



# Children's Perceptions of Peers with Disabilities

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## Abstract

Children's books with characters that have disabilities have been touted as an avenue to introduce children to their peers with disabilities. Children's literature specialists have suggested that the use of these books may result in a more positive attitude on the part of children without disabilities toward their peers with disabilities. Working with fifth grade children in an urban school setting, structured book discussion groups were held during the reading of two books that feature a main character with a learning disability. Data was gathered using an attitude survey, audio-tapes of group discussions and focus group interviews before and after the intervention. Results showed there was not a clear increase in positive attitudes toward peers with learning disabilities. In fact, the focus on the topic may have reinforced some children's negative attitudes. Further study is warranted to examine the premise that these books will improve children's attitudes toward their peers.

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## Keywords

Learning Disability, children's literature, attitudes

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Within classrooms across our country, children form a social pecking order. There are always groups, many involving power obtained through bullying, popularity and social isolation (Denos, 2003; Hazler, and Denham, 2002). The experience of being relegated to a place within a social order is played out in classrooms every day all over the world. For the 6.6 million children in the United States public schools who are identified with some type of specific disability, this experience is generally not benign. The socially popular students often do not let others, including those with disabilities, be a part of groups (Estell et al., 2008; Sale & Carey, 1995).

Currently 13.7% of the school age population is identified with a disability under the federal law for children with disabilities (U. S. Department of Education, 2005). Children with a learning (LD) or mental disability make up over 50% of the children who are identified under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U. S. DOE). These children, especially those identified as LD are currently being served primarily in the general education classroom due to changes in the special education system. These changes have increased the number of children with disabilities who are now in classrooms all or part of each day with their non-disabled peers (Causton-Theoharis & Theoharis, 2008). Unfortunately, these children are not always integrated fully into the social world of the classroom; they are isolated physically and emotionally from their peers in both instructional and social settings. This can be seen clearly in the following statement made by one of the children in our study, “They (‘The special eds’) all sat at the same table.” As the students in our study identified, the special education students all sat together in the cafeteria, and were seemingly physi-

cally and emotionally isolated from their peers. In designing our study, we chose to examine the attitudes of fifth grade students to their peers with cognitive disabilities, and to offer an intervention, through book reading and discussion groups, which we hypothesized would increase the positive attitudes toward their peers with disabilities.

#### *Children’s Literature and Multicultural Education.*

The purposes of using literature in an elementary classroom are unlimited. Importantly, Rosenblatt (1991) states that literature can be used to gain knowledge and increase our aesthetic experience. Literature is also

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used to instill a sense of empathy for those who face discrimination and other hardships. The use of literature in elementary classrooms to reduce prejudice against a marginalized group of society is not a new idea (Banks, 1994; Bennett, 1999). Over the last twenty years, it has become part of a teacher’s job to ensure that children are being exposed to literature from a wide cultural background. Bennett states that schools should be committed not just to equal education for all, but an equitable education for all students. By teaching the values of multicultural education from an early age, the hope is that prejudice will be reduced and all children will acquire the skills they need to be successful adults (Banks; Bennett).

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Building on the concepts established by advocates of multicultural literature, Sapon-Shevin (1982) called on teachers to use books written about children with disabilities to educate children about disabilities. Sapon-Shevin's goals are identical to the goals that Banks (1994) and Bennett (1999) advocate: to reduce prejudice, and to allow children with disabilities to enter into the social world of school as full participants. Regrettably, Sapon-Shevin's recommendation has not been widely heeded.

#### *Children's Attitudes and Perceptions Research*

Since the implementation of PL 94-142 (IDEA) in 1975, a body of work has been produced in which researchers have studied and attempted to change the attitudes of children toward their peers with disabilities. Studies of the attitudes of children toward their peers with disabilities have focused on a number of different variables. Researchers have focused on attitudes toward peers who have mental disabilities (Krajewski and Flaherty, 2000), physical disabilities (Roberts and Linsell, 1997), both mental and physical disabilities (Favazza, Phillipsen, and Kumar, 2000; Kishi and Meyer, 1994), emotional and behavioral disorders (Safran, 1995), autism (Swaim and Morgan, 2001) severe learning disabilities (Lewis, 2002) and mild disabilities (Jacques, Wilton and Townsend, 1998; Sale and Carey, 1995).

