



Individual differences and equity attitude scale : measurement of attitudes toward the accommodation of individual differences
by Katharin Alcorn Kelker

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education
Montana State University
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Abstract:

The Individual Differences and Equity Attitude Scale (IDEAS) is an instrument the purpose of which is to determine the principles of fairness that teachers use in deciding how to distribute the benefits of education among students with and without disabilities. The eight dilemmas which constitute the instrument are based upon realistic situations which juxtapose the needs of a student with disabilities against the needs of the other students in the classroom. Each dilemma invites the respondent to consider four possible options for dealing with the situation; these options represent applications of three different principles of distributive justice, Hierarchical, Collaborative, and Liberal, and an "other" category which presents divergent options following no particular standard. The respondent is asked to arrange the options in order from the most fair to the least fair solution to the problem. Information from this instrument provides insight into the principles respondents use to determine what is equitable and the degree to which they see the accommodation of the special needs of students with disabilities as fair.

Evaluation of the validity and reliability of the IDEAS instrument through jury review, pilot testing, field testing, participant interviews, and test-retest procedures indicates that the instrument has construct and content validity, but the reliability of the instrument fails to reach the generally accepted minimum level of .70. Field testing of IDEAS with 204 individuals showed that the teachers in the field-test sample preferred the Collaborative and Liberal solutions over the Hierarchical and Other categories and that the teachers sampled selected Collaborative and Liberal solutions in almost equal numbers. Data collected from the field-test participants and national jury members indicates that, despite its weak reliability, IDEAS has potential for use as an assessment tool in qualitative research, a self assessment instrument, a vehicle for teacher training on core values in public education, and as a stimulus for discussion among individuals and groups with a stake in public education.

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ACCOMMODATION OF INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

by

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This thesis has been read by each member of the graduate committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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Date *4/19/93*

This paper is dedicated to my father, Robert Willard Alcorn, who understands well the human art of reflection.

. . . the greatest danger of our time is that the calculating way of thinking that is part of the technical revolution will become the dominating and exclusive way of thinking. Why is this so dangerous? Because then we would find, together with the highest and most successful development of our thinking on the calculating level, an indifference toward reflection and a complete thoughtlessness . . . then humanity would have renounced and thrown away what is most its own, its ability to reflect. What is at stake is to save the essence of humanity. What is at stake is to keep alive our reflective thinking.

Heidegger, M. (1959). *Gelassenheit*. Verlag Gunther Neske, Pfulingen, p. 25.

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ABSTRACT

The Individual Differences and Equity Attitude Scale (IDEAS) is an instrument the purpose of which is to determine the principles of fairness that teachers use in deciding how to distribute the benefits of education among students with and without disabilities. The eight dilemmas which constitute the instrument are based upon realistic situations which juxtapose the needs of a student with disabilities against the needs of the other students in the classroom. Each dilemma invites the respondent to consider four possible options for dealing with the situation; these options represent applications of three different principles of distributive justice, Hierarchical, Collaborative, and Liberal, and an "other" category which presents divergent options following no particular standard. The respondent is asked to arrange the options in order from the most fair to the least fair solution to the problem. Information from this instrument provides insight into the principles respondents use to determine what is equitable and the degree to which they see the accommodation of the special needs of students with disabilities as fair.

Evaluation of the validity and reliability of the IDEAS instrument through jury review, pilot testing, field testing, participant interviews, and test-retest procedures indicates that the instrument has construct and content validity, but the reliability of the instrument fails to reach the generally accepted minimum level of .70. Field testing of IDEAS with 204 individuals showed that the teachers in the field-test sample preferred the Collaborative and Liberal solutions over the Hierarchical and Other categories and that the teachers sampled selected Collaborative and Liberal solutions in almost equal numbers. Data collected from the field-test participants and national jury members indicates that, despite its weak reliability, IDEAS has potential for use as an assessment tool in qualitative research, a self assessment instrument, a vehicle for teacher training on core values in public education, and as a stimulus for discussion among individuals and groups with a stake in public education.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Problem

Regular classroom teachers have to cope with a broader range of student abilities and behaviors than they did prior to the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) in 1975. Both federal and state law require classroom teachers to follow the Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) of special education students and to make accommodations for their individual differences which may entail modifying assignments, tolerating extra equipment in the classroom, grading students on different scales, or employing different discipline policies for some students.

Resistance toward bending standards or treating students differently is strong among classroom teachers because accommodating individual differences seems to fly in the face of what many teachers view as the fair or right thing to do (Martin, 1974; Salend, 1984).

In their classrooms, teachers have control over a variety of opportunities and benefits of education. These benefits include: access to knowledge and opportunities to generate knowledge, individualization of instruction, distribution of teacher time and attention, access to materials and

equipment, opportunities to participate in activities and socialize with others, chances to exercise leadership, access to privileges (e.g., free time, choice of activities), and distribution of praise and recognition. By virtue of their status as authority figures in the educational realm, teachers have the power to distribute the material benefits of education and to ensure that students with disabilities are not denied educational opportunities because of neglect, discrimination, or prejudice. How teachers decide to allocate resources and in what ways they choose to protect the rights of the individual depends upon their understanding of their duties as professionals; their internalization of the school system's standards for teacher conduct, and their personal principles of fairness as they are applied to their students.

Special education law which governs, in part, the treatment of students with disabilities by their teachers, establishes a standard of fairness based upon the accommodation of individual differences. This standard says that the individual needs of students with disabilities are to be accommodated in the classroom in order to compensate for the barriers that disabilities pose, and further that these students, despite their disabilities, are to be provided with equal access to the opportunities to participate and learn (Turnbull, 1986). The principle of accommodation does not guarantee to special education students greater educational benefits than may be afforded nondisabled students (e.g., the "best possible" education) nor does it mandate that students with disabilities be guaranteed the achievement of the

same outcomes as may be achieved by other students, but it does imply that special education students will be provided whatever supports and modifications may be necessary to allow them access to the benefits of the educational process (Rothstein, 1990).

Depending upon the circumstances of the situation and their own experiences, values and perceptions of their duties, teachers may or may not choose to utilize or apply consistently the principle of accommodation as a principle of fairness in their classrooms. Certainly, there are other principles that may be used. Barry in his analysis of Rawls' explanation of the liberal theory of justice (1973) has suggested that there are three basic models for social justice which in a logical sense exhaust the available possibilities. These models are identified by Barry as hierarchical, liberal and altruistic (1973, p. 167). In simple dyadic terms, these models can be applied to the accommodation of individual differences in the following way: *A* will accommodate the needs of *B* (a) because *B* merits, deserves or earns accommodation (hierarchy), (b) because *B* is disadvantaged and this disadvantage is to be redressed so that the greatest benefit is provided to the least advantaged (liberalism), or (c) because *A* wants to help *B* (altruistic).

