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ISSUES INFLUENCING IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN THE REGULAR
CLASSROOM: PERSPECTIVES FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION AND
REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

By

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Oxford English dictionary defines perseverance as the ability to continue in a course of action in spite of difficulty or lack of success.

Therefore, it is my pleasure to dedicate this work to perseverance.

This act of perseverance I learned from my parents: Dr. Jack & Mrs. Marion Kelleher. For, it is from them that I learned to have faith in myself, to dust myself off when I fall and to get up and continue on despite any obstacles that come my way.

There is no greater lesson than this.

ABSTRACT

This study was premised upon the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. In particular, this qualitative research investigated the perspectives of experienced regular classroom teachers and special education teachers regarding the issues which influence the successful implementation of inclusion. Qualitative research methods were utilized, including the use of an interview guide and field notes. Four elementary teachers were interviewed via the telephone: two special education teachers and two regular classroom teachers. Data collection took place from the largest school district in Canada. Data analysis and interpretation continued throughout the research process. Findings reveal that the special education teachers and regular classroom teachers have very similar beliefs regarding the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. The main themes that emerged from analyzing the data from interviews with two special education teachers and two regular classroom teachers were: support in the classroom is essential; more collaboration between colleagues in the school is needed and it is inconsistent; teachers need to have a range of teaching strategies when teaching exceptional students in the regular classroom; time is lacking and teachers need more time to prepare for class; and to collaborate with their colleagues; placement of students in the regular classroom can be problematic and needs to be carefully considered; funding for inclusion is important for resources; teachers need professional development pertaining to inclusion as they are unprepared for the reality of inclusion teachers learn more regarding inclusion

from their experience teaching and through trial and error and there are many challenges to implementing inclusion in the regular classroom.

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CHAPTER ONE

Statement of the Problem

Introduction

My study on implementing inclusion in the regular classroom explored the issues that influence successful implementation of inclusion. I chose to explore this topic from the perspectives of special education teachers and regular classroom teachers because they have insight into the issues that bring about successfully implementing inclusion in the regular classroom.

Personal Ground

Special education service delivery in Ontario continues to change to meet the needs of exceptional students in the province (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Research pertaining to inclusion is significant for educators because it is an issue that classroom teachers face daily.

Knowledge of issues that influence successful inclusion may assist regular classroom teachers when they endeavour to teach students with exceptional needs. For example, when regular classroom teachers take part in professional development that highlights inclusion, such knowledge becomes a tangible resource which can then be translated into action within their own classroom. Knowledge of issues that influence successful implementation of inclusion draws from a variety of sources. Professional development is but one.

My interest in pursuing research on inclusion stems from my experiences as both a special education teacher and a classroom teacher in the elementary panel. I first

became aware of the issues pertaining to inclusion while I was taking the following additional qualification courses: Special Education Part I, Part II and Part III (Specialist). While taking these courses, I was teaching in a special education setting where I became well acquainted with the issues of inclusion.

When I began teaching in a regular classroom a few years later, I began to notice issues that influenced successful implementation of inclusion. I had several exceptional students in my classroom and worked with the special education teacher to support them throughout the year. Teacher collaboration, professional development, teachers' perspectives and attitudes, modifying the curriculum and modifying teaching strategies and financial support for inclusion efforts encompass what I view to be the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion.

While teaching in Toronto, I observed that some teachers struggle with inclusion and have limited knowledge of the issues necessary for successful inclusion. I gained valuable insights into such issues when I took six additional qualification courses leading to my special education specialist qualifications. I participated in board level professional development opportunities in special education. As well, I went to numerous special education seminars throughout the school year and continued to read the Ontario Ministry of Education policy manuals. I attended many seminars which were organized by special education agencies. These seminars addressed inclusion practices for students who had exceptionalities such as learning disabilities and autism. At one seminar on students with autism I learned that direct-teaching and repetition were essential for these students and their learning. As such, I began using these teaching

strategies while I was teaching. This helped to promote inclusion practices in my regular classroom as all students benefit from this mode of teaching.

All classroom teachers in Ontario are responsible for educating all students, including those with exceptional needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). In my experience, some classroom teachers have difficulties educating students with exceptional needs when they do not have experience with implementing inclusion. When I went from teaching a regular grade five class to a self-contained learning disabilities class, I began to understand the differences between the two. In a self-contained classroom there are generally less than 10 students and educational assistants to support the teacher. In a regular classroom, the teacher usually has no educational assistant and about thirty students to manage. This becomes an increasingly difficult situation because of the number of exceptional students that may be in that classroom with only one teacher. In order to meet the needs of exceptional students, regular classroom teachers must understand issues that influence successful implementation of inclusion. My perspectives on inclusion are framed by my teaching experiences, professional development and professional reading.

Special education service delivery continues to evolve from a model where students receive support from special education teachers for part or all of their school day to a model where students with exceptional needs spend the majority of their day in regular classroom settings (Weber & Bennett, 1999). From my vantage point as a special education and regular classroom teacher, the issues that influence inclusion such as professional development, collaboration, support in the classroom, and time, are issues

that classroom teachers face as a result of the removal of self-contained special education classes. I have seen students who were formerly in special education classrooms being placed into regular classrooms with special education support for part of the day because the self-contained special education classroom was removed from the school. This placement came as a result of the school board shifting its special education service delivery model from self-contained classrooms to a model of inclusion, where exceptional students spend the majority of their school day in a regular classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Self-contained special education classes are classes that are designed to meet the needs of specific groups of special needs students (Weber & Bennett, 1999). An example of a self-contained class is a learning disabilities class established specifically for students with learning disabilities. Thus, as self-contained special education classrooms are declining in number, heterogeneous classrooms are becoming the norm. Heterogeneous classrooms are classrooms which have a diverse group of students, with a wide range of learning abilities and needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

Significance of the Study

Not only is research on issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion important for special educators and classroom teachers, it is also potentially valuable for the professional development of all educators. This study is essential for special education teachers because their role in special education is shifting from that of self-contained special education teachers to a support teacher for exceptional students and regular classroom teachers in the regular classroom. This research is also especially

important for classroom teachers because they are dealing with inclusion on a daily basis in their classrooms. I see my research on inclusion as potentially important because it may provide insights into issues that contribute to successful inclusion programs. In addition, it may generate more issues and related insights. I believe that this research will benefit classroom teachers and pre-service teachers who are learning about inclusion programs and exceptional students. This study will also be useful to teacher candidates who will learn more regarding the direction the Ontario Ministry of Education is taking in regular education and in special education.

Limitations

With regards to this research study, there were several limitations. Firstly, as this study did not have an extensive scope, as per the number of participants, generalizing the findings and drawing conclusions was limited. Secondly, this study investigated the perspectives of classroom teachers and special education teachers regarding the issues pertaining to the success in the implementation of inclusion through an interview format. Therefore, no data was directly obtained from classroom observations. Thirdly, I conducted interviews with teachers in the Toronto District School Board who were in the primary/junior division. As well, I am employed as a teacher with this school board within the primary junior division. As such, the findings in this study may not have been representative of how teachers perceive inclusion implementation in other school districts. Finally, as this research study was qualitative the findings will be subject to varying interpretations.

Summary

This chapter outlines the research problem which is central to the research being conducted and is continuously focused upon throughout the whole study. Questions guiding the research have also been put forth and will be revisited at the end of the study. Significance of this study is perhaps the most important aspect as it clearly states the reasons for conducting research on the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom.

Chapter two is a review of literature pertaining to the issues influencing the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. This literature serves to illuminate the research problem, as well as providing pertinent evidence as to the issues that teachers face when implementing inclusion in the regular classroom.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

Introduction

The research examined the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. A preliminary review of the literature reveals that there are several issues that significantly influence the implementation of inclusion (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello & Spagna, 2004). Such issues are teachers' perspectives, continued education, role of special education teachers, support from special education, professional development, collaboration, service delivery, financial support, modifications and support in the classroom. Students with exceptional needs are now spending a major portion of their school day in regular education classrooms (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Educators need to further understand the issues that influence implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). In the following section, I will explore these issues.

Issues Influencing Inclusion

Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' perspectives pertaining to inclusion are an issue that has substantial influence over the successful implementation of an inclusion program (Hodkinson, 2006; Idol, 2006; Dedrick, Marfo & Harris, 2007; Bunch 1999; Bunch & Valeo, 1997). Salend (1999) explains that, "Teachers' perceptions of inclusion seem to be related to their success in implementing inclusion"(p. 12). Even though some teachers perceived themselves as successful at implementing inclusion, many teachers remain resistant to change processes (Jordan & Lindsay, 1997; Knight, 1999). Teachers were resistant to

change because it meant that their typical role as teacher was changing (Jordan & Lindsay, 1997). Their role has changed from one where they teach regular students in the regular classroom to a role where they teach regular and exceptional students in the regular classroom (Bruneau-Balderamma, 1997). Change plays a large role in teachers' perceptions regarding inclusion practices (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello & Spagna. 2004; Winzer & Mazurek, 2000; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). Teachers view the regular classroom as having become a changed environment, in that the regular classroom has become a diverse environment premised upon diverse student needs. Teachers also see that change is a large part of inclusion (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello & Spagna. 2004). For example, regular classroom teachers in the past did not have to collaborate much with their special education colleagues because they ran separate programs in the school. Now, regular classroom teachers must collaborate with their special education counterparts because they are required to work with one another throughout the school day (Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997). This form of collaboration may further influence teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of exceptional students in their classroom (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002). As well, it may influence their attitudes towards the success of the implementation of inclusion (Stanovich & Jordan, 2002).

McLeskey and Waldron (2002) suggest that classroom teachers should address the following questions regarding the implementation of inclusion and the attitudes and beliefs they hold before endeavouring to implement inclusion in their classroom. The questions that teachers need to address are as follows:

1. What will my role be in the inclusive program?

2. What will the impact of the inclusive program be on the academic and social progress of students with disabilities?
3. What will the impact of the inclusive program be on students without disabilities?
4. Will students with disabilities have a negative impact on the general education classroom?
5. Will I be given the time to plan a successful inclusive program?
6. Will I be given resources necessary to develop a successful inclusive program?
7. Will I be given the opportunity to develop the expertise needed to be an effective teacher in an inclusive program? (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002, p. 165).

Continued Education

Ways in which teachers learn professionally and operate in their inclusive classrooms is seen to be impacted through the implementation of inclusion (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Forlin, 2001; Sapon-Shevin, 1996). Regular classroom teachers are now required to learn about students with exceptional needs because more exceptional students are being placed in the regular classroom (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). How teachers learn about their exceptional students is by learning to meet their needs in the regular classroom. Learning instructional strategies such as repetition or direct teaching allows the regular classroom teacher to meet the needs of these exceptional students in the regular classroom (Stanovich, 1999). The role of the special education teacher is also perceived as important for the implementation of inclusion programs

(Stanovich, 1999). When special education teachers comply with inclusion, implementation becomes more successful (Cook, Semmel, & Gerber, 1999). Basically this means that special education teachers work in conjunction with the regular classroom teachers throughout the year to assist the regular classroom teachers with issues pertaining to inclusion. Professional learning is important because special education teachers play an integral role in supporting not only inclusion, but also in supporting the regular classroom teacher (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000; Andrews & Lupart, 2000). Special education teachers may support regular classroom teachers in the classroom by assisting with the teaching of a lesson or assisting exceptional students with assigned work (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000). Also, special education teachers may support the regular classroom teacher with the development and implementation of the IEP (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).

Special Education Teachers' Role

Special education teachers' role in the implementation of inclusion is noteworthy. Special education teachers can be seen to maintain an integral role in the implementation of inclusion programs because they have the knowledge and formal experience teaching students with special needs (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). As such, special education teachers' knowledge, expertise and experience are invaluable in the support of assisting regular classroom teachers with implementing inclusion (Smith, Polloway, Patton, Dowdy, Heath, McIntyre et al., 2006; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 1996). Their knowledge is usually derived from taking additional courses and qualifications beyond that of a teaching degree (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). This enables them to have a specialized knowledge set pertaining to special

education and the issues therein, such as how to support students with varying exceptionalities (Reynolds & Wolfe, 1999; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001). Special education teachers hold specialized teaching positions within the school due to their additional educational knowledge. Additional qualifications are obtained after a Bachelor of Education degree is achieved. Holding additional teaching qualifications in special education allows these teachers to teach students who are deemed exceptional (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).

