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A FRAMEWORK OF SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS OF MENTALLY HANDICAPPED STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY

by

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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this case study were: to ascertain the beliefs held by teachers of mentally handicapped students toward the concept of integration; to determine the perceptions of teachers about their program planning practices, in particular the development of Individual Education Programs and their use of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement; to elicit teacher opinions regarding their job-related needs for administrative and instructional support and personal professional development; and to generate, in the form of recommendations to the school district, a framework of support combining teachers' perceived needs and district objectives.

The setting of the case study was the anonymously named Burrard School District—a medium-sized school district located in the metropolitan Vancouver area. The participants in the study were fourteen teachers of students with mental handicaps located in five different school settings and members of the District's administrative and consultative staff.

Data for the study were obtained through open-ended "reflective" interviews with the study's participants during the period of May and June 1985. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcribed and condensed into major categories related to the questions posed for the study.

Among the major findings of the study were:

1. Integration is judged to be an appropriate goal for mentally handicapped students in that it results in: more normalized behaviour, greater skill acquisition, improved self-concept, and access to more facilities and activities.

2. Positive attitudes among regular classroom teachers, administrative support, and the degree of co-operation between specialist and general classroom teachers were the factors judged to be minimally required for successful integration.
3. Teachers of mentally handicapped students endorse the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP's) as a part of program development activities, regardless of program type and actual use.
4. Individual Education Programs are used most by teachers of moderately and severely handicapped students and least by teachers of students with mild handicaps.
5. Specific program concerns varied considerably from program to program.
6. Teachers were positive about the structure and philosophy of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement and, with the exception of teachers of the severely/profoundly handicapped, judged it to be a useful guide for program planning.
7. Teachers indicated a desire for more professional development opportunities to gain more expertise, to be reassured of the soundness of their own practices, and to maintain professional affiliations with colleagues.

The findings of the study suggest that teachers of students with mental handicaps have three general concerns: opportunities for expanding their skills, feelings of professional isolation, and the ambiguities of program ownership. The study presented several recommendations for the amelioration of these concerns.

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CHAPTER ONE

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

I. INTRODUCTION

Literature related to the dissemination of educational innovations (e.g., Fullan, 1982; House, 1979; Leithwood & Montgomery, 1980) stress the importance of viewing implementation as a process that occurs over time and which requires "continuous planning, action and reflection" (Fullan, 1982, p. 31). Additionally, it is a common view that the implementation of new educational programs and services demands several years of effort before an assessment of teachers' use can be adequately demonstrated. Schon (1971, p. 17) notes that the diffusion time for innovations is rapidly shrinking and "currents of change roll through every domain of society, shaking the stable state". Given this constant state of flux, it appears that if implementation efforts are to succeed, it is necessary to conduct formative appraisals or post introductory audits of teachers' concerns regarding new innovations shortly after the educational change has been introduced.

Fullan (1982) postulates that the process of educational change is multidimensional in that three aspects are implicated to varying degrees: materials, teaching practices, and individuals' beliefs. He goes on to suggest that these three aspects of change are "dynamically interrelated" in that, "beliefs guide and are informed by teaching strategies and activities; the effective use of materials depends on their articulation with beliefs and

teaching approaches; and so on" (Fullan, 1982, p. 33). He argues that whether or not a specific change effort represents substantive change will depend upon the extent to which a proposed educational reform entails significant alterations in any one of the three "dimensions". Fullan concludes that alterations in materials are more easily achieved than changes in teaching practices, while changes in beliefs represent the most difficult challenge of all.

Many authors characterize substantive change as a serious personal and collective experience that focuses on the subjective reality of teachers (Fullan, 1982; Huberman, 1983; Werner, 1980). Moreover, the magnitude of these changes are frequently defined in terms of concrete situations and individuals. In order to develop a responsive support system that will enhance teachers' change effort, a description and analysis of teachers' current needs and concerns with respect to materials, practices, and philosophical beliefs is required. Additionally, an optimal support structure should be consonant with teachers' concerns and related literature on effective implementation practices.

The purpose of this study is to describe special education teachers' beliefs regarding the integration of mentally handicapped students; to ascertain teachers' concerns with respect to related program planning practices and materials; and, to describe teachers' expressed needs with respect to implementation support. More specifically, this study will examine the subjective realities of 14 teachers of the mentally handicapped in an urban school district. The intended outcome of the study is the

development of a school district framework of support for teachers of the mentally handicapped.

II. BACKGROUND

Over the past two years, ten new or revised provincial curriculum guides and resource books have been introduced into schools in British Columbia. They include Social Studies and Kindergarten at the elementary level; Science, Acting, Consumer Education, and Computer Studies at the high school level; and Special Education resource books. In some cases, the documents are intended to replace existing curriculum guides; in other instances, the documents are intended to support new or existing programs where no curriculum guides previously existed. This trend of rapid development and change in provincial curricula is continuing. Currently, there are seven new curriculum areas under development, most of which have resulted from a revision of high school graduation requirements.

