

Global Challenges in Special Needs Education: Past, Present, and Future



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Preface

Biennially, professionals from around the world come together for the opportunity to share ideas, learn from each other, and make new friends at the conference of The International Association of Special Education (IASE). By coming together in such a forum, we are able to celebrate our accomplishments toward serving the needs of children and youth with unique life challenges. At the same time, we are made more cognizant of the enormity of what remains to be done in all sectors of the world in order to conserve and enhance the potential of the children and youth.

IASE is proud to sponsor the 2007 conference on *Global Challenges in Special Needs Education: Past, Present, and Future*. Individuals whose proposals were accepted for presentation at this conference were invited to submit an abstract representative of their presentation to be reviewed and included in the conference proceedings. Although many presenters did not take advantage of the opportunity to submit manuscripts, others did. We feel certain you will find the manuscripts interesting and you will want to learn more about the topic being discussed. In the event you desire to learn more about a presentation represented in the proceedings, we have provided contact information so you can make inquiries as warranted.

As editors of the proceedings, we want to express our appreciation to those who submitted manuscripts and to numerous individuals who assisted in the review process. Further, we sincerely appreciate the work of the editorial staff at the University of North Texas' Institute for Behavioral and Learning Differences who helped produce the final product.

We challenge each of you to continue the great work that you are doing!

Lyndal M. Bullock
Vivian Heung
Lynn Aylward

THE JOURNAL OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

Jamie Timmerman
Malgorzata (Gosia) Sekulowicz
Greg Prater

Much of the following information on submission guidelines for manuscripts and PRAXIS articles can be accessed by means of the World Wide Web at the following web address: <http://www.iase.org>. We encourage submission of articles that have not been previously published and are not under review by any other publication that meet the International Association of Special Education (IASE) mission statement. Articles of interest to researchers and/or practitioners are given equal preference.

Mission Statement

The aims of the IASE are to promote professional exchange among special educators all over the world, to develop Special Education as a discipline and profession, to encourage international cooperation and collaborative international research, to promote continuing education of its members by organizing conferences, and to foster international communication in Special Education through *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education*.

Submission Guidelines for Manuscripts

Style. Total length of the manuscript is not to exceed 20 pages and should include all references, charts, figures, and tables. Articles submitted should follow the guidelines of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (5th ed.)*.

Word Processing. Using American English, manuscripts are to be typed in Microsoft Word using 12 point Times New Roman (no bold or italics). The entire document should be doubled-spaced with .75 margins all around (top, bottom, left, and right). However, only put one space in between sentences. Tables, charts, figures, and or illustrations should fit in a 3 ¼ width column and are to be on separate pages at the end of the manuscript. Additionally, a copy of any photos, illustrations or other graphics must be attached electronically in jpeg format. This aids in the printing process for compatibility with the Macintosh computers that our printer uses. References are to be in APA style with hanging indents. (If you do not have access to Microsoft Word please contact us).

Cover Page. Include the following information on a separate sheet: (a) title of the manuscript (b) date of submission, (c) author's name, complete mailing address, business and home telephone numbers, and (d) institutional affiliation, address, e-mail address, and fax number.

Abstract. On a separate sheet of paper at the beginning of the manuscript describe the essence of the manuscript in 100–150 words.

Form. E-mail. Attach as one document in the following order: Abstract, Cover Page, Manuscript and e-mail to Greg.Prater@nau.edu. Any jpeg graphics will of course be attached separately. You will receive an e-mail confirming that we received your attachment. If the article cannot be electronically sent, then please,

Mail. Send two (2) hard copies of the manuscript, abstract, and cover page along with this information on a CD to the mailing address listed below. Include a self-addressed postcard (we will provide postage) so we can notify you we have received your manuscript. Please reference the cover page for the mailing address. Please mail manuscript submissions to Greg Prater.

Authors will be notified of the receipt of their manuscripts by the return postcard and/or e-mail as noted above. After an initial review by the editors, those manuscripts that meet established specifications will be sent to members of the Professional Journal Committee for further editing and reviewing. The journal editors reserve the right to make editorial changes. Points of view and opinions are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of the International Association of Special Education.

PRAXIS Submission Guidelines

The PRAXIS section of this journal is intended for readers to be able to immediately apply the methods/strategies described in the articles in their classrooms. These methods/strategies may be new and unique ideas or they can be effective methods/strategies that some teachers have been using and believe that by publishing them, many more teachers could implement them in their classrooms. The articles should be approximately three to six pages and describe in detail a specific teaching strategy or informal assessment method. The articles should include specific instructions on how to develop and implement the methods/strategies. The methods/strategies should require no unique materials for development. These articles are to be submitted following the same submission guidelines and will go through the same review process as all *The Journal of the International Association of Special Education* (JIASE) articles with the exception of including an abstract. (*See submission guidelines*) The format for these articles should include an introduction, step-by-step directions, materials/examples of charts or graphs if needed, conclusions and references. The JIASE encourages you to consider submitting methods/strategies that you have used with students with disabilities and think would be of interest to our readers. Teachers, teacher trainers, professors, students, speech clinicians, psychologists, health care providers, social workers, counselors, family members and those associated with related disciplines are welcome to submit articles for consideration for publication in the PRAXIS section of the journal.

General Recommendations from the Editors

First, we suggest that you read all submission guidelines to *The JIASE*. Your manuscript should adhere to these guidelines. Please make certain that your topic is consistent with the intended purpose of *The JIASE*. If submission guidelines are not followed the article will be returned to the author and not sent out for review by the consulting editors. For those authors whom English is their Second Language we are working on a plan to help better assist with the editing of these manuscripts. We are always willing to assist when we can. Please contact *The JIASE* Editor directly with any questions or concerns.

The JIASE is a peer reviewed journal. Manuscripts that meet submission guidelines are sent to a minimum of three consulting editors without any information that can identify the author (i.e., blind review). The consulting editors rate the following areas: (a) addresses the mission of IASE, (b) interest to our readers, (c) topic/data current, (d) relevance to international readership, (e) usefulness to the field, (f) innovative theory and/or techniques, (g) quality of written expression, and (h) overall quality of the manuscript.

Currently, *The JIASE* has an approximate acceptance rate of 70 percent. The goal of *The JIASE* is that the authors' articles published in *The JIASE* are representative of our international membership. We encourage authors from all countries to submit their scholarly manuscripts.

Meet the Editors

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NURTURANCE OF TALENT OF N.T.S. SCHOLARS IN INDIA

S. Bhaskara

The Government of India through NCERT New Delhi started National Science Talent search examinations in the year 1962. First, it was tried in New Delhi and in 1963 it was extended to all parts of India. The students at the end of X standard and the end of XII standard were permitted to sit for an examination conducted by NCERT, New Delhi. Initially, the procedure of selection was through a written test, project report, and an interview; later, the project report was eliminated.

As the number of students taking the test increased, the preliminary examination was conducted by NCERT at state capitals. The percentage of students selected at the preliminary stage was in proportion to the population of the state. The objective was to identify scholars in fundamental sciences only. These scholars were given scholarships up to the PhD stage. The national science talent search was later changed to national talent search examination and subjects like history, commerce, and others were included. The major criticisms of these examinations have been that the scholars join the usual colleges where they will be among the multitude. There are no special methods of teaching, challenging learning experiences, and unusual methods of evaluation. All these students are tested along with other thousands, and they take the same stereotyped public examination. Fostering of their creativity is sadly missing in colleges. These scholars, instead of maintaining their ingenuity, become conformistic and the spark of talent is lost forever. In this connection a number of suggestions have been given to make the education of these scholars more meaningful:

- Every year each state can conduct a summer camp for N.T.S. scholars in academic disciplines, thinking skills, creativity, and project work at the state capital for at least a month.
- Separate college can be opened in the state capital to nurture the talents of these scholars. Facilities such as a hostel, library, laboratory could be provided (such as in Navodaya Vidyalayas).
- The scholarships must be only for basic disciplines (e.g., Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics, History, Civics, Economics).
- Nearly 65% of the scholarships must be set apart for the science students.
- The children must be made to prosecute studies like BSc, MSc, and not BE, MBBS, P.Pharma.
- Identification of talent could be based on MAT, SAT, project and an interview. Projects must be made compulsory for all who will attend the summer camp at the state capital. The emphasis of the project must be on novelty, utility and not the repetition of projects done earlier. The selected projects could be held in Visweshwaraiah Industrial and Technological Museum in Bangalore and other such science centers run by the National Council of Science Museum which have hobby centers attached to them.
- The hobby center could be equipped with computers, internet, and other resources.
- The titles of projects could be kept secret for a year or two, so as to avoid repetition.
- The individual initiative, task persistence, ability of risk-taking, etc. need to be observed by the staff during the one-month period.
- The Triad model of Renzulli, viz, above average intelligence task commitment and creativity must be used to identify the talented students.
- The author identified varieties of talents in students in the summer camps organized in Bangalore; the programme of nurturing must be flexible and special programmes could be had for them.
- One other alternative could be that these scholars, after selection, may join any conventional college, but attend special camps run during winter and summer holidays.
- The summer and winter camps must be fully subsidized by the state government or made fully free, including boarding, lodging, travel, and other expenses.
- The selection of the resource persons for the camp must be done carefully. Only those who are open and prepared to try new approaches are necessary and not the simple lectures.

- Students may skip the first year of pre-university course work and can be admitted to year II.
- Special enrichment materials in various disciplines may be developed by NCERT and the continuance of the scholarship may be based on passing appropriate examinations.
- The author would offer a creativity course to foster their creativity.

A special programme to nurture the talent of NTS scholars was tried by the author. The whole programme was funded by NCERT, New Delhi. It was operated from 26 December 2005 to 30 December 2005, at the R.V. Teachers College, Bangalore. All the national talent winners at the national level were invited to the programme. Forty-six students from Karnataka state attended the programme.

The programme featured three components: (a) content enrichment, (b) information processing, and (c) life skills. The resource persons were from the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, R.V. College of Engineering, Department of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, ISRO, and others. The life skills programme was conducted by a psychiatrist of NIMHANS, Bangalore.

Additional programs conducted included meeting eminent persons (e.g., Dr. Janakiraman, founder of Mind Tree Engineering consulting firm), visiting the planetarium and witnessing a mime show by a famous cinema artist.

The children in this program who were from the “cream of society”, expressed happiness over the programme and the way it was conducted. The professors of NCERT, who were the observers, suggested that they would make this a national pattern. The children felt that it was one of the best programmes they ever attended.

In continuation of the experience, this author would suggest a few things.

- The nurturance programme must be done at the regional level at Regional Institutes of Education, which have library, laboratory, and hostel facilities.
- For at least three consecutive years, these children must be called to the Regional Institutes of Education and the curriculum must be an evolving one.

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MEETING THE ACADEMIC POTENTIAL OF FEMALE JUVENILE DELINQUENTS AND TEENAGE GIRLS AT-RISK: CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION IN ALTERNATIVE EDUCATIONAL SERVICES

Deirdra I-Hwey Wu

Regardless of gender, many youths enter correctional facilities with a wide range of educational, mental health, medical, and social needs that present difficulties in educational programming. Large numbers of juveniles in corrections are marginally literate and have a history of school failure and retention. Therefore, education is fundamental to the rehabilitations of these youths. Helping juvenile delinquent develop educational skills can be one of the most effective approaches to the intervention of delinquency and the reduction of recidivism.

Unfortunately, historically, education programmes in juvenile corrections worldwide have been under-funded and neglected by the larger education community (Chesney-Lind, & Shelden, 2003). This neglect is evident in the ongoing struggles of parents, educators, and advocates in securing special education services for juvenile delinquents. The lack of attention to the educational rights of delinquent youths is part of a disturbing trend in corrections to provide juveniles with minimal services.

In recent years, more and more people have noticed the therapeutic effect of education and have stressed improving the educational levels of offenders (Chesney-Lind, & Shelden, 2003). Such programmes mostly include improving literacy, math, and some have among their goals the earning of a high school diploma or equivalent. In 1988, the Andrew and Grace Home (AG Home) in Singapore was established by Pastor Andrew Choo and his wife Grace to provide a refuge for troubled girls and their families. On January 2, 2004, the AG Home Learning Center opened to any AG residents who are premature school leavers and who want to have a second chance at education. With the provision of alternative education and other services, the AG Home has been able to help and reclaim many young girls before further damage is done and to reintegrate them into society as responsible individuals (Andrew and Grace Home, 2004).

Although the pathways to delinquency are complex and not completely understood, school failure such as drop out, retention, illiteracy, as well as other learning problems seems to favor the development of delinquent behaviors. To identify the needs of learners and staff of at the AG Home and investigate the effectiveness of the alternative education programme in the institution, a study of the alternative education services in AG Home was conducted. Two interview protocols were constructed to address the educational characteristics and needs of the AG Home residents. In addition to individual interviews, the researchers reviewed educational records of the residents at AG Home.

By examining the educational needs and characteristics, demographic information, and educational histories of the AG Home residents, this study provides a closer look at the female juvenile delinquents and teenage girls at-risk in Singapore. From these data, implications for curriculum development and instruction in alternative educational services can be drawn. In addition, different practices and interventions of meeting the academic potential of female juvenile delinquents and teenage girls at-risk may be ascertained.

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ASPERGER SYNDROME: THE RESULTS OF A NATIONAL STUDY ON CHARACTERISTICS

Brenda Smith Myles
Jill Hudson

Although the term *Asperger Syndrome* (AS) is widely used, there remains much to be learned about this disorder. Currently, criteria identified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition, Text Revision* (DSM-IV, TR) published by the American Psychiatric Association (2000) and the *International Classification of Diseases* authored by the World Health Organization (1992) are used in the diagnosis of individuals with AS. Due to the dearth of literature on AS, professionals, face great challenges developing and implementing appropriate interventions for students with AS in the absence of a clear understanding of the disorder. The purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics of students ages 12 through 18 with AS. This study was part of a larger, more extensive investigation.

Method

Participants were 150 adolescents (age range = 12 to 18; 18% female, 82% male) with AS who had been diagnosed by a medical professional. These diagnoses were further verified using the Asperger Syndrome Diagnostic Scale (Myles, Bock, & Simpson, 2000). Participants' mean scores indicated that they were very likely to have AS. Students' mean Full Scale Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was in the Average range with no statistically significant differences between Verbal and Performance IQ scores.

After receiving approval from an internal review board, calls to solicit participants were posted the websites of AS-related organizations. The announcements asked interested parties to email the study investigators. In response to their emails, participants were mailed a packet containing materials related to the study. Participants received a second telephone call to establish a date and a time frame for completing the assessments.

Inter-rater reliability checks on 25% of the instruments completed with participants yielding a 95% rate. In addition, inter-rater reliability data were collected on 25% of the data entered into the database. An inter-rater reliability of 100% was found.

Results

The Behavior Assessment Systems Checklist (BASC) assesses positive or adaptive behaviors and negative or clinical behaviors of children and youth age 4-18 years (Reynolds & Kamphaus, 1992). The following briefly summarizes parents' perceptions of the behavior of their children with AS.

- Behavioral Symptoms Index. Parents reported their children's Atypicality, Withdrawal and Index Composite as Clinically Significant.
- Externalizing Problems Composite. Parents rated their children as Average for Aggression and Conduct Problems. However, they reported their children in the Clinically Significant range for Hyperactivity.
- Internalizing Problems Composite. Overall, Anxiety, Depression, and Internalizing Problems Composite Score fell in the At Risk range.
- Adaptive Skills Composite. Parents rated their children's Leadership, Social Skills and Composite scores in the At Risk Range.

The sensory systems enable the brain to receive information about the environment. That is, the brain processes information received from the sensory systems (auditory, gustatory, proprioceptive, olfactory, tactile, vestibular, visual) and responds accordingly. This study utilized the Adolescent and Adult Sensory Profile (Brown & Dunn, 2002). Respondents' scores are compared to those of individuals within the same age-range who do not have disabilities. The adolescent participants in the current study exhibited Low Registration, Sensory Sensitivity, and Sensory Avoiding more than most people while Sensory Seeking behaviors were evidenced less than in most people.

The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (VABS; Sparrow, Balla & Cicchetti, 1984) evaluates the personal and social daily activities in which individuals participate. The VABS is administered through a semi-structured interview with the parent or caregiver. VABS scores for the adolescents ranged from low to moderately low. Specifically, Communication was Moderately Low, and Daily Living, Socialization and Composite Score were identified as Low. This was in marked contrast to their IQs.

Discussion

Several limitations must be considered with regards to this study. First, use of a larger sample size may have yielded different results. Second, this study used a group design; participants' involvement in interventions and use of medications could have impacted its results.

Much remains to be understood and empirically defined regarding the behavioral, sensory, and adaptive behavior characteristics of adolescents with AS. The findings of this study, despite the limitations noted above, indicate that additional investigations into the adaptive behavior and sensory realms might be in order. That is, further research might negate DSM-IV, TR (APA, 2000) criteria that adaptive behavior deficits not be in evidence for an AS diagnosis and support the inclusion of sensory characteristics in the diagnostic process.

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THE EFFECT OF PRIMARY MOVEMENT: A CLASSROOM-BASED EARLY INTERVENTION APPROACH FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL-AGED CHILDREN

Debbie Callcott
Lorraine Hammond

There is strong evidence that inappropriate retention of primary reflexes and consequential Central Nervous System (CNS) dysfunction contributes to a host of common learning problems extending beyond the obvious disruption of motor development. Although CNS dysfunction may result in the retarded development of postural and equilibrium reactions contributing to motor coordination issues, CNS dysfunction, which is characterised by the retainment of primary reflexes particularly the Asymmetrical Tonic Neck Reflex (ATNR), is thought to contribute to difficulties in cognitive areas as well (Jordan-Black, 2005; McPhillips, Hepper, & Mulhern, 2000; Morrison, 1985). The level of retained ATNR is thought to be a strong indicator of total reflex persistence. It is unknown whether inhibition of primary reflexes is a maturational process or whether external behavioural factors may contribute to or interact with the process of inhibition.

Recent approaches to remediating the persistence of primary reflexes include the participation of children in programmes in which movement patterns intended to transform and integrate the persistent primary reflexes into the more secondary postural reflexes required for normal development are performed. One of these movement programmes is the *Primary Movement* programme designed by Dr. Martin McPhillips, Queens University, Belfast. The program involves 15-minutes each day implementing movements to music, including nursery rhymes. These movements replicate primary reflexes and stimulate key movement centres of the brain decreasing the occurrence of primary reflexes including the ATNR.

Studies in Northern Ireland on the efficacy of the *Primary Movement* programme have concluded that students participating in the programme displayed a significant decrease in the levels of persistent ATNR as opposed to control groups. Students in the experimental group also displayed a substantially greater increase in reading scores (McPhillips et al., 2000).

While considerable research has been done with older children in the UK on the effect of primary reflex persistence on reading difficulties and performance in academic tasks (Jordan-Black, 2005; McPhillips et al., 2000; McPhillips & Sheehy, 2004), there is a paucity of research based on younger students and the effect on performance in pre-reading pre-writing motor tasks, for example manual dexterity. Also, research on the efficacy of the *Primary Movement* programme in inhibiting retained reflexes has not been undertaken outside the UK. There is a strong correlation between students who present high levels of retained reflexes and those with poor motor skills: often defined as Developmental Coordination Disorder. By introducing the

Primary Movement intervention at an early age, it is possible to minimise the possible motor difficulties arising from retained primary reflexes.

A total of 195 preprimary aged children from three schools were tested for presence and severity of the ATNR as well as being tested on the ABC Movement Assessment Battery for Children. Children were then allocated to the *Primary Movement* intervention group, the gross motor intervention group or the free play group. After eight months the children were retested. While the median ATNR score for the *Primary Movement* group decreased, all other groups retained their median starting score indicating no reduction in ATNR for these groups. On overall motor performance measured by the standardised motor test, the overall improvement of children in the *Primary Movement* group was statistically significant over the eight-month intervention period. Of particular significance was improvement in the Manual Dexterity component of the motor test.

The results of this research have a number of implications for teachers of children in early childhood classes. The *Primary Movement* programme is effective in reducing levels of the ATNR and improving both overall motor performance and more specifically manual dexterity skills vital to school readiness. Most important is the recognition that retained reflexes can contribute to difficulties in the efficacy of motor skills, which are linked to future reading and writing skills.

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TEACHERS' PARTNERSHIPS WITH UNIVERSITIES IN ACTION RESEARCH: REALIZING A DREAM IN SPECIAL EDUCATION IN SINGAPORE

Karen P. Nonis

Teachers have significant contributions to make when it comes to research in the classroom. They provide great insights into the everyday “happenings” that researchers outside of the school may miss and, as such, form conclusions that may be masked by real experience in the classroom. The role of the teacher as the receiver of information and merely a deliverer of lessons has changed. Given the teacher’s unique position in the classroom and school environment makes their involvement in research critical.

Special Education (SE) teachers in Singapore, like any others, spend a great deal of their time with the children under their care. The time teachers spend with the children involves teaching, preparation of lesson plans, materials for a variety of group work and learning corners. Additionally, SE teachers often spend time preparing stage props and costumes for the year end concerts in the schools as part of the children’s graduation ceremony. Teachers are also expected to meet up with parents to discuss the progress children have made in their class during case conferencing which occurs about twice a year.

To improve and maintain their professional development and to keep up-to-date with current developments in education, teachers in Singapore are encouraged to attend courses and workshops related to learning and teaching in education. A teacher’s commitment to the children in the class is far from over when they return home. Time is spent on long telephone conversations with parents concerning their pupil’s progress or behaviours in class. What time does this leave SE teachers to reflect on their teaching and to commit to their professional development? Keyes (1999) reported that teachers felt that they did not have enough time to participate in research because of the work they had as a teacher. Although research has shown that teachers do participate in research, yet why is it that teachers are generally reluctant to get involved in research?

This study describes SE teachers ($N = 103$) responses to participate as teacher researchers. A Likert Scale Survey was administered to Year One ($n = 51$) and Year Two ($n = 52$) teachers undergoing pre-service training in Special Education. The survey consisted of 25 questions categorized under (a) Interest to Participate (b) Support (c) Skills (d) Practical Use (e) Availability of Time and (f) Opportunity and Networking. The percentage responses were calculated for each category of response.

The majority of teachers from both Year One and Year Two were interested in participating in research. Teachers were, however, concerned about the level of support they received to participate in collaborative research projects with universities. Support was in the form of recognition by the participating school, recognition of their schools, continued support by the

university researcher, and time off from work. Time off from work was expected given that teachers had heavy involvement in their schools beyond classroom teaching. Overall, the results of this study imply that while teachers are interested in participating in research, providing support could help the process of creating a culture of SE teacher's involvement in action research.

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LEARNING DISABILITIES AND READING/MATHEMATICS PERFORMANCE OF EIGHTH GRADERS

Joseph A. Fusaro
Ivan A. Shibley

Standards-based reforms gained speed and momentum when the Improving America's School Act was passed in 1994. The Act initiated major changes in the Title I section of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (Goetz & Duffy, 2001). The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLBA) built upon the standards-based reforms but added an accountability section for all students in the United States of America.

As currently written, NCLBA requires all schools to test all students regardless of their ability to take the tests. The NCLBA also requires that all students, including students diagnosed with learning disabilities, be proficient in reading and mathematics by 2014.

The Pennsylvania Department of Education requires that all public schools, as part of the Pennsylvania System of School Assessment (PSSA), administer tests in reading and mathematics to all students in Grades 3, 5, 8, and 11 and in writing in Grades 6, 8, and 11. Students with exceptionalities are not exempt from the tests, although there has been an adaptation to the tests for the lowest 1% of the disabled students. Students are classified into four segments based on test score results: below basic, basic, proficient, and advanced.

Hence, the purpose of this study was to ascertain the extent to which a learning disability predicts performance on the PSSA reading and mathematics tests when months in the district, socioeconomic status, and sex are held constant.

Method

The participants were originally 1043 eighth graders attending two middle schools in a school district with a large, continuing influx of new students. The actual *Ns* of the study, however, are 856 for reading and 861 for mathematics, as PSSA reading and mathematics scores were not available for 187 and 182 students respectively.

Of the reading *N* of 856, 403 were girls and 453 were boys; 110 were diagnosed with learning disabilities, whereas 746 were not; and 265 qualified for the free or reduced-price lunch program, while 591 did not. Of the mathematics *N* of 861, 406 were girls and 455 were boys; 110 were diagnosed with learning disabilities, while 751 were not; and 266 were eligible for the free or reduced-price lunch program, whereas 595 were not. Demographically, the district is one of the most racially and ethnically diverse in the commonwealth.

Two multiple regression analyses were performed, each with the appropriate PSSA test scores as the dependent variable. Months in the school district, sex, socioeconomic status, and learning disability status were the independent variables. Months in the district is a continuous variable, whereas sex, socioeconomic status, and learning disability status are categorical variables.

Results and Discussion

The results indicate that when months in the school district, socioeconomic status, and sex are held constant students with diagnosed learning disabilities scored on average 297.29 points lower in reading, $t(851) = -18.38, p < .001$, and 220.38 points lower in mathematics, $t(856) = -14.70, p < .001$, than students not so diagnosed.

The major finding that students with diagnosed learning disabilities scored lower on the PSSA reading test than those without such disabilities agrees with previous research (e.g., Horn, 2003). It further lends support to Burns, Roe, and Ross (1999), who stated that many learning-disabled students need reading improvement, and to Beattie and Gaskins (cited in Burns, Roe, & Ross, 1999), who stated that reading is the skill most in need of improvement for more than half of all learning-disabled students. Also, the finding that students diagnosed with learning disabilities score lower on mathematics tests accord with van Garderen (2006).

The findings of this study, along with the mandate of NCLBA, should animate school personnel to determine what assistance students with diagnosed learning disabilities need to achieve academically at a higher level. Gorman (1997) suggested increasing teachers' knowledge of specialized reading strategies, such as the Orton-Gillingham approach, a program based on the theories advanced in the 1920s by Samuel Orton. Though Orton's theories are no longer considered as tenable as they once were, aspects of the Orton-Gillingham approach, along with its modification, the Gillingham-Slingerland approach, are consistent with current research findings on phonics instruction (McCormick, 2003). In order for learning disabled students to score higher on the PSSA mathematics exam, regular teachers will need to learn how these labeled students actually learn. A second approach to help learning disabled students would be to teach regular classroom teachers how to work in collaboration with special education teachers within the same classroom (DeSimone & Parmar, 2006)

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SUPERINTENDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE GASKIN SETTLEMENT

Derry L. Stufft
Dona Bauman

The primary purpose of this study was to evaluate Pennsylvania school district superintendents' familiarity with the Gaskin settlement and the impact on administrators. A secondary purpose of the study was to assess superintendents' perceptions of staff attitudes and professional development needs regarding students with disabilities included in general education settings.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) stipulates that each student with a disability must be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (20 U.S.C. 1412 (a)(5)(A)). IDEA obliges states to establish procedures and policies that assure children with disabilities are educated to the maximum extent possible with children who do not have disabilities. IDEA also stipulates that a child can only be removed from the general education classroom when the nature or severity of the disability prevents the student from satisfactory achievement, even when supplementary aids and services are available (Osborne & Russo, 2003).

According to Yell (2006), few areas in special education law have been the subject of more debate and controversy than the LRE mandate. LRE interpretation by circuit courts is the highest authority available as the Supreme Court has refused to hear any LRE cases returning the case back to the circuit court where it was heard.

In accordance with the LRE mandate, a law suit was filed in Pennsylvania on behalf of a group of children with disabilities in 1994 known as the Gaskin versus the Pennsylvania Department of Education case. The settlement guarantees that the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team will first consider placement in the regular education classroom with supplementary aids and services. Another result of the Gaskin settlement is that students with disabilities will have increased opportunities to receive the supports and services in the general education classroom. In the Settlement Agreement, the Pennsylvania Department of Education agreed to make changes in its systems for exercising general supervision over special education.

The Gaskin settlement will have an impact on the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. Under the Gaskin settlement school superintendents and school leaders are to create a school district that welcomes all students. Additionally, school leaders will use a needs assessment tool to identify relevant information for school improvement and professional development plans. School leaders must ensure that staff are aware of changes and are using the new IEP form. Administrators must ensure access to professional development resources through the intermediate unit, higher education partners and PaTTAN (Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network). Administrators must build partnerships with families of students with

disabilities and actively involve them in the planning process. School leaders must participate in analysis of district data and monitoring visits.

Method

In the spring of 2006, the 501 Pennsylvania public school superintendents were surveyed regarding their perceptions of the impact of the Gaskin Settlement, their perceived LRE index, percentage of students with disabilities served in the general education classroom, staff attitudes towards educating students with disabilities in the general education setting and inclusionary professional development needs of teachers.

The survey collected demographic information and superintendents' responses to nine questions concerning their awareness of the Gaskin settlement, what they think their LRE index will be (based on the three tier system proposed by the Gaskin settlement), their estimation of the percentage of students with disabilities who are being served in the general education setting in their district, their perception of staff attitudes regarding inclusionary classroom practices and professional development topics that might be beneficial to their staff.

Results

Results indicated that the majority of the respondents consider their districts rural. Although 97% of the respondents reported that they were aware of the Gaskin settlement, only 33% indicated that they agreed with the findings of the settlement. Eighty percent of the superintendents believe that their districts will be categorized on Tier Three or no tier monitoring.

It is obvious from the results that the easiest disability categories to include (hearing impairments, speech and language disorders, learning disabilities and visual impairments) are also those that received the most positive staff attitudes regarding inclusion. In contrast the three disability categories that received the strongest negative attitudes regarding placement in the general education setting were emotional behavioral disorders, multiple disabilities, and mental retardation.

Respondents indicated that more training is needed in co-teaching (78%) and progress monitoring (66%). Conversely, direct instruction (36%) and applied behavior analysis (45%) were the two areas of training that respondents identified as less important. It is important to note that collaboration (64%) and adapting assessment (64%) received a high rating regarding topical training areas for inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Training needs are dependent upon an inclusionary continuum of placements. District placements and disability percentages within a district drive training needs.

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STUDENT-DIRECTED TRANSITION PLANNING: HELPING STUDENTS FROM CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE BACKGROUNDS DEVELOP MEANINGFUL TRANSITION PLANS

Lorraine Sylvester
Lee L. Woods

Current trends suggest that by the year 2040, culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students will comprise over half of America's K-12 school population (Archer, 2000; Leake & Black, 2005; Sue, Bingham, Porche-Burke, & Vasquez, 1999). The definition of CLD students includes students who are not regarded as Caucasian or White, although some students who are considered White may fall into the CLD category if they are outside the mainstream of American culture (Leake & Black, 2005). Postschool outcomes for CLD students on IEPs are influenced heavily by the interrelationships between culture, transition programs, self-determination, and the IEP process (Leake, Black, & Roberts, 2004; Trainor, 2002). Unfortunately, outcomes for CLD students often include lower rates of postsecondary education participation, lower rates of employment, and fewer workers earning more than minimum wage, compared to Caucasian students with disabilities (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, & Levine, 2005).

CLD families may find the individualistic nature of self-determination models and the focus on independence and choice to be at odds with their values (Trainor, 2002). Self-determination, usually defined from a mainstream individualistic perspective that emphasizes the student's personal control and free choice in decision-making, is also an integral part of a collectivist

perspective. Students from collectivist background can benefit from instructional strategies that teach self-determination with critical modifications that include giving priority to the group's well being. Regardless of the cultural values system practiced by students with disabilities and their families, their teachers, or other helping professionals, these relationships must be based on mutual trust and respect.

Currently, little literature and few strategies exist to help families and professionals involved with youths with disabilities from CLD backgrounds. Culturally attuning identification of barriers beyond the disability, and some initial suggestions for ameliorating these barriers in education for students with disabilities from CLD backgrounds are emerging. Recognizing that this barrier exists is a start. Removing the barrier requires attention to and strategies for teaching students how to achieve their postsecondary visions through a process that culturally attunes their interests, preferences, strengths, and limits. This process must occur within the context of the student and family's cultural perspective, which is likely to be collectivist, rather than individualistic in nature.

The *Student-Direct Transition Planning* lesson package reflects this dynamic quality of transition planning. There are eight lessons in the program: (a) *Awareness*, (b) *Concepts and Terms for Transition Planning*, (c) *Vision for Employment*, (d) *Vision for Further Education*, (e) *Vision for Adult Living*, (f) *Course of Study*, (g) *Connecting with Adult Supports and Services*, and (h) *Putting it all together: The Summary of Performance*. For each lesson, students will gather information about their own thoughts, their parents' concerns, and their teachers' feedback regarding their collective post-secondary visions, and compile this information using an input circle. From these input circles the students generate a Summary of Performance, which the students can use at their transition IEP meeting.

While recent project efforts have focused on design and development of the lessons, our research activities will include two studies using experimental designs, two studies using qualitative methods, and one study describing the development and validation of the *Student-Directed Transition Planning* program. The quantitative studies will use experimental control/intervention designs with random assignment. Data will be collected directly from IEP meeting observations, surveys, and assessments to be completed by the IEP participants. The qualitative studies will utilize naturalistic observation (audio and video recording) to capture emerging themes. We have commitments from urban and rural schools, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and tribal schools located in five different states, to participate in research into the effectiveness of the *Student-Directed Transition Planning* curriculum.

Practitioners need to know how best to involve all families and students with IEPs in their IEP meetings and in transition planning, but little empirical guidance exists on how to do this, especially while maintaining culturally relevant foci. White school culture and the collectivist values characteristic of many other cultures creates a barrier preventing CLD students from successfully engaging in the transition planning process. The *Student-Directed Transition Planning* lessons are designed to provide a culturally sensitive student-directed transition planning process. They will help to facilitate the partnership between students, their families, and teachers as students develop the necessary tools for managing the transition planning process.

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SCHOOL DROPOUT SYNDROME AMONG HEARING IMPAIRED IN NIGERIA: TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Omolara Funmilola Akinpelu

In this age of technological development, education is a dynamic force to be reckoned with. Tanori, Henderson and Mumford (2002) buttressed this assertion stating that “in fast-paced, complex, information-based economy like ours, education is a must” (p.1). They further expatiated on this noting that in order to compete and become a productive member of one’s society as a whole depends upon the fundamental skills acquired in high school. Fobih (1987) noted that in the developing countries education is regarded as a *sine qua non* for social, political, and economic development and that it provides the skilled manpower needed in these countries and serves as the institutionalized process of socialization for the youth. Tanori and colleagues (2002) stated that without an adequate educational background individuals are often unable to succeed during their adult lives. They affirmed that:

In fact many who find themselves in this position are not only incapable of becoming upwardly mobile and contributing to society, but in addition, create costly problems that society must deal with. This and subsequently places an puts a strain on the personal lives of these individuals undue burden on the backs of the communities that must deal with the problems of dropping out of high school.
(p.1)

In spite of the effort of government in both developed and developing countries in providing education for their citizens, they still combat with problem of school indiscipline which encompasses such phenomena such as truancy, absenteeism, late coming and school dropout. It was stated in a report of Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1991) that dropout phenomenon is a world-wide problem associated with the process of development in any society whether such society is a developing or developed nations. For instance, in the United States, a federal study group known as the National Commission on Excellence in Education observed critically that high school dropout rate rose to almost 30% by the late 1980s. The issue of school dropout in developing countries is also a contemporary issue. Fobih (1987) noted that despite the educational innovations introduced by the Ghanaian government, many children who avail themselves of the educational opportunities hardly complete their schooling before the first terminal point. In the editorial report of one of the newspapers in Nigeria, Daily Champion, of November 9, 2006, Nigeria is viewed as a laggard in various areas of life such as maternal death, infant mortality, access to potable water and human nutrition. The latest in which Nigeria has been identified as a laggard in is in the area of out-of-school children. In the light of the Annual Education for All Global Monitoring Report, published by UNESCO, it has been revealed that Nigeria, Pakistan, India, and Ethiopia, account for 23million out of the world’s 77 million out-of-school children.

Many studies that have been done on school dropout are based on the general population, while related studies on students with disabilities, are quite limited. For instance, Lichtensein (1988) stated that despite the recent growth of literature concerning high school dropouts, only a few studies have focused on the higher than average incidences of dropping out among students with disabilities. Peterson (2005) supporting this notion noted that dropout rate among students with special needs is hardly reported; he further reported that 29 states did not report dropout rates for students with disabilities. Klare (2004) reported that 28% of students with disabilities who left school did so by dropping out of school and concluded that students with disabilities drop out of

school at twice the rate of general students. The U.S. Department (1996) in its Eighth Annual Report to Congress observed that:

Although many youths with handicaps may graduate from school when they are as young as 17 many others exit prior to the completion of the secondary program. (p. 14)

In an extensive study by the National Dropout Prevention Center for Students with Disabilities (NDPC-SD, 2004), the following were listed as negative outcomes of school dropout among individuals with disabilities:

- Reduced access to higher education and vocational preparation
- Low self-esteem
- Criminal involvement
- Generational effects
- Significant costs to individuals who do not complete school(e.g., more likely to be unemployed, underemployed, incarcerated)

In Nigeria, there are no statistics to reflect dropout rates among students with disabilities, but a cursory look at the rate of those with hearing impairment is alarming and disturbing. Akinpelu (1997) observed that despite the effort of the Nigerian government to provide education for persons with disabilities at institutions of higher education, few of them avail themselves to this opportunity. The negative outcomes of this trend were listed in the report of NDPC-SD, 2004.

This paper focused on school dropout syndrome among students with hearing impairment in Nigeria based on teachers' perspectives. The teachers reported among other things that school dropout is influenced by four variables (i.e., students, school, peer and parental related factors). Based on these findings, all hands must be on deck to address the dropout problem in order to get hearing impaired students back to school from the streets where they beg for money constituting a social menace.

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**MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
TRANSFORMING LEADERSHIP AND ADMINISTRATION**

Thienhuong Hoang

With the passage of the *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB), the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA), and the publication of *A New Era: Revitalizing Special Education for Children and Their Families* (President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education, 2002), focus has shifted to outcome measures related to state mandated curricula for all students, including students with disabilities. These latest directives ask special education administrators to play an even more important role by promoting collaboration among general and special education teachers and administrators to assure that high quality programs are accessible to all students regardless of ability (Lashley & Boscardin, 2003).

The school principal is a major player in the change process (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998). A series of studies cited by Barnett and Monda-Amaya (1998) have focused on the role of the principal as the school's instructional leader. If schools are to become more successful in educating students with disabilities, attitudinal, organizational, and instructional changes must fall into place (Block & Haring, 1992). Success or failure of beginning special education teachers can be linked to the critical role of the site principal (Lasky, Karge, Robb, & McCabe, 1995).

In general, the few studies in the literature researching principals' formal training and/or knowledge demonstrate that principals lack the basic knowledge and formal training necessary to provide training and support to teachers. Today, increasing numbers of public schools are including students with disabilities. This situation requires principals to lead staff in successfully implementing best practices for educating students with disabilities. If inclusive practices are to be implemented in schools, much work will be needed to prepare administrators for the changes

that are taking place. The preparation should begin in programs designed to prepare school administrators.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the formal training and experience of principals in a variety of school districts in southern California. The researcher sought answers to the following questions: (a) What information do principals receive in university programs to prepare school administrators? (b) What experience do principals bring with them as they train and support teachers? and (c) How confident do principals feel in their own ability to support and train teachers with regard to children with disabilities?

Method

One thousand surveys were mailed to principals in the southern California area. Six hundred twenty-six (626) surveys were completed for a return rate of approximately 63%. The 63% return rate is at the high end of research-based practice. Quantitative data were coded and entered into a STATVIEW statistical analysis program. In addition to the quantitative analysis, a critical incidence qualitative technique was also used to analyze the open-ended questions. The computer program generated the most common categories describing areas of need in special education. The inter-rater confidence interval was 97.5% accuracy.

Participants were asked to state how many special education courses they had during their college career and how much direct experience they had working with children with disabilities during their formal administration credential course work. Participants provided their views related to how important formal training in special education is for school administrators and to estimate how many hours a week they spent on issues related to special education. The survey also collected data about the students with special needs at their school sites and the types of programs designed to serve students with disabilities. Finally, the researchers asked if the principals felt that their training prepared them to support the teachers who had children with disabilities in either general education or special education classrooms at their school site.

Results

The 626 surveys resulted in a multitude of data and information that can be used to answer the questions posed earlier and to provide insight into future training decisions at higher education institutions and school districts providing professional development for school principals. The data define a need for increased training of principals in the area of special education during enrollment in pre-service administration programs and while on the job. Results of this research extend the previous literature base related to principals' attitudes and knowledge of special education (Barnett & Monda-Amaya, 1998; Praisner, 2003).

Discussion

The role of leaders, including but not limited to principals, curriculum supervisors, department chairs, teacher leaders, and special education directors, is important to the success of students

with disabilities. Administrators equipped with the knowledge and skills to support the implementation of evidence-based practices of teachers in inclusive and accessible instructional environments are poised to be effective advocates of improved educational outcomes of all students. The challenge for school administrators will be to redefine the leadership, transforming the dual system of general and special education administration to a distributed system of leadership that collaboratively supports the use of proven practices to achieve school-wide improvement for students with disabilities, as well as for all the students in their charge.

In an era of instructional accountability, it is imperative that administrators be able to transform schools into places that support positive outcomes for students with disabilities and foster the use of evidenced-based instructional practices by teachers. Two ways of creating supportive administrative roles are to shift the role of the administrator from one of manager to one of instructional leader, and to use leadership strategies to establish effective evidence-based instructional practices that improve the educational outcomes for all students, including those with disabilities.

