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## The Relationship Between Elementary Teacher Personality Types and Their Attitudes Toward Elementary Age Students with Learning Disabilities

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The Relationship Between Elementary Teacher  
Personality Types and Their Attitudes Toward  
Elementary Age Students With Learning Disabilities

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June 13, 1995

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Running head: PERSONALITY TYPES

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between regular elementary teacher personality types and their attitudes toward elementary age students with learning disabilities. Subjects (n=50) were regular elementary teachers grades two through six from five randomly sampled elementary schools in Virginia. 62% (n=31) of the questionnaires were returned. The attitudes of the selected elementary teachers were determined by a self-developed survey questionnaire using a Likert Scale. Personality types were determined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). A Pearson r was used to analyze the data obtained from the Likert Scale and the MBTI at the significance level of .05. A significant negative relationship between the teacher personality type of NT and their negative attitudes towards students with learning disabilities was evident. However, no significant relationship between teacher personality types of ST, SF, and NF and their attitudes towards students with learning disabilities was found.

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### Introduction.

Each year more and more children in the United States are being identified for special education services as provided for by the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 1991 formerly known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. The most dramatic increase in numbers of students being served is in the defined area of Learning Disabilities. According to the Fourteenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (United States Department of Education, 1992), 49% of all students with disabilities are identified as having specific learning disabilities. In 1992, the number of students classified as having specific learning disabilities was 2,144,377. These numbers indicate a 170% increase since 1976. Between the school years of 1989-1990 and 1990-1991, the number of children identified with specific learning disabilities increased 4.0% or approximately 81,000 individuals. The increase in numbers is overwhelming. These increases in numbers are a result of the "increasing number of referrals by regular education professionals of "difficult to teach children" for assessment and placement in special education"(p.48).

Once the students are identified as requiring special education services, the Individualized Education Program

(IEP) usually specifies that they receive much of their education in the regular school environment. This philosophy has not changed significantly since 1976. The Annual Report To Congress (Department of Education, 1992) indicated that as of 1989-1990, 77% of students with specific learning disabilities (SLD) received their educational services in both the regular classroom and a special education classroom. In 1989-1990, placement for SLD students were as follows: 20.7% in the regular class, 56.1% in resource rooms, and 21.7% in self-contained classrooms. These figures represent only a .2% increase from the 1977-78 school year of students with SLD served in regular schools. However, figures for school years 1985-1990 indicate a -1.0% decrease in students being served in the regular classroom. This decrease, although small, is surprising considering the special education movement to integrate students with disabilities into the regular classroom. Only a small percentage of students with SLD (1.5%) are being educated in separate schools. Therefore 98.5% of all students with SLD are in a regular school. They also spend a minimum of 40% of their educational day, depending on their IEP, integrated in the regular classroom.

This integration obviously means that the students are in contact with the regular classroom teacher. Questions arise as to the attitudes of the classroom teacher about

these students and their integration into the regular classroom. Do they behave differently towards these students? Do they feel that it is their responsibility to educate them? Do the teachers possess enough knowledge about learning disabilities to instruct these students properly? Do they have different performance expectations for students with learning disabilities? It is important to understand and to acknowledge the attitudes of regular classroom teachers toward students with learning disabilities. Brophy and Good(1970) stated that research on the processes by which teachers communicate differential performance expectations to different children may lead to self-fulfilling prophecies. Students with SLD may realize that the teacher expects less from them and act accordingly. Improvements in behavior and achievement are minimal. Thus, the regular education teacher has a tremendous impact on the social adjustment and academic achievement of students with learning disabilities.

Horne (1982) stated that research has supported the fact that teachers have negative attitudes toward all exceptional groups and prefer not having them integrated in the regular classroom. He suggested that projects to change or alter teachers' attitudes are of utmost importance. Only by having teachers recognize their own bias toward students with SLD can positive attitudes begin to appear.

If the statistics for students with SLD continue to

increase in numbers in the upcoming years, it will be imperative that regular elementary teachers assume a more responsible role for insuring that these children are receiving a proper education in the "least restrictive environment". If teacher attitudes and behaviors are in fact negative, increased emphasis should be directed toward improving teacher attitudes. Regular education teachers play an important role in the lives of children with specific learning disabilities.

Research has focused on the attitudes of teachers toward elementary students for many years. Silberman (1969) concluded in his study of third-grade teachers that teachers hold four major attitudes toward their students. These attitudes can be expressed in groups as 1) attachment, 2) concern, 3) indifference, and 4) rejection. The observed teacher behavior in the study focused on the three areas of 1) contact, 2) positive and negative evaluation, and 3) acquiescence. The results indicated that teacher attitudes about specific children have a significant impact on their behavior toward those children. The Attachment groups received more positive evaluation and percentage of acquiescent replies than any other group. The Concern group received more amounts of each behavior, but most significantly received more frequent contact. The Indifference group received less contact than any other group

and less positive evaluation. The Rejection group received greater amounts of contacts; however, they received greater amounts of negative evaluation and less amounts of acquiescence.

Brophy and Good (1970) conducted an observational study of the dyadic contacts between teachers and individual students in first grade classrooms. The results of the study indicated through a classroom interaction analysis that teachers expected better performance from students for whom they had high expectations and were more accepting of poor performance from students for whom they had low expectations. Students with low teacher expectations also received less praise, more behavioral criticisms, less rephrase of questions, less persistence in eliciting responses, more negative contact, and less prompting. The students with high teacher expectations were obviously the favored group.

