

ADOLESCENT ATTITUDES TOWARD INDIVIDUALS WITH
DISABILITIES

by

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the attitudes of 121 adolescent children towards individuals with disabilities through a pre and post survey. A thirty-minute workshop on individuals with disabilities occurred between the pre and post survey. The data from the study was analyzed using Pearson's r correlation coefficient and the pre-mean, pre-mode and pre-standard deviation results were compared to their post counterpart results. Generally results from the pre and post survey did not yield much variance. Participants were consistent in their responses to the pre and post workshop.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page #
Chapter One	
Introduction	1
Attitudes	1
Body and Image	2
Discrimination and Disability	3
Interaction and Disability	4
Accessibility and Work	4
Factors Influencing Interaction	5
Preferences of Children	5
Social Acceptance	6
Conclusion	6
Research Hypothesis	7
Statement of the Problem	7
Null Hypothesis	8
Definition of Terms	8
Assumptions	9
Limitations	9
Chapter Two	
Introduction	11
Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities	11
Appropriate Education	12
Problems with Mainstreaming	13
Transportation	14
Negative Impacts and Socialization	15
Peer Relationships and Social Acceptance	17
Experience, Influence and Contact	18
Academic Environments and Disability	19
History and Disability	20
The Effects of the Entertainment Industry on Disability	21
Disability, Stereotypes and Attitudes	22
Preferences and Attitude	23
Accepting Disability and Self Esteem	24
Community Attitudes and the Disabled	26
Ethnicity, Culture, and Disability	26
Authority, Environment, and Influence on the Disabled	27

Teachers Attitudes	28
Gender Differences and Disability	29
Illegal Practices and Disability	30
Table Of Contents (Continued)	
Conclusion	31
Chapter Three	
Introduction	32
Description of Subjects	32
Sample Selection	33
Instrumentation	34
Data Collection	35
Data Analysis	36
Limitations	37
Chapter Four	
Introduction	38
Demographics	38
Chapter Five	
Introduction	43
Summary	43
Conclusion	48
Recommendations	49
Reference List	50
Appendix A	54
Appendix B	58

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Today, many people in society have negative attitudes toward people with disabilities. Historically, negative attitudes toward people with disabilities can be dated back to Ancient Greek and Roman times when people with disabilities were originally viewed as being possessed by evil spirits among other negative connotations. These negative attitudes and stereotypes regarding people with disabilities still prevail today and are detrimental to the success of their lives. These historical stereotypes not only prevail today, but they are being taught and enforced in our children. Children are our future products of society and they will perpetuate these negative connotations associated with people with disabilities, if they are not appropriately educated about this matter. If children were appropriately educated about individuals with disabilities these negative attitudes may change. Children are influential to each other in nature, which has significant implications for children with disabilities. Non-disabled children can influence the development of the child with disabilities self-concept, cognitive and social development, academic performance and over all psychological well being (Woodard, 1995).

Attitudes

Attitudes can shape how we feel and how we interact with each other as human beings in our society. Attitudes regarding people with disabilities can initiate from the fear of the unknown or from previous experiences with individuals who are disabled. They are also paramount in integrating and forming relationships between children who are disabled and non-disabled in classrooms. If schools encourage this relationship among other things,

it will provide a person who has a disability with a genuine opportunity to become independent. However, this opportunity to establish independence will depend on the attitudes of the people closest to children with disabilities such as peers and teachers. It is these attitudes of peers and teachers, which will determine children with disabilities' integration into the classroom (Florin & Cole, 1994).

Attitudes can shape our beliefs, feeling, actions, and interactions with people. Attitudes have four main functions: first attitudes are used as a utilitarian function, meaning they decrease penalties for punishment and maximize rewards that a person can achieve. Second, attitudes work to defend the image that we have of ourselves and to raise our self-esteem. Third, attitudes are used to express values. Fourth, attitudes help the individual achieve meaning behind the beliefs and perceptions they hold. Attitudes are an important influence on how we behave as human beings (Antonak, 1988). Generally, attitudes are perceived as latent psychosocial processes that lie dormant within the individual until evoked by specific referents. Attitudes are acquired through experience and may contribute to prejudice formation (Antonak & Livneh, 2000).

Body and Image

A common perception that prevails today in society, is that if an individual is not perfect in body and mind, then they are not considered to be socially desirable. Generally, people have positive interactions with other individuals if they are viewed as being attractive, competent, and socially skilled. People in society prefer individuals with disabilities that are slight or invisible (Yuker, 1994). Some individuals may even blame the individuals themselves for their disabling condition (McCabe, 1993). Size and appearance of one's own body is important to some individuals in how they judge themselves according to Rodin's theory. Rodin's theory states that physical appearance has a significant influence on how an

individual perceives themselves. Parents also have an effect on how their children develop their body images. Research has demonstrated that a child's self-esteem may reflect how their parents feel about them excluding the time period during adolescence (Guiney & Furlong, 1999/2000). During adolescence, parents' influence over their children's development of body image decreases. During this adolescent phase of an individual's life, peers are conceptualized as being a potential influence in the development of body image and body satisfaction (Guiney & Furlong, 1999/2000). These factors may further contribute to the isolation of individuals with disabilities from mainstream society.

Discrimination and Disability

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 ensures that every individual with a disability has the right to receive accommodations. However, attitudes of non-disabled individuals have contributed to greater social isolation of individuals with disabilities. Even though there are laws that prohibit the discrimination against individuals with disabilities, individuals in our society today do not support the existing legislation and abide by these mandates. Society's lack of knowledge, education, and adequate exposure to people with disabilities prohibits people from making decisions that could bridge the gap between the disabled and non-disabled.

Current and recent legislation has documented that society's negative attitudes and perceptions of people with disabilities have negatively influenced people with disabilities' opportunities of living optimal and independent lives. In the court case of the U.S. versus the Davis Hospital and Medical Center in the U.S. District Court, Mr. and Mrs. Deelstra went to the Davis Hospital and Medical Center of Layton, Utah and were refused a sign language interpreter by the hospital (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/davishos.htm>). In 1990, a taxi service refused to allow seeing-eye dogs in their taxi, which prevented the

accessibility of an individual with a visual impairment from using this form of public transportation (McCabe, 1993). In the 20th-century, individuals with disabilities have been identified by society as a disgrace. Parents who have followed the advice of professionals, have hidden their children who were disabled in institutions or in their homes (Mackelprang & Salsgiver, 1996).

Interaction and Disability

People without disabilities tend to distance themselves from people with disabilities. Some non-disabled individuals will not acknowledge individuals with disabilities' existence in the world, because they feel that they are dumb or that they are abnormal; attitudes such as these can be caused from lack of social interaction, social understanding, among other factors. Attitudes regarding the diverse population of people with disabilities can influence the development of stereotypes, which can be used in a manner that facilitates discrimination and prevents optimal advancement in employment and social interaction. The development and practice of these stereotypes in everyday life, can be another obstacle that people with and without disabilities may deal with. People with disabilities are discriminated against because of the preconceived notions of their actual abilities (McCabe, 1993).

Accessibility and Work

Accessibility issues contribute to the isolation of individuals who are disabled. This lack of accessibility prohibits individuals with disabilities from experiencing many facets of life. Many buildings, homes, and work environments among other various public facilities are not physically accessible to individuals with disabilities who use a wheel chair, which further decreases the chances for social interactions between the disabled and non-disabled populations (McCabe, 1993). Due to the ignorance that persists today in society, many employers are not knowledgeable of the various possibilities that exist regarding

accommodation provision as well as the relatively low expense, which the employer would endure. The majority of accommodations are relatively inexpensive to provide. The average cost of the provision of accommodations is \$300.00 or less

(<http://www.nod.org/presssurvey.html>).