The Ministry of Education's role in the area of curriculum is primarily that of development and initial orientation. Materials (i.e., guides, resource books, and texts) are developed or selected by the Curriculum Development Branch, and introductory inservice on new or revised curricula is offered to school districts through regional workshops, summer institutes, or video-print information packages. The Curriculum Development Branch describes the purpose of offering orientation services as making "intended users" aware of "the availability, intents, contents, methodology and evaluation

components" of the materials (Curriculum Orientation 1984-85, Curriculum Development Branch). It appears that the role the Ministry of Education assumes in the dissemination of curricula is analogous to preservice education of teachers. That is, the primary goal is to develop a preparedness and readiness on the part of participants for further learning.

Since the closure of the Program Implementation Services Branch in December 1983, school districts have the major responsibility of developing means by which new and revised curricula are incorporated into classrooms. Despite the fact that no funds are provided to districts for this purpose, the Ministry states, "the implementation of curriculum is the responsibility of district personnel and class teachers who translate the curricula into classroom practice." Thus, school districts are presently faced with the challenge of providing initial and ongoing implementation support to teachers who are attempting to incorporate new curricula into instructional plans, teaching techniques, and pupil evaluation on a day-to-day basis.

As previously discussed, an effective support system should take into account teachers' needs and concerns with respect to the following areas: use of new or revised material, use of new strategies, and the possible alteration of beliefs. It is necessary, therefore, for school districts to develop formal, informal, and job-embedded support systems for teachers if multidimensional curriculum change efforts are to be successful (e.g., Fullan, 1982; Leithwood, 1981). An underlying assumption of this thesis is that an optimal district implementation plan should be based on (a) teachers' expressed needs; (b) an analysis of the district's priorities and resources; and (c) relevant literature on effective implementation.

In October, 1983, the Ministry of Education outlined a recommended curriculum guide for teachers of mentally handicapped students. Until then, teachers of the mentally handicapped were provided with no direction or curriculum resources for purposes of program planning. The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement (1983) represents the first provincial attempt to articulate a curriculum philosophy based on the concept of integration, and to define goals and learning outcomes for students with mental handicaps. The Curriculum Guide is a supplement to core curriculum documents only in the sense that it is intended for students whose learning needs are not addressed in regular prescribed curriculum.

The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement emphasizes the philosophical belief that educational services should be provided to mentally handicapped students in "the least restrictive environment". The content of the guide defines a wide range of age-appropriate goals and learning outcomes, through the primary, intermediate, and secondary school years, from which teachers can select to develop Individual Education Programs (IEP's). The Curriculum Resource Guide is not prescribed by the Ministry and therefore the decision to use the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement in planning programs for mentally handicapped students rests solely upon voluntary use by individual teachers.

The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement and an accompanying information package that outlined the purpose of the Guide and procedures for ordering the Guide were mailed to school district superintendents and special education directors in November 1983. In January 1984, a provincial orientation plan was initiated with school districts

throughout the province. Superintendents were invited to consult with neighbouring districts and to jointly request a one-day, Ministry sponsored orientation session before June 30, 1984. Sixty-five out of seventy-five school districts requested and received an orientation session. Thus, a standardized inservice program was provided to seven hundred and twenty special educators at various sites throughout the province from February through May 1984. The objectives of the orientation sessions were to familiarize participants with the philosophy, purpose, and content of the Resource Guide and to provide simulated practice for participants in using the Guide to develop Individual Education Programs (IEP's).

One of the purposes of this study is to determine whether the introduction of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement represents a substantive change. Effective adoption and implementation of key components of the Guide would seem to suggest that teachers' beliefs be consistent with the philosophy of integration in the "least restrictive environment". Additionally, the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP's), as recommended in the Guide, requires that teachers employ particular program planning practices. Based upon the author's previous experience, it is hypothesized that successful implementation of the Curriculum Guide and related educational beliefs and practices regarding integration and IEP's are dependent upon a school district's ability to provide an ongoing formal and informal support system that is responsive to teachers' current concerns.

III. THE RESEARCH FOCUS

As described in the previous section, the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement (1983), as an expression of the Ministry of Education's position of education for the mentally handicapped, recommends the integration of mentally handicapped students with non-handicapped peers and the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP's) as the cornerstones of educational services and teachers' programming practices. It is speculated that the practice of integration and the implementation of key components of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement could represent a major shift for teachers insofar as their beliefs, program planning strategies, and use of the Curriculum Guide are three components of a comprehensive change. It is assumed that this change would represent a significant and complex implementation problem requiring substantial support at the district, school, and classroom levels.

The Problem

The general concern of this study was the development of a school district framework of support for teachers of mentally handicapped students. To this end, the study addressed the following questions:

1. What are the beliefs held by teachers of mentally handicapped students with respect to the concept of integration?
2. What are the perceptions of teachers with respect to their program planning practices, in particular, the development of Individual

Education Programs (IEP's) and their use of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement?