The principle of accommodation which underlies the special education law is an instance of the liberal model of social justice. It is based on the premise that the distribution of talents, abilities and physical attributes is unequal. Individuals with disabilities have been disadvantaged in their ability

to access the opportunities of public education because they lack certain skills and abilities which others have as birthrights. The privilege of access to public education has been offered by the states to children as a means for preparing them to accept their roles as citizens in a democracy and to become productive members of society (Dewey, 1916). Prior to the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, access to public education was denied to children with disabilities on the basis of their status as individuals who lacked certain physical, cognitive, or behavioral characteristics. The federal special education law represents an effort to redress previous harm done by denying children an opportunity to participate in public education and to guarantee in the future that children with disabilities would continue to enjoy such participation (Martin, 1974).

But the law goes one step further than providing access. It also says that children with disabilities have a right to certain accommodations and services which compensate for their disabilities and allow them to benefit from their education (Rothstein, 1990). In other words, not only does the law open the doors to public schools for students with disabilities; it also guarantees that once inside these students will have an equal chance to participate in and benefit from education. This compensatory clause of special education law is an application of what Rawls (1972) has called the Maximin Criterion of the liberal theory of justice. The Maximin Criterion says that social and economic inequalities are to be arranged so that they are to the greatest

benefit of the least advantaged. In the case of students with disabilities, application of the liberal Maximin Criterion suggests that social inequalities represented by differences in physical, behavioral and cognitive characteristics are to be redressed, utilizing whatever means necessary and without regard to cost, so that students with disabilities are able to benefit to the greatest extent possible from education despite whatever barriers their disabilities present (Turnbull, 1986).

Classroom teachers find themselves in the position of applying the principles of the special education law in an arena in which resources for all students are limited and in which there are multiple demands on teachers' time, energy, and good will. In addition, most regular classroom teachers have little experience with and training in the accommodation of individual differences related to disabilities (Grosenick, 1982). Many teachers have the expectation that because they are teaching in "regular" education that they will not have to be knowledgeable about disabilities and the special needs of individuals who have disabilities (Harasymiw, Horne, & Lewis, 1976). Attitudes of teachers toward students with special educational needs and toward the accommodation of their individual differences are shaped by a combination of their experiences and their expectations. These attitudes then influence the day-to-day decisions that teachers make about how to treat students and how to distribute the benefits of education which are at their disposal.

Because of the crucial role attitudes play in shaping teachers' behavior, teachers' attitudes toward disabilities and toward having students with disabilities in their classrooms have been a frequent object of study (Garvar & Schmelkin, 1989; Yaker, 1988). Regular classroom teachers have been determined to have attitudes toward persons with disabilities that are like those of the general population (Donaldson & Martinson, 1977; Henisch, 1981). Gottlieb and Corman (1975) have found that members of the general public favor the segregation of exceptional children in the schools and that teachers' views are similar. For example, in a Tennessee study of 326 teachers, supervisors and administrators, Gickling and Theobald (1975) found that 60% of regular classroom teachers thought that segregated self-contained special classes provided more effective instruction for special needs students than placement in the regular classroom.

Not surprisingly, regular classroom teachers are not reported to be supportive of integration of special needs students into their classrooms. According to Charles and Malian (1980), regular classroom teachers are unwilling to accept students "who require unusual accommodations, individual instruction, special teaching methods and special materials and services not provided for non-handicapped students" (p. 6). Panda and Bartel (1972) have found that in terms of social desirability teachers rank students with all different types of disabilities significantly below students considered to be normal or gifted. Contrary to the expectations created by Jaffe's earlier work

(1966), Panda and Bartel also found that teachers with special education course work and experience did not respond any more favorably toward students with disabilities than did teachers with no background.

In general, research seems to show that teachers prefer normally achieving students and view special class placement as more appropriate for the exceptional student (Winzer, 1985). Teachers fear that the placement of exceptional students in the regular classroom dilutes academic programs (Bradfield, Brown, Kaplan, Rickel, & Stannard, 1973; Hudson, Graham, & Warner, 1979); they argue for the retention of special classes to "get the slow ones out" because teachers are concerned about a decrease in their effectiveness when students with disabilities are in the classroom (Barngrover, 1971). In addition, exceptional students are viewed as potential creators of classroom disturbance (Hudson et al., 1979) and as demanding a disproportionate amount of the teacher's time (Brulle, Barton, Barton, & Wharton, 1983a).

Because of the generally negative findings in research concerning attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward mainstreaming, concerns have been raised regarding the capabilities of regular educators to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the regular education program (Mesinger, 1985). Two large scale investigations indicate that given appropriate conditions, there may be a potential for a "promainstreaming" attitude among regular educators (Albrecht, 1984; Knoff, 1985). There is, however, a lack of

clarity about whether attitudes of teachers can routinely be modified in ways that prove helpful in addressing the needs of special education students (Garvar & Schmelkin, 1989).

Although research is clear on acceptance-rejection issues and delineates the negative attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward mainstreaming, it provides no clear direction regarding the variables that contribute to positive attitude formation. This aspect, although studied, has been relegated to secondary status, receiving scant attention as compared to administrative and organizational concerns (Winzer, 1985). Recently, however, there has been a growing awareness of the importance of teachers' attitudes as a determiner of the success of mainstreaming situation (Schmelkin, 1981).

Prior to the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward students with disabilities were not important because their involvement with such students was highly limited. Special education teachers, administrators, and therapists were the dominant groups of professionals involved in the delivery of services for students with disabilities. However, since the passage of EHA, regular educators have been asked to take on roles previously assumed exclusively by special educators (Roffman, 1983). In fact, in many cases the primary responsibility for integrating special needs students into the academic and

social life of the classroom has become the role of the regular education teacher (Biklen, 1985).

