salient factor affecting the school norms that teachers then internalized as

subjective norms. Limitations of the study included a small sample size (n=33), but the results were consistent with previous studies.

Ajzen's (1991) third construct, perceived behavioural control, described the degree of control individuals believed they had over an innovation. In this case, it described the degree of control teachers felt they had over the success of inclusive education in their class. Similarly, Bandura's social learning theory explained this aspect in greater depth. The basis of the theory was that unless people believed they can produce desired effects by their actions, they had little incentive to act. Efficacy belief, therefore, was a major basis of action. Bandura (1997) defined self-efficacy as "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments" (p.3). Self-efficacy is a future oriented belief about the level of competence a person expected he or she will display in a given situation, and can influence thought patterns and emotions. It is important to remember that self-efficacy has to do with self-perceptions of competence rather than actual level of competence. From the social learning perspective, psychological functioning is a continuous reciprocal interaction between personal, behavioural, and environmental determinants (Bandura, 1977). In addition, in the social learning view of interaction, behaviour, personal factors, and environmental factors all operate as interlocking determinants of each other. There are times when environmental factors exercise powerful constraints on behaviour, and other times when personal factors are the overriding regulators of the course of environmental events. Perceived self-efficacy occupies a pivotal role in social learning theory because it acts upon the three levels of determinants stated previously (Bandura, 1997). In an inclusive education scenario, teachers' sense of self-efficacy would be the personal factor interacting with behaviour and environment (the students).

Guskfy (1987) presented a model describing three context variables hypothesized to affect measures of teacher efficacy. These variables include (a) the nature of the student performance outcome (positive or negative), (b) the ability of the student involved (high or low), and (c) the scope of influence (single student or group of students). One hundred and fourteen experienced elementary and secondary teachers responded to attitudinal and perceptual self-reports of self-efficacy. Guskfy (1987) found that teachers' perceptions of self-efficacy varied depending on whether the performance outcome was positive (student success) or negative (student failure). The participants' responses differed by scope of influence. Teachers responded more positively when they had to teach smaller groups of students. Their perceptions of self-efficacy were also higher in one-on-one situation. When poor performance was involved, teachers expressed less personal responsibility and efficacy for single students than for results from a group or entire class of students.

Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk Hoy and Hoy (1998) explored the correlates of teacher efficacy and searched for patterns that suggested a better understanding of the construct. Firstly, the authors reported that when the principal displayed strong leadership, encouraged innovation and was responsive to teachers' concerns, teachers' collective sense of efficacy was greater. Furthermore, they found that a low sense of efficacy was contagious among a staff of teachers. This supports Bandura's "contagious" finding that low teacher efficacy lead to low student efficacy and low academic achievement, which in turn lead to further declines in teacher efficacy (Bandura, 1997). Similarly, Tschannen-Moran et al. (1998) reported that teachers' sense of efficacy was shown to be a powerful construct related to student achievement, motivation, and sense of efficacy. "Teachers with a strong sense of efficacy are open to

new ideas and more willing to experiment with new methods to better meet the needs of their students" (p.16). The relationship between teachers' sense of efficacy towards inclusive educational practices and their attitudes may affect their relationship with their students and subsequently, the students' academic achievement. The relationship between these variables deserves further study.

Purpose of the Study

The current study was inspired by the work of Stanovich and Jordan (1998) who studied the relation between attitudes toward inclusive education and teacher efficacy. However, this present study also explored the relations between attitudes, student achievement (Guskey, 1981) and student-teacher relationship (Pianta, 2001). From the literature reviewed previously, it was found that teachers' attitudes was an important factor to consider for inclusion to be successful (Ajzen, 1991; Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000; Forlin, 2001; Pivik, McComas & Laflamme, 2002; Wilczenski, 1995). Furthermore, it was also stated that attitudes toward inclusive education were related to teachers' sense of efficacy (Avramidis, Bayliss & Burden, 2000) and student-teacher relationship (Pianta, 2001). In addition, teacher efficacy may be related to student achievement (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk & Hoy, 1998). Relationships between children and adults seem to play a prominent role in the development of students' academic, social and emotional competencies in the preschool, elementary, and middle-school years (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Pianta, 2001). Based on the results of previous studies, this research examined these questions:

A) How are teachers' attitudes toward teaching in an inclusive setting related to teachers' sense of self-efficacy?

B) How are teachers' attitudes toward inclusion and their self-efficacy related to their relationship with their students with special needs?

C) How are teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education related to teachers' age and years of experience?

D) How was a teachers' sense of self-efficacy related to teachers' feelings of responsibility for student achievement?

Method

Participants

The participants in this study were 34 teachers from four elementary schools from a large English School Board in the Montreal area, teaching in inclusive classrooms. The participants were recruited on a voluntary basis. With the permission of the principals, the researcher sent a letter (appendix A) to each participant to explain the purpose of the study and the procedure. Each teacher who volunteered his/her participation received an envelope including the consent form (appendix B), teachers' background information (see Appendix C), the 4 questionnaires (appendixes D, E, F, G) with clear instructions to complete these questionnaires. Finally, two open-ended questions about inclusive education was included (i.e., teachers' feelings about inclusion and how services can be improved). The teachers were given 1-2 weeks to complete these questionnaires, and once they were completed, the teachers put them back in a sealed envelope and the researcher picked them up. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their answers. Further, in order to respect this confidentiality, the names of both the schools and teachers were not revealed in the analysis of data.