3. What are the perceptions of teachers with respect to their desired need for support and professional development?

On the basis of the data gathered from these questions a proposed framework of support was developed which combined teachers' perceived needs and available district resources.

IV. LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

It is recognized that several limitations and delimitations affect the study. These relate to the objectives of the study, the choice of design for the study, and the researcher.

1. As a field study, the objectives and the context of the inquiry are situational. Hence, caution should be made in generalizing the findings and implications of the study to other settings.
2. As this investigation is a case study, the outcomes may have immediate practical implications only for the setting in which the study is situated.
3. The data collection is limited to self reporting by respondents through interview. No direct observation of the teaching or program planning of the respondents was undertaken.
4. The writer and interviewer is an employee of the school district and prior to the conduct of the present inquiry, was seconded by the

district to the Ministry of Education to coordinate the development of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement.

CHAPTER TWO

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

I. INTRODUCTION

The purposes of this chapter are to provide background information to the study and to highlight relevant literature related to the implementation of change. The first half of the chapter describes the particular nature of the educational change that is the focus of this study. More specifically, three facets of change are examined: the philosophy and practice of integration; the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP's); and the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement. The latter half of this chapter reviews research related to the process of implementing change and includes a discussion of various factors that enhance the process.

II. THREE ASPECTS OF CHANGE

Introduction

Leithwood (1981) defines an innovation as any product or suggested practice which has novel features for those who use them. Similarly, Havelock (1973) defines an innovation as any change that represents something new to the individuals involved. Both authors indicate that the novelty of any idea, method, or product depends not only on its recent development and new features but also on the subjective perceptions of the

users. Given Leithwood's and Havelock's criteria, an innovation can be defined as any idea, method, or product which requires a perceived change in established behaviour patterns on the part of the individuals who are involved in its implementation.

In his initial work on the multi-dimensional nature of educational change, Fullan (1979) contends that the following five components are implicated:

(a) structural or organizational change at the class, school or district level;

(b) change in materials, such as curriculum guides or text;

(c) change in an individual's role behaviour, such as teaching strategies or planning and preparatory work for teaching;

(d) change in knowledge and understanding possessed by the users; and,

(e) change in individuals' commitment toward an innovation.

Fullan (1979) argues that when these five elements interact in a particular way, at a specific point in time, actual practice or use of an innovation is taking place. In later writings, Fullan (1982) simplifies this view and collapses these five components into three dimensions—beliefs, teaching approaches, and materials. Fullan (1982) states that the success of any change is dependent on what people think and do in relation to each of these dimensions.

It is the argument of this thesis that teachers of mentally handicapped students are observing significant and substantive change in their professional practice. Moreover, it appears that this change can be described

in terms of the three dimensions or aspects Fullan (1982) identified above. The remainder of this section will delineate and distinguish the three aspects of change that are specifically addressed in this study: teachers' beliefs with respect to the concept of integration; teachers' program planning approaches related to the development of Individual Education Programs (IEP's), and the recommended use of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement.

The Concept of Integration

From the early 20th century to the 1960's there was widespread support for the notion that students with mental handicaps should be educated in segregated settings. However, numerous efficacy studies conducted in the 1960's (e.g., Goldstein, 1967; Johnson, 1962; Kirk, 1964) indicated that special class students often demonstrated lower academic achievement, poorer social adjustment, and greater isolation than their handicapped peers in non-segregated settings. These findings caused many educators to question the benefits and adequacies of segregated educational settings. Since that time, educators' attention has been directed towards the provision of alternate forms of special education services that place mentally handicapped students in the mainstream.

The practice of integrating exceptional children into regular school settings represents a relatively new belief regarding deviant populations. This belief is based on the principle of normalization, which embodies a new ideology of human management and which stipulates that deviant populations should be awarded the right to live in as normal a milieu as

possible (Nirje, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1972). With respect to mentally handicapped persons, Wolfensberger (1972, p. 52) notes that the principle of normalization implies the provision of conditions and services that allow an individual "to function throughout his life history as nearly as possible within the mainstream of normal community living, rather than outside of it." The integration of mentally handicapped students into regular school settings is a change effort that involves not only special education but regular education as well (Meiseiger, 1976).

In British Columbia, the philosophy and practice of integration has been supported in principle at the provincial level for the past ten years and is evidenced in the Ministry of Education's position on special education which states: "Children with special needs should be provided services within the framework of general education and in the least restrictive environment possible within available resources that will allow for the achievement of their specified learning goals" (Special Programs: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Rev., 1984; Section 3.1).

While not all school districts in British Columbia have policies concerning the integration of special needs students, many districts have adopted the Ministry's philosophical position and explored a variety of alternative service delivery models that encourage student placement in the least restrictive environment (e.g., resource room model, itinerant services, inclusion).

Clearly, translating the philosophy of integration into practice is a significant education reform that represents a complex challenge. It entails the offering of a variety of instructional alternatives appropriate to students

who need specialized services. It involves a myriad of technical and administrative considerations. But most importantly, the philosophy and practice of integration embodies changes in educators' attitudes and beliefs about "normal" and "handicapped" students and their rights to appropriate education opportunities.