Research has shown that the manner in which regular education teachers respond to the challenge of teaching students with a wider range of abilities and special needs and teachers' attitudes toward these new responsibilities are crucial factors in the success of exceptional students. Haring (1957) and others (Kingsley, 1967; Knoblock & Barnes, 1979; Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Shuetz, & Ockwood, 1980) have found, for example, that regular education teachers' attitudes are influential in determining the intellectual, social and emotional adjustment of exceptional students, and negative attitudes held by regular classroom teachers toward exceptional students and mainstreaming are clear impediments to educational programming for such students in regular classes (Martin, 1974). Since most exceptional students receive a majority of their instruction in the regular classroom, the importance of the regular classroom teacher's attitudes toward the delivery of that instruction is apparent.

In addition, regular classroom teachers play an important role in the referral of students for special education assessment and placement (Pugach, 1985). While teachers are not the only ones who can make referrals for special education testing, teachers are mentioned specifically in special education law as sources for referral and in practice the decision-making process for eligibility for special education is commonly activated by a referral

made by the classroom teacher (Poland, Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Mirkin, 1982). Since the majority of students who are referred for evaluation are assessed and placed in special education (Algozzine, Christenson, & Ysseldyke, 1982; Shepard & Smith, 1981), the teacher's personal decision to initiate a referral is pivotal. Thus, placement decisions for students with learning or behavior problems may be dependent to a degree upon how these students are viewed by their regular classroom teachers.

Besides the impact that regular classroom teachers have on instruction and on the referral process for exceptional students, teachers also have strong influences on the attitudes of their students toward classmates with disabilities. Lapp (1957), for example, has noted that whether the teacher accepts or rejects the exceptional child affects the attitudes that the regular students will assume. In other words, if the teacher displays either an accepting or rejecting attitude, it is likely that the students in the classroom will respond similarly toward the exceptional student.

Because of the potential effects of teachers' attitudes on the placement, instruction, and social acceptance of exceptional students, teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities and mainstreaming have been a focus of special education research over more than a 25-year period (Garvar & Schmelkin, 1989; Yucker, 1988). In general, results of available attitude studies indicate that teachers' attitudes toward disabilities and students with disabilities tend toward the negative (Horne, 1985). This global

kind of information, however, provides little insight into the complex nature of attitude formation. Current methods for examining attitudes toward disabilities and persons with disabilities have contributed to knowledge of the content of stereotypes concerning disability, but they have not provided much information about broader underlying concepts related to the formation of attitudes toward individual differences (Garvar & Schmelkin, 1989).

One such underlying concept is the general notion of equity or fairness. Evidence from the research on teacher's attitudes toward mainstreaming indicates that some teachers resent mainstreaming and the burdens it places upon them to change their classroom routines and adjust to a greater variety of needs among students. These teachers openly express the view that "it is not fair" to give extra help or to reduce the workload of some students without providing the same privileges to all students. This sense of violation of basic fairness leads some teachers to be openly defiant toward their responsibilities under the special education law and causes others to comply only in a grudging fashion (Myles & Simpson, 1989).

Concepts of fairness may underlie and influence the attitudes of teachers toward accommodating individual differences among students. Recent research indicates that attitudes toward disabilities and individual differences are formulated on a complex base of beliefs, values, and experiences which reflect the total development of the individual (Garvar & Schmelkin, 1989). To date, however, there has been no mechanism for

exploring some of the underlying values and beliefs which create and sustain attitudes toward disability and mainstreaming. With some exceptions, the available instruments focus on acceptance or rejection of persons with disabilities. Still needed are ways of analyzing the specific mechanisms which influence a teacher's attitudes toward accommodating individual differences of students with disabilities. A problem for research, therefore, is to develop a means for determining what principles of fairness teachers use for deciding how to distribute the benefits of education. Do teachers associate the accommodation-of-individual differences--an important concept in special education law--with equity? Do teachers use the accommodation principle in making judgments or do they use some other principle for determining how to distribute benefits? Do teachers use a consistent principle for judgment or do they use a variety of principles? These and other related questions can be addressed through the development of an attitude scale focusing on teachers' decision-making processes in situations commonly faced in the classroom.

The Purpose

The purpose of this research has been to develop and validate an instrument capable of determining the principles of fairness that teachers use in deciding how to distribute the benefits of education and the degree to which teachers see accommodating the special needs of students with

disabilities as equitable. The intent of the instrument developed through this research is to provide a means for gathering information about teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming and accommodating individual differences which goes well beyond the like-dislike accept-reject types of attitude scales which have been in common use. The items for the instrument are based upon realistic situations which occur in educational settings and which have been documented in the literature as concerns of classroom teachers (Carpenter, Grantham, & Hardister, 1983; Engleberg & Evans, 1986). Each item invites the respondent to consider four possible options for dealing with the situation; these options represent applications of three different principles of justice, hierarchical-status, liberal-contractual, and altruistic collaborative, and an "other" category which presents divergent options following no particular principle. The respondent is asked to arrange the options in order from the most fair to the least fair solution to the problem. Information from this instrument provides insight into the relative value that respondents place on the three principles of distributive justice and the degree to which they associate the accommodation of individual differences with fairness.

The Significance of the Problem

Attitudes of teachers toward students with disabilities and their placement in the regular classroom are complex in nature. Schmelkin (1981) and others (Britton, 1983; Lieberman, 1983) have documented the need to

get beyond treating attitudes as unitary entities and to begin looking at their underlying dimensions. Garvar and Schmelkin (1989) have done preliminary work with multidimensional scaling which indicates that perceptions of disabilities are indeed complex and multifaceted. These authors suggest that further research needs to be done on the influences of such individual factors as level of maturity, personality characteristics, individual biases, types of previous experiences, and contacts with individuals with disabilities on teachers' attitudes. Garvar and Schmelkin further suggest the need to explore attitudes in relation to real, rather than stereotypical, situations.

The need for greater depth in attitudinal studies and greater emphasis on practical situations is clear. However before these studies can be conducted, instruments must be developed and validated which can measure or describe individual characteristics of teachers in relation to their attitudes toward disabilities and mainstreaming. The Individual Differences and Equity Attitude Scale (IDEAS) developed in this research project is one such instrument since it has been demonstrated to provide a means for determining the relative value that teachers place on three principles of justice when deciding how to distribute the benefits of education. The results from the instrument provide insight into the reasoning of the respondents and indicate potential areas in which attitude formation can be influenced or modified.