Instruments

The following measures were used to measure teachers' attitudes toward inclusion:

Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale (ATIES; Wilczenski, 1992). The ATIES is a 16-item scale developed to measure attitudes toward inclusive education, specifically, the physical, academic, behavioural, and social aspects of integration (see Appendix D). These four categories each include 4 items that is rated on a 6-point likert scale, classification with strongly agree/ strongly disagree anchors. Ratings were summed across items to indicate positive or negative attitudes toward inclusive education. Scores ranged from 16 to 96, a higher score indicating more favourable attitudes.

Teacher Efficacy Scale: Long Form (TES; Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990). Gibson and Dembo (1984) developed an extensive and reliable measurement of teacher efficacy, bringing to bear Bandura's concepts (See Appendix E). This instrument measures teachers' personal teaching efficacy (teacher's beliefs of his/her level of competence to teach in an inclusive classroom) and general teaching efficacy (effectiveness of inclusive education in general). Factor analysis confirmed two factors. One called personal teaching efficacy (PTE, alpha= .75) assumes to reflect self-efficacy, and the other teaching efficacy (GTE, alpha= .79) assumes to capture outcome expectancy. This analysis of the initial 30-item instrument indicated that several items loaded on both factors. Consequently, Woolfolk and Hoy (1990) have used a shorter version, selecting only the 16 items that load uniquely on one factor or the other. They found reliabilities for both subtests of alpha .77 for PTE and .72 for GTE. They also urged researchers to conduct a factor analysis on their own data, because the loadings have not always been consistent across studies (Tschannen-Moran, Woolfolk-Hoy, and Hoy, 1998).

Student-Teacher Relationship Scale (STRS; Pianta, 2001). The Student-Teacher Relationship Scale is a self-report instrument developed to measure a teacher's perception of his or her relationship with a particular student (see Appendix F). This scale measures relationships in terms of conflict, closeness, and dependency, as well as the overall quality of the relationship. A 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (definitely does not apply) to 5 (definitely applies) is used. Test-retest reliability: test-retest correlations ($p < .05$); Closeness .88, Conflict .92, Dependency .76, and total .89.

Responsibility for Student Achievement (RSA; Guskey, 1981). Guskey (1981) developed a 30-item instrument that measures how much the teacher assumes responsibility for student outcomes in general (see appendix G). Also, the scores of this instrument yield to two subscales scores indicating responsibility for student success (R+) and for student failure (R-). For each item, participants are asked to distribute 100 percentage points between two choices, one stating that the event was caused by the teacher, and the other stating that the event occurred because of factors outside the teacher's control.

When Guskey compared scores from Responsibility for Student Achievement with teacher efficacy, he found significant positive correlations between teacher efficacy and responsibility for both student success (R+) and student failure (R-). In general, teachers exhibited greater efficacy for positive results than for negative results. Teachers were more confident in their ability to influence positive outcomes than to prevent negative ones.

Results

For each scale, a composite score was computed for each participant. Intercorrelations among teachers' attitudes towards including students with special needs

in regular classes, teacher efficacy, student-teacher relationship and responsibility for student achievement were computed. Further, the subscales from the Attitude Toward Inclusive Education Scale, the Student-Teacher Relationship Scale and the Teacher Efficacy Scale were used for additional analysis. Finally, a series of one-way ANOVAs was used to examine the relationships between teachers' age and years of experience, and teacher attitude towards inclusion. The participants' opinions about inclusive education were also analysed. This qualitative data was categorized in the themes that emerged from the teachers' reactions to open-ended questions about inclusive education practices.

Quantitative Analysis

Question 1. How are teachers' attitudes toward teaching in an inclusive setting related to teachers' sense of efficacy?

Scores for attitudes toward including students with disabilities in a regular classroom were divided into 4 subscales: (a) attitude towards teaching students with physical disabilities, (b) attitude towards teaching students with academic difficulties, (c) attitude towards teaching students with social maladjustments, and (d) attitude towards including students with behaviour problem. An overall mean score of the four categories was also computed to measure attitude towards inclusion. Teachers' sense of efficacy was divided into 2 subscales: (a) teaching efficacy and (b) personal efficacy. Again, an overall mean score of the two categories was computed to measure Teacher efficacy. Intercorrelations between attitudes subscales revealed the following significant results. Teachers having a positive attitude towards including students with academic difficulties felt the same for including students with physical disabilities ($r = .667$, $p<.01$), students with behaviour problem ($r = .498$, $p<.01$) and students with social

maladjustments ($r = .504$, $p<.01$). However, teachers who were in favour of the inclusion of students with behaviour problem or physical disabilities ($r = .374$, $p<.05$) were not necessarily in favour of including students with social maladjustments.