The Development of Individual Education Programs

In 1975, PL 94-142 - The Education for All Handicapped Children Act - was passed by the United States Congress. This federally mandated educational change was directed at promoting equal educational opportunity for all handicapped students in the least restrictive environment. Additionally, this law defined the means by which special education services would be specified for students and educational accountability would be assured—through Individual Educational Programs (IEP's). IEP's are written statements which describe a special education student's learning objectives and educational services. They are a requirement in the United States by federal statute and represent a commitment to provide services that are appropriate to the needs of the student.

Many provinces, including British Columbia, have recognized the value of this particular program planning strategy and have advocated the development of IEP's in their policies (see B.C. Special Programs: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Rev. 1984). More specifically, in British Columbia, one of the Ministry of Education's purposes in developing the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement was to provide teachers of the mentally handicapped with guidelines for the development of IEP's.

The development of Individual Education Programs is a complex program planning strategy that involves a variety of individuals and demands a substantial amount of time. The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement (1983, p. 133) provides the following description of IEP's:

> "Individual Education Programs (IEP's) are written plans which specify the educational services and learning objectives designed to meet the needs of an individual student. The IEP is usually developed annually at an early point in the school year. The IEP is reviewed and revised as necessary. The development and review of the IEP involves the parents, a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, and the student, when appropriate. The IEP process is frequently coordinated by the student's special education teacher."

Additionally, the Curriculum Guide suggests the following steps be undertaken when developing IEP's:

- Identify the support team;
- Gather information on the student including assessment data;
- Determine educational needs and priorities;
- Describe the student's present level of functioning;
- Outline long-term and short-term instructional goals;
- Indicate special services and instructional materials;
- Define roles and responsibilities; and
- Establish dates for review.

It could be said that many of the steps involved in the development of an IEP are similar to regular teachers' program planning activities. For example, literature suggests that teachers' program planning decisions take

into account a wide variety of variables such as students' needs, teaching methodologies, and available resources (Leithwood & MacDonald, 1981; Leithwood, Ross & Montgomery, 1978; Oberg, 1978). Oberg (1978) indicates in her study of classroom teachers' curriculum planning decisions that the types of preactive planning decisions teachers make consist to a large degree of objectives and activities. She found that the starting points for curriculum planning most often cited by her subjects were objectives and pupil characteristics. Leithwood, Ross & Montgomery (1978) conducted a study which investigated factors influencing teachers' curriculum decision-making in a number of areas (e.g., objectives, materials, and assessment). Their findings suggest that the teacher's own experience and pupil characteristics have the strongest influences on teachers' preactive curriculum decisions.

However, regular teachers' program planning tasks are considerably less complex than those demanded by IEP's. The procedures involved in developing IEP's are reflective of the multi-disciplinary nature of the document. The level of detail and structure of the plan is noticeably intricate and the specialist teacher's role is one of both technical writer and coordinator. Given the conditions outlined in this section, it is evident that developing IEP's constitutes a significant alteration in teachers' program planning activities, both from specialist teachers' past practices and from regular education teachers' program planning approaches.

The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement

In A Study of School (Tye & Tye, 1984) teachers were asked to identify sources that influenced the content they taught in their classrooms. Over

seventy-five percent of the teachers questioned indicated the strongest influences to be their own backgrounds, interests, and experience. This finding was consistent for respondents regardless of their grade level or area of specialization. Teachers also reported that their own judgments of students' needs and interests strongly influenced what and how they taught. However, the study also indicated that local and state curriculum guides exerted a moderate influence on teachers' curriculum planning decisions. This is similar to an earlier study that suggested Ministry guidelines exert a medium influence on teachers' curriculum decisions (Leithwood, Ross & Montgomery, 1978).

Until two years ago, teachers of mentally handicapped students in British Columbia were provided with no curriculum reference. As discussed in Chapter One, the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement (1983) represents the first provincial attempt to recommend goals and learning outcomes for mentally handicapped students. The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is not a prescribed document. Teacher use is not required but is recommended. To the extent that the Guide has no precedent in the province and is a recent educational product, the term innovation can be applied.

To determine whether or not support is needed by teachers and to identify reasons for teachers' use or non-use, it is necessary to ascertain the perceptions of teachers with respect to the Guide. As Lilly (1979) notes, it is desirous and logical for curriculum plans to be well articulated, especially in the case of special needs students.

> "If students are to be enrolled in public school programs for as long as twenty-one years, it is mandatory that instructional objectives be cumulative components of longitudinal skill sequences designed to lead students from current levels of performance to functioning in the least restrictive environment."
>
> (Lilly, 1979, pp. 181-182).

One purpose of this study was to ascertain teachers' concerns regarding their use of the curriculum and to design a framework of support based on teachers' needs.

III. THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

Perspectives on Innovation and Change

Schon (1983) notes that how a problem is defined determines the course of action to be taken and, similarly, sets limits on and points the direction of further research and inquiry. House (1979) provides a useful schema for considering innovations and offers three perspectives from which to view change. He contends that three distinct orientations to the change process can be identified: the technological, the cultural, and the political.

