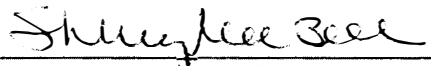


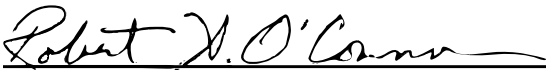
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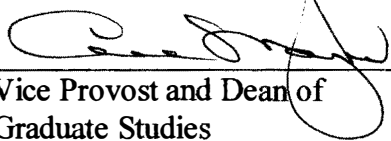

Sherry Mee Bell, Major Professor

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AN EXAMINATION OF GENERAL EDUCATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF AND
SATISFACTION WITH IEP TEAM MEETINGS

A Thesis
Presented for the
Education Specialist Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Nancy Carol Stokes
December 2002

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my husband, Bob Stokes, and my parents, Bob and Judy Wilson. My husband has been my inspiration in my desire to further my career. His motivation and support have allowed me to achieve my goals. My parents have always believed in me and encouraged me to be successful in all that I do.

ABSTRACT

To determine general educators' satisfaction of and satisfaction with the Individualized Education Program (IEP) process, a survey was developed and administered to forty-three general educators in grades 1-12 in a rural county in Northeast Tennessee. The survey was based on a survey used in a larger scale study in Utah. The survey assessed general educators' perceptions of and satisfaction with: their role in the IEP process; their level of preparation; IEP paperwork; roles of others involved in the IEP process; and overall IEP process. Results indicated that general educators in this sample are generally satisfied with the IEP process; further there were no differences in attitudes and satisfaction based on grade level taught, number of years taught, and number of special education courses taken.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Since the passage of the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997, there has been increased focus on the general educator's role in serving special education students. There is a mandate that a general education teacher must participate in the development of an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for a child who receives special education services in the general education curriculum. A general educator is responsible, along with other members of an IEP team, for determining appropriate positive behavioral interventions, strategies, supplementary aides, services, program modifications, and support for school personnel in the initial development, review and revision of the IEP of each special education student (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997, 20 U.S.C. 1400 et seq. [1997]). With IDEA 1997's emphasis on the active participation of IEP team meetings, there is a need to examine general educators' attitudes about the special education process and their new, expanded role.

Definition of Terms

Individualized Education Program (IEP) - A document prepared by the multidisciplinary team or annual review team that specifies a student's level of functioning and needs, the instructional goals and objectives for the student and how they will be evaluated, the nature and extent of special education and related services to be received, and the initiation date and duration of the services (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) - A law passed in 1990 that reauthorized Public Law (P. L.) 94-142 which removed the term handicapped from the law and substituted it with disability. The law continued to uphold the major provisions of P.L. 94-142 and it also accounted for very young children with disabilities and for students who were transitioning from high school. It also added two new categories of disability, autism, and traumatic brain injury to the list of disabilities (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

Inclusion- A professional practice in which students with disabilities are integrated into general education classrooms whether or not they can meet traditional curricular standards and are full members of those classrooms. A special education teacher usually assists the general education teacher to ensure modifications and accommodations are being implemented for each special education student (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) - The setting as close as possible to the general education setting in which a special education student can be educated with non-disabled peers and which meets their needs most appropriately (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

Mainstreaming- A practice of placing students with disabilities in general classroom settings when they can meet traditional academic expectations with minimal assistance, or when those expectations are not relevant (Friend & Bursuck, 1999).

Literature Review

Although the roles of general educators are redefined under the new IDEA, general educators have been teaching special education students in their classrooms for several decades. In the early 1980s, a movement termed the Regular Education Initiative (REI) emerged. This movement gained attention as educators attempted to redefine

instructional methodologies and professional practice leading to more inclusive placements for high-incidence mild disabilities. The goal of the REI was to merge general and special education to create a more unified system of education. The REI was based on the following tenets: “Students are more alike than different, so truly “special” instruction is not required; good teachers can teach all students; all students can be provided with a quality education without reference to traditional special education categories; general education classrooms can manage all students without segregation; and physically separate education was inherently discriminatory and inequitable” (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Mainstreaming and more recently inclusion both refer to the process of integrating students with disabilities into general education classes in order to address the requirement of “least restrictive environment” mandated by the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public law 94-142; now the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; IDEA). In order for either mainstreaming or inclusion to be effective, it is generally agreed that the school personnel who will be most responsible for its success, the general classroom teachers, be receptive to the principles and demands of the process (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). The principles and demands of this process not only include teaching the students with disabilities, but they also include becoming more active in developing these students’ Individual Educational Programs (IEPs).