In an extension of Silberman's work (1969), Brophy and Good (1972), executed a study which used the same identified groups of students - Attachment, Concern, Indifference and Rejection. They concluded that the Attachment group consisted of high achieving students; whereas, the other three groups were a combination of low and average achievers with the concern and rejection groups being mainly low achievers. Thus, since the groups were divided into categories of achievement, the teachers' attitudes and

behavior towards these subgroups could be observed and identified. The results of this study were consistent with Silberman's work in almost every regard. Furthermore, since the observation system used by them was more elaborate, more precise details of teacher behavior were evident. The Attachment group received more praise for academic work and less criticism than other groups. They received more reading turns, a greater percentage of process questions, and less process feedback. The Concern group received more private, teacher initiated contact and were more carefully monitored than other groups. They also received more opportunity for answering questions. The Indifference group who appeared to be passive children held no level of particular concern by the teachers. Due to their lack of participation, the students received less contact and fewer opportunities to respond. They basically avoided the teachers and the teachers avoided them. The students in the Rejection group were the most active in the class and had more contact with the teachers in the areas of procedure, classwork, and behavior. They received fewer response questions, fewer reading turns, less feedback, and were brushed aside as quickly as possible, although they made the most demands on the teacher. In contradiction to Silberman's study (1969), the rejected students did not receive more contact and when contact was received it was usually negative criticism. Good

(1980) in an extension of his previous work with Brophy expanded and confirmed earlier findings to indicate results that show that low achievers are seated further away from the teacher's desk, criticized more frequently for incorrect responses, praised less frequently for correct responses, and rewarded for inappropriate or incorrect responses.

#### Attitudes and Labels.

With the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, a large percentage of the low achievers within the education system became identified as having specific learning disabilities. The "concern" and "rejection" students began to receive support from federal, state, and local governments. They now had a name -a label-Specific Learning Disabled. Combs (1967) addressed the topics of labels well before the passage of PL 94 - 142:

"significant members of the environment may respond in accordance with attitudes toward a label, rather than factual information, and understanding. If these attitudes are negative, the behavior of others toward the child may serve to foster and extend the exceptionality rather than to help the child adjust"(p.399).

Shotel, Iano, and McGettigan (1972) researched the effects of labels on teacher attitudes or bias towards students with disabilities. They found that teachers preferred students with learning disabilities over students

with emotional disturbance, and least preferred students with educable mental retardation. Similarly, Abrams and Kodera (1979) found that the students with learning disabilities were ranked more favorably than those with emotional disturbances. In a study in which undergraduate students ranked the acceptance level of disabilities, learning disabilities was viewed more favorably than other special education categories such as blindness, speech defects, and mental retardation. Abrams concluded that learning disabilities is believed to be more associated with a medical model than other disabilities and produces more credibility and ease in the attitudes of teachers. Therefore, Abrams concluded the label "learning disabled" evokes different, yet still negative, attitudes from other functional handicaps.

Fogel (1983) concluded in a research project which involved teachers watching videos of children with special education labels of LD, EMR, ED, and normal that labels did not bias behavioral observations or grading of academic work, but biased teachers' checklist scores.

Dukes (1989) expanded on the study by Fogel (1983) to investigate whether classroom context clues on video tape showing an LD student and a nonhandicapped student would increase teacher evaluation bias. Results suggested that teachers may be more influenced by a child's behavior in the classroom than by the label of learning disabled. However,



results did indicate that teachers do hold initial biases about the behavior of children with learning disabilities.

Chapman (1979) conducted a research study whose purpose was to determine whether students with learning disabilities encountered different interactions from their regular classroom teachers than children achieving at low, medium, or high levels. Results indicated that children with learning disabilities received more teacher criticism in situations involving classroom procedures and behavior. They concluded that regular classroom teachers may not present the best overall environment to meet the individualized needs of the students with learning disabilities due to the teacher's inability to manage the students' behavior.

Gargiulo (1983) conducted a study which compared the attitudes of forty-eight pre- and in- service regular and special educators toward teaching special needs students. Special education was defined as Learning Disabled, Emotionally Disturbed, Educable Mentally Handicapped, Trainable Mentally Handicapped, and Hearing Impaired. A self-report questionnaire was used to assess attitudes. Also, attitudes were assessed physiologically via changes in pulse and skin temperature as subjects viewed pictures an/or heard case studies of potential students for their classroom. The self-report contradicted the physical evidence. Results indicated that subjects perceived teaching the handicapped

significantly more stressful than teaching "normal" students.

Siperstein and Goding (1985) assessed teachers' differential behavior toward isolated, rejected learning disabled children and toward popular non-learning disabled children in grades 4-6. Results from the study indicated that teachers have more contact with the isolated child which confirms previous research pertaining to low achievers (Brophy and Good, 1972) and contradicted the work of Silberman (1969). Other findings showed that teacher responses were triggered more by the label learning disabled than the children's actual behavior which did not appear to be different from the other children. According to Siperstein and Goding (1985), teachers responded with greater frequency of corrective behavior and used more negative verbal and nonverbal behavior with students with learning disabilities.

Alves and Gottlieb (1986) conducted a study that identified and characterized teacher dyadic interactions with mainstreamed handicapped students and compared them to those of nonhandicapped students. This study expanded on the work of Brophy and Good (1970,1972). The frequency of six aspects of dyadic interactions was considered to include: academic questions, extended feedback, praise, criticism, work interactions, and total amount of interactions regardless of nature. Overall results indicated that "differential teacher treatment of handicapped and nonhandicapped students results

in the former being provided with a less stimulating learning environment"(p.82). Also noted were fewer opportunities for students with learning disabilities to have actual involvement in academic activities.