The IDEAS instrument can be used by teachers in a self-assessment situation to identify for themselves their attitudes toward accommodation of students with disabilities. Teacher educators and providers of inservice training can use IDEAS to assist in the focusing of training and as a tool for opening up discussion of the ethical issues surrounding accommodation of individual differences in the classroom. The instrument represents a rather specific values clarification exercise, calling upon the respondent to determine equity based upon their value systems. As such, the ideal climate for using the instrument is one in which the respondents feel comfortable in exploring their values for the purposes of their own development or as a part of a training and professional development activity, rather as a means of evaluating individual performance.

The instrument also has potential for use in research as a source of descriptive information about the basis teachers use for making decisions on the accommodation of individual differences. In addition, the instrument can be used to measure the effect of particular types of training or experiences upon teachers' notions of equity and how those notions are applied in specific educational situations.

Because of the potential benefits of mainstreaming for students with special needs, the field of special education is looking for the means to make this type of integration work more effectively. Attitudes of classroom teachers are critical to the success of any mainstreaming effort, so the importance of

describing teachers' attitudes more fully and finding ways to modify those attitudes are central issues in the profession of special education. This research project addresses some of these important issues by developing and validating an instrument with the potential to add a new dimension to the understanding of classroom teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming and the accommodation of individual differences.

Assumptions

The researcher has made three major assumptions for the purpose of this study. The first assumption, which is made on a philosophical rather than empirical basis, is that mainstreaming as a method for delivering special education is a potentially beneficial model for most students with special needs and for their peers in the regular classroom. This assumption is made despite some conflicting evidence in the literature which shows that mainstreaming is not necessarily beneficial in some instances (Kauffman & Hallahan, 1990). The assumption of inherent value in mainstreaming is based on the observation that separation of students with special needs from their peers provides an unequal educational opportunity and deprives students with disabilities of a chance to reach their maximum potential. Also, the separation of students with disabilities from their nondisabled peers deprives students who do not have disabilities of the opportunity to learn how to get along with people who have physical or mental limitations (Goetz, 1990).

Another important assumption of this research is that there is a moral or ethical component in the judgments that teachers make concerning the accommodation of students with disabilities in the regular classroom. Certainly, the placement of students with disabilities in the regular classroom is required by law, but teachers have the opportunity to decide how they will comply with the requirement. It is when teachers decide how to respond that it is assumed that an ethical dimension enters the teachers' thinking. As Brown (1965) has noted, the study of attitudes and attitude change can be more properly termed the study of morality and ethics or, in education, the study of values and character development. This research project has adopted Brown's integrative view of attitudes which involves a combination of moral, social, and cognitive components rather than the more narrow behavioral explanation posited by some in American psychology (Skinner, 1968).

A third assumption is that teachers, consciously or unconsciously, adopt some principle on which they base their decisions about how to allocate educational resources in the classroom and that the choices of these principles and how they are applied can be influenced. It is speculated that some teachers may make decisions on a situational basis, weighing the factors in each situation and deciding on a case-by-case basis. Others may decide based upon the needs of individual students, some calculation of the good of all students, school rules, the principal's guidelines, or some absolute

standard like excellence. No matter what model for decision-making teachers use, the assumption is that they rationalize their decisions according to their own level of moral cognition, sensitivity, or awareness (Zeichner & Liston, 1987).

Most of the time, the framework that teachers use for decision-making goes unnoticed and unexamined. If asked why they grade in a certain way or attend to one student more than another, teachers may not have a ready answer (Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1988). Yet the assumption is that decisions are made on some basis, the result of some internal struggle within the individual's conscience and external struggle with factors of the situation and with contemporary political and institutional norms. This research has assumed that the more conscious this internal and external struggle over decision-making can be made, the more that teachers can be made aware of the principles they use, the more likely it is that their decisions can be influenced and even moved in new directions (Kohlberg, 1987).

Delimitation of Knowledge and Theory Base

The theoretical base for this research will be limited to the extensive literature related to the theoretical basis for federal special education law, the concepts and practices of mainstreaming, and the attitudes of educators toward mainstreaming and the accommodation of individual differences. Of interest will be the theoretical and legal basis of mainstreaming, including the

liberal theory of justice and theories of distributive justice, definitions of mainstreaming, effects of mainstreaming on the roles of regular education teachers, and the benefits of mainstreaming for students. Also, of concern will be the types of research done on teachers' attitudes toward disabilities and the evolution of instruments used to measure these attitudes. Some regard will be given to the research base in attitude formation, but no attempt will be made to develop fully the theoretical framework of attitude change theory which constitutes an extensive, separate field in psychological research. The types of attitudinal measures currently in use in the field will be described and their strengths and weaknesses delineated, but no attempt will be made to provide a complete critique of all the available instruments.

Delimitation of Population Base

The population base used to develop and validate the instrument in this study will consist of college students preparing to teach and regular classroom teachers trained to teach grades K-12. Participants were gleaned from educational programs at Eastern Montana College and Montana State University and from cooperating school districts in Billings, Moore, Belgrade, Missoula, and Thompson Falls, Montana.

Definitions

The following definitions will be used throughout the study and represent terms used by providers of service to persons with disabilities and terms in common usage in educational administration.

Accommodation: The amount of special assistance necessary to ensure that a student with disabilities not only receives educational services but that he or she also benefits from this education (Rothstein, 1990, p.11.)

Disability: Restriction or lack (resulting from an impairment) of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being (World Health Organization, 1980). For the purposes of this study, disability is synonymous with handicap.

Education of All Handicapped Children Act: Legislation passed by Congress in 1975 which guarantees a free, appropriate public education to all handicapped children, regardless of the nature or severity of their handicaps (also called P.L. 94-142 and, more recently, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA).

Exceptional Student: A student in special education whose behavior or academic performance is significantly different from the norm in regular education.

Fair: Providing equity or balance among the competing needs of individuals; even-handed treatment.

Handicap: A disadvantage for a given individual resulting from an impairment or disability that limits or prevents the fulfillment of a role that is normal for that individual (World Health Organization, 1980). For the purpose of this study, handicap will be synonymous with disability.

Individualized Education Program: A statement, specifying instructional goals and any special education and related services a child may need, which must be written and reviewed annually. Included are (a) the present educational levels of the child; (b) a statement of annual goals; including short-term objectives; (c) a statement of specific services, if needed, (d) the programs; (e) the date when special services are to begin and the expected duration of these services; and (f) the tests and other requirements or information used to gauge the child's progress to determine if the instructional objectives are being met (Cartwright, Cartwright & Ward, 1984, p. 467).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act: The federal special education law, reauthorized in 1990, which mandates free appropriate, public education for all children with disabilities and provides federal funding for a portion of these services (20 United States Code, Sections 1401-1468; 34 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300).