Despite recent legislation and tax incentives given to employers to hire people with disabilities, many employers are still reluctant to hire this population. Employers are reluctant to hire a person with a disability for fear of lack of appropriate work ethics, when in fact, research has proven that people with disabilities have less absenteeism and equally strong work ethics as the non-disabled population.

Factors Influencing Interaction

Individuals with speech impairments and related disabilities' verbal cues can significantly influence how non-disabled people react and respond to them. Non-disabled individuals may depend on the interaction between their visual cues with people who have speech and physical disabilities to decide whether communication would be productive. The situational context of the communication that occurs between the non-disabled population and people with disabilities can influence people without disabilities' affective reactions, social acceptance, and individual perceptions of people with disabilities. This development of affective reactions, social acceptance, and perceptions stem from the non-disabled individual's conception about the individual who is disabled (Anderson & Antonak, 1992).

Preferences of Children

Preferences for the disabled tend to be established by late childhood and increases in negativity toward the disabled as the individual increases in age (Anderson & Antonak, 1992). Duration of the disability is also a factor in the acceptance of individuals with disabilities. Children with temporary disabilities have been conceptualized as being more

favorable than their peers who had permanent disabilities. As a result, non-disabled children were more willing to befriend peers who were regarded as having temporary disabilities. These attitudes further enhance the social isolation of an individual (Weiserbs & Gottlieb, 2000).

Social Acceptance

Social acceptance is an important component of how we function and interact with each other as a society. The mainstreaming of individuals with disabilities into many of our daily activities will ignite attitude development by the non-disabled and persons who are disabled. For example, in the 1970s and 1980s school systems in the United States and the United Kingdom put forth major efforts to improve the educational opportunities of persons with disabilities under the implementation of Public Law 94-142 (1975) in America and the Education Act of (1981) in the United Kingdom (Florin & Cole, 1994).

Conclusion

There are many factors, which influence the perceptions about people with disabilities today in society. However, most perceptions about people with disabilities are negative in nature. Because of recent legislation, it is legally mandated that people with disabilities be provided with equal and optimal opportunity to become productive members of society. Negative attitudes and perceptions prohibit this optimal opportunity of people with disabilities. These negative attitudes are being taught and enforced in children in our society. Teaching children these negative connotations attributed to this population has significant implications. These children are the future of our society. If these negative attitudes are not addressed and improved, children who are the future of our society are going to perpetuate these attitudes and stereotype development in their everyday environments. This obstacle of providing inadequate opportunity for people with disabilities

in society will continue to keep prevailing if these negative attitudes are never addressed and corrected. Better education, exposure, and experiences with people with disabilities will provide the foundation for more adequate attitude development of this population by their non-disabled peers.

Research Hypotheses

A review of the literature shows that non-disabled children's attitudes are negative about individuals who are disabled. Studies have also shown that adults and other authority figures have an influence on the attitudes of non-disabled children. Also, once non-disabled children are given the proper information on individuals with disabilities, they tend to change their negative attitudes. Therefore, the research hypothesis for this study is that once children attending the Pre-College Summer Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout are educated and informed about individuals with disabilities they, will change their pre-existing negative attitudes about the disabled to more positive attitudes.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine the level of difference in responses of children in a pretest and posttest survey as measured by the Attitudes Towards Disabled Person Survey for Pre-College participants who differ in age, ethnicity and exposure to individuals with disabilities as measured with the Revised Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Form O Survey. Adolescents were chosen because they tend to be open to becoming more socially aware of individuals with disabilities. Adolescents have the task of accepting one's own body and to use it efficiently, which is something that individuals who are disabled have to deal with also (McCabe, 1993). Participants were enrolled in the Pre-College Summer Program, beginning 7-8-01 and ending 7-27-01, at the University of

Wisconsin-Stout. The participants were given a pre-workshop and post-workshop attitude survey entitled The Revised Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Form O.

Null Hypotheses

There will be no change in the attitudes of adolescents attending the pre-college program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout about people with disabilities after attending a workshop on individuals with disabilities.

Definition of Terms

For clarity and understanding the following terms need to be defined.

ADA (American Disability Act of 1990) - the ADA is used to level the playing field, offers individuals with disabilities an opportunity to participate in employment and social activities with their non-disabled peers.

Comparison Children - non-disabled children.

Disability - is a mental or physical illness, condition, or injury that impairs one's ability to perform activities (Babcock, 1962).

Disadvantaged Adolescents - are determined by their local board of education. The criteria for disadvantaged youth are that they be from a low-income home and or may live in a low- income environment.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)—An education plan that is created between the counselor and the client.

Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA)—Mandated free and appropriate education for individuals with disabilities.

Learning Disabled (LD)—A disorder of one or more of the basic psychological processes can affect speaking, reading, listening, spelling, writing, or mathematics.

Mainstreaming - placing children with disabilities in classes with children without disabilities.

Minority - the minority groups participating in the experiment are Hmong, African Americans, Latinos, Chicanos, and Native Americans.

NLD – non-learning disabled.

Pre-College Summer Camp Program - the Pre-College Summer Camp Program is geared towards minority and non-minority disadvantaged adolescents who reside in Wisconsin or Minnesota. Youths participating in the program range from 7th to 10th grade. Participants in the program must have a 2.25 grade point average or better. Each week 60 kids participate in the program, which consist of academic and recreational activities. The program begins on 6-24-01 and ends on 7-27-01.

Revised ATDP Form O - The Revised Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Survey Form O is an attitudinal survey composed of 20 statements geared toward finding out what peoples opinions are concerning individuals with disabilities.

Assumptions

There are several assumptions, which are apparent in this research. These are:

- 1.The attitudes of the participants in the study will change at the end of study.
- 2.The participants in the study will improve their knowledge base about individuals with disabilities.

Limitations

The researcher has identified several limitations. These are:

1. The participants awareness of individuals with disabilities.
2. Dispelling stereotypes and myths held by participants about individuals with disabilities.
- 3.The age range of participants in the study varies.

4. The participants are from different cultures and will have different ideals.
5. The study will take place in the summer and the participants may not be enthusiastic about filling out a survey, when they could be outside playing.
6. The participants may have a fear of changing their knowledge base about individuals with disabilities because it may cause a change in their ideals.
7. Participants may not answer survey forms with the intent to exhibit their true attitudes about individuals with disabilities.
8. Peer pressure may interfere with the participant's willingness to fill out surveys truthfully.
9. Parents may influence the participant's attitudes.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of Literature

Introduction

This review includes research on the inclusion of the disabled into mainstream society; perception of individuals with disabilities; accepting disability and self esteem; disability, stereotypes and attitude; authority, environment, influences on the disabled; non-disabled gender differences in relation to the disabled; and illegal practices and disability. Also attitudes about individuals with disabilities, and the current social climate about individuals with disabilities will be reviewed.

Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities

Individuals with disabilities are being mainstreamed into classrooms with non-disabled children, which has taken place over the last 20 years (Maras & Brown, 2000). Although Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “Inclusion is not a federal mandate, but a recommended method of educating children . . .” (p. 19). Attitudes of the non-disabled individuals are important in the integration of individuals with disabilities in the classroom. The success of integration is determined through contact that children who are disabled and non-disabled children have with one another (Roberts & Lindsell, 1987).