Table 2 presents significant positive correlations between attitude towards inclusion and teacher efficacy ($r = .399$, $p<.05$), teaching efficacy and attitude towards including students with physical disabilities ($r = .446$, $p<.01$), and teaching efficacy and attitude towards including students with social maladjustments ($r = .402$, $p<.05$). These results revealed that a good sense of teacher efficacy was related to positive attitude towards inclusion. More specifically, they indicated that teachers who considered themselves having a good sense of teaching efficacy also reported a positive attitude towards the inclusion of students with physical disabilities or social maladjustments. No correlation was found between personal efficacy and the other variables.

Question 2. How are teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education and their self-efficacy related to their relationship with their students with special needs?

For student-teacher relationship, two subscales were used, level of conflict and level of closeness. A composite score was also computed. Teachers' positive attitude towards the inclusion of students with social maladjustments was related to a high level of conflict with their students with disabilities ($r = .531$, $p < .01$). Furthermore, other positive correlations were found between attitude towards inclusion and the student-teacher relationship ($r = .356$, $p <.05$). Teacher efficacy and student-teacher relationship ($r = .449$, $p <.01$) were also positively related. Teaching efficacy and level of conflict were positively correlated ($r = .422$, $p <.05$). These results suggest that when teachers showed a general positive attitude towards inclusion, and a positive efficacy, they also reported a more positive relationship with their students with disabilities. Moreover,

when teachers showed higher teaching efficacy, teachers reported a higher student-teacher level of conflict.

Question 3. How are teachers' attitude towards inclusive education related to teachers' age and years of experience?

Teachers' attitude towards including students with special needs in regular classes seemed to vary according to teachers' age and number of years of teaching experience. Table 4 shows the distribution of the scores for each age group. The mean score shows how positive their attitude was, 6 being very positive and 1 being very negative. There were no significant differences between the groups, except for the inclusion of students with behaviour problem for which older teachers (51-70 years old) demonstrated a more negative attitude. Furthermore, all age groups had a positive attitude about including students with social maladjustments, but disagreed slightly more than agreed to the inclusion of students with physical disabilities. Also, teachers agreed slightly more than disagreed or disagreed to the inclusion of students with behaviour problems. Whether the attitude was slightly positive or negative depended upon the teachers' age. The attitude became increasingly negative with the age of the teachers questioned. Table 5 presents attitude towards inclusion based on teachers' years of teaching experience. Again, all groups agreed about including students with social maladjustments, as opposed to the other categories of disabilities. The 16 or more years of experience group showed a negative attitude towards the inclusion of students with behaviour problems.

Question 4. How is teachers' sense of self-efficacy related to teachers' feelings of responsibility for student achievement?

The participants received a mean score for responsibility for student achievement. A high score meant that they felt more responsible for their students'

success or failure. A low score meant that teachers believed other factors influenced their students' success or failure, like their home environment. When teachers showed high Teacher Efficacy (Teaching and Personal combined), they scored higher for Responsibility for Student Achievement ($r = .422$, $p < .05$). Attitude Towards Inclusion and Student-Teacher Relationship are also related to Responsibility for Student Achievement. When teachers had a positive attitude about including students with disabilities in their classroom, they felt more responsible for their students' success, as well as their failure ($r = .385$, $p < .05$). Moreover, when teachers developed a positive relationship with their students with special needs, they also demonstrated a higher responsibility for their students' achievements ($r = .514$, $p < .01$).

Qualitative Analysis

This set of analyses focused on two open-ended questions in which participants shared their views on inclusive education and identified ways to improve their teaching practices. A synthesis of the teachers' responses on these two questions will be presented.

From the first question, three themes emerged from the teachers' general view on inclusive education. Eleven out of 34 teachers (32%) were strongly against inclusive classrooms. They explained that including students with special needs in regular classes hindered the academic progress of the typically developing students. Some teachers said that inclusive education was stressful for teachers who need to adapt their teaching material and give individual time for students who are behind. Also, they reported inclusion as being stressful for the students with special needs who always work to "keep up" with the rest of the group.

Six out of 34 teachers (18%) believed that inclusive education was a good idea in theory, but was difficult to implement because it was difficult to adapt their materials and teaching practices for their students with special needs. They thought that children with special needs did not seem to benefit from being included in a regular classroom. Finally, 7 out of 34 teachers (21%) were in favour of the inclusion of students with special needs in regular classes. They stressed the importance of typically developing students being role models for students with disabilities, who develop their self-esteem. Also, some teachers thought that inclusion could benefit typically developing students by facilitating a respect for differences and diversity, and by becoming open-minded individuals. The remaining 10 participants (29%) did not respond to the open-ended questions.

For the second question, five themes emerged from the teachers answers on how they would improve their teaching practices. Firstly, 14 teachers (41%) said that having a teaching assistant for the students with special needs could be beneficial by providing more help for teaching the curriculum, and for dealing with behaviour problems. Secondly, 14 teachers (41%) reported that they would find their work easier if they had fewer children in the group, which would give them more time to give more individual attention to the students who needed it. Further, 9 teachers (26%) believed that more resource, teacher support and more teaching materials adapted to their students with special needs would facilitate their inclusion in the regular classroom. Another aspect that 2 teachers brought up is the importance of a good parent-teacher relationship, as support from home is believed to be necessary in order to help the students. Finally, two other teachers would want more training in developing competencies in teaching students with special needs.

