CHALLENGES FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

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Abstract

This study attempted to discover teachers' perceptions of the success of inclusive education – inclusion of learning disabled students – in the junior high schools of Westwind School Division #74. Several areas were explored. They included the extent to which inclusion is implemented across the Division, the teachers' perceptions of the academic and social success of the learning disabled students, the teachers' perceptions of the effects on the regular students, the teachers' evaluation of the extent to which factors stated in literature as being essential to the success of inclusion were present in their schools, and the changes needed for more successful inclusion. The sample for this study comprised all of the junior high teachers in the division who taught one or more of the core subject areas (science, social studies, mathematics, language arts) in Grades 7-9. All completed a written survey, then a sub-group were interviewed. The results demonstrated that although 82.93% of the teachers believed the regular classroom was the rightful place for the learning disabled students to learn, 80.48% felt that they were unable to meet the needs of these students. To improve the quality of the inclusive programming the respondents felt they required more planning and collaboration time, an increase in knowledge regarding programming adjustments for learning disabled students, reduced class sizes and other professional development activities to meet their individual needs.

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Introduction

Rationale for the Study

As a teacher, I have been involved with planning individualized programs for

learning disabled (LD) students since I first began my student teaching in the fall of 1972. I

have had the opportunity to work with LD students on a Hutterite colony, in a variety of

programs and classrooms from Grade 1 to 12 in Alberta public schools, and in upper

primary classes in Darwin, Australia. During the span of twenty nine years, the approaches

being touted by the authorities and researchers to meet the needs of the learning disabled

students have been varied, yet somewhat cyclical. The movement has evolved from total

segregation to inclusion with extensive pull-out programs and segregated resource rooms,

to total inclusion with some in-classroom support, or in some instances, no external

support.

The latest total inclusion movement had a significant impact on the junior high

schools in the Westwind School Division. In Alberta on September 28th, 1993, the

provincial government mandated (Policy 1.6.1 *Educational Placement of Students With

Special Needs)* that the first option to be considered by school boards in the placement of

students with exceptional needs was in the regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local

schools. Learning disabled students are included as students with exceptional needs.

Westwind administration followed the intention of the policy by placing the LD students in

our school back into all of the regular classrooms where the regular classroom teacher was

responsible to establish effective programs for all students.

At the same time, educational funding in the province was decreased so classroom

teachers did not receive additional assistance in their classrooms to aid them with the instruction of the LD students. This resulted in several students in Grades 7 to 9 in our school receiving report card grades between 20% and 25% in their core subjects, and a plethora of teachers who were feeling disgruntled because they did not know how to help these students achieve success. In my position as Special Needs Facilitator, I was contacted by several parents of the LD students who sought a positive learning experience for their children. As well, the parents and teachers were concerned about an increase in emotional outbursts and inappropriate behaviour from their LD students. Administrators expressed concerns over an increasing number of teachers expressing frustration in regard to modifying programs to meet the needs of the LD students in their classrooms. It became imperative to find ways of improving the learning situation for the classroom teachers and their learning disabled students.

After exploring professional literature concerning inclusion, I was unable to discover Canadian studies that explain whether inclusion has proven successful for the learning disabled students at the junior high school level in rural schools. Most studies on inclusion have been done in the United States or Australia, and generally deal with more severely disabled students in an elementary setting. The actual teaching situation appears to vary greatly at the junior high level. The emphasis in the elementary school is the learner, and what the learner needs to progress from one level to another. In junior high, the focus appears to change to the curriculum, and what needs to be done to ensure that the entire curriculum is covered by all students within a specific time frame. This is especially apparent locally in Grade 9 where four provincial achievement tests are completed. Individual needs can be easily overlooked, particularly in the case of the LD student who

often appears to be lazy and unable to attend to assigned tasks. I wanted to explore this situation in the rural junior high schools because I felt the teaching situations and support systems available are different from what is available in larger city schools. Often with the rural schools, staff are expected to stretch themselves across more curriculum areas. There are fewer home rooms at each grade level, so the LD students are often grouped into one class to facilitate the use of an assistant, or a pull-out program. This often means that teachers who cannot be involved with the pull-out program, and who cannot have an assistant, are faced with an exceptionally challenging group of students.

As a consulting educator responsible to assist others, it is important to me to know if junior high schools in our rural areas have successfully implemented a total or partial inclusion program as is district policy. Of equal importance is knowing what factors are significant and what strategies must be utilized to make the inclusive programming successful for our LD students.

As I continued to review the literature, it became apparent that the issue may not be — whether LD students should be included in the regular classroom (Leyser & Bursuck, 1986; Post & Roy, 1985; Gans, 1985), rather what factors appear to determine if this inclusion is successful. The literature stressed several factors including the importance of teacher attitudes (Williams, Hansen, & Jackson, 1982; Post & Roy, 1985; Gans, 1987), effective communication among members of the staff (Gans, 1987; Post & Roy, 1985; Center & Ward, 1987; Marston, 1996), and the effects of departmentalization and curriculum differences in the secondary school (Post & Roy, 1985).

Within our school division during the 2000/2001 school year, one of our primary goals was to ensure that every student was achieving success. This seemed like an

excellent time to assess what was happening with our LD students in the junior high grades, and to evaluate what changes needed to be implemented to more completely achieve this goal. The information collected and conclusions drawn will assist in developing school-wide plans as well as teachers' personal professional growth plans that will enable future success with our diverse student population.

<div align="center">Definition of Terms</div>

Definitions significant to this research project are presented in Table 1. The definitions used here are contained in the Alberta Government Policy 1.6.1 *Educational Placement of Students With Special Needs*.

Table 1

Definitions of Terms

Term	Definition
Inclusion	The practice of meeting the physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students with special needs in regular classes in neighbourhood or local schools with non-disabled, same-aged peers and with appropriate support. In this paper "inclusion" is used interchangeably with the words "integration" and "mainstreaming".
Students with special needs	Students described in section 29(1) of the School Act for Alberta as being in need of special education programs because of their behavioural, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics; students requiring specialized health services; or students who are gifted or talented.
Individual program plan (IPP)	A concise plan of action designed to address the student's special needs and is based on diagnostic information which provides the basis for intervention strategies.
Learning disabled student	A student who has a learning disability that affects his/her learning.

Learning disabilities	A generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation. Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual, including those with potentially average, or above average intelligence. Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these. Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, events in the pre- to perinatal period, or any other subsequent event resulting in neurological impairment. (as put forth by the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada)
Academic success	Academic progress which for some students may be the attainment of a passing grade within the curricular goals of each subject area as set out by the province. For more severe learning disabled students, it may involve the successful achievement of one or more of the goals in the individual's I.P.P. to the point where the goal is considered met and subsequently discontinued. This may or may not be at grade level depending on the severity of the learning disability, and the student's current level of ability. Also includes active participation in regular classroom activities with accommodations made to meet the individual's needs. It requires attentiveness to the appropriate on-going activities of the class, and would include contributing to class discussions and taking part in class learning activities.
Social success	Having the skills necessary to relate to the students and adults in a regular classroom in a positive manner without negatively affecting the learning of others. This would include the ability to: follow instructions; to accept criticism or a consequence and to accept 'no' for an answer; the use of appropriate behaviours to greet others, to get the teacher's attention, to make a request, to disagree and to give criticism; take part in conversations during a group discussion without interrupting the dynamics of the conversation; and the appropriate use of social space.

Literature Review

<u>Introduction</u>

A search of professional literature concerning inclusion provided a broad range of

information including historical data which explained the development of inclusion in

today's schools, reasons for the use of inclusion in our classrooms, factors believed to be

essential to the success of inclusive education, as well as current controversies on the topic

of inclusion. The terms integration, mainstreaming and inclusion are used interchangeably

throughout the literature.

The first objective in this undertaking was to establish a clear definition of 'inclusion',

so that when the various authors' works are presented the inclusive situation will be

recognized. 'Inclusion' involves keeping special education students in regular education

classrooms and bringing support services to the child rather than bringing the child to the

support services. 'Total inclusion' refers to the practice of having regular education

teachers provide instruction to both regular education students and special education in the

same classroom (Smelter, Rasch, & Yudewitz, 1994). The definition is broadened by

Rogers (1993) who explains that inclusion is a way to redesign the delivery of special

services by acknowledging that goals and objectives can be partially or wholly met in the

regular classroom, even if these goals are quite different from those of the rest of the class.

The students work towards the same educational outcomes; what differs is the level at

which these outcomes are achieved and the degree of emphasis placed on them (Schrag &

Burnett,1994).

Another author explains that we must be careful that the regular classroom does not

simply become the placement for all students. The place chosen must provide instructional

value so that the individual students are receiving a special education suited to their individual needs (Van Dyke, Stallings, & Colley, 1995). This is further clarified by explaining that inclusion does not mean that a student will never receive small group or individual instruction (Brucker, 1994). In summary, total inclusion involves having regular and special education students in the regular classroom and bringing in support services which allow all students to work towards the same educational outcomes. The level of the outcomes, the degree of emphasis, and the method of delivery is modified so that individual students receive an education suited to their individual needs.

<div align="center">Inclusive Education in Review</div>

In order to understand inclusion in our schools today, it is necessary to examine what happened historically to bring our government to mandate inclusion in our schools. During the 1960s and 1970s several studies compared the progress of exceptional children in the segregated and regular classes in the United States (Winzer, 1993). The results from these studies showed no great advantage to learning in a segregated classroom. There began the search for new solutions and the beginnings of inclusion as we know it today. The 1970s, Winzer (1993) explains, saw the development of the ideas of normalization and mainstreaming. Under a policy of mainstreaming, special education stopped functioning as a device for sorting the students according to labels, and instead offered a range of services to enable the development of educational programs to meet individual needs. Although the concept of normalization prompted schools to give up their special education classes and replace them with regular programs supported by special education services, a large number of school districts in Canada were choosing to maintain their segregated education options and approach the integration on a case-by-case basis.

A significant turning point for children's rights occurred in 1971 when a federal district court in the United States ruled that mentally retarded children in Pennsylvania were entitled to a free public education (Phelps, 1993). The ruling stated that whenever possible, retarded children must be educated in regular classrooms rather than segregated from the normal school population. Phelps goes on to explain about another case in 1972, Mills vs the Board of Education of the District of Columbia, where the decision was expanded to include all handicapped children. Cases such as these led the U.S. Congress to pass two very important laws: The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Individuals with Disabilities Act in 1975. Part B of the 1975 Act was called The Handicapped Children's Act, public law 94-142. It was believed that this act was passed because of the importance of educating students with disabilities in the same setting as their non-disabled peers. It provides these children with disabilities with four basic rights: (a) All children suspected of a disability should receive a thorough assessment of the nature and degree of the specific disability, in a nondiscriminatory manner, and with no single measure being the sole criteria; (b) all children with disabilities have the right to a free education, appropriate for each individual child; (c) children with disabilities should be placed in the "least restrictive environment" with maximum effort placed on putting the disabled child with non-disabled peers whenever possible; and (d) supplementary aids and services should be provided to ensure the success of the program including related educational services such as speech, occupational, and physical therapy (The Handicapped Children's Act of 1975, Pub. L. No. 94-142).

Thus began the push in American schools for full inclusion. Until the passage of this bill, few states recognized learning disabilities as a handicapping condition that required

the provision of special education services. This mandate to serve, which came with federal guidelines for diagnosis, caused education programs for students with learning disabilities to become commonplace (Zigmond et al, 1995). In fact, the number of students classified as learning disabled (LD) in the public schools rose from 797,000 in 1976-77 to over 2 million in 1991-92 (Zigmond et al, 1995, p.532).

<u>Inclusive Education in Alberta</u>

In Alberta, a report by Gail Barrington (1995) to the Special Education Branch of Alberta Education provided a portion of Alberta's history that demonstrates how we followed the lead of our American neighbours. In 1990, the Honourable Jim Dinning, Minister of Education spoke of the integration vision as, "Disabled students taking their full place ... integrated into our school"(Cited in Barrington, 1995, p.1). This integration, which is used synonymously with inclusion, was meant to provide disabled students with the chance to learn, to grow, to become full participants in our schools and in our society. The belief was that only a few would still require specialized programs to meet their complex medical and learning needs.