Contrary to previous research, Parker and Gottlieb (1989) found that low achievers were treated differently than average achievers or students with learning disabilities. The data suggested that children with learning disabilities who were integrated did not receive less academically oriented interactions from their teachers. McIntosh and Vaughan (1993) studied the behaviors of teachers toward students with learning disabilities in grades K-12. Results indicated no significantly different behaviors towards students with learning disabilities and regular students. More instructional modifications for students with learning disabilities were found at the elementary level. Most notably, there were no differences in negative comments toward both groups of students at the elementary level.

### Mainstreaming

Studies have attempted to examine the relationships between teacher attitudes towards mainstreaming based on variables such as sex, age, level of education, years of

teaching experience, and number of courses in special education with little conclusive results (Harasymiw and Horne, 1975). Panda and Bartel (1972) analyzed and compared perceptions of exceptionalities by teachers in relation to training and experience found that the level of education did not alter attitudes - the majority of which were negative towards students with learning disabilities. Likewise, Larrivee and Cook (1979) suggested that attitudes toward integration of special needs children are not influenced by institutional variables such as classroom size, type of school, or school size. Teacher perception of being able to successfully teach students with learning disabilities appeared to be the most important factor in relation to the attitudes of the teachers toward the identified children.

#### Education and Experience

Johnson and Cartwright (1979) investigated whether education and experience with the handicapped would improve prospective teachers' attitudes toward integration of students. The results indicated that knowledge and experience as separate factors did not alter attitudes but a combination of direct experience and knowledge did significantly improve attitudes toward handicapped students. Horne (1982) strongly suggested that "attitude modification"

programs for teachers of students with learning disabilities should be a top priority for the educational system. He states, "Positive attitude shifts that facilitate a change in behaviors will occur only if teachers are presented with training experiences that are relevant to the task at hand"(p.82). Harasymiw and Horne (1976) conducted an experimental study in which results indicated that specialists working with teachers of students with disabilities may reduce the amount of anxiety and increase positive attitudes toward the integration of students with disabilities.

Siperstein and Goding (1985) conducted an awareness program in a study and found that the program did not reduce the quantity of interactions between the teachers and students with learning disabilities. However, the negative quality of the interactions was significantly reduced. Furthermore, Alderman (1985) surveyed prominent professionals in the field of education for students with learning disabilities to assess their views about the most important concerns facing the field of learning disabilities in the next decade. The one overriding concern expressed was the need for training and education of all professionals who have any contact at all with individuals with learning disabilities.

Personality Types

Literature available on the personality types of teachers is limited. The study of individual personality types can be traced to the precedent work of Jung (1923). Jung's theory has provided the framework for understanding the complex system of individual similarities and differences. Briggs and her daughter Myers (1985) elaborated on his theories and are most noted for their development of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI is the most simple, most widely-used, and most reliable instrument available today to determine a person's Jungian type (Myers, 1980).

According to Myers, there are sixteen specific personality types that surface as a result of testing. Most researchers limit their studies to four groups to include 1) ST-Sensing plus Thinking, 2) SF-Sensing plus Feeling, 3) NF-Intuition plus Feeling and 4) NT-Intuition plus Thinking. Sensing plus Thinking people are primarily interested in facts since facts can be collected and verified directly by the senses. They make decisions on these facts by impersonal analysis because the kind of judgement they trust is thinking, with its step by step process of reasoning from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion. Sensing plus Feeling people are also interested in facts, but make their

decisions with personal warmth, because the kind of judgement they trust is feeling, with its power to weigh how much things matter to themselves and others. Intuition plus Feeling people make decisions with the same personal warmth as SF people. However, since they prefer intuition, their interest is not in facts but in possibilities, such as new projects, things that have not happened yet but might be made to happen, new truths that are not yet known but might be found out, or, above all, new possibilities for people. Intuition plus Thinking people share the intent in possibilities. However, since they prefer thinking, they approach these possibilities with impersonal analysis. Often the possibilities they choose are theoretical or technical with the human element more or less ignored. There are other combinations used in different individual research studies.

Furthermore, other qualities such as Introversion and Extraversion play a part in personality types. Each type is characterized by the "individual's interests, values, needs, habits of mind, and surface traits that naturally result from the combination"(p.4). Also woven into the complexity of personality types are the differences in people that result from the way they like to Perceive and Judge in order to make decisions.

### Personality Types of Educators

According to Myers (1980), specific personality types have been found to be prominent in particular occupations. Educators tend to be SF-Sensing plus Feeling personality types. The majority of educators are warm, sympathetic, enjoy facts, and like to provide a service to people. Austin and Cage (1980) investigated student teachers and cooperating teachers in relation to their attitudes and student teacher evaluations using the MBTI. Results indicated that NF-Intuitive plus Feeling in both groups had significantly more positive attitudes toward teaching than any other subgroup. They also received the highest student teacher ratings.

Mertz and McNeely(1992) used the MBTI to assess the cognitive constructs about teaching in fifty-two beginning teachers. Particular reference was made to perception and preference. Data supplied in the results indicated that 49% of the subjects were SJ-Sensing plus Judging. In comparison, the national norms statistics reported by Mertz and McNeely indicated that 38% of educators are SJ and 38% are SP-Sensing/Perceptive. These figures indicate that educators tend to possess traits that identify them as "sensing" types. Reckinger (1980) in a speech given at Indiana University suggested that the study of teacher personality types in relation to students' personality types and learning styles



are a crucial implication for education in the next decade. In particular, she stressed the importance of evaluating the relationship between teacher personality types and teacher attitudes about special needs students such as those identified as Specific Learning Disabled.

The literature strongly suggests that regular elementary teachers have negative attitudes toward elementary age children with specific learning disabilities. Regular elementary teacher attitudes are evident in their public and instructional behavior as well as their opinions on the integration of students with learning disabilities in their classrooms. Furthermore, research indicates that certain personality types are more suited for particular occupations (Myers-Briggs, 1980). The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between regular elementary teacher personality types and their attitudes about elementary age students with learning disabilities. More specifically, it was hypothesized that there is a relationship between regular elementary teachers with the personality types of Intuition plus Thinking (NT) or Sensing plus Thinking (ST) and attitudes towards elementary age students with learning disabilities.