The IEP is to be developed by a team of people who have knowledge of the student, the curriculum, the availability of district resources, and the instructional implications of the child’s unique needs (Clark, 2000). IDEA defines an IEP team to include the following individuals: the parents of the child; at least one regular education teacher of the child; at least one special education teacher of the child; a representative of

the school system who is knowledgeable about the availability of resources of the school system; an individual who can interpret evaluations; other individuals who have special expertise regarding the child, and if appropriate, the child. Since general educators share in the educational process of certain “included” students, it is imperative that their input be incorporated into an IEP meeting. With the knowledge of the general curriculum, general educators are able to make suggestions about the supplemental aids and services needed to accommodate the student in their classes. They can also assist in developing and carrying out behavior interventions in their classes (Weishaar, 2001). Regulations do not stipulate which general educator of the child is invited to the IEP team meeting. Some may expect the child’s former teacher to attend, while others may expect the classroom teacher who will work with the child in the future to attend (Clark, 2000).

Along with being viewed as necessary members of the IEP team, general educators must assist in planning for and teaching children with disabilities. (Conderman & Nelson, 1999). This responsibility of general educators stems from the requirement of IDEA that general education teachers be included on the IEP team if the special education student is participating or might be participating in general education classes (Knoblauch, 1998). Furthermore, IEPs must now reflect the role of the general education curriculum and outline goals for both special and general education. Annual goals and benchmarks for special education students should be written in relation to what the student is required to complete in the general education curriculum. IEPs must also reference how the disability affects the special education student’s involvement in the general education curriculum. Modifications and accommodations must be addressed by general and special educators (Conderman & Nelson, 1999).

Aside from the fact that general educators' input in IEP meetings is beneficial to the special education student, participation also provides them with an understanding of and appreciation for special education services, as well as for a broader array of mandated procedures. Since participants in the IEP process are exposed to the pre-referral, referral, and evaluation processes in addition to special education and related services, the IEP meeting becomes an opportunity for special and general educators to understand each others' perspectives and to develop skills in collaboration (O'Shea, Stoddard, & O'Shea, 2000; Amner, J. 1982; National Association of State Directors of Special Education Directors, NASDE, 1998).

The need for general educators' perspectives in the IEP process is indisputable and yet much research indicates that their attitudes reflect uncertainties about their role in IEP meetings. Almost twenty years ago, Amner (1984) reported the results of a twenty-five-item questionnaire completed by ninety New England elementary and secondary regular educators. According to the responses made by the teachers, they did not have much participation in the assessment and/or decision-making process that followed their initial referral. The most frequently suggested role for a teacher who referred a student was to provide an IEP team with an awareness of the curriculum and particular problems of the referred student in the mainstreamed setting. Regular educators identified lack of communication with special educators and administrators involved in the mainstreaming process as a serious hindrance to successful integration of handicapped students into regular classrooms. A number of them expressed concern and frustration because they were ignored once their referral form was completed.

Smith (1990) researched the contents of IEPs in the 1980s and concluded that school administrators were not insisting that general education teachers actively participate in the IEP process. This lack of participation may be attributed to the fact that the general educator's role was not clearly defined in the IEP before the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997. Perhaps because they were never required to attend the meetings, the general educators' attitudes suggested that they did not view themselves as necessary participants. When they attended meetings, they did so in a superficial manner. Smith also noted that even when the general classroom teachers were ranked high as necessary participants at the IEP conferences, they were ranked low in contributing to the IEP.