Table 1.

Descriptive characteristics of the sample

Characteristics		N
Gender		
	Male	2
	Female	32
Age		
	20-30	5
	31-40	12
	41-50	8
	51-60	5
	61-70	4
Years of experience		
	0-4	3
	5-10	14
	11-15	5
	16+	12

Table 2.

Intercorrelations of Mean Scores

Measure	1	2	3	4
ATIES	--			
STRS	.356*	--		
RSA	.385*	.514**	--	
TES	.399*	.449**	.422*	--

Note. ATIES = Attitude Toward Inclusive Education; STRS = Student Teacher Relationship Scale; RSA = Responsibility for Student Achievement; TES = Teacher Efficacy Scale.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 3.

Intercorrelations of Subscales

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
APD	--									
AAD	.667**	--								
ABP	.374*	.498**	--							
ASM	.295	.504**	.202	--						
PE	.003	.250	.174	.294	--					
TE	.569**	.340*	.242	.353*	.241	--				
RSS	.053	.156	.043	.109	.202	.083	--			
RSF	.531**	.369*	.405*	.439*	.144	.316	.076	--		
STCon	.173	.265	.068	.531**	.153	.422**	.142	.174	--	
STClo	.206	.045	.298	.161	.007	.203	.343	.350*	.254	--

Note. APD = Attitude towards including students with physical disablities; AAD = Attitude towards including students with academic difficulties; ABP = Attitude towards including students with behaviour problems; ASM = Attitude towards including students with social maladjustments; PE = Personal efficacy; TE = Teaching efficacy; RSS = Responsibility for student success; RSF = Responsibility for student failure; STCon = Student-teacher level of conflict; STClo = Student-teacher level of closeness.

*$p < .05$. **$p < .01$.

Table 4.

Attitude Related to Age

Attitude	Age	Mean	SD
Physical			
disability	20-30	2.45	1.18
	31-40	2.98	1.14
	41-50	2.88	1.41
	51-60	2.35	2.01
	61-70	2.73	1.00
Academic			
difficulties	20-30	3.30	.48
	31-40	3.65	1.52
	41-50	3.31	1.15
	51-60	3.65	1.47
	61-70	2.37	.43
Behaviour			
problems	20-30	3.00	1.39
	31-40	3.08	1.31
	41-50	2.15	.86
	51-60	1.90	1.28
	61-70	1.75	.35
Social			
maladjustments	20-30	5.35	.49
	31-40	4.69	.94
	41-50	4.53	.99
	51-60	4.45	.80
	61-70	4.56	.63

Table 5.

Attitude Related to Years of Experience

Attitude	Years of experience	Mean	SD
Physical			
disability	0-4	3.08	1.01
	5-10	2.70	1.32
	11-15	3.05	.99
	16+	2.54	1.51
Academic			
difficulties	0-4	3.50	.50
	5-10	3.46	1.31
	11-15	4.20	1.51
	16+	2.88	1.03
Behaviour			
problems	0-4	3.75	1.00
	5-10	2.16	.86
	11-15	4.35	.65
	16+	1.88	.82
Social			
maladjustments	0-4	5.25	.43
	5-10	4.59	1.02
	11-15	5.05	.91
	16+	4.96	.88

Discussion

The results of the present study reveal that teachers' attitudes toward inclusion measured by the ATIES (Wilczenski, 1992) are affected by the nature of the disabilities of the children considered as candidates for inclusion. The subscales from this instrument demonstrated how teachers reacted differently to the different types of disabilities. Teachers' attitudes towards inclusion were negatively related to teaching children with behaviour problems and physical disabilities in an inclusive setting. On the other hand, teachers' attitudes were positively related to the inclusion of students with social maladjustments and academic difficulties. This is consistent with previous studies that found that teachers showed higher levels of stress and concern when children with emotional and behavioural difficulties were included in their classrooms (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998; Wilczenski, 1992). It was interesting to see how each category of special needs was related to teaching efficacy, student-teacher relationship and to teachers' responsibility for student achievement. The overall score for attitude towards inclusion was related to the overall score for teacher efficacy. However, teachers' personal efficacy was not related to any of the attitude subscales. On the other hand, positive teaching efficacy was related to positive attitude towards including students with physical disabilities and with social maladjustments.

Further, teachers who had a more positive attitude towards inclusion reported that they had a more positive relationship with their students with special needs. This is consistent with previous research (Birch & Ladd, 1997). However, if we look at the different subscales from the ATIES and the STRS, we notice a surprising finding. Teachers did not show a very positive attitude towards including students with physical

disabilities. This category included students who cannot move without the help from others, students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille, students who use sign language or communication boards, and students who cannot hear conversational speech. This negative attitude could stem from the lack of resources as mentioned in the open-ended questions. Also, the severity of the disability could explain these results. Ajzen (1991) reported that the attitude towards the inclusion of severely handicapped students was more negative and believed to require more teacher training and resources. Finally, environmental barriers and physical accessibility of the school could also have affected these results, as Pivic, McComas and Laflamme (2002) mentioned in their study.