In a provincial departmental discussion paper on integration in 1992, it was suggested that the placement of exceptional students in Alberta should be made on the basis of one primary objective: doing what is best for the child. Barrington (1995) explains that on September 28, 1993, Policy 1.6.1 *Educational Placement of Students With Special Needs,* a policy on integration, was released by the Alberta government stating that the first option to be considered by school boards in the placement of students with exceptional needs, was in the regular classrooms in neighbourhood schools. The policy went on to recognize that other placement decisions must be based on the child's needs and the needs of other

children in a class, and that the decision must be made in consultation with parents, teachers and administrators. This policy is still in effect. The Education Minister of that time, Halvar Jonson stated, "Our goal is to ensure that the unique needs of all Alberta students are met and that each and every student has the opportunity to learn, grow, and develop in an environment that allows them to achieve their fullest potential. (Cited in Barrington, 1995, p.1). A major political decision in January of 1994 would affect the funding of these inclusive programs. The Minister of Education announced a major restructuring of Alberta's education system. This was done to ensure adequate funding for 'basic' education and to resolve financial disparities among school jurisdictions. The province began to collect and redistribute all of the property taxes that funded education to establish a fairer distribution. At the same time, Premier Klein announced a four year reduction target for spending in education. By 1996, provincial education grants had been reduced by 13.1%. This was a time of diminishing resources and major policy changes.

From this data, it is clear that the province of Alberta placed policies in place to support the inclusive educational movement. However, the reduction in provincial education grants made it difficult for schools to provide the necessary supports in schools to ensure that the unique needs of all Alberta students were met.

<div align="center">Why Inclusion?</div>

Historically we saw that the American and Canadian schools were looking for a way to further integrate students with disabilities. A search of literature provided a variety of reasons, factors essential to the success of inclusion, as well as current controversies regarding its effectiveness.

Inclusion Is a Legal Right to Equal Opportunity

The notion that inclusion has a legal base was first put forth in the United States. Court cases of the past have clearly established that the bottom line of the argument for inclusion is that each child has "a legal right to an equal opportunity to obtain an education in the least restrictive environment possible. Segregated programs are now seen to be unequal and a violation of the rights of the students with special educational needs" (Van Dyke, Stallings, & Colley, 1995, p. 476). The inclusion of all students teaches the student and his/her peers that all persons are equally valued members of this society, and that it is worthwhile to do whatever it takes to include them (Stainback, Stainback, & Stefanich, 1996, p.19). Inclusive schools are able to implement a philosophy of coordination that celebrates the diversity of students while maintaining a continuum of educational options to provide choice and meet the needs of the individual children. The students are working in flexible learning environments with flexible curricula and instruction that are "accessible to all" (Schrag & Burnette, 1994, p.1).

Inclusion Fosters Progress Not Seen in Segregated Situations

Several researchers' results demonstrate that the segregated special education programs have not shown the growth in student achievement that was expected (Van Dyke, Stallings, & Colley, 1995; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986; Will, 1986). Other researchers put forth the idea that it is time to place the students in the regular classrooms so that the effective instructional strategies practiced by teachers in these classrooms can be implemented for all of the children rather than promoting the perception of learning problems as solely the result of student deficits. It is their belief that this segregation may indeed hinder the utilization of more productive techniques with these students (Reynolds

& Wang, 1983; Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986). Others

expand upon this by saying that they believe that pull-out programs impose the extra

burden of academic discontinuity because of the lack of congruence between the two

settings of the regular class and the resource room (Yatvin, 1995; Zigmond, 1995).

Inclusion Diminishes Labeling

Segregating students through the day labels them, thereby creating bias and making

them different in the eyes of other students. These students are part of a larger community

which in turn sees the special needs students as not being a part of their community. Van

Dyke, Stallings, and Colley (1995) are of the opinion that "in the future, students majoring

in education are likely to regard the practice of segregating students with special needs in

much the same way as we look upon racial segregation before the 1960s" (p.476). A

parent, Pat Linkhorn (1999), in her article explains how the special needs students who are

included in the regular classroom have a greater knowledge of their society because they

are now a part of it. She goes on to explain that all who have been involved with them

have learned to be more tolerant and accepting.

In 1986, Madeleine Will, assistant secretary for the Office of Special Education and

Rehabilitation Services in the United States, argued that placing students in pull-out

programs stigmatized them and that resulted in "lowered expectations and a focus on

failure rather than prevention, that the system tends to equate poor performance with a

handicap, and that large numbers of students in need of assistance go unserved because of

the categorical nature of programs" (Cited in Coates, 1989, p.532).

Inclusion Provides For Collaboration

The dual system of education which separated special education, minimized communication between regular and special classroom teachers according to Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar (1991), thus reducing a sharing of educational ideas and strategies. As early as 1984, it was believed that the dual system created artificial barriers between professional people, and divided resources which the entire school could use (Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

Inclusion Supports Better Use of Financial Resources

Administration may see integration as a more effective use of special education personnel and believe it may lower the costs of providing services during times of fiscal restraints (Houck & Rogers, 1994).

Inclusion Fulfills Experts' Recommendations

Integration may take place simply because of recommendations from external consultants and experts. Often teachers take on new approaches like inclusion because of encouragement from administrators or supervisors (Houck & Rogers, 1994, p.443).

Factors That Determine the Success of Inclusion

Current literature contains a plethora of factors which appear to affect inclusion. This review presents only those which the authors have stated have the most significant effect on the success of the inclusive situation.

Teacher Attitude

In the literature reviewed, there were no factors mentioned as often as the teachers' attitude and its effect on the positive outcome of inclusion. As early as 1981, Larrivee put forth that while mainstreaming may be imposed by binding laws, "the manner in which the

classroom teacher responds to the needs of the special child may be a far more potent variable in ultimately determining the success of mainstreaming than any administrative or curricular strategy" (Larrivee, 1981, p. 34).

Projects done a year later at Bowling Green University were examining if the attitudes of educators toward the handicapped could be changed. They put forth as well that the teacher's attitude " is a critical variable in the successful integration of handicapped students in the regular classrooms" (Williams, Hansen, & Jackson, 1982, p. 170). When presenting their paper at an international council on education, Siegel and Jausovic (1994) stated "that the teachers' attitudes are a major concern in exploring the teachers' effects upon the integrated, mainstreamed or inclusive situations, and that inclusion may indeed be defeated if teachers do not hold positive attitudes toward this practice" (p.2). In her paper presented to Alberta Education, Barrington (1995) stated that her "findings indicated that without widespread regular classroom teacher support integration programming will proceed more slowly" (p. iv).

Researchers explained that several factors may combine to affect the attitudes held by teachers towards inclusion including their personal feelings of inadequacy, their knowledge level in regards to LD students and the ways in which they learn, whether or not they are, or have been, involved with exceptional students, and whether they have been able to take part in professional development to improve their professional skills.

Feelings of inadequacy.

A survey of 111 educators teaching in middle school through high school in Wisconsin found that when teachers were asked about their feelings of inadequacy in dealing with special students, "69% responded that these feelings hindered the

mainstreaming process in their schools" (Post & Roy, 1985, p.77). A survey with

more than two thousand respondents in New South Wales, Australia, demonstrated

similar results which showed that the attitudes reflected a lack of confidence by

teachers in their own instructional skill (Center & Ward, 1987). In Alberta, in the

early to mid 1990s, Barrington was asked by the Department of Education to

investigate the state of integration in Alberta schools. After her survey of Alberta

school jurisdictions and an in-depth study of six schools in the province, she found

that the teachers' lack of expertise was one of their greatest fears.

Knowledge attainment.

Barrington (1995) stated that since lack of expertise was one of the teachers'

greatest fears adequate training was essential if the teachers were to become

personally engaged in integration, and if they did not become personally engaged then

she felt integration would not succeed.

Involvement with exceptional students.

The teachers' responses in a study involving a sample of 1100 teachers from an

eleven county area of central New York State indicated that "teaching students who

are gifted/talented is related to increased job satisfaction, whereas working with

students having learning difficulties is related to decreased job satisfaction, especially

for those teachers not specifically trained to work with students with special

needs"(Lobosco & Newman, 1992, p. 28). This same study found that when content,

as in secondary schools, rather than skills, as in elementary schools, is the major

emphasis of teacher preparation, the negative relationship of working with students

with learning difficulties was evident. The authors made clear that one of the major

tasks facing the field of education is recruitment and retention of quality teachers and an important factor in both of these is the self-perception of job satisfaction. The results of this survey indicated that working with special needs populations, especially those with learning disabilities, is directly related to job dissatisfaction (Lobosco & Newman, 1992). A recent study done in 1998 also found that teacher stress levels increased significantly with the mainstreaming mandate (Rice, 1998).

Professional development.

Since the passage of Policy1.6.1 *Educational Placement of Students With Special Needs* in 1993 in Alberta significant changes have occurred. Staff development seminars and workshops are being provided to school staffs in an effort to provide the skills necessary for successful inclusion to those teachers already in the profession. School authorities are much more cognizant of the fact that teachers do not feel confident in their skills and knowledge for dealing with modifications which are essential for the learning disabled students. Providing professional development for practicing teachers, and redesigning teacher preparation programs has become a major commitment by school authorities and universities in the province.

Lobosco & Newman (1992) concluded that teachers, especially at the secondary level, require more preservice training on the expectations and methods of working with special needs students. Barrington (1995) recommends that "training must be provided for regular classroom teachers prior to and once involved in integration activities. Many of their attitudes are forged by fear of the unknown" (p. 40). Barrington's (1995) report, however, explains that an important lesson learned from Grimshaw High School was that the inservice had to be relevant to the teacher's

instructional needs at the time, or it was time wasted.

In the majority of studies that evaluated changes in teachers' attitudes to inclusion, it was found that no matter the method employed, whether it is graduate courses, school inservices, or professional development seminars, more positive attitudes were demonstrated by the teachers who had participated (Leyser, 1988; Thompson, 1992; Bailey, Gable, & Hendrickson, 1991). This must be approached with caution. In a study that investigated the effectiveness of inservice training, Parrish (1982) found that although over 90% of the teachers involved in the inservice had a better understanding of inclusion and how to modify and collaborate, only 58% felt that they were willing to participate in an inclusive teaching situation.

Support Resources

What works for inclusion depends on a variety of factors, including the difficulty of the presenting problems, and the personal and professional services available to those who address them (Kauffman & Pullin, 1989). After a study done with five inclusive schools in the United States, it was concluded that for inclusion to be successful you require additional resources and specially trained personnel who can provide assistance to the classroom teachers so that they are able to provide a program which meets the individual educational goals of the LD students (Zigmond, 1995). These personnel may be special education teachers, regional specialists, learning specialists or teaching assistants. They may act as consultants, do evaluations and assessments of the students' learning, make program suggestions or work directly with the students (Rodriguez & Tompkins, 1994; Ryan, 1994; Wang, 1990).

Communication

Several researchers stressed the importance of increased communication among all of the people involved in the provision of the inclusive learning situation. This collaboration involves commitment by the teachers who will be working together, by their school administrators, by the school system, and by the community. In her recommendations Barrington (1995) states that

> joint planning time must be engineered for teachers who share a student with special needs or between a regular classroom teacher and a teacher trained in integration techniques....In addition, annual planning activities which focus on integration strengthen programming significantly. (Barrington, 1995, p.41)

The biggest issue involved in this is time – time for planning, time for development and time for evaluating (Ripley, 1997). Barrington (1995) informs us that the "case study schools proved that this can be done creatively despite the lack of extra funds to support this activity" (p. 41). The importance of intentionally time-tabling planning and collaboration times is also stressed by others (Friend & Cook, 1992; NCERI National survey, 1994).

Administrative Support

Although teachers play a vital role in inclusion, administrators, by virtue of their leadership positions are of particularly critical importance in the overall process (Garver-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989). It is imperative that the school principal be a leader and proponent of inclusion if it is to be implemented successfully. Barrington's (1995) summary made it clear that out of the case studies that she investigated in Alberta, the stronger integration programming was linked to principal training and hands-on

involvement in the integration process which provided the administrator with a clearer understanding of the needs of the students with disabilities. Other researchers stated that the administrator must be supportive of the inclusive situation because he/she is ultimately the person who must establish the timetable which allows joint planning times and facilitates the learning workshops or inservices desired by the staff. This person is also responsible for maintaining a reasonable student load for the teachers with LD students (Ripley, 1997; Van Dyke, Stallings, & Colley, 1995). Not all principals are directly involved in the implementation of inclusion. Those principals who are not must be cognizant of the fact that they must safeguard instructional resources that are designated for included students and provide the essential professional development that supports their staff in its undertaking (Semmel & Gerber, 1990).