The integration of children with disabilities is most efficient when teachers’ attitudes are positive towards the integration of children who are disabled in their classrooms and children's attitudes and behaviors are influenced by experiences that they have at school (Florin & Cole, 1994). Inclusion is a method by which children who are disabled can receive a sufficient education. Johnson Jr. (1998) also found that “Congressional sponsors of special education legislation recognized that mainstreaming, as well as other possible educational

placements were necessary to provide an appropriate education for all students with disabilities” (p. 20). On the other hand Johnson Jr. (1998) also found that “The financial costs and educational impact on children with out disabilities are additional reasons to oppose inclusion. For example, most schools do not have adequate funding or time to provide sufficient programs for gifted and talented students, and inclusion will negatively impact the gifted programs that do exist” (p. 21).

Appropriate Education

It is clearly against the law not to provide adequate services for persons with disabilities because everyone has the right to acquire an appropriate public education. As cited by Podemeski, Price, Smith & Marsh (1984) they found that key provisions of IDEA are (a) the guarantee of a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities through the age of 21 or completion of high school graduation, (b) a stipulation that education be provided in the least restrictive environment, (c) a requirement that special education and related services be provided according to the stipulations of an IEP, and (d) a provision of due process rights for students with disabilities and their families (Parker and Szymanski, 1992, p.19).

Some of the earlier interventions in the public education of persons with disabilities include the Education of All Handicap Children Act of 1975, and were conducted on the state level. Data Research Incorporated (1985), The Education for All Handicap Children to assist the states in meeting the burdens imposed upon them by the widespread recognition of the right of handicapped children to a free public education to their needs. The Act establishes requirements, which must be complied with, in order for state to be eligible to receive financial assistance. First, each state must have “ in effect a policy that assures all

handicap children the right to a free appropriate education” [20 U.S.C section 1412(1)], and must develop a plan which details the policies and procedures which insure the provision of that right [section 1412 (2)]. Each state must also insure that local educational agencies in this state will establish the individualized educational programs required by the Act [section 1412 (4)]. The Act additionally requires that each state must formulate a plan, which must be submitted to and approved by the Commissioner of Education, before the state is entitled to assistance (p.1).

Parker and Szymanski (1992) found “. . . Wisconsin prohibited discrimination against people with disabilities as early as 1967 (Sec. 111.31, Wisconsin Laws), and the State of Florida guaranteed the rights of people with disabilities under Article 1, Section 2, of the Constitution of the State of Florida (1968), as amended in 1973” (p.18).

Problems with Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming in public schools can present problems for both persons with disabilities and school districts. The book Handicapped Students and Special Education (1985) found that a school district in Hawaii claimed that it did not have adequate staff to assist an 8-year-old girl who suffered from cystic fibrosis. Therefore the school district proposed a “homebound” individual educational plan for the child. The parents of the child sued the school district in the United States district court, which decided that the “homebound education” was not a “free appropriate education”.

Another problem that arose with mainstreaming took place in a Missouri school district. The parents of a severely mentally retarded girl sued the school district and wanted their child to be reassigned to one of two public schools, which were preferred by her parents. The school district objected to the parent’s request because they felt her needs would be best met at a special school for mentally disabled children. The parents case would

later be heard by a special hearing panel, which decided it would be in the best interest of the child to be in a “less restrictive environment” where she could have social interaction with children who are not as severely disabled.

On the other hand a Missouri parents association brought suit against Missouri educational officials because they were labeling certain children with disabilities as “severely handicapped” and placing them in schools separate from children with out disabilities. The courts agreed with the Missouri educational officials citing resources were too scarce and that the separate schools for children who had disabilities provided a “least restrictive environment”.

In Virginia the parents of a child who had a disability requested that their child be placed in a private academy to better suit the needs of the child. They sued the school district claiming that their child’s needs weren’t being met under the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (EAHCA). A United States district court found that an “appropriate” education as provided under the EAHCA is not a “perfect” one. The court found in favor of the school district. These cases are just a few of many that have involved problems with mainstreaming children who have disabilities in public schools.

Transportation

Transportation is an issue for children with disabilities and their parents. Data Research Incorporated (1985) found that a child in Hawaii was denied an appropriate education when her school wanted her to continue her through a “homebound” program. The United State district court found that the Individual Education Plan for the child did not meet the EAHCA definition of a “least restrictive environment”. The United States district court found that the transportation of the child was an expense that should be picked up by the public school and that a “homebound” education was inappropriate. In another

case in Florida the parents of a child who had a disability wanted their traveling expenses paid for when traveling to and from Georgia to see their child in a residential facility. They cited that it was part of their child's Individualized Education Plan for their expenses to be paid because they took part in their child's treatment. The court found that it was not the school districts responsibility to pay for family gatherings.

Negative Impacts and Socialization

There have been many investigations on the impact of negative attitudes towards children with disabilities by their peers. Johnson Jr. (1998) found that " Previous contact with children with disabilities may be an important factor in the attitudes of students toward children with disabilities" (p. 40). Early experiences that children who are disabled go through may affect interpersonal interactions in childhood and adulthood. Social interactions that are positive are a crucial component of adjustment and the healthy growth of children. Children who are disabled will be generally rejected. For example, non-disabled children frequently reject their peers who are mentally disabled. One of the major factors for them being rejected by their peers is that they are seen as dissimilar therefore unattractive (Freeman, 2000).

Physical impairments and/or disfigurements have a negative effect on social relationships and influence social contacts with non-disabled peers. In a study conducted in Nepal, it was found that non-disabled children are influenced by physical appearance. Children who did not have a physical disability were frequently chosen for academic activities more than their disabled counterparts (Harper, 1997).

Children normally compare themselves to one another which results in finding comfort in those who look like and exhibit behaviors similar to their own (Rothlisberg, Hill, & D'Amato, 1994). This puts children who are disabled at a disadvantage because non-

disabled children do not deviate from the norm. When they make attempts to socialize with their none-disabled peers, they receive negative responses, which results in isolation. Non-disabled children tend to tolerate children who are disabled. These factors can decrease the chances of the disabled child's ability to develop and practice social skills, which can be a contributing factor to social isolation in adulthood. The children who are denied social experiences have to deal with loneliness (Helper, 1997).

Heiman and Margalit (1998) found that "social skills reflect the individual's ability to exhibit appropriate behavior by using skill such as cooperation, self-control, and understanding the needs of others, as well as the ability to initiate social interaction" (p. 155). Pearl, Farmer, Van Acker, Rodkin, Bost, Coe, and Henley, 1998, found that "the poor social acceptance of students with disabilities often has been viewed as being the result of social skills deficits" (p. 168).

Loneliness can be a key factor in the disabled child's ability to form relationships with other children. Loneliness reflects a conflict between reality and the individual's expectations of interpersonal relations. The roots of loneliness can be traced back to early childhood and the modes of mother-child attachment, in non-effective social interactions, which are manifested from individual inadequacies in using social skills, or both. Also loneliness has an affect on social relationships. When individuals feel lonely, they are less likely to involve themselves in social relationships, they generally talk infrequently, ask fewer questions, don't attend to social interactions with other individuals, and don't try to form social relationships (Heiman & Margalit, 1998).

Factors such as lack of social skills and loneliness can manifest themselves in the child or adult who is disabled as maladaptive behavior (Helper, 1997). For instance Heiman & Margalit (1998) found that "Studies that examined the social skills of non-disabled

students with deficient social skills revealed they have a greater tendency to develop behavioral problems in school and are more likely to drop out of school or to develop emotional disturbances” (p. 155). Evidence suggests that many students with disabilities exhibit problematic behavior, which results in them being socially rejected by their peers. Non-disabled children often view peers with disabilities as having problematic social behaviors and as being more disruptive than students who are low achievers (Pearl, Farmer, Van Acker, Rodkin, Bost, Coe, & Henley, 1998).