Teachers' sense of efficacy was also related to teachers' reports of the student-teacher relationship. Teachers who reported a higher teaching and personal efficacy, also reported more positive relationship with their students with special needs. Again, if we look at the subscales from TES and STRS, we notice that when teachers have a good sense of teaching efficacy, they also show a higher student-teacher level of conflict. Teachers' positive attitude towards the inclusion of students with social maladjustments was also related to a higher level of student-teacher level of conflict. In the open-ended questions, some participants elaborated on the reasons as to why this may be. Two teachers mentioned that although they believed in including students with disabilities in the regular classroom, teachers were confronted with the reality of the lack of resources and the lack of home support. They believed that a good parent-teacher relationship was important in order to resolve conflicts with students. Teachers who reported a positive relationship with their students with disabilities, also reported a higher responsibility for their students' failure.

Previous research noted that attitude towards inclusion becomes less positive with increasing years of experience (Gilmore, Campbell, & Cuskelly, 2003) and with increasing age (Hastings, & Oakford, 2003). Further, Bandura (1997) identified years of experience as the primary determinant factor of self-efficacy. However, this present study has not found significant differences between the variables and the teachers' age and years of experience. This could be due to the small sample size of the study. Moreover, as they reported in the open-ended questions, teachers agreed on their need for more time spent individually with students with special needs. Therefore, it is important to note that the participants in this study all taught in immersion schools in which they spend half the day with their students, as they teach two groups of students every day, which may explain their need for extra time. Although the results of this study showed a good statistical significance, the 34 participants are not representative of the whole population of teachers in Montreal. Also, with 32 females and only 2 males, no comparison could be made between genders. Because Montreal has such a multicultural population, it could be interesting to include the participants' cultural background as a variable in a future study.

Another finding was that when teachers showed positive teaching and personal efficacy, they demonstrated more responsibility for student achievement (student success and student failure combined). More specifically, teachers' teaching efficacy was related to student failure. These results are consistent with Guskey (1982) who compared scores from RSA with teaching efficacy and found positive correlations between teacher efficacy and responsibility for both student success (R+) and for student failure (R-). Also, Guskfy (2001) found that teachers appear to discriminate their perceptions of efficacy when they reported their perceptions of a single student as

opposed to a group of students. When poor performance was involved, teachers expressed less responsibility and efficacy for single students than for results form a group of students.

The implications of the present research can be related to 3 main issues. Firstly, it is clear from previous research that teachers' attitude towards inclusion is not the only factor that determines the success of inclusion programs for children with disabilities. Therefore, the fact that teachers may hold more negative attitudes towards a particular group of children with disabilities does not preclude successful inclusion for the children concerned. In this case, it would seem important to put a greater emphasis on the observation of student-teacher interactions in order to examine student-teacher relationships and study how they could be improved, especially if the basic orientation of the Education Act is to help students with disabilities to succeed in terms of social development. Secondly, previous research has suggested that training courses have little impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. On the other hand, it was shown that increased classroom support and a better access to resources was needed (Hastings, & Oakford, 2003; Kirk, 1998; Rose, 2001). As expressed in the present study, teachers believed that a teacher in the classroom and more resources would be beneficial to both teachers and students and may improve service delivery for both students with special needs and typically developing students.

Finally, the ATIES, the TES, the STRS and the RSA seem to be good measurement instrument designed to assess attitudes, efficacy, relationships and responsibility for student achievement. However, these questionnaires are answered by teachers and reflect only their personal views on inclusion. A questionnaire is a reflection of teachers' attitudes, but does not provide any information about the extent to

which attitudes are translated into actions. Combined with the questionnaires, classrooms observations would be necessary in order to examine actual behaviours and interactions between teachers and their students. Stanovich and Jordan (1998) used classroom observations by using a checklist designed to measure effective teaching behaviours. This instrument examined teachers' classroom management, time management, lesson presentation and adaptive instruction. They found a significant direct connection between effective teaching behaviours and the principal's vision of what school could be. Teachers' actual behaviours seemed to be linked with the principal's beliefs about inclusion and the school norm. This may be related to Ajzen's (1991) subjective norm and the impact on teachers' attitudes towards inclusion. As shown in Ajzen's model, attitudes are translated into actions and classroom observations might reveal how this process takes place. It might be helpful to examine how relationships between the students, their peers and their teacher evolve over time. Also, children's gender and achievement level should be taken into account, as Bronfenbrenner (1972) reported that these variables might have an impact on student-teacher relationship. Further, it would be interesting to examine instructional practices such as flexible grouping, cooperative learning, peer support, activity-based learning, that were noted in classrooms characterized as having achieved successful inclusion (Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998). There is a need to explore whether specific changes in classroom practices and classroom climate will promote teachers' positive responses to the inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

In summary, any conclusions drawn from the present study must be interpreted based on the limitations of the study. For instance, using a larger sample and recruiting teachers from different school boards across the province would better represent the

population of teachers in Quebec. A longitudinal study could help demonstrating how the quality of relationships between teachers and students evolve as they get to know each other better during the school year. As mentioned earlier, classroom observations, combined with questionnaires, would be helpful in getting more information on actual classroom behaviours. More information on student outcome could be useful to determine how students' achievement level might be related relationships, responsibility for student achievement and teachers' attitude towards inclusion.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Consent form to participate in research

A. Purpose

I understand that:

The purpose of this study is to examine teachers' view about the integration of students with special needs in regular classes.