In a study of the sociometric status of children who were eligible for special education services in a full inclusion school, Sale and Carey (1995) found that inclusion alone did not improve children's ability to make friends or become fully included in the social life of the school. However, in 1998, Jacques et al. found that the effects of a cooperative learning intervention on the social acceptance

of children with mild intellectual disabilities produced a positive effect on the social acceptance of children with mild disabilities by their non-disabled peers.

While several reviewers and experts in children's literature have proposed that the use of children's literature about children with disabilities with non-disabled children will promote acceptance of children with disabilities (Andrews, 1998; Heim, 1994; Kelly, 1995; Lewis and Johnson, 1982; Prater, 2003), few have actually researched this topic. Monson and Shurtleff (1979) examined change in attitudes of children toward peers with physical disabilities after the children had experienced both a film strip about a child with quadphocomelia (a birth defect resulting in a child who is missing all four limbs), and class discussions on physical disabilities. They found that after the intervention, children were more likely to rank a child with quadphocomelia higher on a list of rank ordered possible friends than prior to the intervention. This effect was evident shortly after the intervention and continued to be evident at a one-year follow up study. It should be noted that these were theoretical rankings, since none of these classrooms had a child with quadphocomelia, a very rare condition. They also found that the strongest effects were evident in classrooms where teachers spent time addressing the issue of children with physical handicaps.

#### *Purpose of This Study*

Simply having children read literature that contains positive characters with mild intellectual disabilities does not necessarily change students' attitudes. (Smith-D'Arezzo, 2003) found that students' perceptions of peers with disabilities had more to do with previous exposure (or lack thereof) to family members with similar disabilities. Based on

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this knowledge, we decided to study the effects of not only reading books with characters with disabilities, but also working through small group book discussions in an attempt to improve the attitudes of children toward their peers with mild intellectual disabilities.

In reviewing potential books for this study, we considered three criteria. First, each potential selection must include a main character with a newly diagnosed learning disability. A second criteria was to select books in which the child with a learning disability was portrayed in a positive fashion. Finally, we chose books where the character development of the child with a disability was strong giving the book some level of literary value (Prater, Dyches, & Johnstun, 2006). The principal and classroom teacher were given five

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books written for intermediate readers that fit these three criteria. From these five, *Do Bananas Chew Gum* by Jamie Gilson (1980), and *Egg-Drop Blues* (1995) by Jacqueline Turner Banks were selected. *Do Bananas* and *Egg-Drop* were chosen because they portrayed realistic situations that the school personnel felt were appropriate for their school populations. In *Do Bananas*, Sam, the main character is a sixth grader and the ‘new kid in town.’ Although he knows he has difficulty at school, he has never formally been identified with a learning disability. He works hard to

keep other children from knowing that he has problems reading, relying on his friendly nature and his great sense of humor. Eventually, his deception catches up with him and he is tested and receives some help with his learning problems. Although this book was published in 1980, the language and style of the writing are not dated, and the issues presented in the book are still appropriate for children in schools today. In *Egg-Drop*, the second book selected for this project, Jury and Judge, a set of twins, also in sixth grade, are the main characters. Judge is struggling in school and his mother pushes school personnel to test him for a learning disability at the same time that she is offering Judge alternative study methods to help him stay on top of his school work.

Our question was, if children read and discuss books that present characters with disabilities in a positive light, will the attitudes of these children toward their peers with a disability change? We specifically chose characters with learning rather than physical disabilities; we hoped to examine the attitudes toward peers with cognitive disabilities.

#### Methodology

Based on personal experience, we knew that presenting the books without guided reading is not enough to override prior knowledge and attitudes that children bring to a text. As Rosenblatt and others have pointed out, we all come to the table with our own set of prior knowledge. Kendeou and van den Broek (2005) found strong evidence that prior knowledge has “an intrusive effect on both the quantity and quality of students’ memory representation of text” (p. 239). In other words, a student’s prior knowledge or attitude toward peers with disabilities could cause him/her to either misinterpret or deny the validity of text that went against the child’s pre-

vious level of understanding. Our question then became, does reading books with guided support and activities change the attitude of children toward their peers with mild learning disabilities? In order to measure attitude, we turned to the work of Siperstein (1980). Siperstein identified attitudes toward those with disabilities as consisting of three components: cognitions, feelings, and behaviors. Cognitions include knowledge and beliefs; feelings include an evaluative dimension; and behaviors include overt actions and behavioral intentions. Based on this understanding and the earlier work of Barron (1953) and Gough (1965), Siperstein developed an attitude survey called the Adjective Checklist.