Other Factors

During the study done by Barrington (1995) in Alberta over a four year period, she was able to establish that other factors were also of consequence to teachers in Alberta if teachers were to provide successful integration situations. One factor mentioned is the availability of written policy statements and guidelines at the divisional and school levels. She explains that it is significant that schools developing an integration course develop a clear vision of what they are trying to achieve so they are unified. This vision should then be supported by written guidelines for the integration process. It was demonstrated in one of the case-study schools that high schools need to plan to implement an integration program over a minimum of four years otherwise problems arise when the school tries to make too many changes too quickly. Another significant factor involved in the success of the integration process was the preparation of the IPPs. Barrington (1995) states "greater

teacher ownership of integration programming exists where the regular classroom teachers accept responsibility for preparing IPPs" (p. 41). The Barrington study also discovered that having a process for the preparation of students, regular and special needs, to enter into integration helped to promote understanding and tolerance. The final critical factor that Barrington addressed was a reduced class size where students with special needs were integrated. She explained it was not present in any of the case-study schools and is unlikely to occur soon but "consideration must be given to creative ways of deploying staff and of timetabling teachers' workloads in order to accommodate integration issues" (Barrington, 1995, p.41).

<div align="center">Current Controversies</div>

Over time and throughout the research, not all scholars are in agreement on the various aspects of inclusion. This section will present some of the current controversies.

Economical

Wigle, Wilcox, and Manges (1994) inform us that the implementation of an inclusive model allows scarce school resources, human and material, to be utilized across a broader population so it is more economically viable. However, Raison, Hanson, Hall, and Reynolds (1995) who describe mainstreaming in an urban learning center in Minneapolis which has 450 students, 21% of whom are special education students, explain that, in fact, to do inclusion properly it is expensive. There are more staff and resources required to effectively meet the educational needs of all of the students. Van Dyke, Stallings, and Colley (1995) sum up the situation by explaining that inclusion should never be seen as an option to save money. They stated that, "under inclusion, no support services are taken away from students; indeed, even more support may be required to enable a student to

function optimally in the general classroom" (Van Dyke, Stallings, & Colley, 1995, p.476).

Joint Responsibility

Inclusion will force regular and special education teachers to assume joint responsibility for the successful education of integrated students (Wigle, Wilcox, & Manges, 1994). Post and Roy (1985), however, found in their studies of middle schools and high schools that the high school teachers did not often discuss how to teach specific students, so the special education teacher was often viewed as an interloper. Post and Roy go on to explain that problems also arise because of the sheer number of staff members dealing with each student due to the tracking, departmentalization and changes of classrooms in the high school level. Many of the high school teachers did not think that they had a problem with inclusion even when students were experiencing difficulty in their classrooms.

Maturity

Students develop more maturity in the regular classroom (Friend & Cook, 1992). Ryan (1994) develops this further by saying that the special education students become more responsible, competent, and concerned citizens of their classroom than they would in the segregated classes. However, Barrington (1995) explained that to become more responsible and competent the students must experience learning situations in which they are successful, active participants. In order for this to occur, the teacher and each student must interact. In her study, she discovered that in the inclusive situations the opportunity to respond decreased with the number of students. She found that the LD students were not provided with enough opportunities to respond.

Motivation and Learning

A report by the Harbor Developmental Disabilities Foundation (1999) states that all students experience increased motivation and learning because the sense of belonging helps to build self-esteem and a feeling of achievement. Ryan (1994) supports this further by explaining that the level of confidence of the special education student increases because the sense of belonging in the inclusive classroom helps to build self-esteem and a feeling of achievement.

Wigle, Wilcox, and Mange (1994) found that the LD students were not interacting enough with the teacher for them to receive effective feedback. The result was that these students received lower grades. In 1993, The Learning Disabilities Association and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities in the United States (Wigle, Wilcox, & Mange, 1994) found that students with disabilities tend to lag further and further behind the achievement of their age-grade peers because the students with disabilities were receiving less teacher attention.

Teacher's Professional Worth

O'Reilly and Duquette (1988) explain that teaching the LD students may enhance the feelings of professional worth of the teacher. This idea was not supported in a study by Lobosco and Newman in 1992. Their study involved a sample of 1100 teachers from an eleven county area of central New York state. The responses indicated that "teaching students who are gifted/talented is related to increased job satisfaction, whereas working with students having learning difficulties is related to decreased job satisfaction, especially for those teachers not specifically trained to work with students with special needs"(p. 28). They went on to explain that when content, as in secondary schools, rather than skills, as

in elementary schools, are the major emphasis of teacher preparation, the negative

relationship of working with students with learning difficulties was evident. This may be

supported by a study which explains that secondary teachers are usually not comfortable in

the inclusive situation because they have little contact with disabled students during their

student teacher experiences so receive little training in writing I.P.P.s, and in adapting

curriculum to meet the needs of disabled students (Akasamit, 1990).

Relevant Programs

Wigle, Wilcox, and Mange (1994) inform us that an inclusive learning situation should

be able to provide a relevant curricular program for each student. However, when

Zigmond (1995) carried out a study of mainstreamed schools in five different states, she

found that special education in the inclusive programs was no longer special. She did not

see evidence of practices that truly addressed 'individual' student needs. It was her opinion

that the essential components of a truly special education program had been sacrificed to

the policy that students are in the regular school primarily to be in the company of age

peers. The results of her study showed that there was no redoubling of effort if a particular

part of the curriculum presented difficulty to a student. There was an acceptance of

underachievement and an acceptance that students with learning disabilities would seldom

demonstrate mastery.

Summary

Inclusion is a complex phenomenon that has evolved in a somewhat cyclical way. Its

progress has always been affected by the social conditions of the times, and it has never

taken place rapidly. All of the changes in special education have required a great deal of

patience and perseverance on the part of educators.

The literature review examined why educators felt that inclusion needed to be the method of instruction for exceptional students. The defense for inclusion included: the legal right to equal educational opportunities; a lack of research which demonstrates that academic progress is being made in segregated situations; a belief that segregation causes negative labeling of the students we are attempting to assist; an improved opportunity for collaboration amongst educational professionals; a better use of education's financial resources; and sometimes it is done simply because an external expert suggests that it should be tried.

There are significant challenges to inclusion. These include: the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion which it appears can make or break the inclusive situation; the availability of support resources whether these are financial, personnel, or materials; effective communication between everyone involved including the parents, community, teachers, administrators; administrative support which is essential for hiring and maintaining the involvement of the staff, providing support to all, providing time for planning, and protecting the funds which provide the necessary resources; written policies so that parents and staff alike know what direction inclusion will take in each school setting; reduced class sizes so that the LD students are given the time to actively participate and become involved in the regular classroom; a reassignment of traditional duties of the special education teacher; and initial preparation of regular and special needs students prior to entering the inclusive situation.

The last section of the review presents the current controversies under discussion by the various scholars. From their discussions it appears that there must be an ongoing assessment of each inclusive situation and its effects on the learning situation.

The Study

Introduction

This study is an exploration of teachers' perceptions of the success of inclusion in the

junior high schools of Westwind School Division #74. Several areas were explored. They

included the extent that inclusion is used across the Division, the teachers' perceptions of

the academic and social success of the learning disabled students, the perceived effects of

inclusion on the regular students, the teachers' evaluation of the extent to which factors

stated in literature as being essential to the success of inclusion were present in their

schools, and the teachers' perceptions of the changes needed for more successful inclusion.

A written survey supplemented by face-to-face interviews was the main source of data.

Research Questions

1.   How widely is inclusion implemented in the core subject areas in our school division?

2.   What are the perceptions of success, academically and socially, of the inclusion of LD

     students held by the core subject teachers? These core subject teachers may be regular

     core subject classroom teachers or teachers of learning disabled students.

3.   Which of the essential factors for successful inclusion presented in the current

     literature appear to be present in each school?

4.   What areas need to be strengthened in order for successful inclusion to occur in each

     school?

5.   What do the regular core subject teachers perceive as the positive and negative effects

     of inclusion on the LD students as well as the regular students?

Research Methodology

Sample

The written survey was distributed to all of the teachers in the Westwind School

Division who taught one or more of the core subjects in Grades 7-9 in the 2000/2001

school year, with the exception of the Hutterite teachers, a total of fifty eight teachers. By

doing this, information was collected from regular and special education teachers; teachers

who are subject specialists as well as those who teach combined grades. A total of eight

teachers were selected by the school administrators to participate in the face-to-face

interviews.

Procedure

Data was collected in two ways: written surveys and face-to-face interviews. Data

collection began with the surveys which were distributed to the schools in the division that

taught Grades 7-9. Once returned, the survey data was analyzed. Following the analysis of

the survey data, the administrators at each of the schools were asked to select teachers to

take part in the face-to-face interviews.

After completion of the surveys and interviews, I chose not to present the data in a

format that separated the individual school's responses. In some of the smaller schools it

meant that I would be presenting three people's perceptions as those of the entire school. I

chose not to do this so that undo attention would not be drawn to the teachers who had

participated. Instead, I chose to present a summary of the data collected throughout the

division.

<u>Survey</u>

The survey was composed primarily of fixed-alternative questions in the form of a 5 point Likert scale (1-Strongly Disagree, 2-Somewhat disagree, 3-Somewhat Agree, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly Agree). It was used to garner answers to questions concerning attitudes or emotional issues, as well as demographics.

The cover letter and a survey (See Appendices A and B) were placed in individual envelopes containing the directions so that each of the teachers responding would be following the same directions. The cover letter explained that their answers were anonymous, and the confidentiality of the records and results was stressed. At first it was important that each be notified responses could be identified by school so that individual school reports on their inclusive situations as compared to the situation across the division could be prepared. As explained earlier, this will not occur. The teachers were informed that participation was completely voluntary and could be terminated at any time. Notification was given that a summary of the findings would be available to their schools so that they could use the findings, if they felt their situation warrants it, to coordinate professional development activities within their respective schools.

The surveys were given to the school administrators at their monthly divisional staff meeting and they were instructed which staff members were to receive one. They were to be administered during the first staff meeting of June so that all responses would be returned before the school year ended. Completed surveys were sealed and returned through the divisional courier system.

The survey data was analyzed using a simple spreadsheet and the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), a data analysis software program, to determine: the

representation of male and female respondents; the representation of the various grades

and subjects; the means, standard deviations and cumulative frequencies of respondents

choices regarding their perceptions of the inclusive situations; and the teachers'

perceptions of which factors for successful inclusion needing improvement. Once analyzed,

the data was formatted into tables for a concise representation of the findings. Graphic

representation of these findings is included in Appendix C.

Interviews

After analyzing the survey data, the interview blueprint was finalized as it appears in

Appendix D. It was concluded that the same blueprint would work in the large and small

school situations. The majority of questions were open ended questions used to elicit more

depth of response for the questions in the survey, followed by fixed alternative questions

for demographics. The total length of each interview was 20-45 minutes.

The interviews were booked through the school administrators. The teacher(s)

selected to be interviewed had to be teaching one or more of the core subjects and

currently have a learning disabled student in their regular classroom. The administrator

was informed that the interview would be tape recorded to eliminate any problems that

might occur regarding the accuracy of the answers, and to record specific details that the

teachers would be able to provide. This information was passed on to the interviewee.

Once again the confidentiality of their responses was stressed. Each administrator was then

faxed the interview blueprint which was to be given to the selected teacher(s). This was

done to alleviate undo anxiety on the part of each teacher and to allow them time to

consider their answers in more depth. At the time of the survey, teachers were given the

choice of having their interview tape returned to them, or having it destroyed by me. All

agreed that it could be destroyed. The explanation presented to them may be seen in

Appendix E.