Support from Special Education Teachers

Classroom teachers believe that support from special education teachers is requisite for success in inclusion implementation (Barnes, 1999; Olson &, Chalmers, 1997). Support that classroom teachers receive from special education teachers is needed to bring about successful implementation of inclusion (Karten, 2005). This is seen as a collaborative effort between colleagues. Hefflen and Bullock (1999) emphasize the following as an issue that impacts the implementation of an inclusion program: instructional support. Fisher, Sax and Grove (2000), state that instructional support for the classroom teacher came as a result of the collaboration between special education teachers sharing strategies for teaching exceptional students with their counterparts in the regular classroom. Instructional support also includes the special education teacher being in the classroom and supporting the classroom teacher, on a collaborative basis, during teaching time (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000).

Planning can also be linked to collaboration (McLeskey & Waldron, 2002; Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). Teachers who are working together to establish an inclusive classroom require extensive planning time to bring about successful

implementation (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). The planning between the special education teacher and the regular classroom teacher is for instructional support in the classroom. Instructional support may take the form of the special education teacher informing the regular classroom teacher of strategies for use with exceptional children in the regular classroom (Klingner & Vaughn, 2002). As time moves on, instructional support may take the form of team teaching wherein special education teacher assists exceptional students in small groups after a lesson has been taught to the class. Special education teachers also work collaboratively with regular classroom teachers to develop the IEP (Individual Education Plan) that the special education teacher oversees throughout the school year.

Professional Development

Several researchers have found that professional development regarding inclusion is seen by teachers as an important issue for the success of implementation (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello & Spagna, 2004; Idol, 2006; Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000). According to the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education (2005), “for any professional development to be effective, teachers should have designated time for collaboration and planning” (p. 143). There is considerable evidence that shows that educators favour having professional development opportunities that are ongoing and that pertain specifically to inclusion (Idol, 2006). Educators state the need for in-service sessions that would provide them with specific strategies for teaching students with special needs (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004). For example, I attended a workshop that focused on teaching students through the use of manipulatives, rather than teaching solely from textbooks. This is helpful in dealing with the range of learning

styles in the classroom. Moreover, Fisher, Sax and Grove (2000) report that the workshops teachers attended, “helped them to see themselves as educators who could successfully run an inclusive classroom” (p. 221). Professional development pertaining to inclusion, specifically teaching strategies, were desired by teachers who were moving towards an inclusive learning environment (Burstein et al., 2004; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). An example of a teaching strategy that I learned from teaching special education students and used while I was teaching in a regular classroom, was high interest-low vocabulary books for students who liked to read but who were not reading at grade level.

McLeskey and Waldron (2002), state that for professional development regarding the implementation of inclusion to be successful, four elements must be addressed. They suggest that professional development “should be school based; should use coaching and other follow-up procedures; is collaborative and; is embedded in the daily lives of teachers, providing for continuous growth” (p. 162). This is an important statement because it shows that professional development is needed, and it must be school based, ongoing and collaborative as well.

Collaboration

Collaboration among special educators and classroom teachers was seen by educators as an important feature of successful implementation of inclusion (Hobbs & Westling, 2002; Wood, 2002; Salend, 1999). The Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education (2005) makes it clear that teachers must have time for collaboration and planning. Special education teachers share their expertise on special education and regular classroom teachers share their expertise from their classroom experiences (Bunch & Valeo, 1997; Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997). These teachers collaborate to meet the

educational needs of the students they are teaching that year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

Fisher, Sax and Grove (2002) support collaboration regarding “student needs, resources, and learning strategies” (p. 224). Planning and consultation, which are part of collaboration, were viewed by educators to be essential in the successful implementation of inclusion because without time to plan and consult, success was not achieved (Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997; Klingner & Vaughn, 2002; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). The lack of time was seen as one main barrier to collaborative efforts between teachers (Kennedy & Horn, 2004). Collaboration between regular classroom teachers and special education teachers is essential because they are sharing an expertise that is specific to their teaching roles (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005). These teachers must also plan for the needs of the student throughout the year. For example, they must collaborate regarding the curriculum for the student (McLaughlin, 2000). They must also consult with each other on what is working and what needs to be changed with regards to teaching a particular student (Kennedy & Horn, 2004; Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello & Spagna, 2004). Burstein et al. (2004) report that “Teachers recognized that collaborative planning was critical to the success of inclusive practices and indicated that planning among regular and special educators needed to be not only continued but also expanded” (p. 114). Basically, Burstein et al. contend that the time given for planning is not sufficient and that additional time is required to make inclusion practices more successful. Teachers view collaboration as paramount in bringing about a successful inclusion program (Bruneau-Balderrama, 2004; McLeskey & Waldron, 2000). They see that collaboration between teachers needs to be expanded, showing that teachers’ need to

be given more time to make instructional decisions regarding a student's programming needs, to meet the educational needs of the student and to collaborate with colleagues (Heflin & Bullock, 1999).

Even though collaboration was seen to be an essential issue for success in implementing inclusion, classroom teachers also felt that there was an inadequate amount of time for collaboration (Kennedy & Horn, 2004; Olson & Chalmers, 1997). Teachers perceived that the time given to classroom teachers to plan for an inclusive classroom was insufficient (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). Classroom teachers who plan for an inclusive setting and who collaborate with other teachers to bring about the successful implementation of an inclusion program require more time given to meet their ongoing needs (Heflin & Bullock, 1999; Villa & Thousand, 2005; Lombardi, 1999).

Service Delivery

How an inclusion program is delivered is another issue that influences its successful implementation. In order for an inclusion program to be successfully implemented, careful planning of how a model operates is needed (Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997). This is significant, because teachers need to have their own input into how inclusion will look and operate in their classrooms. Having teachers involved in the planning for implementing inclusion will also provide teachers with further knowledge of how an inclusion program is set into place at the outset of the school year (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004).

Special education service delivery in Ontario has a specific mode of operation. According to Weber and Bennett (1999), three elements that comprise special

education service delivery are: (a) Identifying student needs, (b) Selecting an appropriate setting to meet the needs and (c) Planning, implementing and continual review of the student's IEP. Weber and Bennett succinctly describe how special education service delivery operates in Ontario. They also describe the stages of service delivery that occur throughout the school year. For example, regular classroom teachers are required to attend in-school team meetings regarding students whom they perceive as having special needs but who are not formally identified as exceptional (Kelleher, 2003). At these in-school meetings the regular classroom teacher brings requisite paperwork, including student work samples. They meet with the special education teacher and the principal to discuss the student and the challenges the student is having in the classroom.

Knowledge of special education service delivery is necessary for regular classroom teachers as they will be involved in all stages of service delivery, especially while implementing inclusion (Idol, 2006; Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000; Bruneau-Balderrama, 1997).

Teachers should also be guided in their exploration of delivery options in order that successful implementation occurs (Idol, 2006). When all options are presented to teachers they gain further knowledge as to how service delivery takes shape. Fisher, Sax and Grove (2000) are proponents of teachers sharing in the vision, development, and planning of how an inclusion program will look. Teachers' participation in the development of an inclusion program is important because regular classroom teachers are stakeholders in the implementation of the inclusion program. They are stakeholders because they are in charge of putting the program into operation within their classrooms. The knowledge that regular classroom teachers gain regarding inclusion in their

classrooms may assist them with successful implementation ((Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004).

Financial Support

Fisher, Sax and Grove (2000) contend that teachers' view financial support and the lack of financial support as having a direct impact on the successful implementation of an inclusion program. They also found that teachers were concerned about funding for inclusion:

The strength of the commitment to inclusion was evident when teachers were asked to describe what would destroy inclusion at their school. 'The complete cut-off of funding' was the only consistent answer given. Budgeting for paraprofessionals and/or resource teachers was acknowledged as critical to inclusion. (p. 222)

Teachers acknowledge that financial support plays an integral role in implementing inclusion (Stanovich, 1999). It is also an issue which concerns teachers, as they are aware of the detrimental impact the lack of finances has on inclusion (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999).

Modifications

Classroom teachers need to incorporate modifications regarding instructional strategies and the curriculum in order to achieve success in the implementation of an

inclusion program (Giangreco, 2007; Idol, 2006; Bunch, 1999). Students who are deemed exceptional will require that the teacher make numerous modifications to the student's curricular needs (Francis, Joseph & Howard, 2004). The most significant modification that is made by the teacher is the modification of curricular expectations for the individual student (McLesky & Waldron, 2002; Friend, Bursuck & Hutchinson, 1998; Bunch & Valeo, 1997).

Some examples of modifications can include using large print books for students with visual impairments, having a scribe for students with poor fine motor coordination, providing a quiet work area or allowing the student to spell check or type their work on a computer (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2004). According to McLeskey and Waldron (2002), "Many teachers mentioned that they did not previously make modifications in their classrooms" (p. 51). This statement is significant as it shows the lack of knowledge that some teachers have regarding modifying the curriculum and their unwillingness to make such changes (Wilkins & Nietfeld, 2004; Vaidya & Zaslavsky, 2000).

Special education teachers play an integral role in assisting regular classroom teachers with learning to modify curriculum and in developing instructional strategies to meet the needs of special needs students (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2002; Stanovich, 1999). Teachers' acceptance of what they learned regarding modifying instruction is beneficial to teaching students with wide ranging ability levels. For these teachers, it was significant to see that their efforts did have an impact on their students that they could readily see, in turn shaping their attitude towards implementing inclusion in their classroom (Salend, 1999).

Support in the Classroom

During the implementation process, it is important that classroom teachers receive supports.

■

During For example, Heflin and Bullock (1999) found that, “When asked about their reactions to inclusion, regular classroom teachers reported varying degrees of scepticism and fear. Teachers were willing to try to include students with special needs as long as the ‘appropriate support’ was in place” (p. 5). This reveals that teachers have strong feelings regarding inclusion, yet are still willing to implement inclusion so long as support is in place (Weisel & Dror, 2006; Wade, 2000). The type of support the regular classroom teacher receives from an educational assistant or a special education teacher will be decided through planning and collaboration meetings (Burstein, Sears, Wilcoxon, Cabello, & Spagna, 2004).

Burstein et al. (2004) provides affirmation for supporting classroom teachers in the classroom: “There are so many positives [with full inclusion],...but it has to be supported; unsupported full inclusion is worse than no full inclusion at all” (p. 111). According to Burstein, unsupported inclusion simply means that exceptional students are not receiving the individualized assistance that they require in order to have positive learning outcomes. Teachers believe that students need to be supported in the classroom. Exceptional students need support depending on their exceptionality and teachers are aware of this need. It is clear that teachers understand that having additional support in the classroom, in the form of a special education teacher or an educational assistant, plays a significant role in implementing inclusion (McNally, Cole & Waugh, 2001; Fisher, Sax

& Grove, 2000; Stanovich, 1999; Heflin & Bullock, 1999). They are also mindful that not having support from a special education teacher or an educational assistant is detrimental to the implementation of inclusion because exceptional students need appropriate support in order to achieve success. The regular classroom teacher also requires the support of a special education teacher in implementing modifications to the curriculum, and implementing and developing the IEP (Bunch & Valeo, 1997)..

Stanovich (1999) found that, “participants also expressed the wish for more hands-on assistance in their classroom, saying this could be provided by scheduling more time for resource teachers in their classrooms or by providing educational assistants” (p. 3). This allocation of extra support in the classroom is seen to be an important element in implementing inclusion in the regular classroom (Bunch & Valeo, 1997). Hands-on assistance could come in the form of a special education teacher or an assistant, who could help students with work they are doing in the classroom (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000). Again, regular education teachers express the need for more specialized support in the classroom while they implement inclusion (Cook, Semmel & Gerber, 1999). This specialized support may come in the form of assistance from a special education teacher or an educational assistant (Idol, 2006; Mock & Kauffman, 2002). It is clear that teachers are aware of the need for classroom supports for inclusion (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000). Researchers found that regular classroom teachers made positive comments regarding the support that was available to them, “Several educators indicated that they liked having instructional assistants; valued special education teachers and speech pathologists; were proud of their programs” (Idol, 2006, p. 85). This statement is particularly noteworthy because regular classroom teachers positively state that they are appreciative of the

support they receive from educational assistants, special education teachers and other professionals (Fisher, Sax & Grove, 2000). This is an acknowledgement of the link between the support they receive and the success of their inclusion programs.