*Instrument*

The Adjective Checklist consists of adjectives derived from a sample of students' (1<sup>st</sup> through 6th grade) self generated lists of words that described someone who is liked and someone who is not liked. Siperstein extracted the 34 specific trait descriptors (adjectives) from the students' original lists to form his instrument. In completing the instrument, 2,220 children ranging in age from 8-14 years were asked to check the adjectives that describe a peer who is a friend, and peers with mental retardation, emotional disturbance, and physical disabilities. Factor analytic studies of the instrument, using data collected from the 2,220 children yielded 3 factors,

Table 1

*Adjective Checklist Factors*

Factor Name and attribute	Number of adjectives found on checklist	Examples of adjectives on checklist
P Factor (Positive)	17 adjectives	healthy, clever, friendly
N Factor (Negative)	10 adjectives	sloppy, cruel, stupid
E Factor (Empathetic)	7 adjectives	slow, sad, unhappy

which explained 48% of the variance. Siperstein (1980) labeled the three factors: P (positive) Factor, N (negative) Factor, and E (empathetic) Factor. The Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of Reliability for the checklist was .81, representing a strong measure of the test's internal consistency. Additional factor analyses found similar results. The Adjective Checklist was significantly correlated to children's behavioral intentions ( $r = .49$ ).

When administering the Adjective Checklist, the researcher introduces the students to a fictional character who has a disability in some area. For the purposes of this

study, we described an imaginary boy who had a learning disability, asking the students to circle all adjectives on the page that could describe this fictional child. Not wanting to influence the results, we did not elaborate on the disability, or give a definition. We chose to use a male child because both of the books involved in the study contained males as the main character.

*Procedure*

Working with a group of fourteen fifth grade students (ages 10 and 11) in a medium

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sized elementary school bordering a large northeastern city, we followed these steps:

1. Data were collected on the attitude of the students toward their peers with disabilities through interviewing the children in groups, interviewing the teachers and principal at the school and observing the children in the lunchroom. Throughout the interview process, we worked with small groups of children (n=3 to 6) asking leading questions and then became more analytical with our questions based on the information given by the children (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). The Adjective Checklist was also administered.
2. Each child read one of the two books chosen for the study. The books were read over a four-week period and the children met with one of the researchers each week to discuss the reading and talk about their feelings toward the book. As part of the book discussion, the researchers were explicit in their talk about the positive qualities held by the characters in the books who had learning disabilities.
3. Once the book study was complete, data were again collected using The Adjective Checklist, and interviews. A period of about six weeks elapsed between the final book session and the collection of the post project data.

The interviews were recorded and transcribed. Both of us read and analyzed the data separately, using a process described by Strauss and Corbin (1990) as “conceptualizing” the data (p. 63). Through this detailed

analysis, we both developed themes we saw as individually important, finding evidence for these themes in the interviews, pre and post checklists, and the teacher interviews, as well as the observations. We then combined our themes, finding them not unexpectedly similar and analyzed and discussed these themes together.

## Results and Discussion

### *Qualitative Analysis*

In analyzing our interview data, we found that these fifth graders saw a learning disability as a largely negative construct. We found four repeating themes as we examined the students’ views of learning disabilities. These themes were present in the pre-intervention interviews as well as throughout the book discussions, which focused on the fictional characters of Sam and Judge. This was in spite of the fact that Sam and Judge were presented in a highly positive light by the books’ authors. The four identified categories were: learning disability seen as a character deficit, learning disability seen as either the student’s or the parents’ fault, learning disability seen as a limited mental capacity and learning disability seen as a personal characteristic, not precluding the ability of that trait to be viewed as positive. Each of these categories will be examined in-depth in this section.

Within the pre-intervention interviews, both researchers noted and discussed the perception by the fifth grade students that a learning disability was seen as a character deficit: If you have a learning disability, you should work harder, study more and pay better attention in class, in other words, the disability is your own fault. Kara (all student names have been changed) summed up the feelings of many in our group when she said people with learning disabilities were, “...not

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paying attention and not gettin' a story through your head." Cindi also indicated that a child with a learning disability could do better in school, "You could study, like a lot harder." She also stated that children with LD "...don't bother to, like, listen." Dana said that if you have a learning disability, you should, "...stop ignoring your teacher." The only children who did not indicate that children with LDs could cure themselves were the two who had intimate connections with relatives with disabilities.