Peer Relationships and Social Acceptance

Peer relationships are critical in the healthy development of disabled and non-disabled children. There is general support for the hypothesis that children who are not accepted by peers are generally at risk for difficulties later in life (Ochoa & Olivarez Jr., 1995). Most individuals with disabilities want to achieve acceptance and integration (Li & Moore, 1998). Lack of social acceptance can lead to an environment in which the individual who is disabled feels socially isolated, depressed, and experiences lower self-esteem. This is a critical stage in the development of children with disabilities because it can have a heavy influence on later adult adjustment (Van Hook, 1992). A study cited by Bryan (1976) found that “Learning disabled children received fewer social acceptance and more social rejection votes than comparison children” (McKinney & Feagans, 1983, p.59).

If children with disabilities are viewed as socially competent, they are more likely to experience social acceptance (Forlin & Cole, 1994). On the other hand Rothlisberg, Hill, & D’Amato, 1994, found that “Even when children with disabilities showed competence equal to that of their normal peers, they were less likely to be chosen as a partner by another child” (p. 239).

Children in our society exhibit at a young age that they favor individuals who exhibit qualities and behaviors of mainstream society. Non-disabled children who participated in classes with inclusion exhibited more positive attitudes towards peers with physical disabilities than individuals who did not participate in classes with children with disabilities (Roberts & Lindell, 1987). The integration of children who are disabled is heavily influenced by non-disabled children's attitudes (Forlin & Cole, 1994).

Experience, Influence, and Contact

Limited experience with individuals with disabilities can influence the perception that non-disabled individuals have about people with disabilities. Some studies have inferred that direct contact between disabled and non-disabled children can improve attitudes that non-disabled children have about children with disabilities (Woodard, 1995). Infrequent contact with individuals with disabilities creates stereotypical reactions that are expressed negatively (Anderson & Antonak, 1992). According to Contact Theory, increased contact that is cooperative and intimate can improve attitudes towards others. Also contact with individuals with disabilities can increase perceived similarity, enhance sympathy, and facilitate social acceptance by non-disabled individuals (Van Hook, 1992). Also portraying various types of disabilities to students tends to have positive effects on non-disabled children (Bruce & Shade, 1996). Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “. . . persuasive messages, arguments presented to convince subjects that they should have positive attitudes toward children with disabilities, to have the highest effect size for attitude modification” (p. 48).

In contrast, information about disabilities can also have a negative effect on social acceptance. Information about individuals who are disabled can further emphasize differences and portray them as being weak, which could result in negative effects (Yuker,

1994). Rothlisberg, Hill, & D'Amato (1994) found that “. . .negative attributions associated with labels might impede the children's acceptance by non-labeled peers, it is important to understand how the perceptions of classified children could threaten their adaptation to the regular education environment . . .” (p. 239).

Another explanation may be Group Theory. Helper (1997) found that once individuals develop attitudes about another individual, they tend to maintain them despite any contrary behaviors exhibited, because people do not like inconsistencies. Individuals are able to maintain their beliefs, because they tend to remember attributes from earlier observations and allow the first impressions to affect later perceptions. People are also more adept at remembering information that has a unified view rather than conflicting information. With these biases, group members restructure reality to their early perceptions. Translated to children's social interactions, low status children encounter great obstacles when they attempt to change their social status or group membership (p. 244).

Academic Environments and Disability

In environments, which stress academic performance, students with disabilities are seen as socially undesirable in academic work as opposed to play. One explanation for this finding is that classmates may see individuals with disabilities as a hindrance to academic performance and therefore prefer to work with someone who is non-disabled (Cook & Semmel, 1999). In the case of individuals who are mentally disabled, academic performance or social competence is a major factor in perceptions of non-disabled individuals (Rothlisberg, Hill, & D'Amato, 1994). Heiman & Margalit (1998) found that “Recent research on the effects of inclusion on students with learning disabilities (LD) showed that

students with LD were less liked by their peers and were more frequently rejected than non-disabled students” (p. 154-155).

History and Disability

People with and without disabilities have to deal with a past history, where in ancient times individuals with disabilities were seen as being possessed. When they were thought to be evil, holes were drilled in their heads as a way to release the evil. The Spartans on the other hand would leave young and old people with disabilities to die along the countryside.

Judeo-Christian beliefs ran rampant during and after the Middle Ages in the minds of Europeans. There are even some instances in past history where individuals with disabilities were thought to be physically or mentally impaired because of their current and/or past life sins. There was a general belief that people with disabilities were sinners. They were thought to be descendents of ancient Hebrews therefore were not allowed to be priest and were ostracized.

The 18th century ushered in the Enlightenment period. A

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Using the ratings obtained from same-sex rater, it was again found that learning disabled children were held in lower esteem by their classmates than were non-disabled youngsters” (McKinney & Feagans, 1983, p.59). For example there has been approximately 20 years of research that has shown that children who are learning disabled have lowered peer status when being compared to non-disabled children (Ochoa & Olivarez, 1995). It is sometimes asserted that non-disabled individuals attitudes toward individuals who are disabled is not prejudice, but an expression of ambivalence in which attitudes and behavior are mediated by beliefs, preconceived social norms, context, motive to address norms, and degree of both behavior and attitude (Yuker, 1994).

The context of the encounters between disabled and non-disabled individuals is important in the attitude formation of non-disabled individuals. Students who participated in a physical education program, which was integrated with children with disabilities had poorer attitudes toward peers with physical disabilities than emotional disabilities than students participating in a segregated physical education class (Trip, French, & Sherrill, 1995).

Accepting Disability and Self Esteem

Individuals who are disabled have to deal with issues such as accepting that they have a disability and self-esteem issues. Generally a person’s acceptance of his/her disability is likely to lead to better adjustment. Li & Moore (1998) found that the extent of acceptance of disability is associated with the degree that a person:

- (a) recognizes values other than those that are in direct conflict with the disability;
- (b) de-emphasizes those aspects of physical ability and appearance that contradict his or her disabling condition; (c) does not extend his or her handicap beyond actual physical impairment to other aspects of the functioning self; and (d) does not

compare himself or herself to others in areas of limitations but instead emphasizes his or her own assets and abilities (p. 13).

Also, if the disability is acquired later in life, it can have a dramatic effect on the individual who is disabled and the acceptance of it by family and friends.

Social support can have positive effects on the self-esteem of individuals with disabilities (Li & Moore, 1998). Johnson Jr. found that “self-concept and school performance difficulties in children with disabilities are often a result of this lack of acceptance” (p. 40). For example, when children experience adolescence, they tend to feel helplessness, social pressures, isolation, lack of social support, and depression.

When compared to children who have mental retardation, the effects of this time period put them at a higher risk for developing symptoms of depression because of difficulties using social skills, feelings of loneliness, and because of their cognitive difficulties (Heiman & Margalit, 1998). Generally individuals with learning disabilities have a low self-concept (Cadieux, 1996). On the other hand as cited by Jervis (1959) “. . . there was not a significant difference in self concept between the blind and sighted groups, although there were more blind subjects with extreme scores(both highly positive and highly negative). The interview was structured around a series of stimulus questions, and the responses were rated by two psychologists. Unfortunately, the reliability of the interview scoring was very low (0.65)” (Warren, 1977, p.218). Although Jervis (1959) found that blind adolescents voiced concerns about their future and sighted adolescents had more positive attitudes about the future (Warren, 1977).