Table 2.1, developed by McLeskey and Waldron (2002) provides a description of what inclusion means and what is involved in implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. As well, it provides detail as to what inclusion is not.

Table 2.1 What Inclusion Means (and Doesn't Mean)

Inclusion does mean...

- Students with disabilities attend their neighbourhood school or the school they would attend if there were not disabled.
- That each child is in an age appropriate general education classroom.
- That every student is accepted and regarded as a full and valued member of the class and school community.
- 'Special Education' supports are provided within the context of the general education classroom.
- All students receive an education that addresses their individual needs.
- That a natural proportion of students with disabilities attend any school and classroom.
- No child is excluded on the basis of type and degree of disability.
- That the school promotes cooperative/collaborative teaching arrangements.
- That there is building-based planning, problem solving and ownership of all students and programs.

Inclusion does not mean...

- "Dumping" students with disabilities into general education classrooms without careful planning and adequate support.
- Reducing services or funding for special education services
- Overloading any classroom with students who have disabilities or who are at-risk
- That teachers spend a disproportionate amount of time teaching or adapting curriculum for students with disabilities
- Isolating students with disabilities socially, physically, or academically within the general education classroom.
- Jeopardizing the achievement of general education students by slower instruction

or less challenging curriculum.

- Relegating special education teachers to the role of assistant in the general education classroom.
- Forcing general education and special education teachers to team together without careful planning and well defined responsibilities.

Source: McLeskey, J., & Waldron, N.L. (2002). Professional development and inclusive schools: Reflections on effective practice. *The Teacher Educator*, 37(2), 159-172.

Summary

This chapter has provided an overview of current research pertaining to the issues which influence the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Such issues include professional development, collaboration, support from special education teachers, financial support, modifications to curriculum and teaching strategies, support in the classroom, service delivery and the perspectives teachers hold towards the inclusion of exceptional students in the regular classroom.

An exploration of the research reveals that the issues that are listed above are the most salient and current issues that teachers face while they are implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. These issues have been derived from research into the experiences of teachers while endeavouring to implement inclusion in the regular classroom.

Chapter three is a synopsis of the research methodology. It outlines the qualitative research design that was utilized in the course of the research. Ethical considerations while collecting data and conducting interviews, data collection and data analysis procedures will also be discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I describe the design and the methodology for this qualitative research study which includes the research questions, operational definitions, ethical considerations, criteria for selecting participants, qualitative design, data collection procedures, data analysis and interpretation methods.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of my research is to gain an understanding of issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion from the perspectives of four participants, 2 special education teachers and 2 classroom teachers.

The Research Questions

1. How do regular classroom teachers and special education teachers understand inclusion?
2. What issues do regular classroom teachers and special education teachers perceive to be the most influential in regards to successfully implementing inclusion in their classrooms? Why?

3. How do perceptions of regular classroom teachers and special education teachers compare within and across groups regarding the issues influencing the successful implementation of inclusion?

Definition of Terms

Operational Definitions

All terminology found within the definition of terms is derived from special education sources. As such, the terms are operational, not conceptual.

Inclusion

The Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education (2005) explains that, "...inclusion means not only the practice of placing students with special needs in the regular classroom but ensuring that teachers assist every student to prepare for the highest degree of independence possible"(p.2).

The Special Education Teacher

A special education teacher is defined by the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education (2001) as a teacher who "holds qualifications, in accordance with the regulations under the Education Act, to teach special education" and, "assists in providing educational assessments for exceptional pupils" (p.A9).

The Classroom Teacher

The classroom teacher is defined by the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education (2001) as a teacher that “contributes to the information gathering stage (background information, assessment information, work samples, observations, etc.); plans and carries out instructional programs for the student; modifies or differentiates the expectations for student’s learning” (p.E13).

Exceptional Students

An exceptional student is defined as “a pupil whose behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities are such that he or she is considered to need placement in a special education program by a committee” (Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001, p. A3)

Self-contained special education classrooms

According to Weber and Bennett (1999) a self-contained special education classroom is described as a specialized class in which exceptional students are placed.

Individual Education Plan or IEP

An Individual Education Plan or IEP is defined by the Ontario Ministry of Education (2001) as

A written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student’s strengths and needs – that is, the strengths and needs that affect a student’s ability to learn and to demonstrate learning; a working document that identifies learning expectations that are modified from the expectations for the age appropriate grade level in a particular subject or course, as outlined in the Ontario Ministry of Education’s

curriculum policy documents; an accountability tool for the student, the student's parents, and everyone who has responsibilities under the plan for helping the student meet the stated goals and learning expectations as the student progresses through the Ontario curriculum. (p. E22)

IPRC or Identification, Placement and Review Committee

According to the Ontario Ministry of Education (2001) the IPRC, "meets and decides if a student should be identified as an exceptional pupil and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student's needs" (p. D4).

Modification

The Ontario Ministry of Education (2004) in the policy document on Individual Education Plans, defines modifications as,

Modifications are changes made in the age-appropriate grade-level expectations for a subject or course in order to meet a student's learning needs. These changes may involve developing expectations that reflect knowledge and skills required in the curriculum for a different grade level and/or increasing or decreasing the number and/or complexity of the regular grade-level curriculum expectation. (p. E24)

Service Delivery

Service delivery is described by Bennett and Weber (1999) as "I: identifying a student's special needs; II: Choosing the most appropriate setting to meet the needs; III: Planning, implementing, and regularly evaluating an individualized program to meet the needs" (p. 35).

Teacher Collaboration

Teacher collaboration refers to the ongoing teamwork that regular classroom teachers and special education teachers need to engage in throughout the school year (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

Professional Development

Professional development refers to any learning in which teachers engage to widen their knowledge base, and which positively impacts their teaching (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005).

Teachers' Perspectives

Teachers' perspectives refer to the understanding that teachers have regarding inclusion (McLeskey, Waldron, So, Swanson & Loveland, 2001).

Financial Support

Financial support refers to the funding that is in place to sustain inclusion. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Education allots monies to each school board in the province to fund special education initiatives (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2001).

Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals, or educational assistants support teachers in the course of their teaching duties (Toronto District School Board, 2005).

Respondent Validation

According to Barbour (2001) respondent validation “involves cross checking interim research findings with respondents” (p.1115).

Procedures

Research Design

This study utilizes a qualitative design.

Participants

According to Denzin and Lincoln (Eds.) (1994), “the sample is determined according to the needs of the study” (p. 229). In this research study my aim was to understand the perspectives of a group of special education teachers and classroom teachers regarding the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion. As such, two classroom teachers and two special education teachers were selected. Due to time and financial constraints, the number of participants was limited to four.

Qualitative research focuses on relatively small samples that have depth and are a rich source of information (Patton, 2002). The teachers interviewed had at least five years of experience teaching in the elementary school panel. Interviewing teachers in the elementary school was a prerequisite because I am an elementary teacher and I am seeking the perspectives of my peers. I interviewed teachers with five years or more experience because they are more likely to have varied experiences with implementing inclusion or working in inclusion programs than teachers with less than five years experience. Participant teachers are colleagues I have previously worked with over the past five years. They were recruited based on their experience and my previous professional relationship with them.

Participant Profiles

Each participant works for the largest school district in the country and is located in Southern Ontario. Two participants are special education teachers and two participants are regular classroom teachers. Their range of teaching experience ranges from nine

years to twenty years. Three of the teachers are from the same school and the other teacher is from another school within the same school district.

In the discourse that follows each teacher was assigned a pseudonym in keeping with ethical considerations. Use of pseudonyms protect participants identities and maintain the confidentiality of their responses.

Carrie is a regular classroom teacher who currently teaches grade one. She has been a teacher for nine years and has taught grade one for approximately seven and a half years, taking a year and a half off for maternity leave. Her teaching experiences have solely been at the primary level. She has been a lead teacher for primary teachers in the past. This means that she has been trained to provide instruction and support to other primary teachers in the primary division who need mentorship or support pertaining to teaching primary students. Her career for the past nine years has been with the same school board. She holds a three part additional qualification in reading, meaning that she has a specialist qualification in reading from an Ontario Faculty of Education. The qualification is recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers.

Charlotte is currently a regular classroom teacher and her assignment this year is a grade 2/3 split. She has been teaching for the past twenty years. As she was educated in the United States, she has spent the majority of her teaching career in the United States before coming to teach in Canada four years ago. Her experiences teaching have been in special education settings in Canada and the United States. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Education with a concentration in Special Education.

Miranda is a special education teacher who holds a Master's degree in special education from a Canadian University. Her current assignment is as a half time special

education teacher and a half time prep teacher. In her special education role she is the Methods and Resource teacher and in her prep role she instructs different groups of students thus providing planning and preparation time to the home room teacher. She has been a teacher for eleven years and before beginning her teaching career she was an educational assistant in self-contained classes for exceptional students for fifteen years. She has taught in regular classroom settings for two years and has spent the past nine as a special education teacher in both self-contained settings and as a special education resource teacher in the same board.

Aidan is a special education teacher whose current assignment is in special education. Aidan has been a teacher for the past fifteen years. He has taught for the same school board throughout his career. Although he has taught in the primary division for a short period of time, he has spent over ninety percent of his career in special education settings, mainly self-contained settings. He has taken special education Part I, Part II and Part III, which is recognized by the Ontario College of Teachers'.

Setting

This study was conducted with elementary classroom teachers and special education teachers within the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. The elementary schools in Toronto District are situated within Canada's largest urban centre.

Time Frame

The time frame for conducting this research is as follows. My research proposal was submitted to the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University at the beginning of January, 2007.

My proposal was approved by the Research Ethics Board at Lakehead University. In late January and I then submitted requisite documentation to the External Research Committee at the Toronto District School Board. After receiving approval from the school board, I then asked for written consent from the school principals regarding conducting research with teachers at their school. I then obtained written consent from the participant teachers before conducting the interviews.

I began my data collection by interviewing four teachers beginning at the start of March, 2007. After transcribing the interviews, I sent a copy of the transcript to the teachers that I interviewed for them to edit. In certain instances I had to schedule a second interview with certain participants for further clarification. The data collection and data analysis process took approximately three months to complete.

Data analysis was ongoing throughout the data collection phase. Data analysis of transcripts began after I received transcripts from the teachers and all interviewing had ceased. This stage took approximately one month.

When data analysis was completed, I began writing my findings.

Methods

A case study approach was implemented for this research study. I chose to use a case study method because it is in keeping with qualitative methodology (Creswell, 2003). Case studies are essentially used to conduct detailed investigations of programs using a multitude of data collection methods (Stake, 1995). Data collection methods include interviews, policy documents, fieldnotes, analytical notes and substantive notes. I believe that this approach fits well with my research problem as I attempt to gain a

comprehensive understanding of classroom and special education teachers perspectives on the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion.

Instrument

The instrument that I used was an interview guide. The interview guide explored questions pertaining to issues that influence the implementation of inclusion. Patton (2002) explains that an interview guide:

...lists the questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview.

An interview guide is prepared to ensure that the same basic lines of inquiry are pursued with each person interviewed. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject (p. 343).

A sample of my interview guide can be found in the Appendix G.

Research Process

Data Collection Procedures

Upon the approval of the research proposal, written consent was gained from all participants prior to conducting interviews. Consent forms were sent to participants and signed forms were returned via fax or mail.

All issues pertaining to observation and the reporting of findings were discussed with and disclosed to the participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003). At the outset of the interview, I gained informed consent (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) from the participants by reviewing the consent forms and asking participants if they understood the terms and if they still wished to participate. Once verbal consent was obtained, I proceeded with the interview. Each participant was also informed that their identity would remain

confidential (Patton, 2002). As such, each participant was given a pseudonym to protect their identity and to maintain confidentiality.

In-depth interviews (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium, & Silverman, 2004) were conducted by myself, the researcher. Interviews were informal and open-ended (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I asked participants semi-structured questions that would assist in revealing their views on inclusion (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Interviews lasted approximately one hour.

I conducted interviews via the telephone using a recording device. Telephone interviews are considered to be a reliable and efficacious method for collecting data (Fenig, Levav, Kohn & Nava, 1993). They are considered reliable because they are tape-recorded for accuracy. Also, because people have busy schedules, the use of the telephone was seen to be a useful way of contacting participants. As I am in Thunder Bay and the participants are in Toronto.