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**SUPPORT GROUPS FOR CHINESE FAMILIES OF
CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES**

Lusa Lo

The birth of a child with a disability can be a major challenge for many families. When parents first learn about their child's special needs, they go through a series of mixed reactions: denial, anger, guilt, grief, loss, fear, confusion, disappointment, and rejection (Santelli, Poyadue, & Young, 2001). For many culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) parents, they do not define or address disability in the same manner as in the American culture. Disabilities are often seen as a disgrace and may be considered as a punishment for sins committed by the parents or their ancestors. Therefore, CLD parents do not only have to overcome a tremendous amount of emotional and financial pressures but also cultural burdens.

Several U.S. regulations, such as the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) and the Individuals With Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004), emphasize the need of active participation from parents. However, extensive research suggested that CLD parents of children with disabilities are less likely to actively advocate for their children due to cultural and language barriers and a lack of understanding of the U.S. special education system and parental rights (e.g. Lo, 2004; Park & Turnbull, 2001; Torres-Burgo, Reyes-Wasson, & Brusca-Vega, 1999). Due to budgeting problems, many schools across the nation are unable to provide trainings and additional supports to parents of children with disabilities. Parents have to seek supports somewhere else. Attending parent support group has been considered to be one way for families of children with disabilities to seek information and emotional and psychological assistance (e.g., Ainbinder et al., 1998; Allen, Brown, & Finlay, 1992). However, very little research has attempted to determine whether or not the use of support groups can be equally beneficial to CLD families of children with disabilities (Shapiro & Simonsen, 1994). As the number of Asian students with disabilities continues to increase in the U.S. (U.S. Department of Education, 2003), there is a need for more research to determine how to better support their families. The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences of Chinese parents of children with disabilities who participated in parent support groups.

Method

All the participants of this study were immigrants from China. Only three of the participants were fluent in English. The remaining of the seven participants were either limited or non-English speakers. The disabilities of the participants' children ranged from moderate to severe. Face-to-face interviews were used. Each interview was conducted in Cantonese, the participants' primary language. All interviews were audio-taped, transcribed, and translated. A content analysis was used to evaluate the results of the interviews.

Results

The results of the study suggested that the main reason that drove the Chinese parents to support group was to meet other Chinese parents of children with disabilities. They felt that by meeting other families who faced the same challenges could provide them with emotional supports. They could also learn from their experiences, such as how to help their child and how to negotiate with schools for services. When asked if the parents were satisfied with the supports they received from the support group, more than half of the participants reported that they were disappointed. These parents stated that the structure of their support group was often disorganized and all their monthly meetings were scheduled for socialization purposes only. All the parents would like the support group to provide them with information regarding the special education laws, their parental rights, and how to advocate and obtain additional services for their child.

Discussion

The findings of the current study have several implications for community organizations which plan to organize support groups for families of children with disabilities. First, parent support groups should survey parents at the beginning of each year to find out the types of support they would like to receive and then organize trainings and workshops based on the information. Second, end of the year evaluation should be conducted to obtain feedback from parents. Finally, there is a need for parent support groups to network with other local service agencies and national organizations, so that the parents will be informed about educational conferences and changes in regulations.

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**CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEARNERS:
IMPACT OF EDUCATORS' PRINCIPLES, VALUES
AND PERCEPTIONS OF CONTROL**

Laura M. Frey

Teachers enact what they know, which in large part in the early stages of their teacher preparation is generated from their own life experiences, their principles and values. While this can be a positive and proactive foundation for their personal life, many educators and pre-service education majors may not realize that steeped adult personal principles and values can have negative impact on classroom interactions, management philosophies, teacher responses to challenging student behavior and classroom discipline.

The principles and values that teachers live by are consciously and unconsciously brought into the classroom environment. However, many educators may not be aware of the impact of their principles and values on classroom management perspectives and procedures. This investigation was based on the hypothesis that in order to understand students' affective, behavioral, and social growth, teachers must first understand themselves. When pre-service teachers know their principles and values as well as their view of classroom control they can develop classroom management practices that will enhance the classroom environment and student performance.

This investigation implemented across two academic years in the course *Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners* sought to establish a process to assess pre-service majors' perceptions on: (a) awareness and knowledge of the role that principles and values play in classroom management, (b) assess awareness of control as a perspective in classroom management, (c) application of self-awareness of teacher principles, values, and perceptions on control to

development of proactive classroom management procedures, and (d) establish a database that will support institutions of higher education to gain better understanding of the perception of need by pre-service education majors in regards to classroom management and the role of the teacher.

Method

Fifty-six special education pre-service teacher education majors participated in this investigation which was implemented across two academic years. Nine percent of participants were male and 91% were female. Two percent were general education majors, 79% special education majors, and 19% dual special education-general education majors. The project investigator sought to develop instruments that were manageable, efficient, and motivating for participant completion.

The project consisted of pre/post survey implementation on classroom management concepts including principles, values, and perceptions on classroom control as components in classroom management. Participants integrated these discussion topics into classroom management plans, teacher self-check strategies, and student discipline response plans. Investigation activities sought to increase awareness of teacher principles and values, keep teachers calm and develop a proactive, positive classroom management.

The survey, *Understanding Pre-Service Majors' Perspectives on Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners*, developed by the project investigator was implemented as a pre-post instrument. The quantitative component consisted of 42 comprehensive items on classroom management, of which 15 items report results on teacher principles, values, and control perceptions. The pre-post survey was implemented at the beginning of the first course session and at the conclusion of the last course session.

A post satisfaction survey was implemented to assess participants' relevance of the project components. The survey, *Understanding Pre-Service Majors' Perspectives on Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners Post Project Satisfaction*, developed by the project investigator was implemented at the conclusion of the investigation consisted of 15 follow-up items of which four report participants' satisfaction with the project on teacher principles and values. A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was used to code participant responses (non existent, poor, fair, good, excellent). The post-project satisfaction survey was implemented after the post survey in the last course session.

Results

An overview of this investigation's quantitative survey results is presented in three information areas of participant perception across two academic years.

Awareness of Principles and Values. Respondents reported a 14% increase in excellent/good awareness of their principles and values in day-to-day life. At post-survey gains of 40-65% in excellent/good perception were reported by respondents regarding: (a) awareness of impact of their principles and values on the overall classroom structure and established classroom management, (b) awareness of tuning into your principles and values when you respond to

student behavior you interpret as undesirable, and (c) awareness of the impact of principles and values on decisions you make in responding to student behavior you interpret as undesirable. Respondents demonstrated a 58% increase in excellent/good perception in their awareness that their principles and values can be a negative catalyst in how they implement discipline in their classroom. Respondents also demonstrated a 58% increase in excellent/good perception in understanding how their principles and values can be a negative catalyst in how they respond to student behavior they interpret as undesirable.

Perception that Classroom Management is About Control. At the conclusion of the semester respondents' demonstrated a 46% increase in excellent/good perception that classroom management is about teaching students about themselves. Additionally, respondents reported a 29% increase in excellent/good perception that successful classroom management is about teachers being aware of themselves and a 37% increase in excellent/good perception that successful classroom management is about teaching students to take charge of themselves.

Participation Satisfaction with Investigation Project. At the conclusion of this investigation, 96% of the respondents reported excellent/good perception that this project would be usable in their role as classroom teacher in setting up classroom management. Ninety-four percent of the respondents reported excellent/good perception that it was helpful to become aware of principles and values in regards to how they impact the way teachers respond to students. Ninety-eight percent of the respondents reported excellent/good agreement that classroom management was more about teaching students than controlling students and 89% of the respondents reported excellent/good agreement that classroom management was more about their choices to control themselves versus controlling students.

Discussion

Project outcomes were supportive of pre-service majors increased self-understanding of their principles, values, and perceptions of control. Project data indicated increased participant insight on implementation of proactive classroom management practices that will enhance students' affective, behavioral, and social growth. It will be important to review the results, research methodology, and instruments for revision and refinement for future implementation and implementation in pre-service teacher preparation.

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EVALUATION STUDY OF A PILOT PROJECT ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN INDIA

Anupriya Chadha

In India, the concept of inclusive education emerged in 1960s with a few experiments by International Agencies who placed children with visual impairment in regular schools. The first initiative of the Government came in the form of the Integrated Education of Disabled Children (IEDC) Scheme in 1974. Since 1987 India has implemented various programmes to target Children With Disabilities (CWDs). These programmes broadly fall into two categories: first solely aiming inclusion like the Project Integrated Education for the Disabled (PIED) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Assisted Project on Inclusive Education. The second category includes programmes solely aiming Universalization of Elementary Education and Inclusive Education included as an important component towards fulfillment of this objective. The District Primary Education Programme, Janshala and Education For All Campaign (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, 2001) would fall in this category.

Five major programmes/experiments have been launched in India on inclusion since 1987. However, no evaluation studies have been conducted on inclusive education. These studies would provide detailed information about the implementation of inclusion, including the issues and problems related to it. Thus, in the year 2004, the Government of India decided to evaluate the pilot project *Support to Children with Disabilities*. This project, launched in 2000, was a collaborative effort of the Government of India and UNDP to achieve mainstreaming of CWDs.

The project was implemented in the two States (i.e., U.P. and Karnataka) of India. The project undertook a number of significant initiatives to reach out to CWDs, which included community awareness programmes, identification and enrollment of CWDs, providing special education teacher support, assistive devices to CWDs, teacher training and home-based education to children with severe and profound disabilities. However, an evaluation of these interventions had to be undertaken to assess that up to what extent they could be mainstreamed in the system.

The study was undertaken with the following objectives: (a) analytical study of attendance rates of CWDs enrolled in regular schools; (b) assessment of training of knowledge, aptitude, and practice of trained teachers, school principals, and preschool teachers with a special focus on the teaching methodology adopted by the teachers for including CWDs; (c) impact assessment of the home-based education and itinerant teachers programme; (d) study of suitability and acceptability of aids and appliances provided to CWDs, and (e) identification of gaps in the programme.

Method

A comprehensive questionnaire was designed consisting of Questions, Interview Schedules and Format for Case Studies. After tool development, 20 volunteers (ten volunteers each from the two States) were selected to conduct the study. Purposive random sampling was used in the study. The sample comprised 284 schools and 20 homes of CWDs. The total number of CWDs

in these schools was 1170. In addition, focus group discussions were also held with resource teachers, regular teachers, head-masters, parents, community leaders, pre-school workers, peers and CWDs.

An exploratory and investigative design was adopted for the study. Data were mainly collected through questionnaire and by carrying out focused group discussions with various target groups. The data documented disability-wise enrollment, provision of assistive devices, learning achievement of CWD, impact of teacher-training, peer acceptance, barrier-free access, development of teaching-learning material and resource support for CWDs.

Results

The findings showed that the enrollment of boys with disabilities was more than the girls with disabilities. The enrollment of children with orthopaedic impairment was more as compared to any other category of CWDs. In both the States, CWDs showed satisfactory attendance, thereby dispelling the belief that CWDs usually drop out. Children with orthopaedic impairment showed maximum achievement in learning as compared to other groups of CWDs.

As far as classroom organization, most of the children were seated in rows, as compared to those sitting in circles or small groups. Similarly, in both the states more than 50% schools used the traditional lecture based teaching method as compared to activity based teaching comprising games. CWDs showed better performance in learning when they were seated in circles or small groups as compared to when they were seated in rows. Most of the teachers wanted help of a special education teacher when dealing with CWDs in their classrooms. A fewer number of schools had handicap friendly access in both the states. All these findings have been discussed in detail in the main article.

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SPECIAL EDUCATORS AND OPTIMAL HEALTH PLANS: MAXIMIZE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND COGNITIVE HEALTH

Laura M. Frey

Teacher health is a relevant and necessary topic to include in pre-service teacher preparation as well as ongoing staff development. This investigation integrated knowledge in optimal health and incorporated pre-service majors' development of optimal living plans as part of their knowledge in proactive classroom management. Optimal health was defined as positive and proactive physical, emotional, and cognitive behaviors/activities implemented daily to weekly. Participants were involved in discussions on the role of teacher health in developing positive classroom environments and teacher responsibility to implement optimal health not only as role models but as avenues to maximize student academic performance. This investigation sought to increase pre-service majors understanding of implementing optimal health plans early in their career preparation to maximize their health benefits and transfer these practices to the classroom teaching and management.

This research project consisted of pre/post survey implementation on optimal health and classroom management concepts. Participants were also involved in developing optimal health plans with positive and proactive physical, emotional, and cognitive health activities on a daily to weekly basis. A post-project satisfaction survey was implemented to assess participants' relevance of the project components. This investigation implemented across two academic years in the course *Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners* sought to establish a process to assess pre-service majors' perceptions on: (a) awareness and knowledge of physical, emotional, and cognitive health in successful classroom management, (b) knowledge and implementation of daily/weekly physical health habits, (c) knowledge and implementation of daily/weekly emotional health habits, (d) knowledge and implementation of daily/weekly cognitive health habits, and (e) application of teacher optimal health plans to assist institutions of higher education in effective program evaluation.

Method

Fifty-six special education per-service teacher education majors participated in this investigation, implemented across two academic years. Nine percent of participants were male and 91% were female. Four percent were sophomores, 47% were juniors, 40% were seniors, 8% were graduate

students, and 1% were licensure only students. Sixty-two of the participants were majors in the area of cognitive impairment and 36% were majors in the area of emotional impairment.

The survey, *Understanding Pre-Service Majors' Perspectives on Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners*, developed by the project investigator was implemented as a pre-post instrument. The quantitative component consisted of 42 comprehensive items on classroom management, of which 17 items report the results on optimal teacher health. The survey, *Understanding Pre-Service Majors' Perspectives on Classroom Management for Exceptional Learners Post Project Satisfaction*, developed by the project investigator was implemented at the conclusion of the investigation consisted of 15 follow-up items of which 11 report satisfaction with the project on optimal health. A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was used to code participant responses (non existent, poor, fair, good, excellent). The pre-post survey was implemented at the beginning of the first course session and at the conclusion of the last course session. The post-project satisfaction survey was implemented after the post survey in the last course session.

All participants completed a comprehensive three-part optimal health plan. Part One of the optimal health plan involved participants' identification of physical, emotional, and cognitive health habits they would implement and engage in on a daily/weekly basis. Participants identified five behaviors/activities for each of the three areas including the duration, frequency and projected time of day for each health habit. In Part Two, participants explained the benefits of each physical, emotional, and cognitive health habit to their day-to-day life. These benefits focused on their personal life in how the proactive physical, emotional, and cognitive health activities improved their day-to-day life quality. In Part Three of the optimal health plan, participants explained how each of the health habits helped their teaching performance. Participants then projected benefits for students' emotional, behavioral, and academic performance as a result of having a healthy teacher.

Participants completed an introduction to their optimal living plan integrating explanation of teacher optimal health responsibility for best practice teaching. In order to enhance understanding and relevance of teacher optimal living participants were involved in discussions on teacher responsibility to create positive, proactive classroom environments. These conversations extended to the role that teacher optimal health played in best practice teaching and classroom management. The optimal health plan assignment concluded with participants' reflection of knowledge and skills learned along with plans for future use.

Results

At the conclusion of the project, respondents reported a high level of satisfaction with the optimal health plan activities. In understanding that proactive physical, cognitive, and emotional health habits will be relevant for teachers in setting up classroom management and academic activities, 95-96% of the respondents reported excellent/good perception. Optimal health activities will be usable in their teaching role as well as setting up classroom management was reported as an excellent/good perception by 94% of the respondents. An optimal health plan is helpful to establish a healthy lifestyle that will benefit their day-to-day role as an educator was reported excellent/good by 89% of the respondents. An excellent/good perception was noted by 94% of the respondents as far as daily health in the areas of physical, emotional, and cognitive

health do having an impact on students. Optimal living plans developed were helpful and relevant to meet physical, emotional, and cognitive health needs as they take on the job of teaching were reported by 92% of the respondents. At least 90% of the respondents reported excellent/good perception that they will continue to work with their optimal living plan as they take on the job of teaching and role of being a teacher.

Discussion

This project on teacher optimal health plans contributes to teacher preparation in the area of classroom management by increasing pre-service majors' awareness and understanding of the role their physical, emotional, and cognitive health plays in student learning. Teacher optimal health can be promoted as a responsibility early in teacher preparation programs. Pre-service teachers who learn to implement balanced and optimal health activities can transfer this knowledge to classroom practices that maximize student health as well as academic performance. Participants were supportive of the optimal health plan activities. Post-project data demonstrated intent to continue to implement their positive physical, emotional, and cognitive behaviors in their future teaching role. This initial investigation data can support institutions of higher education for ongoing evaluation and review of teacher preparation in the field of special education.

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DEFINING AND ASSESSING INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: INTERNATIONALLY RELEVANT TRENDS AND ISSUES

Sandra Hansmann
Shawn P. Saladin

The concept of intellectual disabilities dates to antiquity. However, through the centuries, definitions have evolved, societal attitudes toward persons with intellectual disabilities have changed, and the terminology used to classify individual functioning has undergone significant revision (Bellini, 2003; Iacono, 2002; Leicester & Cooke, 2002). Increasing focus is placed on the strengths rather than the weaknesses of the individual (Polloway, 1997), demonstrating both a preference and an intent to avoid stigma associated with labeling (Baroff, 1999; Sandieson,

1998; Smith, 1997). The future of assessment of adults with intellectual disabilities will also include the use of person-first language paired with less stigmatizing terms, strongly supported by consumers and their advocates (Biasini, Grupe, Huffman, & Bray, 1999).

Depersonalizing phrases such as *the mentally retarded* are being replaced by person-first language, as in the phrase *individual with mental retardation*. Depending on the source, terms such as *developmental disability*, *cognitive disability*, or *mentally challenged*, are now frequently used to replace the term *mental retardation*. In fact, many advocates and organizations support replacement of all forms of reference to retardation, deeming it hurtful and stigmatizing (Bellini, 2003; Leicester & Cooke, 2002). Instead, the term *intellectual disability* has gained favor as being less stigmatizing, more in line with terms used to define other categories of disabilities both cognitive and physical, and more accurate in representation of the actual functional limitation (AAMR, 2002; Greenspan, 1997).

The World Health Organization (WHO) publishes the International Classification of Diseases (ICD) as a tool for standardizing diagnostic classifications of health conditions around the world. The ICD, now in its tenth edition (ICD 10) includes the Guide for Mental Retardation. The guide retains the term *mental retardation* as used in prior editions, but includes new alpha-numeric codes. Mental disorders are identified with the letter “F”; specific subcategories are further identified with numbers 00 through 99. Mental retardation has a categorical designation of F 70 through F 79. The codes F70 through F73 cover a range of severity that includes mild, moderate, severe, and profound intellectual disability respectively.

In addition to the severity codes, the WHO ICD classification system includes “other mental retardation” (F78), used when additional limitations are present that make determination of function difficult, and “unspecified mental retardation” (F79), used when evidence of an intellectual disability exists but cannot be quantified (WHO, 1996). While different definitions of intellectual disability have unique components, commonalities are as follows: (a) cognitive impairment—intellectual functioning that is notably below typical, (b) onset occurring before adulthood during the developmental period, and (c) and co-occurring deficits in adaptive behavior; that is, a limited ability to adapt to the demands of society, with allowances being made for age, social and cultural background, and community settings (AAMR, 2002; WHO, 1996).

Assessment of individuals with intellectual disabilities is the process wherein current deficits can be identified and talents recognized in order to better view the individual as a total entity possessing unique cognitive and social adaptation skills. Many service and support eligibility decisions are based on various standardized assessment scores, so evaluations must be sensitive enough to establish whether a diagnosis of intellectual or other development disability is appropriate. By combining assessments such as norm-referenced tests, observations, and informal measures, professionals can develop a strong basis for making decisions (Biasini et al., 1999; Sattler, 1992).

Implicit in the international definition provided by WHO is the assumption that assessment instruments must be accommodating of individual needs and individual functioning (AAMR, 2002; WHO, 1996). Inappropriate or poorly planned use of assessment measures may provide

little useful information on the diagnosis and prognosis of persons with intellectual disabilities. When correctly used however, assessment measures can be invaluable in assessing the individual's skills and pinpointing strengths in personality, achievement, and adaptive skills. The ICD 10 diagnostic guidelines note culturally appropriate standardized tests administered individually should be used for diagnostic purposes and that assessments should consider the presence of other conditions, such as language problems and physical or sensory disabilities (WHO, 1996). Fortunately, both new and well established measures are available for assessing individuals with intellectual disabilities, although the limitations of standardized instruments must be recognized.

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**TEACHER TRAINING IN RURAL NAMIBIA:
CHALLENGES OF THE INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM**

Paula H. Leitz

When Namibia gained its independence from the apartheid rule of South Africa in 1990, a constitution was written that included goals for education. Namibia's educational policy, "Education for all, all for education", was established to ensure that all Namibians, including those most marginalized, had access to education (MEC, 1993). The Ovahimba children in the far northwest corner of Namibia were identified as one of such groups of children who were educationally marginalized as access to government schools was nearly impossible. Lack of access to the existing school system was because this system did not as such cater to children in nomadic cultures. In fact, the existing school system was in conflict with the culture of the Ovahimbas, (as it is in most African settings), as it takes children away from their homes and puts them in hostels, far from daily chores and practices (UN in Namibia, 2000). Further conflict arises in the sense that parents feel they lose control over their children and often these parents feel inferior to their own children (King & Schielmann, 2004).

Ovahimba are a semi-nomadic people. As traditional cattle herders they move during the dry season from one area to another in search of grazing for their cattle, sheep and goats. The livelihood of an Ovahimba depends on these animals. When an area is no longer productive, the communities move to a more productive area. Each community is under the leadership of a headman. It has not been easy for the Himba communities to allow their children to part with their routine of looking after the animals to attend formal schooling (LeBeau, 1993). The roving lifestyles of the Ovahimbas, the mountainous terrain, and the lack of infrastructures such as roads and telephones have contributed to educational hardship for their young children.

To meet the needs of the Ovahimba learners in this region, the Ondao Mobile Primary School was established in 1998. Currently, the Ondao Mobile Primary School serves over 2575 learners in the Kunene region in grades one to seven with 73 teachers. The Ondao Mobile Primary School is unusual in the sense that it is one school with one principal, but the 40 units that make up the

school are spread across the region. A unit (classroom) consists of a teacher, recommended by the community and appointed by the Ministry, children from the community, a tent—since the Himbas are semi-nomadic, a majority of the classrooms are large, moveable tents—and basic educational materials like folding tables, stools, and a chalkboard (UN in Namibia).

In 2002, a teacher training project, The Ondao Mobile Primary School Capacity Building Program, provided in-service training to these teachers with the goal of enhancing their pedagogical skills and content knowledge. Themes ran throughout the training, however, two of these themes were of special importance to these teachers—differentiated instruction and inclusive best practices—due to the challenges they faced trying to meet the needs of all learners, including those with special needs. These challenges include: the lack of teaching/learning materials that are culturally and linguistically affirming; limited access to essential training because of the distances between the units and the training center; having to teach learners from multiple grades and with diverse learning needs in an inclusive classroom; and, most importantly having to teach learners with special needs without training in special education.

The development of inclusion in different contexts around the world is greatly impacted by these challenges. According to Engelbrecht, Oswald, and Forlin (2006), *Barriers to learning and development can be located within the learner, within the school setting, within the educational system and within the broader social, economic and political context* (p. 1). Inclusive education is best achieved if appropriate supports were available to assist teachers and learners in inclusive classroom. The support should be multi-faceted, starting with the family at the grass-root level, then the community level, and district level, and finally the national level (Engelbrecht et al.). Commitment to quality, accessible education for all requires creative, “out-of-the-box” thinking and planning. The standard practices used in other, more developed parts of the world will not necessarily work here in Namibia or other parts of Africa.

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**CRITICAL ISSUES AND BEST PRACTICES IN THE ASSESSMENT
OF DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING YOUTH**

Shawn P. Saladin
Sandra Hansmann

Increasingly, educational settings and rehabilitation settings at all levels require participation in standardized assessment for screening, eligibility, and placement services. In addition, many employment settings now require standardized assessments in the form of certification or licensure examinations, or for promotions after hire. However, people who are deaf or hard of hearing often do not perform well on the types of standardized assessment instruments use in these settings (Loew, Cahalan-Laitusis, Cook, & Harris, 2005). Often, assessment challenges arise due to deficits in English language literacy and limited real-world and social knowledge resulting from experiences of linguistic and social isolation (Holt, Traxler, & Allen, 1997). Reduced literacy and language access are at the root of many of the problems encountered in standardized testing of deaf and hard of hearing individuals.

The difficulties experienced due to English language literacy issues and a lack of real-world and social knowledge are compounded by the typical construction and language used in standardized tests. People whose native language is not English or who have limited access to English acquisition understand a complete question better than questions comprised of an incomplete statement that is completed by one of the multiple choice options. Questions or items stated in the negative, questions made up of multiple subordinate clauses, questions with qualifiers, and test items that are excessively complex, ambiguous, or use idioms may also be quite difficult for these people, yet these questions formats are commonly found in various standardized assessments (Weinstock & Mouny, 2005).

Test items may also be more subtly biased due to constructs of language. Native language fluency is complex, and involves much more than mastery of grammatical rules; voice register, nuances of inflection and tone, formal and informal usages are all part of native fluency. It is due to these aspects of language that one is able to conclude that although a sentence is technically constructed correctly, it just doesn't "sound" right. These types of questions are generally labeled *sound-based*, and are especially challenging for prelingually deaf or hard of hearing consumers (Weinstock & Mouny, 2005, p. 29). If possible, the tests should be reviewed for constructions and language used in the assessments. If using an assessment tool that contains problematic construction is not avoidable, language-related and other accommodations may be needed.

Translating a written test into manual communication is known as *sight translation* (Rogers, 2005, p. 111), and can be a reasonable accommodation for individuals whose literacy difficulties pose challenges in assessment situations. However, assessment accommodations through sign language interpretation is much more complex than simply arranging for an interpreter's attendance. Foremost, it is critical to recognize that not all individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing are fluent in the use of sign language. Secondly, the significant variability within and among signed languages may impact both the expressive accuracy and the receptive understanding of content. The regional variations in syntax and vocabulary of ASL, along with wide use of self, family, and school created signs can all impact meaningful transliteration. And although Signed English includes standardized combinations of specific ASL word signs with spoken English syntax, it is prone to nonstandard alterations due to regional differences and the omission of signs by hearing users (Braden, 1994; Rogers, 2005). Additionally, live translations can vary from interpreter to interpreter due to differences in language skills, competencies, and familiarity with the testing procedures, content of the test, and preferred communication style of the client (Rogers, 2005).

Several basic principles apply to effective assessment of individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, superseding specific considerations related to particular instruments. First, assessment instruments that depend on verbal language are generally not appropriate for individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing, unless hearing loss is very mild. Secondly, test administrators must be aware that verbal or written assessment may be measuring the individual's language limitations due to deafness, rather than the intelligence, personality, abilities, achievement, or other individual characteristics (Weinstock & Mounty, 2005). Also, it may be appropriate to assess individuals who are significantly hard of hearing using measures designed for individuals who are deaf in addition to tests for individuals without hearing loss in order to obtain the most valid results.

The use of standardized assessment instruments should be one part of a more comprehensive approach to assessing individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing that includes case history data and a thorough records review (Vernon & Andrews, 1990). With any instrument, it is important for the examiner to note the accommodations provided and the degree to which the participant appears to have understood the evaluation (Spragins, 1997). Lastly, but perhaps most importantly, test administrators need considerable understanding of deaf culture and other psychosocial issues related to deafness in order to give accommodate and interpret standardized test results.

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**A CROSS-CULTURAL STUDY OF STUDENTS PROBLEM BEHAVIORS
AND CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

Sunwoo Shin
Myung-sook Koh

The purpose of this cross-cultural study is to investigate comparative students' problem behaviors and classroom behavior management strategies for students in urban public schools between teachers in the United States of America and Korea. Through this process, this study can provide a comprehensive description of teachers' classroom behavior management strategies through the inter-cultural perspectives of both countries. Specifically, the study is designed to answer the following research questions: (a) What cross-cultural differences are there in student behavior problems observed by teachers between urban American and Korean school systems,

and (b) What cross-cultural differences are there in discipline procedures and strategies implemented by high school classroom teachers in urban American and Korean school systems?

The population of interest for this study was public high school teachers who taught students in an urban Mid-South school district in the United States and in a city school district in Korea. Of 31 high schools in a Mid-South school district in the United States, seven schools participated, and of 284 high schools in a city school district in Korea, seven schools participated in this study. Among the American teachers, 30% were male and 70% were female. Among Korean teacher participants, 72% were male and 30% were female.

For American teachers, 22% had 1-5 year(s) teaching experience, 23% had 6-15 years teaching experience, and 55% had more than 16 years teaching experience. Whereas, 23% of Korean teachers, had 1-5 year(s) teaching experience, 42% had 6-15 years teaching experience, and 36% had more than 16 years teaching experience. The average year(s) of teaching experience for American and Korean educators were 18 and 12 years respectively. The average number of students in class in America was 26.1 and that of the Korean class was 34. This study incorporated data collection from two sources with analysis to address the research questions. The instruments were: (a) Student Behavior Questionnaire (SBQ) partially developed by Ahrens, Barrett, and Holtzman (1997) and (b) Teacher Survey (TS) developed by the authors. The authors altered the SBQ to respond to the unique characteristics of this cross-cultural study.

To examine cross-cultural differences in student behavior problems and teachers' classroom behavior management strategies, quantitative and qualitative methods were used to organize and analyze data. The responses of the SBQ, involving what are cross-cultural differences in discipline procedures and strategies implemented by classroom teachers in the American and Korean school systems and demographic responses were analyzed by independent *t*-test and the descriptive analysis. The mean scores and percentages were calculated and Chi-square test was conducted to see the distribution of each forced choice response.

Through the SBQ, American teachers reported that they had more students with behavioral problems. The two countries' high schools did not demonstrate many different types of student problem behaviors, but the teachers' concerns and reactions to those problematic situations were somewhat different. Both teacher groups seemed to prefer the behavior management strategy based on behaviorism rather than cognitivism. American teachers were more dependent on administrative intervention strategies, whereas, Korean teachers tended to attempt to handle infraction situations by themselves.

A clear contrast between the two cultural groups was found in the result. However, owing to the characteristics of the cross-cultural study, it may be cautious to generalize these findings to other settings because of some intrinsic cultural and historical factors. First of all, nominated social norms and values in both societies should be indicated as one of the most imperative factors to influence the way of the teacher behavior management approaches as well as the student behavioral reactions towards teachers. Secondly, as the results, several fundamental differences existed in both educational environments. For example, both educators' and learners' mindset or value concepts were considerably different. In a pluralistic society, one emphasizes individual rights in the equalized relationships. The other society acculturates collectivity and a hierarchical

relationship as social norms and values. Consequently, American educators have developed more scientific and humanistic behavior management techniques not to infringe individual civil rights in this equalized teacher-student relationship, demonstrating the preference of the third party's involvements. Meanwhile, Korean educational thoughts and philosophies have naturally reflected in hierarchical and authoritarian leadership orientations in managing instructional and student behavior management strategies. Therefore, the findings are better explained by considering the both the structure and systems of two different societies.

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PRE-VOCATIONAL AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN PAKISTAN

Shahida Sajjad

Vocational education for persons with disabilities has a psychological significance as it gives them a psychological boost towards self-independence and necessary confidence in life. The primary importance, however, for adapting vocational rehabilitation as part of the strategy of a training program for disabled is economic. There is a need to make the person with disabilities economically self-sufficient as best as possible and reduce the economic burden that the person may carry as a member of a social group. Considerable work has been done in the advanced countries about organizing and systematizing vocational education needs and practices.

In Pakistan since 1980, interest in vocational rehabilitation, vocational training and placement of disabled persons has increased considerably. The education for the person with disabilities vocational skills, training facilities, career guidance and counseling, job finding, organizational and institutional support all are needed to do this work in different places to cater to the diverse

training needs of at least 1.1 million young people from 14-20 years of age. Vocational training centers for person with disabilities need coordination with the National Training Bureau of the Ministry of Labor for the purpose of employment of trained disabled persons in suitable jobs. The government of Pakistan has promoted various schemes for the rehabilitation of the disabled. Accelerated implementation of Disabled Persons (Employment and Rehabilitation) Ordinance 1981 by National Council for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons is a relatively important step taken by government. The main characteristics of the Ordinance are fixing two percent quota in all agencies, which employ more than 100 persons.

In the sub-continent with the introduction of modern Western Education some recognition has come for children with disabilities. The philanthropist and social welfare agencies took upon themselves to ameliorate their lot, but the government remained apathetic to their need and requirements. Some social welfare agencies opened schools for deaf and blind children who were capable of receiving education in a school system. For example, in 1906 the Amerson Institute was established in Lahore and in 1922 the British Missionary opened Ida-Rieu School for blind persons in Karachi. Such schools still exist in large cities. There is one in Karachi while other two were located in Lahore. The great fillip came during the martial law period of General Zia-ul-Haq. It is said that his motivation owed itself to his daughter who was a disabled child plus his religious grounding with emphasis on sympathy for the deprived. This coincided with the worldwide concern for children specially the disabled. The introduction of zakat and usher ordinance, which obligated people to pay to the government, provided a source of income for allocating resources to persons with disabilities. A large number of Special Education Centers were established by non-government organizations in Karachi Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and some other places. In our country, non-government organizations are also active in special education side-by-side with the government sector and are concentrating on an expansion in this field.

Method

This research study was designed to investigate the pre-vocational and vocational training programs included in the syllabus of special schools, the facilities provided to the students with disabilities to cater their special needs, the availability of trained vocational teachers, and the relationship between vocational training and job placement of students with disabilities in Pakistan. . It was an exploratory research and the data were collected with the help of a structured questionnaire by interviewing administrators, principals, or senior teachers of 62 special schools of visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally retarded and physically handicapped persons selected through purposive sampling. Out of these 62 schools, 23 schools from Karachi, 20 schools from Lahore, 7 schools from Rawalpindi, and 12 schools from Islamabad were selected for the purpose of study. Hypotheses were tested through percentage method and Chi-square methods.

Results

The results of the study indicate that most of the special schools were offering only pre-vocational training programs and few schools were offering vocational courses. The reason for providing vocational courses was that fewer resources were needed to conduct the courses, not

because of the market demands. There was no standard curriculum for the vocational courses offered to special students. There was a lack of professional personnel for vocational training in special schools. The special schools did not have any record as to where the students were absorbed after leaving the schools. Some students obtained jobs in the skill areas in which they were trained, some got jobs in other areas, and some were said to “go home” with no further details on their activities.

Discussion

The findings of the study will be useful to highlight the status of disabled persons in our society and should help to improve their quality of life. It will also help professionals to revise the curricula focusing vocational training programs to match with the business market need. The study is expected to enhance the awareness in the families of the disabled about the importance of job for a disabled person. The study will emphasize the participation of society & community in vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons. The study will help the government in framing the education & labor policy to support disabled persons. The findings of the study will provide data on the status of vocational training component in the teaching of disabled and will add to the existing literature.

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PRACTICE TEACHING IN URBAN SCHOOLS: EARLY FIELD EXPERIENCE IN URBAN SCHOOL SETTINGS

Myung-sook Koh
Sunwoo Shin

Each year, approximately three million first graders finished their grade experiencing difficulties in learning (Madden, Slavin, Karweit, Lolan, & Wasik, 1993). The question was what the underlying causes were for the difficulties of these first graders. The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 indicated that only 35 percent of fourth graders in urban schools could read their own grade level textbooks and if children do not learn how to read by 3rd grade, there was a small possibility they would learn to read in later grades.

Often urban schools have high rates of students at risk, such as those from low socio-economic status, single and broken families, and linguistically and culturally diverse families. Also, urban schools' drop-out and retention rates are usually much higher than those of the majority students.

According to Heward (2004), many urban schools themselves are at-risk schools and produce at-risk children. Therefore, urban schools are not usually attractive places for beginning teachers to embark on their teaching profession. Further, urban schools usually have a huge teacher shortage. Even though teachers begin their first teaching experience in high poverty schools, one-third resign their jobs (Neville, Sherman, & Cohen, 2005). Thus, urban schools have a greater number of teachers who are not licensed and teach with alternative certifications. In a meeting of an advisory meeting with special education directors, many administrators in urban school districts express their concerns about the beginning teachers' lack of readiness skills in teaching urban school students.

Research has shown that teacher quality is the most critical factor in improving student performance and effective teachers are critical to student achievement. The NCLB requires schools, districts, and states to have "highly qualified teachers" and improved 100 percent student proficiency in reading and mathematics by 2014 (Neville, Sherman, & Cohen, 2005).

Preservice preparation had the potential to help teachers develop more knowledge and skills, enabling them to meet the challenges they face in their classrooms. However, traditional teacher preparation has failed to produce the level of quality demanded by the urban educational environment (Heward, 2004; Neville, Sherman, & Cohen, 2005). Therefore, preservice teachers must be given the opportunity to acquire the appropriate field experiences and learning necessary to understand the characteristics of students from low socio-economic status and different cultural and linguistic backgrounds in urban schools. In spite of more frequent field experience requirements, a body of research has shown that preservice teachers did not feel they were provided with sufficient opportunities to observe and work in real classrooms. In addition, educators often felt that they lacked the necessary skills to manage children with special needs, disadvantages, or multicultural backgrounds in their classrooms before they went out to teach in the real world (e.g., Croll & Shank, 1983; Garmon, 2004).

Based on this previous research, it was crucial to investigate the impact of early field experience on preservice teachers as we prepared them to provide an appropriate education for students with disabilities and at-risk students in urban schools. The proper training in an urban setting may make preservice teachers feel more comfortable working in urban schools and allow urban schools to recruit more highly-qualified teachers. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of such early field experience and how it affects their perspective of teaching in urban schools.

The participants of this study are 210 preservice general and special education teachers who enrolled in the classes entitled *Education of Students with Exceptionalities* and *Pre-Clinical Experiences: Cognitive Impairment* at a Midwestern public university in Michigan. To measure the effectiveness of early urban school field experiences and the impact on preservice general and special education teachers' perspectives regarding teaching students in urban schools, four

questionnaires are being used: three Reflective Field Experience Questionnaires and Assessing the Instructional Environment Checklist.

These three questionnaires were developed by the first author and reviewed and revised with other professionals. In addition, two groups of participants fill out the Assessing the Instructional Environment Checklist to investigate if there are any differences regarding instructional environments in urban and suburban schools. This checklist is adapted from Stewart & Evans (1997). Students are required to choose a school that has at least 50% of students with diversity and 70% of students with free or reduced lunches.

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FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER: PREVENTION TO INTERVENTION

Teri Bembridge
Sandra McCaig

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder is on the increase in North America. It is the one known learning and behavioral disability that is completely preventable. Since antiquity, people have suspected that alcohol can harm a developing fetus. A quote attributed to Plato says “Children should not be made in bodies saturated with drunkenness, what is growing in the mother should be compact, well attached and calm.” It was not until the mid 1970s that the distinctive pattern of delayed growth, intellectual and behavioral disabilities, physical characteristics caused by alcohol abuse during pregnancy was recognized as a diagnostic category. According to the Canadian Medical Association (2005), the term Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) describes the range of characteristics that can affect a child exposed to alcohol in the womb. FASD is not a diagnostic term but an umbrella term that encompasses three medical diagnoses: Fetal Alcohol Affect (FAS); Partial Fetal Alcohol Affect (pFAS); and Alcohol Related Neurodevelopment Disorder (ARND).

Diagnosis involves a multi-disciplinary process involving medical, health and educational professionals who use multiple sources to determine a diagnosis. FASD has been called a ‘hidden’ disability because often there are no overt indicators such as atypical facial features or below average scores on standardized tests used in schools. However, individuals afflicted may have serious adaptive problems and can suffer from secondary issues.

Frontier School Division (Thordarson, Monias, & Braun, 2001) developed a sequence of lessons for middle year’s students that are taught in all the Division’s schools. The lessons for each grade level can be taught during Health or integrated with other subjects such as Language Arts. The Curriculum Guide contains all necessary material and background information. Each grade level unit begins with general outcomes and lesson summaries. The appendices contain all the teaching materials required for each lesson. Teachers consider it to be “user friendly” and require little professional support to teach the lessons. Sensitive issues are discussed respectfully and teachers are provided with information on how to deal with the emotional impact on students. Each school that uses the unit plans ensures that their community members and parents are part of the planning process.

The lessons use a wide variety of strategies to encourage student involvement. Each grade level of the curriculum guide is composed of 4-8 lessons that utilize 10-12 class periods. The content covers the nature of addiction in general terms and the consequences of alcohol use during pregnancy. The content is graphic, detailed and based on the current scientific evidence.

The Winnipeg School Division maintains a continuum of supports for students with FASD ranging from programming in specialized classes to inclusion in neighborhood schools (see Manitoba Education Citizenship and Youth, 2001). An Early Childhood Transition Network, consisting of all of the preschool services, meets regularly to identify students transitioning from preschool to school, to ensure a smooth transition and a continuation of services and early interventions. In 1993, the network was informed that 63 infants were born at the Health Sciences Centre, having been exposed to drugs, alcohol and solvents prior to birth. This was the first indication of the significant numbers of students who would be transitioning into school. The children presented an opportunity to research best practices and design an intensive program specifically to meet their needs. A partnership was formed among several agencies, and in 1995 the Bridges Early Childhood program opened. A partnership of services allowed students to

receive a full day program and supports including: speech /language therapy, occupational therapy, educational assistant support, behaviour support and family outreach. As additional students were identified each year, the program expanded up to Grade 8 operating at two sites.

