



**An Evaluation of the Effects of Special Education Course and Observation-Based
Interaction Sharings on Developing Positive Attitudes of Students Enrolled in
Education Faculties towards Individuals with Special Educational Needs**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to find out how effective introduction and interaction sharings with individuals with Special Educational Needs (SEN) effect the university students who are taught to be teachers at the universities; and to shed advanced researches which will be planned in future in this field. In this study ‘single group pre-test post-test experimental design without control group’ among the other experimental models has been used. The reason of choosing this model is to present effectiveness of the practised programme and interaction model with changing attitudes. ‘Attitude Scale for the Individuals Effected from Disabilities’ developed by Yüker, Block and Young (1970) was carried out for defining the attitudes of students towards the individuals affected from handicap in this study. According to the results of the study, pre-test point of the candidate students is 2.85 and final test point of them is 3.61 and in comparing these two different points, it is found that there is a statistically meaningful difference for pre-test. In other words, the attitudes of the students towards students with SEN have been changed in positive way. Also, it was found that the university students’ attitudes have been increased in positive way.

I. Introduction

Attitudes are whole of the pre-shaped emotions, ideas and the beliefs which show continuity to the groups, individuals for objects and thinkings (Ross-Hill, 2009, McGregor ve Elaine, 2001). According to Social Learning Theory, behaviors and attitudes effect each other (Fiscus and Mandel, 1983; Wiener and Tardif, 2004; Cole, Waldron and Majd, 2004). An attitude is not an aspect coming by born but a feature acquired via learning afterwards. (Maras and Brown, 2000; Cassady, 2011). Parents, firends, media and personal livings are some of the factors that play an important role in consisting of the attitudes (McGregor and Elaine, 2001). Attitudes are explained as organized by experience, acting in the existence of connected situations and objects and preparing / prepared for the positive and negative reactions (Anderson, 1988). Smith (1968) and Ryan (2009) defined the attitudes as the tendency which made someone's emotion, thinking and behaviours about an psychological object regular. Attitude, in general, is the possible reaction tendency of an individual against a fact or an object in his/her environment (Inceoğlu, 2010). As understood from these explanations, attitudes can be said to be the whole of the emotions, thinkings and beliefs consist against thinking, objects or events.

It is remarked that for positive change of the society's general attitudes against disabilities; education and introduction are effective ways (Özyürek, 1977). Society's expectations and attitudes are significant in a good level education and rehabilitation of the individual with SEN. If the attitudes towards the individuals with Special Educational Needs are negative in the institutions of education and rehabilitation, the pratices about special education supply services for these individuals can be insufficient and this makes individuals be hard in over coming his/her disability (Sari and İlik, 2014, Sarı, 2002; Bender, 1995; Özyürek, 2006, English, 1971). Once being thought that there are more differences than similarities in individuals effected from insufficiency (Akçamete, 2009), the other people in the society can be thought to be in the attitudes changing positive from negative towards the individuals with disabilities (Özyürek, 2006). It should be struggled with the negative attitudes blocking the individuals, in general, with disability to be together with society (Dyson, Farrell, Polat, Hutcheson & Gallannaugh, 2004; Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994). In developing countries, the general social attitudes towards the disabled people are so appropriate and positive in

words; however, the reality is that the attitudes towards disabled people are often reflected negative in non-oral emotions (Daruwalla and Darcy, 2005). The negative attitudes towards disabled people also affect them negatively to get supplied from social services. The experts in education may present limited services because of their negative attitudes towards disabled people and the services cannot be sufficient (Rosenthal, Chan, Livneh, 2006). It is said that cultural values are the most important factor to define attitudes towards disabled people to be negative or positive. (Frosted and Pijl, 2007). Within this situation, it is anticipated that the results reflecting West's attitude should be different in Turkish Society (Smelter, Rasch and Yudewitz, 1994). However; the research for the attitudes towards disabled people are limited. Akbuğa and Gürsel (2007) studied the attitudes of the Physical Education and Sports Department students towards disabled people. They observed Physical Education and Sports Department students' text reading and being informed about this person's features affected their attitudes towards disabled people positively. In addition to this, Özyürek (1977) reported that observing the lives of disabled people and sharing this in the classroom effected teacher candidates' attitudes positively. There are many researches showing that information is effective in changing the attitudes of the students and teachers towards disabled people in the other countries (Jones and Black, 1996; Jameison; 1986, Brooks 1971; Helton and Helton, 1977; Glass and Meckler, 1972; Brooks and Bransford, 1971).

Seccombe (2007) found that first cycle nursing education has positive effects in the attitudes towards students with SEN but this difference is not meaningful. However, Şahin and Akyol (2010) researched if there is a difference between nursing and medicine students' attitudes towards disabled people because of their education and they found that medicine students have more positive attitudes because their knowledge about disabled people is more and they have more interaction with disabled people during their education.