After conducting the interviews I then transcribed the recordings and sent the transcripts back to the participants for respondent validation. This means that I invited participants to make revisions to the transcripts by adding or amending information. In this way, "I cross-checked my interim research findings with the respondents" (Barbour, 2110). I used respondent validation to ensure that any revisions to the transcripts were made by the participants so that I did not make incorrect assumptions regarding their responses.

Documents

Policy documents from the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education played a key role in the data collection process. These documents outline the role of special education

in the province and how teachers are complying with such guidelines. These policy documents are particularly important, as they share a close link to my research problem on implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. The Ontario Ministry of Education (2005) policy document states clearly that inclusion is a primary goal in the education of exceptional students in Ontario. This shows that the direction of government policy favours inclusion in the regular classroom.

At all stages during my research I took detailed fieldnotes. These notes come in three forms: analytical, methodological and theoretical (Patton, 2002). Analytical notes and methodological notes were taken at the outset of the data collection process. These notes are not verbatim. For example, I took notes regarding post-interview details. Theoretical notes provide emergent patterns and themes to the researcher (Creswell, 2003). These notes are taken during the data analysis stage. These notes support the direction the research is taking and support the credibility of the findings because the researcher continuously reviews the notes taken throughout the research process (Creswell, 2003).

Process for Documentation

I tape recorded all of the interviews. Tape recorded interviews were transcribed. Written fieldnotes accompanied the tape recorded interviews. References and notes from policy documents were also kept.

Ethical Considerations

As a graduate student in education at Lakehead University, my research proposal was approved by the Research Ethics Board at the university before conducting the

research. Once the research proposal was approved at the university level, approval was also sought from the school board before I began the research.

After the data were analyzed, the tape recordings of the interviews and any notes were kept in a secure location (Sieber, 1998). At Lakehead University the time period for storage is 7 years (Lakehead University, 2005), after which the data will be destroyed.

Findings will employ pseudonyms in order that participants maintain anonymity, also to ensure that there is little or no risk from participating in this research study. Also results will be disseminated as follows: copies of the completed thesis will be kept at the Education Library and the Patterson Library at Lakehead University.

Data Analysis & Interpretation

Data Analysis

The method I used for data analysis was ongoing and reflective throughout the analysis process (Creswell, 2003). I endeavoured to review my research questions and the literature to guide my analysis of findings (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). I did this by continuously reviewing and sorting out my findings in order to extract pertinent information that either supported or refuted my research problem and research questions.

Coding

Once the transcripts were transcribed I read through them before coding. According to Patton (2002) codes are a way of, “Developing some manageable classification” scheme (p. 463). Coding practices can be seen as the first step to bringing order to the vast amount of information that was collected. At this stage I numbered each line of participant response in the transcript. Then I went back and began to write an

acronym or codes for the information in each line. For example, if the participant discussed collaboration with colleagues I coded the line COLL. I followed the same guidelines for each transcript. When I finished the process for each transcript I then translated the codes onto another piece of paper for further reference in assisting me in developing emergent themes.

Themes

Marshall and Rossman (2006) explain that developing themes is the “most intellectually challenging phase of data analysis, and one that can integrate the entire endeavour” (p.159). Themes are described by Patton (2002) as patterns or categories that emerge from the information. Finding themes is done by searching all data for recurrent words or ideas.

Triangulation

In this study data triangulation was employed. Patton (2002) describes data triangulation as, “the use of a variety of data sources in a study” (p. 247). I compared and contrasted data from the interview guide, fieldnotes, and sources of published data to ensure that the results are consistent, not necessarily the same. The purpose of triangulation is to support validity of research findings, to maintain credibility of research, and to corroborate the evidence. An example of triangulation is taking a response from an interview question and contrasting the response to policy documents and fieldnotes taken by the researcher.

Data Analysis Techniques

Ethnographic techniques were utilized during this research study. According to Creswell (2003) ethnographic techniques are associated with qualitative research. Data

collected by the researcher takes place over a period of time and is in a natural setting. This observational data consists of documents, semi-structured interviews and fieldnotes.

Documents that were used in this research study were published by the Ministry of Education. Documents include: Education For All: The Report on Literacy and Numeracy Instruction For Students With Special Education Needs, Kindergarten to Grade 6 (2005), Special education: A Guide For Educators (2001), and The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004). These documents address issues pertaining to special education service delivery in Ontario, as well as guidelines for implementing inclusion in the regular classroom in the province.

Fieldnotes took three forms: Analytical, Methodological and Theoretical. These notes were kept in a fieldnotes journal and written throughout the research process.

The nature of the interviews were informal. An interview guide was utilized to encourage discussion and reflection. All interviews were transcribed by myself and e-mailed to participants in Toronto for editing purposes. Once the transcripts were returned to me, I placed them in the data analysis collection pool.

Interpretation

Patton (2002) describes interpretation of the data as, “attaching significance to what was found, making sense of the findings, offering explanations, drawing conclusions, extrapolating lessons, making inferences, considering meanings, and otherwise imposing order” (p. 480). Using Patton’s model of interpretation I endeavoured to determine whether the transcripts, fieldnotes, and policy documents relate to my research questions being asked and sought to build linkages which were significant to my research focus.

Interpretation of the data was also seen as making sense of the data by creating order and meaning. Marshall and Rossman (2006) say that interpretation of data is, “Often referred to as ‘telling the story,’ interpretation brings meaning and coherence to the themes, patterns, categories, developing linkages and a story line that makes sense and is engaging to read” (p.161). This is noteworthy because my goal was to find meaning from the data that would reveal regular classroom teachers and special education teachers’ perspectives regarding implementing inclusion. From these perspectives, I compared and contrasted the data sources with themes from the literature review to create connections to my research and research questions. The connections made are in terms of similarities and differences within and across data sources. Significance of the similarities and differences were also discussed in relation to the research questions and the focus of the research.

Transferability and Credibility

According to Locke, Silverman & Spirduso (2004) transferability refers to whether the data collected has value to other researchers and how well the research is written so that other researchers may use the findings in similar research.

Credibility refers to whether the information gathered is credible. As I moved through all stages of the research, from the research problem, to the methods and data collection through to analysis, I ensured that each and every stage of this research study was documented to ensure that the findings were in fact credible. I used multiple data sources including documents, interview transcripts and the fieldnotes during the triangulation process to further support credibility of findings.

Summary

This chapter outlines the research design as well as how all aspects of the research study were established before research took place. Not only is the research methodology necessary for providing a framework for conducting research, but it is needed for reflective purposes throughout the research process.

Chapter four will provide a summary of the findings from the data collection stage. Themes extracted from the analysis of data are discussed. As well, the process of triangulation is discussed in the context of transcripts, fieldnotes and documents.

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the findings in relation to themes that emerged from data analysis. In particular, I examined the findings generated from triangulation of transcripts, fieldnotes and documents. The intention of this chapter is to give a voice to the participants as well as an analysis of the findings.

Ten main themes emerged: (a) support; (b) collaboration; (c) strategies; (d) time; (e) placement; (f) funding; (g) experience; (h) benefits of inclusion; (i) inconsistency and; (j) challenges.

Description of Findings

Support

When questioned regarding the support they receive in their classroom, participants results revealed that they had strong feelings regarding this issue. Teachers interviewed indicated that there was a strong need for support, yet at times support was lacking.

As Carrie put it:

There are times when the child needs to walk, needs a break, or needs to go down to leave the room, just remove themselves from all the stimulation in the classroom or to take a break and go to the bathroom and I can't take the child out on their own. That was the biggest support and just helping to keep up with the

routines, helping to encourage positive interactions with their classmates. In a lot of cases the disruptions were affecting the other kids. The behaviours or perhaps some of the aggressive behaviours, they were there also to minimize that. I've had cases where I've had scissors pointed in my eye because of an impulsive reaction from a student. So, that helps to reduce those types of incidents.

Carrie also added that the teachers with the most behavioural problems in their classrooms seemed to be the ones who received the most support. She commented:

Someone being brought into the room? It really depends on how many people are available and how many people have been assigned. It seems as though sometimes the most disruptions and behavioural concerns in the classroom will get it. So that the most behavioural or disruptive child will be the one who gets someone in the room (Interview 1).

Charlotte, the grade 2/3 teacher, also expressed the need for support in the classroom. She stated that sometimes in the afternoon she is left with no support. She then has to manage the autistic students in her classroom, the other special needs students, and the regular students (Interview 2). She also expressed that the level of support is inconsistent and there is not enough of it throughout the day (Fieldnotes 2).

Charlotte explained:

Having support in the classroom, I use the support to work with the children . I don't have them...I don't have them do...how do you say, mediocre things. I have them involved with the students. I have a group, may I have. I try to put maybe 4-5 students that may need extra help, I put them in the same area of the room so that during direct instruction I have the assistant there to maintain them

and to keep them focused, on task. And then later on, when I'm doing one-on-one, I can ask the assistant to move around the room, even with the students who don't need help. So that I can work directly with the special needs kids (Interview 2).

Aidan commented that what his role is in supporting the classroom teacher. He says that as a special education teacher he supports regular classroom teachers by "providing strategies and ideas on what to do" (Interview 3).

Miranda, a special education teacher, had very strong feelings regarding having support people in the regular classroom. She placed a great deal of emphasis on having properly trained personnel in the classroom assisting the teacher.

If it was an educational assistant it would have to be somebody that was trained. That's the only way I see it as beneficial. Who understands the different learning styles of the children and has some training in it. You know, there are courses for EA's to go and learn that. But just throwing, just throwing someone in the classroom who's maybe a parent and says "Oh look, you've got so and so to help you!" That doesn't help the teacher because it's more work for the teacher to train that assistant or helper. But, if they're trained, and they know what they're doing and there's consistency, I think it's the best thing. It would be great. It would make the job of the teacher so much easier and the children would learn (Interview 4).

Miranda also stated later in the interview that inclusion only works when it is supported. She added:

...if the teachers are not supported and given the proper training, or the support

that they need or the input, allow the input, then I don't see it as a positive thing.

Further on in the interview Miranda comments on support for the teacher in this statement,

Sometimes students are brought into the classroom and left too soon without an EA and that can be very, very hard for the teacher who doesn't have training in special ed and who has a difficult class to start with. So that can make it very difficult and that can also turn off the teacher as far as inclusion. I think, personally, inclusion is good if the supports are there (Interview 4).

Collaboration

All participants indicated and recognized the importance of collaboration between colleagues as being beneficial to exceptional students in the regular classroom. They also recognized that there was a lack of collaboration and that there was a need for change.

As Carrie explained:

...talking to others who may have had the child before me. I asked that teacher, "What did you do to deal with them?" Experience I think had a lot to do with it, you just sort of figure out what works. Colleagues. Talking to the principal about suggestions (Interview 1).

Charlotte added:

There's different ways. Like you see with the students with Autism, I collaborate with the autism teacher. And just to, just touch base to make sure that they understand where, and what I'm expecting from the students in my classroom.

Further in the interview Charlotte spoke of how she collaborates with the home school teacher:

As far as the other students that I have in the home-school, I cooperate with the home-school teacher and the special needs assistant that works with the children in there (Interview 2).

She also explained that she collaborates with other teachers in the school who teach her exceptional students, as well as other people in the school who come in contact with students she has in her classroom. As the teacher stated:

Even my colleagues that have them. Like my colleagues that teach drama or gym to my students, I collaborate with them. The Librarian. We also, in general knowledge, if we're sitting and talking and you bring up, okay maybe students to teachers who had those students before. I'll collaborate with them and ask: okay, what works and what didn't work? Because I think you need to collaborate with everyone who is involved with that student. So, there needs to be a whole team effort, it's not just you, it's not just them. You have to collaborate with everyone that is involved. That includes the school, the lunchroom supervisors. It's a whole team effort for everyone that's involved (Interview 2).

As a special education teacher, Miranda is involved in collaborating with her regular classroom colleagues. Throughout the interview she stated that she does in fact collaborate with her colleagues in a variety of ways. The following excerpt describes what happens in a perfect scenario:

Well, if everything goes right, okay. Let's pick the perfect scenario. I'm booked with the teacher to come in and now I'm coming in and I'm going to be working with a group. Then I would work with that group and I'd know exactly what I'm going to be doing with them. And that would enable the teacher to work with the

other groups, but at the same time, it would enable her to leave and go to groups that are independent, come over to my group and watch me and learn from it, take over from me, then I can go back to her other groups and work with the other groups. So, it's like. You come in, I do something with the kids, she sees it, she can leave her independent groups, she takes over and then I go back and work with the other groups, the independent group, monitor it, then come back with the group again (Interview 4).