Children who have learning disabilities feel less competent in areas concerning intelligence, academic skills, behavior, and social acceptance. This is important because an estimated 3% of school-aged children are dealing with some form of a learning disability. As cited by Winne, Woodlands, and Wong (1982), children who deal with learning disabilities generally have a positive feeling concerning overall self worth. In contrast other studies have found that individuals with disabilities have expressed an overall lowered self worth (Smith & Nagle, 1995). Harper (1997) found that “children with visible physical differences such as orthopedic/mobility impairments, amputations, and facial disfigurement have been noted to experience a social milieu that can be hostile, rejecting, and at best ambiguous” (p. 710).

Community Attitudes and the Disabled

Community attitudes can influence individuals who are disabled. Generally attitudes, which exist in communities towards the disabled tend to be negative and there is evidence that health and rehabilitation are not viewed as positive which can effect the treatment and self-esteem of the disabled individual (Gething, 1994). Full acceptance of individuals with disabilities can't be accomplished until subtle barriers are eliminated. These subtle barriers are the attitude of health and rehabilitation professionals, teachers, employers, coworkers, counselors-in-training, educators, parents, peers, and persons with disabilities themselves.

Negative attitudes in one's community can create barriers in the fulfillment of individual's with disabilities life roles (Antonak & Livneh, 2000). On the other hand there is also evidence that suggest that attitudes towards the disabled are positive. In a study performed in the United Kingdom, evidence suggests that shops, pubs, and cafes valued the business of individuals who were disabled, but asserted that they stood out from non-disabled individuals by the way they dressed and behaved. Although 38% of non-disabled individuals in another study expressed that they were generally accepting of individuals with

intellectual disabilities, they were concerned that they tended to stand out (Parsons, Elkins, & Sigafos, 2000).

Ethnicity, Culture, and Disability

Race of individuals who are disabled also effects the attitudes of non-disabled individuals. If the individual is from African descent or female it can result into a double handicap (Yuker, 1994). Culture plays an important role in how non-disabled attitudes are formed. Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “. . . research demonstrated that Jewish students reported a significantly higher positive attitude toward children with disabilities than Arab students. The researchers believe this outcome reflects the Arab tradition of treating people with disabilities as spiritually and physically weak individuals who deserve pity” (p. 44).

In another case as cited by Bryan (1974a) found that “. . . white LD children were more likely to be rejected by peers than were black LD youngsters. While no specific information was presented as to the racial composition of the 1,430 children whose judgments comprised the popularity scores for the LD and comparison child, there were more white than black youngsters. The finding that white LD children were rejected more than black LD children is noteworthy in light of the typical finding that youngsters appear to prefer members of the same race (McKinney & Feagans, 1983, p.59).

Authority, Environment, and Influence on the Disabled

Using the theory of reasoned action, one could assume that the environment plays a significant role in influencing a child's attitudes and behaviors towards their peers with disabilities. Teachers can also influence the acceptance of individuals with disabilities. Fifth and sixth grade children's attitudes toward children who are intellectually disabled closely resembled the attitudes of their teachers (Roberts & Lindsell, 1987).

Teachers have a dramatic impact on how children who are disabled feel about themselves and how children deal with individuals with disabilities. Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “perhaps one of the most important findings concerning teacher impact is, that if a child is perceived in a negative manner by a teacher, it is possible that the child may accept the negative belief for his own” (p. 37). McKinney and Feagans (1983) found that “Teachers preferences correlated with the peer status of the children rated and indicated that teachers had less preference for LD than NLD students” (p.70).

Non-disabled beliefs about individual’s who are disabled are an important factor in influencing attitudes. Figures such as friends, politicians, peers, and family members are usually influential in shaping attitudes if they are perceived as credible and strong (Yuker, 1994). Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “a negative attitude by mother was related to a negative attitude of the younger children. A positive attitude by mother was related to a positive attitude of younger children. This effect was not found with older children or with children’s fathers” (p. 34).

The attitudes of parents have an effect on the acceptance of individuals with disabilities. Parents are generally concerned that including children who are disabled in their non-disabled children's classes would effect the academic success of their children (Roberts & Lindsell, 1987). Johnson Jr. (1998) found that “. . . research suggested that after children participate in integration programs, the anxiety level of their parents is reduced. Integration in early childhood programs has also demonstrated that parents have a general belief that their children benefit from the encounter” (p. 36).

Teachers Attitudes

Teacher’s attitudes play an important role in the success of children with disabilities. Children with disabilities tend to be seen by teachers as less desirable.

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On February 2, 1993, the United States of America filed a complaint against the Stowe Township of Commissioners, Pennsylvania because public meetings were held in a location, which was inaccessible to individuals with physical disabilities (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/stoweset.htm>). In the United States of America versus Hancock County, Mississippi, the defendant violated Title II of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990. The defendant was being prosecuted for not ensuring that individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing have the opportunity to use programs and services of the Court. These programs and services included but were not limited to acting as jurors, parties, spectators, and witnesses (<http://www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada/hancocks.htm>).

Conclusion

In conclusion persons with disabilities have a long-term history of discrimination by the non-disabled majority. This discrimination has led to attributes of non-acceptance to intolerance. This intolerance has had a negative effect on persons with disabilities ability to function in society and be judged on their own merits. The preconceived negative attitudes of the non-disabled majority hinder the progression the persons with disabilities.

Methodology

Introduction

A review of the literature shows that non-disabled children's attitudes are often negative about individuals who are disabled. Studies have also shown that adults and other authority figures have an influence on the attitudes of non-disabled children. Also, once non-disabled children are given the proper information on individuals with disabilities, they tend to change their negative attitudes. Therefore, the research hypothesis for this study is that once children attending the Pre-College Summer Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout are educated and informed about individuals with disabilities they, will change their pre-existing negative attitudes about the disabled to more positive attitudes.

This chapter will describe the subjects under study and how they were selected for inclusion in this study. In addition, the instruments being used to collect information will be discussed as to their reliability, validity, and content. Data collection and analysis procedures will then be presented. The chapter will conclude with some of the methodological limitations.

Description of Subjects

The Pre-College Summer Program was conducted by the Multicultural Student Services, summer of 2001, at the University of Wisconsin Stout. Subjects participating in the study numbered 121. Each week a group of subjects was sub-divided according to their grade level, 7th through 8th comprised one group and 9th through 10th comprised another group.

Subjects participating in the study ranged from grades 7th through 10th grade and currently live in Wisconsin or Minnesota. The program was geared towards minority and

non-minority disadvantaged youth. The subjects lived in either rural or inner city environments. The racial make up of the total subject population were as follows:

European American participants totaled nine and composed eight percent of the subject population.

African American participants totaled 47 and composed forty-two percent of the subject population.

Hispanic American participants totaled seven and composed six percent of the subject population.

Native American participants totaled 22 and composed twenty percent of the subject population.

Asian American participants totaled 27 and composed twenty-four percent of the subject population.

The participants had a 2.25 grade point average or better. Each participant in the program agreed to spend a week out of their summer to attend classes and participate in recreational activities. The week that the participants spent in the program was dedicated to academics.

Sample Selection

Subjects were asked to participate in the study. The subjects and their parents were informed that they would be participating in an experiment concerning the subject's attitudes on disabilities. They were also informed that all identifying information about their participation would be destroyed after the study was complete. They were given a consent form for their parent(s) and themselves to sign upon meeting the requirements of the pre-college program which were having a grade point average of 2.25 or better, parents' permission to participate in program activities, and they also must be a minority or non-

minority disadvantaged youth. Each week for four weeks a different subject group participated. The subjects were split into two groups. The first group ranged from 7th to 8th grade and the second group ranged from 9th to 10th grade. Each group experienced the same survey and workshop on individuals with disabilities.