Definitions of Terms

Attitude-- The term attitude indicates a predisposition to think, perceive, and behave toward a cognitive object (Kerlinger, 1964).

Negative Attitude-- The term negative attitude refers to a regular elementary teacher's predisposition to think, perceive, or behave toward a student with learning disabilities in a manner inconsistent with educational research and findings.

Positive Attitude--The term positive attitude refers to a regular elementary teacher's predisposition to think, perceive, or behave toward a student with learning disabilities in a manner consistent with educational research and findings.

Personality Types-- The term personality types refers to the personality traits of an individual that involve specific motivational, temperamental, or emotional attributes that contribute to the total personality.(Myers,1980).

Feeling--One of two judging functions that makes decisions by ordering choices in terms of personal values(Myers,1985).

Intuition--One of two perceptive functions that attends to meanings, relationships, symbols, and possibilities (Myers,1985).

Sensing--One of two perceptive functions that attends to experiences available to the senses(Myers, 1985).

Thinking--One of the two judging functions that makes decisions by ordering choices in terms of cause-effect or impersonal logical analysis(Myers, 1985).

## Methods

### Subjects and Procedures

Subjects(SS) of this study were fifty randomly selected regular elementary teachers from five randomly selected school divisions in the state of Virginia. During the 1994-1995 school year, fifty survey questionnaires to include the self-developed attitude surveys and the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator were mailed directly to the Supervisor of Special Education Services in order to obtain a sample. Each Supervisor was asked to distribute a copy of each instrument to a random sample of ten regular elementary teachers in their school system comprised of two teachers at each grade level of second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade. The teachers were asked to return the package directly to the researcher in a provided postage-paid envelope within a two-week period.

### Instruments

The attitudes of the selected elementary teachers towards beliefs about learning and behavior of students with learning disabilities were determined by a self-developed survey questionnaire using a Likert Scale. The questionnaire was pilot-tested among fifteen regular elementary teachers and college faculty. The Likert Scale consisted of six

response categories with assigned values to include 0)No Opinion, 1)Strongly Agree, 2)Agree, 3)Neutral, 4)Disagree, and 5)Strongly Disagree. A score of 34 and above indicates positive attitudes toward students with learning disabilities and a score of 33 and below indicates negative attitudes toward students with learning disabilities. Certain survey questions were included for purposes other than the scope of this research study and were not included in the total attitude scores. Survey responses included in the total attitude scoring included the following item numbers: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, and 16 for a total of 11 survey items.

Personality types were determined by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). The MBTI is widely used by professionals and is a simple yet reliable instrument to determine personality types. The MBTI contains four separate indices to include EI- Extraversion or Introversion; SN - Sensing perception or Intuitive perception; TF - Thinking judgement or Feeling judgement; and JP - Judgement or Perception.

According to Myers (1985), The SN index reflects an individual's preference between two opposite ways of perceiving. Individuals may rely on (S) sensing processes using the five senses to interpret facts or happenings or they may rely on (N) intuitive processes beyond the conscious

mind to interpret meanings or relationships. The TF index reflects an individual's preference between two contrasting ways of judgement. An individual may rely on thinking (T) to make impersonal, logical decisions or an individual may rely on feeling (F) to make decisions based on social or personal values.

The four indices of EI, SN, TF, and JP yield sixteen possible types. This study was limited to the four personality types of SF, ST, NF, and NT due to the intended exclusion of the EI and JP indices in scoring the personality types. Personality types were scored according to the MBTI Manual (Myers, 1985) guidelines and scoring stencils. Types were yielded using points using the weighted total of answers for each pole of the indices. Points were converted into preference scores that indicated the reported strength of the preference. Furthermore, the preference scores were converted into continuous scores using the convention that for S or T preference scores, the continuous score was 100 minus the numerical portion of the preference score. For N or F preference scores, the continuous score was 100 plus the numerical portion of the preference score.

### Data Analysis

The relationship between regular elementary teacher personality types and their attitudes towards elementary age students with learning disabilities was tested using a Pearson  $r$ . The significance level used was .05.

### Results

Fifty survey questionnaires including the self-developed attitude surveys and the MBTI were distributed to a random sample of fifty regular elementary teachers grades two through six in five rural Virginia counties. The response rate was 62%. 31 surveys were returned which consisted of one male and 30 female subjects. The ages of the sample included 10% (n=3) in the 20-30 range; 3% (n=1) in the 31-35 range; 20% (n =6) in the 36-40 range; 42% (n=13) in the 41-50 range; and 25% (n=8) in the 51+ range. 68% (n=21) indicated they had 16+ years of teaching experience.

Sixty-two percent (n=19) had not taken any special education courses within the last five years. Thirty-five (n=11) had taken 1-2 courses within the last five years, 0% (n=3) had taken 3-4 courses, 3% (n=1) had taken 5 or more special education courses within the last five years(See Figure 1). In reference to the number of inservices or

seminars attended on the subject of special education within the last five years, 26% (n=8) had not attended any, 61% (n=19) had attended 1-2, 13% (n=4) had attended 3-4, and 0% (n=0) had attended 5 or more.

The results indicated that the average number of identified students with learning disabilities in the classrooms of the sample over the past five years ranged from none to six or more. The subjects responded that 3% (n=1) had 0 students with learning disabilities over the past five years, 35% (n=11) 1-3 students with learning disabilities, 20% (n=6) 3-5 students, 39% (n=12) 6 or more students with learning disabilities and 3% (n=1) chose not to disclose that information.