The focus of the technological perspective is on the innovation itself. This orientation emphasizes the technique contained in the innovation and its effects. The technological perspective assumes a systematic and rational

process of change wherein common interests and values prevail and co-operation exists among participants in the change process.

The cultural perspective emphasizes the context of change rather than the innovation itself. Its primary focus is on the different meanings and values groups attach to the change. From this standpoint, participants are seen as members of subcultures who may have different values and interests from other subcultures involved in the change.

The political perspective also places the innovation in context but emphasizes the power and authority relationships that surround the change effort. It is assumed that co-operation is problematic and that factional groups engage in conflict and compromise. Thus, influence is exerted through persuasion, inducements, and coercion.

House (1979) argues that it is necessary to identify the dominant beliefs and positions researchers hold when investigating educational change. Schon (1983) advances this notion and suggests that in the process of defining a problem, a world is fabricated in which things are determined to exist or to not exist in an ontological way. This process of "naming" and "framing" Schon describes as problem setting.

The problem setting of this study incorporates aspects of House's technological and cultural perspectives. From the technological perspective, the curriculum guide is viewed as an innovation and dissemination efforts are considered to be most effective when undertaken in a rational and systematic fashion. However, the practice of integration and teachers' program planning practices are considered primarily from the cultural

perspective, in that the study focuses on the meaning individual teachers attach to these activities and teachers' current needs for support.

Change as a Developmental Process

Research on educational change in a wide variety of settings (e.g., Berman, 1981; Fullan, 1982; Huberman & Crandall, 1983) stresses the importance of viewing change as a process that occurs over time. This stance suggests that something is happening to transform individuals and situations in stages (Hall & Loucks, 1977). Most authors do not perceive the change process as purely linear and acknowledge there is overlap and feedback between different stages. Some authors (e.g., Berman & McLaughlin, 1976; Fullan, 1982; Fullan & Leithwood, 1982) suggest that the change process can be distinguished by three major consecutive phases: initiation (adoption), implementation, and institutionalization (continuation). Each of these phases will be discussed in the context of the current study.

Initiation

The first phase, initiation, is comprised of those processes and actions which lead to and include the decision to adopt or undertake a particular change. Fullan (1982) suggests that during this phase implications of the proposed change on personnel and resources are often considered. Additionally, he puts forth a list of factors which are often associated with the decision to adopt such as, access to information, availability of support and funds, policy considerations, and advocacy from the community and school personnel.

Marsh and Huberman's (1984) study indicates adoption most often occurs from the top down. The decision-making function of adoption is made by central office administrators. The authors suggest there are four essential elements in the top-down approach: administrative advocacy, high prescriptiveness, well coordinated implementation processes, and substantial assistance to teachers. However, these authors further note that people in schools and districts serve superordinate and subordinate functions at different points in the implementation process to the extent that bottom-up decisions within top-down administrations do occur. Fullan (1983, p. 163) states, "the attitudes of district administration about a planned change [are] a signal to teachers as to how seriously they should take a special project". District administrators act as key advocates in the adoption processes by correctly identifying a need, mobilizing support, establishing conducive conditions for change, and developing an action plan (Berman, 1981).

Forshay (1975) submits that educational change can enter the ecosystem of a school in numerous ways. He indicates that change can be adopted:

1. Through the hierarchy or commitment of the de facto leadership;
2. Through the supporting community by seeking to alter what it will support;
3. Through materials of instruction;
4. Through the teachers, by altering their beliefs about what should be taught, to which students and how; and
5. Through the students, by altering the kind of student served by a school or given program.

(Forshay, 1975, p. 95)

Regardless of the origins of the adoption process, Fullan (1982, p. 29) indicates that "the extent to which proposals for change are defined according to one person's or one group's reality is the extent to which they will encounter a problem in implementation". Common (1983), cautions implementers against any hubris when initiating new programs and stresses the strength of teachers' autonomy and power to consent or refuse new programs. In this way, she argues for a collaborative partnership between implementers and teachers. Earlier, House (1974) outlined a similar position, suggesting that teachers who do not agree with the basic concept of the innovation and see neither extrinsic nor intrinsic rewards attached to the innovation will not even attempt to adopt it. "Teachers do have an important power, that of refusing to participate in the innovation made accessible" (House, 1974, p. 95). He indicates that teachers' decisions to adopt or reject some part of a new innovation will depend on "who sponsors it, what is said about it, personal values and the existential situation" (House, 1974, p. 79).

This notion of incentives and cost/benefits is expanded by Doyle and Ponder (1977) who observe that are three issues teachers must be convinced of in order to adopt a new program. That is, the innovation must be congruent with teachers' perceptions of their own situations, the change must be perceived as useful at the classroom level and recognized for its instrumentality, and increased benefits for teachers such as staff recognition and student enthusiasm must outweigh the costs of teachers' invested time and energy. Fullan (1982) notes that when facilitation from fellow teachers is present, teachers are more willing to adopt change at the classroom level. Other factors cited by Fullan (1982) that affect teacher adoption

are adequate time, access or energy, and the generalizability of the innovation across situations. Interestingly, findings from Huberman & Crandall's (1983) study indicate that teachers' commitment to an innovation only develops after they have begun to actually use a new practice.