Instrumentation

The instrumentation used for the experiment was the Revised Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Form O, index cards, and a workshop on individuals with disabilities. The Revised Attitudes Towards Disabled Persons Form O is an attitudinal instrument. Antonak and Livneh found that it has a test retest reliability of +0.66 to +0.89. They also found that there was no relationship between the age of subjects and acceptance, or rejection, of persons with disabilities. They found that females had greater acceptance levels of persons with disabilities and that the educational level of participants has a positive affect on acceptance of persons with disabilities. Index cards were used as identification numbers for subjects participating in the study.

The thirty-minute workshops on individuals with disabilities were administered once a week to two groups of subjects. The first group was composed of adolescents in 7th through 8th grade and the second group was composed of adolescents in 9th through tenth grade. The workshop consisted of detailed information on individuals living with disabilities, how one may acquire a disability, and famous people who have disabilities. The purpose of the workshop was to dispel stereotypes and fears that subject may or may not have about individuals with disabilities.

Data Collection

The subjects in the study were told before they participated in the study that it was voluntary. Each participating subject in the experiment was randomly given a 3 ½” by 5” index card with a number on one side of the card to be used as an identification number. The participants were asked to fill out a pre survey and write pre in the upper right hand corner of the survey. After the pre surveys were completed they were collected and placed in a 9” by 12” clasp vanilla envelope, which was dated, and labeled pre for each group. Subjects were asked to write post in the upper right hand corner of their surveys.

The subjects were responsible for keeping their identification cards until after they completed the post surveys. Between the Pre and Post surveys a 30-minute disability workshop was conducted. The workshop included an explanation of disability, how one can acquire a disability, the effects of a disability, and famous people who have disabilities. After the post surveys were completed the identification cards were collected. The completed post surveys were placed in a 9” by 12” clasp vanilla envelope, which was dated and labeled post. The identification number was written in black marker. The identification numbers ranged from 1 to 100.

The Revised ATDP Form O surveys were altered to ask the participants to include their identification number, race and/or ethnicity and age on each of the pre and post surveys. Each person's race was given a number to be used for identification purposes for later analysis:

African Americans were identified by the number one.

Asian Americans were identified by the number two.

Native Americans were identified by the number three.

Hispanic Americans were identified by the number four.

European Americans were identified by the number five.

Participants were asked on each survey to give one opinion on each of the twenty-attitudinal statements. They were only asked to give one opinion per statement. The opinions that the subjects had to choose from were:

SD=(Strongly Disagree)=1

D=(Disagree)=2

N=(Have no opinion and/or indifferent)=3

A=(Agree)=4

SA=(Strongly Agree)=5

Each subject's opinion was given an identification number to be used for later analysis:

The participants in the study were given a pre workshop and post workshop Attitude Towards Disabled Persons Survey. The first, second and third week of groups that participated in the pre workshops and post workshops was given the pre workshop and post workshop survey.

Data Analysis

All appropriate descriptive statistics were run on the data. Pearson's r correlation coefficient test was conducted on the data to determine whether a positive change occurred between the pre-workshop and post-workshop survey. The data was analyzed by using Microsoft Excel program spread sheet. The subject's personal identification number, race and/or ethnicity, age, and ATDP Form O survey statements formed specific categories to be used for both pre and post survey description. The identification numbers for the subject, race and/or ethnicity, age, and opinions were analyzed for each pre and post category. After the data from the surveys was analyzed it was destroyed.

Limitations

The researcher has identified several limitations. These are:

1. The surveys were administered on the last day of the camp and the subject's attention may be geared towards going home.
2. The information about individuals with disabilities may cause the subject's to have conflicts with prior beliefs and result in inaccurate survey results.
3. Subjects had limited time to fill out surveys.
4. Subjects are seated in close vicinity of their peers and may have been concerned about their peers seeing how they answered their survey statements.
5. The subjects attend a Pre-college dance and talent show the night before the workshop and therefore may have not been alert during the workshop.
6. The entertainment industry images may have influenced participation in the workshop and therefore may have influenced their ability to answer survey statements.
7. Prior experience with individuals with disabilities may have influenced their participation in the workshop and ability to answer survey statements.
8. The workshop consisted of European American examples of disability, which may not be identifiable to subjects who aren't European American participating in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Results

Introduction

The research questions were designed to find out individual attitudes about people with disabilities. The following results are a reflection of the pre Revised ATDP Form O survey forms and post Revised ATDP Form O survey Forms. Results include:

1. Demographics for the subject population.
2. Mean, mode, and standard deviation for the pre and post survey.

Demographics

A Total of 121 persons were administered the survey pre and post workshop.

Persons who participated in the workshop were of various race and/or ethnicities and ages.

The race and/or ethnic make up of the participants were as followed:

There were 47 (38.8%) persons who were African American.

There were 35 (28.9%) persons who were Asian American.

There were 25 (20.7%) persons who were Native American.

There were 7 (5.8%) persons who were Hispanic American.

There were 7 (5.8%) persons who were European American.

The age make up of participants were as followed:

There were 4 (3.3%) persons who were 11 years of age.

There were 17 (14.0%) persons who were 12 years of age.

There were 33 (27.3%) persons who were 13 years of age.

There were 36 (29.8%) persons who were 14 years of age.

There were 22 (18.2%) persons who were 15 years of age.

There were 6 (5.0%) persons who were 16 years of age.

There were 3 (2.5%) persons who were 17 years of age.

The mean, standard deviation (std), mode, correlation coefficient(r) as measured by Pearson r correlation coefficient, and results for pre ATDP Form O and post ATDP Form O statements one through twenty were as follows:

The first statement “Parents of disabled children should be less strict than other parents” resulted in: (pre mean=1.03, pre std=1.253, pre mode=3; post mean=2.81, post std=1.26, post mode=3; $r=0.646$).

The second statement “Physically disabled persons are not as intelligent as non-disabled ones” resulted in: (pre mean=1.653, pre std=0.882, pre mode=1; post mean=1.835, post std=0.84, post mode=2; $r=0.417$).

The third statement “Disabled people are usually easier to get along with” resulted in: (pre mean=3.066, pre std=0.989, pre mode=3; post mean=2.967, post std=0.966, post mode=3; $r=0.569$).

The fourth statement “Most disabled people feel sorry for themselves” resulted in: (pre mean=2.86, pre std=1.098, pre mode=3; post mean=2.76, post std=1.118, post mode=3; $r=0.502$).

The fifth statement “Disabled people are different from others” resulted in: (pre mean=2.579, pre std=1.181, pre mode=3; post mean=2.512, post std=1.148, post mode=2; $r=0.56$).

The sixth statement “There should be special schools for disabled children” resulted in: (pre mean=2.917, pre std=1.275, pre mode=4; post mean=2.653, post std=1.202, post mode=2; $r=0.481$).

The seventh statement “It would be best for disabled person to live and work in special communities” resulted in: (pre mean=2.545, pre std=1.162, pre mode=2; post mean=2.545, post std=1.183, post mode=2; $r=0.594$).

The eighth statement “It is up to the government to take care of disabled persons” resulted in: (pre mean=2.628, pre std=1.104, pre mode=2; post mean=2.512, post std=1.081, post mode, 2; $r=0.622$).

The ninth statement “Most disabled people worry a great deal” resulted in: (pre mean=2.902, pre std=0.9, pre mode=3; post mean=2.909, post std=0.913, post mode=3; $r=0.473$).