DeNomme (1995) reported similar findings when he conducted a study that focused on strategies for increasing the involvement of junior high regular classroom teachers. He believes that there are two broad categories that need to be examined: (1) administrative and (2) special education experience/training for general education teachers. He reports that general classroom teachers do not realize their expertise and experience is respected and welcomed by special educators. Furthermore, they are not actively encouraged to participate in the decision-making process and the IEP development. He also notes that the general education teachers feel the IEP is not written in a way that implies the special education students' education is a shared responsibility between the regular and special education teachers. According to his research, the general education teachers do not initiate any goals and objectives, but are responsible for exposing the student to the regular curriculum. Furthermore, he reports that most teachers do not attend IEP conferences thus prohibiting them from taking any kind of ownership in the IEP document. DeNomme also reports that general classroom teachers are not

provided with enough time to adequately plan for and evaluate the special education students' progress in addition to their other required duties. Moreover, IEP meetings are often held during the general educators' planning time, which further decreases, the actual amount of time that they have for planning (NASDE, 1998).

In order to distinguish between “reality and dreams” in inclusion practices, Menlove, Hudson, and Suter (2001) compiled results of a Utah State Office of Education survey which examined satisfaction levels of general educators who work with special education teachers in the general classroom setting. One major consensus of the study was that general education teachers consistently reported lower levels of satisfaction with IEP development than all of the members of the IEP team combined. The other members usually include a special education teacher, parent, principal, local educational agent (LEA) and anyone else who has had contact with a student such as a psychologist or an occupational/physical/speech therapist. Furthermore, satisfaction levels of general educators decreased as student age increased. There were four major categories of concern to general education teachers: (1) team connection issues, (2) time issues, (3) preparation time, and (4) training issues. First, general educators do not feel connected to the IEP team or the IEP development process. Sometimes team members had already made decisions and asked them to sign IEP forms after the meeting or not at all. The IEP team members did not address their concerns and it was not considered “their” meeting. The general education teachers preferred to meet during the day but felt frustrated because they have such little time. They also expressed a lack of prior knowledge of issues concerning the student before the meeting. General educators also expressed a need for training in understanding and valuing the IEP process. This need for extensive

inservice training in the IEP process is echoed through at least two decades of research. Training for general education teachers who instruct students with disabilities proves to be just as a substantial need now as it did in the early 1980s (Amner, 1982, 1984; DeNomme, 1995; Katsiyannis, Ellenburg, & Acton 2000; Knoblauch, 1998; NASDE, 1998). Currently there is a need to assess general educators' attitudes about the various parts of the IEP process in order to determine specific deficit areas of concern. Once the specific deficit areas are identified, then training for general educators can be implemented either in pre-service or in-service teacher training.

Administrators and special educators need to work collaboratively to promote positive attitudes of general educators' involvement in the IEP process. Several researchers have proposed practices that may allow general educators to view their roles as necessary and even useful in an IEP meeting. In order to ensure attendance in the IEP meeting, general educators' schedules and time constraints must be considered. Amner (1984) reported that in elementary schools, teachers' schedules and meetings must be coordinated. At the secondary level, teachers who express the greatest concern and/or whose teaching most directly affects student performance can be scheduled to participate in the IEP process. These teachers may be designated as disseminators of information to other teachers. Accordingly, the NASDE (1998) reports that guidance counselors or department heads at the secondary level can gather all information from all the students' teachers in advance and represent all interests. The general education staff can be rotated in order to facilitate IEP involvement and floating substitutes can be used with written input. Menlove et al. (2001) also reports that administrators and special educators need to consider the general educators' schedules and have meetings before and after school in

their classrooms where the general educators feel more comfortable. General educators can also be provided with release time for planning for the IEP meeting. Special education assistants can be shared with general educators so they do not feel overwhelmed. Implementation of these suggestions prevent taking away necessary planning time from general education teachers, and furthermore making the IEP team meetings seem more desirable to them.