With respect to the present study, articulation of the philosophy of integration and the practice of developing IEP's have been advocated in policy at the provincial level for the past decade and the Curriculum Guide was developed and published by the Ministry of the Province. Only recently have these directions manifested themselves in school district policy. The study examines teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding each of these aspects of change and outlines recommendations that the school district can undertake to facilitate implementation of these changes.

Implementation

The implementation phase is the process of putting into practice an adopted change (Fullan, 1982). Berman and McLaughlin (1976) emphasize that this is a particularly crucial stage as the life of the innovation is dependent upon actual use. Crandall (1983) stresses that teachers are the paramount players in the implementation process and cite Purkey and Smith (1982) who state, "Change will not take place without the support and commitment of teachers". Nash (1979) concurs, noting "the ultimate responsibility for change lies with the individual teacher".

Huberman and Crandall (1983) investigated the teacher's role in implementing new curricula and instructional practices and indicate that teachers are implementing new practices at a high rate and with remarkable

success. Factors these authors identified as influencing successful implementation are commitment, exemplary practices, training, and leadership. While numerous studies indicate teachers are isolated behind their classroom doors (House, 1974; Tye & Tye, 1984), a critical feature of effective implementation efforts appears to be the social interaction or networking which occurs among change participants (e.g., Crandall, 1983; House, 1974; Tye & Tye, 1984). Moreover, Fullan (1982) suggests that an innovation will not be implemented unless there is a shared meaning or understanding of the nature of the change.

Taking into account participants' subjective realities is perceived by many authors as essential to the implementation process (Fullan, 1982; Lortie, 1975; Werner, 1980;). Werner (1980) stresses the social process of implementation and the importance of participants' beliefs—the values, assumptions, and expectations held by individuals.

Tye and Tye (1984) highlight the fact that increased social interactions, in the form of partnerships with administration in decision-making, encourage school staffs to look to themselves and others for support. Huberman and Crandall (1983) indicate central staff can play a key role in this process. Their study revealed that central staff were frequently the initiators of programs which had their origins outside of the district. Additionally they noted that central staff can advocate new practices, provide follow-up to initial external training, and provide support to teachers and school administrators.

Loucks and Lieberman (1983) identify three critical aspects in the implementation process: the availability of staff and material support, a

sense of growth by participants in the process and active participation on the part of the principal. MacPhail-Wilcox and Guth (1983) reinforce the notion of the principal as one who sets the school tone and contributes to the cohesiveness and coherence of the staff. As teachers spend most of their time in direct instruction (Goodlad, 1984), the crucial role of the principal as an instructional leader has generated enormous interest within the ranks of educational researchers.

Leithwood's (1983) review of the literature on principal effectiveness indicates studies are of two types--program related behaviours and general managerial style. Hall, Rutherford, Hord, and Huling (1984) identified two effective patterns of principal behaviour that appear to be related to the facilitation of new programs: directive and facilitative behaviours. Additionally, the authors suggested a principal's leadership can be described as one of three styles: an initiator, a manager, or a responder. Initiators were found to achieve the highest level of use of new innovations. While Leithwood's (1983) critique of leadership studies indicates that more research is needed to determine program-specific behaviours of effective principals, it is clear that different principals' behaviours and styles can contribute in various ways to the success of change efforts (e.g., McCoy & Shrieve, 1983; MacPhail-Wilcox & Guth, 1983).

But perhaps the most potent criterion for teachers' classroom curriculum decisions is a shared basis for decision-making that arises from principal-teacher communication and "mutual understanding and agreement about needed classroom and school interventions" (Leithwood and Montgomery, 1982, p. 334). It is important to note, however, that although

principals initiate, encourage, and facilitate the accomplishment of instructional improvement according to their own abilities, styles, and contextual circumstances, teachers still require a great deal of help from others (Hall, Hord & Griffin, 1980).

Documenting the role of the "consigliere" or Second Change Facilitator, Hord, Hall and Stiegelbauer (1983) discovered that the role and impact of persons, other than the principal, who are active in the school also have a significant impact on the success of an implementation process. Consiglieres encourage change by providing supportive interventions in the change efforts of teachers. Hord et al. (1983) indicate that often the facilitator is an on-site staff member or district consultant who functions as a team member in planning and interpreting the innovation to other teachers. This role can be distinguished from that of the principal in that consiglieres engage in complex interactions with teachers over time with limited formal authority at the school level. Facilitators engage in a mutually supportive role with the classroom teacher by providing a role model and responding to the concerns of teachers on a daily basis.