<div align="center">Results</div>

Demographics

The survey return rate was 41 out of 58, or 70.68%. Of the 41 respondents, 20 were

male and 21 female. Of these teachers, 28 were 40 years of age or over, and 13 were

between the ages of 20 to 39. Looking at their teaching experience, 26 had 11 years or

more with 50% of those having over 20 years of teaching experience. The remaining 14

responses were divided evenly between 1-5 years of teaching experience and 6-10 years of

experience.

As well, there was a widespread representation from the various grade levels.

Remembering that only 41 teachers responded and that many of the teachers instruct at

several grade levels, the results demonstrated: 25 respondents teach a core subject at the

Grade 7 level; 27 respondents teach a core subject at the Grade 8 level; and 27

respondents teach a core subject at the Grade 9 level.

When the results are examined from the point of view of subjects being taught by the

41 respondents we find that: 19 respondents teach math in one or more grades from 7-9;

20 respondents teach social studies in one or more grades from 7- 9; 20 respondents teach

science in one or more grades from 7- 9; and 23 respondents teach language arts in one or

more grades from 7- 9.

Survey Results

The survey inquired whether each respondent currently had a learning disabled (LD)

student in his/her classroom. The results indicated: 89% of the math teachers were

currently teaching one or more LD students; 85% of the social teachers were currently

teaching one or more LD students; 95% of the science teachers were currently teaching

one or more LD students; and 87% of the language arts teachers were currently teaching

one or more LD students.

In addition to this, the results showed that 68% of the math teachers and 65% of the

language arts teachers surveyed had learning disabled students drawn out for smaller

group or resource room instruction, while only 40% of the science teachers and 35% of

the social teachers had students drawn out. This data identifies the core subject areas in

which these alternative teaching strategies are implemented.

Table 2 presents the results of the fixed-alternative questions. More graphic

representations of the results for each item are available in Appendix C. From this data we

can glean that 82.93% of the respondents felt the LD students have the right to participate

in regular classrooms with the necessary accommodations to meet their individual needs.

But 80.48% felt that they are unable to meet the needs of the majority of the LD students

currently in their classrooms.

Only 51.22% of the respondents felt the regular classroom teachers hold the primary

responsibility for the education of the LD students in their classrooms. In fact, 82.92%

responded that pull-out or resource rooms are more effective for meeting the needs of

these students. This percentage may be related to the 65.85% who responded that their

teacher training did not prepare them to effectively meet the needs of the LD students; the

58.53% who felt they were unable to construct I.P.P.'s; and the 65.85% who responded

that they are not provided with extra time for planning and collaboration.

Respondents believe the LD students gain socially in the inclusion situation with

85.37% holding this opinion, while 80.49% believe that inclusion fosters understanding

and acceptance of individual differences. However, 58.54% felt that LD students do not

gain academically when they are placed full time in the regular classroom. Indeed 58.54%

of the respondents felt that the achievement levels of regular students were affected by this

full time placement.

Table 2

Summary of Survey Results

1=Strongly Disagree 2=Somewhat Disagree 3=Somewhat Agree 4=Agree 5=Strongly Agree			
Item	Mean	S.D.	Cumulative Frequency
Regular classroom placement for all learning disabled (LD) students should be the first educational option considered by our school board.	2.42	1.03	51.21% Disagree (21/38)
My school has clearly articulated goals and policies for the inclusion of learning disabled (LD) students.	3.24	0.94	80.49% Agree (33/41)
Learning disabled (LD) students have the right to participate in regular classrooms with the necessary accommodations provided to meet their individual learning needs.	3.56	1.11	82.93% Agree (34/41)
Regular classroom teachers hold the primary responsibility for the education of the LD students in their classrooms.	2.73	1.3	51.22% Agree (21/41)
Regular classroom teachers are unable to meet the needs of the majority of LD student(s) currently in their classrooms.	3.61	1.09	80.48% Agree (33/41)
My teacher training prepared me to effectively meet the needs of LD students.	2.15	1	65.85% Disagree (27/40)
I can effectively construct individual program plans (I.P.P.s) that include objective and measurable goals for the LD student(s) in my classroom.	2.88	1.09	58.53% Agree (24/40)

Item	Mean	S.D.	Cumulative Frequency
LD students experience academic success (as previously defined) when they are placed full time in the regular classroom.	2.32	0.93	58.54% Disagree (24/41)
Inclusion offers mixed group interactions which foster understanding and acceptance of individual differences.	3.32	0.88	85.37% Agree (35/41)
LD students lose the stigma of being "dumb", "different", or "failures" when they are placed in the regular classroom.	2.46	0.87	56.09% Disagree (23/41)
Inclusion promotes social success (as previously defined) of the LD students.	3.15	0.85	80.49% Agree (33/41)
Achievement levels of regular education students are not affected when LD students are placed full time in regular classrooms.	2.51	1.19	58.54% Disagree (24/41)

On the next portion of the survey respondents identified whether the factors identified in the literature review as being necessary for successful inclusion were evident in their schools and, whether the individual factors were perceived as being adequate or needing improvement at the time of the survey. The respondents answers are presented in Table 3 in order of their perceived need for improvement.

Additional planning and collaboration time was perceived by 95% of the respondents as the factor needing the most improvement in their schools. This was followed closely by teachers' knowledge regarding programming for the learning disabled at 90%. The next factor at 82% was reduced class sizes when LD students are included. Two factors were perceived as being adequate by low percentages of the respondents. They were teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion with 55%; and administrative support and involvement in the inclusive process at 58%.

Table 3

Respondents' Perceptions of Their Current Situations

Factors From Literature (in order of perceived need for improvement)	Percentage of Respondents	
	Adequate	Needs Improvement
extra planning and collaboration time	5%	95%
teachers' knowledge regarding programming for the learning disabled	10%	90%
reduced class sizes when LD students are included	18%	82%
professional development opportunities available in the areas of planning for instruction, behaviour management, & preparation of I.P.P.'s	22.5%	77.5%
extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels	22.5%	77.5%
teachers' feelings of adequacy when dealing with meeting the needs of LD students	28%	72%
written school policies and mission statements regarding inclusion	42%	58%
parental involvement in the inclusion process	46%	54%
support personnel to assist in assessment, planning and classroom instruction	47.5%	52.5%
teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion	55%	45%
administrative support and involvement in the inclusion process	57.5%	42.5%

<u>Interviews</u>

Eight teachers were interviewed at six different schools. During the interview the

blueprint (Appendix D) was used as a guide for the order of the questioning, but

opportunities were taken to ask other probing questions as the interview proceeded to

further clarify the respondents' answers.

Demographically, five males and three females were interviewed. Two were between the ages of 20-29, five were between the ages of 40-49, and one was between 50-59. Two had taught for 1-5 years, while five had taught between 6-20 years, and one had been teaching over 20. This random selection by the administrators provided a diverse sampling of the teachers in the division.

<center>Discussion & Recommendations</center>

<center><u>Discussion</u></center>

The purpose of this research project was to investigate teachers' perceptions of the success of inclusion in the Westwind School Division's junior high schools. At this juncture, the original research questions will be linked with the resulting data from the surveys and the interviews.

<u>Implementation</u>

How widely is inclusion implemented in the core subject areas in our school division?

The survey resulting in responses from 70.68% of the core teachers indicated inclusion is used across all grades in all core subject areas across the school division. In fact, 85 to 95% of the teachers in all four core subject areas responded that they had learning disabled students within their regular classrooms.

One of the interviewees stated,

- "The inclusion of the learning disabled, not the severely, but the learning disabled to me is a necessity for those students to have any self esteem, to have any feeling of accomplishment, and to have any feeling that they are an integral part of society ... social impacts are great, so to me, inclusion of the mildly

learning disabled – there should be no question"(Math teacher, 26/01/2001).

However, it is important to note that 51.21% of the respondents did not feel that this

should be the first educational option considered by our school board for all LD students.

Policy 1.6.1 *Educational Placement of Students With Special Needs*, which was put out by

Alberta Learning does recognize that other placement decisions may occur. This policy

simply states that the placements must be based on the child's needs and the needs of other

children in the class. It is expected that decisions made will involve consultation with

parents, teachers and administrators. During the interviews, five of the schools mentioned

that they have established other types of placements including time with specialists, pull-

out programs, or separate classes for the severely learning disabled. Responses indicated

that some teachers perceive that inclusion for some students should not be an option and

that it may, in fact, be detrimental. They went so far as to state,

- "I wish that I did have those kids in a different classroom. Those kids, the lower

  kids, are disadvantaged being in my classroom at this point. . . .Streaming is such

  a loaded word but I would like to see that girl, and maybe ten other students at

  that level and I prefer just to work with them at one time" (English teacher,

  02/03/2001).

- "In spite of the labels that kids put on each other, in spite of them being

  segregated, being separated out of the main stream, I really believe that those

  kids are far and away better off in the modified program here than they would be

  in the regular classroom because teachers are human; teachers can only do so

  much and those kids have a much better opportunity one on one with a smaller

  class in a modified program. Again depending on the learning disability, on the

severity of it" (Math teacher, 30/01/2001).

- "Sometimes I wonder if it wouldn't be better to have different classes at slightly different levels where the kids don't have to obviously be pulled out and brought back in, and obviously be doing a different assignment and that sort of thing. . . . I know a lot of people don't like the idea of having skill levels grouped together, but we do it in high school" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

From the responses it can be concluded that inclusion is occurring in over 85% of the core subject classes in the Westwind School Division, although at least half of the respondents do not believe that it should be the first placement choice. The inclusive situations discussed by interviewees involved the use of a diverse range of teaching strategies. For some of the interviewees, the LD students who were included received little academic programming in the regular classroom, some took part only in discussions, others did the same assignments with modifications like fewer questions, doing the assignment orally or having someone read and discuss the assignment with them when an assistant was available. Some felt that peer tutors or group work helped to meet the needs of the LD students. At least five of the schools felt academic programs for the LD students needed to be supplemented outside the regular classroom. The options offered were as varied as the students and teachers involved in the educational experience.

Perceptions of Success

What are the perceptions of success, academically and socially, of the inclusion of LD students that are held by the core subject teachers?

When asked on the survey if inclusion promotes the social success of the LD students, 41.5% responded that they somewhat agreed and 39.0% agreed, which tallied to 80.49%

who felt inclusion promoted social success to some degree. Several of the responses from

the interviews supported the findings of Smelter, Rasch and Yudewitz (1995) who also

pointed out the significance of interacting with the regular students in order to learn

acceptable behaviour patterns. Some of the responses from interviewees that supported

this topic included:

- "I think the greatest argument for inclusion is the social part of it. He's part of

  all of the activities and he sees the other students modeling behaviour skills,

  study skills and I think that's as valuable as anything"(Math teacher,

  30/01/2001).

- "I'm sure it's much better than if they're isolated with other kids. They do have

  to learn how to respond appropriately in a public setting and I don't think that

  the social skills will improve if they're isolated. Socially, I think it's important.

  They need to know how peers respond when they're acting inappropriately"

  (Social/ Language Arts teacher, 25/01/2001).

Interviewees who supported the 19.51% who felt that inclusion did not support social

gain explained,

- "... a couple of the others go for the disruptive behaviour which in the class I'm

  teaching really brings a lot of sneering from other kids. They think it's silly; it's a

  lot of derogatory feedback that they get from their ridiculous questions and their

  bad behaviour"(Social/Language Arts teacher, 25/01/2001).

- "There are students I have that I've asked them if they want me to modify for

  them, you know "Would you like it if I gave you every second question?"

  They've said "No." And the reason that they don't is they don't want to be

different. They don't want other people to know that they're doing less...they're in the classroom but in a lot of ways they don't fit in with everybody else that's in the classroom and it makes it difficult" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

Two questions in the survey approached the question of academic success from different angles. One of the results showed that 80.84% of the core subject teachers felt they were unable to meet the needs of the majority of the LD students currently in their classrooms. Yet, only 58.54% felt that the LD students did not experience academic success when they were full time in the classroom. It is necessary to show some of the responses so that it is apparent that the growth may be at the students' individual instructional levels, not necessarily at the grade level of their peers.

- "Well, I don't know that I could really say I've seen great improvements academically in the LD students, at least not if you compare it to grade level but there's certain growth on a limited scale, but I also usually mark the LD students on different criteria" (Math teacher, 30/01/2001).