Least Restrictive Alternative: Handicapped children are to be educated in the placement option--regular classroom, resource room, special class, special school, residential or hospital setting--which meets their

educational needs and which is the regular education environment experienced by children who are not handicapped or which as closely as possible approximates the regular education environment (Section 1413 (a) of EHA, 1976).

Least Restrictive Environment: ". . . to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are to be educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special education, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (Section 1412 (5) (b) EHA, 1976).

Mainstreaming: A term in common parlance referring to "a form of educational programming that integrates special needs and non-special needs children in regular classrooms" (Meisels, 1977).

Normalization: The principle that persons with disabilities should experience life in the same proportions and states as nondisabled persons; persons with disabilities should experience each stage of life with its responsibilities, obligations, and risks (Wolfensberger, 1980).

Regular Education: A term in common parlance meaning instruction provided in the common school curriculum in public schools; that is, general

instruction not individualized to meet the unique needs of particular students.

Regular Educator: A teacher who is properly trained and licensed to teach the common school curriculum in public schools.

Special Education: Specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child, including classroom instruction, instruction in physical education, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals and institutions (Code of Federal Regulations, Part 300.14).

Special Educator: A teacher with proper training and background to meet state standards for providing special education to eligible students.

Student with a Disability: A student of preschool age (3-5) or in grades K-12 who, on the basis of appropriate assessment, has been determined to have the characteristics of one of the eleven disabilities recognized by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

Summary

Mainstreaming is a potentially valuable experience for students with disabilities, providing them with greater academic and social opportunities than can be found in segregated settings. The success, however, of the mainstreaming experience is highly dependent upon the role that the regular classroom teacher plays. The current evidence is that regular classroom

teachers are not entirely comfortable with their responsibilities for the integration of disabled students into the regular classroom. Teachers are beset by feelings of insecurity and uncertainty about how to handle an exceptional student which result in negative attitudes.

Measurement of teachers' attitudes to this point has been largely one-dimensional, using scales which measure acceptance-rejection, preference of disability, or preferred level of social distance. This research goes beyond one-dimensional scales by developing and validating an instrument which measures one of the underlying factors on which attitudes toward accommodation of disability may be formed; that is, the individual's concept of equity or fairness. The Individual Differences and Equity Attitude Scale (IDEAS) identifies the relative value that teachers place on three principles of distributive justice when they are deciding how to distribute the benefits of education and the degree to which teachers see the accommodation of individual differences as fair. Information gleaned through this instrument provides insight into how teachers' attitudes influence their behavior toward students with disabilities in their classrooms.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to develop and validate an instrument capable of determining the relative value that teachers place on three principles of distributive justice when they are deciding how to distribute the benefits of education and how to accommodate individual differences in the classroom. This review summarizes research about the nature of attitudes and one theory of attitude change, McGuire's Logical Consistency Theory, which relates to the conceptual basis for the Individual Differences and Equity Attitude Scale developed in this study. This review also synthesizes the major issues related to the particular types of attitudes measured by the proposed instrument; that is, regular classroom teachers' attitudes toward disabilities and accommodating individual differences. The following areas of investigation are reviewed: the nature of attitudes and attitude change, the theoretical and legal basis of mainstreaming, teachers' roles in mainstreaming, teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming, attitudes of teachers toward particular disabilities, the importance of teachers' attitudes in relation to

student outcomes, and research on instruments used to measure teachers' attitudes toward students with disabilities and mainstreaming.

The Nature of Attitudes and Attitude Change

Problems of attitude change have generated widespread interest in the field of social psychology and have formed the basis for numerous experiments to determine how attitudes can be measured, influenced, or modified. Beginning with the work of Hovland and his colleagues in the Yale Communication Research Program (Hovland, Janis, & Kelley, 1953), an increasing amount of attitude change research has moved away from problem specific experimentation to studies explicitly related to stated theoretical orientations. Insko (1967) identifies ten leading attitude change theories: reinforcement theory (Hovland et al., 1953), assimilation-contrast theory (Sherif & Hovland, 1961), adaptation-level theory (Helson, 1964), congruity theory (Osgood & Tannenbaum, 1955), belief congruence theory (Rokeach, 1961), balance theories (Heider, 1958; Newcomb, 1959), affective-cognitive consistency theory (Rosenberg & Abelson, 1960), dissonance theory (Festinger, 1964), psychoanalytic theory (Sarnoff, 1965), and logical-affective consistency theory (McGuire, 1960a). Though these diverse theories explain more than nontheoretically-based experiments, they often have been limited to solving specialized problems. Insko has noted, however, that there are themes among these theories indicating that "many . . . are characterized by

one or both of two emphases, the importance of reward, reinforcement or need reduction and the importance of consistency" (1967, p. 347).

Hovland and Rosenberg (1960) have argued that these two principles of reinforcement and consistency can be reduced still further to one general explanation of attitude change. They contend that the motivation to reduce inconsistency can be explained on the basis of reinforcement-produced learning. This learning can occur as a consequence either of adaptation to the environment or of deliberate social training. According to Hovland and Rosenberg's line of reasoning, if the individual is going to adapt successfully to the environment, he or she will have to achieve consistent relationships among feelings, beliefs, and behaviors; otherwise conflicts could not be resolved in a manner which produces reinforcement. Eventually consistency may itself become a rewarding state of affairs and thus be a learned incentive.

Hovland and Rosenberg (1960) further claim that examples of direct social training for consistency are easy to find in typical social interactions. For example, individuals are frequently criticized for holding inconsistent opinions or for behaving in ways that are inconsistent with their stated opinions or beliefs. Hovland and Rosenberg note that all known societies have sanctions against logical inconsistency between beliefs and behaviors and that, therefore, it can be concluded that there is a strong universal social norm favoring consistency.

Consistency theories of attitude change are based on the whole notion that logical relationships do exist among the ideas and opinions that help to shape attitudes. In other words, consistency theories assume a cognitive basis for attitudes. Several authors (Allport, 1935; Sherif, Sherif, & Nebergall, 1965; Doob, 1967), however, have pointed out that attitudes are more than ideas. A common conceptualization of attitudes has three parts: affective, cognitive and behavioral components. The affective component is said to deal with feelings of liking or disliking about the attitude object. Cognition refers to the knowledge or beliefs a person has about the attitude object, and the behavioral component of attitude refers to the intentions or actions of a person toward an attitude object or how the person actually behaves.