Since the majority of students with FASD attend regular classrooms at their home school, the Division developed a cascade model to train a cadre of teachers in programming and teaching strategies for inclusive settings. Kits and handbooks were developed to support regular classroom teachers.

In 1999 an FASD Advisory committee was established to bring together key players in the schools and the community. The Advisory coordinates professional development and identifies specific issues for action. One of the outcomes of this network has been a partnership with the Health Sciences Centre, to develop referral, intake, diagnostic and follow-up procedures through a coordinated systems approach. Outcomes of these initiatives have resulted in increased awareness of FASD, resource kits, a cadre of trained personnel to support and mentor teachers, clinicians knowledgeable of research-based practices, increased programs to support students in specialized settings and inter-agency collaboration. Forming partnerships, which promote a unified common vision while at the same time meeting the mandated needs of each agency, has helped each agency reach their goals in a collaborative manner.

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SOCIOCULTURAL ASPECTS OF SELF-DETERMINATION IN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

Chen-chen Cheng

Self-determination has been promoted in U. S. special education policy, practice, and research initiatives throughout the last decade (Algozzine, Browder, Karvonen, Test, & Wood, 2001). Research has shown that self-determination supports successful postsecondary transition for students with disabilities. We use the definition proposed by Wehmeyer (2005) that *self-determination behavior refers to volitional actions that enable one to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to maintain or improve one’s quality of life* (p. 117). Self-determining behaviors include choice making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment, self-management, self-advocacy, self-efficiency, self awareness, and self-knowledge (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997).

The theoretical framework of self-determination stem from the principle of normalization which was introduced to the United States from north Europe while the civil rights movement was in full swing and was adopted by the special education field. Normalization is a deeply embedded value in policy and service provision for people with disabilities (Harry, Rueda, & Kalyanpur, 1999). As the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was the impetus to formally eliminate racial discrimination, the disability rights movement began to push for legislation during the 1970’s to ensure the rights of people with disabilities. Self-determination is one of these rights.

Self-determination for youth with disabilities has been conceptualized as an important part of the transition to young adulthood and much of the empirical evidence that guides preferred practices has been generated in transition research (Algozzine et al., 2001). In addition, including youth with disabilities in the decision-making processes of their special education services to promote self-determination has been codified in the Individuals with Disabilities Act 2004, as well as in several of its earlier iterations.

Despite the undeniable importance of self-determination, questions about student self-determination in both U.S. and international educational settings remain unanswered. Specifically, most self-determination research has not fully explored the constructs of “youth” and “person with a disability” although these ideas have been explored in multicultural special education research. Identity constructs (e.g., gender) also interact with the development of self-determination (Wehmeyer & Schwartz, 1997). Further, sociocultural interactions among key special education stakeholders have not been sufficiently considered within the body of self-determination research (Trainor, in press). In this paper, we focus on the extent to which this foundational aspect of educating people with disabilities matches the beliefs and values that provide context for Taiwanese special education.

In Taiwan, more than half of the special education faculty members were trained in U.S. universities, increasing the likelihood that these scholars are well versed in self-determination as it is constructed in the U.S. We explore the potential tension between Taiwanese values and beliefs as they relate to the self-determination of youth with disabilities and Taiwanese special

education, special education policy, and practice that may be reflective of core American values such as equality and individualism.

Special education research in Taiwan has indicated that cultural beliefs can act as barriers to successful transition when scholars and teachers witnessed and experienced conflicts with parents in adopting American transition theories in Taiwan's local contexts (Lin, 2005). Little consideration has been given to Chinese culture and its potential influences on the development of self-determination for Taiwanese students with disabilities.

Hsu's (1971) psychosocial homeostasis model and the Confucian teaching of self-cultivation as the psychological and cultural frameworks help us expand our understanding of self-determination in Taiwan. According to Hsu, Chinese identities are often tied to parents and siblings, and other close relatives, in contrast with Western beliefs that often encourage children to become independent. People may interpret social relationships and community differently in Taiwan and in the U.S.; therefore, self-determination behavior expressed in the U.S. might not be applicable for people with disabilities in Taiwan as a result of different understanding of social expectations and normalization. For Confucius, the highest level of self-cultivation is the integration of social regulations and personal internal desires and motives and a person has to make his own decisions after carefully taking into consideration his or her personal proclivities, cultural values, and the social regulations (Lau, 1979).

In this presentation we examine larger sociopolitical and cultural issues relevant to the development of self-determination for people with disabilities. Further, we draw on the existing research in self-determination in special education, and present evidence of the adoption or adaptation of this construct in Taiwanese settings. Our purpose is to examine the extent to which such application has the potential to be culturally responsive.

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NO ONE IS LIMITED!

Sandra McCaig
Teri Bembridge

Inclusion is based on the belief that student success is a result of the interaction that takes place between teachers and students within the classroom. The classroom teacher is now a vital part of what was once the purview of special education. The foundation for an inclusive culture is a collaborative environment, in which special education serves as a network of resources operating in collaboration with the classroom teacher and other school resources, to provide a continuum of school based instructional support services. This means coordinating all programs, support services (professionals, paraprofessionals, parents, and clinical personnel) and teachers in a manner to accommodate the instructional needs of all students.

Within this model, teacher development is crucial to creating inclusive classrooms. *Strategies for Organizing Inclusive Classrooms & Schools*, a course offered by the authors, at the University of Manitoba, highlights key concepts that teachers need to know and use. The course explores a variety of service delivery models and instructional practices which support the education of students with special needs in inclusive settings. Students examine the organization and implementation of school-wide supports for access, learning, socialization, behaviour, family liaison, clinical engagement and community services. Organizational strategies to enhance consultation, cooperation and collaboration are included. Upon completion of the course, participants can (a) describe effective school based services and a variety of service delivery models, including co-teaching models, (b) identify effective change and teamwork strategies, and (c) describe the concept of universal design in relation to creating environments and classroom practices to support the education of all students.

Several of the strategies have been effectively incorporated into programming for students in both rural and urban settings in Manitoba schools, and are evidenced in the story of Eddie, an

international winner of a Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) *Yes I Can Award*. Although he had Lesch-Nyan syndrome; a rare genetic disorder that limits motor control and speech, Eddie served as the President of Grant Park High School, with a population of 1200 students. Eddie's story epitomizes the philosophy of appropriate educational programming outlined by the Province of Manitoba (2006).

Students in Manitoba schools are entitled to an appropriate education, which means having individualized and relevant learning objectives, with the necessary supports to learn. Eddie was one such student, who required an IEP and opportunities for success. Grant Park High School's core belief stated (2002) . . . *students will be provided with opportunities to reach their personal potential through high quality challenging programs, research-based practices, supported policies and committed people, working together in a safe and nurturing environment : an environment that encourages mutual respect, dignity and inclusion*. At Grant Park, access means removing not only physical barriers, but providing opportunities for all students to participate in the life of the school. The school reflects diversity and promotes opportunities for all. The school stated (Grant Park, 2002) that it . . . *will not tolerate discrimination, intimidation, harassment and/or violence and will promote good citizenship*. Walking into the school, a visitor would see a diverse student population engaged in all aspects of student life (e.g., performing arts, band, drama, art, football, track camping, field trips and student government). The school showcases and celebrates student success and boosts the image of what students with differing abilities can achieve. By working together, the school and community highlight and foster inclusive environments through public forums, mentorships, work experience sites, and scholarships for students who demonstrate inclusion. Parents participate as partners in their children's education and serve on school advisory councils.

One of the Grant Park's (2002) core values stated . . . *effective education prepares students to participate responsibly in the world community*. Consequently, all students develop a personal career portfolio for graduation and employability. Students who cannot articulate for themselves, develop a virtual portfolio based on their personal path. Eddie, as President of the Student Council, exhibited leadership skills that further promoted an inclusive environment. He was a role model for inclusion, and his death at age 20 left the school with the legacy that, *No one is limited*. Eddie demonstrated that in inclusive schools (a) all students can learn, albeit in different ways and at different rates and (b) all students want to belong and feel valued and all students have something to offer in a diverse society.

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**THE UBE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA:
ISSUES AND NEEDS**

Theo Ajobiewe

The Universal Basic Education (UBE) programmes is one of the approaches of the Federal Government of Nigeria designed to meet the goals of Education for All (EFA). The UBE is therefore expected to provide free education to all school age children all over the country for 9 years; 6 years of primary and 3 years of junior secondary education. In addition, adult literacy will form part of the UBE programme, thus giving adults who missed the initial opportunity to become literate a second chance (Ipaye, 2006). Hence UBE is a programme for all school-age children and for all non-literate adults.

The UBE programme in Nigeria, as Obani (2006) observed, corresponds to what UNESCO (1991) describes as a *transformative inclusion agenda*. According to UNESCO, this inclusion agenda should be concerned with identifying all forms of exclusion and barriers to learning within national policies, cultures, educational institutions, and communities, with a view to removing them. Also, it has implications for redirecting teacher training and curriculum development and for developing education within communities that would be relevant to their local needs. Furthermore, the UBE programme regards a number of issues as critical to its success (e.g., full community involvement, recruitment of teachers and their education, training and retraining, an enriched curriculum textbooks, instructional materials, good and efficient management (Obani, 2006).

According to Nwazuo (2004), inclusive education as a concept is largely an unexplored social frontier in education. Most academic discussions bordering on inclusive education in Nigeria tend towards abstract ideological positions rather than focusing on the practical details on mode of operation. Maiwada (2004) on the other hand, is convinced that special education, mainstreaming, and inclusive education are concepts which are closely related in the sense that they are used to refer to education of persons with special needs. In the light of the above, one can look at inclusive education as a goal to aim for rather than a fixed state to be achieved. The

philosophy of inclusive education also denotes that ordinary educational arrangements should accommodate all children regardless of their physical intellectual, emotional, social, linguistic or other conditions (UNESCO, 1991).

In 1999, the Government of Nigeria undertook to implement the major recommendations of the Situation and Policy Analysis (SAPA) project report, which underlined two cardinal principles, namely universalizing access and promoting equity. The idea, as Nwazuoke (2004) put it, is that education should be made available to anyone who is entitled to it and at the same time every stratum of the society should be afforded uninhibited access to its fair share of educational facilities. The implication is that children with disabilities should be allowed access to education commensurate with their level of ability. In launching the UBE, governments avowed intention to make equal educational opportunities available to all Nigerian children of school-age and to gradually eliminate illiteracy and ignorance in the society (Nigerian Tribune, 2000).

Though, the goal of inclusive education is to allow children with disabilities access to neighbourhood schools, the greatest challenges faced in the UBE programme is highlighted by Ipaye (2006):

- Regular schools and their teachers have little or no skills at all for meeting the education needs of the children with special education needs
- Schools and teachers have little or no information, facilities, instructional materials and guides for handling, and instructing children with special education needs.
- In school plans and in the construction of school buildings, adequate attention has not been paid to making them friendly and accessible to children with disabilities etc.

With the introduction of the UBE whose underlying principle is to promote equity and universalize access, many children with disabilities in Nigeria, along with the non-disabled ones, will enroll in the school system especially at the primary school level (Nwazuoke, 2004). The question that may need to be addressed is: What is the implication of inclusive education within the UBE programme in Nigeria?

The successful implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria would have far reaching implications for personnel preparation, pedagogy, curriculum, learning environment, funding, condition of service, school management, structures, monitoring and evaluation.

- Personnel preparation – efforts need to be made to bring in teachers who would be able to respond appropriately to the challenges posed by the children. Capacity building in support of inclusive education should involve the training of regular teachers to acquire at least basic skills in special needs education.
- Active pedagogy is critical to the success of inclusive education. To ensure that children with disabilities participate actively in classroom practices efforts need to be made to include differentiated activities in the classroom.
- The present curriculum of the regular school system in Nigeria should be reworked in the light of inclusive practices in the school. Curriculum designers should plan the learning experiences in a way that the unique needs of the children are adequately addressed.
- The environment in which children learn exerts tremendous influence on them. Inclusive practices can only be effectively carried out in supportive environments. The present state of

most public schools in Nigeria, as Nwazuo (2004) pointed out, is a far cry from the ideal. The schools lack resource rooms, good libraries, recreational facilities etc.

- The inclusive education within the framework of UBE scheme will make demands on the existing management structure of our schools with the anticipated population explosion in the schools and the presence of children with disabilities, the management structure should be reviewed.

In this paper we have emphasized that inclusive education which involves the training of children with special educational needs and their normal peers in the same neighbourhood (regular) schools is now the global trend. Such practice is in line with the widening democratic principles and human rights agenda of most nations (Obani, 2006). The UBE programme should result in fundamental changes in the operation, organization, administration attitudes, programmes, curriculum, and other activities and relationship within the school system. It has to be a whole school affair, involving important systematic changes and innovations so that the peculiar learning needs, problems, strengths and weaknesses of all pupils and staff in the school are equitably attended to.

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FACILITATING COLLABORATION: THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF MOTIVATION, EMPATHY AND VOICE

Kate Scorgie

Despite increased emphasis on collaborative decision-making models, parents of children with disabilities continue to assert that they feel marginalized and excluded from choice-making processes that affect future child and family services (Kearney & Griffin, 2001; Scorgie & Sobsey, 2000). When parents were asked how professionals could be more sensitive to their needs, they asserted that professionals should welcome parents' knowledge of their children, provide them with a full range of options regarding possible interventions, grant them equal voice in decision-making processes, and try to understand life from their perspective (Pruitt, Wandry, & Hollums, 1998). In short, they urged professionals to *walk a mile in [their] shoes* (Pruitt et al., p. 165).

The challenge for those who prepare pre-service professionals is to utilize pedagogy that will facilitate greater understanding of and empathy toward parents of children with disabilities. Case study teaching methods enable students to enter the contextual experience of another, engage in solution-building activities and, ultimately, challenge and transform inadequate assumptive and belief structures (McDade, 1995). In addition, case studies can effectively incorporate many of the essential pedagogical components of transformational learning, such as presentation of a disorienting dilemma, reflective journaling, engagement of emotions, development of empathy, and authentic role-playing activities (Franquiz, 1999; Mezirow, 1997; Pohland & Bova, 2000).

The *Family Collaboration Portfolio Project* [FCPP] was designed as a 9-week interactive course component for pre-professionals containing 31 activities that include simulation exercises, role-playing activities, utilization of on-line resources, and readings. The simulation exercises utilize a 9-week developmental case study methodology in which students become parents of a child with a disability. Sixteen different case study streams (each covering a nine-week trajectory from birth through adolescence and representing such diagnoses as Down syndrome, autism, hearing impairment, developmental disability, learning disorder, behavior disorder, seizure disorder and intellectual delay), allow students in the class a unique virtual parenting experience. The case studies, which were based on authentic parent accounts of raising a child with a disability, incorporate such scenarios as; (a) birth, (b) diagnosis of disability, (c) difficulty accessing early childhood services, (d) starting school, (e) public perceptions of disability, (f) child friendship difficulties, (g) family issues, (h) parental feelings of disempowerment, and (i) school and life opportunity limitations as the child reaches adolescence. Each scenario requires the virtual parent to journal his or her thoughts and feelings, initiate a course of action, and engage in solution-building activities with other members of the class. In addition, throughout the nine-week term, students are required to locate on-line parent resources, engage in various parent-professional role-playing activities, and critique articles and books written by parents of children with a variety of disability characteristics. In the concluding exercise, "parents" reflect on what they learned about parenting a child with a disability through composing a final letter to their virtual child.

The FCPP exercises have been used with undergraduate and graduate pre-professional education and counseling students. As attested by data from the final letters, across diverse classes students demonstrated remarkable attachment to their virtual children (e.g., “I really felt as though when I was writing I had a deaf child”), even integrating them into existing family and friendship structures (e.g., “I went home after class the first night and told my children, ‘You have a new brother and he’s got Down syndrome,’” and “every day after class I would go home and tell my roommates what happened to my child that day”) (Scorgie & Wilgosh, 2006). Thus, students were strongly motivated to see life from a different perspective. As they reflected on what the case study experience taught them about parents of children with disabilities, students responded that parents of children with disability are similar to most parents—they fiercely love their children, they will strive to obtain needed services so that their children can develop to their full potential, they desire that their children will be included and valued by others, and they hope for a secure and prosperous future for their children. Students further contended that they struggled with the pain of disempowerment and dismissal common to parents of children with disabilities as indicated in their readings.

As a result of parenting their virtual child, students attested to increased understanding of and empathy toward parents of children with disabilities (e.g., “I know I will work differently with parents by ensuring that their opinions or remarks are taken seriously and that they are valued” and “I have new knowledge that will change my way of working with parents”) (Scorgie & Wilgosh, 2006). In addition, follow-up surveys with students in two classes indicated that the discovery of their own “voices” as virtual parents has enabled them to heed the voices of parents of children they work with.

Case study pedagogy can be utilized to effectively challenge pre-professional students to enter and reflect on the world of another, transforming perspective and practice. The opportunity to “walk in another’s shoes” incorporates student motivation, empathy and voice, essential elements in facilitating use of collaborative parent-professional solution-building strategies.

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**HANDHELDS: EFFECTIVE ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVICES
FOR STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES**

Tandra L. Tyler-Wood

The No Child Left Behind (NCLB; 2001) legislation requires that educators ensure all children meet at least minimal academic competency standards. For most children in an inclusion classroom, NCLB is not an issue. Although there are often a few minor problems in a child's road to high school graduation; most children meet the necessary competencies and standards that state legislative bodies identify as necessary for high school graduation. However, for some children, meeting minimum academic standards is an issue. Some children meet with failure when attempting to master necessary academic requirements. A conscientious teacher will try various approaches to facilitate a child's academic gains. Sometimes the approaches the teacher attempts are not successful and the child is considered "resistant to remediation (RTR)." Much research has focused on teaching the child who is RTR (e.g., Marston, 2005).

The current study utilized two approaches that have proven effective for assisting children who are considered RTR: learning strategies instruction and assistive technology. Learning strategies instruction involves teaching students how to learn and perform across a variety of academic, social, motivational, and executive demands (NICHCY, 1997). Assistive technology is defined as products, devices or equipment, whether acquired commercially, modified or customized, that are used to maintain, increase or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities (Assistive Technology Act of 1998). The goal of the current study was to determine if assistive technology could provide an effective monitoring and record keeping system for facilitating self-management to promote achievement in an inclusion classroom and if the learning strategy used with the subject was effective. The strategy used with the student was the FOCUS Strategy.

The FOCUS Strategy is part of the *Focusing Together* program (Rademacher, Pemberton, & Cheever, 2006). *Focusing Together* consists of a series of seven lessons designed to promote self-management skills in the classroom. Specifically, students are taught how to manage their own learning behaviors in association with a set of classroom expectations (rules) that define responsible work habits, respect, and safety.

The identification of assistive technology as an effective tool for educating students in special education evolved considerably in the 1990s culminating in the passage of legislation that required consideration of assistive technology for any student receiving special education services. Historically, assistive technology has been reserved for individuals with severe disabilities. Clearly, there is a need for determining how best to effectively use assistive technology to help students with mild disabilities master basic learning skills, as well.

Through a grant from Verizon, the Texas Center for Educational Technology (TCET) has provided assistive technology for students with learning differences and/or behavior disorders. The Verizon grant study examined the effectiveness of handheld devices as an instrument to enhance a student's ability to learn. Many students with learning problems actually have difficulties with language pragmatics or the social interpretation of language. Some students fail academically because they have difficulty conforming to classroom behavior standards because of misinterpretations or incorrect responses in social situations. These students often have trouble understanding and adhering to classroom rules. It is paramount to provide these students with a vehicle to facilitate communication and to provide the structure necessary to understand the classroom requirements necessary for successful learning. Handheld devices provide such a vehicle. TCET has developed templates for use with handheld devices to assist students with self-monitoring behaviors such as: following established class rules, completing assignments, bringing materials to class and completing homework. These templates facilitate the appropriate social and organizational interaction of the student who is RTR within the inclusion classroom. The templates were developed in an attempt to facilitate the students' use of the pragmatics of classroom language necessary for success within an inclusion classroom. TCET also developed a template to facilitate the use of the FOCUS Strategy within the inclusion classroom.

The current study sought to determine if assistive technology could facilitate the effective adoption of a learning strategy (FOCUS Strategy) that has documented success of improving the skills necessary for successful learning within an inclusion classroom.

The data were analyzed using t-tests and an ANOVA to answer the research question: *Is there a significant difference in the pre-intervention and post ratings on "following the learning expectations" portion of the FOCUS Strategy?*

A t-test was used to compare the pre-intervention ratings made by both the student and the teachers to the post-intervention ratings made by the student and teachers. A total of 196 pre-intervention ratings were compared to 209 post-intervention ratings. The mean for pre-intervention ratings was .87. The mean for post-intervention ratings was 1.43. Post-intervention ratings were significantly higher at the .01 level.

The Focus Strategy has been identified as one of the learning strategies that can help children perform effectively in an inclusion classroom. This study provides yet another example of how the FOCUS Strategy can be taught and effectively implemented. Pre-intervention data for indicated that the subject had difficulty conforming to the expectations component of the FOCUS Strategy. After, training, the student's ability to adhere to the expectations increased significantly. The study reinforces the effectiveness of training on the FOCUS Strategy to increase a student's ability to interpret and follow the rules. The current study differs from previous studies because assistive technology is used gather data on the student's ability to adhere to the "expectations component" of the FOCUS Strategy. Collecting data on a single student can be an arduous task in today's inclusion classroom. The use of assistive technology allows for easy data collection and analysis.

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TEACHING WITH MULTIMEDIA E-BOOKS: THE MODULAR E-BOOK AUTHORING SYSTEM (MEBA) EXAMPLE

Yvonne Bui

The advent of the e-book model promises a new generation of anytime anywhere learning. E-books were initially defined by the creativity of the developer; thus the early e-book models were primarily a digital version of the printed book. Most were in the form of e-books for pleasure

reading. E-books are now fostering a revolution in the delivery of all forms of content including college texts and instructional resource materials. Authors of textbooks are also beginning to view the development of e-books as instructional resources and not just digital versions of traditional books. This revolution is driven in part by rapid advances in storage capacity, display quality, formats, and mobilization. In institutions of higher education instructors are beginning to see the value of multimedia e-books as offering professors and students instructional resources that go far beyond print and/or digital text. For example handheld mobile devices such as personal organizers, telephones, and iPods are now capable of storing and displaying multimedia resources such as e-books.

One of the challenges in higher education is assisting faculty in using multimedia e-books that provide students an integrated set of resources that traditionally have been provided by the instructor (e.g., assessments, practice activities). In addition to e-books becoming available in a multimedia format, opportunities are extant for instructors to create resources of their own in an e-book or similar format. Access to multimedia e-books will allow instructors more time to engage their students in learning activities that are best provided through classroom experiences and are complementary for the multimedia e-book.

Just as there was resistance among some instructors in post-secondary education when the Internet first became functional as a source for teaching online, it is reasonable to expect resistance to multimedia e-books. As tools evolved to assist instructors in personally creating online instruction and students demonstrated their expectations for this new form of pedagogy, the resistance disappeared and online instruction is now extant on most if not all campuses. The current status of e-books is that they are largely digitized texts. Some publishers will offer web sites containing support materials aligned with digitized texts in various formats. Multimedia e-books with the mediated resources integrated into the e-book are just evolving. As they become more prevalent, they too will likely impact the acceptance of instructors and become common.

The intent of this paper is to demonstrate a multimedia e-book and to describe the features that instructors might consider in creating their own e-books. The authors were involved in the design of the Modular e-Book Authoring System (MeBa) developed by the e-Learning design Lab at the University of Kansas and have developed a multimedia introductory special education text book using the system. MeBa allows for multiple formats in the presentation of content. In each format the content is held constant, but the format varies to accommodate the preference of learners (e.g., text with graphics, multimedia with audio, MP3 files). Each format with the exception of the MP3 files is accompanied by a set of instructional support features such as content maps, outlines, key notes, glossary, activities, case studies, and assessments. All features are designed to provide immediate feedback where appropriate. The adding of new resources as they become available is also accommodated by MeBa.

A major feature of the e-book model is that in the text-based format, all of the features are interactive and can be accessed from embedded icons. Users can also access the content directly from a menu of support features. For example, the user is able to click any place on an outline and go directly to that content in the text. Another example is that after completing an assessment item, the user may click on the item to review related content directly from the associated content in the text. While the e-book is interactive, it is also designed to allow users to

print a hard copy of any content or feature they wish. The user interface elements include: (a) multiple navigation strategies with pagination and position indicators, (b) a main table of contents, (c) a pull-down menu bar, and (d) sub-menus that support a modular design allowing components to be used independently.

The key factor in the adoption and successful use of multimedia e-books may be more related to instructors altering their classroom instruction to accommodate the use of e-book resources while they structure their teaching to complement the resources available through the e-book. Examples include the following:

- Developing lecture content to create a context for the e-book content and supplementing the e-book content with real life examples, additional resources, and personal insights of the instructor.
- Engaging students in observation, interviews, family-related experiences or community activities that help to add meaning and application to the e-book resources.
- Collecting data on individuals or groups of students.
- Writing case studies of students representing their particular interests.
- Maintaining journals and developing portfolios of their course experiences.
- Analyzing district policies and procedures to determine compliance.
- Carrying out collaborative projects requiring them to collect and interpret information from professionals and families.
- Reviewing instructional resources designed specifically for learners with exceptional needs to determine how they respond to attributes of the e-learner.
- Creating web sites offering resources for targeted groups such as families.

The paper focuses on suggestions for helping instructors use e-books in ways that allow them to gain instructional time and be more flexible in the use of classroom time. The authors will also describe the features that can be created in the development of e-books. The features generalize beyond MeBa. They are also applicable when using Learning Management Systems (LMS) such as Blackboard or freeware such as MOODLE or SAKAI. This paper is extended during the presentation to share lessons learned on how best to design the instructional features for the development of multimedia e-books. The lessons learned are in the form of specific suggestions on writing and structuring the instructional features so that they enhance instruction via the e-book and also meet the technical requirements of an LMS. Checklists and criteria to assist instructors in assessing the quality and appropriateness of their features will also be provided. Attention will also be given to the basic design and technical requirements that need to be adhered to when developing multimedia e-books.

Instructional Features

- Self-paced & access to personal folder
- Clear communication of expectations
- Self-contained to the degree possible
- Access to instructors when needed
- Flexibility in accessing content and resources
- Self-assessments with feedback
- Collaborative projects

Sample Instructional Elements

- Content maps of courses and lessons
- Reflection questions
- Outlines
- Key notes
- Lesson content
- Glossary
- Embedded assessments
- Readings/resources
- Practice activities
- Syllabus with target completion dates

Technical Features

- User friendly
- Intuitive navigation
- Multiple navigation options
- Immediate feedback
- Clean interface designs
- Capacity for generating hard copy of resources
- Sustainability
- Capable of going to scale
- Monitoring links

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ASSESSMENT AND TREATMENT OF FINGER-SUCKING IN A STUDENT WITH ADHD

Chiu-Hua Chiang

Finger-sucking is one form of stereotypic behavior often exhibited by children with developmental disabilities (LaGrow & Repp, 1984). Such stereotypic behavior might affect learning activities if it exhibited at high levels (Runco, Charlop, & Schreibmen, 1986). If stereotypic sucking is maintained by sensory consequences, habit reversal (Long, Miltenberger,

& Rapp, 1999) or alternative sensory reinforcers (e.g., favorite toys, objects) (Goh et al., 1995; Piazza, Adelinis, Hanley, Goh, & Delia, 2000) have been successfully used to decrease these responses. If stereotypy is maintained by social contingencies, noncontingent reinforcement could be used to reduce such aberrant behavior (Lancaster et al., 2004).

Method

The current study used single subject methodologies to investigate one child who exhibited lots of stereotypical finger-sucking responses. Functional analyses were employed to examine possible contingencies which might maintain this student's finger-sucking. The subject, Brendom, a 14-year-old boy classified as ADHD, in a regular class placement. He was selected because of the high levels of stereotypic finger-sucking exhibited throughout the day.

The dependent variables were sucking behaviors. Brendom's sucking response was defined as "Put either his thumb or finger(s) into his mouth". Two experimental studies were conducted.

Procedures and Results

Experiment 1: Functional Analysis. A multielement design (Sidman, 1960) was used to assess the occurrence of stereotypical finger-sucking across four conditions: (a) attention, (b) demand, (c) alone, and (d) play (Iwata, Dorsey, Slifer, Bauman, & Richman, 1982/1994). Throughout 28 sessions, Brendom exhibited a high frequency of finger-sucking in *alone* and *attention* condition. The results showed that his function of sucking fingers might be maintained by positive social reinforcement and sensory reinforcement. Therefore, Experimental 2 was further conducted to examine the functional-based intervention of Brendom's sucking responses.

Experiment 2: Functional-based Intervention. Experiment 2 examined habit reversal and noncontingent reinforcement as a means to decrease finger-sucking and to further test the functions of this aberrant behavior identified in Experiment 1. Simplified habit reversal, which included awareness of sucking behavior, practice of competing responses to sucking, and reinforcement was applied to compete with the consequence of sensory feedback during alone conditions. In contrast, extinction was applied to sucking behavior, and non-contingent social reinforcement was provided to non-target behavior during attention conditions. A multiple-baseline design across operant functions was used in Experiment 2 to further assess these treatment effects on the sucking behavior (Kazdin, 1982).

Brendom's baseline data of sucking responses in the *alone* condition had little variability and produced an upward trend (a mean of 47%, range, 40% to 55%). During the habit reversal assessment, training in the competitive responses produced near-zero levels of finger-sucking throughout the phase (a mean of 15%, range, 5% to 25%). Similarly, his baseline data of sucking responses during the Attention condition also showed an upward trend with stability (a mean of 38%, range, 30% to 45%). The non-contingent provision for attention then was introduced to Brendom. After 10 sessions of providing attention noncontingently, the mean percentage of his sucking response was 10% (range, 0% to 20%) with zero-level in the last three sessions.

Discussion

Data from the current study suggest that Brendom's sucking was maintained by multiple sources of reinforcement. Specifically, the data for Brendom reflect both social and nonsocial component to his sucking. In other words, his sucking behaviors was sometimes exhibited to obtain sensory

reinforcement in a lack of environmental stimulation and to get positive social reinforcement via obtaining attention at times. The findings of the present study supported the hypothesis that sucking behavior could be maintained by sensory or positive social consequences (Lancaster et al., 2004; Long et al., 1999).

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SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATED SERVICES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: THE PPSS MODEL PROGRAM

Bella Irlicht

Port Phillip Specialist School is a government school that caters for 150 children aged 2 to 18 years-of age with a wide range of intellectual and physical disabilities. All students have an intellectual disability. Thirty percent of the student population have an Autism Spectrum Disorder and 15% have a Physical Disability. The school was the first school in Australia to develop a fully-serviced school model. This model required that a multidisciplinary group of services be available at the school. These services include art therapy, counselling, dance therapy, dental therapy and dental clinic, drama therapy, hydrotherapy, massage therapy, music therapy, occupational therapy and an independent living centre, physiotherapy centre as well as a full gymnasium, podiatry, psychotherapy, social work, specialist swimming instruction and swimming pool, speech-language therapy and audiometry, and a technology centre for computers and computer assisted learning devices. In addition to these internal services, there are extensive linkages to local clinics, hospitals, schools, independent organizations, and family support groups. These linkages ensure that staff, students, and families can access relevant services and the school has up-to-date information on services. School staff work extensively to network with professional staff in external organizations.

The school's extensive therapy services are provided within a framework of a special education school program with approximately 20 teachers who are qualified in special education. A comprehensive education program is provided that includes literacy, numeracy, integrated studies and arts, drama, music, and physical education. The school has also developed the concept of using arts-based learning to develop powerful practice.

The concept of an integrated model of service delivery has been around for some time. A few innovative services have attempted to use this model. Unfortunately, very few schools for children with special needs have attempted to implement an integrated model of service delivery. Port Phillip Specialist School in Melbourne, Australia has implemented and developed this model. It is recognised as an exemplar of *best practice* for children with special needs and their families.

Integrated service is the effective utilisation of a range of professionals with different specialities (but of equal status) who bring together their unique expertise to ensure that the children under their *joint* care can reach their maximum potential. A failure to use an integrated service model suggests that there is a disintegrated service or a service that lacks proper coordination or that the program is missing important components to provide the best education for children with specialist needs.

In order to achieve an integrated service delivery model, three major components had to be provided. First the school had to ensure that it had the range of professional services required to meet the needs of the students. Thus, work had mostly been achieved through the development of the fully-serviced school identified above. In addition, once the Visual and Performing Arts

Curriculum was developed, additional arts-based therapy staff was also employed to provide specialist services from their unique perspectives.

Second, in order to get the integrated service delivery model to work, the school employed a Director of Integrated Services, Dr Carl Parsons, who had previously been employed as an Associate Professor in Childhood Language Disorders at LaTrobe University. He had an extensive theoretical background and practical experience in the area of integrated service delivery. His job was to ensure that therapy staff and teachers worked together to collaborate in developing student program. In order to achieve an integrated service delivery model we had to break down the idea of *teacher ownership* of children in their classes. We had to ensure that teachers and appropriate professionals were engaged in shared program planning, implementation, evaluation and overall program accountability. This role was no longer to be the sole domain of the teacher. It meant working on the same goals, using expertise to understand problems and solutions at a higher level. Shared observations and discussion were central to providing *best practice* service delivery to each student because it recognised that learning in children with specialised needs required specialised input from a range of professionals. Therapists were required to consult with teachers about their program offerings and their programs were offered in classrooms and teachers and therapists worked as a team. For example, this meant that therapists would spend time in the classroom during literacy and numeracy. They attended swimming and physical education and social activities with the students and their teachers. There was minimal withdrawal for services. Teachers and therapists worked out ways to embed clinical services as a part of core curriculum.

When teachers and therapists work together to apply their discrete and valuable sets of professional skills, those skills merge together into a single powerful instructional package—that reduced professional frustrations and improved student outcomes. The implementation of an integrated service delivery model required staff to function in new ways. Primarily it meant shared decision making to ensure best outcomes for individual students. This led to innovative changes in instruction and delivery methods and innovative changes in timetables. Staff now have shared goals, shared planning time, and common understandings, and have developed their own culture with a unique shared professional language. The daily timetable is constructed around the needs of children.

Teachers now regularly incorporate the key principles of various therapies into their daily practice. Children have improved because of the continuity of services and the fact that they receive therapy services throughout the day. Teachers and therapists continue to collaborate and continually develop and improve their programs.

The third component was the development of an Integrated Services Committee. This Committee ensures that every child's individual program is reviewed. The Committee consists of all the senior administration team, teachers, teaching assistants, relevant therapists, psychologist and social worker. Any staff member who has a concern about a child's program can attend the review. The Committee provides a forum for the multidisciplinary team to discuss any issues that have been identified, seek clarification, and ensure that appropriate services are delivered. For example, the Committee can recommend home visits, assessments, trial therapy sessions, discussions with other professionals, interaction with hospital staff, pursuit of equipment for

home, and/or additions/changes in programs. In some cases, the school has agreed to pursue funding bodies to support equipment to be used at home for children with severe disabilities. The Committee can also identify areas of need within the school or for families. This Committee recommends and assists in planning programs and professional development for parents, siblings, and grandparents.

In order to ensure that the Integrated Service Delivery Model is working, the school has a number of review mechanisms. Teachers and therapists are required to collaborate on all school reports. These reports are based on individual progress in goals in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The school encourages research and is actively engaged in research activities. In 2006, the school had two full-time PhD students working on visual processing abilities in children with intellectual disabilities and autism. This year the school is involved in an Australian Research Council Linkage Project with the University of Melbourne Assessment Research Centre (Faculty of Education) and the Department of Education and Training to develop some protocols for mainstream teachers who have students with intellectual disabilities in their classes. Finally, the school maintains ongoing professional development for staff to learn about Integrated Service Delivery and professional development is geared towards keeping our staff at the cutting edge in understanding specific disabilities.

Only in this way will the school continue to have a successful integrated service delivery model.

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**HEAR OUR VOICES: PARENTS OF CHILDREN
WITH DISABILITIES FROM MEXICO**

Dona C. Bauman

Research available on disability in Mexico and the meaning that disability has for the child and his/her family is extremely limited. Recognizing that Mexico is the single largest contributor to the immigrant population of the United States and that many immigrant families, like families everywhere, face issues of child health and disability, faculty from the Panuska College of Professional Studies of the University of Scranton traveled to Mexico to establish a dialogue

with universities clinic and hospital personnel, schools, and parents in order to increase our understanding of the role that disability plays in that country.

Travelers represented an interdisciplinary group of U.S. professionals in special education, occupational therapy, physical therapy and hospital administration. The group visited university, government, and community-based agencies to gather data regarding the provision of healthcare, education and rehabilitation services to children with disabilities in Mexico. The focus of this paper is our work with middle class families of children with disabilities.

Zuniga (2004) describes the important characteristics that professionals working with Hispanic immigrant families who have children with disabilities should understand. Zuniga states that the beliefs professionals hold about Hispanic families may be stereotypical and so it is important that professionals view their beliefs with some skepticism until they know the family individually. Many of the cultural beliefs about disability do not apply to the growing middle class in Mexico. The middle-class believes less in the folk remedies and reasons for disability's occurrence as the middle class has acquired more education and sophistication.

The authors individually interviewed five parents, three mothers and two fathers, whose children attend a special education facility. In 2006 the authors returned to Mexico to interview the mother of a young man with cerebral palsy. When her son was diagnosed, this family proactively founded a school for children with Cerebral Palsy and therefore was of particular interest to the authors.

Open-ended questions were asked of the six families. Their children ranged in age from 4 years of age to 28 years of age. The disabilities of their children included Down syndrome, autism, brain damage, defect in the myelin of the brain, learning disability with ADD/ADHD and cerebral palsy.

The questions were the following:

- How were you told about your child's disability? Age of identification was dependent upon the disability. Parents reported that the disability was seen at birth, 40 days after birth, and when four of the children were slow in reaching normal developmental milestones. This occurred anywhere from several months of age to several years of age.
- Why do you think your child was born with a disability? This question was specifically asked because some of the literature reports that Mexican families are fatalistic and superstitious about the reason a child is born with a disability. Zuniga reports that many Mexican-heritage people believe that the evil eye caused the disability or someone puts a hex on the child out of jealousy and that caused the disability. None of the six families we interviewed ascribed to this belief. They reported that there was birth trauma, birth defects or that the cause was not known. However, the mother of a child with autism reported that her child's doctor blamed her for her child's disability.
- What are your child's strengths and needs? All parents reported that their children had both strengths and needs. There was a sincere desire of all parents for their children to be independent and live a productive life to the extent that they are able. One young man with cerebral palsy uses adaptive technology in the form of a communication device in the United States and in Mexico.

- Has your extended family accepted your child with disabilities? Most families stated that their extended family has accepted the child with disabilities. One parent said that it was very difficult for her husband to accept his child with cerebral palsy and that his siblings accused her of loving the child with cerebral palsy more than them. Because she spent so much time aiding the child with cerebral palsy her husband took over the education of the other children. Another mother stated that she was asked by a relative if she had sinned. She reported that the Mexican culture is not a culture that accepts people with disabilities. The culture has visions of beautiful people, not people with disabilities.
- What are your dreams for your child? One mother stated that she doesn't dream. She sees continuous progress as long as he goes to the best schools. Since he was the youngest of her children she really did not look beyond the present. All parents hoped their child would be independent and have some way to support themselves. Several expressed concern about what would happen to their children when the parents were no longer able to take care of them. One mother stated that she was extremely concerned about what would happen to her son after she was gone because she was not sure his siblings would be willing to assist him.

The six Mexican families interviewed expressed many of the same concerns as parents of disabled children in the United States. We agree with Zuniga professionals must get to know the family individually before they make judgments based on stereotypical beliefs. If professionals don't take the time to get to know the family, there will be no chance to develop a true family/professional partnership.

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VIOLENCE PREVENTION: IMPLEMENTING AND EVALUATING SECOND STEP IN MULTIPLE SCHOOLS

Michael Rozalski

School-age children who display aggressive and impulsive behavior are more likely to be neglected by their peers, have low self-confidence, underachieve in school, exhibit social withdrawal, or be depressed, (Coie, Dodge, & Kupersmidt, 1990; Dahlberg, 1998; Fitzpatrick, 1997). However, these indicators appear mild when one considers that childhood aggression is also highly correlated with later high-risk behaviors, like using drugs and alcohol, dropping out of school, becoming early parents and engaging in violent crimes, such as aggravated or sexual assault and murder (Dahlberg, 1998; Fitzpatrick, 1997; Frey, Hirschstein, & Guzzo, 2002). It is critical to interrupt the progression from aggressive child to high-risk adolescent, as the problem behaviors disrupt the community and prevent these students from becoming productive citizens.

Research has shown the importance of creating a multidimensional approach to prevent aggression and high-risk behavior in students at the individual, family, school and community level (Fitzpatrick, 1997). *Second Step*, a violence prevention curriculum widely recognized and used across the United States and Canada (Frey et al., 2002; McMahon & Washburn, 2003), may be a means to prevent some aggressive behaviors in students.