B. Procedures

The researcher will invite the participants to complete four questionnaires, asking them to reflect on their teaching practices. They will also be invited to complete a general information questionnaire that includes questions related to their teaching background and their opinions on the topic of inclusive education.

C. Risks and benefits

There is no risk or deception associated with the participation to this study

D. Conditions of participation

- **I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.**
- **I understand that my participation in this study is CONFIDENTIAL**
- **I understand that the data from this study may be published.**

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

Name (please print):_____
Signature :_____

If you have any questions concerning the questionnaires or this study, you can reach me at: 514-714-6881 or at nrandoll@netscape.net
If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Officer, Concordia University, at (514) 848-2424x7481 or by email at areid@alcor.concordia.ca

Appendix B

Letter of recruitment

Dear teachers,

I am a student completing a Masters degree in Child Study at Concordia University. My supervisor is Dr. Harriet Petrakos in the Department of Education. I am presently conducting a study on the impact of inclusive education on teachers' practices in Montreal. The goal of this project is to have a better understanding of elementary teachers' point of view about the integration of students with special needs in regular classes. This study could be a good opportunity for you to voice your opinion and share your experience on the topic of inclusive education. If you are interested, a summary report could be sent to you by email.

You are kindly invited to complete questionnaires and to share some personal information concerning your educational background. Your answers will be completely anonymous, however we may know your identity if you request a summary report a this study.

It should take 20-30 minutes for you to complete these questionnaires. Should you decide to participate, you will be given the questionnaires and a self-addressed envelope to return the questionnaires anonymously.

This project was reviewed and approved by the Education Department Concordia University ethical committee. No one else but the researcher will have access to your answers. There is no risk or deception associated to your participation to this study. All information in this study will remain anonymous and you will not be identified in any results that are summarized at the end of the study. During the project, all information will be protected for confidentiality by assigning a random number code to each participant. The random number codes will be stored in a reference file from the data set used to analyze the results.

Étant donné que les questionnaires ne sont disponibles qu'en anglais, je peux avec plaisir offrir mon aide aux francophones qui ne sont pas à l'aise avec la langue anglaise. I thank you in advance for taking the time to participate in study and for your contribution in educational research. For any more information concerning this study, do not hesitate to communicate with me by telephone or email and/or my supervisor (Dr. Petrakos, 514-848-2424, ext. 2013).

Attached you will find a written consent form for your participation in the study as described above. Please complete the attached consent forms and return them with your questionnaires in your self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation,

Nadine Randoll
(514-714-6881); nrandoll@netscape.net

Appendix C
General information

Gender of the participant:

- ❑ Male
- ❑ Female

Age:

- ❑ 20-30
- ❑ 31-40
- ❑ 41-50
- ❑ 51-60
- ❑ 61-70

1. Educational attainment
   Bachelor's degree:_____
   Masters degree :_____
   Phd :_____
   Other (please specify):_____
2. Years of teaching experience
   0-4 _____
   5-10 _____
   11-15 _____
   16 or more_____
3. Years of experience of teaching students with special needs.
   0-4 _____
   5-10 _____
   11-15 _____
   16 or more_____
4. Special training: Please provide any additional information concerning training (i.e.:workshops, certifications, etc.)

   _____
   _____
5. What is your general opinion about including students with special needs in regular classes? Explain why.

   _____
   _____
   _____
6. If you could change or improve your teaching practices in your inclusive classroom, what would you do? (*These questions are a chance for you to voice your opinion. This is not a test with correct or wrong answers.)*

   _____
   _____
   _____

   If you are interested in receiving a summary report of this study, please leave your email address:_____

Appendix D

Attitudes Toward Inclusive Education Scale

(Wilczenski, 1995)

A number of statements about physical, academic, behavioural and social factors of inclusive education are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinion. Your responses will remain confidential.

Key: 1=Strongly agree, 2=Moderately agree, 3=Agree slightly more than disagree
4=disagree slightly more than agree, 5=Moderately disagree, 6=Strongly disagree

1. Students whose academic achievement is 2 or more years below other students in the grade should be in regular classes.			1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Students who are physically aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
3. Students who cannot move without the help from others should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
4. Students who are shy and withdrawn should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
5. Students whose academic achievement is 1 year below the other students in the grade should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
6. Students whose speech is difficult to understand should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
7. Students who cannot read standard print and need to use Braille should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
8. Students who are verbally aggressive toward their peers should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
9. Students who have difficulty expressing their thoughts verbally should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
10. Students who need training in self-help skills and activities of daily living should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
11. Students who use sign language or communication boards should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
12. Students who cannot control their behaviour and disrupt activities should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
13. Students who need an individualized functional academic program in everyday reading and math skills should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
14. Students who cannot hear conversational speech should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
15. Students who do not follow school rules for conduct should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		
16. Students who are frequently absent from school should be in regular classes.	1	2	3	4	5	6		

Appendix E

Teacher efficacy

(Woolfolk & Hoy, 1990)

A number of statements about organizations, people, and teaching are presented below. The purpose is to gather information regarding the actual attitudes of educators concerning these statements. There are no correct or incorrect answers. We are interested only in your frank opinion. Your responses will remain confidential.