The tenth statement “Disabled people should not be expected to meet the same standards as non-disabled people” resulted in: (pre mean=2.628, pre std=1.191, pre mode=2; post mean=2.562, post std=1.147, post mode=2; $r=0.581$)

The eleventh statement “Disabled people are not as happy as non-disabled one” resulted in: (pre mean= 2.479, pre std=1.05, pre mode=3; post mean=2.488, post std=1.134, post mode=3; $r=0.537$).

The twelfth statement “Severely disabled people are harder to get along with than those with minor disabilities” resulted in: (pre mean=2.62, pre std=0.968, pre mode=2; post mean=2.57, post std=1.039, post mode=3; $r=0.441$).

The thirteenth statement “It is almost impossible for a disabled person to lead a normal life” resulted in: (pre mean=2.537, pre std=1.096, pre mode=2; post mean=2.347, post std=1.062, post mode=2; $r=0.533$).

The fourteenth statement “You should not expect to much from disabled person” resulted in: (pre mean=2.579, pre std=1.063, pre mode=3; post mean=2.554, post std=1.064, post mode=2; $r=0.562$).

The fifteenth statement “Disabled people tend to keep to themselves much of the time” resulted in: (pre mean=3.099, pre std=0.945, pre mode=3; post mean=2.876, post std=1.037, post mode=2; $r=0.561$).

The sixteenth statement “Disabled people are more easily upset than non-disabled people” resulted in: (pre mean=2.917, pre std=1.069, pre mode=3; post mean=2.727, post std=1.049, post mode=3; $r=0.47$).

The seventeenth statement “Disabled persons cannot have a normal social life” resulted in: (pre mean=2.074, pre std=1.026, pre mode=2; post mean=2.207, post std=1.056, post mode=2; $r=0.516$).

The eighteenth statement “Most disabled people feel that they are not as good as other people” resulted in: (pre mean=2.835, pre std=0.978, pre mode=3; post mean=2.843, post std=1.025, post mode=3; $r=0.531$).

The nineteenth statement “You have to be careful of what you say when you are with disabled people” resulted in: (pre mean=3.554, pre std=1.095, pre mode=4; post mean=3.355, post std=1.196, post mode=3; $cc=0.567$).

The twentieth statement “Disabled people are often grochy” resulted in: (pre mean=2.322, pre std=0.942, pre mode=3; post mean=2.273, post std=0.983, post mode=2; $cc=0.642$).

The average score, standard deviation for both the pre and post survey were as follows:

Pre: 1. Mean=53.65289

Post: 1. Mean=52.30579

2. Standard Deviation=9.677044

2. Standard Deviation=11.88616

The correlation coefficient (r) of the pre survey versus the post survey score resulted in 0.815696 yielding a positive change in attitude toward persons with disabilities.

CHAPTER FIVE

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Introduction

The author began his research with the goal of finding out what adolescents with out disabilities attitudes were concerning individuals with disabilities. He found through research that adolescents typically held negative views of individuals with disabilities. The author believed that these negative attitudes could be changed if the adolescents were educated and informed about individuals who have disabilities. The author found a group of adolescents participating in a Pre-College Summer program conducted at the University of Wisconsin-Stout and contended that they would have negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities as in the findings of Cook and Semmel (1999). Cook and Semmel (1999) found that children with out disabilities saw children with disabilities as socially undesirable in academic work.

The author hypothesized that once children attending the Pre-College Summer Program at the University of Wisconsin-Stout are educated and informed about individuals with disabilities they, will change their pre-existing negative attitudes about the disabled to more positive attitudes. The author found his research hypothesis to be a realistic possibility as McCabe (1993) found that once adolescents are more informed and educated about individuals who have disabilities their attitudes tend to become positive.

Summary

The subjects that participated in pre and post workshop showed significant change in attitudes between pre ATDP Form O and post ATDP Form O results. The author found that statement one “Parents of disabled children should be less strict than other parents” yielded a significant change in pre versus post attitudes. There was a positive

change in attitude as related to pre and post scores. Where as children's initial opinions were that parents should be strict and/or more strict on individuals changed to more positive scores. The reason for this change in direction of scores may be attributed to the work shop which depicted individuals with disabilities as functional responsible individuals who could be successful and lead independent lives. As Freeman (2000) found, a major contributing force in the rejection of individuals with disabilities as seeing them as dissimilar and therefore unattractive. Subjects may have seen similarities between themselves and individuals with disabilities and may have felt they should be treated by the same standards as adolescents with out disabilities.

Statement two "Physically disabled persons are not as intelligent as non-disabled ones" did not result in a significant change in attitudes in both pre and post scores. Generally subjects disagreed with the analogy that individuals with disabilities are not as intelligent as individuals with out disabilities. This may be due to prior experience with individuals with disabilities such as family members and/or classmates who were successful. Statement three "Disabled people are usually easier to get along with" yielded a slight increase in positive results in that subjects acquired more information about individuals with disabilities which may have influenced some attitude change.

The author found as did Florin and Cole (1994) adolescents attitudes concerning individuals with disabilities tend to change when subjects receive information about disabling conditions and are able to comprehend them. The workshop may have enabled individuals to distinguish between various disabilities and dispelled the mascot and/baby mentality as Cook and Semmel (1999) found. Cook and Semmel (1999) found that children who have disabilities are not treated as peers, but rather as babies or someone smaller. The workshop may have made the subjects see individuals with disabilities as peers.

Statement four “Most disabled people feel sorry themselves” did not yield a significant change in pre and post results. Prior experience with individuals with disabilities may have influenced their decisions. Subjects may have had prior experiences with successful individuals who have disabilities or may have disabilities themselves and they may not identify with feeling sorry for themselves. Statement five “Disabled people are different from others” did not yield a significant change in attitude scores. For the most part subjects disagreed with the statement. This may be the result of subjects having positive experiences with individuals with disabilities. Subjects also may have thought of the statement in recreational terms as Cook and Semmel (1999) explained that generally children see them as peers in settings in which play is their interaction.

Statement six “There should be special schools for disabled children” did not yield any significant results. Generally subjects disagreed with statement six in both pre and post results. Statement seven “It would be best for disabled persons to live and work in special communities” did not yield a significant change in pre and post results. Subjects disagreed with statement seven in pre and post results. The author found that in the case of statement eight “It is up to the government to take care of disabled persons” subjects disagreed in both pre and post surveys. The author finds that this may be the result of the subjects believing that individuals with disabilities can be self-sufficient. Statement nine “Most disabled people worry a great deal” did not yield any significant changes in both pre and post results. Generally subjects disagreed with statement nine. This may be due to prior experience with individuals with disabilities. Prior interactions with persons with disabilities may equate the degree of worries an individual with disabilities has as that of a non-disabled person.

Statement ten, “Disabled people should not be expected to meet the same standards as non-disabled people”, did not yield any significant difference in pre and post results.

Subjects disagreed with statement ten. This may be the result of subjects having classmates who have disabilities who meet the same standards that they do in school. Also some of the subjects may have disabilities themselves and therefore may see themselves just as capable as their non-disabled peers.

Statement eleven “Disabled people are not as happy as non-disabled ones” did not yield a significant change in pre and post results. Generally subjects disagreed with statement eleven. This may be the result of individuals with out disabilities having interactions with people with disabilities where they may have expressed happiness or they may themselves have a disability. Subjects may have seen commonalties between themselves and individuals with disabilities and therefore came to the conclusion that there is no difference between the two populations.