- "... they're really not learning much. These are kids who are pulled out for L.A. and math but not for social and science and they're not doing any better in social than they would if they were in a mainstream L.A. classroom, academically. . . . I do give them opportunities for make-ups, those kids that really put in an effort can pass and feel good that they're passing in the regular room. Those that don't... I have a very hard time knowing what to do with kids who quit" (Social teacher, 25/01/2001).

Others expressed a differing view,

- "They do everything we do but their assignments are modified. Everyone is

feeling some academic success. I don't let them set a goal below fifty" (Math

teacher, 26/01/2001).

- "... they're gaining at the level that they're at academically. I think because their

  confidence level might be boosted a bit and when you have a strong confidence

  then you feel like you can accomplish anything" (Language Arts teacher,

  05/03/2001).

- "They're doing the exact same test and a lot of those students, or some of them

  at least, that would be identified as LD students do quite well on them, so

  something's working out there" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

The responses from the surveys and the interviews indicated that an overwhelming

majority of the core subject teachers perceived that social success for the LD students is

evident in the inclusive classroom. Academic success was less obvious as 58.54% of the

survey respondents felt that the LD students experienced academic success while 41.46%

felt that they did not. It is not possible to know if the academic success demonstrated in

the survey was at the individual students' instructional levels or at the level of the

classroom students. The interviewees' responses discuss success more often at the

individual's instructional level.

Presence of Essential Factors

Which of the essential factors for successful inclusion presented in the current

literature appear to be present in each school?

From the surveys, two factors were identified as being adequate by the respondents,

although by small margins. These included administrative support and a positive teacher

attitude.

There were 57.5 % who believed they had administrative support and involvement in the inclusion process. Respondents who discussed this during the interview stated,

- "I guess it has to come from the top first of all. You have to have the administrative support and the encouragement" (Language Arts teacher, 05/03/2001).

- "Administrative support is, I think, is very important. You know having the support of administration when a teacher comes in complaining maybe as you sometimes do, you know this is a tough thing. If you don't have administrative support there, they're going to feel like – Yeah, they don't think they should be there either" (Social teacher, 02/03/2001).

These statements support the studies done by Garver-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) and Barrington (1995) who stressed the importance of administrative participation for successful inclusion.

Of the respondents, 55% felt that teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion were adequate. Some of the comments that demonstrated the importance of this positive attitude included,

- "You need to have that very positive attitude that – Yes, this is going to work and I will make this work, and I will do the very best that I can with these students in my classroom" (Language Arts teacher, 05/03/2001).

- "Teachers' positive attitudes gotta be there. Without that you can kiss it goodbye" (Math teacher, 26/01/2001).

- "Teachers' attitude, that's a hundred percent of it, you know. I mean if that's not there it's just not going to be successful for the student or the program

itself" (Social teacher, 02/03/2001).

The significance of positive teacher attitude was further strengthened by one of the respondents who is in involved with inclusive situations in social and language arts. This respondent falls into the 45% who felt that teacher attitude needed improvement. She explained that she is "not comfortable with the inclusive situation and the LD students cause too many distractions and interruptions." She further clarified her feelings by stating,

"I have a very negative attitude towards inclusion for the most part, but that's because I've had no training in it at all. I took one class in university that was extremely poorly taught to about 200 students (Social/Language Arts teacher, 25/01/2001).

The previous comment is similar to the findings of Siegel and Jausovic (1994) who stated "inclusion may indeed be defeated if teachers do not hold positive attitudes toward this practice" (p.2).

Areas Needing Improvement

What areas need to be strengthened in order for successful inclusion to occur in each school?

This section discusses factors that the participants felt needed improvement if inclusion of LD students was going to be more successful in the junior high schools in the Westwind School Division than it is currently.

There were 72% of the survey respondents that felt the same way as the previous teacher, that teachers' feelings of adequacy when dealing with LD students needed improvement. But the teachers who were interviewed often linked their feelings of inadequacy very closely with possible solutions which were presented as essential factors in the literature. For example, interviewees stated,

- "I'm not a specialist in special needs and I need to have help. I need to have the P.D. available. I need to know where I can go to get some strategies to help these kids and that is a top priority that you have some training yourself" (Language Arts teacher, 05/03/2001).

- "Professional development opportunities, I'm craving. I have a strong desire to go to a conference that shows me how to, you know, work with a learning disabled student" (Language Arts teacher, 02/03/2001).

In fact, 77.5% of the survey respondents agreed with the teachers interviewed regarding the importance of professional development. This was connected to the 90% of the survey responses that indicated that teachers' knowledge regarding programming for the learning disabled needed improvement.

A factor often coupled with the teachers' feelings of inadequacy was the need for more time for planning and collaboration. In fact, 95% of the respondents felt that this needed to be improved. Closely connected to this is the 77.5% who felt that they needed extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels and the 52.5% who required support personnel to assist in assessment, planning and classroom instruction. Interviewees stated,

- "The biggest hurdle for me is training and resources. I think right now I'm in such a mode of gathering resources for my regular kids that the time isn't put into modifying for these others, and if we were able to do that, whether as a whole school or just in our departments, I would" (Language Arts teacher, 02/03/2001).

- "One of them (factors) was extra planning and collaboration time, or extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels, and it would be an 'either/or'

because if I had extra time then I could be making those resources myself. I wouldn't have a problem with it. But given the time that I have now and not having it, I would rather have the extra resources and not have to make them myself" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

- "Extra planning, collaboration time – can't be done so – I mean great, it would be good but dream on in a small school – there's no such thing. Smaller classes – oh yeah that one would be excellent especially combined classes. I find that when you're teaching a combined class, two grades, and you've got your inclusion of LD students, it enhances the problem. You need, in my opinion, anybody who teaches a combined grade with any LD students needs a teacher assistant in there during the core program" (Math teacher, 26/01/2001).

There were 82% of the survey respondents who agreed with this interviewee on the topic of reducing class sizes when LD students are included. Several mentioned that the LD student required more one on one time than they could provide.

As the literature indicates, the respondents felt that teacher attitude was the most important factor and they proceeded to explain how they perceived that their attitudes towards inclusion could be improved with the provision of professional development opportunities, time to collaborate with one another, extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels, and additional support personnel. This data reinforced recommendations put forth by Barrington (1995) in which she stressed the need for professional development before and during the inclusive situations as well as the need to intentionally plan for collaboration time, and Zigmond (1995) who explained the importance of extra resources in teaching materials and personnel.

Effects on Regular Students

What do the core subject teachers perceive as the positive and negative effects of inclusion on the LD students as well as the regular students?

Since the positive and negative effects, academically and socially, for the LD students were dealt with in research question #2, Perceptions of Success, this section will discuss the positive and negatives effects for the regular classroom students.

From the survey results, it appears that socially the inclusive situation is perceived by the respondents as being beneficial for the regular students. There were 85% of the respondents who felt this way. The diversity of opinions held by the respondents on this topic is demonstrated in statements like,

- "I think the other students can learn as well. They can learn tolerance; they can learn patience; they can learn how to deal with students that don't learn as quickly as they do" (Language Arts teacher, 05/03/2001).

- "I think there are probably some positives to them having the other students in because it allows them to recognize that people do have different abilities...I mean you try to encourage that it's okay that other people have different abilities and that's their thing" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

- "They get tired of him being out of control because it's so hard for him to sit in a desk and try to work on something and so they get frustrated and we've had numerous talks throughout the year about, you know, the way we treat each other and things" (Language Arts teacher, 02/03/2001).

When the academic growth of the regular students was being discussed some of the frustrations of the classroom teacher became visible. The results from the survey

demonstrated that 54.54 % felt the academic learning of the regular students was not being affected while 41.46% felt that it was. The interviewees demonstrated the breadth of thinking on this matter by saying,

- "I don't think it affects the regular students, not in a negative way. If anything, I explain it so many times the kids who are considered quote 'regular students' get it" (Math teacher, 30/01/2001).

- "I used to peer teach with the LD student and a real academic student and I'm not so sure there was much academic growth through that. Then I started using students who didn't have very good academic skills to work with them and that idea of retelling them what they're working on and reexplaining it, I think it helped them. Instead of hearing the information once or twice from me and reading it themselves they were then reteaching, and reteaching is obviously a pretty good method for lower academic students to learn something. So I think it's good for lower students to work with the LD students. . . . If I started spending lots of time with the LD student, I would think that it would take away from the regular class, but I don't let that happen. I probably don't spend as much time with the LD student as I should" (Social teacher, 30/01/2001).

- "Not if you've got an aide or somebody that can spend the extra time with that other student (LD student). Otherwise it can significantly diminish the amount of time you're able to spend with them - regular students, trying to keep this other student on track and getting the help that they need" (Social teacher, 02/03/2001).

- "The only time it would (affect the learning of the regular students) is if they're

doing group things and they're paired with somebody, or have some students, that would hamper their academic success. But other than that as a full class the pace might be a little bit slower but I wouldn't say much, afterall there is a curriculum to cover" (Science teacher, 25/01/2001).

- "I don't feel I'm able to challenge my higher students as much as I would because you have to teach to the group....The other down side is government achievement exams. When we get our report, if I have a class with four learning disabled students, we are going to be below provincial average because I only have eleven students. In a small school when you've got a higher percentage of LD students then it really takes your results down and so as a school and as a teacher I feel bad, and I feel a failure... it's a frustration level to a teacher" (Math teacher, 26/01/2001).

- "I spend more time doing classroom management than I do teaching. It definitely was affecting their (regular students) learning and not for the better" (Social/Language Arts teacher, 25/01/2001).

In some of the inclusive situations, the teachers appear to have found strategies that ensure the academic success of all students in their regular classrooms. Other interviewees comments supported the findings of Lobosco and Newman (1992) that working with the LD students may be related to job dissatisfaction. All responses, however, indicate that teachers are challenged by the presence of LD students in their classrooms. They support inclusion, but seek to improve their practices.

Recommendations

This research project does not provide all of the information necessary to better the inclusive educational situations across the Westwind School Division. It is merely a beginning point from which the school division and each school can begin an extensive examination of the inclusive situations and what is needed to improve them. On the basis of the results, there are five recommendations to be made for the Westwind School Division.

First, it is recommended that goals and policies be established by the district school board, school administrations, and staff to determine the direction to be taken to more effectively meet the needs of the LD students both socially and academically. As Barrington (1995) explains having stipulated goals and approved policies provides a common focus for all.

Second, it is recommended that school administrators provide the professional development activities which the staff feel are essential to success in their current inclusive situations. From the responses obtained this may include the provision of assessment tools as well as strategies for differentiating the classroom instruction. It is significant to remember that the activities should not be mandated for all staff since prior studies demonstrated that professional development activities not relevant to current teaching assignments were viewed with frustration on the part of the staff members. Rather interviewees stated that they sought small group, on-site activities which dealt specifically with their students. Other staff members, board office specialists, the University of Lethbridge, and the Alberta Teachers' Association could be approached for assistance on a number of topics relevant to the teachers. This would help to address the concerns of the

80.48% of the respondents who felt that they could not effectively meet the needs of the LD students and those who felt that teachers' knowledge regarding programming for these students was the second highest factor requiring improvement.

Third, it is recommended that school administrators and their staffs find creative methods to intentionally schedule time to be used to learn, plan, and collaborate with other teachers to examine what strategies work with specific students, as well as time to prepare modified teaching materials. This is extremely significant because 95% of the respondents felt that this was the factor which needed the most improvement. Barrington (1995) found in her Alberta study that schools that found the time were able to improve their inclusive educational experiences.

Fourth, it is recommended that the district and school administrations provide additional educational assistants in the rural schools where several LD students are often grouped together. Since 72% of the teachers feel inadequate, and over 80% feel they cannot meet the needs of the LD students in their classrooms, extra support appears essential. When there is more than one LD student in a classroom without additional support, the academic needs of all students may be compromised.

Fifth, it is recommended that district and school administrations increase budget areas to meet the increase needed in support personnel, and to allow for the purchase of teaching resources at lower instructional levels in each of the core subject areas. This would help to alleviate some of the pressures the classroom teachers have expressed.