The personality types of the sample included 32% (n=10) ST; 32% (n=10) SF; 23% (n=7) NF; and 13% (n=4) NT (See Figure II). Within the ST group, the attitude survey using the Likert Scale indicated that 70% (n=7) had negative attitudes towards students with learning disabilities and 30% (n=3) had positive attitudes. Within the SF group, 100% (n=10) had positive attitudes. Within the NF group 100 % (n=7) had positive attitudes. Within the NT group, 100% (n=4) had negative attitudes towards students with learning disabilities (See Figure III). The overall percentage of positive or negative attitudes for the sample included 55% (n=17) having positive attitudes towards students with



learning disabilities and 45% (n=14) having negative attitudes towards students with learning disabilities (See Figure IV).

#### Testing the Hypotheses

The relationship between regular elementary teacher personality types and their attitudes towards elementary age students with learning disabilities was tested using a Pearson  $r$  at the significance level of .05. The hypothesis testing the relationship between ST personality types and attitudes did not show any significant relationship ( $r = .01$ ,  $p < .05$ ). The hypothesis testing the relationship between SF and attitudes did not show a significant relationship ( $r = .06$ ,  $p < .05$ ). Likewise, the hypothesis testing the relationship between NF and attitudes did not show a significant relationship ( $r = -.61$ ,  $p < .05$ ). However, the hypothesis testing the NT personality type and attitudes did show a significant negative relationship ( $r = -.97$ ,  $p < .05$ ) between regular elementary teachers with NT personality types and their negative attitudes towards elementary age students with learning disabilities (See Table I).

### Discussion

The primary purpose of this study was to determine if a relationship existed between regular elementary teacher personality types and their attitudes toward elementary age students with learning disabilities. A significant negative relationship between the personality type of NT and their attitudes toward students with learning disabilities was evident. This result suggested that regular elementary teachers with NT personality types have a predisposition to think, perceive, or behave toward students with learning disabilities in a manner inconsistent with educational research and findings. One possible explanation for the NT personality group to have negative attitudes may be the tendency for individuals with NT personality types to choose possibilities that are theoretical or technical. Often the choices made by NT individuals more or less ignore the human element (Myers, 1984). The effects of these negative attitudes on students with disabilities goes beyond the scope of this paper; however, it is an important issue to consider given the fact that 77% of all students with learning disabilities receive their educational services in both the regular classroom and the special education classroom (Department of Education, 1992).

### Limitations of the Study

Generalizations from this investigation were limited by the small sample size from a restricted population. The results may not be generalized to other populations.

### Recommendations

It is recommended that a long term observational study with a large random sampled population be conducted to assess differential behavior and attitudes towards elementary age students with learning disabilities within a random sample of regular elementary personality types of SF, ST, NF, and NT. Future studies could address actual dyadic teacher-child interactions as those researched by Good and Brophy in 1972. By actually observing teacher behavior towards students with learning disabilities, it is proposed that researchers can more accurately identify teacher attitudes.

Furthermore, it is recommended that administrators and educators in the public school system become more familiar with MBTI personality types and the potential for certain personality types to have negative attitudes towards students with learning disabilities. In addition, the MBTI can be a resourceful tool for individuals to learn more about themselves and their perception and judgement of the world

around them. If an individual has knowledge of their personality type or those of others, the information can possibly strengthen teamwork, cooperation, and mutual respect. In situations such as collaboration and inclusion, successful teamwork can help regular teachers and special education teachers to work together more constructively. In classroom situations and teacher-child interactions, knowledge of personality types can allow individuals to focus on their abilities to deal effectively with situations utilizing their personal strengths. Students with learning disabilities can benefit from teachers that possess personal development and are free from negative attitudes. Hence, educators can focus on the main agenda of providing a quality education for all students especially those students with specific learning disabilities.

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Appendix A

Survey

Cover Letter



SurveyPART I

Please answer the following brief items by circling the number that corresponds with your answer. Participation is voluntary, but your input is greatly appreciated. No information linking a teacher to responses will be used and all information will remain confidential. At no time will the researcher be aware of the name of any participant.

1. Age
  1. 20-30
  2. 31-35
  3. 36-40
  4. 41-50
  5. 51+
  
2. Number of years teaching
  1. 0-1
  2. 2-5
  3. 6-10
  4. 11-15
  5. 16+
  
3. Grade presently teaching
  1. Second
  2. Third
  3. Fourth
  4. Fifth
  5. Sixth
  
4. Education Level
  1. College Degree - Undergraduate
  2. College Degree plus teaching certificate
  3. College degree plus specialist certificate
  4. Master's Degree
  5. Master's degree plus professional certificate
  6. Doctoral degree
  
5. Gender
  1. Male
  2. Female
  
6. Race
  1. African-American
  2. Hispanic
  3. Native American
  4. Oriental
  5. Caucasian
  6. None of the above

7. Number of special education classes taken within the last five years
  1. None
  2. 1-2
  3. 3-4
  4. 5 or more
  
8. Number of inservices or seminars attended on the topic of special education within the last five years
  1. None
  2. 1-2
  3. 3-4
  4. 5 or more
  
10. Number of students in your classroom
  1. Under 20
  2. 21-25
  3. 26-30
  4. over 30
  
11. Number of students in your school
  1. 1-200
  2. 201-300
  3. 301-400
  4. 401+
  
12. Average number of identified students with learning disabilities in your classroom during the last five years
  1. None
  2. 1-3
  3. 3-5
  4. 6+
  5. Cannot disclose this information
  
13. Number of years working with students with learning disabilities
  1. None
  2. 1
  3. 2-3
  4. 4-6
  5. 7-10
  6. 11+