The findings explained above reflect that the existence of a successful inclusive education programme can be possible only with various education and informations which supply the improvement and respect of personal differences. In this context, with the inclusive program, students with special needs and peers, from the aspect of social interaction as well as in teaching activities should also be given the opportunity to progress together and to be together. This unity in the attitudes towards the students

with special needs, special psychological needs of individuals, the fact that the positive effects of social and academic development should not be overlooked (Cassady, 2011). Teachers feelings about them can help their students with a disability; can lead to positive changes in their thinking about themselves (Cassady, 2011; Horne & Timmon, 2009). Therefore, the attitudes of individuals with special needs in order to provide effective integrated situations need to be converted to a more favorable. It is also necessary to know well the variables that play an important role in the formation of attitudes. These variables are established between the special needs of individuals with great communication and knowledge gained about their roles. Because courses are conducted with lectures related to Special Education in the Faculty of Education, the course should provide the students to interact with individuals affected by the failure. In addition, examples of the content of the courses related to special education must be enriched with applications and audio-visuais. Of a period of special training courses for the duration of the course while the area with special needs watching films about the individuals, it is believed that the concluding observations of the institutions they go to the period covered by the special education courses experiences gained in applications such as sharings the experiences with special needs is effective in developing positive change of attitudes towards individuals.

Melekoğlu (2011) in providing for students with individual with special educational needs to interact with their teachers inform research indicated positive attitudes to gain a better level. Positive attitudes of the individual by interacting with a large number of research demonstrated that effective interaction increases significantly (Au and Man, 2006; Chen et al., 2002; Krajewski and Flaherty, 2000; Murray and Chambers, 1991; Oermann & Lindgren, 1995; Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006; Slevin, 1995; Slevin and Sines, 1996; Stachura and Garven, 2003; Tervo, Azuma, Palmer, and Redinius, 2002; Tervo, Palmer and Redinius, 2004).

Special needs, rather than build in informing alone are or interaction for changing attitudes towards individuals, to interact after a successful briefing, attitude more positive aspects of the sharings of students in the class are said to be effective in winning (Anthony, 1972; Haney and Rabin, 1984). Lee and Rodda (1994) reported that information led changes after interactions in addition to the need for positive results, and they stated that information presented both in cases where the interaction with the

positive attitude earned more successful. Barr and Bracchit (2008) in their study investigated that the effect of creating the attitude of interacting with individuals SEN, the teacher training 1, 2 and the changing attitude scores of the 3rd grade students, but last year students' attitudes towards these individuals change in a positive direction and that the more realistic thoughts and feelings they claimed that develop. Considering the interaction of changing attitudes desirable to have in the development of positive attitudes in order to create sufficient effect which can be said that prior to requirement the disclosure must work effectively. Limitation of these types of research in Turkey on the obstacles to the formation of positive attitudes led to the need for such a study so this study was designed.

The aims of this study are to explore, 1) the impact on the students how to share among themselves educated to become teachers with effective information and interaction with individuals with special educational needs, and 2) to shed light on such advanced researches

II. METHOD

The detailed information is given about the method of this study in the following

II. I. Research Method

In this study, experimental model of 'one group pre-test and post test experimental design ungrouped' was used. The reason to select this method was to determine the effects of sharings of the special needs students' observations in special education classes on their attitudes. However, the reason not to use ungroup design is that there are not students who have not received courses during one period in the same department (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008).

Table 1: Research Model

Group	Pre-test	Practice	Post-test
G	O1	X	O2

G: Group,

O1: Preliminary measurements taken from the experimental group

O2: The last measurement taken from the experimental group

II.2. Study Group

171 students from Necmettin Erbakan University, Ahmet Keleşoğlu Education Faculty, Department of Elementary Mathematics Education 2014-2015 Academic year Fall Semester 4th class and 85 of whom day class students and 86 of whom evening class students participated in this study.

Table II: Detailed Information for Participants According to their Sexes and Training Schedules

Students	Females	Males	Total
Elementary Mathematics Education I (Day Class Students)	62	23	85
Elementary Mathematics Education II (Evening Class Students)	71	15	86
Total	123	38	171