Conclusion

In the year 2000, a short publication entitled A Vision and Agenda for Public Education was distributed by Alberta's education partners, namely the Alberta School

Boards Association, the ATA, the College of Alberta School Superintendents, the Association of School Business Officials of Alberta, and the Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association. They stated that "public education in Alberta has a three-fold mission: (a) To develop a foundation of learning that enables individuals to function effectively in work, further learning and life, (b) to develop citizens of a democratic society, and (c) to develop the potential and gifts of each child" (p.1). The data from this research project demonstrates that the teachers in the junior high schools of the Westwind School Division #74 do not believe that they can effectively fulfill this mission without putting practices into place which will ensure that more of the factors put forth in literature as being essential to the success of inclusion are implemented in their schools. The factors of prime importance included on-site professional development opportunities, more time for collaboration and preparation, and more resources in the form of personnel and instructional materials.

If I were doing this research project again, I would make one significant change. I believe a clearer picture of the inclusive situation would have been provided if all of the junior high teachers in the school division had been allowed to participate. As I progressed through the study several teachers who deliver option classes like industrial arts, home economics, and band were disappointed that they did not have the opportunity to participate. As one teacher succinctly put it, "the learning problems don't go away just because they come to my option class. It may be even more difficult to assist them in an option where there is lots of movement, or where the teacher has to keep moving throughout the classroom area for the safety of all students" (Industrial Arts teacher, 06/03/2001). This statement further affirms the need for each school staff to undertake its

own research and discussions to establish the school and personal professional goals that will enable them to improve the inclusive situations for the learning disabled students in their schools.

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Appendices

Appendix A

The Cover Letter

Teachers,

I am presently conducting a study on the inclusion of learning disabled students in junior high schools in the Westwind School Division. The purpose of this study is to establish how widely inclusion is used in the division, what factors appear to affect the inclusive setting, as well as the positive and negative effects of inclusion on the learning disabled and regular students.

As this study is only concerned with the gathering of information on the inclusion of learning disabled students in the junior high schools in the Westwind School Division, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions that you will be answering. To help set your mind at ease, I want to inform you that all of the teachers of the core subject areas of math, science, social, and language arts, in Grades 7- 9, within this school division have been invited to take part in this survey. Your participation is completely anonymous, voluntary, and confidential. It may be terminated at any time without penalty. A summary of my findings will be forwarded to each school at the conclusion of my study.

I greatly appreciate your assistance in this study at a time of year when I realize you are extremely busy. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at the Magrath Jr./Sr. High School at 758-3366. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. Rick Mrazek at 329-2452, and/or the chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee, Dr. R. Butt at 329-2434.

Before beginning there are three terms which I need to define so that the survey questions are dealt with on the same level of understanding by everyone participating. They are as follows:

1. **"inclusion"** means:
   - the practice of meeting the physical, intellectual, social and emotional needs of students with special needs within regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools alongside non-disabled, same-aged peers, and with appropriate support. This word is used interchangeably with the words "integration" and "mainstreaming".

   For the purpose of this survey, the students with special needs that are being included are the learning disabled students.

2. **"learning disabled student (LD)"** means:
   The Learning Disabilities Association of Canada puts forth this official definition:

"Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction. Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas: attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation. Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual, including those with potentially average, or above average intelligence.

Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.

Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, events in the pre- to perinatal period, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment."

Within the Province of Alberta's Department of Learning, many of these students are to be identified with a code of 54, but not all LD students are identified.

For the purpose of this survey, teachers are asked to look at those students who are coded, as well as those who are perceived by the teacher to have a learning disability.

3.   **"perception of success"** means:
For the purpose of establishing a common rubric for comparison the following definitions of success are to be used for evaluation of the inclusive situations in this survey:

Academic success: This includes:

a.   Academic progress.
For some students, academic progress may be the attainment of a passing grade within the curricular goals of each subject area as set out by the province.
For more severe learning disabled students, it may involve the successful achievement of one or more of the goals in the individual's I.P.P. to the point where the goal is considered met and subsequently discontinued. This may or may not be at grade level depending on the severity of the learning disability, and the student's current level of ability.

b.   Active participation.
This refers to the student's active participation in regular classroom activities with accommodations made to meet the individual student's needs.

Accommodations may include individualized work, simplified vocabulary and explanations, modified reading materials, a reader, a scribe, tutoring by an aide, adult or a peer volunteer, hands-on activities, or exam

accommodations.

Active participation requires attentiveness to the appropriate on-going activities of the class, and would include contributing to class discussions and taking part in class learning activities.

Social success:
This includes having the skills necessary to relate to the students and adults in a regular classroom in a positive manner without negatively affecting the learning of others.

Successful social skills would include:
- the ability to follow instructions.
- accept criticism or a consequence, and to accept 'no' for an answer.
- use of appropriate behaviours to greet others, to get the teacher's attention, to make a request, to disagree and to give criticism.
- the ability to take part in conversations during a group discussion without interrupting the dynamics of the conversation.
- the appropriate use of social space.
- showing respect for the privacy of others.

The determination of success for each of these would need to be able to be agreed upon by the teacher and one other person who regularly works with the student

PLEASE fill out this survey as soon as you can, place it in the accompanying envelope, seal it and return it to your administrator. I need all surveys back before June 16th, 2000. Your administrator will return them to me via the divisional courier. The pen is yours to keep, a small token to demonstrate my appreciation for your assistance with my study.

Sincerely

Cory Beres
Magrath Jr./Sr. High School
758-3366

Appendix B

The Survey

The first set of questions are intended to establish the subject areas in which inclusion is being attempted within the school division and your school.

1. Circle the grade(s) that you are currently teaching at the junior high level.

    Grade 7   Grade 8   Grade 9

2. Circle **all** of the subjects that you teach within these grades.

Grade 7	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 8	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 9	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts

3. Circle the subject(s) in which you teach one (1) or more learning disabled (LD) student(s).

Grade 7	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 8	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 9	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts

4. Circle the subjects in which you are responsible for constructing the individual program plan (I.P.P.) for one (1) or more learning disabled (LD) students.

Grade 7	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 8	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 9	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts

5. Circle **all** the subjects in which students are pulled out of your regular classroom for smaller group or resource room instruction.

Grade 7	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 8	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts
Grade 9	Math	Social	Science	Language Arts

The next set of questions will provide knowledge regarding your current perceptions of inclusion and its effectiveness in your school division, school, and classroom.
For this section please use the following scale. CIRCLE THE NUMBER which most closely demonstrates your opinion of the following statements. The scale is as follows:

1 - Strongly Disagree   2 - Somewhat Disagree   3 - Somewhat Agree   4 - Agree   5 - Strongly Agree
----

6.   Regular classroom placement for all learning disabled (LD) students should be the first educational option considered by our school board.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

7.   My school has clearly articulated goals and policies for the inclusion of learning disabled (LD) students.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

8.   Learning disabled (LD) students have the right to participate in regular classrooms with the necessary accommodations provided to meet their individual learning needs.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

9.   Regular classroom teachers hold the primary responsibility for the education of the LD students in their classrooms.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

10. Regular classroom teachers are unable to meet the needs of the majority of LD student(s) currently in their classrooms.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

11. Pull-out programs or a resource room, are more effective for meeting the needs of LD students.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

12. My teacher training prepared me to effectively meet the needs of LD students.

    Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
          1   2   3   4   5

13. I can effectively construct individual program plans (I.P.P.'s) that include objective and measurable goals for the LD student(s) in my classroom.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

14. The utilization of special education personnel is improved through the use of inclusion (i.e. increased number of students served, more time for direct instruction, more time for collaborative consultation).

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

15. My school administration supports inclusion by providing extra time for planning and collaboration meetings.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

16. LD students experience academic success (as previously defined) when they are placed full time in the regular classroom.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

17. Inclusion offers mixed group interactions which foster understanding and acceptance of individual differences.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

18. LD students lose the stigma of being "dumb", "different", or "failures" when they are placed in the regular classroom.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

19. Inclusion promotes social success (as previously defined) of the LD students.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

20. Achievement levels of regular education students are not be affected when LD students are placed full time in regular classrooms.

Strongly Disagree   Strongly Agree
1   2   3   4   5

The next section will identify the factors necessary for successful inclusion which are evident in your school.

Identify which factors you perceive as being adequate at this time with an "A", and those factors needing improvement with an "N".

___ written school policies and mission statements regarding inclusion

___ administrative support and involvement in the inclusion process

___ teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion

___ teachers' feelings of adequacy when dealing with meeting the needs of LD students

___ teachers' knowledge regarding programming for the learning disabled

___ professional development opportunities available in the areas of planning for
instruction, behaviour management, & preparation of individual program plans

___ support personnel to assist in assessment, planning, and classroom instruction

___ extra planning and collaboration time

___ reduced class sizes when LD students are included

___ extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels

___ parental involvement in the inclusion process

___ Other ... Please state what other factors you feel are significant to the success of
inclusion

The last section provides relevant demographic information. Please CIRCLE the response that applies to your situation.

What is your gender?

Male   Female

What age range are you within?

20-29   30-39   40-49   50-59   over 50

How many years of post secondary education do you have?

1-4   5-6   7-8   over 8

How many years have you been teaching?

1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   over 20

How many years have you been teaching at the junior high level?

1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   over 20

What classification of teacher are you?   ___ Regular classroom   ___ Special Needs   ___ Both

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS SURVEY. Please place your survey in the accompanying envelope, seal it and return it to your administrator.

Appendix C

Graphic Representations of Survey Question Results

6. Regular classroom placement for all learning disabled students should be the first educational option considered by our school board.
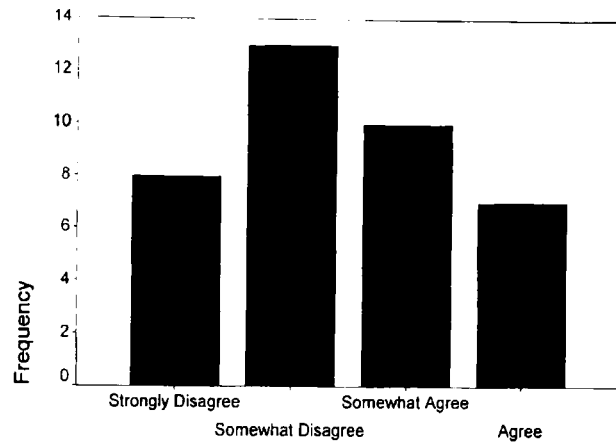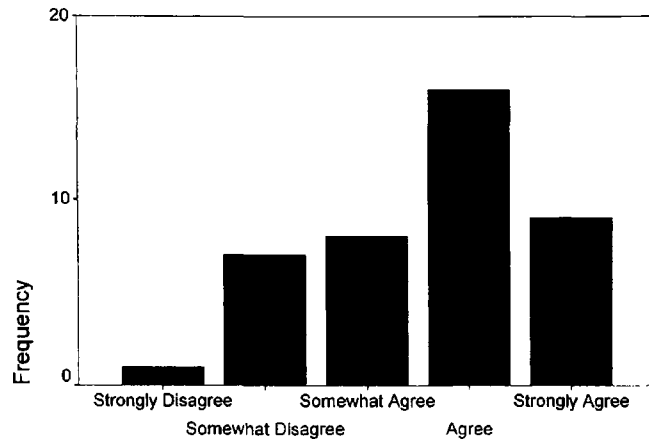

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	19.5	21.1	21.1
	Somewhat Disagree	13	31.7	34.2	55.3
	Somewhat Agree	10	24.4	26.3	81.6
	Agree	7	17.1	18.4	100.0
	Total	38	92.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	7.3		
Total		41	100.0		

7. My school has clearly articulated goals and policies for the inclusion of leaning disabled (LD) students.
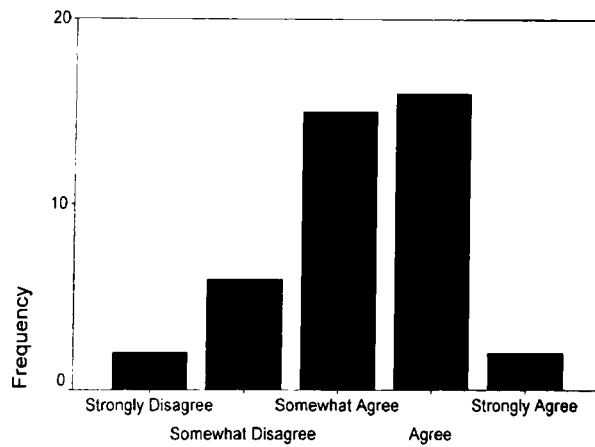
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Somewhat Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	19.5
	Somewhat Agree	15	36.6	36.6	56.1
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	95.1
	Strongly Agree	2	4.9	4.9	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