PART II

Do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? Circle the number which best describes your opinion. O - No opinion, SA - Strongly Agree, A - Agree, N - Neutral, D - Disagree, SD - Strongly Disagree

1. I know a student with learning disabilities when I see one.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
2. Hyperactivity is a learning disability even if the child performs adequately academically..  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
3. A student with learning disabilities can not be distinguished from a slow learner.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
4. A LD child has below normal intelligence.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
5. A student with learning disabilities is lazy.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
6. A student with a learning disabilities does not suffer from neurological impairments.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
7. A student with learning disabilities is usually from a culturally deprived environment.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
8. A student with learning disabilities has no desire to learn.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD
  
9. Most students with learning disabilities suffer from emotional instability.  
O.NO            1.SA            2.A            3.N            4.D            5.SD

10. A student with learning disabilities does not need additional encouragement and support from regular classroom teachers.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
11. All students with learning disabilities should be educated in self-contained special classrooms.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
12. I do not possess the knowledge necessary to work with students with learning disabilities.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
13. It is difficult to maintain order in a regular classroom that contains a student with learning disabilities.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
14. The contact regular class students have with integrated students with learning disabilities will be damaging to the regular students.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
15. Communication between regular and special educators is adequate to effect successful integration of students with learning disabilities into the regular classroom.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD
  
16. Students with learning disabilities will never achieve academically and should be "pushed" through the educational system in order to relieve stress from the regular classroom teacher.  
0.NO      1.SA      2.A      3.N      4.D      5.SD

Cover Letter

100 Mountain Road  
Halifax, Virginia 24558  
March 21, 1995

Supervisor of Special Education Services

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I contacted you earlier this week in reference to your county's participation in a research project I am conducting for the completion of my thesis at Longwood Collge in Farmville, Virginia. I appreciate your willingness to participate and your cooperation.

Please distribute the enclosed envelopes to two regular (non special education) elementary teachers in each grade of second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth for a total of ten teacher participants. Teachers should return the packages to me in the postage paid envelopes provided in the package by \_\_\_\_\_.

Teacher participation is strictly voluntary. To ensure confidentiality, no information linking a teacher to repsonses will be used. All information obtained in this survey will remain anonymous.

Once again, thank you for you cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mary Beth Thompson

Appendix B

Table I

Relationship Between Personality Type and Attitude

Table I

Relationship Between Personality Type and Attitude

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Personality Type	N	r
ST	10	.01
SF	10	.06
NF	7	-.61
NT	4	-.97*

---

\* $p < .05$ .

N = Number of Subjects

Appendix C

Figure I

Percentage of Special Education Courses  
Taken Within Last Five Years



Figure 1. Percentage of Special Education Classes Taken Within The Last Five Years