DeNomme (1995) suggests that administrators should develop a school-based plan outlining the responsibilities of the general classroom teacher, special educator, parents, as well as the special education student. Administrators should require the general educator to write and list on the annual IEP, the goals and objectives that the student will achieve in the regular classroom (DeNomme, 1995; Menlove et al., 2001; NASDE, 1998). By making these goals realistic to both the general education teacher and the students, they both could see progress was being made in the classroom. These two practices would ensure that general educators have a role that is unique to their specific knowledge of the curriculum and thus give them more ownership of the IEP.

To ensure successful inclusion of the general educator in the IEP meeting improved communication between the special educator and the general educator must be ongoing (NASDE, 1998; Wood, 1998; Menlove et al., 2001). The special educator can initiate this in various ways. Menlove et al. (2001) suggest using Vermont's family centered IEP process. In this procedure, a blank IEP planning form is sent with the notice to attend the meeting to prepare ahead of time. This allows general educators to view the options that are provided to a special education student and to write down any questions or concerns they may have regarding the student's expected role in their classrooms.

Weishaar (2001) states that the general educators know their curriculum better than anyone does and they should speak up about what might and might not work in their classrooms. They should review the IEP of students and become knowledgeable about accommodations, supplementary aids, and services needed. If they are not satisfied with the contents of the IEP and are not having success with a special education student in their classroom, they should request a meeting to discuss their concerns.

In addition to increased communication between special and general educators, administrators need to train the general education teachers who will be teaching special education students. Some areas of need include general educators' roles in the IEP development process, IEP terms and forms, charting student progress on goals and objectives, and how to implement programs and plans in the regular classroom (Menlove et al., 2001). If the general educators are expected to teach special education students in their classrooms, and attend IEP meetings where they will be contributing members, they should be knowledgeable about special education laws and terminology.

General education teachers are becoming a more crucial part of the special education curriculum. Before the passage of IDEA in 1997, they were considered to be optional members of the IEP team meeting. With the current emphasis that students be educated in their least restrictive environment, general educators are now necessary members of an IEP team meeting. Faced with the ever-changing plethora of special education laws and practices, special educators and administrators need to be cognizant of the general educator's skills and knowledge about the general education curriculum; moreover, they need to use those skills to enhance the delivery of services to meet the unique needs of the special education student.

Statement of Problem

General educators' attitudes and their roles in the IEP team process have recently come under scrutiny as more special education students are placed in general education classrooms. This reality coupled with the reauthorization of Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) in 1997, which requires a general education teacher to attend an IEP team meeting, has led school personnel to take more interest in how general educators feel about their own participation in IEP team meetings. Some of the problems facing general educators include limited participation in the initial referral of a student, lack of communication with special educators, and lack of training for the IEP process. Furthermore, they do not have adequate time to plan for and evaluate the special education students' progress in the general curriculum. As implementation of IDEA 1997 enters its fifth year, there is a need to determine attitudes of general education toward the IEP process. Determining general educator attitudes about how they perceive their roles, how prepared they feel, and how important their input is during the IEP process will provide useful information for teacher preparations via pre-service and in-service experiences. This information is needed to implement practices so special education students will reap the benefits of a truly cohesive team.

Research Questions

1. What are general educators' attitudes concerning the IEP process?

Specifically, to what extent do general educators perceive that meetings are conveniently scheduled and that enough time is allowed? Do general educators report understanding of the purpose of the meetings?

2. What are general educators' attitudes concerning their role in the IEP team meeting?

Specifically, to what extent do general educators report that they prepare for IEP meetings? Do general educators feel prepared and do they feel they have received adequate training for their role in IEP meetings? Do general educators feel their input in the IEP meeting is valued?

3. What are general educators' attitudes about the paperwork used in the IEP meeting?

Specifically, to what extent do general educators report an understanding of the terms and forms used in IEP meetings? Do general educators believe the IEP paperwork contributes to the IEP process?