First published in 1986, *Second Step* is a research-based, violence prevention program designed to foster development of the social skills necessary for students to lead successful lives (Committee for Children, 1997; Frey et al., 2002; Munoz, 2002). *Second Step* includes scripted grade-level lessons, divided into three areas: empathy training, impulse control, and problem-solving. The lessons rely on several teaching techniques, including: modeling, rehearsal, role play, and verbal mediation. All grade levels have a variety of resources, including: (a) unit cards, (b) photo lesson cards, (c) family overview and lesson videos, and (d) classroom posters. The Pre-K/Kindergarten pack also includes: puppets (Impulsive Puppy, Slow Down Snail), a stuffed animal (Be Calm Bunny), a CD of sing-along songs, and reinforcement hearts.

Previous research has suggested that *Second Step* is effective in increasing elementary (Grossman et al., 1997) and middle school student's pro-social behaviors, and decreasing aggressive and hostile interactions in rural (Taub, 2002), suburban and urban settings (Munoz, 2002), and with a variety of populations (e.g., Caucasian and African American; McMahon & Washburn, 2003). Despite these improvements, research shows that there is no evidence supporting the effectiveness of *Second Step* when used with students with disabilities. Our goal is to highlight the major components of *Second Step*, briefly present data from a multi-year evaluation of the program's implementation, and suggest areas for future investigations.

Methods

For these analyses, teachers in eight schools completed a pre- and post-implementation survey during the 2005-2006 school year. Although pre- or post-surveys were collected from 85 teachers for Kindergarten through Grade 9, these analyses are based on 14 teachers from Kindergarten to Grade 5 who completed both pre- and post-surveys. The 14 matches come from three different schools. Additional details about the actual administration of those pre- and post-measures were neither known nor observed by these authors.

Results

General Impressions of Violence Prevention. When teachers were asked, *Do you think violence prevention is something that should be taught in schools?* 86% answered yes; 10% indicated yes and no, offering sentiments like, *We should do it but until we get additional resources to do it right, we shouldn't be burdened by the extra work.* Only 4% answered no, indicating that teaching violence prevention is primarily the responsibility of parents.

Program Effectiveness. When teachers were asked how *Second Step* has influenced behavior in their classrooms, teachers indicated improvements in student behaviors including:

- **Empathy:** (a) sharing, (b) respecting others, (c) actively listening, (d) being thoughtful, (e) expressing feelings, (f) displaying compassion, and (g) helping friends.
- **Problem -Solving:** (a) complying with school procedures, and (b) cooperating.
- **Anger Management:** (a) calming down, (b) displaying patience, (c) using words not actions, and (d) bullying (i.e., fewer bullying behaviors).

Teachers did, however, note additional disruptive and violent behaviors, including decreases in overall classroom safety and increases in (a) general disruptions, (b) disciplinary referrals, (c) verbal aggression to students and staff, and (d) verbal and physical aggression toward students.

Barriers. Fifty percent of teachers indicated that time was the biggest barrier to successfully implementing *Second Step*. In follow-up interviews, 78% indicated that they rearranged their class schedule to teach the program, with 33% stating that they sought additional assistance. When asked how the school could help with formal implementation, teachers indicated that training teachers' assistants to implement the program is necessary for success.

Recommendations

To determine the effectiveness of *Second Step* in this context, additional study is needed.

- *Collecting and analyzing existing behavioral data (e.g., in-school, after-school suspension or discipline referrals).* Although analyses suggest that teachers perceive *Second Step* to be effective, caution should be exercised when drawing conclusions from self-reports.
- *Evaluating the cost effectiveness of providing instruction at various grade levels and with students with disabilities.* Some results suggest that students without disabilities in Grades 3 and 4 were more likely to improve than students with disabilities or those in Grade 5. Collecting additional data will help determine whether it is more cost effective to only offer the *Second Step* training and curriculum to younger students or specific student groups.

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**DECELERATING ABERRANT BEHAVIOR OF STUDENTS
WITH ASPERGER SYNDROME: USING SOCIAL STORIES**

Chiu-Hua Chiang

Individuals with autism or Asperger Syndrome have significant difficulty understanding the thoughts and feelings of other persons and, therefore, often have problems in social interaction (Wing, 1992). To date, few studies have examined the treatment effects of social stories on problem behavior. For example, Kuttler, Myles, and Carlson (1998) investigated the use of social stories to decrease tantrum behavior in one student with autism. Results indicated that social stories could be successfully used to decelerate the rates of tantrum responses in this student. Similarly, Hagiwara and Myles (1999) studied three students with autism and presented social stories on a computer to examine their impacts on positive and aberrant behavior. They also found that social stories could be used to reduce aberrant behavior. Despite effective treatments in reducing problem behavior in some students with autism, as shown in studies (e.g., Kuttler et al., 1998), rare investigation thus far focus on students with Asperger Syndrome. Therefore, the

purpose of this study was to assess the effectiveness of social story intervention on aberrant behavior in two students with Asperger Syndrome.

Method

Two students with Asperger Syndrome, John and Peter, participated in this study. Subjects were selected because of their high levels of disruptive behavior that were emitted throughout the day. John was a 12-year-old boy whose sustained attention paid to teachers or classmates was deficient, and was often out of seat. Peter was a 14-year-old boy who could understand requirements of many directions without provision of prompts. However, he usually liked to be alone and made finger sucking.

The independent variable was a variation of social story training program developed from the results of functional assessments and modified from the guidelines of Gray and Garand (1993), and the dependent variable was the frequency of students' aberrant behavior. Aberrant behavior was defined as off-task behavior, and out of seat behavior. The duration of observational session was ten minutes per day. The sessions were conducted three times a week at the same time.

Across experiments an average of 27% sessions (range, 20% to 35%) were scored for interobserver agreement. Interobserver agreement was computed by dividing the number of agreements by the number of agreements plus the number of disagreements and multiplying by 100% (Kazdin, 1982). The interobserver agreement for John's aberrant behavior is 93% (90% to 100%), and for Peter's aberrant behavior is 88% (85% to 95%).

A multiple baseline design across participants was used to assess the effects of social story on students' aberrant behaviors (Kazdin, 1982). Each participant was observed for two weeks and analyzed for possible functions of low levels of aberrant behaviors via functional assessments. Secondly, two social stories were developed from the results of functional assessments and the guidelines from Gray and Garand (1993) for each participant. Thirdly, the experimenter read the social story, and the participant followed. Fourthly, the participant read independently, and the experimenter gave feedback.

Results

In baseline phase, John's mean percentage of aberrant responses occurring during the first baseline was 97% (range, 75% to 100%). After 12 sessions of social story intervention, his aberrant behavior was decreased to a mean percentage of 3% (range, 0% to 13%) with the last 5 sessions in the levels of 0%. In contrast, Peter's mean percentage of aberrant responses occurring during the baseline was 25% (range, 4% to 46%). After 14 sessions of social story intervention, his aberrant behavior was decreased to a mean percentage of 8% (range, 0% to 33%). The results from these social story interventions suggest that the interventions for aberrant behavior are effective for John and Peter respectively.

Discussion

The findings of current study suggest that social story intervention could successfully decrease the levels of aberrant behavior in students with Asperger Syndrome. This is consistent with the results of Rogers and Myles' study (2001) which has shown that effects of social stories training on problem behavior of participants with Asperger Syndrome.

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THE ROLE OF THEORETICAL MODELS IN FACILITATING CROSS-CULTURAL PARTNERSHIPS

Kate Scorgie

Research suggests that culture serves as a framework for how parents of children with disabilities interpret and assign meaning to events in their lives (Mary, 1990; Watanabe, 1998). Professionals who work with families must be mindful that family perspectives on disability may differ from their own. Therefore, efficacious models must account for both cultural and individual variables that may influence parent and family outcomes (Scorgie & Wilgosh, 2006). Alston and Turner (1994) and Rogers-Dulan and Blacher (1995) have examined parent coping in African-American families, concluding that African-American parents often find strength

through their interfamilial support networks, religious belief structures, solid work ethic and role flexibility. More recently, Scorgie, Wilgosh and Sobsey (2004) have offered a model describing parent transformation following diagnosis of disability in a child that was tested using cross-cultural data from African-American and Hispanic families (Wilgosh & Scorgie, 2006), and Italian families (Wilgosh, Nota, Scorgie, & Soresi, 2004).

The Parent Transformational Process Model [PTPM] (Scorgie et al., 2004) suggests that following diagnosis of disability in a child, parents are faced with a number of critical emergent questions concerning the diagnosis, why it occurred, what it ultimately means to them and their families, and the range of choices available to them now and in the future. These questions can be subsumed under three categories, each of which activates a process that may influence family functioning positively or negatively. As a result of these processes many parents report transformations in personal (e.g., “who I am and what I do”), relational (e.g., “how I perceive of and relate to others”) or perspectival (e.g., “what is important in life”) domains. The purpose of this paper is to briefly discuss the cross-cultural utility of the PTPM and implications for fostering collaborative parent-professionals partnerships.

When a child is diagnosed with disability, parents often experience bewilderment and loss of future dreams (Scorgie et al., 2004). Image-making is the process used to contend with such questions as: who is my child and who can he/she become? Who am I as a parent and who can I become? and what will our lives be like, now and in the future? During the process of image-making parents construct new identities of themselves, their children and their future life trajectories. Parent image-making is often affected by prior experience with disability, socially constructed ideas about and attitudes toward disability, attitudes of professionals involved in diagnosis, and information provided during the period surrounding diagnosis. Parents who experience positive adjustment and transformation draw on images of personal, cultural, and familial strength and resilience. They value professionals who are strengths-based, and present constructive and hopeful, yet realistic, future trajectories for them and their families. They also value professionals who emphasize their children’s strengths and positive attributes (e.g., courage or interpersonal qualities), while also acknowledging needs.

Following diagnosis, parents are also contending with questions regarding the diagnosis, why it happened, and what it ultimately means to be a person with disability within society. In addition, parents are often bombarded with the interpretations and opinions of others regarding the diagnosis and its impact on life. Meaning-making is the process by which parents respond to these questions. Parents who experience optimal outcome craft meanings that enable them to maintain a relatively stable, integrated, yet hopeful, meaning perspective. Efficacious meaning construction often involves examination of personal religious or philosophical belief statements. Parents may also have to contend with negative meaning statements proffered by family, friends or society. Professionals should be aware of the range of competing messages that parents might be struggling with subsequent to diagnosis that can powerfully shape outcome. They should also examine their own assumptions about disability and the information they provide to parents to ensure that they engender hopeful outcomes.

As parents move through diagnosis, they wonder how they will manage their lives and meet their children’s needs. Choice-making is ultimately about ownership of the future. This process can be

optimized by professionals who offer a range of child and family options, value parent input in all decision-making situations, and remain child-oriented, rather than funding-oriented. When the process of choice-making is hindered through such practices as adversarial or hierarchical relationships or the withholding of information or services, parents may deem themselves victims of the child's disability rather than active, competent participants in constructing optimal child and family outcomes.

For many parents, adjustment following diagnosis of disability is not a linear process; rather it continues as children and families progress through various developmental stages. The PTPM can be utilized by professionals to understand and facilitate ongoing construction of images, meanings and choices throughout the family life-cycle, creating cross-cultural parent-professional partnerships that foster optimal child and family outcome.

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**LINKING PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT TO SELF-ADVOCACY AND
REFLECTIVITY—“I GOT BETTER AT GETTING THE
VOCABULARIES RIGHT NOW!”**

S. Anthony Thompson

Portfolio as Empowerment—Promoting Self-Esteem, Self-Advocacy, and Self-Reflectivity with Students with Disabilities.

If there were only one thread running through most of the international research on portfolio assessment with a wide range of students with disabilities, it might be a surprisingly uplifting one. Broadly speaking, educators who use portfolios may empower students with disabilities in many different ways. All teachers and parents agreed that the use of portfolios increased the students' self-esteem. Parents and teachers expressed that students with disabilities experienced a feeling of empowerment because of their involvement in the portfolio assessment process (Ezell, Klein, & Ezell-Powell, 1999). Portfolios may facilitate active student participation in the assessment process, promote student reflectivity, may be structured to assist students to self-monitor, self-evaluate and generalize (Carothers & Taylor, 2003). I wanted to weave as much of the uplifting, empowering, and enabling portfolio threads as possible into students' learning stories. Therefore, my primary purpose was to explore the use of *reflective portfolio assessments* (Carothers & Taylor, 2003; Salend, 1998) with a range of learners with disabilities/exceptionalities in a classroom over a semester.

Method

I conducted an exploratory qualitative case study (Merriam, 1998). My hope was to consider the relevancy of portfolios to support student reflectivity while simultaneously to consider issues of instructional utility and manageability. From February 2005 until June 2005 I conducted this project in a Saskatchewan multi-grade elementary school classroom with a special education teacher. Students were in grades 2, 3 and 4 with various diagnoses, including Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADHD, intellectual disability, and some at-risk.

The classroom teacher structured the portfolios around the novel *Stuart Little* by E. B. White. Many different kinds of activities were included within this theme, such as:

- language arts activities (e.g., reading, writing a poem and a nursery rhyme, composing a story of what it might look like if one were in Stuart's house);
- science activities (e.g., researching facts about mice and constructing a mouse report);
- art activities (e.g., creating a model of Stuart's house with popsicle sticks, drawing pictures); and
- mathematics activities (e.g., graphing frequency of classmate responses to named favorite animals).

Salend (1998) provided sample caption prompts to elicit statements from students regarding their portfolios, suggesting a range of possibilities to promote student reflectivity, including improvement, feelings, special efforts, individualized education program objectives, content areas, thematic units, projects, difficulties and strategy use. Because most students were in grade 3, I adapted Salend's caption statements and limited them to five areas. With their portfolios in front of them, students were asked: *What did you learn, what did you find the most difficult to do, what did you improve upon, how did you improve, and how do you feel about your portfolio?*

Results

"Some Mice Don't Have any Hair at All" - Things Students Reported Learning.

To begin, the interviewer asked students what they learned. Probably because their portfolios were in front of them, some learners provided a mini-tour of things they had done. Most students identified selected bits of declarative knowledge, such as Barry who confirmed that *the female mouse is called a doe, the male mouse is a buck, and Mickey Mouse was born in 1928*, and Aaron who stated *that some mice don't have any hair at all*. Notably, several students mentioned some procedural knowledge they had acquired, things that they learned to do. Tim's response to the opening question was *typing letters on the computer*.

"Typing up and Making the Mouse Report" - Areas in which Students Reported Challenges

Perhaps not surprisingly, most students mentioned examples of procedural knowledge as challenging: constructing proper sentences, writing more sentences, using the dictionary, and typing using the computer. Students also reported difficulty learning new words. Frequently students mentioned writing as difficult, and without hesitation. The interviewer asked Celeste, *Thinking about your whole project, did you have any difficulty?* to which she replied, *The proper sentences I did... and the vocabulary... because you had to find all these words in the dictionary and they were hard*.

"I Got Better at Getting the Vocabularies Right Now, Looking in the Dictionary"- Student Reflections upon their Improvement

Although students reported difficulties with writing complete sentences, using the dictionary, using the computer and learning new words, generally students mentioned aspects of writing and using the dictionary as improved. Colin's response was typical, *I'm writing better*. Students reported that practice and feedback allowed them to write and read more effectively. Barry, for example, when asked how he got better at writing sentences, replied *by keep writing them*, while Tim said that *getting used to... the Stuart Little vocabulary improved his reading*.

"I got my book done" - Student Reflections upon their Feelings

The interviewer asked students how they felt about their portfolio; student responses were varied. Some students replied positively and enthusiastically. Barry commented that constructing his portfolio *was fun*; Leslie said she was *happy because it's making a portfolio fun*. Several other

students appeared less committal, less enthralled with their portfolio. Tim stated that he felt *pretty good*. Interestingly, creating art was not mentioned as an area of improvement or challenge, it was mentioned as a source of pride and satisfaction for Barry and Tim. When asked what makes him feel proud about his portfolio, Colin indicated *That I got my book done*—simply finishing the project. Perhaps for some students with ADHD or for students whose lives can be chaotic, changing and maybe unstable due to life circumstance, a sense of completion may be very important.

Discussion

Through this case-study I demonstrated student reflectivity, and in this way this research connects to the work of others around self-determination, self-empowerment, and self-advocacy (Ezell et al., 1999; Ezell & Klein, 2003). I was surprised at the range of emotional responses students provided about their portfolios; perhaps portfolios are of particular salience in the case of students with disabilities and those at-risk—students who sometimes require additional emotional support. Portfolios can be more personal than other assessment instruments, and may provide opportunities to facilitate deeper teacher/student relationships.

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USING ARTS-BASED LEARNING TO DEVELOP POWERFUL PRACTICE

Robert Newall

Students in special schools require teaching practices that are particularly responsive to their unique social, emotional and educational needs. Using dance, drama, music and visual arts in the classroom is a way of recognising and responding to this need. These four modes provide concrete and direct ways of engaging students with meaningful learning experiences in literacy, numeracy and the acquisition of living skills.

For a school to adopt such an arts-based approach and be able to embed this approach in its daily teaching practices requires the support and commitment from all of the teaching staff. To achieve such a level of active support requires a carefully developed process of discussion and negotiation that is feedback driven.

Port Phillip Specialist School began this journey of development and implementation of its arts-based curriculum in mid-2004. To facilitate this process a small team of education consultants were engaged. Their first step was to set up a series of targeted focus groups. Each of these groups was guided by two of the consultants whose task was to facilitate discussion around key questions. These questions focussed on what was considered best practice at the school and how and why these practices could and should be carried forward into an arts-based delivery model. The school administration was not part of the focus groups. This was deliberate to allow discussions within the focus groups to be open, wide-ranging and confidential. Over the period of focus group meetings, all staff were included and given voice about the current and future operational possibilities for the school. It eventuated that many staff requested that they be present and contribute to several focus groups beyond their initial agreed meetings.

Information gained from the focus groups was then collated by the consultants, referred back to the focus groups to ensure clarity and accuracy and then presented to the school administration. From here key points were identified that were to shape a model for the schools revised curriculum. A curriculum model was subsequently developed and presented to the whole staff at an off-campus venue. This model was endorsed by the staff and thus formed the basis for the construction of the school's revised approach to curriculum delivery centred on the arts. It was subsequently named the Visual and Performing Arts Curriculum (VPAC) and implementation of the VPAC began at the start of 2005.

A key feature of the VPAC has been the bringing together of therapy and teaching approaches to inform the provision of appropriate services for each individual student. To achieve this, the school maintains a series of planning and consultation structures that enables teachers and therapists to meet to discuss and plan the educational needs of each student. By provision of these meeting times, a clear expectation is created where therapists and teachers work in concert to continually monitor, adjust and enhance the delivery of services. The child-centred focus of VPAC ensures that individual needs remain central to all decisions.

Supporting the implementation of the VPAC requires ongoing professional development for all staff. Being a special school, the Port Phillip Specialist School has a staff profile that is unique. Staffing consists of approximately equal numbers of teachers and teacher assistants, as well as a smaller group of therapists. This means that the professional development needs of each group are quite distinct although somewhat parallel, differing in the levels of understanding and involvement required with VPAC.

To guide understanding and to facilitate the implementation of an arts-based curriculum, the VPAC document contains a unit planner. The teachers discussed and modified the planner during the early stages of VPAC implementation. This formed the platform for a computerised database. The electronic unit planner developed from VPAC is known as Learning with Purpose (LWP). LWP requires teachers (with the involvement of therapists) to state a set of educational objectives for each unit of work that a class will complete over a term or year. The educational objectives are written from a common stem, "The student will be able to..." then a verb, this is followed by a noun phrase. Thus an objective might be: "The student will be able to *remember* gestures and actions for a simple song." ...where "*remember*" is the verb and the noun phrase is "gestures and actions for a simple song."

The use of educational objectives enables planning that has an educational end in mind, as well as an assessable level of achievement. Thus, teaching and therapy services can be modified as necessary. There are three taxonomies that provide verbs for the educational objectives. Within VPAC they are the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. These provide an ordered set of verbs moving from lower order (i.e., simpler) to higher order. When a teacher chooses a particular verb, the LWP database is able to track what domain and at what level student needs are being addressed by that particular unit. Hence the school is able to build a profile of a student's journey through each year and for their whole time at the school. LWP also enables a teacher (or therapist) to add comments on an individual student's response to this unit. Such comments are dated and transferred by LWP into a half yearly or end of year report template. In effect a teacher is constructing a student report throughout the entire reporting period.

The process of change that has been undertaken at the case study school was guided by the work of Michael Fullan (2001) and also Jim Collins (2001). At the outset of the implementation phase of VPAC, that is the beginning of 2005, staff were introduced to Fullan's *10 Assumptions About Change*. These assumptions have been revisited at subsequent professional development days in order to recognise and acknowledge the difficulties that change brings. The key points of this summary are that:

- Change is a process, not an event, and implementation consists of some transformation or continual development of our initial ideas. It also takes time.
- Effective implementation is a process of clarification and this is likely to be achieved via reflective practice. Be encouraged by what has been achieved.
- Conflict and disagreement are not only inevitable but fundamental to successful change. Objectors may have some valid points.
- Assume that no amount of knowledge will ever make it clear what action should be taken and that changing the culture of the institution is the real agenda, not implementing a single innovation.

The implementation of VPAC has been supported with the multi-million dollar refurbishment of school facilities to create a Performing Arts Centre. There has also been appointed a full-time Assistant Principal whose role is specifically to facilitate understanding and further development of VPAC.

Are student outcomes improved by the school implementing VPAC? Anecdotally, the answer is yes. However, the school has developed a partnership with a university to establish means to verify changes in outcomes. This initiative forms a major part of future developments for 2007.

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PREPARATION FOR EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING: STRATEGIES THAT WORK

Diane Schwartz
Darra Pace

From the initial United States special education legislation in 1975, the field of special education has moved from a segregated deficit-driven model of education to an inclusive growth paradigm today. In 1997 The United States Congress reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities with Education Act (IDEA) resulting in several key changes, particularly in the definition of least restrictive environment. Today, the presumption is that the least restrictive environment for children with disabilities is the general education classroom (Schwartz & Pace, 2005). To support inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, the law has redefined the relationship between general and special educators (Kochhar, West & Taymans, 2000). Again in 2004, when IDEA was reauthorized, the expectation that students with

disabilities would be included in the general education community was reemphasized (Mandlawiz, 2007).

Much of the initial research on inclusion discussed the establishment of inclusive classrooms to meet the federal mandates for least restrictive environment (Avramidis, Bayliss, & Burden, 2000). The research pointed to the need to address teacher dispositions toward disability as a first step to establish effective inclusive schooling. Educators may harbor unconscious prejudices that can result in segregation, isolation, even persecution of students with disabilities as social outcasts. Teachers may also generalize and make broad inferences about the nature of the disability resulting in what is referred to as “disability spread” (Murdick, Shore, Chittooran, & Gartin 2004). The literature highlights the need for appropriate field experiences to remedy this tendency (Andrews & Clementson, 1997, Campbell, Gilmore, & Cuskelly, 2003).

Federal and state law mandate extensive field work prior to student teaching for all pre-service teachers. Our field work is integrated into every course and exposes pre-service teachers to students across the full range of disabilities. Preliminary data gathered by the authors suggest the power and importance of field experience in teacher disposition. One pre-service teacher expressed it best by saying: *The school opened my eyes into a world I barely knew existed. I felt completely at ease and remembered what I never should have forgotten; children with disabilities are not very much different from others their age. Until I visited the school I planned on becoming an Elementary School Chorus teacher. Now, I intend to get my masters degree in Special Education and I am considering teaching music in a facility similar to the Viscardi School.*

However, positive attitudes alone do not result in successful student outcomes (Cook, Tankersely, Cook, & Landrum, 2000). Students with disabilities joining an inclusive classroom represent a wide range of needs and abilities. Therefore, teachers working in this venue are asked to teach a diverse group of children with different learning processes. To successfully teach all the students in their classrooms, teachers must consider multiple intelligences and learning styles in order to modify curricula, deliver effective instruction, and use alternative assessment strategies (Vaidya & Zaslavsky 2000). Some of the most effective techniques being used for instruction in the inclusive setting are flexible grouping (Klingner & Vaughn, 1999), such as cooperative learning models, and class-wide peer tutoring (Maheady, Mallette, & Harper 2006). These instructional models have been shown to be effective when working in an inclusive setting. Friend and Bursuck, (2000) describe multiple co-teaching configurations to facilitate inclusive instruction including parallel teaching, station teaching, alternative teaching, team teaching, and consultant teaching. In addition, differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2000) provides a number of strategies to address diverse student populations. It begins by assessing the prior knowledge of individual students, and then offers a number of approaches that allow all students to progress through the curricula based on their needs and strengths. Currently, educators realize the need to develop classroom materials that incorporate strategies for students of all ability levels. Universal design for learning creates a curriculum that integrates accommodations and modifications into instructional content providing accessibility for all learners (Bowe, 2000). Together with the field experiences these strategies promote the content, skills, and dispositions needed to enable educators to facilitate the learning of students in the inclusive classroom.

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CHILDREN WITH AUTISM: PARENTAL GRIEF AND PERSONAL GROWTH

Mickie Wong-Lo

Autism Spectrum Disorder impairs multiple areas of development, including social interaction, language, interests, activities, and stereotyped behavior (APA, 2000.) An estimated 1 in 175 children per year are identified as having autism, a number that is increasing. Although extensive research about autism has been conducted, currently no medical test exists to diagnose it. Instead, observable characteristics such as the exhibited behaviors of a subject are the basis for diagnosing autism. In addition, limited research currently exists about the emotional state of parents of children with autism.

Method

In this descriptive study, the researcher examined the lives of two parent couples who had children with autism to determine if their grieving process and personal growth are similar to those of parents of a deceased child. Subjects in this study were two parent couples between the ages of 18 – 64, whose child had been diagnosed with autism within the 12 months prior to the beginning of the study. Data collection consisted of a demographic questionnaire, a modified version of the Hogan Grief Reaction Checklist (HGRC; Hogan, Greenfield, & Schmidt, 2001), and a semi-structured interview.

The demographic data were used for general information on the participants and no statistical analyses were conducted. The HGRC was scored by summing the items in each of the six subscales: Despair, Panic Behavior, Blame and Anger, Detachment, Disorganization and Personal Growth. For this study, three items were deleted and one item was modified from the original HGRC. The HGRC functions as a research instrument, not a psychodiagnostic instrument, and was designed to compare groups of bereaved individuals based on subscore means. Individual scores cannot be interpreted on the HGRC. The scored results of the HGRC were used in this study as indicators to explore if each of the six factors may have influenced the subject's grief reaction.

Information collected in the semi-structured interview was analyzed using a coding system with a componential analysis made for the dimensions of contrast within the interview. All four

participants were interviewed separately, with data from the interviews broken down into five sections: personal views on family, the child with autism, social support, stressors, and a personal view on the child and the participant. Each section was analyzed and grouped into common characteristics and themes.

Results

Data analysis from both the HGRC and the semi-structured interview indicated that among the four parents, only the mothers exhibited grief characteristics, while the fathers did not exhibit significant signs of grief. However, responses from all four parents on the HGRC demonstrated that the Personal Growth factor had a stronger influence on their reaction to their child's diagnosis than the other five factors in the HGRC, regardless of gender. The semi-structured interview supported that the parents' personal growth factor contributed to their ability to adjust to their child's diagnosis and to seek help for their child. Based on the findings from the four participants, fathers (unlike mothers) of children with autism did not report grief characteristics similar to parents of a deceased child. This finding was in contrast to the mothers' reported experience. However, both mothers and fathers did report personal growth comparable to that of parents of a deceased child.

Discussion

The research findings contributed to the awareness of factors that may influence parental response to the diagnosis of autism. The results of the study indicated that the contributing factors involved in grief responses were present in all four parents at some level. The six factors of the HGRC – Despair, Panic Behavior, Personal Growth, Blame and Anger, Detachment and Disorganization – were also found in the analysis of the semi-structured interviews. In terms of gender differences, both mothers exhibited a higher level on all six factors of the HGRC in regards to their grief process than both fathers. Although factors such as marital satisfaction may contribute to the six factors, more research needs to be conducted to identify the extent that factors such as number of years married, age at which married, marital happiness and number of children may influence the response of parents.

Personal growth is the main similarity between parents of children with autism and parents whose child died. Differences between the two groups include that parents of a child with autism experienced a constant series of reminders about their child's autism due to events as ordinary as their child's interactions compared to those of a "typical" child. Another difference was that all four parents of a child with autism displayed an eagerness in "finding the cure" for their child, with "cure" referring to finding the best treatment, therapy, or early intervention for the child.

Unlike the other five factors, the personal growth factor had a greater influence on the grief responses in both mothers and fathers. One may speculate that perhaps the personal growth characteristics helped the parents adjust to their child's diagnosis or that the diagnosis itself led them to develop personal growth characteristics. The order cannot be determined by this study; however, further studies of this phenomenon could be investigated.

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SPECIAL EDUCATION IN SOUTHERN AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND THREATS

Morgan Chitiyo
George Chitiyo

The provision and development of special education in Southern Africa is hampered by several factors which include poverty, cultural influences, lack of resources and lack of adequate governmental support. To illustrate these factors, this paper draws specific examples from Zimbabwe, Zambia, Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho, and South Africa.

Most Southern African countries adopted legislation for special education only recently (Abosi, 2000; Peresuh & Barcham, 1998). Despite this development, the implementation of these policies in some countries, like Zambia, has been gradual and difficult for a variety of reasons (Kalabula, 1993).

With widespread poverty, many in the region have limited access to fundamental resources and are most often unemployed. According to the World Bank (2000), the average rate of poverty for Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole is about 47%. In South Africa most children are born and raised in poverty (Gwalla-Ogisi, Nkabinde, & Rodriguez, 1998) while in Zimbabwe, the majority (88%) of the population is poor (World Bank, 2000). In Zambia, Kalabula (2000) noted that the increasing poverty level has inhibited access to suitable education and training. Because of this, most schools do not have the required resources to accommodate students with a variety of disabilities. Matala (2000) identified shortage of special materials in schools as one of the constraints retarding the progress towards inclusive schooling for children with disabilities in Botswana.

Furthermore, most Southern African countries have shortages of adequate skilled human resources requisite for the development of their education systems for various reasons ranging from inadequate training of teachers (South Africa, Lesotho and Botswana) to migration (Zimbabwe, South Africa) (The Financial Gazette, 2003; Peresuh & Barcham, 1998; Mattes, Crush & Richmond, 2000; Chitiyo, 2006; Ministry of Basic Education, Sports and Culture (Namibia), 2004; Gwalla-Ogisi et al., 1998; Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002; Mpofu, Zindi, Oakland, & Peresuh, 1997).

Social and cultural factors have played a role in obstructing the progress of special education provision in Southern Africa. People with disabilities did not command respect in most African societies until quite recently and in some societies they were even considered burdens to the family and to the community (Kabzems & Chimedza, 2002). Such societal attitudes have not been favorable to the development of special education.

Southern Africa is severely affected by HIV/AIDS, and at least 12.3 million children have been orphaned by the pandemic (UNICEF, 2004). HIV/AIDS creates economic insecurity due to the sickness and subsequent deaths of the most productive group of the population which in turn raises the level of poverty. It is postulated that the pandemic will worsen the already existing shortage of special education teachers and other professionals since it affects the economically active age group.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic coupled with poverty, cultural factors and lack of skilled personnel threaten the already weak provision of special education in Southern Africa. In addition to enacting policies favorable to the development of special education, governments may need to consider staffing, equipping, and providing adequate resources to the sector to ensure that vulnerable children and those challenged by disabilities are not left behind. Governments could also consider providing preventive intervention services to children who are at risk for developing specific disabilities and promote childhood early intervention services to ameliorate the impact of certain conditions among children at risk for developing certain disabilities. These strategies have been seen to work in industrialized countries and may yield tremendous benefits for the region.

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PROJECT MAINSTEP: MULTIMEDIA ANCHORED INSTRUCTION AND NETWORKING TO SUPPORT TEACHER EDUCATION PROJECT

Cathy N. Thomas
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Teacher education programs struggle to prepare new teachers to teach effectively in today's complex classrooms. Too many novice teachers are ill prepared and leave the field during their initial years of teaching. In fact, attrition estimates exceed 50% for special educators over the first four-year period of teaching (McLesky, Tyler, & Flippen, 2004). In an effort to reduce attrition and improve teacher preparedness and quality, recent reforms have called for evidence-based innovations in teacher education (IDEA, 2004; NCLB, 2001). Technology has been proffered as a means of improving teacher education (Putnam & Borko, 2000). One instructional use of technology, multimedia anchored instruction (MAI), has been demonstrated to be effective in promoting knowledge and skill development for pre-service teachers; (Wang & Hartley, 2003).

MAI was first explored in the late 1980's as a means of contextualizing learning and facilitating the transfer of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (CTGV). MAI utilizes video as a focal point of instruction to create a shared context for learning (Bransford, Sherwood, Hasselbring, Kinzer, & Williams, 1990). Students engage in extended in-depth explorations of video vignettes, and participate in problem-solving activities and discussions as they develop shared understandings of content knowledge, (Schwartz, Brophy, Lin, & Bransford, 1999). Building on these principles, Multimedia Anchored Instruction Networking to Support Teacher Education Project (Project MAINSTEP) was developed to teach evidence-based content and practices to pre-service teachers.

Method

The project participants included 149 pre-service teachers enrolled in special education courses during the summer and fall semesters of 2005 at The University of Texas at Austin and Buffalo State College. The majority of participants were female ($n = 129$) graduate ($n = 113$) students. Six instructors served as subjects in this study. The MAINSTEP website was developed over a two-year period and includes 258 video anchors. The website includes five modules: Pre-referral, Challenging Behavior, Reading Fluency, Math Intervention, and Feedback. Each module has incorporated content that aligns with the standards for competent pre-service special education teachers established by the Council for Exceptional Children, National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2000), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), and No Child Left Behind Act (2001). Instructors used MAINSTEP modules in a variety of ways to meet their course objectives; therefore, implementation procedures varied widely between instructors with some using modules as stand-alone instruction while others integrated the content and learning activities into their class sessions and assignments.

Data were collected to evaluate whether the content met students' and professors' instructional needs. In addition, this study evaluated the functionality, accessibility, and aesthetic appeal of the web-based materials. Three assessment instruments were used to evaluate participant's satisfaction: (a) a ten-item multiple choice pre- and post-test measured students' knowledge gains for each module; (b) an on-line 20-item satisfaction questionnaire measured students' perceptions of the content, quality of the learning experience, and technical functionality; and (c) students and instructors were interviewed to obtain in-depth information about user experiences.

Results

The results of paired sample t test indicated that the Pre-referral ($t = 5.58$, $df = 27$, $p < .05$), Challenging Behavior ($t = 86$, $df = 35$, $p < .05$), and Reading Fluency ($t = 5.08$, $df = 37$, $p < .05$) MAINSTEP modules were effective in increasing participants knowledge. Indicators of student satisfaction were highly positive ratings on the content quality ($M = 94.48\%$), the video anchors ($M = 80.74\%$), the content structure ($M = 90.6\%$), and the website's visual attractiveness ($M = 87.88$). In particular, the data strongly supported the effectiveness of video anchors to provide contextualized learning. Students consistently reported that after watching the video anchors they had a better understanding of special education settings, including students with disabilities, the school environment, and the tasks that they would be expected to perform. The most common student complaint was about the inordinately long time it took the video to load.

Discussion

This pilot study contributed to the knowledge base by focusing specifically on the types of knowledge and skills pertinent to novice special education teachers, an area that has been relatively unexplored by previous research. Results were highly positive due to increases in knowledge of reading fluency, challenging behavior, and the pre-referral process. The modules helped participants learn relevant content. The website was reported to be visually appealing and easy to navigate, despite a wide disparity in usage times that ranged from 50 minutes to 7 hours.

The flexibility of MAI makes it compatible with a wide variety of implementations and purposes. The positive findings across implementations clearly demonstrate the robustness and efficacy of the modules. As a result, the modules proved to be useful beyond the project's original scope; as Project MAINSTEP has also been successfully used in professional development for in-service special and general educators.

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CARE OF THE CHILD WITH HYPOTONIA AND DEVELOPMENTAL DELAY

Shannon Munro Cohen

Hypotonia is characterized by decreased muscle tone with varying degrees of floppiness and occurs in multiple neuromuscular, metabolic and genetic disorders. Hypotonia affects many areas of a child's life including cognitive development. The severity and progression of hypotonia varies with each child and their diagnosis.

The infant with hypotonia feels very limp and fragile with very flexible joints, easily falling sideways and sliding out the bottom of high chairs and strollers. They may not develop head control until quite late and are prone to skeletal deformities from maintaining abnormal postures. They are described as content babies who need to be awakened to feed and do not nurse well. Parents may unintentionally discourage their child from learning self help skills such as dressing and feeding as the tasks are so time consuming. The infant with hypotonia is unable to reach out and mouth toys and becomes used to having someone entertain, feed, and change him and may not receive the stimulation needed. This contributes to developmental delay (Cohen, 2006).

The child's low tone often includes the face and mouth making sucking, chewing, and swallowing a challenge. Food aversions and vomiting due to choking episodes are common. Food and saliva may be drooled out of the mouth persisting as late as grade school affecting socialization. Some children appear to be less intelligent due to decreased smiling, verbal and nonverbal communication (Shaughnessy, 2003). These children have wide gaps in receptive and expressive language development (Cohen, 2006). Global developmental delays are found due to the child's inability to explore the environment.

Congenitally dislocated hips and clubfeet are common in this population. After birth children with hypotonia may develop pectus excavatum from adapted trunk control patterns and muscle weakness (Cohen, 2006). Continued low tone in the pelvis causes the young child to lean way forward in order to sit. They often sit on their forelegs with their feet behind them (W-sit) leading to further hip and knee problems. A motor pattern commonly seen is the combat crawl. In this pattern the child uses his forearms to propel forward while dragging his legs (think of soldiers crawling under barbed wire fences).

Children with hypotonia should be discouraged from performing gymnastics as they may be easily injured and not feel pain due to their hypermobile joints (Cohen, 2006). The child may lack sufficient fine motor control to button a coat, hold a pencil and use scissors. On the playground, the child displays an immature run and has difficulty keeping up with children his own age. Playground equipment may be too large and climbing the tall steps on the school bus is an obstacle for some. Older children and adults with hypotonia are at risk for shoulder and hip dislocation, back injury and scoliosis (Cohen, 2006).

Learning disabilities have been found in as many as one fourth of children with hypotonia potentially affecting success in school (Cohen, 2006). In the young child there may be less social interaction and may fill the void with self stimulating motions such as banging and finger

motions. It is interesting to note that children with autism often present with hypotonia in infancy (Rapin, 1997).

When the home revolves around the scheduling and needs of one child, the entire family dynamics are changed. Siblings and spouses feel unappreciated and the primary caregiver, usually mom, feels overburdened. As a result, divorce rates among families with children with special needs are higher. Siblings may feel resentment and anger and a perceived pressure to succeed in sports or academics. They may seek to be the “good” child so as not to be a burden to their parents (Shaughnessy, 2003).

Parents sense negative attitudes of health care providers and often view teachers and therapists as their primary source of support and information. Families voice many common concerns. They do not know what services are available and where to go for information, and do not know what questions to ask. Communication and continuity of care is less than satisfactory for many. Referrals may include physical, speech and occupational therapy, financial resources, respite, and support groups. Families need the support and guidance of educators in maneuvering through the assortment of available resources for children with special needs.

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BENEFITS AND PITFALLS OF INCLUSION ACCORDING TO TWO FORMER INTEGRATORS

Christie L. Gilson
Billy Yau

The integration of students with disabilities into typical classrooms in primary and secondary education is just one of many recent reforms sweeping across the educational landscape of Hong

Kong (Education and Manpower Bureau, 2005). The perspectives of researchers (Dymond, Renzaglia, Gilson, & Slagor, in press), administrators (Furtado, 2005), and teachers (Lian, 2000) have been articulated within the international literature, but those of students with disabilities have been less apparent. This paper will provide space for two former students with visual impairments to share their personal encounters with integration as experienced in Hong Kong and the United States of America. While the authors recognize that their experiences are not generalizable to students with all types of disabilities, it is hoped that their stories will encourage those making policy and classroom-level decisions about inclusion to continue to seek the input of students with disabilities.

The term inclusion has gained prominence in the international literature over the past decades (Singal, 2005; Vlachou, 2006). Broderick, Metha-Parekh, and Reid (2005) suggest that inclusion implies attending to the needs inherent when educating all students in typical school settings, whether or not they have disabilities. The academic and social aspects of school life should be carefully addressed to optimize the participation of students with disabilities in every aspect of their education.

Given the large number of students usually present in classrooms in Hong Kong, and to a lesser extent in the United States, teachers are sometimes hesitant to adapt their instruction to suit the needs of individual students (Dymond, Renzaglia, Rosenstein et al., in press). In addition, students with disabilities may be unable or unwilling to articulate their special needs to teachers and other service providers. Gaps still exist between the teaching styles of educators and the needs of their students with disabilities in their classrooms. Monetary resources for optimal inclusion are still lacking world-wide.

The Ebenezer School and Home for the Visually Impaired in Hong Kong and the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) in the United States provide specially trained resource teachers to help bridge the gap between the types of instruction teachers are most comfortable giving and that required by students with disabilities. While universal design for learning and differentiated instruction are frequently employed by inclusive teachers, an even more fundamental component of successful inclusion is the willingness of educators and service providers to fully welcome students with disabilities into their classrooms and to creatively address their needs. The student with the disability should always be consulted, as she or he is the one receiving the educational services and will continue to utilize such skills in adult contexts such as employment, higher education, and family planning (Gilson & Lian, 2006).