8. Learning disabled (LD) students have the right to participate in regular classrooms with the necessary accommodations provided to meet their individual needs.
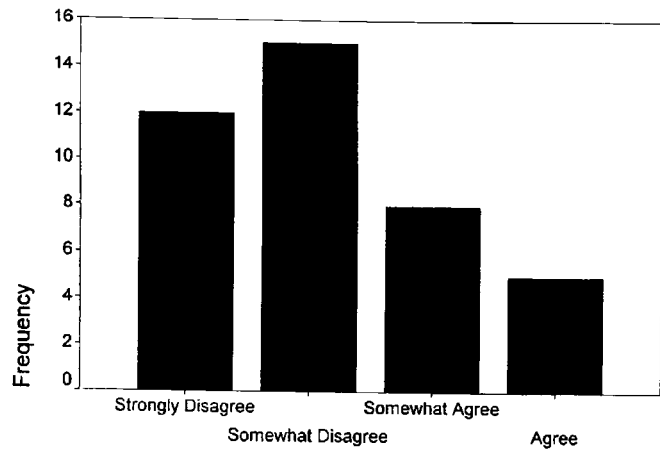

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Somewhat Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	17.1
	Somewhat Agree	11	26.8	26.8	43.9
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	78.0
	Strongly Agree	9	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

9. Regular classroom teachers hold the primary responsibility for the education of the LD students in their classrooms.
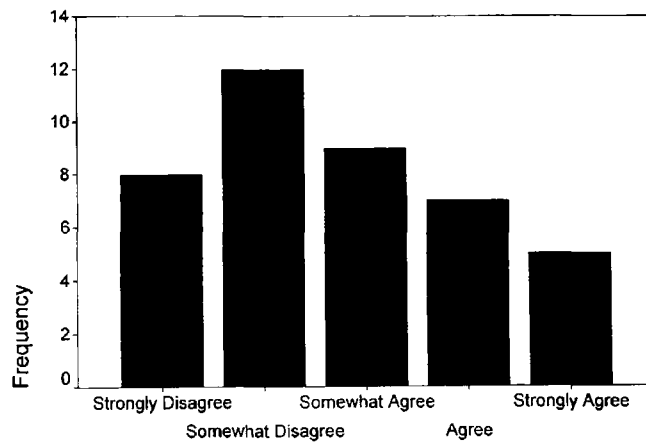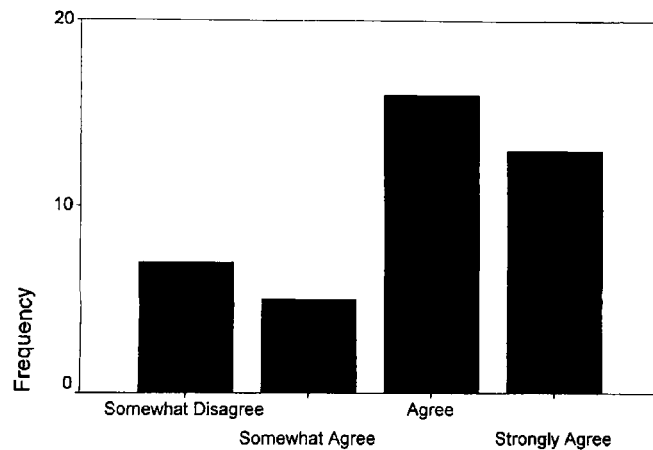

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	19.5	19.5	19.5
	Somewhat Disagree	12	29.3	29.3	48.8
	Somewhat Agree	9	22.0	22.0	70.7
	Agree	7	17.1	17.1	87.8
	Strongly Agree	5	12.2	12.2	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

10. Regular classroom teachers are unable to meet the needs of the majority of LD student(s) currently in their classrooms.
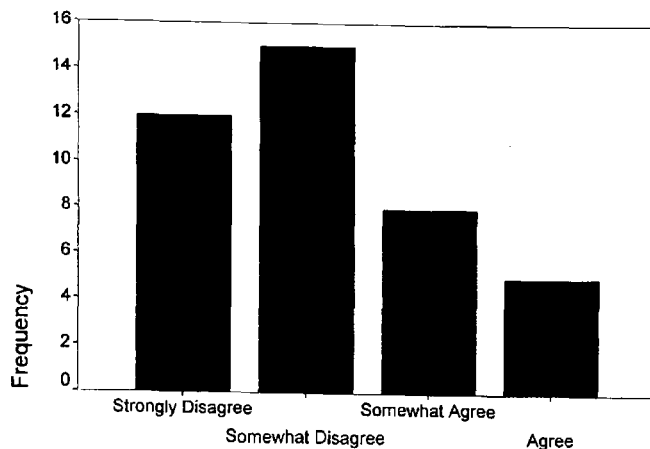

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Somewhat Disagree	7	17.1	17.1	19.5
	Somewhat Agree	8	19.5	19.5	39.0
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	78.0
	Strongly Agree	9	22.0	22.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

11. Pull-out programs or a resource room, are more effective for meeting the needs of the LD students.
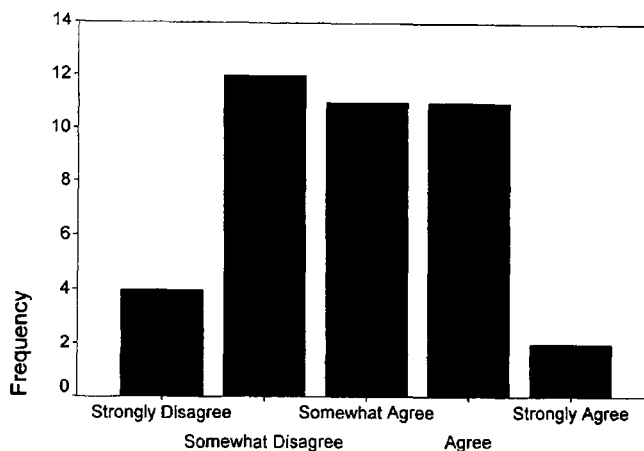

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Somewhat Disagree	7	17.1	17.1	17.1
	Somewhat Agree	5	12.2	12.2	29.3
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	68.3
	Strongly Agree	13	31.7	31.7	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

12. My teacher training prepared me to effectively meet the needs of the LD students.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	29.3	30.0	30.0
	Somewhat Disagree	15	36.6	37.5	67.5
	Somewhat Agree	8	19.5	20.0	87.5
	Agree	5	12.2	12.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

13. I can effectively construct individual program plans (I.P.P.'s) that include objective and measurable goals for the LD student(s) in my classroom.
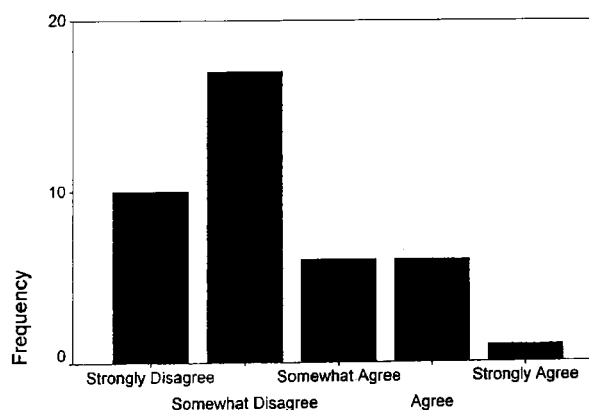

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	9.8	10.0	10.0
	Somewhat Disagree	12	29.3	30.0	40.0
	Somewhat Agree	11	26.8	27.5	67.5
	Agree	11	26.8	27.5	95.0
	Strongly Agree	2	4.9	5.0	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

14. The utilization of special education personnel is improved through the use of inclusion (i.e. increased number of students served, more time for direct instruction, more time for collaborative consultation).
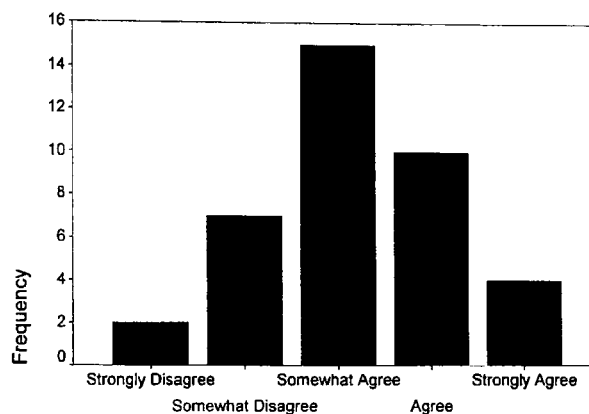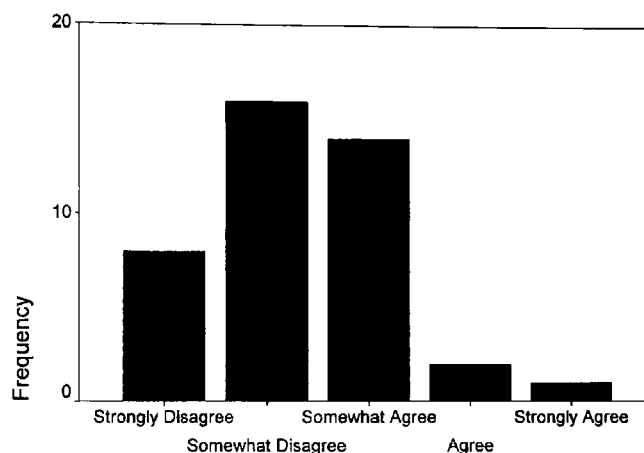

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	5.3	5.3
	Somewhat Disagree	7	17.1	18.4	23.7
	Somewhat Agree	15	36.6	39.5	63.2
	Agree	10	24.4	26.3	89.5
	Strongly Agree	4	9.8	10.5	100.0
	Total	38	92.7	100.0	
Missing	System	3	7.3		
Total		41	100.0		

15. My school administration supports inclusion by providing extra time for planning and collaboration meetings.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	10	24.4	25.0	25.0
	Somewhat Disagree	17	41.5	42.5	67.5
	Somewhat Agree	6	14.6	15.0	82.5
	Agree	6	14.6	15.0	97.5
	Strongly Agree	1	2.4	2.5	100.0
	Total	40	97.6	100.0	
Missing	System	1	2.4		
Total		41	100.0		

16. LD students experience academic success (as previously defined) when they are placed full time in the regular classroom.
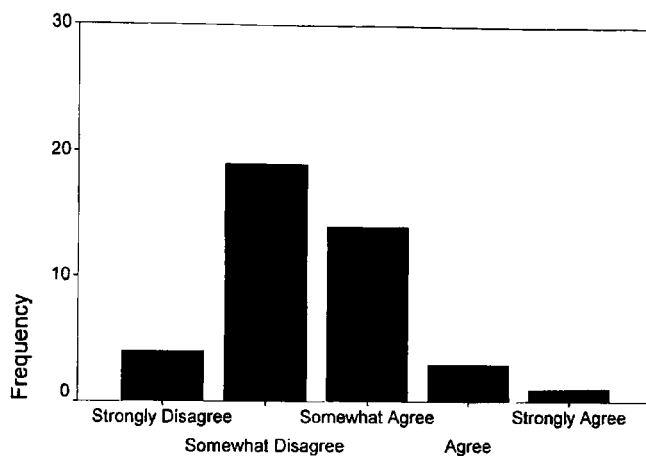

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	19.5	19.5	19.5
	Somewhat Disagree	16	39.0	39.0	58.5
	Somewhat Agree	14	34.1	34.1	92.7
	Agree	2	4.9	4.9	97.6
	Strongly Agree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

