

Special Educator Attitudes toward Children with Communication Disorders in the Caribbean

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This paper examined the attitudes and perception of Communication Disorders in special educators in the Bahamas. An interview, observation field notes and a questionnaire comprised of open-ended responses and a rating scale captured the views, pedagogical knowledge and skills and perceptions of 17 special education teachers who educate children with special needs and communication disorders pre and post a simulated workshop. The findings revealed four emerging themes related to perceptions and previous personal experiences in which may affect their respective teaching approaches. Findings of the study also revealed that providing special educators with workshops and other professional development opportunities to learn and discuss difficulties children with special needs and communication disorders may experience, increased their teaching approaches, changed some perceptions and introduced new techniques that were later actively incorporated. The special educators of this study expressed a need for more resources to assist them in effectively educating all children with special needs and communication disorders. The special educators attributed limited resources such as professional development to their motivation or lack thereof to functionally engage and educate children with special needs and communication disorders.

Keywords: Bahamas, attitudes, perception, skills, special needs, communication disorders, professional culture, qualitative

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