Aidan and Miranda noted that there was insufficient opportunity for collaboration with colleagues and that more time needs to be given for collaboration. Miranda expressed the problem she has with collaboration in the following statement:

I never used to be given time, or where I could work with teachers and free them up, separately. I would be, the expectation would be for me to do PD with them. And the expectation would be I would have to do it after school with them or at lunch time with them. And at that point I refused because it went against my federation to do that and I discouraged teachers to do that because I believe that teachers need to have their lunch break and they need to have their afternoons to catch up on whatever they need to do to prepare themselves for the next day. So, that was one of the most difficult things was collaborating with teachers to help them with inclusion (Interview 4).

Miranda believed that all teachers are not given enough opportunities to plan together, to meet and to collaborate (Fieldnotes 4).

Aidan, a special education teacher with fifteen years of experience, noted that collaboration was difficult to achieve.

...this year in my school there's been a lot of talk, but I don't think we get a chance to really sit down and talk about the stuff that needs to be talked about. My fellow teachers have come over to me to ask about how to do this and how can I accommodate the program, you know, for some kids in the class. You know, so those kinds of things are going on (Interview 3).

Aidan characterized the current level of collaboration as,

I would say, currently, it's satisfactory. It's satisfactory that sometimes I have to go over to provide some kind of, to open the discussion, or just to give some kind of pointers. They are quite receptive, so there is no hostility. But in my view, true collaboration, it should be mutual, two-way. And I would like to see that happen more.

He also added that while regular classroom teachers and special education teachers collaborate with one another regarding exceptional students, they should also discuss modifications. Aidan comments:

I'd like to see, at some point, some discussion being allocated on how to make accommodations or modifications, how to develop a student program. I think I would like to see that happening more between all the teachers. At the same time, to help in some ways to know that the program is actually specific, so there is satisfactory collaboration. But I think there is room for improvement. Part of it is having gotten into a culture where when you do your class planning, really SPEC ED students should be an important component of your planning. Right now for most classroom teachers, when they do their planning for SPEC ED students they are not as organized as they should be

(Interview 3).

For Aidan, collaborating with his regular classroom colleagues was important and something that was not happening as much as it should have been. He clearly felt that there is room for improvement in that area (Fieldnotes 3). Although Aidan found collaborating with his regular classroom colleagues difficult, he did say that he does collaborate more with his counterpart in the special education department, as well as his principal. Aidan stated:

I have a lot to say in contributing to the SPEC ED model in the school, for instance. So, you know, I go to my MART teacher, I go to my principal and say that certain things are not working. You know, they would listen very carefully to me and they would change it. You know, they see that you know, the reasons are well-informed and justified. So, there is a lot of trust (Interview 3).

Strategies

When I asked teachers to explain the modifications they make to their teaching strategies for exceptional students they had varying responses based on their teaching background and education in special education.

Charlotte said:

For example, I've had some spec ed students and I find their strengths and weakness and I find what level they're on. And from that point on, if we do math, I'll do the whole class—even with the split—I'll do the grade 2 direct instruction and the grade 3 direct instruction. So, at the same time I'm going to do a grade 2 and a student who needs modifications on a grade 2-3, I introduce it to the whole class and then I go and help the student with different behaviours, different

problems. Also, you need to talk about, to make sure that they are aware that they can use all their senses, not just their hands. I find out that the more hands-on activities I use, the more they seem to grasp. So, I probably do a lot of collaborate learning and cooperate learning. I also try to do hands-on as much as possible. And in everything I do, I definitely follow the IEP (Interview 2).

Charlotte also said that she would like to see more differentiated instruction and the pairing of special education teachers and regular classroom teachers in the classroom.

I would really love to see it done correctly. I would love to see, I would love to see differentiating instruction with a special ed teacher and a regular classroom teacher. I think that would really blow the tops off everything. I think that would be the most amazing thing that would ever happen (Interview 2).

Aidan stated that he is the one who writes the student's IEP, reads the former assessments of the student's academic performance and establishes the student's reading and math programs for the duration of the year. Aidan also makes the decisions regarding the modifications which are made to the student's academic program throughout the year and shares this information with the regular classroom teacher to inform her instructional strategies when teaching this exceptional student. So, his role in special education differs from that of the regular classroom teacher. This is evidenced in the subsequent statement.

Well, what I do is at the beginning of the year when you get a SPEC ED student in September you have to do the IEP, do reading, writing and math assessments. What happens is I have to use that because that's the drive for the program, the regular program, for the rest of the year. And usually what accompanies the

September reports will be notes from the previous SPEC ED teacher regarding the reading levels, the writing levels and so on. Sometimes you can use that as a guide. But, I think using that as a guide with say Vincent. And the previous teacher shows that he's reading at level 5 in June or the end of the term. And in September he's been tested at the same level because we've forgotten the summer period. So, that would give you a guide to the kind of materials you should prepare for reading and writing assessments, so, once you have to do the recording in the IEP. So, he's in grade 8, but reading at grade 5, that's where the modification come in. And you come up with his reading program, his writing program. It is very much decided by the level he is tested at. So, that's how you provide the modifications (Interview 3).

As a regular classroom teacher, Carrie acknowledged that there are varying strategies she uses to teach exceptional students in her classroom. She said that she learned many of these strategies through a trial and error process. Carrie also said that it has been a difficult adjustment teaching exceptional students in her classroom and learning strategies to cope with the disruptions that may occur. She described the strategies she used when dealing with a particular exceptional student in her classroom and eluded to the difficulties that may occur. Carries commented:

Keeping him close, a lot of reminders, repeating instructions, one-on-one. So, actually I would instruct the class and then tell him to repeat the instructions to me and tell him specifically what he needs to do and see if he understands what he needs to do and then tell him that it's time to get to work. A lot of time management too, telling him that he has five more minutes on this and ten more

minutes on this; really helping to control the time. Also, I've done a lot of peer mentoring helping in the class because especially when you don't have anyone in the class working with you, I have to have someone sort of designated help for the child, and to keep that child on task. I try to rotate the responsibilities.

Carrie went on to explain the course of action she takes when exceptional students in her classroom have behaviour issues and are not able to cope in the regular classroom. She described, in detail, the strategies that she and her educational assistant use during times of disruption. Carrie also described how the other children respond during disruptions. She stated:

As far as outside the curriculum and just management in the room, proximity to keep them involved and engaged, allowing movement around the room walking if need be, strolls in the hallway. Things they would be allowed to do, other kids wouldn't be allowed to do. If there was an outburst, we would just let it happen and that's it. If there was like verbal things like utterances and things like that, in this particular case there were a lot of hand gestures and you just sort of know that they happened and the children knew that they happened and allowed it to happen because we couldn't stop every time these things happened. It would be sort of like a constant disruption, so we just acknowledged that this child did things like that and we became aware and told the others that this is how this student behaves. So, the children became aware of it and worked through that and that it was how they behave and that it's not acceptable for the rest of them to have verbal outbursts and what not (Interview 1).

Miranda, a special education teacher said that she learned strategies to teach

exceptional students by doing. As a special education teacher she works with small groups of exceptional children in and out of the regular classroom. She described the strategies she uses to teach them, based on the idea of differentiated instruction, in this excerpt from her interview.

I also learned it once I started doing things like, with my own little groups, with my resource groups and I got rid of pencil and paper work and I did a lot of activity work. And, sort of, the kids had choices. But they always had to write something for me eventually. At a time they had to write, they had the confidence to write because I've been able to differentiate within my groups, their learning styles. I could adapt to the learning styles. So, they were learning to talk about it. Lots of oral language. Oral language it so important with kids with special ed needs. They need to talk it, they need to hear it and some of them can write it. Some of them, some of them have to write it actually to be able to understand it. But some of them cannot talk it. They have to hear it first. They have to with hear you read it or they listen and then they can speak it. There's just a different learning style. I learned the learning style before I learned the differentiation of curriculum (Interview 4).

Time

The study revealed that each participant had their own view regarding time as an issue while teaching exceptional students. Each teacher expressed his/her view on time as follows.

In her half-time position as a special education teacher and half-time as a prep teacher, Miranda noted that she felt time was an issue that was problematic for her. As a

special education teacher in her school, Miranda is responsible for all of the paperwork that is associated with students receiving special education funding, for example ISA and SIP grants. She felt that the basic constraint for time came in the form of paperwork, which she had to do in addition to her role as a special education teacher and a prep teacher. She expressed the problem she faces in this way:

There's a lot of money out there so everyone can get ISA. And the quicker you get it in, the faster you're going to get that. That takes a lot of time. So, that would get down, some of my afternoons. So, I'm still doing a full-time job, plus my ½ time. So, as far as I'm concerned, I'm doing 1.5. That's 1.5 day (Interview 4).

Carrie felt that time was also a problem for her in her classroom because she felt the exceptional students she had in her classroom required a great deal of time and that that time was taken away from the other students in her classroom. She supported this by saying,

Well, of course it's the time. I think, without support it's the time required that the children require. Which, obviously will take away from the time you give to the rest of your class. If you've got a child with special needs in your room, then they're going to require a lot of time. So it becomes sometimes difficult to manage. If they come with disruptions and behaviour concerns, then of course that can also cause disruptions to the programming in the room and cause distractions to the other students learning. Beyond the regular distractions then a lot of attention is required that can take away from the other kids time (Interview 1).

Aidan expressed the problem of time in terms of the issue the regular classroom teacher faces with time constraints and including exceptional students in the regular classroom:

In terms of academic performance you find that for kids that I mentioned earlier who were at JK/SK level, when they go back to their regular grade 7 classroom the poor guy is really helpless. Because the teacher doesn't quite have time to give him one-to-one (Interview 3).

Time was also an issue that Charlotte mentioned in her interview, yet her reason differed from other participants. Coming from a teaching background in the United States, she felt that there was not enough time designated for professional development regarding inclusion and that teachers were not as prepared to teach exceptional students as they should be.

I feel that we have the limited workshops. I find that we, I find that we have these one-day workshops and afternoon development workshops. I don't think that the limited time that is given to this is really preparing teachers (Interview 2).

Placement

Placement was a theme that emerged during the data analysis of the present research. Participants discussed the placement of students in the classroom and also discussed the model for special education within their schools.

Carrie commented:

So, but when you do usually have support it's on a pull-out basis. There's been a lot of talk about having that support system come into the classroom, working with the students within the classroom so that the children were learning better to

cope within the regular day within the confines of the regular day, and with the regular program. But in many cases the small group instruction is best to enhance their learning in particular areas so the pull-out system is used (Interview 1).

Charlotte added:

You know, like I am doing, I am doing grade 5 to 8. Another teacher, I believe is doing grade 1 to grade 4. And both are withdrawn models. So, they just come to me for math and language. And it's the same model for the other teacher. So, they come to me for, you know, 50% of their day. That's how much SPEC ED they got from me for the 50% of the day (Interview 3).

Miranda explained:

...we have one, self-contained classroom. And that's the autism class. We have kids that are getting ready for transition. And to Kindergarten and grade 1. So, they're getting ready for transition and we do try and integrate those kids towards the, the end of the second term, into a regular class, so they can see what it feels like to be in a classroom and we take them to all activities. Like if there's an assembly they'd be integrated. The aim is to integrate. The aim to integrate as soon as possible, regardless of where the child is at or which class they're in. That's the goal of the school (Interview 4).

Aidan remarked:

The home-school we have presently is a half day home-school and then we have the MART [Methods And Resource Teacher] program, The MART sees them, being a half time MART, the MART sees them sometimes if they don't have paperwork (Interview 2).

Funding

Participants believed that funding was essential for having resources such as educational assistants, professional development and classroom resources suitable for the students they teach.

Charlotte observed:

I think financial support is very important. Because if you have the financial support, then you have the assistant's, you have the ability to bring more manipulatives, to buy more for the classroom. You have the funds available to provide the classroom with multiple opportunities, not only for the special needs, but for all children in the classroom (Interview 2).

Aidan provides further support as to the importance of having financial support in the classroom not only by having educational assistants, but by having funds so that there continue to be special education teachers in the school.