17. Inclusion offers mixed group interactions which foster understanding and acceptance of individual differences.
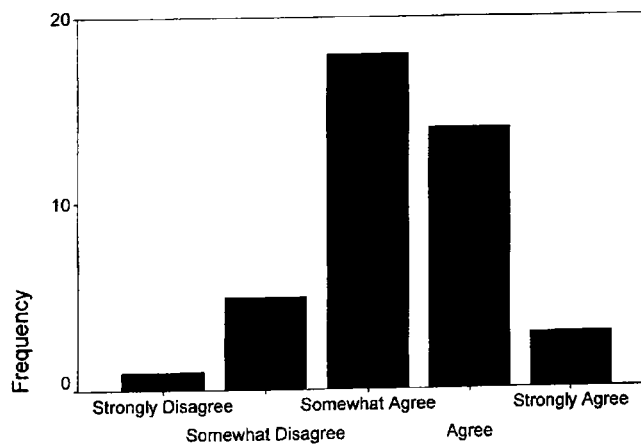
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	2.4	2.4	2.4
	Somewhat Disagree	5	12.2	12.2	14.6
	Somewhat Agree	18	43.9	43.9	58.5
	Agree	14	34.1	34.1	92.7
	Strongly Agree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

18. LD students lose the stigma of being "dumb", "different", or "failures" when they are placed in the regular classroom.
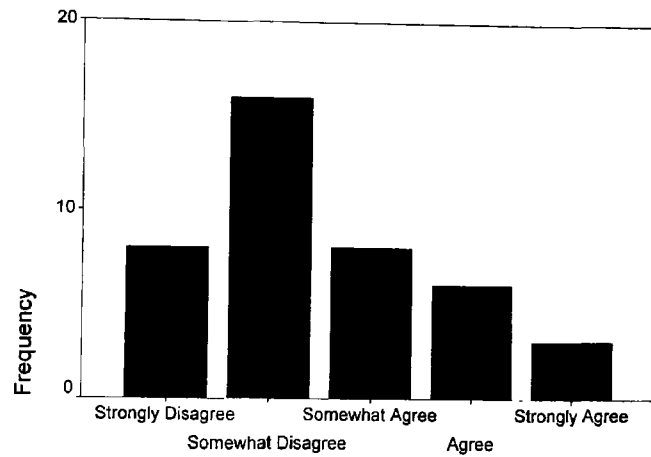

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	4	9.8	9.8	9.8
	Somewhat Disagree	19	46.3	46.3	56.1
	Somewhat Agree	14	34.1	34.1	90.2
	Agree	3	7.3	7.3	97.6
	Strongly Agree	1	2.4	2.4	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

19. Inclusion promotes social success (as previously defined) of the LD students.
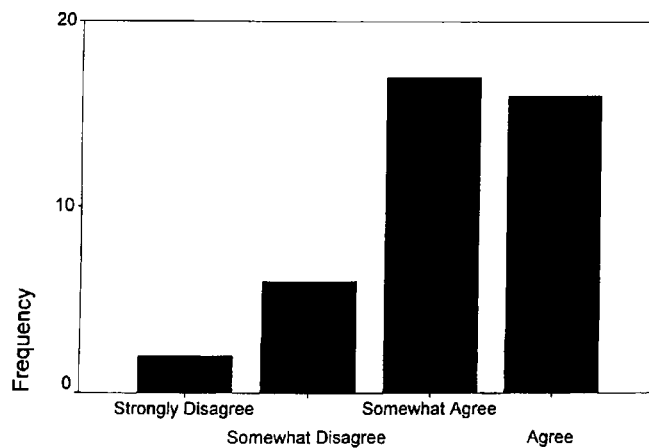
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	4.9	4.9	4.9
	Somewhat Disagree	6	14.6	14.6	19.5
	Somewhat Agree	17	41.5	41.5	61.0
	Agree	16	39.0	39.0	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

20. Achievement levels of regular educations students are not affected when LD students are placed full time in regular classrooms.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	8	19.5	19.5	19.5
	Somewhat Disagree	16	39.0	39.0	58.5
	Somewhat Agree	8	19.5	19.5	78.0
	Agree	6	14.6	14.6	92.7
	Strongly Agree	3	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	41	100.0	100.0	

Appendix D

Interview Blueprint

AT THIS TIME I AM INVOLVED IN THE MASTER OF EDUCATION PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE. TO SUCCESSFULLY FULFILL MY REQUIREMENTS, I HAVE CHOSEN TO DO A RESEARCH PROJECT ON THE INCLUSION OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE WESTWIND SCHOOL DIVISION.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS INTERVIEW IS TO GAIN INFORMATION WHICH WILL CLARIFY ANSWERS PROVIDED ON THE QUESTIONNAIRES WHICH I SENT OUT IN JUNE 2000, AND TO GAIN A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF THE PERCEPTIONS TEACHERS IN OUR DIVISION HOLD ON THE SUCCESS OF INCLUSION. BECAUSE I AM ONLY INVOLVED IN GATHERING INFORMATION ON THIS TOPIC, THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS I WILL BE ASKING.

IT'S IMPORTANT THAT YOU KNOW THAT I WILL BE TAPE RECORDING OUR INTERVIEW. I AM DOING THIS TO ELIMINATE ANY PROBLEMS THAT I MAY HAVE REMEMBERING SPECIFIC DETAILS FROM OUR CONVERSATION. AT THE COMPLETION OF MY PROJECT THE TAPES WILL BE DESTROYED. IF YOU WOULD RATHER DESTROY THE TAPE YOURSELF, I WILL GLADLY RETURN IT TO YOU. TO SET YOUR MIND AT EASE, I WANT TO TELL YOU THAT ALL OF YOUR RESPONSES ARE CONFIDENTIAL, AND YOUR NAME WILL NEVER APPEAR IN MY WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT.

SINCE I HAVE EXPLAINED THAT I AM LOOKING AT THE INCLUSION OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS, I FEEL IT IS ONLY FAIR TO PROVIDE YOU WITH THIS DEFINITION OF 'LEARNING DISABILITIES' WHICH IS PROVIDED BY THE LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA. BY DEFINING WHO THESE STUDENTS ARE, IT IS MY HOPE THAT EACH INTERVIEWEE WILL BE DISCUSSING THE SAME TYPE OF STUDENT IN THE INCLUSIVE SITUATIONS.

"Learning disabilities is a generic term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders due to identifiable or inferred central nervous system dysfunction.
　　Such disorders may be manifested by delays in early development and/or difficulties in any of the following areas:
　　　　attention, memory, reasoning, coordination, communicating, reading, writing, spelling, calculation, social competence and emotional maturation.
　　Learning disabilities are intrinsic to the individual, and may affect learning and behaviour in any individual, including those with potentially average, or above average intelligence.
　　Learning disabilities are not due primarily to visual, hearing or motor handicaps; to mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage; although they may occur concurrently with any of these.
　　Learning disabilities may arise from genetic variations, biochemical factors, events in

the pre- to perinatal period, or any other subsequent events resulting in neurological impairment."

Interview Questions

1. Let's begin by focusing on the inclusive situation in your classroom. I asked your administrator to select a teacher who was currently working with learning disabled students in the regular classroom so I would like to clarify whether you currently have one, or more than one LD student in your classroom at this time?
Please explain to me how this type of student is involved in your classroom activities?

2. A large number of the articles I read tried to examine the perceived effects of inclusion on the students, both learning disabled and regular.
Looking first at the LD students could you explain to me what **you** perceive as the positive and negative effects of inclusion as it relates to their :
    A) social skills
    B) academic skills.
Next, could I get you to focus on the positive and negative effects as **you** perceive them, for the regular students as it relates to their:
    A) social skills
    B) academic skills.

3. I am providing definitions of the perceptions of success which I need you to read. After thinking about them I will need you to explain whether or not you feel your LD students are experiencing these types of success.
Please take note that these definitions are not intended to be the only measures of success. They are simply the definitions that I established for the purpose of having a common rubric for comparison.

Academic success: This includes:
a.   <u>Academic progress.</u>
For some students, academic progress may be the attainment of a passing grade within the curricular goals of each subject area as set out by the province.
For more severe learning disabled students, it may involve the successful achievement of one or more of the goals in the individual's I.P.P. to the point where the goal is considered met and subsequently discontinued. This may or may not be at grade level depending on the severity of the learning disability, and the student's current level of ability.
b.   <u>Active participation.</u>
This refers to the student's active participation in regular classroom activities with accommodations made to meet the individual student's needs. Accommodations may include individualized work, simplified vocabulary and explanations, modified reading materials, a reader, a scribe, tutoring by an aide, adult or a peer volunteer, hands-on activities, or exam accommodations.
Active participation requires attentiveness to the appropriate on-going activities of

the class, and would include contributing to class discussions and taking part in class learning activities.

Social success:

This includes having the skills necessary to relate to the students and adults in a regular classroom in a positive manner without negatively affecting the learning of others.

Successful social skills would include:

- the ability to follow instructions.
- accept criticism or a consequence, and to accept 'no' for an answer.
- use of appropriate behaviours to greet others, to get the teacher's attention, to make a request, to disagree and to give criticism.
- the ability to take part in conversations during a group discussion without interrupting the dynamics of the conversation.
- the appropriate use of social space.

4. I know that in our school division the IPP's for the LD students are developed in a variety of ways. Have you any idea how they're developed in your school?
Are you aware of whether or not these plans are used when planning for instruction or assessment?

5. In the questionnaires that were sent out last June, I included a list of factors which were presented in literature as being essential to the success of inclusion. Please look over this list now and select 2 or 3 which you feel would best meet your needs when it comes to including LD students successfully in your classroom. At the interview, I will encourage you to explain the reasons behind your selections.

Factors necessary for successful inclusion:

___ written school policies and mission statements regarding inclusion

___ administrative support and involvement in the inclusion process

___ teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusion

___ teachers' feelings of adequacy when dealing with meeting the needs of LD students

___ teachers' knowledge regarding programming for the learning disabled

___ professional development opportunities available in the areas of planning for instruction, behaviour management, & preparation of individual program plans

___ support personnel to assist in assessment, planning, and classroom instruction

___ extra planning and collaboration time

___ reduced class sizes when LD students are included

___ extra teaching resources at lower instructional levels

___ parental involvement in the inclusion process

___ Other ... Please state what other factors you feel are significant to the success of inclusion

6. As you consider your individual circumstances in relation to inclusion, what would you say the biggest problem is that you face?
   What professional development activities do you believe could best improve your situation?

7. Is there anything else that you would like to add regarding inclusion that perhaps I haven't asked? Anything that you think that I'm missing?

I WANT TO THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO WORK ON THIS RESEARCH PROJECT WITH ME.
I JUST NEED YOU TO ANSWER A FEW DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS, AND WE'LL BE DONE. MOST OF THE FOLLOWING INVOLVE SELECTING A RANGE WITHIN WHICH YOU WOULD FIT SO THAT I CAN CROSS REFERENCE WITH SOME OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE QUESTIONS WHEN I WRITE UP MY REPORT.

What age range are you within?

20-29   30-39   40-49   50-59

How many years have you been teaching?

1-5   6-10   11-15   16-20   over 20

Did your teacher training include any course material on inclusion, or accommodating LD students?

Yes   No

ONCE AGAIN I WOULD LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE AND PARTICIPATION.

Appendix E

Interview Consent Letter

Consent Letter

At this time I am involved in the master of education program at the university of Lethbridge. To successfully fulfill my requirements, I have chosen to do a research project on the inclusion of learning disabled students in the junior high schools in the Westwind School Division.

The purpose of this interview is to gain information which will clarify answers provided on the questionnaires which I sent out in June 2000, and to gain a deeper understanding of the perceptions teachers in our division hold on the success of inclusion. Because I am only involved in gathering information on this topic, there are no right or wrong answers to the questions I will be asking.

It's important that you know that I will be tape recording our interview. I am doing this to eliminate any problems that I may have remembering specific details from our conversation. At the completion of my project the tapes will be destroyed. If you would rather destroy the tape yourself, I will gladly return it to you.

To set your mind at ease, I want to tell you that all of your responses are confidential, and your name will never appear in my written assignment. A summary of my findings will be forwarded to each school at the conclusion of my study.

I greatly appreciate your assistance in this study. If you have any questions please feel free to call me at the Magrath Jr./Sr. High School at 758-3366. Also feel free to contact the supervisor of my study, Dr. Rick Mrazek at 329-2452, and/or the chair of the Faculty of Education Human Subject Research Committee, Dr. R. Butt at 329-2434.

Sincerely,

Cory Beres

_____

I, _____ , agree to participate in this study.

Name: _____   Signature:_____

                                             Date: _____