Many authors, however, are not satisfied with this three part explanation of attitudes. Triandis (1964) suggests that the term attitude implies evaluation of the attitude object, so that any explanation of attitude must include reference to values and judgments. Shaw and Wright (1967) also emphasize the evaluative nature of attitudes, and they clarify much of the complexity in defining attitude by limiting its theoretical construct to an affective component which is "based upon cognitive processes and is an antecedent of behavior" (p. 3). Anderson and Fishbein (1965) and Osgood (1957) offer a similar view, suggesting that an attitude is the evaluative dimension of a concept. These authors further argue that the attitude toward an object is the sum of the strength of individual beliefs about the object and

the evaluative aspect of these beliefs. Shaw and Wright (1967) build upon these evaluative conceptualizations and provide the following comprehensive definition of attitude:

A relatively enduring system of evaluative, affective reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs which have been learned about the characteristics of a social object or class of social objects. (p. 3)

An attitude is, then, a predisposition to think, feel and act in a particular way toward a referent or social object. This predisposition is based upon a set of related opinions, beliefs, values, memories, and perceptions which form the attitude and sustain it over time.

Shaw and Wright (1967) have described six general characteristics of attitudes: (a) Attitudes are based upon evaluative concepts which motivate behavior toward the referent object, (b) attitudes vary in quality and intensity on a continuum from positive through neutral to negative, (c) attitudes are learned, rather than innate or a result of development or maturation, (d) attitudes have specific referents, (e) attitudes possess varying degrees of interrelatedness to one another, and (f) attitudes are relatively stable and enduring. For an attitude change theory to be useful, it must take into account these characteristics and multiple components of attitude and the underlying beliefs, opinions and feelings which shape attitude sets.

McGuire's Logical Consistency Theory

One promising formulation of attitude change theory which does take into account both the affective-evaluative nature of attitudes and their underlying cognitive structure is McGuire's Logical Consistency Theory (1960a) which states that "a person tends to change his or her opinions on logically related issues in the direction of mutual consistency when he or she is asked to state these opinions in close temporal contiguity" (p. 345). This theory is based on two related postulates--one dealing with the cognitive component of attitudes and the other related to the affective component. The cognitive postulate states that there is a tendency for an individual's beliefs or expectations to be related in a manner required by the rules of formal logic. The affective or "wishful thinking" postulate states that there is a tendency for an individual's beliefs to be consistent with that individual's desires or wishes.

According to McGuire, the individual attempts to minimize the inconsistencies among his or her beliefs as well as the inconsistencies between beliefs and ideas (cognition) and desires or wishes (affect). When the individual is made aware of inconsistencies, he or she experiences discomfort. To alleviate discomfort, the individual tries to resolve the inconsistencies in ideas, beliefs and feelings; this resolution results in a reorganization of the attitude set and a change in attitude.

In their unexamined state, the attitudes that a person forms based upon an underpinning of beliefs, opinions, and values may be "loosely

coupled" (Birnbaum, 1989, p. 166); that is, they may be logically inconsistent with one another but the inconsistency goes unnoticed because the individual does not focus on all of the related beliefs, opinions, and values at once.

However, according to McGuire, when the individual is called upon to examine a set of attitudes in close proximity of time, the individual notices the inconsistency and has a tendency to revise the attitude set in the direction of becoming more logically consistent. McGuire calls the whole process of movement toward a greater degree of logical consistency following the relatively simultaneous elicitation of inconsistent feelings and beliefs "the Socratic effect."

Operationally, McGuire (1960b, 1960c) suggests that if an individual is influenced by a reorganizing event (e.g., an argument or discussion) to change an attitude set, then other logically-related beliefs will also change so as to maintain logical consistency. This effect occurs even though the remote, logically-related beliefs are not directly mentioned in the reorganizing event. On the basis of a cognitive inertia assumption, however, this prediction is qualified somewhat. Due to the existence of cognitive inertia, McGuire states that the amount of change in the remote beliefs will be less than that which is logically required for complete consistency. In addition, the effect on the remote beliefs will not occur all at once but gradually over time. Inertia results in less and slower change in the remote beliefs than in the target belief affected by the reorganizing event.

Though McGuire's postulates concerning inertia effect have not been supported with strong results in replicated studies, his theories concerning the logical repercussions of changes in attitude sets have been consistently replicated (Insko, 1967, p. 111). Dillehay, Insko, and Smith (1966), for example, have tested the logical repercussions of changes in two studies utilizing syllogisms, communication and instructions derived from McGuire's work. Their results from direct and indirect effects of the persuasive communications indicate that the communications had a significant effect upon the logical premises which are directly addressed and that this effect carried over to unmentioned but logically related conclusions.

McGuire's theory of logical consistency presents some promising leads concerning the nature of attitude change and suggests that a cognitive-affective approach to attitude change may yield results on a whole set of attitudes, beliefs and values. McGuire's methodology of bringing about attitude change by generating cognitive reorganization; Horne (1985) has suggested, may have some application to attitude change toward persons with disabilities. However, to this point the methodology has not been studied in relation to modification of disability stereotypes (Horne, 1985).

Mainstreaming

Measuring and potentially modifying teachers' attitudes toward the process of "mainstreaming" students with disabilities into regular classrooms

are matters of particular interest in this study. However, in order to explore these topics, it is necessary first to examine the literature surrounding the subject of mainstreaming and determine from that literature what mainstreaming is and how it affects the classroom teacher.

Mainstreaming is a result of the implementation of the federal special education law called originally the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA). The history of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act begins with the civil rights case of Brown v. Board of Education (1954) in which the Supreme Court decided that separate schooling provided on the basis of race was inherently unequal and therefore unconstitutional. In the Brown decision, the court articulated a philosophy of integration based upon the Fourteenth Amendment which prohibits states (1) from depriving anyone of life, liberty or property without due process of law, and (2) from denying equal protection of the laws. The court reasoned that no federally protected right guarantees education, but once a state determines to provide public education, that state has granted to its citizens a property right to education (Rothstein, 1990). Thus, to deprive a child of education is to deny due process of law as well as equal protection of the laws.