Instructions: Please indicate your personal opinion about each statement by circling the appropriate response at the right of each statement.

KEY: 1=strongly agree 2=moderately agree 3=agree slightly more than disagree 4=disagree slightly more than agree
5=moderately disagree 6=strongly disagree

1. When a student does better than usually, many times it is because I exert a little extra effort.	1 2 3 4 5 6
2. The hours in my class have little influence on students compared to the influence of their home environment.	1 2 3 4 5 6
3. The amount a student can learn is primarily related to family background.	1 2 3 4 5 6
4. If students are not disciplined at home, they are not likely to accept any discipline.	1 2 3 4 5 6
5. I have enough training to deal with almost any learning problem.	1 2 3 4 5 6
6. When a student is having difficulty with an assignment, I am usually able to adjust it to his/her level.	1 2 3 4 5 6
7. When a student gets a better grade than he/she usually gets, it is usually because I found better ways of teaching that student.	1 2 3 4 5 6
8. When I really try, I can get through the most difficult students.	1 2 3 4 5 6
9. A teacher is very limited in what he/she can achieve because a student's home environment is a large influence on his/her achievement.	1 2 3 4 5 6
10. Teachers are not a very powerful influence on student achievement when all factors are considered.	1 2 3 4 5 6
11. When the grades of my students improve, it is usually because I found more effective approaches.	1 2 3 4 5 6
12. If a student masters a new concept quickly, this might be because I knew the necessary steps in teaching that concept.	1 2 3 4 5 6
13. If parents would do more for their children, I could do more.	1 2 3 4 5 6

14. If a student did not remember information I gave in a previous lesson, I would know how to increase his/her retention in the next lesson.	1 2 3 4 5 6
15. The influences of a student's home experiences can be overcome by good teaching.	1 2 3 4 5 6
16. If a student in my class becomes disruptive and noisy, I feel assured that I know some techniques to redirect him/her quickly.	1 2 3 4 5 6
17. Even a teacher with good teaching abilities may not reach many students.	I 2 3 4 5 6
18. If one of my students could not do a class assignment, I would be able to accurately assess whether the assignment was at the correct level of difficulty.	1 2 3 4 5 6
19. If I really try hard, I can get through to even to most difficult or unmotivated students.	I 2 3 4 5 6
20. When it comes right down to it, a teacher really cannot do much because most of a student's motivation and performance depends on his or her home environment.	1 2 3 4 5 6
21. Some students need to be placed in slower groups so they are not subjected to unrealistic expectations.	1 2 3 4 5 6
22. My teacher training program and/or experience has given me the necessary skills to be an effective teacher.	1 2 3 4 5 6

Appendix F

Student-teacher relationship
(Pianta, 2001)

Please reflect on the degree to which each of the following statements currently applies to your relationship with your students with special needs. Using the scale below, circle the appropriate number for each item.

KEY: 1= definitely does not apply 2=not really 3=neutral, not sure 4=sometimes apply 5=definitely applies

1. I share an affectionate, warm relationship with this child.	1	2	3	4	5
2. This child and I always seem to be struggling with each other.	1	2	3	4	5
3. If upset, this child will seek comfort from me.	1	2	3	4	5
4. This child is uncomfortable with physical affection or touch from me.	1	2	3	4	5
5. This child values his/her relationship with me.	1	2	3	4	5
6. When I praise this child, he /she beams with pride.	1	2	3	4	5
7. This child spontaneously shares information about himself/herself.	1	2	3	4	5
8. This child easily becomes angry at me.	1	2	3	4	5
9. It is easy to be in tune with what this child is feeling.	1	2	3	4	5
10. This child remains angry or resistant after being disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Dealing with this child drains my energy.	1	2	3	4	5
12. When this child wakes up in a bad mood, I know we are in for a long and difficult day.	1	2	3	4	5
13. This child's feelings toward me can be unpredictable or can change suddenly.	1	2	3	4	5
14. This child is sneaky or manipulative with me.	1	2	3	4	5
15. This child openly shares his/her feelings and experiences with me.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix G

Responsibility for Student Achievement

(Guskey, 1981).

Directions:

For each of the following questions, please a weight or percent to teach of the two choices according your preferences. For example:

If most students complete a home assignment you make, it is usually

_____a. because of their personal motivation or

_____b. because you were very clear in making the assignment?

You may feel that students complete assignments more because of personal motivation than because of your clarity in making the assignment. In that case, you might answer:

85%a

15%b

Or you may feel quite the opposite. The percentage will vary according to how strongly you feel about each alternative. You may see choice (b) almost totally responsible for students completing assignments and might give 99%. Choice (a) would then get 1%. The two must always add to 100%.