The foundation of this study rests on teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding their professional practices and their expressed need for support. It is assumed that teachers are the critical agents of change and that their subjective realities play a significant role in the implementation process. To this end, personal interviews were conducted with teachers of mentally handicapped students in order to ascertain their beliefs and desires for support with respect to particular special education issues. While the literature points to the vital role of individual teachers in the change

process, many authors also suggest that change is dependent upon the social interactions that make up the fabric of the school district. Thus, the intended outcome of the study, a framework of support, focuses on the need for collaborative efforts among a variety of educators if change is to continue.

Fullan (1983) argues it is essential to educate participants who are involved in any change effort. To achieve this, Cavanagh and Styles (1983) recommend that staff members engage in the following practices: identify present practices that do not require change as well as those practices that do require change; define specific modifications; develop a change plan; delegate responsibilities and determine roles; and, establish short and long term priorities.

Institutionalization

The institutionalization or continuation phase is described by Fullan and Leithwood (1982) as the extent to which a change becomes part of routine practice. Fullan (1982) indicates this process may take from three to five years after the point of initiation. Fullan (1982, p. 77) submits that "the single most powerful internal factor which takes its toll on continued change is staff and administration turnover. Since effective change depends on interaction among users, removal of key users weakens the conditions that would incorporate or help new members." Factors influencing the institutionalization phase were not examined in this study.

Conclusion

Crandall's (1983) observation is that people are the critical factor in change. At the initiation phase, teachers are most likely to hear of a new innovation through their peers (House, 1974; Tye & Tye, 1984). During the implementation stage networking and sharing among teachers provides the necessary social energy to effect change (Crandall, 1983; Fullan, 1982; Tye & Tye, 1984; Werner, 1980). Continuation of a particular change appears to rely on attitudes teachers have toward the innovation and sustained contact among users (Fullan & Leithwood, 1982).

Fullan and Leithwood (1982) summarize nine assumptions regarding the change process, many of which are accepted by other authors and have been alluded to in this chapter. The degree to which the assumptions listed below are relevant to a specific change process is dependent on the nature of the innovation being considered.

1. Change is a process not an event.
2. Change happens to individuals.
3. Change involves a social process on the part of individuals. That is, change is developmental as people acquire new meaning, skills, and attitudes.
4. The meaning of change varies for people in different roles.
5. Innovations are complex, involving changes in materials, beliefs and practices.
6. Adaptation frequently occurs throughout the change process.
7. Many situational factors influence implementation.
8. Change efforts can be facilitated.

9. Change involves questions of values, ethics, and professional responsibility.

CHAPTER THREE

CONTEXT AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

The purposes of the study were to identify and elaborate upon the views held by teachers of mentally handicapped students toward the concept of integration and to describe these teachers' perceptions of their program planning practices, in particular, the development of Individual Education Programs and use of the recommended provincial curriculum. Additionally, the study sought to ascertain teachers' perceived needs for support. These purposes were, in addition to being the objects of the study, enabling purposes to a desired implication of the study which was to develop a district framework of support for teachers of mentally handicapped students.

The purposes of this chapter are to describe how and where the data were collected. The first half of this chapter describes the context or setting of the study. The remainder of the chapter describes the research design selected for this study, and reviews the instrumentation, data sources, and data analyses used in the investigation.

II. CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out in a school district located in the metropolitan Vancouver area. At the time of the study, the Burrard School

District provided educational programs for just over 15,000 students in 38 schools. Employing approximately 900 teachers, the school district had an annual budget of just over 50 million dollars.

The organization of the Burrard School District is similar to other districts of comparable size in British Columbia. The public, comprising a population of approximately 100,000 people, elects a Board of seven trustees. Delegated to a Chief Executive Officer (Superintendent of Schools), is responsibility for the management of all operations of the system.

The District provides a number of special programs and services in accordance with guidelines promulgated by the Ministry of Education. Included in this set of programs and services are three programs for mentally handicapped students. These programs are: Moderately Mentally Handicapped (Trainable Mentally Handicapped-TMH), Mildly Mentally Handicapped (Educable Mentally Handicapped-EMH), and Severely and Profoundly Mentally Handicapped (Severe-Profound). A general description of each of these programs, taken from Special Programs: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, is provided in Appendix A.

The three programs are located in five age-appropriate locations. Table 3.1 describes each of the programs and their respective locations.

Table 3.1

Description of Programs for Mentally Handicapped Students

Program - Funding Category	Location	Enrolment	Staff (Professional)	Staff (Aide)
A. Moderately Mentally Handicapped (TMH)	Elementary School (Alpha)	22	3.0 f.t.e.	90 hours per week
	Secondary School (Delta)	46	5.0 f.t.e.	25 hours per week
B. Mildly Mentally Handicapped (EMH)	Elementary School (Beta)	45	4.0 f.t.e.	80 hours per week
	Secondary School (Sigma)	44	3.0 f.t.e.	85 hours per week
C. Severely and Profoundly Mentally Handicapped (Severe-Profound)	Elementary School (Alpha)	5	1.25 f.t.e.	70 hours per week
	Secondary School (Omega)	9	1.25 f.t.e.	85 hours per week

As each of the programs are housed in regular schools, the responsibilities for program personnel supervision and evaluation reside with each building principal. Programs for mentally handicapped students operate within the schedule and policies of the host schools. The programs' personnel share both non-instructional days and parent-reporting schedules with the regular school. Program instructional support and consultative

services are among the responsibilities of the District's special education department. The District's Coordinator of Special Education, reporting to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools (Programs), is assigned the responsibility of allocating appropriate itinerant specialized services to each of the programs. Accordingly, the services of speech and language therapy, psychological assessment, and student counselling are available on an assigned basis to each of the programs.