4. What are general educators' attitudes about the roles of others involved in the IEP process?

Specifically, to what extent do general educators report satisfaction with the role carried out by special educators in IEP meetings? Do general educators report that parent and student (when appropriate) input was used in the IEP process? Do general educators report that IEP decisions were made collaboratively?

5. What are general educators' attitudes about overall IEP development and the process?

Specifically, to what extent do general educators report that IEPs enhance student learning? Do general educators report satisfaction with the IEP process?

6. Is there a difference in general educators' attitudes toward the IEP process and IEP meetings based on a) grade level taught, b) number of years' teaching experience, and c) previous coursework in special education?

CHAPTER 2

Method

A survey, *General Education Teachers' Satisfaction with the IEP (M) Team Meeting*, was developed to assess general educators' attitudes and perceptions about the IEP process. The survey consisted of seventeen statements designed to assess attitudes regarding general educators' roles in the IEP process. Items on the survey were taken largely from a study conducted as part of a Utah State Office of Education survey, which examined satisfaction levels of elementary, middle, and high school general education teachers (Menlove et al., 2001). The survey was revised slightly to reflect issues suggested in the relevant literature (e.g., "other IEP team members" was changed to parents for question 14 – "In my opinion, parents' input is used in making IEP decisions"). See the Appendix for a complete copy of the survey. Three demographic items (grade level taught, number of years taught, and number of special education courses taken) were followed by fourteen Likert-scale items with the following response choices: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Responses were coded from 4 to 1 so that a higher score indicates a more positive response. An alpha coefficient of .95 provides strong support for the internal consistency of the survey.

The survey was distributed to fifty-five general education teachers who attended IEP team meetings during the past two years. The surveys were left in the teachers' mailboxes in their respective schools with a brief letter requesting completion and return of the survey to the researcher. Anonymity was maintained. Ten of the recipients taught grades 1-4, twenty-five taught grades 5-8, and twenty taught grades 9-12 in a rural county in East Tennessee. The schools from which the samples were drawn receive Title I

funding; the population of the schools is 99% Caucasian. The population is geographically isolated from any urban area and the area is somewhat socio-economically depressed. The surveys were distributed randomly to teachers in each of the schools; 43 were completed and returned for a return rate of 78%.

CHAPTER 3

Results

Demographic information describing the respondents is presented in Tables 1 and 2. Specifically, Table 1 provides information about the grade levels (i.e., 1-8 and 9-12) taught by general educators responding to the survey. Table 2 provides information about years' teaching experience and number of special education courses taken by respondents.

All grade levels responded to the survey. Twenty-six elementary educators responded for a total of 60.5% and seventeen high school educators responded for a total of 39.5 %. Twenty-four respondents taught 2-15 years for a total of 55.8%. Nineteen respondents taught 16-33 years for a total of 44.2%. The mean number of years taught by the respondents was 13.86 with a standard deviation of 9.753. The number of special education courses taken ranged from 0 to 7 with a mean of 1.40 and a standard deviation of 2.177.

Results of the 43 completed surveys were tallied and are presented descriptively (i.e., means and standard deviations for each Likert-scale item) in Table 3. Data describing general educators' satisfaction with the IEP team meeting process indicate relatively high scores in each area assessed including attitudes toward the IEP process, role in the IEP meeting, attitudes about the paperwork, attitudes about the roles of others, and attitudes about overall IEP development and process. Item means ranged from 2.77 (question 8- "I have received adequate training for my role as an IEP team member") to

Table 1. *Grade Level Taught by General Educators Responding to General Education Teachers' Satisfaction With the IEP (M)-Team Meeting Survey.*

<i>Grade Level</i>	<i>Frequency of Responses</i>	<i>Percent</i>
1-8	26	60.5
9-12	17	39.5
Total	43	100.0

Table 2. *Descriptive Information about General Educators Responding to General Education Teachers' Satisfaction With the IEP (M)-Team Meeting Survey.*

<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
1. How many years taught?	2	33	13.86	9.753
2. How many Special Education courses taken?	0	7	1.40	2.177