Socialization is an important indicator of quality of life (Moon, 1994). Students with disabilities who are included may feel isolated from their peers without disabilities (Heward, 2006). Their ability to participate in extra curricular activities may be hampered by those offering such activities if adaptation is seen as burdensome. Activity organizers can consult with students with disabilities, their parents, and service providers such as physiotherapists, orientation and mobility specialists, sign language interpreters, and psychologists in order to increase the frequency, depth, and breadth of participation by students with disabilities in extra curricular events. The student with the disability can attempt to put peers and activity organizers at ease by interacting with them before tryouts or auditions commence, thereby increasing the likelihood of being welcomed into extra curricular activities.

The development of friendships between students with and without disabilities may blossom slowly. Teachers and parents can encourage socialization by avoiding the tendency to be overly helpful to students with disabilities. As students with disabilities interact more with their non-disabled peers, they often gain self-confidence in forming friendships with them.

Inclusion requires continuous effort from all parties concerned, if it is to be successful. However, the academic and social benefits are many and are long-lasting. When students with disabilities are given a chance to compete on a level playing field with their peers, they often exceed parental, teacher, and administrator expectations; realize marked increases in self-esteem; and grow up to be respected contributors to their societies.

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**INTERFACE OF SPECIAL EDUCATION
AND VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION**

Jen-Yi Li

Programs in life career development and transition are concerned with age-appropriate independent living skills. They promote the protection of an individual's freedom to make choices and decisions, including supporting an individual to become aware of alternatives regarding their career development. Adolescents with disabilities often are less able to make career decisions to prepare them for adult responsibilities. They need structured planning and substantial support to help them achieve successful post-school living. They might also be enrolled in post-secondary education or training upon exiting school with eventual, successful completion. Finally, students with disabilities will achieve a level of independent community living based on their preferences, knowledge, skills, and abilities. To allow these successful postsecondary outcomes to become a reality, interagency collaboration is a critical variable to the process.

Both special education and vocational rehabilitation (VR) programs serve individuals with disabilities. When special education students prepare for transition from school to work or postsecondary education, the interface between the two systems becomes critical to ensuring continuity of services. Public education serves students with disabilities until the age of 21 through the mandates of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). At that point, the State Rehabilitation Agency assumes this responsibility based on eligibility to the Rehabilitation Act. Because eligibility for special education services does not necessarily ensure

eligibility for vocational rehabilitation services, the interface between these two systems may not be a smooth and complementary linkage.

While several factors contribute to this fracture, poorly trained transition professionals may help to explain some of these difficulties. Different roles and responsibilities are required for professionals from schools and adult services to implement successful transition practices, such as transition assessment, planning, instruction, interagency collaboration, as well as job development. The study, from a phenomenological analytic framework, investigated the perceptions by practitioners in the rehabilitation and educational fields, as well as in the school-to-work program, regarding the importance of transition competencies and their own role within the transition process. Participants were selected based on their professional experiences and their willingness to participate in this study.

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which were audio taped and transcribed verbatim. Member checking and inter-coder reliability were performed. Once inter-coder agreement on the first transcript was achieved, the rest were coded based on the revised parameters. The original text was extracted from the transcripts, color-coded, and categorized. The main categories including responsibilities, collaboration, competencies, and barriers were emerged.

Results reflected that school and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR), as well as School-to-Work Alliance Program by being contracted with DVR, by law and practices, are given primary responsibilities for establishing collaborative efforts to plan and implement transition services for individuals with disabilities. Their primary responsibility was job development and involving parents during transition practice. Both school-to-work liaison at school and SWAP specialist stressed their responsibilities to help students achieve independence and self-determination.

Participants indicated competencies are mostly obtained from learning by doing, as well as in-service training. Their higher degree of involvement was an important motivator for them to involve in transition tasks. However, they all indicated the conflict such as policies and rules between different agencies/systems as major barriers to their work. The findings of this study suggest that professionals from both sides require to assuming new roles and responsibilities. Either a federal initiative or a coordinated state effort is needed to permit students eligible directly for rehabilitation services within the educational system. Transition meeting is important venue linking professionals' involvement to transition practice and must resume periodically. Paperwork also needs to come out in a systematical way to facilitate referral process between different systems.

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**USING CASE STUDIES TO ENHANCE THE UNDERSTANDING
OF LEARNING DIFFERENCES**

Georgia M. Kerns
Cynthia R. A. Watkins

The case-based method of teaching is used in a variety of disciplines. Cases can be most useful when *course goals involve values clarification, the appreciation of multiple perspectives or complex problem-solving* (Kim, Utke, & Hupp, 2005, p. 104). Other purposes for incorporating cases in teaching include developing group skills, analyzing and synthesizing information, enhancing time management skills, honing research skills, as well as applying knowledge and skills from course content. The use of cases can be especially effective in preparing specialists in special education through the cross disciplinary experience of analyzing and synthesizing information in a case.

Case study materials can be presented in a variety of ways within and across content and courses. Presentational format is determined by the outcomes desired, with each format providing differing challenges to the student. Some students may find the use of cases difficult because of the open-ended assignments associated with the activity. Simple cases that utilize a single event or issue often allow students to become familiar with the process. Presenting the purpose and some suggested ways to solve the case are also important. This type of case is useful in assessing student understanding of materials and student application of course content.

Case study materials may also be presented to facilitate content across an entire course. Weekly or bi-weekly additions to the case can help students understand the impact of a disability across time, either from birth to adulthood or across the school years. These types of cases can be used as the basis for highlighting important course content, while asking students to assume the role of *parent* or *team member* for a specific child. This type of case asks students to become invested in *their* child and to begin to develop an understanding of affective issues and implications.

Case materials come in a variety of forms. There are many texts available now with cases and directions for facilitation. The use of video, multimedia and web resources is also increasing (Herbert, 1999). Instructor- or student-written cases can be tailored to meet specific needs or topics. All of these have a place in the repertoire of an instructor who is using case-based teaching.

The utilization of cases is effective at both the undergraduate and graduate level based on the knowledge and experience of the students in the class. Although there are many positive reasons to incorporate cases within coursework, there are also pitfalls. Case-based teaching is most

effective with *teacher educators who are flexible and reflective and act as facilitators of knowledge with their students as together they co-construct knowledge and meaning from course content and case dilemmas*' (Sudzina, 1999, p. 9). The use of cases requires faculty to fully understand the case and alternative interpretations of the case; to know their students well; and to provide feedback and redirection without being authoritarian (Sudzina, 1999). Case-based teaching requires hard work on the part of the instructor. Instructors must be well versed in the case; must be comfortable in facilitating case discussions (skill in improvisation can help here); must be able to provide extensive feedback to students; and have adequate resources of time to work with students (Gideonse, 1999).

Case study materials can be used in a variety of ways, including cases to address core course content throughout the semester to explore ethical/moral dilemmas, consider collaboration/communication problems, examine behavior management concerns, address accommodation and modification procedures, and study other related issues in special education.

Responses collected on student evaluation in courses at Belmont University and the University of New Hampshire indicate that students feel the inclusion of cases in the courses taught by the authors has increased their understanding of course content. Students have stated that the use of cases has personalized their learning, has asked them to explore sensitive issues, and has helped them to understand others' points of view more effectively than the reading of texts with class discussion alone. A follow-up survey of students 6 months after completing an introductory course in special education at the University of New Hampshire was conducted. Student comments included the following:

- *Overall, I thought the case study project was of great value in knowing some of the things involved with having a child with a disability and all the rights of the child and parent. The best part was sharing with all of the other 'parents' in class. (Brian)*
- *I learned that individuals with disabilities or significant challenges in their lives can still accomplish whatever it is they desire in life. (Allison)*
- *When reading the textbook example of the child with autism, it was difficult to fully understand the challenges that the family may encounter. Through the case study process, I realized how those challenges impact all of the family! (Molly)*

Similar sentiments were found at Belmont University. On the comment portion of the faculty evaluation one student stated, *Case studies allowed me to practice judgment making within a safe environment. If I made a mistake here it won't hurt a real child. With cases I get to 'fix' my errors. If I had made the same errors in real life- I could potentially do great harm!*

The use and refinement of cases in teaching specific content, as well as framing semester long coursework, has provided our students with the opportunity to consider real world issues. Discussion of moral and ethical dilemmas, practicing participation in team decision making, and assuming the role of parent or teacher has provided them with experiences that required them to make choices, defend decisions and hear other viewpoints that lecture or even small group discussions would not have provided. Case-based instruction will continue to be a tool we utilize in all of our courses.

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TEAM BUILDING WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION PARAEDUCATORS: ELEVATING INSTRUCTIONAL AIDES

Antonette W. Hood

Legislation in the United States provides special education services to students in public schools who meet eligibility criteria described in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Their teachers are assisted by *paraeducators*—paraprofessionals or instructional aides. The students' success is affected by personnel who work with them, yet minimal attention within teacher preparation programs is paid to the skills needed to train and collaborate with paraeducators, or to the development of effective communication and working partnerships

within the special education team. Consequently, paraeducators learn on-the-job with their assigned special education teachers, and the results are seldom ideal.

Partnerships in special education (e.g., novice teacher with a veteran paraeducator, novice teacher with a novice paraeducator, veteran teacher with a novice paraeducator, and veteran teacher with a veteran paraeducator) require different sets of skills. However, identification of and opportunities to gain them through cohesive, systematic training experiences, and support of school districts is absent (Zulewski, 2003). Giangreco (2001) suggests, *Many paraeducators feel ill-prepared to handle...academic content, social dynamics, and behavioral challenges that need to be addressed...[S]imilarly, ...teachers have...minimal, if any, training...to work with paraeducators (p.3).*

According to the California Department of Education (2006), the No Child Left Behind (NCLB; USDE, 2001) legislation requires paraprofessionals to meet certain qualifications including successful completion of two years of study at an institution of higher education; an associate's (or higher) degree; or a formal state or local academic assessment, demonstrating knowledge of and the ability to assist in instructing reading, writing, and mathematics. Despite this mandate, there is great disparity in preparation and support for paraeducators. According to the American Federation of Teachers (2006), only 33 of the 50 United States (66%) require training or certification of special education paraeducators, and much of this is not prerequisite to employment. According to the National Clearinghouse for Professions in Special Education (2006), roughly 70% to 90% of paraeducators are hired without prior training. Since the 1997 reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the field of special education has seen a growing reliance on paraeducators with greater emphasis on their instructional and learner support roles in the delivery of services for children and youths with disabilities (USDE, 1998).

The government has advised local education agencies to provide leadership in developing standards to ensure that all personnel, including paraeducators, are adequately and appropriately prepared and that standards be developed in accordance with State law, regulations, or written policy allow appropriately trained and supervised paraprofessionals [paraeducators] and assistants to assist in the provision of special education and related services (USDE, 1998). To-date, this has not been fully actualized.

The purpose of this study is to create more productive partnerships among special education teachers and their paraeducators. To facilitate this, the investigator developed a training program based upon the role identification, teaming, communication, and collaboration needs identified by study participants. Three research questions guided the study: (a) What are the professional skills sets identified by the 4 categories of special education paraeducator/teacher that would support an improved working partnership, and experiences of students with special needs? (b) In what ways might time spent together in professional development activities enhance the skills and relationships of special education partners? (c) How might special education teacher educators collaborate with public school districts to provide professional development for special education teams?

Surveys were developed and distributed to public school special education teachers and paraeducators in Southern California to identify their skills and needs. The survey was sent to school

administrators, who were asked to distribute them to those whom they identify as meeting the role descriptions included in a cover letter. The data regarding demographics, role descriptions, communication needs, and collaboration experiences collected during Spring 2007 were analyzed.

One likely outcome of the researcher's study will be the completion of a training manual to accompany the three-part workshop series, which will be used to support the researcher and others she trains to conduct paraeducator workshops for special education partners in public school districts. By the end of three of her own workshop presentations, which she plans to have videotaped, she will work with a film editor to produce videos to supplement the workshop series and manual.

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DEVELOPING PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS IN CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Marcia Singer
Diane Newman

A primary goal in the education of children with autism is to create instructional experiences that encourage them to fulfill their intellectual potential. The development of appropriate curricula presents challenges to the educators who work with these children. Always mindful of these challenges, the special education teachers and specialists of a New York City public elementary school for children with autism decided that while their curriculum was sound overall, the children did not seem to be learning transferable problem-solving skills. Because a major goal of the school is to help students become as independent as possible; it is important for the children to learn to problem solve on their own to the best of their abilities. This goal is often in conflict with many of the instructional strategies for teaching children with autism; these strategies often increase dependency because the children become increasingly reliant on teachers to provide cueing strategies (Iovannone, Dunlap, Huber, & Kincaid, 2003). Compounding this problem are the research findings that children with autism have difficulty understanding the concept of cause and effect (Powell & Jordan, 1997) and that they problem solve differently than other children (Philips, Gomez, Baron-Cohen, Laa, & Rivere, 1995). In response to this instructional need in their school, the teachers of this New York City elementary school developed a curriculum to promote the learning of problem-solving and named their new approach to teaching problem-solving the Discovery Approach.

In the Discovery Approach, the traditional teacher-directed format is replaced with a more facilitative strategy. The child's problem-solving skills are encouraged to develop through a variety of child-centered activities that present problems to be solved. However, the focus of the approach is on the process of solving problems, rather than on the specific activities. The teacher views all interactions with the child as potential opportunities to develop thinking skills. The teacher evaluates the child's current level of independent problem-solving behavior and gradually steps back and moves away from organizing the child's environment. The teacher carefully observes how the child *naturally* uses the environment and, based on this observation, creates appropriate challenges for the child.

Informal teacher observations over two years of implementation supported the efficacy of the Discovery Approach. However, to more formally investigate its effectiveness, a longitudinal case study was conducted with ten children with autism, aged five to six. Children were observed over the academic year while they participated in the Discovery Approach. Three tasks for each child were selected to be videotaped and the child's first, middle, and last experience with each of the three tasks were videotaped using a coding scheme developed for this investigation. Stages of problem-solving behavior were coded from the tapes. These stages were: attention, orienting to the task; repetition, using material repeatedly in the same way; exploration, exploring the characteristics of objects; symbolization, integrating the characteristics of objects. Findings showed that all ten children showed an increase in problem-solving behavior over time within an activity. By the last experience with each task, each child showed more high-level behaviors than in the previous two observations. The complexity of the activity did not have a relation to the

problem-solving behavior; however, cuing techniques that engaged more senses seemed to pull the child into the activity more quickly and enabled the child to progress through the stages more rapidly. These results demonstrated that the problem-solving abilities of children with autism can become part of their repertoire of skills.

Promoting problem-solving behavior in children with autism involves a number of strategies. These strategies essentially fall into two categories: the type of materials with which the students are provided and the way in which the teacher interacts with the students. The materials are selected so that each item can be used in both a functional and a creative manner. The materials engage the student because of their novelty and familiarity. These materials are open-ended in terms of how the student might interact with them and present realistic problem-solving situations. The teachers facilitate learning, rather than provide direct instruction. They keep the student engaged by utilizing visual, verbal, and haptic cues. We have demonstrated through research and practice that these strategies foster independence and problem-solving in students with autism.

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SUCCESSFUL STRATEGIES: INVOLVING ALL LEARNERS IN AN INCLUSIVE MODEL OF EDUCATION

Emilie Berruezo Rodger

A system of education with long established roots in the history of American pedagogy is multiage education. As early as 1642, laws were passed requiring towns to establish and support schools, which resulted in the one-room schoolhouses, based on multiage groupings out of necessity.

The multiage classroom continues to be a model of education *inclusive* of all children. Graded schools often focus on the model of teaching whereby information is transmitted *to* the learner. Multiage classrooms encourage an interactive model between the teacher and each student. The philosophy and underlying foundation of multiage education is based on the belief that ALL children can learn, and that each individual child brings to the classroom his/her own unique gifts and strengths.

The multiage model of education has been internationally implemented, although often it is out of necessity rather than a specific educational paradigm shift. However, the key to improving education for all children requires a shift in the manner of teaching, whereby all children are included and feel successful. *You have to change your methods of instruction. It's what we do with the groups of children that make a difference* (Gaustad, 1994, pp. 2-3).

Successful implementation of inclusive classrooms involves teachers with in-depth knowledge and understanding of child development and learning, in order to meet the diverse needs of each learner. Educators must also possess a large repertoire of instructional strategies and be proficient in their ability to assess, evaluate and record student progress utilizing numerous assessment tools aligned with country, state and national standards. *Inclusive education is most easily introduced in school communities that have already restructured to meet the needs of their increasingly diverse student populations in regular education* (Villa & Thousand, 2003, pp. 19-23).

Developmentally appropriate instructional procedures provide the foundation of successful inclusive classrooms. When planning and implementing developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), the teacher must strive to develop the mental abilities of the child, provide creative activity in the learning process, and provide opportunities for the personal construction of knowledge (Stone, 1996). Assessing children individually and nudging them along their personal developmental continuum ensures each individual's success in the learning process. The multiage philosophy' rejects a *deficit* model that focuses on what a child does not know, rather than what a child *does* know. This focus on success keeps the child engaged in the learning processes (Stone, 1996). The successful implementation of inclusive education includes cooperative learning, cross-age learning, flexible, heterogeneous groupings, no labeling, and respect for the individual. In 1995, the National Center on Education Restructuring and

Inclusion reported that the majority of the districts implementing inclusive education stated that cooperative learning was the most important instructional strategy in support of inclusive education. Other practices supporting effective inclusion were: teaching practices that make subject matter more meaningful and relevant to the students, authentic assessments (such as portfolios and anecdotal records) and current theories of learning (such as constructivism and multiple intelligences). Since strategies for exceptional and diverse learners are based upon similar educational techniques, inclusion in a multiage classroom becomes an additional caveat for the entire community of learners.

Curriculum is utilized as it relates to teaching children in meaningful ways. The intent is to meet the children on their continuum of learning development rather than rush them through a prescribed curriculum.

All diversity is celebrated and perceived as positive in a multiage setting. *The belief that certain children can not be included in the regular classroom is based on a false assumption of lockstep instruction...but by using strategies such as 'multi-level' instruction, learning centers, and cooperative learning, teachers can accommodate all students* (Willis, 1994, p.5).

The welfare of students with disabilities continues to be a concern to many educators, and as such, the multiage setting seems to address many of the issues facing students and teachers in that the strengths of each student are emphasized, while labeling is de-emphasized, and the educational practices utilized make accommodations for all learners in the learning community.

There are many strategies utilized which complement an inclusion model of education, not the least of which involve a commitment to building a supportive community for all learners. Children's strengths are used as the basis for instruction. Curriculum is implemented to support each child. Open-ended centers provide choice to the learner and capitalize on collaborative learning situations. Diversity in the classroom is central to the building of the community of learners.

Particularly effective strategies for building the community of learners include:

- Ball of respect
- Students stand in a circle.
- Using a ball of yarn, they gently toss the ball across the circle while calling out a name and a positive attribute. This continues until each student is holding a bit of the yarn.
- Classmate Hunt. This is a scavenger hunt which can be contextualized to meet your students' experiences. Sample questions might include: Who has read the latest Harry Potter? Who enjoys art? Whose favorite color is green?

As educators, our greatest challenge is to provide meaningful and relevant learning experiences to each of our students, facilitating their growth in each of these domains.

Miller (1989) addresses the essence of the relationship between multiage classrooms and inclusion when he states: *Within this secure and predictable structure (of a multiage program), children can enjoy having the freedom to explore individual interests. And with their individual differences accepted, they can find a true sense of community in their classroom.* (p. 33)

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ANALYSIS OF WISC-III-JORDAN FOR THE MATHEMATICALLY GIFTED WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

Anies Al-Hroub

This paper investigates the WISC-III-Jordan (Wechsler, 1996) cognitive profiles of a sample of mathematically gifted students with learning difficulties (MG/LD). This has been discussed in the literature (Brody & Mills, 1997; Schiff, Kaufman, & Kaufman, 1981; Waldron & Saphire, 1990), but has been largely ignored by empirical researchers.

We examine what was hypothesised in the literature; that the results of the WISC-R or WISC-III for gifted children with learning difficulties would:

- Produce a significant Verbal-Performance IQ discrepancy and yield a large amount of scatter in the subtest profiles, significantly more than the scatter found for normal populations or for groups who have only learning difficulties.
- Produce a characteristic pattern of strengths and weaknesses in the subtest profile.
- Show consistent patterning in clusters of scores when different Models' factors of the WISC-III subtests are used.

- Produce a characteristic pattern of strengths and weaknesses on different factors and profiles (Kaufman, 1994; Prifitera & Dersh, 1993; Schiff et al., 1981).

Further, we analyse the patterns of subtests for the mathematically gifted students with learning difficulties compared with average IQ students with learning difficulties (Average-IQ/LD), using the five cognitive classification systems of Bannatyne (1974), Kaufman (1975, 1994), Rapaport, Gill, & Schafer (1945-1946), Wechsler (1991), Horn (1989) and the ACID profile to compare the results with factors computed for matched average students, and to report findings that might be relevant to classroom teaching strategies. The experimental group of 30 MG/LD students and a comparison group of 22 average-IQs with learning difficulties (excluded cases) students were administered the WISC-III-Jordan. The profiles of the 52 students were examined to assess strengths and deficits as well as the spread of their capabilities. While differences between the two groups on individual subtests were examined, a comparison of broader factors was also conducted as a means of discovering cognitive patterns that might suggest effective intervention. The performances of the two groups were compared on 17 factor scores, using the abovementioned five cognitive classification systems and the ACID profile.

The findings obtained from the scores of the WISC-III-Jordan show that mathematically gifted students with learning difficulties tended to show some similarities and differences in cognitive characteristics that support the findings of previous studies and literature (Baum, 1990; Stewart, 2003; Udall & Maker, 1983).

In the WISC-III-Jordan, students with MG/LD showed, only, a significant discrepancy of 12.73 points between the verbal and performance subscales (VIQ-PIQ) in favour of the verbal scale. This finding supports previous findings that VIQ-PIQ discrepancy is to be considered a good indication of the co-existence of giftedness and a learning difficulty (Silverman, 1983). Compared to the Average/IQ-LD group, the MG/LD students showed high scores with a significant difference on some subtests such as: Comprehension, Arithmetic, Vocabulary and Picture Completion. This reveals that they tend to understand social comprehension and judgment and common sense (*Comprehension*), numerical reasoning, attention, short-term memory for meaningful information and concentration (*Arithmetic*), knowledge of word meanings, language development, and verbal fluency (*Vocabulary*) and attention to visual detail and visual discrimination (*Picture Completion*). The two MG/LD and Average/IQ-LD groups scored low with no significant difference between them in subtests such as Object Assembly and Coding. Arguably, having learning difficulties in both groups caused the non-significant difference between their weaknesses in visual-motor skills, processing speed, visual motor coordination and concentration (*Coding*), in addition to their part-whole reasoning skills, visual analysis, and construction of objects (*Object Assembly*).

The significant deviations of the WISC-III-Jordan subtest scores for the MG/LD students support the abovementioned findings by showing relative strengths in the four subtests: Comprehension, Arithmetic, Vocabulary, and Picture Completion. In addition, the findings showed that both groups, the MG/LD and Average/IQ-LD, do not only have a relative weakness in the Coding subtest (no significant difference between them), but also in Information and Similarities subtests (with a significant difference in favour of the Average/IQ-LD group). This means that both groups showed weaknesses in recalling general information that they learned from school and at

home (*Information*) the ability to think abstractly in verbal abstract reasoning, verbal categories, and concepts (*Similarities*). Although these weaknesses were shown more in the Average/IQ-LD group, this could imply that having a learning difficulty in both groups would negatively affect their abilities in these skills.

Five cognitive classification systems were used to analyse cognitive patterns of the mathematically gifted with learning difficulties by comparing them to the Average/IQ-LD groups on nine paired factors. The findings revealed that the Rapaport et al. (1946) and Kaufman (1994) models were the most powerful for discriminating between the two groups. Exclusively, the MG/LD group showed that the discrepancy was significantly high between the Visual Organisation-Visual Motor Coordination (VO > VMC), and Right Brain Processing-Left Brain Processing (RBP < LBP) paired factors. This demonstrates that the MG/LD group has more problems in the motor domain than in the cognitive domain, while the Average/IQ-LD group has more problems in both domains. The MG/LD group also tended to be more verbal, analytical, and better at problem solving. Furthermore, the discrepancy between the Right Brain Processing-Integrated Brain Functioning (RBP > IBF) paired factor was statistically significant for the MG/LD group (at level .01), and for the Average/IQ-LD group (at level .05). This discrepancy shows that the two groups, and particularly the MG/LD group, had a variation in the efficiency of their application of different styles of problem-solving.

Although the Wechsler Model (1991) of Verbal Comprehension-Perceptual Organisation (VC > PO) showed a significant difference between two factors for both groups, this difference was not enough to be considered abnormal on interpretation, or giving a good insight into learning difficulties. In contrast, the Horn Theory (1989) of Crystallised-Fluid Intelligence (Gc > Gf) provided a good indication into the deficits of students with learning difficulties in both groups. The Bannatyne (1974) model was the only one not to be found useful in diagnosing students with learning difficulties, although it showed that only the MG/LD group had a significant difference in the Verbal Conceptualisation-Sequencing Abilities (VCI > Seq) paired factor.

The two groups also showed similarities and differences on relative strengths and weaknesses and the WISC-III-Jordan factor rank ordering. Significantly, the MG/LD group was found to differ more than the Average/IQ-LD in the Visual Organisation factor, which indicates that students with both mathematically giftedness and learning difficulties have stronger visual-perceptual awareness and coordination than the Average/IQ-LD group. On the other hand, both groups showed relative weaknesses with a significant difference between them in Sequencing Ability, ACID profile, Visual-Motor Coordination, and Broad Speediness. Although the relative weaknesses were higher for the Average/IQ-LD group, the findings show that the ACID profile and other mentioned factors give us a good insight into the learning difficulties of the two groups.

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INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN MULTIMEDIA-SUPPORTED SPEECH LEARNING OF CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Fai Kim Lau
Allan H. K. Yuen
Ming-Gon John Lian

Recently, we have recommended tailor-made programs (Lau, Yuen, & Lian, in progress) and adapted multimedia designs (Lau, Yuen, & Lian, 2006a) for speech development in children with autism. These reflect the significant impact of individual differences on the speech acquisition in students with autism in a multimedia-facilitated learning context (Lau, Yuen, & Lian, 2006b). We have added two elements (i.e., childhood autism and multimedia) to the theory of adaptive teaching (Corno & Snow, 1986) addressing different kinds of aptitude support in cognition, affection, and conation (i.e., new cognitive systems and structures for the students' existing ones to overcome the instructional impediments they encounter). This further involves an individual student's strategy and style of information processing and the question of the transfer of learning.

Integrating this with the theme of language acquisition as an outcome and process of complex interaction between a child learner's *biologically given dispositions* and *the social, cognitive, and linguistic supports provided in the environment* (Gleitman & Newport, 1995, p. 21) and the inspiring findings of the dissociation between language acquisition and general intelligence, as Pinker (1995) explained, we further examine fundamental but significant questions observed in our study with five children with autism. Student 1 (S1) was found to be an apparent echolalic since he was three years of age and the echolalia seemed to help him correctly verbally respond to questions raised during our intervention. Then, is echolalia an innate capacity to help students with autism demonstrate better receptive and expressive performances? On the contrary, Student 2 (S2) reacted enthusiastically when he heard the music incorporated in the multimedia product used in our investigation. Therefore, what is the role and function of music, which may be an external support, in this boy's learning performance?

Technologically, the multimedia systems we are advocating are able to provide *all possible algorithms* due to the *systematic diagnosis and correction* of computerized instruction which is *an important vehicle for the effective application of adaptive teaching* (Corno & Snow, 1986, p. 614). The systems are incorporated with intelligent programs which seem able to cater for these areas such as comparatively high expressive desires in S1, integration of music with tailor-made multimedia learning tool for S2, and satisfying the expectation for materialistic rewards in both S1 and S2. However, further exploration is needed if Kozma's (1987, 1991) theory, which argues for the cognitive functions of the computer-based learning tools for typically developing but disadvantaged learners, can be extended to the well-beings of those students with an atypical development history, such as childhood autism.

The emphasis on learner's maturation (Gleitman & Newport, 1995) helps us rethink the appropriateness of speech development approaches in children with autism. This is in fact close to Bloom's (1976) concept of the learner's history or prerequisites three decades ago, but we are interested in a learner's background as detail as possible in addition to *an economical current summary of the individual's history with the respect to the learning yet to be accomplished* (Bloom, 1976, p. 14). We believe that this understanding should help multimedia designers develop more appropriate computer-assisted instructions for students with autistic features.

Despite our tentative findings at this stage supporting the need for education with care and the role of automaticity and interactivity (Hardy, Ogden, Newman, & Cooper, 2002) in our theoretical framework, we first face the assumption of the computer as an external memory for relevant information retrieval by the user with autism. The second question is the integration and internalization processes of the audio and graphic data. Since there were no mechanisms to display how the audio and visual information had been integrated and internalized, we will be required to critically examine the application of information processing theory in our forthcoming study with the collaborative efforts of professional educators, music therapists, multimedia technologists and designers, cognitive psychologists, and neuropsychologists in order to improve the speech performance of children with autism in a multimedia-assisted learning environment.

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**SUSTAINING SPECIAL EDUCATORS UNDER
THE EDUCATION REFORMS IN HONG KONG**

Daniel Chun-wing Fok
Ming-Gon John Lian

To maintain their economical growth under keen competition of globalization, most developed countries have initiated a series of educational reforms in the past two decades. The wave emerged in Hong Kong and triggered the 2000 Education Commission (EC, 2000) to launch a 10-year reform. Then, the one-after-another initiatives like the 2001 Curriculum Reform (CDC, 2001), the 2003 Quality Assurance Inspection (EMB, 2003), the 2003 Report of the Advisory Committee on Teacher Education and Qualification (ACTEQ, 2003), the 2004 School Self-evaluation and External School Review (EMB, 2004a), the 2004 Consultation on the New Academic Structure (3-3-4) and Assessment System (EMB, 2004b), and the 2005 Review of Medium of Instruction for Secondary Schools and Secondary School Places Allocation (EC, 2005), and others were imposed.

These EC's initiatives and policies conglomerated the restructure of curriculum, the reconfiguration of the academic system, and the transformation of the assessment mechanism. The ecology of the education system has changed dramatically in two aspects: (a) to provide quality education for the sake of the stakeholders, and (b) to embed higher expectation upon schools' performance in terms of teachers' proficiency (Fok, 2005).

Facing these changes, escalating workload was generally identified as a potential source of teachers' stress in recent local studies (Cheung, 2006; CTW, 2006; Lau, 2002; Lee, 2001). As to professional development, it was essential to the schools development (Hopkins, Ainscow, &

West, 1994) and regarded as the cornerstone for future reforms (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996). However, it could also make teachers more stressful while problems like pedagogically naïve, absence of a conceptual basis for program, and conventional school cultures resistance were found on the process (Gordon, 2004).

Amidst worse working condition and higher professional expectations from the public, increasingly teachers were nearly burned out and more willing to leave their profession. To determine the ways to sustain the special educators under educational reforms in Hong Kong, a three-layer study was conducted to make better understanding of the frontline practitioners (Fok & Lian, 2006). First, a 4-section questionnaire regarding the educational reforms, their stressors and professional development was distributed to all teachers (n=159) in seven schools for children with physical disabilities (PD) in June, 2006, among them 92 (57.86%) responded by mid-July, 2006. Secondly, 11 individual interviews were conducted from November 2004 to July 2006. Each of the four novice, three experienced, and four administrative teachers from five schools for children with PD participated in a 30-minute interview to share freely on their stress and professional development. Lastly, to recognize how the special educators grow up along their professional paths, six experienced teachers from a PD school were invited to have a focus group discussion for about an hour.

The majority of the respondents reported that the educational reforms in Hong Kong were pressure-causing, rushed, and difficult to follow. It caused them high stress affecting their working style and health. Their stressors were diverse in different stages of careers. Meanwhile, they were keen to participate in training programs for professional development, especially self-initiated courses. However, an increasing professional gap among the novice special educators was found due to a lack of suitable and effective training for them. And the ACTEQ's indicator on continuous professional development (i.e., 150 hours trainings in three years) was uncovered dampening motivation of, and creating pressure to, the respondents.

To sustain the special educators at their job sites, several opinions were drawn from data analysis of the interviews and group discussion. Teachers need to set higher priority to keep their eyes on students' needs and try to gain parents' support through genuine compassion and efficient communication skills. The schools need to provide meaningful induction programmes for the newcomers and establish a supportive culture to all staff. The special educators should have motivation to enhance their professional growth by obtaining either academic knowledge at the universities or practical skills at work. They should also treasure the thorough supports and encouragements from the families of their students.

The results of the present study led to a number of implications for education officials, school leaders, and the special educators. For instance, the education officials should revise the pace of educational reforms in account of the teachers' endurance and schools' capacity. The school leaders should cherish their special educators, keeping and cultivating them by adapting a well-planned, pragmatic, and professional-laden approach for their professional development. And, the special educators should step further in an attempt to facilitate a positive and supportive culture in schools through proactive communication among recreations.

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**A HOLISTIC MODEL IN SUPPORTING INTEGRATED EDUCATION
FOR CHILDREN WITH PHYSICAL IMPAIRMENT**

Clare Cheng Yuk Kwan

Children with physical disabilities without significant learning difficulties are known to be more readily accepted in the mainstream schools. However, integrated/inclusive education is more than physical co-existence of the special needs students and the non-disabled peers. In an earlier pilot project at the Jockey Club Marion Fang Conductive Learning Centre of the Spastics Association of Hong Kong, five children with cerebral palsy graduated from the special childcare unit of the Centre and integrated in mainstream primary schools were followed up for their adaptation to the school life. Using standardized batteries of assessment, we kept track of their self-concept and physical ability each for three years. The results showed that the children demonstrated declining self-perceived physical capabilities which did not match with the objective assessment of their physical ability. There was also a concomitant decline of self-concept of peer relationships. The result revealed that students with physical impairment have been facing a three-folded barrier of integration – environmental or physical barrier, attitudinal barrier, and internal limitation. These barriers are the resultant interactions among the integrators themselves, their non-disabled peers, the mainstream teachers and the parents.

The finding prompted the formulation of a holistic model of support which took into consideration of the need of the integrators, their non-disabled peers, the mainstream teachers and the parents in order to achieve integrated education for the benefit of all parties concerned. The model was piloted and operated for three years from September 2003 to August 2006 with a funding support. Thirty-four children, the majority with cerebral palsy or spina bifida, enrolled in this project. They were between 5 and 12 years of age at the time of enrollment. The schools involved in this project included kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools.

The model was founded on the principles of Conductive Education (Tatlow, 2006) and empowerment (Zimmerman, 1995). The model included:

- Four areas of supports - for the integrators, the teachers, the parents and the school peers, coordinated into a seamless whole.
- Four coherent goals encompassing: the empowerment of the integrators for improving self-confidence and self-esteem; the empowerment of parents for improving parenting skills, parent-child relationship and parent-teacher collaboration, the empowerment of teachers for improving differential teaching skills to meet the special needs of the integrators and the cultivation of inclusive atmosphere among all students, and to work with parents; and the empowerment of peers for improving the understanding of and interaction with the integrators in contribution to inclusive culture in school.

- Four core content of support covering: training on physical and social aspects of the integrators; collaboration with teachers on PE lessons, homework and examination adaptation, communication with parents and integrated activities for integrators and peers; training on parenting and negotiation skills as well as the concept of inclusive/integrated education for parents; and disability awareness training and integrated activities for non-disabled peers with the integrators.

The model had distinct features on the following aspects:

- Trans-disciplinary team approach – a team of rehabilitation professionals including physiotherapist, occupational therapist, speech therapist, nurse, social worker and childcare worker formed a transdisciplinary team who followed the two founding principles of the holistic model of this project. One members of the team acted as coordinator to work collaborative with other members in assessing, planning and implementing the model to ensure an integrated and consistent support to the students, peers, teachers and parents.
- All-rounded approach – the physical, psycho-social and academic development of the integrators were taken into consideration as a whole and the support for parents, teachers and peers were coordinated.
- Early introduction of the concept of inclusion to the integrators, their non-disabled peers and parents, as early as the integrators being at the kindergarten level.
- Special attention was paid to the transitional stages, including from kindergarten to primary one and from primary six to secondary one.
- Periodic review of the status of integration and adjustment was made as required for individual cases.

Positive feedback through questionnaires from teachers and parents were obtained, with particular indication in improved self-acceptance of their own impairment among the integrators, improved peer-acceptance of the integrators among the non-disabled peers, increased teachers' awareness of the needs of integrators with physical impairment and improved parent-teacher communication. At the end of the project, more than 90% of the teachers indicated that the project has offer help to them in knowledge in the problems and needs of the integrators, helping the integrators to integrate in school, positive attitude to the integrators, knowledge of inclusive education and method to carry out inclusive education; more than 80% of the teachers expressed an improved acceptance towards inclusive education.

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**TRANSFER OF SKILLS TO TEACHER AND PARENTS IN ENHANCING
CHILDREN'S HANDWRITING PERFORMANCE**

Candice W. S. Cheung

Five to ten percent of the Hong Kong school-aged population was found to have reading and writing difficulties by The Heep Hong society in 2004 (unpublished local report, 2004). This group of children also experience difficulties in academic achievement, social participation and integration, psychological well-being and affect their adulthood. It is important to help those children with learning or handwriting difficulties to accomplish the school tasks so that they can integrate better in the society. To let all students achieve the same education goal, such as to write with neatness and accuracy for both Chinese and English characters (primary 1 to primary 3) in a reasonable speed (primary 4 to primary 6), special provision, techniques and facilities are required for those with special needs to help them fully develop their potential, achieve independence as much as possible and being well-adjusted in the community.

With special training, occupational therapists (OTs) are usually the ones who provide extensive assessment and treatment for those children with handwriting difficulties. However, treatment provided outside the treatment room and in the natural environment as daily routine is believed to have better outcomes. Thus, a transfer of skills to teachers and parents, who have a better understanding of the child's daily routine, is needed by providing an easy-to-administer training program for daily training. Hence, our project aims to transfer the training skills to teachers and parents via a students' training program and teachers/parents educational workshops.

During the past year, four teacher workshops and four parent workshops were held with a total number of 248 attendances (124 and 124 respectively). Feedback collected from the evaluation form showed that teachers and parents appreciated the training workshop. The workshops were able to help them better understood about the handwriting problems of their children and know the possible strategies in helping their children. Participants also recommended to organize the workshops more frequently, and would like the school to have more events and handouts to teach them on training their children. The positive feedback from the teachers and parents not only support the organization of these kinds of workshops, but also indicated the need for parents to know more about handwriting difficulties.

Seventy-three students (boys-50.9%; girls-49.1%) were recruited to participant in an interactive computerized handwriting training program. Most of students (98.25%) were studying in primary two while the others were studying in primary 1 and one studying in primary 3. Children were recruited based on their assessment result on handwriting performance, visual perceptual skills, visual motor integration and hand strength. Their performance was assessed immediately following and one month after the training so as to evaluate the program effectiveness.

Positive feedback on the program effectiveness was gained from the children. More than 85% of the children indicated they enjoyed the training program. The statistical result showed those children who received training had significant improvement ($p < 0.5$) in the performance components of handwriting especially visual perception.

Under the current culture in school setting of Hong Kong, more support and resources should be given to the teachers so that training programs can be integrated into the schools. In the current stage, professional supports from occupational therapists and/or other professionals is needed.

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**FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT FOR
PEOPLE WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY**

Viola You Ching Yan

The victim of a learning disability that has cut short his education and rendered him virtually unemployable, his is a life of minimal promise (SITNews., 2006). In Singapore, the majority of people with intellectual disabilities face a measure of difficulty in securing employment. In this paper, people with mild intellectual disabilities are the focused group for analysis. We will address the causes of the problem, and suggest programs to assist in dealing with the problem.

People with mild intellectual disabilities are those with IQ ranges between 50–70. Intellectually, they function significantly below average. Typically, the individuals have limitations in adaptive behavior which affects self-help, living or social skills. Intellectual disability is not an illness but a condition occurring before, during or after birth but before 18 years of age” – (Adapted from the Dictionary of Disability Terminology, 2003).

The main reason for the difficulty in securing employment is that many employers have negative images of the disability. Employers believe individuals with intellectual disabilities to be less productive, less intelligent, and less capable and are viewed to have less loyalty to the working place. People with intellectual disabilities are very difficult to get employed. Most of them are unable to secure employment for more than one year. A recent survey completed in a special training centre indicated that one out of twenty-four trainees was able to secure a job for one year. The problem was not so much that trainees could not perform the job, but rather the issues such as difficulty in attendance, initiative, responding to criticism, and social interaction with co-workers, supervisors and customers, were identified.

Discrimination is the outcome of the misconception of people with intellectual disabilities. However, we know that people with intellectual disabilities can be treated as equal members of the community in spite of their physical, sensory, intellectual abilities. We do recognize, however, that not all people with intellectual disabilities are able to cope with the demands of employment.