Statement twelve “Severely disabled people are harder to get along with than those with minor disabilities” did not result in any significant change in pre and post results. Subjects generally disagreed with statement twelve. Subjects may have or had experience with individuals with disabilities and therefor shaped their opinions. Statement thirteen “It is almost impossible for a disabled person to lead a normal life” did not yield any significant change in pre and post results. The author found that subjects disagreed with statement thirteen. This may be the result of individuals with out disabilities having healthy positive peer relationships with individuals who have disabilities. Subjects may have disabilities and they may see themselves as leading normal lives.

Statement fourteen “You should not expect too much from disabled persons” did not yield any significant change in pre and post attitudes. Subjects disagreed with statement fourteen. Subjects may feel that disabled individuals are capable of achieving goals and should have things expected of them. Statement fifteen “Disabled people tend to keep to

themselves much of the time” did not yield any significant change in pre and post results.

Subjects disagreed with statement fifteen. This may be the result of interactions that subjects have had with individuals who have disabilities or they themselves may have disabilities and feel that they are an extravert.

Statement sixteen “Disabled people are more easily upset than non-disabled people” did not yield any significant change in results between pre and post scores. Subjects disagreed with statement sixteen. This may be the result of prior experiences with individuals with disabilities or they may have disabilities themselves. Statement seventeen “Disabled persons have a normal social life” did not yield any significant results between pre and post results. Subjects disagreed with statement seventeen. This may be the result of non-disabled individuals seeing people with disabilities have normal lives or themselves have disabilities.

Statement eighteen “Most disabled people feel that they are not as good as other people” did not yield any significant results between pre and post scores. Generally people disagreed with statement eighteen. This may be because they have seen positive examples of individuals with disabilities and they themselves may have disabilities and see themselves as just as good as their peers. Statement nineteen “You have to be careful of what you say when you are with disabled people” did not yield any significant differences between pre and post scores. Generally subjects were ambiguous to statement nineteen. This may be the result of the subjects concern for not offending individuals with disabilities. Statement twenty “Disabled people are often grouchy” did not yield any significant differences between pre and post scores. Generally subjects disagreed with statement twenty. This may be the result of positive interactions that individuals with out disabilities have had with the individuals who have disabilities or subjects themselves may have disabilities and see themselves as not being grouchy.

Conclusion

In conclusion subjects prior experience may have had an influence on the subjects attitude to the survey pre and post workshop. The author found that prior experience with individuals who have disabilities is crucial in forming attitudes toward the disabled as Woodard (1995) found. Woodard (1995) found that limited experience with individuals who have disabilities can influence the attitudes of individuals who don't have disabilities. Studies have found that direct contact with the disabled can positively influence the attitudes of non-disabled individuals. Van Hook (1992) found that increased contact that is cooperative and intimate can improve the attitudes of non-disabled individuals.

It appears that contact with individuals who have disabilities increases perceived similarities, enhances sympathy, and facilitates social acceptance by non-disabled individuals. Anderson and Antonak (1992) found that contact is essential to forming opinions of individuals with disabilities. During the workshop the author noted that some of the participants expressed that they had a disability and/or had a family member or friend who had one.

The subjects who participated in the study may be having more interactions with individuals who have disabilities through school and other activities. Through the creation of IDEA, ADA, and other strides to make education more inclusive concerning individuals with disabilities many of these social interactions were facilitated. Increased social interactions may be the reason for positive attitudes about individuals with disabilities. Generally the subject's attitude did not change in pre and post survey. The author viewed this consistency in attitudes between the pre and post survey as meaning that the results for the pre and post survey were reliable.

The author notes that some of the subjects did not participate in the pre and post workshop and exhibited maladaptive behavior. They would try to interfere with the workshop by taking pens from participating subjects, and tried to physically harm subjects that wanted to be participate in the study. The author talked to the Pre College Counselors about this behavior and they described some of the subjects participating in this behavior as being diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder and/or Bipolar Disorder. The counselors expressed that they had a hard time with the subjects in question because some refused to take their medications.

Recommendations

It appears that social interaction between disabled and non-disabled individuals was a key factor in bridging gaps between the two. It also seems as though, that as the population of disabled individuals seems to grow more people are becoming aware of what a disability is and that individuals with disabilities have just as diverse of a population as their non-disabled counterparts. Therefore, the establishment of courses concerning individuals with disabilities in elementary schools, high schools, and universities would go a long way in educating teachers and students about disabilities. Educating Americans is key so we don't become ignorant to the fact that individuals with disabilities do exist and should be respected in the same manner that one respects their non-disabled peers.

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APPENDIX A
MODIFIED REVISED YUKER'S ATDP SCALE
AND KEY FOR THE MEAN

Revised ATDP--Form 0

Identification Number _____

Race/Ethnicity _____

Age _____

SD-Strongly Disagree **D**-Disagree **N**-Neutral (have no opinion) **A**-Agree **SA**-Strongly Agree

Disagree < > Agree
(Circle One)

- | | |
|---|-------------|
| 1. Parents of disabled children should be less strict than other parents. | SD D N A SA |
| 2. Physically disabled persons are not as intelligent as non-disabled ones. | SD D N A SA |
| 3. Disabled people are usually easier to get along with. | SD D N A SA |
| 4. Most disabled people feel sorry for themselves. | SD D N A SA |
| 5. Disabled people are different from others. | SD D N A SA |
| 6. There should be special schools for disabled children. | SD D N A SA |
| 7. It would be best for disabled persons to live and work in special communities. | SD D N A SA |
| 8. It is up to the government to take care of disabled persons. | SD D N A SA |
| 9. Most disabled people worry a great deal. | SD D N A SA |
| 10. Disabled people should not be expected to meet the same standards as non-disabled people. | SD D N A SA |
| 11. Disabled people are not as happy as non-disabled one. | SD D N A SA |
| 12. Severely disabled people are harder to get along with than those with minor disabilities. | SD D N A SA |

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| 13. It is almost impossible for a disabled person to lead a normal life. | SD D N A SA |
| 14. You should not expect too much from disabled persons. | SD D N A SA |
| 15. Disabled people tend to keep to themselves much of the time. | SD D N A SA |
| 16. Disabled people are more easily upset than non-disabled people. | SD D N A SA |
| 17. Disabled persons cannot have a normal social life. | SD D N A SA |
| 18. Most disabled people feel that they are not as good as other people. | SD D N A SA |
| 19. You have to be careful of what you say when you are with disabled people. | SD D N A SA |
| 20. Disabled people are often grouchy. | SD D N A SA |

The Key for Mean

1 = Strongly Disagree

2 = Disagree

3 = Neutral

4 = Agree

5 = Strongly Agree

APPENDIX B

PARENTAL PERMISSION SLIP

I understand that my child's participation in this study is strictly voluntary and he/she may discontinue participation at any time without any prejudice. I understand that the purpose of this study is to investigate adolescents' and young adults' knowledge of individuals with disabilities and their opinion towards them. I further understand that any information about my child that is collected during this study will be held in the strictest confidence and will not be part of any permanent record. I understand that at the conclusion of this study all records, which identify individual participants, will be destroyed. I also understand that there are no risks involved other than the knowledge that my child has participated in research about her/his opinion regarding persons with disabilities both pre-disability awareness workshop and post-disability awareness workshop.

Signature of guardian(s): _____ date: _____

Signature of participant(s): _____ date: _____

NOTE: Questions or concerns about participation in the research or subsequent complaints should be addressed first to the researcher: Michael Nickson (715) 232-1381 or research advisor: Dr. Robert Peters, Rehab and Counseling, 250F Vocational Rehab Bldg, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone (715) 232-2505 and second to Dr. Ted Knous, Chair, UW-Stout Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research, 11 HH, UW-Stout, Menomonie, WI, 54751, phone (715) 232-1126.