Table 3. *Descriptive Statistics on the General Education Teachers' Satisfaction with the IEP (M)- Team Meeting Survey.*

<i>Research Question</i>	<i>Survey Question</i>	<i>Number of responses</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
1. What are General educators' attitudes toward the IEP process?	3	43	3.21	.709
	4	43	3.33	.644
	5	43	3.42	.499
2. What are General educators' attitudes concerning their role in the IEP meeting?	6	43	3.07	.799
	7	43	3.26	.621
	8	43	2.77	.895
	11	43	3.16	.615
3. What are General educators' attitudes about the IEP paperwork?	9	43	3.09	.781
	10	41	3.15	.691
4. What are General educators' attitudes about the roles of others involved in the IEP process?	12	37	3.27	.560
	14	41	3.32	.521
	15	43	3.28	.549
5. What are General educators' attitudes about overall IEP development and the process?	13	43	3.16	.721
	16	43	3.28	.549

Table 4. *Means and Standard Deviations on the **General Education Teachers'** Satisfaction With the IEP (M)-Team Meeting Survey (Total Score) Based on Years and Grade Level Taught and Number of Special Education Courses Taken*

<i>Survey Subgroup</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard Deviation</i>
Years Taught	2-15	24	44.8	7.8
	16-33	19	43.0	8.0
Grade Level	1-8	26	43.8	8.1
	9-12	17	44.3	7.7
Number of Special Ed. Courses Taken	0	20	43.7	6.5
	1 or more	23	44.2	9.0

3.42 (question 5-“The purpose of the meeting is clear to me”) on the 4-point Likert-scale.

In Table 4, means and standard deviations on the surveys for each of the demographic variables are presented. There were twenty-four respondents who had taught 2-15 years and nineteen respondents who had taught 16-33 years. There were twenty-six respondents who taught in grade levels 1-8 and seventeen respondents who taught in grade levels 9-12. There were twenty respondents who had not taken any special education courses and twenty-three who had taken one or more courses. The means of each of these groups ranged from 43.0 to 44.8 with standard deviations ranging from 6.5 to 9.0.

A 3 x 2 factorial analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to determine if there are any significant differences on the survey total score based on grade level, number of years teaching experience, and number of special education courses taken by the respondents. In Table 5, results of the ANOVA are presented.

There were no significant differences in the survey total score based on grade level, years' teaching experience, or previous special education coursework.

Table 5. *Analysis of Variance for General Education Teachers' Satisfaction With the IEP (M)-Team Meeting Survey Total Score.*

<i>Source</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Mean Square</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance</i>
Years Taught (YT)	1	8.238	.123	.728
Grade Level (GL)	1	5.058	.000	.993
Number of Sp. Ed. Courses (N SPED)	1	4.091	.000	.998
YT X GL	1	2.321	.035	.853
YT X N SPED	1	.578	.009	.926
GL X N SPED	1	161.969	2.423	.129
YT X GL X SPED	1	49.759	.744	.394
Error	35			
Total	43			
Corrected Total	42			

CHAPTER 4

Discussion

Results of this study indicate that the attitudes of the general educators' in this sample concerning the IEP process are positive. The general educators surveyed report that IEP meetings are conveniently scheduled and enough time is allowed for them. General educators also report understanding the purpose of the meeting. These results are important for special educators and administrators since IEP meetings have to fit the schedule of so many individuals. If general educators realize a need for the meeting, and the meeting is scheduled with their needs in mind, then they are more likely to take an active role in it.

The general educators are less satisfied with their perceived roles as IEP team members. Although they report feeling prepared for IEP meetings and report feeling like their input in the IEP meetings is valued, they report feeling less like they have received adequate training for their role in IEP meetings. General educators may feel prepared to share their input on the student's progress in the classroom, but they may lack training in special education issues that may hinder their understanding of why and how a student learns in a particular way.

The general educators surveyed report a good understanding of the terms and forms used in IEP meetings. They reported that the paperwork contributes to the IEP process. It is important that general educators understand why various forms are used in the IEP process for each individual student. If general educators can clearly see how a particular form relates to a special education student's disability, then they are more likely to abide by it.