1. If a student does well in your class, would it probably be
   _____a. because that student had the natural ability to do well, or
   _____b. because of the encouragement you offered?
2. When your class is having trouble understanding something you have taught, it is usually
   _____a. because you did not explain it very clearly, or
   _____b. because your students are just slow in understanding difficult concepts?
3. When most of your students do well on a test, it is more likely to be
   _____a. because the test was very easy, or
   _____b. because you let them know what you expected?
4. When a student in your class cannot remember something you said just moments before, it is usually
   _____a. because you did not stress the point strongly enough, or
   _____b. because some students just do not pay attention?
5. Suppose your chairman or principal says you are doing a fine job. Is that likely to happen
   _____a. because you have been successful with most of your students, or
   _____b. because chairmen and principals say that sort of thing to motivate teachers?
6. Suppose you are particularly successful in one class. Would it probably happen
   _____a. because you helped them overcome their learning difficulties, or
   _____b. because these students usually do well in school?
7. If your students learn an idea quickly, is it
   _____a. because you were successful in encouraging their learning efforts, or
   _____b. because your students are basically intelligent?
8. If your chairman or principal suggests you change some of your class procedures, it is more likely
   _____a. because of his/her personal ideas about teaching methodology, or
   _____b. because your students have not been doing well?
9. When a large percent of the students in your class are doing poorly, does it usually happen
   _____a. because they have done poorly before and do not really try, or
   _____b. because you have not had the time to give them all the help they need?
10. When your students seem to learn something easily, is it usually
    _____a. because they were already interested in it , or
    _____b. because you have helped them organize the content?
11. When students in your class forget something that you explained before, is it usually
    _____a. because most students forget new concepts quickly, or
    _____b. because you did not get them actively involved in learning?
12. When you find it hard to get a lesson across to particular students, is it
    _____a. because you have not insisted on their learning earlier lessons, or
    _____b. because they are just slow in understanding and learning?

13. Suppose you present a new idea to your students and most of them remember it. Is it likely to be
    _____a. because you reviewed and re-explained the difficult parts, or
    _____b. because they were interested in it even before you explained it?
14. When your students do poorly on a test, is it
    _____a. because they did not really expect to do well, or
    _____b. because you did not insist they prepare adequately?
15. When parents commend you on your work as a teacher, is it usually
    _____a. because you have made special effort with their child, or
    _____b. because their child is generally a good student?
16. If a child does not do well in your class, would it probably be
    _____a. because he did not work very hard, or
    _____b. because you did not provide the proper motivation for him?
17. Suppose you do not have as much success as usual with a particular class. Would this happen
    _____a. because you did not plan as carefully as usual, or
    _____b. because these students just had less ability than others?
18. If one of your students says, "you know, you're a pretty good teacher," is it probably
    _____a. because you make learning interesting for that student, or
    _____b. because students generally try to get on a teacher's good side?
19. Suppose you find that many students are eager to be in your class. Do you think this would happen
    _____a. because most students feel you have a nice personality, or
    _____b. because you encourage most of your students to learn well?
20. Suppose you are trying to help a student solve a particular problem but she is having great difficulty with it. Would that happen
    _____a. because you may not be explaining it her level, or
    _____b. because she is not used to being helped by adults?
21. When you find it easy to get a lesson across to a class, is it
    _____a. because you could get most students to participate in the lesson, or
    _____b. because the lesson was an easy one to teach?
22. When a student in your class remembers something you talked about weeks before, is it usually
    _____a. because some students have that potential to remember things well, or
    _____b. because you made the point interesting for that student?
23. If you are working with a student who cannot remember a concept and he suddenly gets it, is it likely to happen
    _____a. because you gave him regular feedback on each learning step, or
    _____b. because he usually works on something until he gets it?
24. When you are having a hard time getting your students interested in a lesson, is it usually
    _____a. because you did not have the time to plan the presentation well, or
    _____b. because your students are generally hard to motivate?
25. If one of your students says, "You're a rotten teacher!" is it probably
    _____a. because many of your student have learning problems, or
    _____b. because you have not been able to give that student enough individual attention?
26. When your students seem interested in your lessons right from the beginning, is it
    _____a. because the topic is one which students generally find interesting, or
    _____b. because you were able to get most of the students involved?
27. If you were to discover most of the students in your class doing very well, would it probably be
    _____a. because their parents were supporting the school's efforts, or
    _____b. because you had been able to motivate them to work hard?
28. When your students seem to have difficulty learning something, is it usually
    _____a. because you are not willing to really work at it, or
    _____b. because you were not able to make it interesting for them?
29. If a parent is critical of you as a teacher, is it likely to be
    _____a. because you have difficulty getting that parent's child to do the work you require, or
    _____b. because that parent's child is not developmentally ready to do well in your class?
30. On those days when you are depressed about teaching, is it
    _____a. because learning is a difficult activity for many of your students, or
    _____b. because you just were not able to motivate students to work as hard as they should?