Education for students with disabilities is a direct extension of Brown. The legal theories of due process and equal protection first articulated in Brown v. Board of Education were applied to educational rights of children with disabilities in numerous law suits across the United States. In two of

these cases, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children (PARC) v. Pennsylvania (1971) and Mills v. Board of Education (1972, 1980), trial courts enjoined states from denying education to children with disabilities in the absence of due process of law. The Mills case was settled by a consent decree which defined due process rights applicable to education of children with disabilities; including, procedures for the evaluation, labeling, and placement aspects of the special education process, (Rothstein, 1990). The due process procedures identified included a right to hearing (with representation, a record and an impartial hearing officer), a right to appeal, a right to have access to records, and a right to written notice at all stages of the process.

In disability-related cases like PARC and Mills, advocates for students with disabilities successfully argued that when a state undertakes to provide a free public education system for its school-age citizens, the state denies equal protection of the law if it treats students with disabilities differently by denying them an opportunity to attend school or by inappropriately assigning them to special education programs (Turnbull, 1986). In addition, the courts found that denying disabled students access to education unfairly discriminates against such students on the basis of unalterable and unchosen traits--their disabilities. Such discrimination is as constitutionally unacceptable as discrimination on the basis of race, economic level, gender or age (Turnbull, 1986, p. 12).

During the period of 1960-1970, many states responded to the educational needs of children with disabilities by creating special education programs; however, implementation of these programs was uneven across the states and was judged by Congress not to provide equal opportunity for education. Against this background of uneven state provision of special education, Congress determined that it needed to act to provide a basic floor of educational opportunity for children with disabilities. On November 25, 1975, Congress passed P.L. 94-142--the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA)--which guaranteed a free, appropriate public education for all handicapped children, regardless of the nature or severity of their handicaps.

Equal Educational Opportunity

The federal special education law, P.L. 94-142, is based upon a concept of equal educational opportunity which is unique in American law. Brown and other school desegregation cases interpreted the equal protection doctrine as requiring equal educational opportunity and therefore equal access to education for all students. In Brown, the court demanded that black students be given equal access to the same resources as whites. Subsequent court decisions have ruled that when a school system provides facilities to white children, exactly the same facilities (not an equivalent separate set of facilities) must be made available on the same terms to black children (Stevens & Wood, 1992, p. 10).

Disability-related cases like PARC and Mills and the Educational for All Handicapped Children Act have expanded the doctrines of equal opportunity and equal access beyond what was outlined in the Brown case. In disability-related law, the right to education for disabled students has been interpreted to require that schools furnish all disabled children equal opportunities to develop their own capabilities. Thus, schools are required to provide different programs and facilities for pupils with different needs. In other words, the courts have concluded that children with disabilities must be given special or different treatment if such accommodations are necessary in order for the children to benefit from education (Turnbull, 1986, p.60). Disability law established a new equal access (or equal opportunity) doctrine by claiming that disabled children require compensatory opportunities--namely, access to additional or different types of resources for different purposes--in order to have genuine access to an education that is equal to that which is provided to nondisabled children.

This compensatory notion of equal educational opportunity is different from the customary one. The usual meaning of equality is equal access to the same resources for the same purposes. The new meaning for equality which has been established in disabilities law is "access by disabled children to different resources for different purposes" (Turnbull, 1986, p. 60).

According to the courts, the major reason that children with disabilities can lay claim to special treatment is the fact that these children have disabilities

which require different educational approaches in order for the children to benefit from education (Stevens & Wood, 1992, p. 16).

In addition, educational access for these children must be provided on an individualized basis, so some students with disabilities may receive no accommodations and be treated exactly like nondisabled students. Other disabled students can be treated substantially like nondisabled students, but may require some modifications or accommodations in order to participate in educational programs. Examples of such accommodations might include interpreters for deaf students, braille training for blind students, or provision of taped materials for students with learning disabilities. A third group of students with disabilities may need to be treated quite differently from their nondisabled counterparts. For example, educating students with severe disabilities may require separate classes, using a different curriculum and different methods of instruction. This different set of circumstances may provide severely disabled students with educational opportunities that, for them, are comparable to the opportunities provided to nondisabled students who are educated in the regular classroom.

This new access doctrine articulated in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act established the precedent for requiring not only that disabled students be provided with public education, but also with education which is appropriate to their capabilities and suited to their needs. Recent cases decided by the Supreme Court, such as Board v. Rowley and

Irving Independent School District v. Tatro, have upheld this new equal access approach and confirmed the requirements both for access and appropriate, individualized education that have become the foundation for special education law.

Least Restrictive Environment

In Brown v. Board of Education the Supreme Court interpreted the equal protection doctrine also to imply that separate education for the white and black races is inherently unequal. Further, the Court ruled that separation of the races in educational settings deprives children of the opportunity to interact with children of other backgrounds and imposes a stigma upon those educated separately. Much the same logic as was used in the Brown case became the basis for claims that children with disabilities should not be excluded from school or educated separately from other children. Disability advocates argued that--as much as possible--children with disabilities should be educated in regular classrooms with nondisabled peers (Turnbull, 1986).

A key provision of the special education law--Section 1412 (5) (b)--was the concept of placement in the "least restrictive environment" which requires states to:

Establish procedures to assure that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are to be educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special education, separate schooling or other removal of handicapped children from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in

regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.

This section of the law creates a strong preference for placing children with disabilities in the regular classroom by requiring that educators not only tailor each child's educational program to meet the child's special needs, but that they also educate the child to the maximum extent appropriate in the regular educational environment.

"Least restrictive environment" (LRE) is a legal, rather than educational, term. Several authors (Deno, 1970; Peterson, Zabel, Smith, & White, 1983; Reynolds, 1962) have attempted to elaborate upon the term to give it educational significance by offering a continuum of educational alternatives in rank order; including, separate special schools, resource rooms, and individual tutoring. The term LRE implies placement in the regular classroom as a preference, but also includes the notion of a continuum of placements, each gradually more restrictive as they differ more and more from the regular classroom environment. Although the concept of LRE is the foundation of integrated educational programming and the term LRE is used in both legal and educational circles, placement of children with disabilities in the regular classroom has come to be commonly called mainstreaming.

The term "mainstreaming" is an educational corollary to the Scandinavian principle of "normalization" (Dybwad, 1980). Normalization suggests that people with disabilities be exposed to, and placed in, environments that approximate normal environments to the maximum extent

possible in light of their disability. One environment is the educational setting, and special education law does require the placement of students with disabilities in the mainstream of public education (i.e., regular classes) to the maximum extent possible.

Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, and Kukic (1975) have proposed a definition of mainstreaming that incorporates three major components: (a) integration, (b) educational planning and programming processes, and (c) clarification of responsibilities among educational personnel. It has been argued (MacMillan & Semmel, 1977) that if all three components must be present, then few, if any, programs meet the definition of mainstreaming. A more practical definition of mainstreaming may be one that attends to the amount of time that students with disabilities spend with their nondisabled peers. In fact, the most common element used to define mainstreaming in practice is temporal integration or the amount of time children with disabilities have the opportunity to interact with nonhandicapped children. A common figure cited for the amount of temporal integration required to constitute "mainstreaming" is 50% or more of the school day (Gottlieb, 1981). However, that 50% is not exclusively academic learning time because it usually also includes time spent between classes, in the hall, at lunch, at recess and so forth (Zigler & Muenchow, 1979).

Mainstreaming has been advanced as a worthwhile educational practice on the assumption that placement of students with disabilities with

their nondisabled peers would result in increased academic and social development for the students with disabilities (Birch, 1974; Christopher & Renz, 1969; Dunn, 1968; Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, & Kukic, 1975) as well as in a reduction of stigma from being educated in segregated special education settings (Dunn, 1968). The research on the efficacy of mainstreaming has, however, been inconclusive (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980). Several researchers have reported that mainstreaming has not resulted in significant educational and social growth in students with disabilities (Budoff & Gottlieb, 1976; Gottlieb, 1981; Gresham, 1982). However, others have shown that regular class placements can have positive effects on the development of students with disabilities (Grosenick, 1982; Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974; Haring & Krug, 1975; Macy & Carter, 1978; Voeltz, 1980, 1982).

Initial research related to mainstreaming was primarily concerned with its impact on the academic, social, and emotional growth of students with disabilities. Recently, there has been a growing awareness that the climate within which mainstreaming is to be implemented is probably one of the most important determiners of its outcomes (Gearheart & Weishahn, 1976; Gottlieb, 1975; MacMillan, Jones, & Aloia, 1974; Schmelkin, 1981; Zermanek & Lehrer, 1977). Research studies have, therefore, begun to deal with some of the major players in the mainstream situation with particular focus on regular classroom teachers.

Teachers' Roles in Mainstreaming

Teachers are expected to be the primary agents of the implementation of mainstreaming (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990). In fact, basic to the mainstreaming model is the notion that regular classroom teachers, rather than turning over the responsibility for educating low achieving students to specialists, assume instead a major role in educating these students in the regular classroom. The mainstreaming model is based on the notion that regular classroom teachers have the overall responsibility for making and monitoring most instructional decisions for all the students in the class, including those identified for special education, and that special educators serve only in a supportive capacity by working with students on areas specified in the students' Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) as needing remediation or requiring alternative teaching methods.

In addition, regular classroom teachers are bound by the IEPs for identified special education students to provide alternative activities and modifications of the regular curriculum to meet the individual needs of each student with a disability (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990). Regular education teachers receive support and assistance from special educators in the design and modification of materials, but the actual implementation in the classroom is usually left to the teacher. Thus, in the mainstreaming model, the regular classroom teacher remains the primary instructor of children with learning problems, and he or she assumes the additional responsibility of

implementing modifications to the curriculum and classroom discipline that are specified in each child's IEP.

As critical as this teaching role may be, the regular classroom teacher also has another important role in the special education process--that of evaluator. The decision-making process in special education is only activated when a referral is made. Though referrals for special education assessment can be made by anyone, in practice the classroom teacher is the most common source of a referral (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1980; Poland et al., 1982; Weatherly, 1979). The individual teacher's decision whether or not the student's learning problems or behavior are enough different from the norm to warrant special assessment becomes pivotal, therefore, in beginning the special education process. The importance of this teacher-made decision is underscored by the evidence in the literature that students who are referred for special education evaluation almost without exception undergo a lengthy case-study assessment (National Association of State Directors of Special Education, 1980; Poland et al., 1982; Weatherly, 1979). Subsequent to evaluation, a majority of referred students are declared eligible to receive special education, typically in resource rooms for students with mild disabilities. Algozzine, Christenson and Ysseldyke (1982) found that 73% were so classified and in Colorado 80% of all students evaluated for special education were positively identified (Shepard & Smith, 1981).

According to Pugach (1985), the day-to-day referral practices of classroom teachers appear to govern, de facto, the operation of special education identification procedures, yet despite the importance of these teacher-made decisions the evidence is that teachers make referrals for special education testing on a highly subjective basis. In a study of 105 teachers, each of whom had recently referred an elementary student for consideration for learning disabilities services, Ysseldyke et al. (1982) found that teachers offered general, highly variable and subjective reasons for initiating referrals. Other studies (Medway, 1979; Ysseldyke et al., 1982) have found that teachers almost always view learning or behavior problems as residing within the student or as a result of home-based difficulties, but not as being due to any shortcoming on the part of the referring teacher.

Because teachers play such an important role in the referral and placement of students in special education and because the evidence is that these decisions are often subjective and based on teachers' opinions rather than on objective observations of the students, teachers' attitudes toward students who are different from the norm become an important object for study. In addition, teachers' general attitudes toward mainstreaming or having direct contact with students known to be disabled also are of significance.

Attitudes of Teachers Toward Mainstreaming

The mainstreaming literature reveals that many regular education teachers are opposed to having exceptional children in their classrooms (Jamieson, 1984; Jones, Gottlieb, Guskin, & Yoshida, 1978). Knoff (1985) asked regular education teachers in two eastern states if they would be willing to accept exceptional students into their classrooms if special education programs were discontinued. Seventy-nine percent of the respondents expressed an unwillingness to accommodate pupils with disabilities. Other researchers, including Hudson et al. (1979), have reported similar findings. These researchers surveyed the attitudes toward mainstreaming of 151 regular education teachers in two midwestern states. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents considered special class placement for exceptional students to be superior to regular class placement. Although 31% of the survey respondents were supportive of mainstreaming, there was moderate agreement that such placement would negatively influence teaching effectiveness and that exceptional pupils were an educational detriment.

The question of whether teacher willingness to mainstream exceptional students is influenced by diagnostic labels also continues to be a significant topic of debate (Gullung & Rucker, 1977; Moore & Fine, 1978). Rosenthal and Jacobsen (1968), in their historic book, *Pygmalion in the Classroom*, suggest that teacher's expectations of students may become self-fulfilling prophecies. Similarly, Dunn (1968), in his classic article on the efficacy of