The general educators reported general satisfaction with the role carried out by special educators in IEP meetings. They also reported that parents' and students' input in meetings is used in the IEP process. IEP decisions are viewed as being made collaboratively by most general educators in this sample. An awareness of the general educators' attitudes about the roles of special education teachers, parents, and children in an IEP meeting is important. It is imperative that general educators do not feel like they are on one side of an issue, and special education teachers along with parents are on the other side.

Somewhat surprisingly, there are no significant differences in the survey total scores based on the three demographic variables: grade levels taught, years taught, and number of special education courses taken. In contrast to the literature review, specifically the Utah State Office of Education (Menlove et al., 2001) survey that also examined satisfaction levels of general educators, the general educators who responded in this survey did not report decreased satisfaction levels as student age increased. The general educators that responded to this survey also reported they understood the purpose of the IEP team meeting. In the Utah State Office of Education survey, the respondents reported they did not have any prior knowledge of issues concerning a student prior to a meeting. General educators in the current sample reported less satisfaction with the training they have received for IEP team meetings. This need for training in the IEP process has been an issue for general educators as reported in at least two decades of research (Amner, 1982, 1984; DeNomme, 1995; Katsiyannis et al., 2000; Knoblauch, 1998, NASDE, 1998.) Training for general educators seems to be needed now just as much as it was twenty years ago. Extensive training for general educators in special

education issues needs to be addressed in both a collaborative effort by school administrators and special education teachers as well as pre-service teacher education courses. If more in-depth training on special education issues can occur in both pre-service and in-service settings, then general educators are more likely to understand the expectations of their roles in the IEP process.

Conclusions and generalizations from this study are limited by the relatively small sample size. In addition, the population from which the sample is drawn is rather homogeneous, specifically, rural and Caucasian. Results may have been influenced by the circumstances under which the survey was administered (i.e., by a special education teacher within the system) even though anonymity was maintained. Differences in the sample population may have been masked by restriction of range; there was generally little variability in the mean scores on most items of the survey. Further research needs to be conducted with a larger, more diverse population in major metropolitan areas and other parts of the state and nation.

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APPENDIX

General Education Teachers' Satisfaction With the IEP (M)-Team meeting

Please circle the grade level(s) that you teach and the appropriate responses that follow, reflecting on the IEP team meetings in which you have participated in the past two years.

K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

SA = Strongly agree
A = Agree
D = Disagree
SD = Strongly disagree

1. How many years have you taught? _____
2. How many courses have you taken in special education? _____
3. IEP meeting are held at a convenient time & location. SA A D SD
4. There is enough time allowed for the IEP meeting. SA A D SD
5. The purpose of the meetings is clear to me. SA A D SD
6. I prepare for my role at the IEP team meetings ahead of time. SA A D SD
7. I feel prepared to carry out my role as an IEP team member. SA A D SD
8. I have received adequate training for my role as an IEP team member. SA A D SD
9. I understand the terms and forms used in IEP team meetings. SA A D SD
10. The IEP paperwork is an important part of the IEP process. SA A D SD
11. I feel that other team members value my input. SA A D SD
12. In transition IEP meetings, the student's input is valued. SA A D SD
13. In my opinion, IEPs enhance student learning. SA A D SD
14. In my opinion, parents' input is used in making IEP decisions. SA A D SD
15. IEP decisions made are discussed and decided together. SA A D SD
16. Overall, I feel satisfied with my role in the IEP process. SA A D SD

Please add any additional comments at the bottom of the page.

VITA

Nancy Carol Stokes was born in Pineville, Kentucky on January 7, 1972. She was raised there and attended Lone Jack Elementary School and graduated from Bell County High School in 1990. She attended Cumberland College in Williamsburg, Kentucky and received a B.S. in elementary education (Pre K-4) in 1994, and a M.A. in elementary education along with a K-12 special education endorsement in August 1999.

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