Aidan commented:

And, to provide all those kinds of things, obviously you need money; so that you'll find that to have assistants will not end. And also allocations for SPEC ED teachers, will be there as well. So, yes, money is important.

In so far as financial support and funding are concerned, Carrie also felt that financial support is necessary to maintain both special education programs and regular classroom programs in the school. Carrie stated:

Absolutely you need financial support. You need financial support to get assistants. If you have an SNA or an educational assistant in the room you need support. Also, for any additional resources you may need. For example, I see in

the autistic room in the autistic class in our school, that there is a tonne of stuff needed to help keep those kids on task and to support their learning. And even in just coming to an assembly, these kids need special balls to squeeze to keep them focused. There's a lot of tools that could be really useful for kids who haven't been identified, but kids who there's a suspicion of perhaps a learning disability. Those types of things. Extra books, resources. Money in any program would be useful (Interview 1).

Miranda, a special education teacher, had very strong feelings regarding funding. She believed that funding was important to support the programs in the school. Miranda also believed that teachers should be given more funds to support their learning, rather than paying for resources themselves. Miranda observed:

It's very important and I think teachers should choose their own resources for their grade and they should have enough materials and reading, in reading books and whatever they need. They should have enough of those. And it shouldn't be coming out of their pocket at all. The reading materials should be up to date. You know, reading and materials from 20 years ago, it's not interesting, it's not relevant to the children today, it has to be relevant.

Miranda also pointed out that teachers should be able to choose and participate in professional development opportunities that are relevant to their teaching assignments.

Miranda stated:

I think there should be. I think it just needs more funding so the teacher, in order to go for training, if she wants to if she finds out that there's a specific course, a one day course given somewhere and it focuses on what her needs are, then she

should be able to go, there should be resources available for her to go. For instance if there was a course that talked about, you know, setting up different centres based on the learning styles of your students and she hears about that course, she should be able to go if that's what she wants to learn more about. Or a course that specifically deals with ADHD kids, she should be able to go. And, the teacher should be able to teach. I'm sorry, the teacher should be able to choose where she wants to get the extra development.

Miranda also commented on the training that she receives in her specialized position as Methods and Resource Teacher and says that the training could be improved if there was more funding. She remarked:

I sometimes find that I've gone for training as a MART and we're doing the same stuff over and over again. I'm not really learning stuff that I need to learn, that I can bring back to teachers and I think it's the same for teachers. They're not being taught and at the school level even, they really don't have any knowledge, say for instance, one teacher recently went to a workshop on dealing with parents. I mean, that's a very big thing, especially if you have special ed students who are integrated in the classroom and parents who don't like that. How do you deal with those parents? Well, going to a course will really help you address that and give you the strategies to work with that. So, if the teacher thought that's what I need to do, she should be allowed to go to that course. There should be funds provided for that.

Miranda explained:

As well, as if she see that there's a resource out there that's really going to help her with her teaching and integration. she should be able to get that resource and call it her own (Interview 4).

Experience

Findings indicated the importance of experience in relation to servicing exceptional students in the classroom. Both special education and regular classroom teachers responded that teachers who have experience teaching exceptional students are more able to implement inclusion in the regular classroom.

Carrie remarked:

I haven't had a lot of experience with exceptional students so I haven't had a lot of need to work with exceptional students in my room. I've had maybe two occasions (Interview 1).

She also went on to say that in her experience as a grade one teacher there are issues with students in her classroom whom she believes have exceptionalities who have not yet been formally identified because the identification process does not usually begin until grade two or later. As Carrie explained:

So, that's the only thing I feel like I'm on a really limited amount of experience as far as students with exceptionalities. I mean there's always cases in which you have children you believe to have exceptionalities. Because I've taught grade one, I'm always in the early stages of identification and it's not often, but prior to identifying (Interview 1).

Miranda who teaches regular classroom teachers about inclusion in her role as a special education teacher, believed that experience is an asset to teaching exceptional

students. She herself has over twenty-five years of experience in the special education field. Miranda remarked:

I find the most experienced teachers can do it. And the ones that are really dedicated, who love teaching, will do it (Interview 4).

Aidan also recognized that experience is essential in learning how to include and teach exceptional students. He commented:

You know, it's through experience. A lot of it, the work I've done over the years. You get to know what works and you get to know what doesn't work. And you fine tune your strategies as the year goes by. You know, and sometimes you get a chance to discuss with other teachers and so on. Sometimes you get a chance to see reports of special education professionals. You know, you learn through those kinds of things and sometimes you have discussions with your MART teachers. So, those are the learning avenues to develop programs for SPEC ED students (Interview 3).

In her interview, Charlotte also commented on the need for experience when teaching exceptional students in the regular classroom.

Charlotte expressed:

For instance, had I not changed my program. I'm the only primary teacher that changed my program to work with the home-school program. Most of the others have math in the morning, I mean they have language in the morning and math in the afternoon. And then their students have language in the morning with them and then they go to home-school and have language and they miss math altogether. So, it's knowing that those students are in my room, I moved my

schedule around to work with the teacher in the home-school program. To make sure that my students got everything. When it comes to inclusion, whether they get it or not, they are at least exposed to it. I mean you have to, it's the teacher's responsibility to for them. They have to make the modifications and they have to make the adaptations to everything that every students has to do. So, it puts more work on the teacher, but at least they have the exposure, not to mention socialization (Interview 2).

Charlotte also expressed that teachers should be more experienced in the classroom in order to better understand the needs of their exceptional students. She argues that in order to gain experience, teachers need to be better versed in their educational experiences as well as assessing student needs. She comments:

I think that, again, again, my States background comes in. I think that students who have IEP's and I think that we have a difficulty. Assessment, academic assessment such as psycho-educational battery. Something like that to see where these children are because unless you have them tested, you, you can take a guess where they're, where they're at.

Charlotte added that academic testing, in her experience, is a good way to pinpoint the areas where a student is experiencing academic difficulties. When she taught in the United States special education teachers tested their students in a variety of areas using tests provided by the state.

She remarked:

But when you have that one-on-one testing you get to see, you know, where their strengths are at, you know, where their weaknesses are at and you even know

what their competencies are because it's broken down for you. Even in math. you see computation, or if it's logical thinking. You know, and that's hard to do without any kind of assessment. And I think that if you, I think that even if you could have some type of diagnostic, or even a diagnostic tool. Just so to where you could see these students and you could have time to, you know. Because even with a diagnostic tool it will show you even of they're oral, if they're visual, if they're tactile.

Charlotte also stated that finding out where the child is academically takes experience.

She commented:

And getting to know the children, you don't have time to get to know the children. And I think that, again, that comes with time. But, at the same time, using inclusion.

Charlotte observed that having a lengthy teacher preparation program is necessary for being an effective teacher, especially concerning special education students. She explained:

I think a lot of students with one year of teacher's college and then you become a teacher, no disrespecting to anyone, you can see the difference in someone who wants to be a teacher and has taken 4 years of education. You're in a classroom, you have a feel for it and you've had four years, or three years, a feel for it. And then you go to teacher's college. Then you've become more prepared for it and I think that they should get. To me, a 13 week course is minute to be an authority to teach spec ed. I think if you're going to teach spec ed, I think there should be extensive training (Interview 2).

Charlotte also commented on the positive impact her experience has brought to her current teaching position:

I had to document everything. And that's my only support to have an input because I have the paper trail to follow where they have been. In 20 years experience and special ed intensive training, I know to do that. Where many students, many teachers here in Ontario has not had that strong focus and experience in spec ed, they don't know that. And that's when, you don't have the knowledge, you have limited input (Interview 2).

Benefits of Inclusion

Participants were asked of their perspectives regarding the inclusion of exceptional students in the classroom. All teachers stated that there were benefits to including exceptional students in the regular classroom.

Aidan, a special education teacher, stated that he felt exceptional students be integrated with regular students for a portion of the day, in certain subjects only. He remarked:

So my feel is that, you know that kids should be, according to me, once again, should be kept in SPEC ED classes or given support in smaller classes for the core courses: history, geography, science and so on. Should be integrated for things like: music, art and you know, what is that, gym. Those kinds of things.

Once again, according to me, I find that you would get a better response from the kid and better results (Interview 3).

He also added:

So, you find that when you put them in an isolated class they don't really have an opportunity to shine, at what they're good at, with the rest of the school population or cohorts. So, those were some of the thinking behind the movement to inclusion. So, in that sense you find that it does have benefits for kids to be included in a regular classroom for much of the day because they learn to socialize with the school population, with their peers and they get to see things that they don't quite otherwise see in a self-contained classroom. Like the functioning of higher kids, collaboration and all of those kinds of things (Interview 3).

Carrie, as a regular classroom teacher, noted that there are benefits to including exceptional students in the classroom:

For the child, in particular, the social aspects. The benefits of regular social interaction. Participating, learning the norms of behaviour and understanding and being able to participate with the people in the world they are going to live in. They are learning to interact with people in their lives and learning to have that experience of interacting with children of regular abilities, that is going to be good for them. As well, getting the programming, understanding and seeing what the regular programming expectations are and getting the benefits of that (Interview 1).

Miranda, who has a background in inclusion, said that there are enormous benefits for having exceptional students included in the classroom:

I think what happens when you are implementing inclusion is that it means that the children, all children are being educated. And what happens is every child

sees themselves as valued. Children realize that they are, that their peers learn to help each other, to work together. If it's teacher supported, I think inclusion is the way to go (Interview 4).

Charlotte also said that:

The benefits of implementing inclusion is that the students are exposed to everything. I think exposure, whether they get it or not, they're exposed to everything that students are. (Interview 2)

Inconsistency

The study revealed that teachers had experienced a certain level of inconsistency regarding the implementation of inclusion.

Carrie, for example, expressed how she felt about the level of consistency regarding collaboration among her colleagues in the school by saying,

No, I don't think it's consistent. I think it's based on the need that year (Interview 1).

Charlotte clearly expressed that she felt there were problems with support from the special education programs in her school by describing the programs below.

The MART program was very inconsistent. And the MART would see certain levels of children for 30 minutes at a time. Very inconsistent. And with home-school some things came before the kids. So, it's not consistent. It's not a consistent program (Interview 2).

Aidan stated that there were inconsistencies in the way inclusion was supported:

I think that if done properly, if done with effective support, inclusion can work very well. It can benefit the kids. But what I see is that it's done in a very half-baked way – it's not benefiting anyone (Interview 3).

Miranda also commented on her role as a special education teacher. She felt that she was inconsistent in her service delivery because she was being pulled from her role as a special education teacher by the principal to fulfill other obligations. Miranda also said that being consistent in her service delivery would be beneficial to everyone concerned, particularly the classroom teacher:

I think what I find, if it's not consistent it may be very difficult for the teacher because they can't count on you to be there. And from a personal, I know that from a personal point of view because I would say to the teacher, I'd say: "I've got my calendar open. When do you want me to come next week?" I've got these times and I would book in to go work with that teacher and I'd know what she'd be doing, I'd know what I'd be doing...

Miranda commented that a contributing factor to the inconsistency she saw with her role as a special education teacher was the principal:

...and my principal would call me out and say, I want you to do this instead. That would have to take precedence. That would be very conflicting for me. Because what it did for me was it made my job feel not as valued and it made the teacher, to put it in mild terms, annoyed. Because they were counting on me coming in and I wasn't able to come in that day. And I didn't. And I wasn't able to give them notice, they would find out five minutes before.

Miranda also commented on the importance of consistency as a special education teacher assisting regular classroom teachers:

So, it would be beneficial if it was consistent and there was nothing to change it.

Like this was what I'm doing and the principal or administrator can't pull me out for anything else (Interview 4).

Challenges

Participants revealed that they faced challenges during the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Their responses were particular to their experiences.

Carrie expressed that her biggest challenge was that it was difficult to manage exceptional students in the classroom when their needs are so great:

...I don't think it's realistic for one person to be able to manage all of that in one room and to effectively meet the needs of all of the children if you have one child in particular who requires, say 90% of your time. It's sometimes a challenge (Interview 1).

Charlotte also explained the challenges she feels with inclusion in terms of the workload for teachers:

As a teacher, more work for the teacher because you always want to make sure, as for me, I want to make sure that I hit every child's level. I'll do a direct instruction and then tell them to come to see me after a direct instruction. To go back and make sure that I, I meet all students, all students and make sure that I definitely make the modifications for the student's who have the IEP's (Interview 2).