The current special education system can be empowered in helping people with intellectual disabilities be accepted in society by improving in several ways:

- Create awareness of the quality of life of people with intellectual disabilities. Ensuring a quality of life is a responsibility of society; there is an obligation to help them fulfill their potential and develop feelings of positive social involvement. A practical publicity of the values of people with intellectual disabilities is necessary to change the negative image. Public education gives a glimpse of knowledge to tell the public who the disabled people are, but not all information about people with disabilities is helpful in changing the negative attitude towards them. A Chinese Proverb states, Tell me and I will forget; show me and I may remember; involve me and I will understand. The effective way of helping society understand the needs of people with an intellectual disability is to encourage the creation of projects where the disabled and non-disabled can work together cooperatively.
- Improve the inclusion in mainstream education for people with mild intellectual disabilities. *By 2010, the Ministry of Education expects fifty-seven primary schools and thirteen secondary schools will provide Special Need Officers in order to help students with mild to moderate Dyslexia and Autistic Spectrum Disorder integrate better into their school programs* (Ministry of Education, 2006). The inclusion of special education in mainstream education is a global trend. It promotes a strong collaborative community in schools when the general educator and the special educator support each other by sharing resources and goal in classrooms.
- Improve the accessibility of resources (e.g., transportation) for people with intellectual disabilities in schools. Authority support is necessary to lighten the burden of finance of families with children with a mild intellectual disability. Many families are paying higher school fees in comparison to families with non-disabled children. They might pay for a long-term period of school fee when their children cannot find employment. The salary is very low even though they get employed. By all these reasons, many intellectually disabled people do nothing at home. Recently, the Singapore government has done a good job to upgrade schools and public transport to be friendly to the disabled.
- Improve the standard of education in four areas. The first area is the training programs for further employment in special education curriculum. Schools should set a realistic goal for students with a mild intellectual disability. A recent study found that the mild intellectually disabled can perform better in their jobs when they work in a familiar environment. In other words, the working place is also the training workshop. For example, a suggested program is to train these students to work in health food store, selling fruit juice and bread in school canteens.
- Advocate for the Singapore society to create employment opportunity for people with intellectual disabilities. Singapore has been funding organizations and enterprises that are helping people with mild intellectual disabilities. It will be a big influence when Singapore government sets an example to hire people with intellectual disabilities. The suggested program is for the Singapore government to hire people with mild intellectual disabilities to work as cleaners in hospital food courts and government buildings.

In conclusion, people with intellectual disabilities will be able to enjoy their well-being in society when the Singapore government broadens its programs to assist people with unique needs.

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THE ROLE OF EARLY DIAGNOSIS AND THERAPY OF ADHD

Malgorzata (Gosia) Sekulowicz

ADHD is a complex developmental disorder which, as it seems, has been known for over 150 years. The mechanism of the disorder's emergence is connected with the disequilibrium of neural processes so that the processes of stimulation overbalance the mechanisms of restraint/control. The prevalence manifests itself in psychomotor hyperactivity in physical, emotional and cognitive spheres. Children are usually too mobile and active; they often switch from one activity to another, undertake actions leaving them unfinished only to get engaged in another action, are very talkative and unintentionally aggressive.

It is impossible to unambiguously define the causes of the disorder. Several types of brain damage are discussed, including the damage to frontal lobes, subcortical nuclei, corpus callosum and cerebellum (Bragdon & Gamon, 2004). Also observed are disturbances in the balance between the basic neurotransmitters (noradrenaline and dopamine), which causes disturbances in reception and transmission of information. Important influence is also exerted by serotonin, which is responsible for regulating moods. Impulsive people report deficit of this neurotransmitter. More and more frequently researchers take into consideration a possibility of the genetic transmission of ADHD. Probably the syndrome is multigenically inherited.

According to Hallowell & Ratey (2004), many researchers support the thesis that ADHD is a disorder very difficult to diagnose in small children, and its first symptoms are noticed only when the attention deficit appears (i.e., when children begin regular school education. Delay in proper diagnosis results in lack of early intervention. The diagnosis should contain: information about a child's development and its current condition (obtained from the parents); pediatric examinations; and neurological and/or psychiatric tests, if need be; EEG, magnetic resonance, computerized scan.

Leaving the analysis of medical issues to the specialists, I would like to concentrate on the description of the necessary observation and interviews with the parents intended to very early detect the symptoms which may signal the disorder. The most important symptoms include: the

child's behaviour: physical hyperactivity or inhibition; typical symptoms of lowered competence, such as delayed development of speech and walking, headaches, nausea and vomiting, delayed conscious regulation/control of sphincters, convulsions, night terror, excessive or inadequate reactions to emotional stimuli, increased fatigability, accelerated exhaustion; disturbances in social adjustment; assessment of the child's functions by means of psychological tests (the levels of organicity and intelligence); assessment of the child's condition/functions by means of questionnaires (DSM IV and/or ICD 10); and objective measurement of the child's attention.

According to literature (e.g., Hallowell & Ratey, 2004), such children frequently behave violently as early as in their mothers' wombs. And the moment they are born they make an impression of being very conscious/alert. From the early infancy on, the children are very absorbing and moody; they whine and wail, sleep but little and lightly. They are hyper, mobile, and suffer from eating disorders--either eating like a horse or vomiting and manifesting sitophobia. They often go into crying fits and become very anxious at unexpected moments.

As infants, children with ADHD may require constant attention and care: they are very fussy and cry without an apparent reason; they may loathe certain tastes or textures or be hypersensitive to sensory stimuli. They are irritated by sounds or lights that would not disturb other children; some of them do not like being cuddled. It seems that they have very low empathy levels, which may lead in later developmental stages to cruelty towards peers and animals. Often the cruelty is unintended and unpremeditated, hence the child does not understand why it is punished; many infants try to stand up very early; they often skip the crawling phase; they acquire many skills early; they are not afraid to climb dangerous heights; it's said they are here, there and everywhere; they are unusually expansive: lively and always on the move; and they hate boring situations, such as changing or being/getting dressed, when they fidget, wriggle and writhe.

As kindergarten pupils they are serene, open and cheerful as a rule. Nevertheless they may be also lachrymose and petulant: their speech develops either very quickly and excellently or rather slowly; the children make pronunciation mistakes and distort words. Having acquired speech, the children become real chatterboxes, flooding others with incessant questions; they have problems with sound processing; despite excellent hearing, they are unable to grasp the sense of the sounds heard. They keep forgetting things and have difficulty concentrating on the information received; their hyperactivity often manifests itself in bedwetting that can continue for years even into their early teens; and they have difficulty falling asleep; they gnash, speak and even walk in their sleep.

The multiplicity of symptoms reported in children at early ages implies that therapeutic action is unconditionally necessary. An important factor is cooperation of physicians, psychologists, pedagogues and parents in early intervention centres in order to detect early symptoms.

Beside pharmacotherapy, the following forms of therapy are applied in Poland: therapy verifying the sensory-motoric disorders on the basis of diagnostic tests (e.g., the Kephart test, the S. Viola sensory-motoric integration disorder test, Psychomotorischer Screeningtest --the psycho-motoric screening test); eliminating-supplementing diet; and proper pedagogical intervention-therapy through play, music therapy, relaxation and others.

As it seems, the effectiveness of therapeutic action renders a more optimistic picture of the further fortunes of early diagnosed and treated children. It means that the role of early intervention in this type of disorder is a priority.

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PROFILE: EDUCATIONAL PLANNING FOR CHILDREN WITH SEVERE/PROFOUND OR MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

Karen Nave

Educators are challenged daily to provide the best possible curriculum for their students. Since the beginning of public education, teachers have grappled with what, when, and how to teach the students in their care. We want to give our pupils the greatest control over their environment possible, to broaden their involvement in their community and to create the most competent, well-rounded, self-sufficient, productive citizens possible. Reading, writing, math, science, and social sciences in various forms have always been the mainstay of education, along with the arts, physical conditioning, languages, vocational training and, most recently, technology.

Children with special needs bring with them another dimension to the discussion. Education must be modified, individualized and often augmented into areas not usually offered to the traditional, non-disabled child. Historically, special classes, schools and programs have been created to accommodate children with sensory disabilities, physical handicaps, and cognitive delay. We developed modified curriculums, life skills programs, developmental checklists, vocational assessments and adaptive behavioral scales. These are all valuable tools to assist the teacher of children with disabilities construct an effective education.

It can be challenging, however, to develop meaningful and appropriate educational goals for the child with severe/profound and/or multiple disabilities. This is particularly true for the child whose disabilities include global cognitive delays. Academics, in their most recognizable form, are no longer appropriate. Each child is completely unique and likewise their goals.

So, how do we decide upon appropriate, meaningful goals for our most severely disabled students? All children can be taught, and all children can learn. That we know. We are less sure about where to go next. There are many good, functional assessments for children with severe/multiple disabilities that cover the areas of communication, self-help, behavior, cognition or motor skills, but with our most severely involved children checklists and assessments provide only limited information and the children quickly cap out on the test items. We know that they have significant untapped abilities, so how do we determine which objectives are most worthy of the time and effort to teach? How can we tap into that potential?

Before we look at what skill is next on an assessment, we need to look at the children holistically. What are their strengths? While their disabilities are daunting, where are their areas of greatest potential? What interferes with them reaching that potential? How can we increase ways for them to control and/or interact with their own environment? Most individuals with multiple, severe disabilities will require supervision and caregiving throughout their lives. In what ways do caregiving concerns or problems limit the child's access to the community? In areas where acquiring a more complex skill might be unrealistic, can we aim for improvement in the quality of a response or in its generalization? It is often seemingly small things that can make the most significant differences in the quality of life for a child.

PROFILE: Educational planning for children with severe/profound or multiple disabilities is a working, comprehensive profile to explore the strengths, abilities, weaknesses, dreams, barriers, etc of the child (or adult) with the most severe disabilities in order to provide the most appropriate, functional, student-driven educational goals possible. This brainstorming tool investigates the various domains of a child's functioning levels. These include physical/ motor skills and deficits; tolerance levels; mobility, cognitive skills, communication, sensory, self-determination, personal care, self-help/independence, daily living skills, social/ behavioral; transitions; medical, supervision levels and leisure time.

Rather than a pure checklist format, this tool is also based on the *futures planning* concept. It asks questions that allow personalized responses that address not only the skill or response being discussed, but also such things as the quality, frequency or intent of the response. The profile is designed to be used by a team (e.g., teachers, parents, caregivers, specialists) to create a broad picture of the child and how that 'picture' drives the selection of educational goals for the individual.

When completed, the education team will have a detailed overview of the individual's present level of performance as well as the deficits that most stand in the way of the student becoming more independent. This brainstorming tool is not designed to tell teachers what to teach next. It is, instead, a way to explore the individual child with all of his or her uniqueness, to look at his strengths and barriers to access. Hopefully it will trigger questions which will consequently

trigger areas to explore. As a teacher we cannot change the severity of the disabilities, but we can help the child break down some of those same barriers that most interfere with quality of life.

This information should provide a jumping-off place to pinpoint the areas that warrant the most emphasis. This tool can be used at any level or age and can provide significant information for home, school, community or adult living programs to give the person greater control over his/her own environment, broaden involvement in the community and produce the most well-rounded, self-sufficient, happy citizen possible.

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**PREPARING EDUCATORS FOR THE CHALLENGING ROLES OF TEACHING,
ASSESSING, AND INTERACTING WITH DIVERSE POPULATIONS:
TACTICS PROVEN EFFECTIVE**

Tammy L. Stephens
Brenda Gilliam
Jessica A. Rueter

The demographic makeup of America's schools has changed immensely over the past decade (Fuller, Miller, & Dominguez, 2006). Santos, Corso, and Maude (2006) reported growing diversity among children within the United States across ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and ability characteristics. The increase in educational enrollment of diverse populations in the United States has nearly doubled from the 22% reported in 1972 to the 43% reported in 2003. As a result of such changes in school population, today's educators are expected to effectively teach students from an array of diverse backgrounds. Unfortunately, many of these educators lack sufficient training about socioeconomic, cultural, and linguistic diversity to address this task adequately.

The definition of diversity has evolved from one which referred to ethnic, cultural, racial, and religious differences to encompass multi-racial, linguistic, religious, socioeconomic backgrounds, and ability levels (Ladson-Billings, 2001). Although diverse student populations are growing at escalating rates, the majority of teachers in public schools in the United States continue to remain predominately female, Caucasian, and middle-class. Teachers' lack of understanding, experience, and formal training in working with culturally linguistic diverse

populations often result in their being ill-prepared to embrace and appreciate the diverse backgrounds of the students they serve (Fuller et al., 2006).

Experts in the field agree that exhibiting an understanding of diversity contributes to effective instruction, positive relationships between schools, communities, and families, high expectations of all students, and improved societal outcomes (Fuller et al., 2006; Garcia, & Ortiz, 2006; Ladson-Billings, 2001). In contrast, a limited understanding of diversity contributes to poor instructional programming, low expectations, poor assessment decisions, and increased referrals to special education (Cummins, 1984).

Misunderstanding the major characteristics of diverse groups often results in the overrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special education (Hosp & Reschly, 2004). The converse may also be true, for in many parts of the nation, second language learners are underserved in special education programs. The limited understanding of diversity which results in overrepresentation may also cause underrepresentation. For example, it is often difficult to distinguish normal characteristics of second language acquisition from learning disabilities (Gonzalez, Brusca-Vega, & Yawkey, 1997). Inappropriate referrals deriving from inadequate knowledge of language development and acculturation influences, as well as faulty assessment practices, have contributed to the problem. Assessment of culturally and linguistically diverse individuals is a challenging task that is often flawed and frequently misunderstood theoretically (Klingner & Artiles, 2003).

Pre-service teacher programs have an obligation to ensure that pre-service educators acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively teach students from diverse backgrounds. Effective multicultural training programs should include activities which (a) demonstrate knowledge of factors affecting first and second language acquisition, as well as cultural and socioeconomic differences that affect learning; (b) demonstrate appropriate instructional approaches and strategies for use with diverse learners; and (c) display effective accommodations and adaptations for learners with diverse needs. Moreover, activities should result in the pre-service teacher's reflection of cultural self-awareness, attitudes/expectations, and beliefs, and emphasize ways cultural influences impact a student's socialization and behaviors at home and school. Promising practices in working with diverse student populations include programs which focus on content integration of ethnic and cultural concepts, principles, and theories, encourage pedagogy training addressing a variety of teaching and learning styles, and emphasize techniques which promote gender, racial, and social class equity (Garcia & Ortiz, 2006).

Prescriptive teaching techniques and informal assessment strategies have proven to be successful when working with students from diverse backgrounds and should be emphasized within teacher training programs. Sequenced instruction, teaching/re-teaching for mastery, and frequent informal assessment of individual's skill levels are typical components of prescriptive teaching pedagogy. Additionally, curriculum-based measurements and portfolio assessments are critical in determining student progress (Garcia & Ortiz, 2006).

In conclusion, public school populations in the United States are rapidly changing; however, pre-service teachers continue to be predominately Caucasian females who commonly have not been

exposed to best practices when working with diverse groups of individuals (Ladson-Billings, 2001). The disconnect between teachers and students with diverse backgrounds has given rise to inadequate instruction and inappropriate referrals to special education resulting in both overrepresentation and underrepresentation of culturally and linguistically diverse students in special programs. Consequently, pre-service teaching programs which concentrate on sound methodology and instructional practices appropriate for diverse groups of learners are crucial in preparing new teachers for the challenging roles which lie ahead.

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EARLY IDENTIFICATION OF CHILDREN AT-RISK FOR READING AND LANGUAGE DISORDERS

Becky A. Knickelbein
Susan Glor-Scheib

Given the proven advantages of attention to emergent literacy skill development and early intervention for young children, as preventative measures to ward off future learning problems, it is logical to seek means of reliable identification of those likely to benefit from such efforts. Recent findings suggest that increased understanding of the interrelated processes required to develop the complex skills needed for academic success may result in identified predictive skills in very young children which can be measured earlier than previously thought. Bishop and Snowling (2004) have noted language impairments in children with dyslexia before they begin to read, suggesting intervention can hopefully begin sooner than in the past.

Increasing evidence regarding the neurological plasticity in the young brain clearly suggests beginning intervention as early as possible in order to optimize effectiveness (Zull, 2001). Students with disabilities present with very individualized strengths and needs requiring specific interventions. Too often students must experience failure prior to the provision of individualized skill development activities or the activities provided are not specifically designed for the individual student in question.

A segment of children beginning to communicate in written form choose to begin each stroke of the pencil from a grounded point, preferably a line on the paper if provided. Regardless of the design or shape being replicated, these students appear to need the provision of this common starting point for each orthographic character, and revert to these methods whenever possible despite specific instruction to the contrary. Teaching of print convention (directionality) is often included within reading interventions regarding print awareness (Chard & Osborn, 1999). The question becomes, how common is this natural tendency to regularly *ground* letters and digits (which will be called *bottom-up writing*) in a similar fashion in the school population, and does this practice correlate with other differences in language processing.

This study seeks to identify the frequency of students choosing to use the *bottom-up* writing style in the general school population, and correlate the frequency of this style comorbid with learning disabilities. A newly developed instrument, designed for this study will be analyzed for reliability and predictive validity, as the students are retested and their academic performance is

followed during the elementary school years. All task demands of this brief screener are developmentally sound and involve only orthographic tasks. Each student's observed technique is the most valuable information gained, versus the permanent product. The careful and standardized observation of the student's natural approaches to the tasks is analyzed for similarities to those displayed by other students with and without learning difficulties related to language and reading. Specific remedial interventions to address orthographic errors prior to the student overlearning these errors include direct instruction utilizing several modalities and the Denelian style of print. Future research phases will include following the students

Frequency of *bottom-up* writers in the general population and the correlation between this behavior and learning disabilities is gaining attention of many special educators and warrants ongoing study. Longitudinal data will provide correlations between this writing style prior to formalized instruction and later learning disabilities. Follow-up studies of expanded populations will provide data regarding the screening instruments predictive value for identifying at-risk learners and the eventual effectiveness of providing early intervention.

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FRESHMAN YEAR EXPERIENCE FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Karen A. Hahn
Patricia A. Parrish
Marguerite McInnis

Since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act, the number of students with disabilities accessing post secondary education has increased dramatically. A large percentage of these students do not possess skills necessary for success in college. Difficulty with academics and socialization skills puts these students at greater risk to drop out of college. Retention of students in general is a major concern for private colleges and universities. Retention of at-risk students has become a focus of many private and public institutions, where consistent or growing tuition revenue is essential for survival. Students with academic difficulties are more likely to leave due to such causes as academic dismissal, poor academic performance, negative experiences such as insufficient peer support or mentoring (Tinto, 1993). This paper will address one private institution's efforts to increase retention and decrease the drop out rate of students with disabilities through a Freshman Experience course.

Colleges and universities have recently begun to recognize the lack of effective transition services for students with disabilities. Implementing a program on campus that could provide appropriate support during the critical transition to higher education is becoming more of a necessity (Mott, 2003). At Saint Leo University, Academic Affairs developed a course that all freshmen would be required to take in the fall of the Freshman year. The initial focus of this course was critical thinking and intensive writing. Many students with disabilities struggled in this course.

The original focus of the course remained for three years, but in the 2004-05 academic year, it was suggested that the students with disabilities be offered the opportunity to sign up for the freshman experience course with the Director of Disability Services as the instructor. As students self-identified, they were offered the opportunity to take the course with the Director of Disability Services. The remaining seats in the course were filled with basic education students. The Director of Disability Services also served as the student's advisor for the first year. The focus of the course changed significantly that year only. The focus was on the Election of 2004 and basic computer skills such as e-mail, PowerPoint, and academic searches. That year there was, again, a section offered to students with disabilities that would be taught by the Director of Disability Services.

Over the next years, the focus of the freshman course changed, some years focusing on academic skills, computer skills and/or goal setting and study skills. Each year there was a section offered for students with disabilities taught by the Director of Disability Services. Recently, it was differentiated for students with disabilities in that advocacy training, self-determination, disability awareness training, socialization skills and review of University policies were included in the course.

Another important component for students' success is college is the relationship with the academic advisor. The University began to move from an academic advising model to a developmental advising model in 2004 beginning with the Freshman Experience course. Developmental advising models are based on the concept that the personal domain is an intrinsic aspect to student growth in an academic context (Ryser & Alden, 2005). The literature reports that academic advisors feel inadequate to advise students with disabilities (Preece, Beecher, Martinelli, & Roberts, 2005). Ryser & Alden (2005) report that students with learning disabilities or attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder often present emotional challenges that affect the personal domain and consequently the academic advising relationship. Students with disabilities need systematic academic support; therefore, the University experience selected an advisor that had been trained to work with students with disabilities.

The class entering Fall 2004 had thirty students who self-identified as having a disability. Fifteen students volunteered to be placed in the Freshman Experience course with the Director of Disability Services. Of the 15, 12 still are active students at the University. Of the three who withdrew, two were identified as having received conditional acceptance as they did not meet general admission standards. One of these students withdrew mid- semester and the other withdrew at the end of the first semester. The third left at the end of his freshman year to attend another university out of state. Of the 15 enrolled in other Freshman Experience courses, seven did not return to the University. Two of the seven were conditionally admitted students who withdrew mid-semester. Five of the seven left at the end of their Freshman year. The mean cumulative GPA for the students in the Freshman Experience course with disability support was 2.75; while the mean cumulative GPA for the remaining students was 2.65.

Similar results were found with the class entering Fall 2005. There were 17 students that self-identified, nine of which chose to be in the Freshman course with support. Of the nine only one withdrew at the end of the Fall semester. Of the eight that were in other course section, two withdrew at the end of Freshman year. The mean cumulative GPA for the students in the course with support was 2.77 while the mean for the other sections was 2.69.

The Director of Disability Services noted that the students who were in the course with support tended to utilize the services of the Office of Disability Services with more frequency and utilize a wider range of services. The Director was better able to provide support for these students as she had worked with them in an academic setting. Students saw their advisor twice a week and could deal with issues as they developed. From an advising standpoint, this format was successful.

There has been an immediate impact on retention. This may be due to the relationship formed between the student and the advisor/instructor. Students report positive relationships with the advisor, that they were better able to get questions answered, revise their schedule, and receive feedback about their other coursework. Offering the Freshman course with disability support has had positive effects for the students.

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PREPARING GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS FOR INCLUSION: AN EXAMINATION OF STUDENT TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS TO TEACH STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN SPAIN

Cristina M. Cardona

Inclusion has gained momentum since the Salamanca Statement in 1994 which recognizes the necessity and urgency of providing education to all children, young people, and adults within the regular education system (UNESCO as cited in Rao & Lim, 1999; Rao, Lim, & Nam, 2001). The

policy of *inclusive schooling* is being practiced in various countries all over the world. Teaching students with disabilities in general education classrooms is increasingly being regarded as a best practice (Ainscow, 2000). Much of the success of inclusion, however, depends on general education classroom teachers. General educators' attitudes/ beliefs, personal qualities, and perceived competence have a lot to do with navigating the road to successful inclusion (Rao & Lim, 1999).

In Spain, as in other developed countries, experience has demonstrated that inclusion is best achieved within schools that serve *all* children and young within a community (Ainscow, 2000; Allan, 1999; Giangreco, 1997; Tilstone, Florian, & Rose, 1998). But as inclusion has moved from being a philosophic commitment to being a legal requirement (LOCE, 2002; LOGSE, 1990), one must ask the question: Are teachers adequately prepared for this inclusionary revolution? At this point much controversy remains. Teachers in Spain, generally, favor inclusion (Cardona, 2000; García, 1998), and agree with the concept of inclusion, but their degree of enthusiasm decreases (a) when the concept of inclusion is personally referenced (Harry, 2005), (b) when questions address the teacher's willingness to make curricular and instructional adaptations (Harry, 2005), (c) when teacher needs greatly exceed the supports they receive (García Llamas, 1999). For preservice general education teachers the situation remains similar, indicating that student teachers have serious concerns related to their ability to design and deliver effective instruction for children with disabilities (Cardona, 2004). In addition, the challenges of inclusion in Spain, generally, have been presented in global terms and few attempts have been made to discern the particular challenges faced by students during and at the end of their preparation programs. In the present study, we surveyed preservice teachers' beliefs and perceptions of specific aspects of inclusion (e.g., theoretical and academic issues, instructional concerns, and outcomes of inclusion), as well as students' perceived preparedness or competence to teach special educational needs students. We tested the hypothesis that although preservice teachers support the concept of inclusion, they feel ill prepared to make inclusion possible.

A survey instrument based on Rao and Lim (1999) was used to collect data during summer and fall sessions (June-October 2006) from a sample of 114 preservice teachers seeking a Bachelor's Degree in Education in a mid-size university in Spain. Sections of the survey instrument included demographic information, perceptions and attitudes toward students with disabilities (12 items, $\alpha = .54$), and perceived competence (15 items, $\alpha = .88$) to teach them. The survey asked respondents to indicate (a) to what extent (1 = *strongly disagree*, 6 = *strongly agree*) they agree or disagree with 12 statements regarding inclusion, and (b) to rate the competence (1 = *not at all competent*, 4 = *highly competent*) of regular education teacher (RET), special education teacher (SET), and themselves to teach and manage the behavior of students with and without disabilities, as well as working with their parents. Of the 114 participants (100% return rate), $n = 96$ (84%) were female; and $n = 18$ (16%), male. The age of the respondents ranged from 19-49 ($M = 23.08$; $SD = 4.21$). Eighteen percent were working on a kindergarten degree, elementary (62%), foreign language (9%), physical education (6%), music education (4%), and speech therapy (1%).

The majority of preservice teachers believed that: (a) the social and emotional needs of special needs students are better met in regular classrooms (70% agreed), (b) that the academic performance of students without disabilities is not negatively affected by the inclusion of

children with disabilities (92% agreed), (c) that the needs of the majority of children with disabilities can be met in regular classrooms (78%), and (d) that they would recommend the inclusion model (92%). Although they recognized that special education teachers are better trained (79% agreed), and are more effective (61%) than regular education teachers in teaching students with disabilities, almost all respondents agreed (93%) on the primary responsibility of RET to teach subject content to special needs students. With respect to self-competence, student teachers rated their skills to teach and manage behavior of students *with* and *without* disabilities at a significantly lower level than the general and special teacher skills [$F(2,112) = 127.74$ & $F(2,112) = 89.89$], $p = .000$] as well as felt significantly less competent than RET and SET in working with parents [$F(2,112) = 6.24$] $p = .002$]. This suggests that student teachers perceived themselves less prepared to teach diverse students than inservice teachers. As would be expected, student teachers rated their skill level to teach children with disabilities and manage behavior as insufficient, and perceived SET more competent than RET to teach these children. These results confirm the hypothesis that students teacher feel ill prepared and lack confidence in working with students with disabilities. A number of implications for teacher education programs can be derived. First, teachers in Spain should be asked, more precisely, what concrete skills they need in order for successful inclusion to take place (although more than a third asked for additional training/education in working with students with disabilities, more specific information is needed). Second, training should be made a priority for both preservice and inservice teachers. Third, university preparation programs must be remodeled in the context of the current process of Higher Education Reform in Europe.

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**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SELF-DETERMINED TRANSITION PLANNING:
NAVAJO YOUTH EXPANDING CULTURES, EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT,
AND KNOWLEDGE OF CAREERS**

Rudolph L. Valenzuela

In unison, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 and No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 mandate students participate in evidence-based transition programming meeting their "unique needs" and leading to a high school diploma, further education, and careers. It is obvious, from disparate educational attainment and employment outcomes between the four largest ethnic groups in the United States: European Americans, American Indians, African Americans, and Mexican Americans (U.S. Census, 2004), the unique needs of culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) students remain unmet. Meeting unique needs of many CLD

students, parents, and families involves addressing a continuum of cultural values and educators promoting social equality need to incorporate instructional practices to promote diversity in cultural transition values (Valenzuela & Martin, 2005).

Consideration of bicultural, collective, and individual transition values of CLD students is integral to direct active participation in transition planning. Research of cross-cultural psychology validates the ability of individuals to *cultural frameshift* between cultural values in contextual settings (e.g., home, school) (Oysermann, Coon, & Kemmelmeir, 2000). Educators must assist students to identify, acknowledge, and address self-determination transition values of biculturalism, collectivism, and individualism to assist them in managing both mainstream and native cultures and mental health (Rudmin, Ferrada-Noli, & Skolbekken, 2003). Broad stroking educational research identifies practices supporting collectivism and individualism in secondary transition planning.

Collectivist Transition Values. Kim and Schneider's (2005) research supports collective efficacy and its positive influence on educational attainment. According to their findings, a match between student and parent educational aspirations for the student *significantly increases the odds of [the student] enrolling in a four-year vs. a two-year college; [and] also increases the odds of [the student] enrolling in a four-year college vs. not being in school* (p. 1191). Moving from collective efficacy, by shifting our lens of educational research, leads us to transition practices encouraging individualism.

Individualistic Transition Values. Self-Directed IEP (SD-IEP) (Martin, Marshall, Maxson, & Jerman, 1996) research, arguably the most prolific of self-directed IEP research, communicates the success of inducing individualistic self-determination (Snyder, 2002). However, a disturbing finding of this research is decrease of parent involvement in the IEP meeting (Valenzuela & Trujillo, 2006). Additionally, the research provides little evidence of either collective collaboration between student and parent prior to the IEP meeting or student composition of, or speaking to, transition services (e.g. course-of-study) or transition service needs at the IEP meeting (Martin, 2005).

Exploration of the relationship between self-determination transition education and Navajo youth culture provides the framework and rationale for the current study: The limited availability of evidence-based lessons facilitating culturally responsive self-determined transition programming requires educators to become competent in assessing cultural values to guide components of student or self-directed IEP instruction.

Due to the brevity of the conference proceedings the findings of this two phase study are summarized. One finding that is discussed here is the result of the informal measure of educational attainment. Findings not discussed here are significant increases in student abilities to develop a post-school vision and course-of-study and increased knowledge of postsecondary options and vocabulary.

Educational Attainment of Parents and Perception of Students. Types and percentages of educational attainment by parents in the study are surprising. According to the data, around 40% of both fathers and mothers hold less than a high school diploma. Student perception of parent

desire for student to attain a high school diploma in Phase I intervention group is 92% and 100% for Phase II of the study.

Pundits of mono-cultural self-determination focused on individualism need to move towards acknowledging the importance of expanding bicultural value systems. As educators we must begin to heed words echoed nearly a decade ago that *at the dusk of the 20th century, the concept of [United States] diversity as a melting pot of culture is giving way to the notion of a salad bowl or cultural pluralism that affirms the diversity, strengths, and distinctiveness of each culture within the broader context of the generic American culture* (Singh, Ellis, Oswald, Wechsler, & Curtis, 1997, p. 4). In living these words educators may achieve expectations of increasing social advancement for youth in both native and American social systems.

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**DATA-DRIVEN INSTRUCTION? EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES?
YOU ALREADY USE THEM!**

Carol Dinsdale

Successful teachers never stop learning. Educators who improve every year are those who are open to new ideas and who can critically view their own teaching. (Slavin, 2006) Good teachers rely on strategies and techniques that are based on research (Glasgow & Hicks, 2003). In a period of history when the need for effective educators is critical, it is necessary to arm both our veteran and incoming new teachers with the strategies they need to deal with discipline issues, relate to diverse populations of students, address their own professional development, and ultimately increase academic skills. The current trend is the expectation that educators specifically recognize and utilize proven methods and materials in these interactions. Many teachers use evidence-based practices daily, but are simply not aware of it.

Most educators begin each academic year armed with multiple teachers' guides, an established classroom management system, and a repertoire of *tools* gathered over time that simply work in the school setting. Research indicates that educators' realization that certain prerequisites must be met before problem behaviors can be managed is vital in the instructional setting. The instructor must:

- Be knowledgeable of the academic content and use curriculum which meets the students' needs
- Provide chances to learn, practice, and receive meaningful feedback. Researcher, John Hattie, termed feedback as *the simplest prescription for improving education*.
- Motivate children to participate, constructing knowledge so that students see the application across subject areas, and demonstrate mutual respect for diverse cultures and disabilities. Many educators utilize peer coaching in which students act as tutors. This has proven to be an efficient and effective method for increasing achievement of students from diverse backgrounds in urban and suburban schools. I extend the tutoring model, and encourage my second and third graders with emotional disabilities to venture outside their classrooms, sharing their original Reader's Theater scripts and science knowledge with other groups of students.
- Be certain students clearly understand what is expected of them academically. According to Marzano, Pickering, & Pollack (2001), student achievement increases by 27% when pupils are made aware of the objectives of the academic lesson.

- Ensure that behavioral objectives, or expectations, are understood. These positive behaviors must be taught, modeled, reminded, and monitored.
- Use appropriate strategies in response to behavior problems. There will be fewer inappropriate behaviors in the classroom, and the classroom environment will support and encourage *doing what is right*. (Fuchs, Fuchs, Mathes, & Simmons, 1997; Glasgow & Hicks, 2003; Marzano et al., 2001; Witt, Vanderheyden, & Gilbertson, 2004)

Educational research has an indirect effect on educational practices, and affects policies, professional development programs, and instructional materials (Slavin, 2006). Knowledge of evidence-based strategies keeps veteran and new teachers informed of current professional issues. Research shows the sharing of knowledge and materials in collaborations with colleagues provides support and solutions to common dilemmas. For example, teacher *burnout*, commonly thought to affect veteran instructors, is taking its toll on new educators. Knowing and recognizing the warning signs allow opportunities for intervention. Frequently teachers who experience symptoms of burnout push to work harder, but burnout contributes to lower student achievement. Researchers recommend working smarter and more efficiently instead. A solution? Classroom management procedures for restoring order and gaining students' attention without raising the teacher's voice level not only increase instructional time, but frequently benefit the educator's health. Students usually absorb, retain, and apply more when working cooperatively. According to research, these learning situations motivate student learning because they are fun, meaningful, boost their self-esteem, and improve interpersonal relationships between diverse student populations. (Slavin, 1990)

Expectations for educators, students, and schools continue to increase, as does the pressure to meet these expectations. Involving pupils in decision-making processes in class meetings and instruction turns much of the responsibility of conflict resolution, goal setting, and the creation of action plans over to students. The experienced educator recognizes the limits on the capacity of the students and chooses the matters about which the children may decide. *After all it is experience with decisions that helps children become capable of handling them* (Kohn, 1993, p 9). Students can:

- Compare their scores, discuss their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) goals and objectives, and attend their IEP meetings.
- Lead parent/student conferences as they present and discuss their individual data folders, personal goals, and action plans.
- Use proximal (specific, short term, and realistic) goals to foresee and plan for difficulties, track their own progress, and determine whether they have met their goals.
- Begin to understand the part their effort and abilities play in achieving their personal goals. (Alderman, 1990).

Today's educators utilize a variety of evidence-based instructional and behavioral interventions and strategies. They must become *intelligent consumers of research* (Slavin, 2006, p.14). Their goal is to investigate practices and determine whether the activities in which their students are involved are purposeful and based solidly on research, or simply the latest fad.

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ROLE OF RELATIONAL AND INTERSUBJECTIVE THEORIES IN MEETING CHALLENGES OF EARLY INTERVENTION FOR CHILDREN AT-RISK FOR BEHAVIOR PROBLEMS

Peggy P. Hester
Larry R. Hester

Children's behavior problems pose tremendous challenges to families, schools, and society (Kauffman, 1999). Once established, problem behavior tends to persist and intensify over time. Among the most significant consequences is the fact that the child is at increased risk for

academic failure, social isolation, and peer rejection. Recent research has highlighted the importance of early intervention and the promotion of early social and emotional competence for later school success (Kendzidora, 2004).

The development of children's behavior problems is complex and no single factor accounts for its evolution. The characteristics of the child (e.g., temperament, physical health) and the parent (e.g., educational level, degree of situational stress/depression), the interaction between the parent and child (e.g., punitive and negative style of interaction), along with economic, cultural, and social factors influence its development (CPPRG, 2002; Kaiser & Hester, 1997).

Once a child enters school, other factors begin to influence child behavior. These factors include the quality of the classroom instruction, the quality of the teacher-child interaction, peer influences, and the child's developmental and social communication abilities. Thus, the child's developmental level, the child's parents, teachers/peers, and others with whom the child interacts, all play a role in a child's development.

Any model of intervention, therefore, must take into account not only child and parent characteristics, but also the dynamics of the interaction between the child and those with whom the child interacts (CPPRG, 2002; Kaiser & Hester, 1997). Thus, the match between teacher practices and a child's developmental needs tends to be a more robust predictor of a child's academic, social and task oriented skills or precursors to these skills (NICHD, 2003; Pianta, 2005). For example, higher student achievement has been shown to be related to teacher use of assessments of students to guide their practices, individualized attention to student needs (NICHD, 2003), the provision of supportive feedback, communication clarity, warmth, and teacher reflective practice (Heffron, Ivies, & Weston, 2005). These findings suggest the need for professional development programs to focus on the *process of teaching*, that is, how teachers speak and interact with children and comprehend the ways in which their own values, beliefs and interaction styles impact student behavior and learning (Pianta, 2005).

The field of special education has a rich research-base on early intervention, yet teachers often fail to make use of best practices, or if they do attempt implementation, they lack the level and intensity of intervention components (Kendzidora, 2004). These mismatches between teacher knowledge of, and comfort with an intervention and its implementation with individuals or groups of children, frequently lead to lack of implementation and teachers resorting back to old familiar practices (i.e., student rejection, reprimands, nags, repetitive commands, low rates of praise, few nurturing, supportive, and empathic interactions), regardless of the impact on student behavior.

What is needed in these interactions is teacher understanding of how his/her own past history and internal experiences impact an intervention with a student (Heffron et al., 2005). Relational and intersubjective theories (Aron, 2006; Hester & Hester, 2006; Stolorow, 2005) provide such perspectives for they offer an awareness of how teacher approaches to classroom teaching and engagement can vary according to his/her own attributes and the attributes of the children with whom they interact. This perspective underscores the fact that the relationship between teacher and student is a bidirectional psychosocial influence process in which the learning that occurs depends upon the quality of the relationship between each participant (Hester, Hester, &

Hendrickson, 2005). Both partners bring their developmental histories, relational capacities, and particular behavioral propensities to form a unique intersubjective relationship with one another. The degree to which the teacher student dyad is characterized by empathy, a working alliance, and the establishment of a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity will contribute to the overall growth and learning of the student. Only when we begin to focus on how teacher and student perceptions, judgment, and relational capacities play a powerful role in setting the stage for, and maintaining, academic and behavior problems, can we begin to implement effective interventions.

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PREPARING SPECIAL EDUCATORS IN READING INSTRUCTION: THE IMPACT OF STATE CERTIFICATION POLICIES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER CERTIFICATION PROGRAMS

Mary Theresa Kiely

In the United States, under The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB; 2001) and The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; USDE, 2004), special education teachers become certified by passing a state exam in special education and holding a bachelor's degree. This implies that formal teacher education is unnecessary. Research on teacher quality in special education, however, suggests that this is not the case (Darling-Hammond, 2000). Research findings also point to the importance of preparation to teach reading for special educators (Brady & Moats, 1997; Brownell & Haager, 2006; Wise & Snyder, 2002). The need for teachers to be knowledgeable about teaching reading is being recognized in many states' *Reading First* efforts. It is not known, however, whether states are recognizing the need to prepare prospective special education teachers to provide reading instruction, or whether defining state standards in reading for special education preparation programs even has an effect on teacher preparation.

We examined the impact of state policy on preparation for teaching reading in special education teacher preparation programs, and the role rigorous standards and assessment of teacher knowledge play in the design and delivery of alternative and traditional route preparation programs. Implications for setting teacher education state policies are discussed.

Method

We analyzed websites of the 20 largest states in terms of size of student population to determine standards they set for reading preparation in special education. We ultimately selected four states for closer study. Interviews were conducted with state departments of education personnel and program providers from traditional and alternative routes. Interview questions focused on the nature of the state's standards and how programs respond to standards.

Within the 20 states determined by size, we selected states according to whether they had published standards elaborating the state's expectations for special education teachers in the area of reading, whether a specific test in reading instruction was required for special educator certification, and whether a specific number of credit hours or courses in reading instruction

were required for special education certification. We selected states that were similar in terms of size and demographic diversity, but diverse in terms of geographical regions and reading requirements. Four researchers interviewed state department personnel who were knowledgeable about certification requirements for special education teachers and teacher education program personnel in both traditional and alternative settings in four states.

Interviews were transcribed and broad themes were identified. Memoing and open coding were performed. Meetings were held to clarify themes and reach agreement on the predominant ideas in the interviews.

Results

Few states require programs to address reading knowledge and skills in the preparation of their special education teachers. Teacher education programs in states requiring reading certification tests have responded by increasing preparation in this area.

This first round of analysis revealed participants' attitudes towards state certification policies fell into four major areas: (a) beefing up requirements to meet state standards, (b) what gets tested gets taught, (c) the standards shuffle, and (d) the mystery of the alternative routes. Participants frequently spoke of increasing the amount or the depth of courses to prepare teachers to teach reading effectively, and raising the bar with regard to what pre-teachers should know about ways to teach reading. State reading tests had an impact on how reading courses were structured, to the point that test blueprints were reported to be the basis for course construction. The constant changes in standards and policies have resulted in a teacher preparation system whose requirements are in perpetual flux, which was reported to be stressful for teacher candidates. Last, only one alternative route representative (out of six) consented to participate despite repeated attempts; it is unclear therefore how policy affects those programs.

Discussion

State responses to federal legislation vary dramatically, not surprisingly considering the latitude afforded them by the law. Some states have no requirements at all in the area of preparation to teach reading for prospective special educators; others require extensive coursework and a particular score on a rigorous, specific test. The use of a test seemed to be an effective way to influence teacher preparation program content, but only if the test is specific and relevant.