II.3. Data Collection Instruments

In this research, to determine the attitudes of the university students, the Disability Attitude Scale 'O' form, developed by Yuker, Block and Young (1970) was used. The aim of the scale is to measure the students' attitudes towards individuals with special educational needs in general. Relatively low scores be taken from the scale show that an individual has different attitudes towards the students with SEN but relative to the high score as actual individuals with special educational needs given that show they are not perceived differently from those with special needs. The reliability of the test was calculated using test-retest reliability coefficient which indicates $r = .57$ varied between $r = .83$. The scale, was translated from English to Turkish and adapted by Ozyurek (1977) in Turkey and he calculated the reliability using test-retest reliability technique which was $.76$, while for the content validity of the scale three experts' perceptions were consulted. The scale consists of 20 items in total and was prepared 6-point Likert-type format. There are +3 agree totally, +2 agree, +1 agree little, -1 little

not agree, -2 not agree, -3 definitely not agree. Items in the scale 2, 5, 6, 11 and 12 are scored in reverse order. After considering all the material collected, the total score was obtained by adding 60 points to eliminate negative values. The maximum score which can be obtained is 120. Receiving high scores from the scale means that individuals with SEN were perceived in a similar way as individuals without SEN. A low score indicated that students with SEN are perceived differently from students without SEN (Özyürek, 2006).

The students who are enrolled in Primary Mathematics Teacher Education Department are requested to visit and observe the institutions and the students with SEN for five weeks respectively, then record their observations for five weeks. After their recordings, every week in 10 minutes of the last 25 minutes of the third (last) course hours they were asked to share their observations with each other, taking advantage of the four-person small group interaction. Then, the two minutes were spent by each group for the presentation of the discussion in the group in the remaining last 15 minutes. Thus, the observations from each group were shared with the other groups.

In the fall semester of 2014-2015 of the academic year, three -hour courses were prepared for the fourteen weeks. Course contents were prepared in accordance with the Higher Education Council program developed by the Committee in that Council. Education program on three hours per week for fourteen weeks were presented. While the course programmes were adapted during the lectures, video presentations, questions and answer techniques were also used and also their experiences were shared among the students related to the experiences of individuals with SEN in the schools. The course contents and observations taken from the experiences of the students with special educational needs were enriched with some experienced stories and visuals of the individuals with SEN in other places.

Table III: The Course Contents adapted to the Students in the Universities

	The Content of “Special Education” course
Course	Pre-test Practices, Introduction to the Course Contents, Information about the

1:	Practice of Course
2:	Course Definition of the Special Education, The Purpose of Special Education, Basic Principles, Classification, Prevalence, the Medical Reasons and Causes, Definition and Education of Disability
3:	Course Individuals with Intellectual Disability and Their Trainings
4:	Course Individuals with Specific Learning Difficulties and Their Trainings
5:	Course Individuals with Attention and Hyperactivity Disorders and Their Trainings
6:	Course Training Individuals with Language and Speech Difficulties
7:	Course Education of Individuals with Physical and Chronic Illnesses
8:	Course Education of Talented and Gifted Individuals
9:	Course The Hearing Impaired Individuals and Their Trainings
10:	Course Individuals with Visually Impaired and Their Trainings
11:	Course Education of Individuals with Emotional and Behavioral Difficulties
12:	Course Strategies to Practices of Inclusive Education in Schools Effectively
13:	Course Evaluation of the Implementation Training Models in Developed Countries (USA and England)
	Course Measurement and Evaluation and the Post-test Adaptations

14:	
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At the end of the 2013-2014 school year, the data were collected from the students through the adaptation of the Scale under the supervision of the lecturers. The data collection through the scale took between 10 and 14 minutes. The implementation of the scale was carried out according to these steps below.

Table IV: The Post-test Araptations Phases

Phase 1	The students were informed about the scale and the contents and about how it should be fulfilled
Phase 2	The students searched by the researcher "Attitude Scale for People with handicaps" was applied .
Phase 3	2014-2015 academic year in the fall semester 3 hours per week for 14 weeks " Special Education course" was applied by the researcher.
Phase 4	At the end of the subjects experimental procedure " Attitude Scale for People with Handicaps " was applied again.

II.4.Data Analyses

The data to determine the impact of the special education course on the fourth grade math students' attitudes towards individuals with special educational needs were analysed by using SPSS 19 Statistical Programme. To test the difference between the pre-test and post-test scores taken from the subjects with the the "Attitude Scale for

People with Handicaps", t-test (paired-samples t test) was applied in the dependent groups. The statistical significance was accepted at the 0.5 level.

III. THE FINDINGS

The data collected from the scales were analysed with using “t test” results of dependent group for comparing the pre-test and post-test results of the students in this study which aims to find out if the 3 hours courses a week “Special Education Courses (information) hold 14 weeks were effective or not in changing the attitudes of the 4th grade Elementary Math Class Students towards handicaped people. The findings were presented in **Table V**.