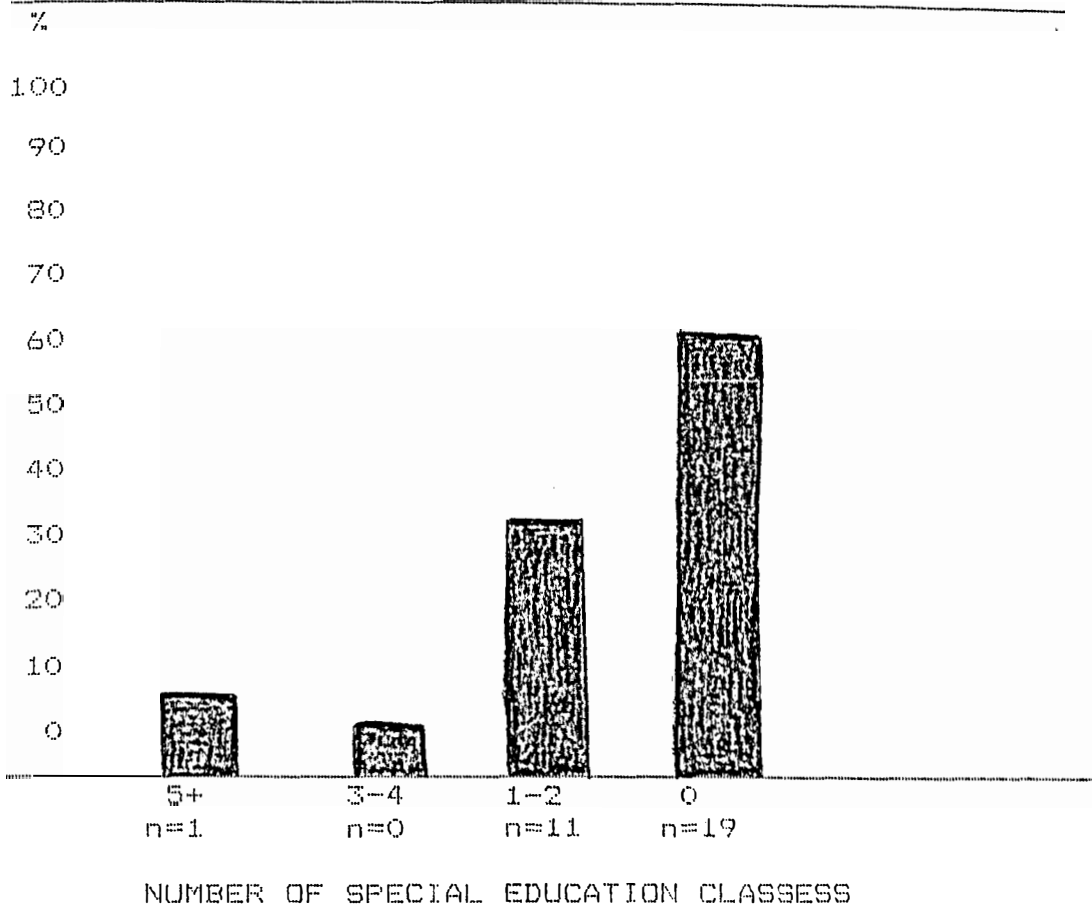


Figure II  
Percentage of Personality Types From Sample

Figure II. Percentage of Personality Types In Sample

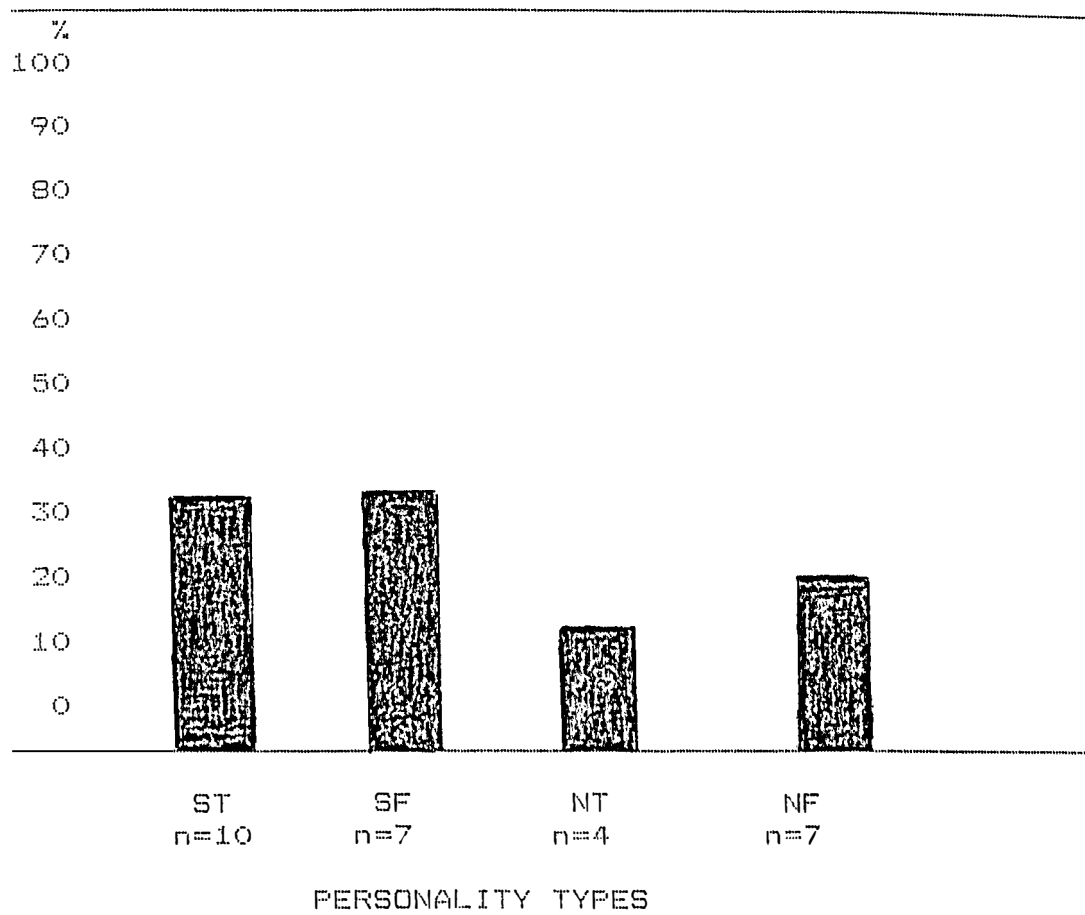
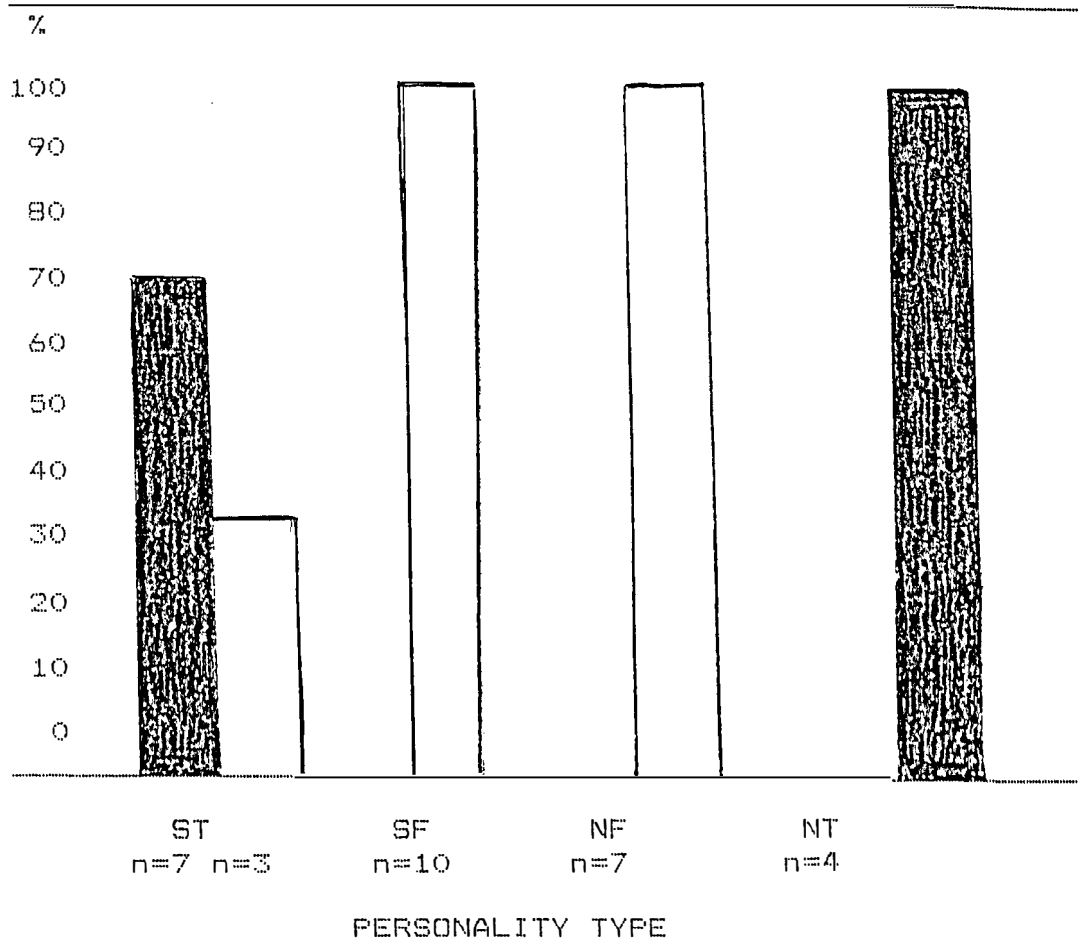