A second theme we identified was that of a learning disability seen as either the student's or the parents' fault. In this theme we found evidence of the broadened responsibility for studying and doing well in school being stretched from the child to the parents. When Cindi suggested that a child with a disability needed to study harder, Lindy added, "You could have your parents help you." Students also blamed the idea of not doing well in school on events of the past, ranging from having a mother who was drunk or taking drugs while pregnant to a mother who used hair dye. They also speculated that a child might have a learning disability as a result of being dropped on his/her head by a parent, primarily a mother. This speculation on responsibility was corroborated by Reba when she said, "My little brother has a learning disability 'cause he was adopted and his mom—he was a drug addicted baby."

For the most part, however, when we discussed the characters of Sam and Judge from the two books, little blame was assigned to the parents. The cause of the learning disabilities was not explored and the students did not discuss this. Ellie, however, had a difficult time with the way Sam was treated by his mother. At one part in the book, Sam's parents were arguing over the necessity of Sam taking the tests designed to identify a learning

disability. Sam's father believes that Sam is just a late bloomer and given time, he will catch up and do well. His mother states quite directly that she believes Sam may be retarded. The tone of this message agitated Ellie and she especially objected to the use of the word retarded. She stated on at least two different occasions that she did not like how Sam's mother had treated him. Nevertheless, she did not blame the mother for her son's disability.

Viewing a learning disability as a significantly limited mental capacity was a prominent theme both in our pre-interviews and in the book discussions. Several children stated that having a learning disability meant that you could learn, but not as fast as other people. Steven said that you could not, "...be in the higher reading group..." if you had a learning disability. Reba agreed and said, "You don't pick the reading up as fast as all the other people." She also said that it means you are "below proficient." Several also recommended that a person with a learning disability should be in a special class or have a special teacher, at the very least a tutor.

This theme also emerged in the specific discussion of the book characters, Sam and Judge. Steven bluntly stated that Sam did not have any friends, "...because he's dumb." Reba did not agree with this, but her statement was perhaps more telling in her interpretation of a friendship with Sam, "I wouldn't think that I would say dumb, he has learning disabilities.... If somebody's like friends with him, maybe people will start picking on both of them so they don't want to be his friend." Ellie agreed that Sam has a learning disability, but she also said, "He doesn't have, like a big disability because if he did, he would be in a special ed. class."

It is important to note that at the beginning of *Do Bananas*, Sam is a new stu-



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dent, having just moved to a new town with his family. Because of this, he does not yet have any friends. The text of the book is clear that Sam's lack of friends is due to his being a newcomer and the author goes to great lengths to make sure the reader recognizes that Sam is a fun guy, has a great sense of humor and can easily make friends. In spite of this, the students attributed Sam's lack of friends to his being "dumb."

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The students who read *Egg-Drop* also picked up on Judge's feelings of inferiority, as well as his disability, "...he kinda' doesn't understand things..." "...he has trouble getting started..." "...he has a learning disability..." "...he would get really bad grades." Most of these statements, made during the course of the book discussions could be supported by the text, but they are taken somewhat out of context and were contrary to the picture the author was attempting to portray. In spite of these comments, the preponderance of evidence from these discussions indicates that the children in the *Egg-Drop* group were able to see the character in their book as having more positive characteristics than the children in the *Do Bananas* group.

As stated above, the fourth major theme we saw pertained to a person with a learning disability as being a person who is a capable human being who is not totally stifled by the disability. This theme was evident in the pre-intervention interviews as well as the book discussions. To illustrate this point,

however, many students' positive comments came as a way of softening or ameliorating an adjacent comment:

"If you have a learning disability, you can still, like, do good at math."

"They could still know a lot of stuff, they just learn at a slower rate than other people."

"You can still learn but not as fast."

"You're still smart, but you're not as smart as everybody else. You're like, slower a little bit. Like, you don't learn as quickly."

