Attitudes of Pre-Service Teachers toward Individuals with Exceptionalities and Inclusive Practices: A Baseline Analysis of Students’ Attitudes Enrolled in the Introductory Course

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- “We can legislate physical access and the provision of educational opportunity as we have done, but we cannot legislate acceptance; and it should not be surprising to any informed observer that meaningful implementation of legislative acts will require that we give as much attention to attitudinal barriers as we have given to the elimination of barriers of physical access, barriers of employment access and barriers of education access” (p. vii).
Lit Review: Attitude toward inclusion can be influenced . . .

- Culture (Leyser, Kapperman & Keller, 1994)
- Staff roles (Garvar-Pinhas, & Schnelkin, 1989)
- Experience with inclusion (Garmon, 2005; Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher & Saumell, 1996)
- Teacher gender (Ellins & Porter, 2005)
- Severity of the students’ disabling conditions (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, Cameron, & Tankersley, 2007; Jung, 2007)
- Sensitivity training (Jung, 2007; Pivik, McComas, & LaFamme, 2002; Rice, 2005)
- Pre-service special education courses – number completed (Bradshaw & Mundia, 2006; Burke & Sutherland, 2004)
- Core subjects taught by teachers
  - (i.e., English, Mathematics, Science; Ellins & Porter, 2005; Scruggs, Mastropieri, & McDuffie, 2007)
- Perceived lack of experience and knowledge (Idol, 2006; Pivik et. al, 2002)
- Teachers’ self-confidence (Jung, 2007)
- Support services - availability (Scruggs et. al., 2007)
- Field experiences with students who have disabilities (Burke & Sutherland, 2004; Cook, et.al., 2007; Cameron, & Tankersley, 2007; Ellins & Porter, 2005; Idol, 2006; Jung, 2007; Pivik, et.al., 2002; Rice, 2005; Scruggs et. al., 2007).
Purpose of Research

• Are there significant correlations between student demographic variables (i.e., gender, age), familiarity variables (training, legislation, confidence, and teaching), types of personal experiences with individuals with disabilities (i.e., babysitting, camp counselor), the frequency of these interactions (time and category) and Bloomsburg University pre-service students attitudes toward inclusive practices?

• Are student attitudes of majors enrolled in various disciplines (i.e., early childhood, elementary education, secondary education, special education, non-education programs) similar or significantly different?
Future Research

• Is there a significant difference in students’ attitudes toward inclusive education prior to and after the completion of the course, Introduction to Exceptional Individuals, at Bloomsburg University?

• What reasons or factors are stated in the students’ essays (Personal Belief Statement on Inclusive Practices) to support their opinions and/or attitudes toward inclusion?