Further on in the interview Charlotte also noted that she felt the Ontario government was doing a disservice to new teachers by not preparing them enough for their roles and responsibilities in the classroom with exceptional students. Her feeling was that teachers in Ontario should be educated for more than one year, as one year does not prepare them thoroughly enough to teach:

I just you know. I think that, I don't think that the province of Ontario is preparing the new teachers for what it's really like in that classroom. I don't think they are preparing teachers because I've seen so many in just the few years I've been here, teachers that have told me they want to be a teacher and they've quit after the first three months. Although they started teaching. And then we have supply-occasional teachers and they say 1 or 2 days a well is all they can stand. This is not what I expected. This is not what I thought. And I think that Ontario needs to wake up and say, okay, you know, sending teachers to school for one year, I don't think that's enough.

Charlotte also commented that teachers should have a longer period of education and concentrate as other professions do. She explains:

I think if you want the best teachers, I think you should have these teachers getting their background in education, not just one year of teacher's college. I think they should have their background in education, and I think they should be trained in all areas of education. They should have a concentration, you find that doctors have to concentrate, and lawyers have to concentrate. Then I think teachers should have to concentrate. I think they should have a concentrated

degree program for them, more than one year, because the teachers are not prepared for it (Interview 2).

Aidan also expressed the challenges he sees in terms of how the special education model for inclusion operates:

So, I think that can be improved in the SPEC ED inclusion model. To make sure that those that can benefit from inclusion do not have a blanket policy that you have 50% of your class with Aidan for language and math and for the afternoon you go back for history and geography regardless of whether or not you can cope, just muddle through or whatever. That's not good enough. We've got to make sure that we send students for inclusion. That the students are going to be well-served. I think that's something that we've got to work together to ensure that it happens (Interview 3).

Miranda said that the greatest challenge she faces is having input regarding the placement of exceptional students in the school. She commented:

Okay. well, I think it's sometimes a little annoying because as the MART you're trained to be able to say this child may be integrated more into the classroom, this child needs more work, some in a segregated setting with maybe the MART coming in and working with that child and helping that child, preparing that child to come out, or this child needs resource maybe a 1/2 an hour a day with a resource teacher. And often, I find, in my case, there are people making bad decisions, you should really not be making that decision at all because they're not trained to. It just depends on who can rub up against the administrator the way she likes to be rubbed up against (Interview 4).

Summary

Clearly, findings from this research study revealed that there are indeed significant issues which influenced both special education teachers and regular education teachers as they implement inclusion in the regular classroom. The ten themes that dominated the findings were: (a) support; (b) collaboration; (c) strategies; (d) time; (e) placement; (f) funding; (g) experience; (h) benefits of inclusion; (i) inconsistency and; (j) challenges. These findings also provide evidence as to the similarities between special education teachers and regular classroom teachers pertaining to the issues influencing the implementation of inclusion. Further supporting the notion that there are issues that need to be addressed in order that inclusion function properly.

In the following chapter a discussion of the findings will be put forth. As well, the research questions will be revisited. Implications for theory, practice and research will also be examined in terms of the findings. This will be followed by a conclusion, which will provide a summation of the chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

Introduction

In this last chapter a discussion of the findings will be summarized. The research questions will reviewed. As well, the implications for theory, practice and research will be discussed in terms of the teaching profession and research in general. The end of the chapter provides a conclusion based on my personal experiences throughout this research study.

Discussion of Findings

As special education is currently going through a metamorphosis, the issues surrounding the implementation of inclusion have now become very important for all teachers, whether they be regular classroom teachers or special education teachers. As more and more exceptional children are being placed in regular classroom settings, it becomes an imperative that regular classroom teachers are supported by not only educational assistants, but from their colleagues in the school. Inclusion is a collaborative effort that requires that special education teachers bring their expertise regarding teaching exceptional students to their regular classroom counterparts. Inclusion can therefore only be successfully implemented with support, collaboration, time and the sharing of teaching strategies and expertise.

In the following section, the discussion will be organized around the themes discussed in chapter four.

Support

Similar to Bunch and Valeo (1997) and Burstein (2004), participants commented on the importance of having support in the classroom. On varying levels throughout the interview process, participants in my study articulated that having support in the classroom was necessary in order to maintain the functioning of the classroom and lessen the disruptions that may occur from having exceptional students included in the regular classroom. Particularly, participants noted that educational assistants in the classroom not only supported the regular classroom teacher in their teaching, but they also provided needed support for the exceptional student within the regular classroom.

Collaboration

Fisher, Sax and Grove (2002) found in their research that collaboration among colleagues is needed when teaching exceptional students. Participants in my study who were regular classroom teachers articulated that collaboration was an important aspect of teaching and that there were benefits from collaborating with their colleagues regarding exceptional students they had in their classrooms. As the role of the special education teacher is different than their regular classroom counterparts, the special education teachers mentioned that collaboration was essential.

Strategies

Giangreco (2007) and Idol (2006) say that a variety of teaching strategies are crucial when teaching exceptional students. During the research participants supported this notion and it was a key issue participants discussed during the interviews. Even though the teachers interviewed had divergent backgrounds and levels of experience in teaching exceptional students, they acknowledged using varying strategies while teaching

these students. Special education teachers noted the use of various teaching strategies including the use of modifications to the curriculum and the use of the IEP in order to maintain an individualized program for the exceptional students they are teaching. Regular classroom teachers mentioned using direct teaching, small groups and shortened chunks of time to teach exceptional students in the classroom. One regular classroom teacher said that she used the educational assistant to take the exceptional student out of the classroom when they needed a break. Thus, this teacher used the educational assistant to employ the strategy.

Time

Kennedy and Horn (2004) remark that time is an issue that teachers face when implementing inclusion. Each participant in my research study noted that in their interview that time was problematic for them in their teaching. One regular classroom teacher stated that time was an issue for her because she never felt that there was adequate time for her to properly teach the exceptional students in her classroom while properly teaching the regular students. The other classroom teacher felt that there was limited time given for teachers to pursue professional development. She also felt that because of the limited time allotted for workshops that teachers were not fully prepared for inclusion. One special education teacher revealed that she was inundated with paperwork and felt that she was doing a full time job in her half time special education position. The other special education teacher explained that because of the diversity in academic levels in the classroom the teacher doesn't have time to give each student the one-to-one time they may need.

Placement

Weber and Bennett (1999) remark that placement plays a role in inclusion. Reference to the placement of exceptional students in the regular classroom and the support they receive from special education teachers was a topic that the four participants discussed in varying degrees. Across all four participant responses there was one similarity: all students receive support from a special education teacher out of their classroom for a portion of their school day. Both regular classroom teachers commented on times during the school when the exceptional students in their classroom left and went to the resource room to be taught by the special education resource teacher. These times were always according to the established timetable. It would appear that there is a concerted shift away from self-contained classrooms, leaving inclusion as the new reality. One special education teacher remarked that the goal is to include exceptional students in the classroom as much as possible, with some time pulled out for special education intervention.

Funding

Stanovich (1999) posits that funding is imperative to the successful implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Funding was also mentioned by participants throughout my research as a key element in the implementation of inclusion. They recognized that money was needed to sustain programs and provide for resources in the classroom such as books and manipulatives, and for educational assistants as well. One participant also mentioned the need for funding for professional development. They recognized the connection between the funding the school receives and the success with inclusion of exceptional students in the regular classroom. Now more than ever as

exceptional students are being placed in the regular classroom, more money is needed for all types of resources.

Experience

Hodkinson (2006) found that teachers' perspectives on experience which relates to inclusion was an issue influencing the successful implementation of inclusion. Three of the teachers in my research felt that their teaching experience was an asset when teaching exceptional children, while the least experienced one felt that they had much to learn. The teacher with the least experience stated that she had little to no experience with special education and also had students in her classroom who were not formally identified as exceptional, even though she knew they required more assistance than other students in her regular classroom. The three teachers who felt their experience was an asset had a background in special education and years of experience teaching exceptional students.

Benefits of Inclusion

McLeskey and Waldron (2002) emphasize the benefits of having exceptional students included in the regular classroom. Most of the participants of my study believed that inclusion was beneficial to student learning so long as it was done properly. All participants mentioned that the greatest benefit for inclusion is that exceptional students are socialized with their regular classroom peers and from that they are not only educated, but they learn that they are valued. The benefits of inclusion mentioned by all participants surrounded the benefits to the exceptional student.

Inconsistency

Helpen and Bullock (1999), make specific reference to the importance of teachers being supported in order to successfully implement inclusion. Each participant interviewed expressed that the special education program in their school was not as efficient as they would have like it to be. One participant mentioned that she felt her role as a special education teacher was inconsistent because she was continually pulled from her duties by the principal to fulfill other obligations. She also stated that her being inconsistent had negative repercussions for the regular classroom teachers and the exceptional students she worked with. The other three participants stated that there were problems pertaining to the inconsistency of special education programs in their respective schools. The two regular classroom teachers felt that the inconsistent support they received from their special education colleagues was a problem for them and their teaching.

Challenges

Fisher, Sax and Grove (2000) contend that professional development in the area of inclusion would serve to assist teachers with the challenges they face when implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. In this study the participants indicated that they faced challenges implementing inclusion. One participant mentioned that there was insufficient time for professional development pertaining to inclusion and that more time needed to be designated for teachers in the area of inclusion. This teacher commented on the limited amount of time for teacher education in general and stated that teachers should be trained more rigorously as other professions are in order that teachers are better prepared to meet the demands in the classroom, such as inclusion. A special education teacher also commented that funding is given for certain professional

development and not necessarily for what teachers are interested in. She also mentioned that teachers should be given a choice as to what professional development they pursue as well as the funds to pursue such choices.

Revisiting the Questions: Conclusion

In the following section the research questions are addressed in terms of the findings.

1. How do regular classroom teachers and special education teachers understand inclusion? All four participants shared a very similar view of inclusion. The grade 2/3 teacher who came from a special education background was closest in her beliefs regarding inclusion to the other two special education teachers because of her educational background and experiences in special education. All four teachers seem to view inclusion as a positive thing for the students because of the benefits for the students. Positive benefits to the students that were mentioned included socialization with their regular class peers and learning to cope in a regular classroom. Along with the benefits to the exceptional students, all four teachers also see that there needs to be more done in certain areas to properly implement inclusion in the regular classroom. Support in the classroom and time for collaboration between groups of regular classroom teachers and special education teachers were issues that were mentioned repeatedly. So, these teachers do favour inclusion so long as it is done in a comprehensive manner which takes account of the needs of the students and the teachers. Otherwise, they view unsupported inclusion as problematic.
2. What issues do regular classroom teachers and special education teachers perceive to be the most influential in regards to successfully implementing inclusion in

their classrooms? Why? The four teachers perceive the support, collaboration, and teaching strategies as the three most influential issues in regards to the successful implementation of inclusion. All teachers acknowledged that the support regular classroom teachers receive in their classrooms to be essential to the implementation of inclusion. They understood that the regular classroom teacher needs assistance while teaching exceptional students in the regular classroom and they cannot be effective teachers without this support. For example: they were aware of the high needs of exceptional students in the regular classroom and they understood that in order for the teacher to be effective in their instructional program that they do in fact need another person in the classroom to give support to exceptional students in the form of direct teaching or removing the student from the classroom when they are disrupting the learning of other students. Participants described how the role of the person supporting the regular classroom teacher varied according to the exceptional students that they are working with. Regular classroom teachers and special education teachers also recognized the importance of collaboration with other colleagues pertaining to the exceptional students in their classroom. They also acknowledged that more collaboration should be occurring because the level of collaboration was inconsistent at best.

3. How do perceptions of regular classroom teachers and special education teachers compare within and across groups regarding the issues influencing the successful implementation of inclusion? In discussing the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion with special education teachers and regular

classroom teachers and then comparing the data within and across groups, there was little divergence regarding the issues that influence implementing inclusion. All participants noted similar problems and issues they deal with in regards to their roles in implementing inclusion. As well, the regular classroom teachers noted similar issues pertaining to the issues influencing inclusion.

Implications for Theory, Practice & Research

Implications for Theory

There is a great deal of research being done on inclusion and the perspectives teachers hold towards implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. Research on inclusion is a positive thing for educators because exceptional students are spending the majority of their day in regular classrooms and teachers of these students need to be prepared to teach them effectively. Therefore, theory is being impacted and, in many ways, changed by additional knowledge.