Only one of the students at the beginning of the study noted an underlying trait that would add a positive quality to a person with a learning disability, or learning problem: "Because it's not just they have a learning disability as they can't hear what you're thinking or know what you're thinking or know how to say things cause they are human beings too. People treat them like they're completely different, but they're not. And they are very, very normal once you get to know them." This child was speaking from her own personal experience with two cousins who were described as being eleven years old, non-verbal and very slow, but as she says here, "very normal, once you get to know [them]."

For whatever reason, the students who read *Egg-Drop* had more of a propensity to see Judge as a capable human being than those who read *Bananas* saw Sam. Perhaps this is because Judge had friends right from the beginning of the book. Judge and his twin brother are in class together and they have a little cadre of friends. In addition to noticing his friends, the children in this group saw Judge as determined, full of energy, caring, talkative and curious. Seeing Judge with these positive qualities made it easier for the stu-

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dents to see Judge as a well-rounded person, not just someone with a learning disability.

While the students who read *Do Bananas* were able to name several positive qualities that Sam had: helpful, caring, loyal, fun to be with, the negative aspect of having learning problems kept emerging in the discussion. For example, even though Olivia was trying to describe what she liked about Sam, she couldn't get past the learning disability: "He's gonna', like, practice really, really hard to get, like better grades and then he's gonna' get real smart."

Finally, within the data, there were indications of the students' misconceptions of the texts. These misconceptions are seen as separate from inability to comprehend the written text. Kendeou and van den Broek (2005) describe misconception as "memory representation of the text that critically depends on [the readers'] interpretation in light of prior knowledge" (p. 235). One of students' misconceptions was discussed previously. In reading *Do Bananas*, the students thought that Sam had no friends at the beginning of the book because he was not a good reader. What made this particularly interesting was that there is a secondary character in *Do Bananas*, Alicia, who is also new to the school. Alicia does not have any friends and the students were able to accurately assess that she will have trouble making friends because she is stuck-up and thinks very highly of her own abilities. Steven correctly stated that Alicia would have difficulty making friends because she, "is just trying to sorta' like being the boss of everybody." Charles concurred with this "She's a show-off. She acts like she's perfect." At the same time, they misconstrued the author's intention of making Sam a friendly boy who quickly makes new friends in a new environment. It was evident that they relied on their own prior knowledge

of not being friends with the kids who are "special eds" to form a skewed memory representation.

**"It was evident that the students relied on their own prior knowledge of not being friends with the kids who are "special eds" to form a skewed memory representation."**

The second area of misconception also occurred in the reading of *Do Bananas*. At one point in this book, Sam has a job babysitting for two younger boys. He does a great job as a babysitter, but his employer finds out that he is unable to accurately read the notes she leaves him. She wants to encourage Sam to get the help he needs, so she tells him that she will fire him if he doesn't take the tests that are lined up at school for him to take. Charles read this as evidence that Sam was fired from his job. Again, this seems to come from his own internal set of beliefs, that if you are not capable of reading, you are not capable of holding a job, or being productive. In our book discussions, it was clear that Charles was not having difficulty comprehending the text, in general; rather he had a difficult time seeing a child with a learning disability from a positive viewpoint. Supporting the idea that Charles had negative preconceptions of children with LD is the fact that on both the pre and post tests in the adjective survey, Charles only circled negative constructs to describe a peer who has a learning disability. These two examples show clearly that the students in our study were comprehending the text correctly, while they exhibited misconceptions based on their own prior knowledge.

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### Quantitative Analysis

Although the sample size in our study was small ( $n=14$ ), we conducted descriptive analyses and T-tests to complement the qualitative data. The mean score on the pre-test Adjective Checklist was 16.50 ( $SD = 1.70$ ), while the post-test mean was 17.36 ( $SD = 2.13$ ). Both the mean pre and post test scores were under 20, indicating a negative reaction to the imaginary target child (Siperstein, Table 2

1980). It is important to note that statistical analysis showed no significant differences between total pre and post test scores or any of the subscales of the Adjective Checklist. The mean scores and standard deviations are found in Table 2. It is also important to note that significant gender differences were found on the pre-test Adjective Checklist N factor (Boys'  $M=.29$ ;  $SD=.04$ ; Girls'  $M=.11$ ;  $SD=.12$ ).