Although knowledge of teaching reading is essential to successful instruction of students with disabilities, states have been slow to enact standards for teacher education. Moreover, NCLB and IDEA provide little incentive for states to set a higher bar for preparation programs. Our research suggests that despite the current federal policy context in the United States, some states recognize the need for preparation programs to provide special education teachers with training in reading, and as such, have set higher standards. Further analyses of our data will help us understand the degree to which higher state standards affect the nature of teacher education programs.

It is clear that policy can have a qualitative impact on the nature of teacher preparation in a specific and well-defined area such as reading instruction for special education teachers. Policymakers should consider, however, the impact of the constant flux in standards and requirements on the teacher preparation enterprise. While standards do need to reflect up-to-date research, there is a tension between improvement and stability, and between standards and shortages. Teacher educators need to be aware of shifts in thinking related to teacher certification policy at the state level, and prepared to offer guidance to policymakers regarding what teachers need to know. Future research in this area entails the investigation of whether and how policy might help to improve teacher education as well as how it may hinder efforts to improve teacher education. Further research is also needed to determine how well a reading instruction test for teachers predicts effective classroom reading instruction.

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ENERGIZING UNIVERSITY CLASSES AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT SEMINARS: ACTIVITIES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION FACULTY

Patricia Williams
Margaret Hammer
Nancy Casey

I can't spend so much time helping this one student that I don't have time for everyone else. It's frustrating and exhausting. I want to be the best teacher, but I feel that I'm not teaching my subject; I'm just babysitting. (Comment at the beginning of the student teaching semester)

My kids with disabilities behaved better than the rest. I was blown away. They were my favorites, not my behavior problems. (Comment after student teaching for twelve weeks)

These are typical student teacher comments that we hear. Why? Our students learn that they are teaching individuals—children and adolescents, not history, math, or reading. What do public and private pre-K through twelfth grade general education teachers need to know about working with students who have disabilities? In teaching undergraduate methods students/student teachers and graduate students enrolled in education courses to use best practices in working with special populations, we use creative, interactive strategies that will help them remember what to do in their classes and understand legal requirements. During this energizing workshop, we will share six activities that we use in university classrooms and professional development seminars.

In addition, we have students role play what in Texas is called an admissions, review, and dismissal meeting and determine what should be in the child's individualized education program. In this exercise, students will consider parental rights, safety issues, and diagnostician reports. Both preservice and actual teachers benefit from this activity because they assume various roles, including being the child's parents. In addition, we utilize case studies (e.g., a student who is a gifted English language learner and has a disability). Students are asked to explain how they would handle the situation and what the general education faculty would need to do to accommodate this child.

To have our undergraduate and graduate students complete in-depth research on particular disabilities (e.g., autism, traumatic brain injury), we divide them into groups and help them locate Internet resources, books, journal articles, and other materials on the particular disability they are assigned. Upon completion of this assignment, all students have a detailed notebook to take with them on the characteristics, needs, special services, and resources available for students with various disabilities. Other activities (e.g., designing appropriate questions for a special education teacher, diagnostician, psychologist, or psychiatrist interview; completing a reading road map of a special education chapter) provide learning strategies to use with general education teachers and ways to adapt them to their future school settings.

For conference attendees who are interested may contact the author(s) and request information on (a) how to design a lesson to teach their peers and accompanying handouts, and (b) developing peer, self, and university faculty rubrics helpful in evaluating student presentations.

In addition, research data from undergraduate and graduate students concerning which activities helped them the most to understand how to work with students who have special needs are available. Other information available from the author(s) includes the results of a questionnaire from secondary, private school students who want to become teachers on their views on teaching and working with children.

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MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG ADULTS WITH DISABILITIES: A FAPE-22 PARTNERSHIP

Patricia A. Parrish
Marguerite McInnis
Karen Hahn

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEIA; 2004) requires Local Education Agencies (LEA) to provide free and appropriate public education to students through age 22. These services are commonly referred to as FAPE-22 services. Best practice also requires that educational services be provided as much as possible with same-aged, non-disabled peers. In order to meet both mandated services and best practice, The School Board of Pasco County, FL

approached Saint Leo University in November 2005 with hopes of establishing a public school classroom on the college campus. The paper will outline the process followed to develop a partnership that allows FAPE-22 students to receive services, including job training and functional academics, in an environment with exposure to same-aged peers.

At our initial meeting, the School Board provided an information packet outlining the proposed program, examples of other programs (Newbert, Moon, Grigal, & Redd, 2002), expectations and responsibilities and other articles relevant to the project (Grigal, Newbert, & Moon, 2002). During this initial meeting, we discussed logistics, responsibilities, and other contractual elements which are foundational to a successful program (Grigal, Neubert, & Moon, 2001).

The Pasco County School Board then developed a draft contract for review by the Saint Leo University legal representative, the Dean and the Graduate Director. Discussion and interaction followed to finalize a contract that would meet the needs of both parties. This process delineated our initial discussions about responsibilities, eligibility, employment, time frames, liability, class attendance, and other details. The final contract was submitted, accepted, and signed five months after our initial meetings.

An additional meeting in May 2006 was devoted exclusively to components for housing the program at Saint Leo University. In this meeting, we discussed certain logistics such as the office space, number of students, transportation issues, issuing identification cards, lunch room access, library access, class attendance, and employment issues. Later that summer, the School Board designated a Job Placement/Transition Specialist and an Instructional Assistant to manage the program. Generally, staffing is by the local school system, in this case Pasco County (Grigal et al., 2001).

Understanding the host culture is an ongoing educational process. It is not enough to provide an initial orientation of the program's personnel and participants as to life at Saint Leo. We have had meetings with Human Resources regarding employment of participants and feedback about participants' employment performance. In addition, attitudinal barriers (Grigal et al., 2002) such as class attendance, and off-campus activities were discussed. Most of these issues have been generated by Saint Leo representatives as issues have come to light that needed attention. It is recommended that ongoing planned communication is needed to resolve these issues and address any other issues that arise.

We have found that it is important to adjust many of our original decisions regarding some of issues delineated above as the program has progressed. Some of these adjustments have been the result of understanding the host culture and some have been logistical in nature. Logistical concerns included access to a copy machine, access to the library, dining hall access, job placement processes, and calendars. Other concerns were more pressing.

Almost immediately, there were concerns regarding transportation. The district school bus was planning to drive on campus to drop off/pick up students in the commuter parking lot. University staff were very concerned about creating a social divide if our college students saw their public-school peers getting off the school bus. Additionally, there were safety concerns regarding maneuvering the bus in the crowded parking lot. Ultimately, a solution was found by

having the bus stop on the road outside the University's main gate with students walking to their classroom from there.

Another concern that arose was in expectations for FAPE-22 students if they attended college classes. The Job Placement/Transition Specialist's perception of this process, based on her observations in a large university, was that students could attend sporadically. However, Saint Leo University has small class size, averaging 14 students, and we realized our faculty would not agree to sporadic attendance. We also felt strongly that FAPE-22 students needed to come to class prepared and to participate in all tests and quizzes. Another concern with class attendance was the need for FAPE-22 students to participate in Community-Based Instruction (CBI) which would create conflicts with class attendance. This was addressed in the second semester by only putting FAPE-22 students in classes meeting on Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Thursday, thus leaving Fridays open for CBI and other experiences. Additionally, the Job Placement/ Transition Specialist was asked to monitor attendance during the second semester of the program, as many students stopped attending classes toward the end of the first semester.

The first year of the program has been successful, with students engaged in on-campus job training and in college-level classes. FAPE-22 students have been widely accepted by college students with whom they attend class. One student has been employed by the University in a paid job. However, this success was the result of many hours of work on behalf of both school district and university personnel, who made considerable efforts to keep communication open.

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UNIVERSAL DESIGN: AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO ACADEMIC INCLUSION FOR ALL STUDENTS

Rick Freeze

Universal Design (UD) originated in the field of architecture in response to the demand for more accessible school, work, and community environments for individuals with disabilities. Ron Mace, who coined the term Universal Design, defined it as the design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design (The Center for Universal Design, 2007). The idea was to avoid the costs and inconvenience of *retrofitting* physical accommodations for people with disabilities by designing them to be more universally accessible in the first place (e.g., replacing stairs with ramps and elevators, adding automated doors, introducing sound signals at crosswalks, coding elevator buttons with Braille). Later, the concept of UD expanded to include the renovation of spaces and infrastructures to accept a wider diversity of individual differences, including cultural and linguistic differences (e.g., pictures and symbols rather than words to accommodate language differences in public spaces, choice of language at banking machines and internet websites, using real-time voice recognition software to convert speech to text in users' languages during instruction). Recently, UD principles have been imported into education as a way to create inclusive educational technologies, curricula, teaching strategies, and learning supports (Bowe, 2000; Curry, 2003; Jackson & Harper, 2002; McGuire, Scott & Shaw, 2003; Priestley, 2006; Udvari-Solner, Villa & Thousand, 2005).

Universal Design reduces the need *to retrofit* accommodations for students with special needs through adaptation, modification, individualization, and alternative programming by planning for their inclusion in the physical, social, and academic life of the classroom from the outset. From the UD perspective, the need to adapt, modify, individualize, or segregate points to design flaws in educational environments, curricula, teaching and learning technologies, instruction, behaviour management, and in-class student and teacher supports. Such inadequacies likely arose and became perpetuated because traditional special education methods are grounded in a pedagogy that did not anticipate the inclusion of students representing a wide variety of disabilities and diversities in classrooms. Unfortunately, the traditional accommodations prevalent in special education today have had undesired and largely unintended consequences.

These include: (a) full or partial segregation, (b) social marginalization, (c) lowered expectations, (d) substandard academic achievement, (e) devaluation, (f) exclusion, and (f) low self-esteem (Freeze, 2006; James & Freeze, 2006; Koskie & Freeze, 2000; Skrtic, 1995).

UD applications in education designed to create accessible teaching and learning technologies are illustrated by exemplary innovations such as Web-4-All (Matanga, 2005), an empowerment tool for people with disabilities and literacy challenges from minority ethno-cultural communities. Web-4-All provides alternative access tools for computer use that can be individually adapted to a variety of users with physical and perceptual disabilities and in a number of languages. The Teacher Resource Model (Priestley, 2006) and the Inclusive Teaching model of school-wide inclusive special education support services (Peterson & Hittie, 2003; Priestley, 2006) represent examples of UD infrastructure reform. These approaches combine the use of (a) class profiles and multilevel programming, (b) trans-disciplinary teaming and co-teaching, and (c) scaffolding and differentiated instruction with authentic assessment approaches that fuse teaching and assessment. They combine to create collaborative, inclusive, in-class *special education* supports for students and teachers. Although, in this context, *special education* becomes a misnomer - UD is about pre-empting the need for the continual process of redesign we call special education with universally inclusive approaches to teaching, learning and the promotion of responsible behaviour.

UD applications in academic areas include strategies that provide remediation infused within regular instruction in ways that assist all students, not just those with academic deficits. One example of such an approach is Precision Reading (Freeze, 2006); a revolutionary, inexpensive, practical, and highly effective UD approach to recovery to grade level in reading. Useful at all grade levels, across content areas, Precision Reading bundles strategies that enhance fluency, word comprehension, and passage comprehension in ways that recover students' enthusiasm for reading and writing in the context of daily teaching and learning.

Universal Design is the theoretical orientation that converts special education for some into inclusive education for all. Finally, an emerging approach that addresses the practical concerns of teachers striving to be inclusive, but lacking the supports they feel they need to fully succeed.

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**NEW ROLE OF SPECIAL SCHOOLS: EMPOWERING MAINSTREAM
TEACHERS TO ENHANCE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Joan A. A. Jafthas

South Africa, officially the Republic of South Africa, is a country located at the southern tip of the African continent with a population of about 47,432,000 people South Africa. Two

philosophies originated in South Africa: ubuntu (the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity); and Ghandi's notion of passive resistance (Satyagraha), developed while he lived in South Africa. The country is one of the few in Africa never to have had a coup d'état, and regular elections have been held for almost a century, however, the vast majority of black South Africans were not enfranchised until 1994. The economy of South Africa is the largest and best developed on the continent, with modern infrastructure common throughout the country. South Africa is often referred to as *The Rainbow Nation*, a term coined by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and later adopted by then President Nelson Mandela as metaphor to describe the country's newly-developing multicultural diversity in the wake of segregationist apartheid.

Learners with disability experienced great difficulty in gaining access to education. Very few special schools existed and they were limited to admitting learners according to rigidly applied categories. Learners who experienced learning difficulties because of severe poverty did not qualify for educational support. The impact of White Paper 6 on Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (DOE, 2001), was that only 20% of learners with disabilities were accommodated in special schools.

The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has established Education Management and Development Centres (EMDCs) in seven education districts. Launched in July 2001, the aim of the EMDCs is to bring management and development support closer to public schools throughout the Western Cape, and to assist schools in their efforts to become more accountable learning organisations, able to manage themselves effectively, efficiently and economically. The launch marked a major milestone in the development of the education in the province, and followed several years of policy research and development by WCED task teams, in collaboration with NGOs and donor agencies.

EMDCs offer a range of services, provided by teams of specialists, assisted by the WCED's Head Office in Cape Town. These services include (a) curriculum development and support, (b) specialised learner and educator support (SLES), (c) institutional management and governance (IMG) support, and (d) administrative services, including institutional development and support for Articles 20 and 21 schools, labour relations assistance, and internal administrative services.

EMDCs also promote parental involvement in schools through school governance, local participation in the WCED's Safe Schools Project, and internal administrative services. Four of the EMDCs are in the metropolitan region of Cape Town and three are in the rural areas. The WCED's Directorate: SLES offers a range for learners experiencing barriers to learning. The services include (a) prevention of learning difficulties, (b) early identification of learning difficulties and early intervention, (c) specialised support services including psychological, therapeutic, health and social services, (d) education programmes for learners with special education needs (LSEN) in both mainstream schools and in schools for learners with special education needs. The directorate manages 77 schools in the province for learners with special needs.

Our Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) serves as the basis of our democratic state and common citizenship on the values and human dignity, the achievement of equality and the advancements of human rights and freedoms. Outcomes-based Education (OBE) was introduced in South

Africa in 1997. The new Ministry of Education (MoE) had to move away from apartheid education and introduce a new curriculum in the interest of all South Africans. According for the Revised National Curriculum Statements (RNCS), OBE forms the foundation of the curriculum in South Africa. It strives to enable all learners to achieve their maximum ability (DOE, 2002). According to Naicker (1999), are there various similarities between OBE and Inclusive Education.

Inclusive Education was introduced into South Africa by the National Commission on Special Needs in Education and Training (DOE, 1997a) and the National Committee on Education Support Services (DOE, 1997b). These bodies were appointed in 1996 by the President and the MOE to investigate and make recommendations on all aspects of educational and training need and support services (DOE, 1996). A joint report on the findings of these two bodies was presented to the Minister of Education in November 1997, and the final report was published by the Department of Education (DOE) in February 1998 for public comment and advice (Report of NCSNET/NCESS: DOE, 1997).

The central findings of the investigation included:

- Specialised education and support have predominantly been provided for a small percentage of learners with disabilities within “special “schools and classes;
- Where provided, specialised education and support were provided on a racial basis, with the best human, physical and material resources reserved for whites;
- Most learners with disability have been fallen outside of the system or been *mainstreamed by default*;
- The curriculum and education system as a whole have generally failed to respond to the diverse needs of the learner population, resulting in massive numbers of drop-outs and failures; and while some attention has been given to the schooling phase with regard to *special needs and support*, the other levels or bands of education have been seriously neglected.

In the light of these findings, the joint report of the two bodies recommended that the education and training system should promote education for all and foster the development of inclusive and supportive centres of learning that would enable all learners to participate actively in the education process (DOE, 2001).

In accepting inclusive education, it is essential to acknowledge that the learners who are most vulnerable to barriers to learning and exclusion in South Africa are those who have historically been termed *learners with special education needs* (i.e., learners with disabilities and impairments). Interventions or strategies at different levels, such as the classroom, the school, the district, the provincial and national departments and systems, will be essential to prevent them from causing learning to be ineffective. Interventions or strategies will also be essential to avoid barriers to learning from contributing to the exclusion of learners from the curriculum and/or from the education and training system.

The White Paper 6 Building an Inclusive Education and Training System in South Africa (DOE, 2001), emphasises the need to develop a community-based effective support systems to support schools and education institutions. A particular emphasis on the development of institution-level support teams also known as Teacher Support Teams (TSTs), with all education institutions.

TSTs is a learning institution-based team and comprises teachers, specialists and other interested stakeholders who co-operate on equal footing in order to provide advice, assistance and support to staff members and to the learning institution (Jafthas, 2004).

As I described earlier, special schools (resource centres) currently provide, in a racially segregated manner, education services of varying quality. While special schools provide critical education services to learners who require intense levels of support, they also accommodate learners who require much less support and should ideally be in mainstream schools. According White Paper 6 Building an Inclusive and Education and Training System (DOE, 2001), special schools will be converted to resource centres and will form part of District-based Support Teams (DBSTs) at departmental level, and provide specialised professional support in curriculum, assessment and instruction to neighbourhood (mainstream) schools. Therefore, the new role of special schools will have a vital influence on mainstream schools, and are as follow:

- The provision of comprehensive education programmes that provide life-skills training and programme-to-work linkages.
- Staff of special schools as part of the DBST at departmental level, will be retrained to assist and support mainstream teachers to accommodate learners with mild and moderate learning difficulties.
- They will serve as helpline for teachers or parents to connect regarding queries.
- Running workshops on a continuous basis on how to provide additional support in classrooms to visually impaired learners.
- Sharing and exchanging facilities, skills and information.
- Empower mainstream teachers to support learners in their classes who may have learning difficulties.
- Assist teachers in preparation of specific materials, training and capacity building.
- Adapting the curriculum and will focus specifically on differentiation.
- Good practices will be shared, and
- Promoting sustainability and ongoing development.

The essential feature of the support from special schools to mainstream schools are that they will work in collaboration with, and provide assistance and support to, other schools in the area so that a range of learning needs can be addressed. Members of the DBSTs at departmental level will have meetings, information sessions, discussions as well as training schedules to be more skilful to support mainstream teachers. With the new role of special schools in the education department, the DBSTs, comprise of psychologists and learning support advisers at district level, therapists and special education teachers from special schools, a foundation for all learning is the creation of an inclusive ethos of the education institution, a secure, accepting and stimulating society.

Through the White Paper 6, the Government is determined to create special needs education as a non-racial and integrated component of our education system. I am fully convinced that our Inclusive Education policy on the special schools project will be an advantage for our Western Cape Education Department.

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PUZZLES AND HUMOR IN MATH AND SCIENCE LEARNING AND TEACHING

Daniel Nomishan

There is now a greater desire, ever than before, to move the teaching of mathematics and science from the traditional methods whereby students are fed information of facts with little room for them to explore math and science concepts, examine objects, observe phenomena, design experiments, and collect data. In many classrooms teachers use inquiry methodology that involves utilizing individual interaction with the environment, assessing prior knowledge, communicating science understanding, and active engagement. This method may not help all or most students Choate, 1997). Often, teachers may resort to direct instruction as a way out (Van de Walle, 2006). In particular, students with exceptionalities at all levels often have difficulty

with mathematics and science. This made us look at other ways to teach math and science that make the learning of these subjects less stressful. This presentation examines how using puzzles and humor can produce greater learning outcomes than when using either traditional or constructivist methods alone (Henderson, 1996). We believe that the use of humorous jokes and puzzles can and does help reduce anxiety and increase performance.

In simple terms stress is viewed as an ongoing, interactive process that takes place as people adjust to and cope with their environment (Bernstein, Roy, Srull, & Wickens, 1991). The researchers continue to say that stressors such as pressure, conflict, and boredom tend to interfere with performance. We all have some form of stress and are generally able to cope well when the tasks are simple. As people encounter more difficult activities the behaviors that result from stressors may not be the desired ones. Teachers must be aware that difficult tasks in science and mathematics can and do lead to science and mathematics anxiety. Simplifying tasks, using puzzles and humor also help to motivate students, especially those students that have challenges.

Students are likely to learn best when they are engaged in hands-on experiences as they explore, discuss, observe, and experiment. Learning math and doing science is not only *fun* it provides an avenue for learners to be totally immersed in the process. They are into science and math because they can relate what they are learning to their real lives. As students explore the different resources, they are also bound to ask questions and seek answers to them, they are often thinking creatively as well as critically to solve problems, and are able to develop and use their own and other technological resources.

When using puzzles and humor, students can work individually or cooperatively. This is an aspect of active and collaborative learning. Active learning allows students to listen and inquire (Victor & Kellough, 2005). By using puzzles and humor, students are able to construct their own meaning of the concepts that are hidden in them. As students work together, they are able to examine diverse points of view, are able to support one another, and make decisions that reflect cooperative efforts. The following are examples of activities involving puzzles and humor that were used by the authors to reach diverse student groups in the elementary and middle school.

Math puzzles are given as simple problems that require thinking before answering them. The following represents humor and puzzles in elementary and middle school education.

- In how many moves can one transfer all the discs from peg 1 to peg 3 of the *Tower of Hanoi* puzzle? Only one disc can be moved at a time and you cannot place a smaller disc on a larger one in the process (Posamentier & Stepelman, 2003, www.mazeworks.com). How many moves would it take one to do it?
- Write six palindromic years beginning with 2002 and find the difference between any consecutive years. What do you get? Take any middle two non-zero digits and divide by 2. What do you get? Try any two similar numbers of a four-digit palindrome (Posamentier, et al., 2003).
- See what you get when you add 9 and 9 and add the digits of the sum; add 9 plus 9 plus 9 and add the digits in the answer. What about multiplying 123456789 by 9 or 18 or 27? Also, see if you can multiply by nine by using one of the nines to make the others into tens and then adding what you have left? You must keep track of your fingers.
- You have five points do not shine; and do not live in the sky. What are you?

- This thing has a hidden treasure inside and it can open and close. Can you guess what it is?

One often hears riddles about animals, materials, and household objects. These can form the basis for discussions of science and mathematics concepts and procedures (Nomishan, 2007). We attempted to anecdotally analyze the usefulness of these tools across special needs populations. It was observed that special needs students tended to take longer periods of time in solving conceptual and contextual problems that demanded higher-order thinking skills. This was more so when teaching strategies were mainly at the abstract, symbolic level. The use of puzzles and humor enabled a large number of students to relate to the real world examples and were able to make meanings of the concepts taught. This is in line with many researchers who believe that the use of appropriate approaches and materials will enhance greater attainment of knowledge and concept understanding (Bruner, 1986; Carin & Bass, 2001; Ebenezer & Connor, 2006; Martin, 2003; & Victor & Kellough, 2005).

In conclusion, several observations can be made from the use of puzzles and humor as teaching and learning tools. Language development is necessary to enhance mathematical and scientific thinking and processes (Vygotsky, 1962). Clear communication (use of language) is an integral part of the teaching learning process. Students should be provided opportunities to use concepts and manipulative materials, including computers and other technology (Forcier, 2005) as when solving the *Tower of Hanoi* problem. Use cues and prompts to facilitate the thinking and problem-solving process. Proceed from the simple to the complex procedures for learning concepts. Make learning math and science fun and challenging at the same time.

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**OPTIMIZING FLUENCY THROUGH SINGLE SUBJECT RESEARCH:
STUDENTS WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENTS**

Erika M. Forster
Junie Brayley

Although there is a lack of commensurate research for students with visual impairments, it is thought that their early reading skills are predictive of later reading skills as is the case for sighted students (Juel, 1988). A number of studies show that, in the absence of high quality, specialized intervention and regular progress monitoring, children with visual impairments are at an increased risk for literacy problems (Koenig & Holbrook, 2000; Ryles, 1998). It has been demonstrated that these difficulties are likely to have an adverse impact on their educational career and eventual employment potential (Amato, 2000). Estimates of under- or unemployment among adults, with visual impairments, range from 70-80%. These alarming employment statistics have a strong connection to literacy rates (Ryles). Specialists in the field join with stakeholders across disciplines in demanding a greater emphasis on evidenced-based accountability and empirical measures of student achievement and progress monitoring in key areas such as literacy. Developing reading proficiency in areas such as oral reading fluency for young students with visual impairments is an ongoing subject of concern in the clinical practice of teachers for students with visual impairments and is reflected in the research.

The study addressed in this paper investigated whether a functional relationship existed between the implementation of a treatment package aimed at maximizing visual functioning and the improvement in oral reading fluency rates for a legally blind, severely photophobic grade four student. The multi-component treatment package included environmental modifications to the oral reading fluency testing conditions, adaptations to the grade level reading materials for the fluency tests, and the use of a non-optical tool. The treatment package was designed to optimize visual functioning and mitigate the effects of the student's visual impairment on her fluency

during one minute curriculum based measurement oral reading assessments that preceded and followed a 20-minute sustained silent reading period. A brief ABAB design was adopted to assess if the student's oral reading fluency scores were affected by the implementation and withdrawal of the treatment package. It is hoped that this study's findings will encourage replication and further research on effective fluency-related interventions for young readers with visual impairments. Additionally, the intent was to advance a progress monitoring and intervention model based on single subject research methodology that coordinates the expertise of a variety of school personnel in a multidisciplinary team approach to meet the unique literacy needs of students with visual impairments. The ultimate goal is to reinforce the use of the intervention associated with higher oral reading fluency rates extra-experimentally and across settings as part of the student's ongoing program.

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ADVOCATING THE FUTURE: UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SKILLS THAT PREPARE STUDENTS FOR THE COLLEGE EXPERIENCE

Yvonne Redmond-Brown Banks

Students with special needs entering the college system require skills that provide an anchor as they transition into a new learning environment. Mastering pragmatic and universal social skills prior to leaving school promote appropriate behaviors that enhance their transition into the college setting. The transitional needs of young adults entering college with special need are not limited to the academic realm. Educational models that promote social competency, along with academic improvement are seen as the appropriate models for the future learning of students. The Office of the Prime Ministry of Education (2005) released a report that advocated for the educational needs of students and cited equipping them with universal social skills to support their transition into college and beyond.

Social skills deficits are key issues for schools to address when assessing the future needs of students with unique challenges seeking a positive post-secondary experience. A universal method for developing social skill competency in schools prior to the college experience is cited in the literature as impactful. This point is especially relevant for students with educational needs that fall under the category of emotional/behavioral or specific learning disabilities. If special education students are to have a more successful post-secondary experience, according to Lohrmann and Talerica (2004), effective social competencies/skills are needed. As we look to the future, it appears important to help students with special needs improve in the area of social competency. Social competency/skills are needed to support students with special challenges experience success beyond the doors of college and into the workforce.

If students labeled with special needs are expected to experience success in college they will need a well developed set of transferable social skills. Therefore, helping students to develop such skills prior to leaving the secondary setting would be in line with the best practices outlined in the literature (e.g., Maddox-Dolan, 2003; Turco & Elliot, 1990). For students who received special needs services under the labels of either emotional or behavioral disorders or specific learning disabilities, the lack of social skills impacts how well they can effectively navigate the college setting. Educational settings working to improve the social skills development of students with special needs preparing to go to college are on track with the best practices outlined in the literature. Developing social skills that prepare special needs students for college and beyond is highlighted in the literature in terms of readiness skills. Readiness skills for college support the vocational component of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process. Addressing the needed social skills development for this population is relevant because approximately 11% of college undergraduates reported having a need for services that support a documented disability and that number is increasing. Assessing the learning environment to determine where universal social skills strategies can be employed, before students enter college, appears to be a good place to start. Providing students with anchoring social skills should be part of the learning experience that occurs prior to students leaving school for college (Lohrmann & Talerico, 2004).

It is suggested that schools teach skills that will help students read social cues while in group settings. Learning transferable social cues can help students with special needs master the social skills that are expected at the college level (Lohmann & Tolerica, 2004; Maddox-Dolan, 2003). Research promotes using strategies that focus on students' learning cues from peers in a group setting help reduce nonproductive social behaviors, because the strategies taught are easily reinforceable and readily implementable in a classroom setting (Turco & Elliot, 1990).

Strategies that help students advocate, negotiate and mediate social relationships with peers and others are key social skills for college success (Westby, 2003).

The IEP process is an inclusive model that allows for integrated components that can support social skills being developed throughout the curriculum. A review of the research sets forth what social skills students need exposure to before entering the college environment. Developing practical social skills will anchor students into a more successful college experience from the onset. School should address the following areas in order to improve the social skills of students labeled with special needs heading off to college (Inger, 1991; Lohrmann & Talerico, 2004; Westby, 2003).

- Listening to others.
- Adjusting to conflict.
- Learn how to take action and following up.
- Learn positive active group participation skills.
- Learn self-advocacy skills and social negotiating skills.
- Practice the designed social skills across the curriculum.
- Learn strategies to reduce out of seat frequency and incomplete assignment patterns.

Students with special needs face many challenges while transitioning into the college setting. Providing transitional skills that help promote success is a practical step for schools to take in order to equip and anchor students for success in college (College Bound, 2000, 2003). Advocating for the future success of students labeled with social, emotional or learning challenges mandates that special needs students heading off to college become equipped prior to leaving high school with practical social skills. It is anticipated that such skills will enhance their college experience and lead to success beyond the doors of college. Preparing special needs students for the future involves social competency improvements that follow them to college (CEC, 2006), and into the workforce.

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WHAT RESEARCH TELLS US ABOUT NOTE-TAKING

Joseph R. Boyle

Prior research has shown that effective note-taking leads to increased engagement during lectures and increased achievement on tests. A number of studies have demonstrated that effective note-taking increases attention to material, allows for active engagement in the lecture, encourages students to clarify their understanding of confusing points (Austin, Lee & Carr, 2004; Ruhl & Suritsky, 1995), and overall, increases comprehension of lecture material (i.e., test performance) (Boyle & Weishaar, 2001; Peper & Mayer, 1986).

Despite evidence that students who record notes perform better on recall measures and tests (Barnett, 2003; Kiewra, 1985), students are not explicitly taught how record notes. Few, if any, students are given instructions in how to use different note-taking techniques to enhance their own learning. Even students with mild disabilities, who record fewer and less complete notes than nondisabled students, are rarely given formal instruction in note-taking (Suritsky & Hughes, 1996). To complicate matters, while teachers are lecturing they may not be prompting students to record complete notes (Austin et al., 2004). What makes these findings troubling is that research has shown that that notes serve as the primary means of capturing lecture content (Suritsky & Hughes, 1991) and that lecture information is directly linked to teacher-made tests (Putnam, Deshler, & Schumaker, 1993). This same research has noted that information presented in lectures usually shows up in tests and these tests often comprise half of the student's grade (Putnam et al., 1993). In other words, students with disabilities who are effective note-takers or who are trained in note-taking will more likely perform better on classroom tests than those students not trained or those students who used conventional note-taking (Boyle, 2006; Boyle & Weishaar, 2001; Lazarus, 1991).

Teachers can do a number of things to improve their own lectures and the note-taking skills of students with mild disabilities. These changes can lead to improved performance on the amount

of notes students record, their recall of lecture points, and their comprehension of lecture information (Boyle, in press; Boyle & Weishaar, 2001; Lazarus, 1991; Maddox & Hoole, 1975). A review of the literature on note-taking skills indicates that many of the techniques fall into two broad categories: strategies for teachers to use while lecturing and strategies for students to use in note taking.

Strategies for teachers include a continuum of approaches that can be incorporated before, during, or after the lecture to increase the number of notes students record. For example, if the teacher provides cues during note-taking, students will likely record more notes. Student techniques are those that can be used by students before, during, or after taking notes on the lecture and serve to mediate between the lecture points provided by the teacher and the cues given on the note pages to aid students at recording more notes.

Using teacher cues involves calling attention to important lecture points. The two types of lecture cues commonly used by teachers are organizational cues and emphasis cues. Organizational cues are those cues that are given by teachers as they present lecture points in a small cluster of related information. For example the cue, *there are six components to a plant cell*, informs students to record the category *components of a plant cell* and to record a least six points about a plant cell. Emphasis cues on the other hand are meant to call attention to a critical lecture point that the teacher would like all students to record and later recall. For instance the cue, *it is important to remember that...* serves to call attention a point that may later show up on a test. Both types of cues serve to insure that certain lecture points are recorded and hopefully remembered by students.

Of the student techniques, two that have been demonstrated by research as effective mediating techniques for students with learning disabilities are strategic note-taking and guided notes. To use strategic note-taking, students are first given *cued* note paper. The first portion of strategic note-taking has students quickly identify the lecture topic and relate the topic to their own prior knowledge. In the next step, students cluster together three to seven main points with details from the lecture as they are being presented. At the bottom of each page, students are asked to summarize lecture information, again to assist in encoding of lecture material. The steps of naming three to seven new main points and summarizing immediately after naming these points is repeated until the lecture ends. The last step involves writing five main points and describing each. This step is intended to serve as a quick review of the lecture.

Guided notes can be described as *a skeleton outline that lists main points of a verbal presentation and provides designated spaces for students to complete as the speaker elaborates on each main idea* (Lazarus, 1991, p. 33). To construct guided notes, the teacher takes lecture notes and pulls out the main lecture points. These main points are then placed in the guided notes on prepared notepaper and space is left for the student to fill in details during the lecture. Students are then given guided notes prior to the lecture and are asked to complete the outline during the lecture. One advantage of using guided notes is that students are given an outline listing and structuring the main ideas prior and during learning.

In conclusion, although note-taking represents a complex process, teachers can help students to become better note-takers through a number of lecture modifications and through explicit

training in note-taking. By helping students to attend to important lecture information, students will record more notes and in the process become better note-takers.

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**MUSIC AS AN EFFECTIVE TOOL IN IMPROVING
FOLLOWING DIRECTION SKILLS**

Zuhar Rende

Music is one of the important ways in which children with exceptionalities express themselves. It is a nonverbal form of communication that helps the child to socialize and develop in other areas. Music therapy has been used to establish and teach a variety of skills and behaviors including following directions. Nelson, Anderson & Gonzales (1984) indicate that music stimulation is often used as a therapeutic tool in the education of children with mental retardation, and the music activities in therapy provide a variety of rich play opportunities for children with mental retardation. Songs and games affect the general personality of children with mental retardation. To educate the children with mental retardation, special educators and music therapists have looked for various kinds of suitable techniques, and have used them in many settings.

Jung (1977) indicates that songs and games included in activities improve both expressive and receptive language. In addition, children who experience individual and/or group musical therapy learn to pay attention to themselves and others. These skills are necessary for any type of learning activity to occur. Spencer (1988) studied the efficiency of both instrumental and movement activities in following directions. The present study investigated the applicability of Spencer's findings to the Turkish setting.

The primary purpose of this study was to compare the effectiveness of instrumental and movement activities in helping adolescents with mental retardation develop the ability to follow directions. This study also set out to investigate the sufficient time needed to develop the ability to follow directions.

Method

The target population for this study consisted of children with mental retardation enrolled in public schools in Turkey. Twenty-eight children with moderate to severe mental retardation between the ages of eight to fourteen were included in the study. All twenty-eight children attended a day school, and were randomly assigned to two experimental groups: instrumental and

movement intervention groups. Fourteen children from a self-contained classroom in a public elementary school formed the control group.

The main instrument used to collect data was the Following Directions Evaluation Tool (FDET). Data relating to the background information of the subjects were collected using the information form. A checklist was used to record the observation of the subjects during the testing stage. The FDET was based on the 10-items that Spencer (1988) used in a similar research. These items included following direction commands, which required usage of musical instruments and motor skills in the responses. The entire instrument was translated into Turkish. Six-items were added to Spencer's items and adapted to the Turkish language and culture. For example, the researcher substituted the *lute* with *darbuka* and *piano* with *organ*. The standardization study of FDET was conducted with 60 children with moderate mental retardation, 60 children with mild mental retardation, and 60 children experiencing normal development between the ages of eight and fourteen. The validity and reliability of the instrument were determined during the standardization process.

The first experimental group of fourteen children was introduced to the program that covered instrumental activities. The second group of fourteen children was introduced to the program that included movement activities. Each program lasted 10 weeks. The researcher met with the control group 3 times during the snack period and art program. These sessions formed the placebo. Before the beginning of the intervention program, after 5 weeks had progressed, and then at the end of the program, both experimental and control groups were administered the FDET. Each groups pre-test, mid-test and post-test scores were analyzed and compared.

The following activities were used for the instrumental group: keeping instrumental rhythm related to the administered rhythm, playing instruments, stopping the play, following directions in sequences, figuring out the pauses between the rhythms, and increasing/decreasing the volume depending upon the administered direction. During the instrumental group activities, Orff-Schulwerk music instruments were used: drums, triangles cymbals and maracas (Orff, 1980). For the movement group, basic musical games, which included body movements and songs were played. These games were *Woodcutters*, *Our Body*, *One Day While I Was Going To School*, and *Musicians*. These activities combined music, body movements, and songs in a harmonious fashion.

Before the experiment started, the FDET was administered to children in both experimental and control groups to ascertain their level of following directions. The results of pretesting showed that there were no significant differences between both experimental groups and the control group. After 5 weeks of intervention, the FDET was administered individually to the two experimental groups and the control group. The posttest was administered after 10 weeks of intervention. One-way analysis of variance statistical technique was used in comparing subject's skills in both instrumental (Group 1), movement group (Group 2), and control group.

Results

The research findings indicated both music and movement therapies to be effective after 5 weeks intervention. The following direction skills of children in the movement group showed greater

improvement over the instrumental and control groups. These results validate Spencer's findings, which apply to both Turkish and North American settings.

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CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE SELF-DETERMINED IEPS: BICULTURALISM, COLLECTIVISM, INDIVIDUALISM AND CAREER TRANSITIONS

Rudolph L. Valenzuela

The challenge of providing a free appropriate public education that promotes and respects cultural and linguistic diversity (CLD) in secondary transition practices and leading to culturally responsive careers is an issue in the United States. By the year 2040, estimates suggest that more than half the K through 12 school population will consist of CLD students (Leake & Stodden, 2002). With the current and expected increase in CLD students and families in U. S. schools, educators must aim to provide instruction tending to the career education and cultural needs of this population. For example, the unemployment rate for individuals with disabilities of the largest ethnic and CLD group in the U. S., Hispanics, is 52% (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). No exact employment data for American Indian's with disabilities are available, but it is logical to presume their numbers are higher than those without disabilities. Unemployment rates for all

American Indians in the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) service regions range from a low of 41% to a high of 71% (Brown et al., 2001). Just as appalling are unemployment rates for other ethnic and cultural groups, as 72% for African Americans with disabilities and 75% for those with severe disabilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000). These outcomes indicating individuals with disabilities of all ethnic and cultural groups are experiencing difficulties transitioning into career positions illustrates the need to implement effective career education strategies, including cultural responsive self-determination instruction.

Cultural self-determination, as currently applied in the field of special education and self-directed Individualized Education Plan (IEP) instruction, focuses on values of individualism, which may be foreign to many members of CLD groups who practice bicultural and collectivist values (Geenan, Powers, & Vasquez-Lopez, 2003). The need for a more culturally responsive definition and practice of cultural self-determination in special education, in light of an increasing CLD population deserving recognition, needs to account for values of biculturalism, collectivism, and individualism. Cultural self-determination transition values entwined with the secondary transition planning process are self-awareness, self-advocacy, decision-making, interdependence, and adjustment (Valenzuela & Martin, 2005). Values of cultural self-determination are practiced by and vary within and between all ethnic groups (Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeir, 2002) and need to be considered when providing instruction in the self-directed IEP and in the transition planning process. Cultural self-determination is formed through attitudes developed by complex mental processes involving *values*, . . . [and] dispositions to act in certain ways. Educators providing secondary transition services must recognize and respect these cultural value differences.

Educators and vocational counselors must adopt, embrace, and implement culturally responsive career development models into career education programs to meet the employment needs of CLD students and families. Career development models considering values of collectivism are available and grounded in research. For example, vocational psychology researchers found that values of collectivism and individualism for many CLD individuals, specifically in interdependence, profoundly affect career choices (Juntunen et al., 2001). These studies provide evidence educators and vocational counselors need to become familiar with emerging CLD career development models and cultural values of students and families to provide culturally responsive self-determination instruction in career education.

Educators must begin to understand that cultural self-determination transition values, self-directed IEP practices, and career goals for many CLD students, parents, families, groups, and communities may be different than those expected in the mainstream. Assisting and respecting the various transition cultural values of ethnic and cultural groups may allow, for it cannot be worse (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996), for better transition outcomes for CLD youth in transition to careers. Infusing values of the mainstream culture must not come at the expense of those favored by the student, parent, family, group, and community. Furthermore, applying mono-cultural self-determination strategies across various ethnic and cultural groups without considering value differences most likely feeds sentiments of non-value among many CLD families. It is here, the frontier of cultural self-determination transition values of CLD youth, parents, families, groups, and communities that current special education leaders must halt their advance of mono-cultural self-determination IEPs focused on individualism. To recognize and respect the values of others

educators of cultural self-determination must begin to heed the lessons learned from bilingual educators (Garcia, 2005a; Garcia, 2005b) and that is, to bypass cultural penury the self must be allowed to express the *SELF* in a multitude of manners to enjoy the profits of cultural and linguistic diversity.

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**UNDOING DEFICIT THINKING: REDUCING IDENTIFICATION
RATES OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Barbara J. Sramek

Over the past several years, the Marshall Public Schools, like most districts, has focused on student achievement. Further, we believe that students will achieve to their fullest potential when they have an opportunity to participate in a rigorous and relevant curriculum and participate in instructional opportunities delivered in the general education classroom taught by content area experts.