Figure III  
Percentage of Positive or Negative Attitudes  
Within Personality Subgroups

Figure III. Percentage of Positive or Negative Attitude Within Personality Subgroups





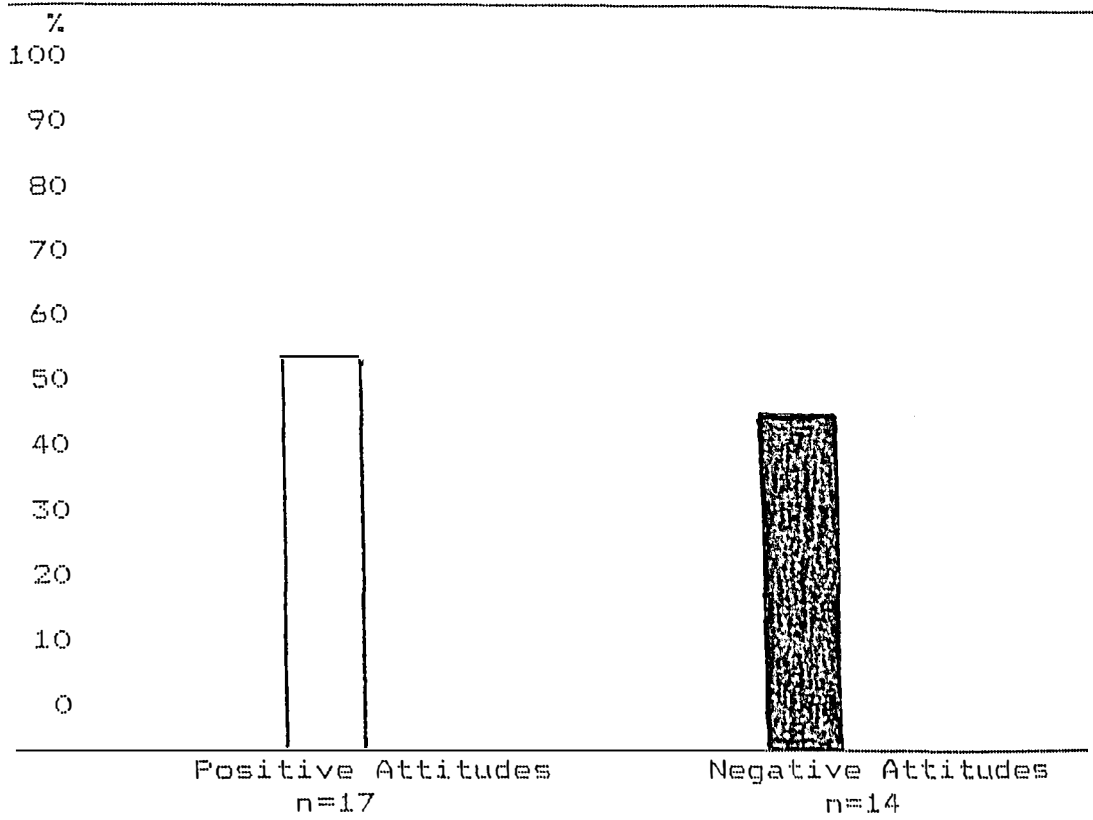
 Positive Attitudes  
 Negative Attitudes

Figure IV  
Percentage of Positive or Negative Attitudes  
Within Total Sample

Figure IV. Percentage of Positive or Negative Attitudes  
Within Total Sample.



Biography of Author.

Mary Beth Thompson was born in Halifax County, Virginia in 1961. Educated in the public school system, she graduated with honors from Halifax County Senior High School in 1980. In 1984, she graduated from Averett College in Danville, Virginia, with a Bachelor of Science degree in Liberal Studies concentrating in Business, United States History and Sociolgy.

In 1985, Mrs. Thompson moved to Richmond, Virginia, where she was employed in the field of Human Resources Management. In 1989, she became Director of Human Resources Management for the law firm of Williams, Mullen, Christian, & Dobbins, P.C. In June 1993, she relocated to Halifax with her family and began to pursue a career in teaching students with learning disabilities. In June of 1993, she enrolled in the Graduate Program at Longwood College seeking a degree in Education as a Learning Disabilities Curriculum and Instruction Specialist. Her anticipated graduation date is December 1995.

Mrs. Thompson is married to Kent Thompson. They have a daughter, Kelsey, age 3. Mrs. Thompson is employed by the Halifax County Public Schools as a teacher for students with learning disabilities grades K-4.