### Pre and Post Adjective Checklist Scores

Scale	N	Mean	SD
Pair 1 Total Pretest	14	16.50	1.70
Total Post test	14	17.36	2.13
Pair 2 Pre P Factor	14	.06	.13
Post P Factor	14	.06	.08
Pair 3 Pre N Factor	14	.19	.12
Post N Factor	14	.16	.09
Pair 4 pre E Factor	14	.34	.16
Post E Factor	14	.27	.22

Note. P Factor = positive factor; N Factor = negative factor; E Factor = empathetic factor.

While the small sample size must be noted, these preliminary data may suggest critical findings. First, the students' perceptions of students with disabilities as measured by the Adjective Checklist did not make any statistically significant change pre and post intervention, although the raw data do indicate a post test trend toward a more positive

perception of the target (fictional child with a mild learning disability). These data appear supported by the students' statements which seem to suggest only slight variation in the attitudes toward students with disabilities throughout the study. The gender differences on pre-test N Factor scores may be explained by the two girls in the study who had previ-

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ous experience with family members with disabilities. Previous research regarding students' perceptions of peers with disabilities and their prior exposure (or lack thereof) with family members with similar disabilities (Smith-D'Arezzo, 2003) may in part explain the findings of this study. The small sample size, however, presents serious limitations and must be taken into consideration when interpreting these findings.

### Conclusion and Implications

The findings of this study did suggest that the participating fifth graders saw a learning disability as a largely negative construct involving character deficit, student and parent culpability, limited mental capacity, and character traits. These perceptions of students with learning disabilities were not significantly, positively affected by the presented books and accompanying discussions. While disappointed by the findings, we were encouraged to see that a slight but insignificant trend for enhanced perceptions toward students with a learning disability did emerge from the descriptive data and seemed further supported by two, female students' previous involvement with family members with disabilities. Although the size and nature of this study prohibit the generalization of the findings, we believe the following implications for practice and future study are in order

If classroom teachers plan to use books such as those described in this article, we recommend that they choose the books carefully, work closely with a school counselor to examine preconceptions and prior knowledge that might inhibit attitude change, actively discuss the attitudes of children within the books to give positive role models through literature, and extend the work to include numerous books and discussions, rather than limiting it to a one time event. Teachers

could also include book character work in conjunction with specific, developmentally appropriate self-awareness exercises and skill practice opportunities.

In the area of future research, prior research and the data gathered from the female participants of this study, in particular, warrant future investigations of children's perceptions of those with disabilities. The results of these investigations could then incorporate and build on actual experiences of children. While this does present a challenge, perhaps the way toward enhanced relationships between all children is through exposure to and meaningful involvement with diverse individuals. As echoed by a child in our study, “. . .they are very, very normal once you get to know them.”

Second, while the means for the pre and posttest scale scores on the Adjective Checklist did not change significantly, the means for each scale did move ever so slightly in the anticipated direction after the children participated in the four weekly book discussions. While these findings are far from being statistically meaningful, perhaps they were affected not only by the small sample size, but by the intensity and duration of the intervention. Previous research has suggested that enhanced students' perceptions are affected by intervention intensity and duration (Monson & Shrtleff, 1979). Those findings in conjunction with the empirical trends found in this study may warrant further study with intensified intervention involving more frequent and involved book discussions, classroom guidance activities facilitated by professional school counselors working in conjunction with classroom teachers and reading specialists, and social emotional instruction focused on appropriate cognitions, feelings and behaviors of non disabled students regarding their peers with disabilities.

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Given the facts that increasing numbers of books that highlight children with disabilities are being written and published and many experts in children's literature are advocating the use of these books in classrooms, it is important to pursue this line of research. It is imperative that this work is not performed as a one-time intervention; the effort must be a systematic, sustainable discussion and if necessary involve working closely with a school counselor. Comfort comes first, then growth follows. The fifth graders in our study became more vocal about their thoughts and ideas concerning children with learning disabilities as the study progressed. If they had not been given opportunities to examine their own misconceptions within the framework of the book discussions, their increased level of comfort in discussing this topic could conceivably have backfired, resulting in a group of children who were more willing to voice negative opinions about children with learning disabilities.

Based on the results of this pilot study, we feel that additional areas of inquiry would include exposing children to other classroom and psychosocial interventions such as classroom guidance lessons and small group counseling sessions on values, perceptions and tolerance. By adding these interventions, we could provide children with opportunities to share their perceptions and to more readily see a learning disability as a personal characteristic, not precluding the ability of that trait to be viewed as positive.

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