Researchers should consider doing more long-term research into the issues that influence the implementation of inclusion in the classroom, in particular to explore whether issues can be remedied through time and practice. Results from longitudinal research may provide some answers as to how best to remedy the issues teachers face in the classroom.

Implications for Practice

The study provides further evidence as to the issues that teachers are facing while implementing inclusion in the regular classroom. As such, teachers should continue to read current research on inclusion and be involved in professional development regarding inclusion. The findings revealed that professional development is an important issue for

teachers as it pertains to inclusion. Therefore, teachers should strive to participate in professional development regarding inclusion to help them implement inclusion with success. At the Ministry level, the Ministry and school boards need to provide teachers with ample opportunities for workshops and courses regarding inclusion in order that teachers are well-informed. Teachers should have opportunities to have the choice of professional development and professional development should be offered over time, not in a limited manner.

Implications for Research

This study provides further support for the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion that were brought forth in the review of literature. Even though the study was small and the number of participants was limited to four, this research may be useful to other researchers who are interested in studying the issues of implementing inclusion in the regular classroom from the perspectives of special education and regular classroom teachers.

Reflections

The purpose of my research was to gain an understanding of issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion from the perspectives of two special education teachers and two classroom teachers. I choose to investigate the perspectives of special education and regular classroom teachers because they work in conjunction with one another to implement inclusion in the regular classroom.

Thinking back to my time as a regular classroom teacher with no support in the classroom, I do feel that having this support is essential if not imperative. Including exceptional students in the regular classroom is time consuming for the regular classroom

teacher and having the support of an educational assistant helps to minimize the constraint they feel. So, I was not at all surprised that both regular classroom teachers and special education teachers agreed that support in the classroom was an important issue that needed to be addressed in order that the implementation of inclusion is successful.

Coming from a background of being both a special education and a regular classroom teacher, I can see that the perspectives are different yet still quite similar. In my role as a special education teacher I collaborated on an inconsistent basis with regular classroom teachers because my role in a self-contained classroom didn't require me to do so. Yet, as a regular classroom teacher, I was in constant contact with other colleagues who previously taught exceptional students in my class. As well, I was in consistent contact with two special education teachers in the school who taught the exceptional students in my class for a portion of the day. We would discuss making changes in the classroom, to the curriculum and to the IEP each term of the school year. I do not believe that inclusion would have been as successful if we had not collaborated throughout the school year. Therefore, when participants noted that they believe collaboration is needed, I can understand their perspectives quite well.

Summary

At the close of this research study it is my belief that the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion were uncovered successfully. I gained a deeper understanding of the issues that influence the successful implementation of inclusion from the perspectives of professionals who have at least five years of teaching experience pertaining to inclusion and with the issues surrounding inclusion. The literature also

provides support for the dominant issues that were brought forth by these teachers, as there are links between the dominant themes found in the data and the predominant ideas that are expressed in the current research being conducted on inclusion.

I have personally been affected by this study in that I always believed that there needed to be more collaboration between special education teachers and regular classroom teachers. Clearly, special education teachers and regular classroom teachers would benefit from collaborating with one another not only for their own benefit, but for the exceptional students that they teach as well.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Cover Letter to the School Board

APPENDIX B: Cover Letter to the School Principal

APPENDIX C: Cover Letter to Teacher

APPENDIX D: Consent Form for School Board

APPENDIX E: Consent Form for School Principal

APPENDIX F: Consent Form for Teacher

APPENDIX G: Interview Guide

APPENDIX H: Interview Themes (Spreadsheet)

APPENDIX I: Comparison of Themes (Spreadsheet)

APPENDIX A

**Graduate Studies and Research in Education**

Tel. (807)343-8706

Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

To External Research Committee at Toronto District School Board:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Colleen Kelleher and I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In order to complete the requirements of this program, I am conducting research that will lead to a completed thesis. As such, I would like to conduct research with a group of classroom teachers and special education teachers regarding issues influencing the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Therefore, I would like to ask the school board's permission to conduct interviews with elementary classroom teachers and elementary special education teachers within the school board.

I would like to invite three classroom teachers and three special education teachers in the elementary panel to participate in taped interviews regarding their perspectives on issues that influence the implementation of inclusion within the regular classroom. The interviews will last between 45 minutes to one hour.

Inclusion is defined by the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education, in the publication *Education For All (2005)* as, "...the practice of placing students with special needs in the regular classroom but ensuring that teachers assist every student to prepare for the highest degree of independence possible."

In order to maintain confidentiality, the school board name and the names of those participating in the interviews will be kept in confidence. Pseudonyms will be assigned to protect the privacy of those involved in the study. There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in this research. Participants may find the opportunity to participate in this research beneficial, as their perspectives will be acknowledged in my thesis. All those who participate will do so in a voluntary manner and may also withdraw from the study at any time.

APPENDIX B

**Graduate Studies and Research in Education**

Tel. (807) 343-8706
Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

To School Principal:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Colleen Kelleher and I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In order to complete the requirements of this program, I am conducting research that will lead to a completed thesis. As such, I would like to conduct research with a group of classroom teachers and special education teachers regarding issues influencing the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Therefore, I would like to ask your permission to conduct interviews with elementary classroom teachers and elementary special education teachers at your school.

I would like to invite three classroom teachers and three special education teachers in the elementary panel to participate in taped interviews regarding their perspectives on issues that influence the implementation of inclusion within the regular classroom. The interviews will last between 45 minutes to one hour.

Inclusion is defined by the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education, in the publication *Education For All* (2005) as, "...the practice of placing students with special needs in the regular classroom but ensuring that teachers assist every student to prepare for the highest degree of independence possible."

In order to maintain confidentiality, the school board name, the school's name and the names of those participating in the interviews will be kept in confidence. Pseudonyms will be assigned to protect the privacy of those involved in the study. There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in this research. Participants may find the opportunity to participate in this research beneficial, as their perspectives will be acknowledged in my thesis. All those who participate will do so in a voluntary manner and may also withdraw from the study at any time.

APPENDIX C

**Graduate Studies and Research in Education**

Tel. (807) 343-8706
Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

Dear Teacher:

Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Colleen Kelleher and I am a graduate student at the Faculty of Education at Lakehead University, in Thunder Bay, Ontario. In order to complete the requirements of this program, I am conducting research that will lead to a completed thesis. As such, I would like to conduct research with a group of classroom teachers and special education teachers perspectives regarding issues influencing the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom. Therefore, I would like to ask the school board's permission to conduct interviews with elementary classroom teachers and elementary special education teachers within the school board.

I would like to invite you to participate in one tape recorded interview regarding your perspectives on the implementation of inclusion. The interview may last approximately 45 minutes to one hour.

Inclusion is defined by the Ontario Ontario Ministry of Education, in the publication Education For All (2005) as, "...the practice of placing students with special needs in the regular classroom but ensuring that teachers assist every student to prepare for the highest degree of independence possible."

In order to maintain confidentiality, the school board name and the names of those participating in the interviews will kept in confidence. Pseudonyms will be assigned to protect the privacy of those involved in the study. There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in this research. Participants may find the opportunity to participate in this research beneficial, as their perspectives will be revealed. All those who participate will do so in a voluntary manner and may also withdraw from the study at any time.

APPENDIX D

Lakehead

UNIVERSITY

Graduate Studies and Research in Education

Tel. (807) 343-8706

Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

The signatures affixed to this form indicates that the Toronto District School Board agrees to have teachers participate in the study conducted by Colleen Kelleher on ISSUES INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM This research study will include one interview.

Signing below indicates that the following is understood:

- All teachers are volunteers in this study.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.
- There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in participating.
- All information will be kept in strict confidentiality.
- Data collected will be analyzed by the researcher only.
- The data collected will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a seven year period and then destroyed.
- Toronto District School Board will receive a summary of this research study when the final thesis has been approved.

Signature of TDSB External Research
Committee Member

Date

Signature of TDSB External Research
Committee Member

Date

Signature of TDSB External Research
Committee Member

Date

APPENDIX E

**Graduate Studies and Research in Education**

Tel. (807) 343-8706
Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

My signature on this form indicates that I, as school principal, agree to allow teachers to participate in the study conducted by Colleen Kelleher on ISSUES INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM. This research study will include one interview.

Signing below indicates that I understand the following:

- All teachers are volunteers in this study.
- Participants may withdraw from the study at any time.
- There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in participating.
- All information will be kept in strict confidentiality.
- Data collected will be analyzed by the researcher only.
- The data collected will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a seven year period and then destroyed.
- Toronto District School Board will receive a summary of this research study when the final thesis has been approved.

Signature of Principal

Date

APPENDIX F



 Graduate Studies and Research in Education

Tel. (807) 343-8706
 Fax (807) 346-7771

February, 2007

My signature on this form indicates that I do agree to participate in the study conducted by Colleen Kelleher on ISSUES INFLUENCING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSION IN THE REGULAR CLASSROOM. This research study will include one interview.

Signing below indicates that I understand the following:

- I am a volunteer in this study.
- I can withdraw from the study at any time.
- There are no psychological, physical or social risks involved in participating.
- All information will be kept in strict confidentiality.
- Data collected will be analyzed by the researcher only.
- The data collected will be securely stored at Lakehead University for a seven year period and then destroyed.
- I will receive a summary of this research study upon request.
- I may choose not to answer any question in the interview.

I, _____ agree to participate in the interview.
 (Please print name)

Signature of Participant

Date

APPENDIX G

Interview Guide

Interview Guide: Perspectives on Implementing Inclusion Key for Questions: Classroom Teachers=CT, Special Education Teachers=SET, All=A

A. Roles

1. Please describe your current teaching assignment? (A)
2. How long have you been teaching? (A)
3. Describe your teaching assignments throughout your career.

B. Professional Development

1. What types of professional development opportunities are available pertaining to implementing inclusion? (A)
- board level -school level
2. What professional development have you received on implementing inclusion?(A)
3. How often do you participate in professional development regarding implementing inclusion?(A)

C. Collaboration

1. How do you collaborate with your colleagues in the school regarding exceptional students? (A)
2. Describe whom you collaborate with the most regarding exceptional students? (A)
3. How often do you collaborate with special education teachers regarding exceptional students in your classroom? (CT)
4. How is the level of collaboration consistent throughout the school year?(A)
5. How would you characterize your collaboration with classroom teachers regarding exceptional students in their classrooms? (SET)

D. Modifications: Curriculum & Instructional Strategies

1. How do you modify the curriculum for exceptional students in your classroom? (CT)
2. How do you modify instructional strategies for exceptional students? (CT)
3. How did you learn to make modifications? (A)
4. What are some examples of teaching strategies which you modify for exceptional students? (A)

E. Support for the Classroom Teacher

1. What type of support do you receive in the classroom to assist with exceptional students? (CT)
2. How often do you receive this support?(CT)
3. What are the benefits to having support in the classroom? (A)
4. What are the challenges to having support in the classroom? (A)
5. How could you be better supported in the classroom? (CT)
6. How do you support classroom teachers in the classroom? (SET)

F. Financial Support

1. How important is financial support to the implementation of inclusion in the regular classroom? (A)

G. Service Delivery

1. How do you participate in the decision making process regarding the service delivery model for implementing inclusion? (A)
2. What is the model for service delivery of special education programs within your school? (A)

H. Perspectives

1. What are the benefits of implementing inclusion? (A)
2. What are the challenges of implementing inclusion? (A)
3. What would you like to see changed when implementing inclusion? (A)

I. Reflections

1. What else would like to share about the issues influencing inclusion? (A)
2. Do you have anything else to add? (A)

APPENDIX H

Interview Themes

support	support	placement	Time
student behaviours	teachers unprepared	collaboration	strategies collaboration
strategies collaboration exceptional students placement	placement	strategies	curriculum
PD	Time collaboration experience student behaviours challenges/negatives	Time Inclusion Model experience documentation positives to inclusion	placement funding
Time Inconsistency funding	strategies placement	support levels	challenges
			levels MART position training

APPENDIX I

Comparison of Interview Themes

support	support	support	MART support
collaboration strategies TIME funding experience	collaboration strategies TIME placement teacher prep /exp.	collaboration strategies TIME placement funding experience	collaboration strategies TIME placement funding training
exc. stu.	stu. beh.	stu. beh.	exc. stu.
inconsistency challenges	spec. ed model challenges	inclusion model	MART position challenges