Table V: The Data Taken from the Department of Elementary Mathematics Education Students with Pre-test and Post-test Results

	n	x	Ss	Sd	r	t	p
Pre-test	171	2.85	11.021				
				.876	.77080	-5.351*	.000
Post-test	171	3.61	12.721				

*p<.05

As shown in Table V, the pre-test scores of the teachers 2.85, compared to pre-test and post-test scores of 3.61 on a post-test scores which were found to be statistically significant difference in favor of the positive attitudes. The students' attitudes towards failure have changed in a positive direction. Experiences an increase in positive attitudes of the students have been provided.

IV. DISCUSSION

According to the results, the special education courses have a positive and significant impact on the attitudes of the fourth grade Math Teaching students towards the individuals with inability. In addition, the attitudes towards students' attitudes towards the individuals with inability changed positively.

It is occurred that to inform the Type field, make observations in institutions, the

sharings of the youth with the students and the researches which change the attitudes towards the individuals with disabilities positively and significantly, support the findings of this research (Alptekin& Batık,2013; Moroz&the others, 2010; Sari, Bektaş and Altıparmak, 2010; Özyürek, 2010; Flower et al, 2007; Akbuğa & Gürsel, 2007).

Akbuğa and Gursel (2007) proved that the informing by reading a panel text that the individuals with special needs express their feelings, thoughts and the difficulties faced with, impact positively and significantly the attitudes towards individuals with special needs. The result of this research supports the result of this search.

The attitudes of the students who are in different departments of the University and who take or do not take classes informing special needed individual have been compared and in towards of those who take class, meaningful difference have been found. In comparison with the third grade students studying in special education departments of universities and the beginners by utilizing “Attitude Scale for People with Disabilities”, it was found that the third grade students’ attitudes were more positive (Buell, Halam, Gamel ve Scheer, 1999).

As a result of this research that conducted with college students; it was determined that the attitudes of students towards people with disabilities were moderate (Nagata, 2007). In another study, in general it was found that students who are studying in the field of health are insufficient positive attitudes towards disability (Tervo, Palmer,2004). Seccomb (2007) has identified that the nursing students in New Zealand have positive attitudes towards disabled people. Daruwall and Darcy (2005) stated that the attitudes of nursing students and nurses in rehabilitations are more positive than the tourism students. Chen, BRODWEAR's, Cardoso, and Chen, (2002) stated that rehabilitation students have more positive attitudes than business students. In other words, all of these results; The most important reasons for this difference were listed as follows; 1) Increased levels of education, 2) to be training for the disabled people and 3) there is sort of pre-form positive relationships with disabilities develop positive attitudes towards people with disabilities (Daruwalla and Darcy 2005). The results were obtained in the researches that just informing doesn't achieve the expected results and all students have positive attitudes at the same level. However, observations of students with special needs in this study showed that be informed about the student with special needs is

more successful to gain positive attitudes.

In addition, some researches proved that education have an impact on the attitudes of the individuals with special needs; however it is not sufficient to chance the attitudes permanently (Flower and the others, 2007; Stachura and Garven, 2007; Tröster, 1990). The teaching program for the individuals affected by a short term inability was a panel subject in a research that university students' knowledge level and attitudes related the special needs and it consisted of the stories and the physical evaluation of the individual with special needs. After this information students' knowledge level and attitudes has changed positively and significantly. Knowledge level of students related the inadequacy was not long-term, however positive attitudes of students continued for three months (Moroz, Gonzales-Ramos, Festinger, Langer, Zefferino & Kalet 2010).

As understood from the results of this study, together with information, sharing the observation in the institutions of these students positively affect the attitudes towards disabled individuals, but; Although the knowledge is forgotten because of the marching time, the observations in the institutions and sharing the observations, the changes occurring in the students' attitudes were able to provide for years (Özyürek, 2010). In this study only the effects of information has been considered and the change that occurred after information has continued or not will be tested in a next research.

The teacher candidates who complete their education without having positive attitudes towards handicapped individuals are considered to be very difficult to change later (Brooks, and Bransford, 1971) So the content of the Special Education courses in the faculties of education it is important to be planned in a qualified way. That the teacher who has disabled students during his/her teaching life has positive attitudes will affect the quality of his education. For that reason it is important to inform the candidates so that they decrease their lacks towards students with special educational needs (Golin, 1970; Roehrer, 1961). Thus the teachers should present more positive attitudes; therefore requirement of giving Special Education Courses in Education Faculties is gaining big importance. It is even important to design special education courses with appropriate content in various fields like engineering departments because the engineers can be come across in every fields of life.

In the next studies, the effects of the special education course on the attitudes

towards the individuals with special needs of teacher candidates who are in the other departments of the education faculties can be research in advanced. Also, long term effects of education faculties on the other 1st cycle departments can be researched. The further researches should be planned for the teachers participating in research to get deeply richer findings for their emotions and ideas by relating their attitudes towards handicaped individuals after starting their jobs with special education courses via interview method.

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