The District has had a history of providing quality education for its students including students with disabilities. In reviewing the District's data, we became increasingly alarmed about the incident rate of students with disabilities within the district. Further, we were concerned that once students were identified, they were very unlikely to be dismissed from special education.

One of the issues that came to light as we examined our data was related to a culture that had been created in the district. Within that culture, staff members believed that the manner in which we provided help to students was to label the student with a disability and provide special education services.

Our staff was frequently engaging in deficit thinking (Valencia, 1997). The premise of deficit thinking involves looking at circumstances or characteristics of the student and his or her family and asserting that the reason for student struggle or failure was because of individual or familial reasons. Responsibility for struggle or failure rested with the student, not with the instruction or school. Rather than examining the system in which the child is educated, we tended to look only at the child. In essence, we looked at fixing the kid rather than addressing other issues within the system that would increase the likelihood of success for that child.

We utilized legislation to leverage for change, namely the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB, 2001) and the recent reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Educational Improvement Act (IDEA, 2004). Inherent in NCLB is a call for accountability. We recognized the imperative in scrutinizing the academic achievement of the disaggregated groups, and students with disabilities were among them. We married the call for accountability with opportunities for all students to receive instruction from highly qualified teachers in the general education environment. This change resulted in including students with disabilities as well as students who struggle in the general education environment and shifting our model of service delivery from one of pull out to one of providing services and supports in the general education classroom. This shift in service delivery has allowed us to serve the needs of all students, and

students do not require a label in order to receive services. Services and supports are provided to students based on need rather than a label.

As a district, we worked to establish a common understanding of the purpose of special education. Rather than viewing special education as providing extra help, we moved toward a shared definition of special education. We defined special education as specially designed instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability. We addressed our identification rates in several ways. First, we provided training and staff development for our special education personnel in a variety of areas. We examined our evaluation procedures as well as the scoring and interpreting of test data, and administrators worked with our special education staff to review scoring procedures as well as interpreting data from standardized instruments.

We repeatedly reviewed the criteria for disability as identified in the statute paying particular attention to the high incidence disabilities (speech and language disorders, specific learning disabilities, and emotional and behavioral disabilities). In addition to the aforementioned, we were particularly sensitive to referrals of students who were non-native speakers and worked to ensure that our assessments supported identification of a disability in both languages when applicable. We also frequently revisited the language of the criteria in each area of disability as we considered eligibility determination and focused on the notion of *significance*, a term included in each disability definition. Finally, we carefully monitored initial referrals and re-evaluations. We also purposefully examined the reevaluation process.

As we consider the data over a five year period, beginning in the 2000-2001 school year through the 2005-06 school year, the district reduced the rate of identification of students with disabilities. In 2000-2001, 17.26% of our student population was identified as having a disability. By 2006-2007, that rate had decreased to 13.50% of the student population. It is noteworthy to point out that in 2002-2003, 18.5 % of the students in the District were identified as students with disabilities, the highest rate of identification in the history of the district, and more than six percent higher than the state average. In addition, once a child was identified as a student with a disability, it was very likely that s/he would continue to be served in special education. In 2000-2001, 95.31% of students who were reevaluated continued to be eligible for and receive special education services, whereas in 2005-06, 68.42% of students continued in special education. Finally, in 2005-2006, the District's incidence rate of students with disabilities approached the state average.

As a part of this effort, we provided staff development for all of our staff with the intention of reframing their thinking related to disabilities. Part of that professional development involved addressing the myth that special education *helps* students by sharing research on the educational outcomes and long-term impact on students with disabilities. Students with disabilities are more likely to drop out of or leave high school without a diploma than their non-disabled peers. Students with disabilities are more likely to be unemployed or under employed than their non-disabled peers. Students with disabilities are more likely to be incarcerated than their non-disabled peers. These were not the outcomes that we desired for our students.

Just as we reviewed and discussed eligibility criteria and the notion of significance with special education staff, we also held those same conversations with general education staff. We also

provided parent education to increase understanding of eligibility as well as the purpose of special education. When students were found ineligible or no longer in need of services, we committed to provide supports and interventions on behalf of the students, and we kept our word in providing those services. Providing services and supports has gone a long way in providing the intervention that parents felt was needed as well as in alleviating the fears that parents expressed regarding dismissal. Parents have been accepting of our shift in service delivery and are grateful that students no longer require a label to access services.

Perhaps most importantly, we have moved from a reactive model that centered on remediation to proactive approaches that provide intervention and supports to students who may struggle behaviorally, emotionally, or academically. This process has laid the groundwork for implementing IDEA (2004) and Response to Intervention (RtI) requirements.

The focus of the Marshall Public Schools will continue to involve creating a culture of excellence for everyone. Our goal regarding students with disabilities is to identify and serve students at rates that are consistent with the state average and to provide instructional opportunities that lead to increased achievement for all children in the district.

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QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF WRITING SAMPLES OF YOUTH IN AN ALTERNATIVE SETTING

Zuhar Rende

Behavioral problems are among the main concerns of educators. Serious atypical behavior during adolescent years prevents successful school achievement, and serves as the basis for later delinquency and crime (Cassel, Chow, & Demoulin, 2000). There has been limited amount of

work that addresses the preventive intervention strategies and early identification of students who are at risk for behavioral disorders. The importance of language abilities and co-occurring disabilities has been an emerging area of research. It is essential to understand the language abilities of children who are at risk for behavioral disorders in order to provide the services that are needed.

Larson and McKinley (1995) indicated that older children with language learning disabilities demonstrate insufficient skills in writing. Problems with their writing skills are reported to be in *consistently and/or efficiently processing information obtained through reading and in generating written language that conveys their messages* (p. 79). Englert and Raphael (1998) reviewed research studies in writing. They reported that the writing deficits of students who have disabilities and are considered to be poor writers include (a) less time spent on writing, (b) less success in using strategies to generate ideas and activate their prior knowledge for writing (Graham, Harris, MacArthur, & Schwartz, 1991), (c) difficulty in organizing text, (d) lack of meta-cognitive controls, such as failing to monitor or revise (Gregg, 1983), and (e) more dependence on external sources such as teachers. The writings of inexperienced writers are significantly shorter with fewer words per sentence (Hayes & Flower, 1987). In addition, Graham et al. (1991) indicated that writing behaviors of students with disabilities are characterized by transcription errors, impoverished ideas, missing elements and apparent lack of effective strategies.

Method

Oral language of students with behavioral disorders has been studied; however, the written language abilities have not been adequately investigated or well understood. The study reported here was designed to enhance the understanding of the relationship between behavioral disorders and language disorders. The purpose of this study was to investigate the written language skills of middle and high school students who attend an alternative program and, at-risk for the development of behavioral disorders and delinquency in Orange County, California. Orange County Department of Education (OCDE), Division of Alternative Education provides alternative programs and settings to students who cannot function in regular school settings for various reasons. These reasons are truancy, low credit, disruptive behaviors, and inability to function in a regular school setting, substance abuse, numerous suspensions, expulsion, and other discipline code violations or have been found guilty of a crime, and placed on probation by the court. A total of 198 students were included in the study, of which 151 (76%) were male and 47 (24%) were females. The descriptive findings of this study indicated a descriptive profile of participants enrolled in alternative programs: a majority of the participants were males; Hispanics and a large number of them were English Language Learners.

The Test of Written Language –3 (TOWL-3) was used to obtain the written language samples. The TOWL-3 is a norm-referenced written language test that appropriate for ages 7 years 6 months through 17 years 11 months (Hammill & Larsen, 1996). Fifteen minutes time allocated to the story writing section which included students' spontaneously written story about a *Prehistoric* picture. The TOWL-3 consists of following eight subtests: (a) Vocabulary, (b) Spelling, (c) Style, (d) Logical Sentence, (e) Sentence Combining, (f) Contextual Conventions subtest measures capitalization, punctuation, and spelling, (g) Contextual Language subtest

measures vocabulary, syntax and grammar, and (h) Story Construction subtest measures plot, character development, and general composition. Subtests 6, 7, and 8 were used to analyze the quality of the written story. These findings were used to describe the spontaneous writing skills.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study revealed the following descriptive information for each subtest by gender: On contextual conventions, female students' writing samples were found to be overall one paragraph with no punctuation marks used, and lack of capitalization of proper nouns. On the other hand, spelling was found to be the strength of the female students. In both punctuation and capitalization, similar deficits were found in the male students' writings. However, spelling was a greater weakness area.

In contextual language subsection, female students' writings included run-on sentences, lacked introductory sentences and phrases, limited usage of coordinating conjunctions, limited mostly to one paragraph comprising two or more sentences, mostly fragments and poorly constructed sentences. The number of words with three syllables ranged from zero to two. The strengths included appropriate vocabulary selection, some appropriate usage of *a* and *an*, correctly spelled words having seven or more letters, appropriate usage of subject-verb agreement and including compound sentences. Male students' writings, in this subsection were very similar to the female students.

Female students' writing samples revealed the following weaknesses in subtest 8, story construction: weak, ordinary beginnings, stories with some sequence but rambling, weak statement of plot, no indication of characters' feelings, no expression of moral or philosophic theme, predictable actions, abrupt ending, ordinary prose and overall simple stories. Generally, male students' writings were very similar to the female students. However, their stories sequence flowed more smoothly from the start to finish, and the ending was weak to more logical.

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**BUT WILL THAT WORK WHEN I HAVE MY OWN CLASS? PRE-SERVICE
TEACHERS' FEELING OF SELF-EFFICACY ABOUT MANAGING
THE BEHAVIOUR OF STUDENTS IN INCLUSIVE SETTINGS**

Susan Main
Lorraine Hammond

Behaviour management is arguably the cornerstone of good teaching in inclusive settings. Put simply, effective behaviour management skills enable the teacher to program for individual differences and to help individual children. While this view underpins most approaches to behaviour management in any school setting, contemporary researchers have highlighted the need to use empirically-based behaviour management practices for children with disabilities, specifically those based on Applied Behaviour Analysis (e.g., Carnine & Granzin, 2001; Engelmann, 1991; Kauffman, 1999). Carpenter and McKee-Higgins (1996) and Colvin, Kameenui, and Sugai (1993) highlighted that children with disabilities require direct instruction in appropriate behaviours and responses to classroom situations. In spite of this research it appears that, when students with disabilities are included in the regular classroom, teachers employ strategies that are focused on managing, as opposed to teaching, appropriate behaviour.

Method

With the move toward more inclusive educational practices in Western Australian schools (Pearce & Forlin, 2005), there is the need to ensure that pre-service teachers are adequately prepared for behaviour management in inclusive classrooms. Pre-service teachers in their third year of a four year Bachelor of Education degree were surveyed to determine the type of behaviour management strategies they were exposed to during practicum in schools and in their tertiary studies. In addition, their perceived self-efficacy in behaviour management and attitude

to inclusion were surveyed. Surveys were distributed to 155 Kindergarten to year 7 and 147 secondary pre-service teachers of which a total of 156 responded. Pre-service teachers had already completed a compulsory general unit on classroom management and at least six weeks of practical experience in schools.

Previous studies on teachers' sense of self-efficacy, or belief in their ability to carry out their duties, have provided compelling support for the significance of this construct on teacher behaviour including effective classroom management. Martin, Linfoot, and Stephenson (1999) identified teacher's sense of self-efficacy in behaviour management as a factor in the way in which they respond to inappropriate classroom behaviour. Baker (2005) found that there was a significant correlation *between perceived self-efficacy for classroom management and teacher readiness for managing challenging behaviours* (p.58). Self-efficacy has also been linked with teachers' willingness to include students with disabilities in their classrooms (Meijer & Foster, 1988; Soodak, Podell, & Lehman, 1998). Buell, Hallam, Gamel-McCormick, and Scheer (1999) and Soodak and Podell (1993) found that teachers who have a high sense of self-efficacy hold the belief that difficult students are teachable.

Results

Results on the self-efficacy scale, adapted for the present context from one developed by Baker (2005), indicated that the respondents had a high level of self-efficacy in behaviour management. Pre-service teachers also reported a positive attitude to inclusive educational practices. In addition, pre-service teachers identified that they were exposed to a broad range of behaviour management strategies and theoretical approaches in their tertiary studies. The exception to this was in relation to Applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA) and Functional Behavioural Assessment (FBA), with only 6% reporting knowledge of these approaches. The behaviour management strategy that pre-service teachers predominantly reported observing in secondary schools was timeout, both in-class and out of class. The second most commonly observed approach was the use of proximity. In K-7 time out was also the most frequently observed approach with extrinsic rewards and warning systems, such as putting the student's name on the board, ranking as the next most common. Only 30% of the pre-service teachers reported observing Individual Behaviour Plans or Behaviour Support Plans in use and none reported observing ABA or FBA procedures.

The behaviour management strategies that pre-service teachers perceived to be most effective were closely aligned with those they observed in schools. Secondary pre-service teachers perceived proximity followed by timeout to be the most effective strategies and also included using discussion with student about their behaviour to assist them to make more appropriate choices. K-7 pre-service teachers highlighted extrinsic rewards followed by timeout as the most effective behaviour management strategies. None of the students perceived behaviour analysis-based strategies to be effective for behaviour management. This appears to highlight the significant impact of practicum on pre-service teachers' selection of behaviour management approaches but can also be linked to the materials covered in their course of study.

Discussion

The high levels of self efficacy reported by the pre-service teachers in this study suggest that they are well placed to begin teaching in inclusive classrooms. The concern however is that, despite their confidence, they have had limited exposure to some of the empirically validated methods of behaviour management for children with disabilities such as ABA and FBA. A study by Hodkinson (2006) found that teachers in their first year of teaching were less positive about inclusion than they were as pre-service teachers. In part this was attributed to their perception that they lacked the specialized skills needed to cater for children with disabilities. Ensuring the success of inclusive education is a complex issue and, while students appear to be graduating with a positive attitude to inclusion and confidence in their behaviour management skills, this will not be maintained if they do not have the skills they require. Indeed, beginning teachers need both 'the will and the skill' (Jackson, Chalmers, & Wills, 2004).

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PREPARING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICE

Dianne Chambers
Chris Forlin

The inclusion of children requiring support for mild to moderate, and even severe, disabilities in regular classrooms in many countries in the world has been increasingly gaining impetus in the past two decades (Ainscow, Booth, & Dyson, 2004; Ashman & Elkins, 2005; Education Department of Western Australia, 1998, 1999). The Department of Education and Training in Western Australia (DET, 2001), through a review undertaken of educational services for those with disabilities, identified the development of inclusive philosophies and practices to be instrumental in order to promote widespread inclusive education. Pre-service teachers, though, continue to report that they have high levels of discomfort when interacting with people with disabilities and that they have often had little prior contact with learners with disabilities or learning difficulties (Forlin, Jobling & Carroll, 2001).

In many countries, including Hong Kong and Australia, it has been recognised that universities and colleges of education have a significant role to play in preparing pre-service teachers to address their concerns and beliefs about the education of children with special needs in an inclusive setting, as well as increasing their knowledge base in regards to different disabilities. Also requiring consideration from an inclusive viewpoint are those students who are marginalised because of culture, religion, ethnicity, socio-economic, or psychological factors (Forlin, 2004).

In the past, study in the area of education for children with special needs was primarily provided for those pre-service teachers who would be actively pursuing a role in teaching in this specific area, often in segregated settings. This focus has now broadened to include *all* pre-service teachers. In order to ensure that pre-service teachers gain the understandings that are vital to successfully include all students in a regular classroom setting, education institutions must ensure that their programs adequately prepare the pre-service teachers by being relevant and challenging.

It has been more than 10 years since the Salamanca statement on the inclusion of children was signed by over 90 countries (UNESCO, 1994), which has led to the examination of how this has translated into practice for pre-service teacher education programs. Universities have a great responsibility to adequately prepare teachers for the roles that they will play in including all students in their classrooms. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved. A variety of models have been employed in order to cater for the needs of school systems and pre-service teachers, such as distributing information in the form of lectures, involvement with people with special needs through guest speaker programs, and inclusion of pre-service teachers in volunteer programs in the community (Forlin, 2003).

Two universities engaged in preparing teachers to work in inclusive classrooms were used as the study sites for this research. The University of Notre Dame, Australia (UNDA) is a private, Catholic university situated in restored buildings within the port city of Fremantle in Western Australia. The Catholic ethos that is a key focus for the University is also integral to the studies undertaken by the pre-service teachers. The Hong Kong Institute of Education (HKIED) is a university accrediting institution that focuses on teacher education. In recent years, teacher preparation at the HKIED has moved from training teachers in specific areas to ensuring that all pre-service teachers have the skills that they require to cater for a diverse population of students (Education Department, 2002).

Pre-service teachers at both universities have access to a number of units or modules of study which allow them to broaden their understanding and examine beliefs in regards to the education of students with special needs. During their preparation for teaching, all pre-service teachers complete at least one compulsory unit in educating children with special needs. This model of teaching consists of lectures, during which information about significant disabilities and appropriate strategies to address educational issues are discussed, and tutorial sessions, where pre-service teachers explore these strategies and also discuss implications of their actions and begin to formulate belief systems in regards to the education of children with special needs. Current issues and trends in educational theory are explored during these sessions.

In addition to theoretical experiences, pre-service teachers may also explore the inclusion of students in greater depth through the completion of elective units. These units allow the pre-service teachers to interact with people with disabilities in a social or recreational capacity (Chong, Forlin & Au, 2006). This allows the pre-service teachers to become familiar in interacting with those who have disabilities and to begin to examine and challenge pre-existing conceptions in regards to people with disabilities (Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, & Earle, 2006).

In addition, at UNDA a joint program has been established between the university and the state volunteer body, Volunteering WA, to place pre-service teachers with appropriate organisations and individuals in a volunteer capacity. A number of guest speakers are introduced, allowing the pre-service teachers to hear from a variety of sources and from those with relevant and immediate knowledge of the area. Anecdotal and survey data has indicated that students found the volunteer program to be very beneficial in forming positive views and beliefs in regards to the practices that are necessary for inclusive settings.

The strongest forms of preparation have been found to include those activities which allow students to examine their own beliefs about people with special needs and develop an innate set of guidelines that allow them to successfully include children with special needs by preparing and planning appropriate curricula for the regular classroom (Forlin, 2003; Forlin et al., 2001). The programs that have been established in both Australia and Hong Kong are reviewed. The use of a newly designed measuring instrument, the Sentiments, Attitudes, Concerns about Inclusive Education (SACIE) scale (Forlin, Earle, Loreman & Sharma, 2007) provides a means of examining these beliefs and encourage pre-service teachers to provide appropriate teaching and learning experiences for all students in the classroom, not just those who are able to cope with the existing conditions or who are part of the mainstream culture.

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**CHARACTERIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF A SAMPLE OF CHILDREN WITH
LEARNING DISABILITIES - RESULTS OF A REMEDIAL PROGRAM**

Ângela Botelho

A learning disability is diagnosed when a specific ability, such as reading, writing or math, is significantly lower than the person's general ability, measured by an IQ test. Specific abilities can be assessed by academic achievement tests. According to the DSM-IV (APA, 1994), several criteria must be considered in making a diagnosis of learning disability: (a) reading, writing or math skills substantially below those expected for the child's age and measured intelligence, and (b) poor skills that interfere significantly with academic achievement and/or the activities of daily living. The DSM-IV allows for concurrent diagnosis of learning disorder with sensory, motor, neurological, and intellectual conditions; however, if a individual is concurrently diagnosed with any of these, the learning difficulties must be in excess of those usually associated with the condition.

We analysed a sample of 200 individuals, with a diagnosis of learning disabilities, followed at CADIn (Centro de Apoio ao Desenvolvimento Infantil), between January 2003 and December 2006. We gathered information concerning age, gender, initial school year, duration and frequency of intervention. Data regarding cognitive level, possible co-morbidities, performance

in reading, writing, mathematics, and phonological awareness, was also assessed. The success of the interventional program will be related to the demographic factors, as well as with the intensity of the program and family adherence.

Our support program is based, among others, on the work by the National Reading Panel (2000) and Direct Instruction (2007), and improved by suggestions made by some relevant authors in the field (e.g., Hallahan, Kauffman, & Lloyd, 1999; Lerner, 2003; NJCLD, 2005; Snowling, 2004). The degree of success of the children followed at CADIn was compared with a group of matched children who did not undergo a structured support.

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ECOLOGICAL MODEL OF CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Gabrielle Kowalski

Ecology refers to the interrelationships between people and the environment. The ecological model is built around those domains in which the student presently functions or will function in the future. Once identified these domains are further subdivided into various environments. These environments are then analyzed to determine what activities are performed in each environment and which skills are necessary for successful performance (Wehmeyer, 2002).

The development of a curriculum based on an ecological model requires the curriculum developer to answer three questions: What will be taught? What will the student be expected to learn? and How will the student learn? (Hunter, 1982).

- *What will be taught?* Curriculum requires a structural framework that includes the scope and sequence of the content. Scope refers to the selection of the knowledge, skills, values and generalizations encompassed by the curriculum. Scope is ever-expanding as the students mature and their interests and experiences broaden. Sequence refers to the order in which proposed learning is developed. It is based on chronological age, developmental maturity and societal expectations.
- *What will the student be expected to learn?* For each component of the curriculum objectives are developed based on the learner's needs (Mager, 1984). These objectives are task analyzed to determine appropriate placement in the curriculum. Robert Gagne's (1977) work on conditions of learning deals with *chaining*, an approach which may be necessary for students with a low level of cognitive functioning.
- *How will the student learn?* For each objective lesson plans are developed (Mercer, 1998).

An Ecological Inventory is a person-centered planning method to identify instructional priorities. The term *inventory* refers to the process of systematically analyzing natural settings to identify the skills one needs to function independently in those settings. This method of assessment differs from other methods. Standardized tests are rarely used in the process. Similarly, it differs from developmental assessment in that the norms of typical child development inventories are not applied. The ecological approach is concerned with creating a match between environmental demands and individual needs. Steps in developing and using an Ecological Inventory include: identifying domains; identifying the student's current and future or next environments; identifying activities performed in those environments; identifying skills necessary to perform those activities using non-disabled chronological age peers as a means of social validation and to determine age appropriateness; task analyzing the skills identified; selecting the domain and environment of choice by identifying student and family preferences; selecting the activities to be performed; assessing the student's level of functioning through direct observation and/or parent interview; teaching the necessary skills; adapting the activity if necessary; and providing support in the natural setting.

Possible domains may be vocational/work, community, domestic/home, recreation/ leisure, school, and consumer. Identifying current and future environments may require investigating the community (e.g., stores, restaurants, banks), considering where the student lives and the student's post school plans. Skills can be identified by observing and recording the behavior of

non-disabled, chronological age peers, noting naturally occurring prompts, materials, communicative content, and consequences. Student performance of these skills is assessed against that of the non-disabled peer. Analysis of the assessment identifies discrepancies between skilled and unskilled performance. Instructional options include teaching the skill as typically performed, developing an adaptation of the skill or teaching a different though related skill, considered partial participation. Once the skill is mastered through systematic instruction it is applied across different settings, with different people and with different materials and cues (Wehmeyer, 2002).

The result of using an ecological model is a curriculum that is meaningful, individualized, data-based, community-based, adaptable, and age-appropriate. Academic skills are taught in the context of functional activity. Since activities are not based on a developmental sequence, the student does not have *to get ready*.

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MASTER STUDY PROGRAMME ON SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS INTERNATIONALLY

Jan Šiška

In this paper a unique international study Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs on the Master's level is introduced. Erasmus Mundus initiative is introduced and the content of the study programme Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs is described.

The Erasmus Mundus programme is a cooperative and mobility programme in the field of higher education which promotes the European Union as a centre of excellence in learning around the world (European Commission, 2006). It supports European top-quality master's courses and enhances the visibility and attractiveness of European higher education in third world countries. It also provides EU-funded scholarships for third world country nationals participating in these master's courses. Erasmus Mundus seeks, primarily, to enhance the quality and attractiveness of European higher education world-wide. Secondly, Erasmus Mundus master's courses and scholarships provide a framework to promote valuable exchange and dialogue between cultures. By supporting the international mobility of scholars and students, Erasmus Mundus intends to prepare its European and non-European participants for life in a global, knowledge-based society.

In 2004, a joint application of three universities (i.e., Roehampton University, Charles University, and Fontys University) for Erasmus Mundus grant was accepted by European Commission. In the academic year 2005 – 2006, the first group of 26 students from India, Pakistan, Cambodia, Botswana, Uganda, China, Vietnam and United States participated in the programme Erasmus Mundus Special Education Needs (EM SEN).

EM SEN programme is intended for graduate students in education, teachers, and lecturers from a wide range of educational contexts at all educational levels both within Europe and internationally. The study programme is shared between three universities in which students visit Roehampton University, Charles University, and Fontys University. Roehampton University (London, UK) is state-funded and is one of the oldest higher education institutions in England, dating back to 1841. Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic) Charles was founded in 1348. It presents the oldest University in Middle Europe. Charles University, Faculty of Education was opened in 1946. Fontys University of Professional Education (Tilburg, Holland) represents one of the largest state recognized and state-funded educational institutions in the Netherlands, providing about 200 different programmes and education programmes.

The EM SEN study programme reflects recent changes in policy and practice in field of special education needs (SEN) in Europe and internationally. Movement towards inclusive education, social cohesion, compacting discrimination and valuing reflective practice are formulated in the study programme objectives. The objectives can be summarized as follows: (a) to promote a clear understanding of SEN across Europe and internationally, (b) to explore relevant legislation and the range of policies affecting SEN, leading to a measured consideration of the nature of provision for SEN within an international context of education practice, (c) to enhance the knowledge of those professionally involved in SEN practice in Europe and internationally, (d) to develop the ability of those professionals to analyse policy and practice in a range of contexts, and (e) to engage in comparative action research for the enhancement of professional practice at various levels in education.

The consortium of these universities offers five modules: Research Methods and Enquiry; International Perspectives on Professional Practice in Education; Inclusion; Inclusive Society – Inclusive Education; Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning, and dissertation. The Research Methods and Enquiry module develops the concept of the reflective enquirer. It is, therefore, designed to introduce students to the nature of knowledge, paradigms of educational and basic research techniques upon which they can structure an individual enquiry in order to make effective and valid analysis and conclusion from collected data. The International Perspectives module presents the demands of postgraduate study as a reflective practice and seeks to do so within a comparative international framework. It impacts on the students' academic, professional, managerial, and personal development. This is achieved by contextualising professional experience in SEN within Europe with a focus on Holland, the Czech Republic, and the United Kingdom as well as at least one other international context. A student, therefore, reflects on her/his own context and compares it analytically with other practice within Europe.

The module on Inclusion was developed with the Dutch educational environment in mind with its application worldwide. Essentially, the module enables SEN practitioners to develop further their practice and knowledge and understanding of SEN policy-making. The Inclusive Society – Inclusive Education module focuses on Charles University in Prague. It is designed to offer a critical view on different perspectives towards ability and disability. Understanding the changing paradigms of disability is intended to allow observation of different barriers in full participation of persons with disabilities in society. Analysis of the movement towards an inclusive society and towards inclusive education is documented by means such as observation in educational and support environment including legislative instruments.

The module on Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning is intended to offer an opportunity to gain credit towards award bearing programmes for work or for prior experiential learning which has been carried out in professional practice relating to SEN. This work may include practice-based projects; work done on short modules, practice-based research and enquiry. This process of according value and status to work carried out in practice underpins and strengthens the model of critically reflective practice which informs the EM SEN programme. The module aims to support and enable participants to critically analyze work carried out as part of their professional practice and to produce, for assessment, a reflective portfolio which meets master's level criteria through which they will make a claim for credit.

The dissertation is designed to enable students to undertake an extended piece of work in SEN within an area of their own interest relevant to their professional practice. In so doing, they demonstrate the application of forms of educational inquiry and specific strategies for collecting, analyzing, interpreting and validating data within a range of educational contexts within Europe and Internationally. The dissertation enables students to synthesize learning and practice from the preceding modules and to contextualize these elements in a concentrated research project. The module is designed so that students may become autonomous and independent critical researchers in areas of advanced interest and concern in SEN education and practice. The module aims to provide a research focus for students to test arguments, assumptions, hypotheses and models of professional practice, including those relating to their own experience and provide for subsequent development of SEN practice within Europe and internationally. The dissertation

enables students to carry out a carefully planned, sustained enquiry and to critically evaluate the implications of their findings with a view to developing and improving their own professional practice in relation to SEN within Europe and internationally. The module is also designed to help students demonstrate their understanding of the complex nature of the relationship between theory and practice, critique existing theory in their chosen field, and relate that theory to their own work and thinking. In conclusion, the study programme Erasmus Mundus SEN is an intensive course with wide range of learning resources. Besides conventional academic studying the students are led by tutors to become reflective and critical practitioners in area of SEN. Thus, critical reflection conducted individually and within tutor groups is highly appreciated and valued. Results of the first year of the programme proved that ambitious plans of three universities were achieved.

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BORDER CROSSINGS: IS THERE JUSTICE UNDER THE IDEA? A CASE STUDY

Carol Strax
Marshall Strax

Cultural and contextual borders (Giroux, 2004) stand as an adversarial force in dividing the energies, resources, and sense of community between stakeholders involved in the process of

testing, classifying, placing, and developing an Individualized Educational Program (IEP) for children with disabilities (Apple, 2004). Congress' intent when it passed and reauthorized the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act (IDEIA; 2004) was to remove the borders between stakeholders in the education of children with disabilities.

However, the borders stand as strong as ever. A hearing officer describes a case of special education classification and placement as an issue of poverty, race, ethnicity, illiteracy, and illegitimacy, finding a District neglectful of meeting a child's needs and interfering with her federal rights. Children of color are classified as children with disabilities in higher percentages than white children and children from low socioeconomic status (SES) families are more likely to be found in special education settings than children from high SES families. The percentage of litigation in education related to special education far exceeds the percentage of children evaluated or placed in special education.

Educators working directly with children such as principals, teachers, psychologists, and learning disabilities specialists find themselves in the uncomfortable position of supporting an adversarial district policy or behavior and developing an uncaring pro-district stance against children and parents who are members of their cultural, economic, and contextual communities. For example, African American and Hispanic educators find themselves giving testimony to leading questions from an attorney representing their school district who is trying to stop a Black Hispanic child from receiving services under the IDEIA.

To understand the source of these borders, how they constrain discussions and amicable solutions to problems, and how borders cause miscommunication and uncooperative behavior between school districts and people with disabilities, a case study approach using qualitative methods of inquiry was used. The case study of Carol describes a child's adversarial evaluation, classification, and placement experience under the IDEIA which led to a local and state level impartial hearing. Observations were made of all procedural due process hearings that occurred in this case, the child, and the schools involved. Extensive documentation of the child's educational and psychological records and transcripts of all hearings were reviewed. Interviews with stakeholders were conducted.

Morgan (1997) used the metaphor of organizations as living organisms to describe how an organization will attack anybody threatening homeostasis in the same way a living organism fights off a virus or bacteria with all the strength it can muster. In the case of Carol, the District policy was to force a child who sought to receive special education services under the IDEA to accept whatever services the District chose to offer. The District reveled in conducting trench warfare by using the legal avenues provided by the IDEIA.

The District's behavior might well be the result of elements put forth in Morgan's (1997) metaphor of organizations as psychic prisons. The idea that people are often prisoners of their own thoughts might explain why the District learning disabilities specialist, a parent of a child with a learning disability, interpreted results of her own testing indicating a learning disability as cultural and environmental disadvantaged, and why an African American principal and African American hearing team members were unable to articulate how a poor child of color would have difficulty making friends in an upper middle class and white elementary school. Critical

theorists, such as Apple (2004), would suggest that the District's behavior was simply a vehicle to control significant discourse effecting the assessment, classification, placement, and IEP preparation of children with disabilities.

The key to bridging cultural and contextual borders and bringing all stakeholders involved together in order to generate collective solutions to contextual and cultural issues is to build an ethical child study team using Starratt's (1994) multidimensional ethical framework of justice, care, and critique to develop a rich and pluriform approach to evaluate issues in the education of students with disabilities and implement the mandates of a just IDEIA. They may then understand the nature of contextual and cultural borders as scientifically managed systems categorically grouping people in the hope of controlling which groups succeed and which groups reproduce themselves as subordinate in American society (Apple, 2004).

In order to critique current structures in the testing, classification, and placement of students with disabilities using just, caring, and critical belief systems, ideal stakeholders must first free themselves from their psychic prisons, see the learning potential of children with disabilities, and look past the constraints of resources to find ways to maximize this potential. They must grasp the social and intellectual possibilities in children with disabilities and develop these possibilities by recognizing the children's unique value as human beings who can better the whole of society. They should let their mind rise above the status quo and perceive the many issues of power, domination of one group over another, and resource control that are inherent in the hierarchy of special education and critique these issues in daily action with students and colleagues. Ideal stakeholders must be advocates for their flock, who are often the vulnerable and powerless members of society.

Ideal stakeholders must be knowledgeable of current educational organizations, philosophies, pedagogies, and the legal systems that impact students in special education. Suggestions to bridge cultural and contextual border crossings highlight the need for, and suggest the content of, preservice education, sensitivity training, and school district policy changes. Educators should meet to redesign their district child study team process into an ethical one.

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**THE ROLE OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS
AND SPECIAL EDUCATION IN POLAND**

Anna Firkowska-Mankiewicz
Ewa Wapiennik

In the field of special education, non-governmental organizations (NGO) developed a range of modern solutions, thus filling the gap in the public education – especially in services for children, youth and adults with various kinds of disabilities such as intellectual disabilities, visual and hearing impairments, and autism. For example, they developed educational services for children with profound intellectual disabilities, totally excluded from any form of education until 1996, and proposed modern solutions (e.g., early intervention centers, integrative kindergartens, schools and classes, day activity centers and remedial centers, occupational therapy workshops). In the field of early intervention, thanks in part to the important efforts of NGOs, a pilot Government Programme is being developed. It is called *Early, multi-specialist, coordinated and permanent support for children who are at risk of disability and children with disabilities and their families*. Likewise, integrative education has been developing mostly at the initiative of parents' organisations. In 1989, there was only one integrative kindergarten in Poland, but by 2005 there were over 1200 integrative kindergartens and schools. NGOs also provide a wide range of social and vocational rehabilitation services. For example, most occupational therapy workshops where people with disabilities can re(gain) employability through occupational therapy, are administered by NGOs.

The non-governmental organisations are also the main agent of positive changes in the sphere of legislation, social policy, awareness-raising, perception of persons with disabilities, and respect for their human rights. Their activities serve well the development of civil society in Poland.

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TRANSITION FROM EDUCATION TO EMPLOYMENT IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Ewa Wapiennik

The support for transition from school to employment is in many Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries very limited. Because of various reasons the education systems often fail to prepare the youth with intellectual disabilities to find employment. In many cases, students with intellectual disabilities do not receive vocational education at all; they end up at the compulsory education level. The courses that are seldom offered correspond to the needs of the labour market. Likewise, small numbers of people with intellectual disabilities take advantage of the employment services provided through the labour offices. Although they are entitled to register at the labour offices, few actually do so. Moreover, the employment services usually are not well adapted to the needs of people with intellectual disabilities.

Still, in many CEE countries there are examples of good practice and legislative changes that have been introduced to facilitate the transition. Several services in this area, which can serve as positive examples, are operated by non-government organisations. One of them is the *Workplace Practice* Programme operated by the Salva Vita Foundation in Hungary or the Vocational Counselling and Assistance Centre for People with Intellectual Disabilities introduced by the Polish Association for Persons with Mental Handicap in Poland.

Most of the data presented come from the monitoring conducted by the EU Monitoring and Advocacy Program of the Open Society Institute in collaboration with the Open Society Mental Health Initiative in 2003-2005 (OSI/EU-Hungary, 2005; OSI/EU-Poland, 2005).

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**APPROACH TO TEACHING BRAILLE – COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS IN SELECTED COUNTRIES**

Małgorzata Paplińska

In contemporary education of people with visual disabilities, the role of the Braille code in the education process of blind children is emphasized as well as speed and effectiveness of teaching tactile reading. Methodological investigations lead to improvement of teaching methods, international exchange of experiences of Braille teachers, and creative modifications of programs and methods.

A research study on programs and methods of teaching Braille was performed by the author under the sponsorship of the Polish government. The study focused on two areas: (a) analysis of programs and methods of introducing Braille letters used in four countries: USA, UK, France and Sweden, and (b) in-depth research of Braille teaching methods used in all Polish schools for the blind. The approach of teaching Braille in the selected countries was compared to the methodology used in Poland.

Programs of teaching Braille to children were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of programs based on a traditional approach that focused on developing basic perceptual skills, using controlled and gradually extended vocabulary – carefully planned sequences of new words (Swenson, 1999; Swenson & D'Andrea, 2002). In the traditional approach, emphasis was put on sequence teaching of isolated skills (e.g., leading of hands and fingers through Braille verse, finding of the next verse).

Polish ways of teaching Braille reading and writing are based on the traditional approach. Although there is a need for early preparation of children for learning reading and writing Braille, for many young students the first contact with Braille is still not earlier than in the first grade of school.

The second group of Braille teaching programs consists of those which are based on the whole language approach. The whole language approach is oriented to text understanding and development of ability to listen, speak, read and write.

Whole language methods prevail in the countries chosen for the research project (i.e., USA, UK, France and Sweden). The characteristic feature of the programs used in those countries is

familiarizing young children with Braille. In the USA, it is done by *immersing in Braille* – giving children opportunities to use Braille across the curriculum throughout the day (Swenson, 1999). In UK, France, and Sweden it is done by labelling the environment in Braille.

There is no one certified program of teaching Braille in Poland. There are a number of ways and approaches used in particular schools and by particular teachers (Paplińska & Kuczyńska-Kwapisz, 2005). In their work teachers usually use a student-book as a basis for teaching, and additionally prepare their own texts and exercises.

The research showed that there is a relationship between the language and the way of teaching Braille. Children in Poland are first taught uncontracted Braille, because Polish contracted Braille is difficult for them. The reason is that Polish contractions are not intuitive because one particular contraction may have several meanings, depending on the context: its place within a word (at the beginning, in the middle, at the end) and its relation to other letters. These complex characteristics of the Polish language and Polish Braille often discourage students from learning contracted Braille. Learning it is not obligatory and usually occurs at the secondary level of education.

The results of the study were used for developing an outline of a complete Braille teaching program and preparing guidelines for Braille teachers of children who are blind in Poland. The educational and information website www.braille.pl dedicated to Braille was developed during the research project and is currently in operation.

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EARLY LITERACY ACQUISITION: IMPROVING STUDENT LANGUAGE SKILLS

David Gordon

The Matthew Effect in reading, as described by Stanovich (1986), shows us why teaching children successful literacy skills at a young age are so important. Research has shown that children who do well in reading from a young age continue to do well as they progress through the grades. In contrast, children who struggle with reading at a young age continue to get further and further behind as they grow.

One rural district (Wisconsin, USA) reported that scores on state tests and other anecdotal evidence suggested that students were deficit on language skills as they enter primary grades. This led to a higher rate of referral for special education as students enter upper elementary and middle school. Changes in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) focused on issues such as over identification and now the requirement to demonstrate a Response to Intervention (RtI). The district intended to evaluate its early literacy efforts and the school district and use scientific research-based intervention as part of meeting RtI (Graner, Faggella-Luby, & Fritschmann, 2005).

A collaborative effort between school leaders, special service providers, classroom teachers and university faculty ensued and examined the roots of literacy development, assessment tools, *best practices* in curriculum and instruction, and on-going evaluation of program. Students in the kindergarten were assessed three times during the year by college-age students at a nearby university in a pre-service special education program using The Dynamic Indicators of Early Basic Literacy Skills (DIBELS). The university students were trained in administering the DIBELS and were monitored during the testing sessions. This researched based assessment instrument has been found to be very valid and reliable in determining language acquisition (Elliott, Lee, & Tollefson, 2001).

The district adopted *Jolly Phonics* (www.jollylearning.co.uk), which is a synthetic phonics program, developed by Sue Lloyd and Sara Wernham. This program uses a synthetic phonics approach. Research has demonstrated that *Jolly Phonics* improved test scores and greater enjoyment in the learning of reading (Stuart, 1998). Teachers in the K-2 building were all trained with the program and implemented it as part of their daily instruction.

Data have been evaluated to make modifications for curriculum and instruction for individual students, small group, class-wide services, and whole school instruction. Data will demonstrate that with intensive literacy instruction students' demonstrated gains as most students who were in at-risk categories at the beginning of the year were making demonstrated improvements to be attaining at the appropriate rate. Students entering first grade will continue with intensive assessment, curriculum and instruction.

The first year of the data demonstrates gains made by all of the students, but areas of needs to be problem solved. These include analysis of students from low socio-economic status (22% of the sample qualified for free and/or reduced hot lunch), other language groups (6.7% of the sample)

and those students who did not receive pre-school programs prior to kindergarten (11.4% of the sample). One area of interest is the gains for students eligible for special education and receiving speech and language services (10.1% of the sample) was higher than those made for the general population.

The efforts of the district have been to identify those at risk for learning difficulties and as an overall program to reduce over identification of students with disabilities. The early literacy collaboration in early grades has occurred at the same time as the district decreased the percentage of students with disabilities (18.50% in 2002-2003 to 13.50% in 2006-2007). Additional grades have continued with the assessment and progress monitoring of early literacy acquisition during the current academic year.

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