Students are enrolled in the programs as a consequence of the District's annual screening process, which takes place in May and June of each school year.

Access by teachers to professional development opportunities is through three channels. The Burrard School District Teachers' Association manages a fund from which grants to individual teachers are made. Administered by a teachers' professional development committee, this fund provides financial support to teachers to attend out-of-district conferences and workshops related to their area of specialization. The District and the Teachers' Association contribute to this professional development fund. A second means of access to professional development funding and support is through a school-based inservice program. A portion of District funds is set aside to support and encourage individual school program initiatives. Funds are available through application to the Assistant Superintendent (Programs). During the 1984-85 school year, eight schools received funding for school initiatives. None of these school-based initiatives involved special education programming.

The District provides a comprehensive in-service program through district-wide workshops. Twice a year a calendar is published in which District workshops, covering a variety of areas, are listed. Teachers are able to attend without cost and substitutes are provided. These workshops, based upon District staff's perceptions of teacher needs, are the main formats for in-service in the District. Teachers are involved only insofar as their individual and collective needs are made known to and articulated by the District's consultative staff.

III. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Research Design

The methodology that was employed in this investigation was case and field study research. The purpose of this type of research is to examine, in-depth, the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a particular social unit (Isaac & Michael, 1971). In other words, the object of the inquiry is a bounded context where events, processes, and outcomes are studied in order to obtain a detailed and naturalistic picture of the unit. Case and field study research is grounded in the interpretive anthropological paradigm that focuses on describing and understanding social phenomena and relies primarily on subjective and qualitative data collection methods.

Numerous authors have argued for the use of qualitative, naturalistic research in education (e.g., Bogdan & Biklen, 1982; Miles & Huberman,

1984). Their contention is that qualitative research can provide a vivid portrait of the educational context and highlight the meaning behind the human dimension or the "conceptual linkages between event and context, context and totality" (Roberts, 1982). While the classic debate between quantitative and qualitative research methods continues to be argued in the literature, Roberts (1982) notes that the quality of all research should be appraised on one principle—the defensibility of the argument.

Case and field study methodology were selected as the most appropriate research strategies for this investigation based on the nature of the problem. In this instance, the social unit under study is the Burrard School District. The School District is a bounded system with specific contextual characteristics. Elements of the system that were the focus of the inquiry were special education teachers' beliefs and perceptions regarding their professional practices and the School District's objectives and priorities with respect to programs serving students with mental handicaps. The intended outcome of the study, a framework of support, was derived from a close examination of the possible linkages between district policy and teachers' beliefs and practices within the constraints of the local site. To this end, the research problem was one of describing, understanding, and explaining complex and dynamic processes and events of a single case.

Data Collection

Case and field study methods employed in this investigation permitted intensive study of the interrelations of the elements of the unit; that is, the perceptions and attitudes of educators in interdependent roles. Data

were collected through an open-ended "reflective" interview that was conversational in nature. The interviews were reflective in that the questions raised by the interviewer were an attempt to respond to and clarify issues and concerns raised by the subject. The interviewer attempted to maintain a natural rhythm throughout the interview by adapting to what Schon (1983) describes as the "back talk" of the situation. Back talk is distinct from feedback in that no predetermined goal is present and information is mutually exchanged in a free-flowing, interactive, and responsive manner. Thus, while the interview protocol included at the end of this chapter suggests a rather fixed structure, the process of interviewing demanded a more non-directive, exploratory stance on the part of the interviewer. A complete transcription of a sample teacher interview is provided in Appendix B.

Interviews were conducted with teachers of mentally handicapped students and related school district personnel in June and July 1985. The location and times of the interviews were chosen by the subjects. Interviews were held in a variety of locations including home settings and schools. Interviews varied from 20 minutes to 90 minutes in length but commonly extended to 45 minutes.

Access to the Burrard School District was, in accordance with the District's written policy and regulations in respect to research in the schools, obtained through a formal request to the District's Superintendent of Schools. Further access and the necessary cooperation was obtained with the approval of the District's Coordinator of Special Education and

the fourteen teachers involved. Permission was also obtained to receive and review the necessary secondary data sources.

Data Sources

The data sources for the study were teachers in the District's three programs for mentally handicapped students. Although 18 teachers were assigned to the three programs, only 14 were included in the study. Four teachers were excluded from participation in the study as they would not be assigned to any of the three programs for the 1985-86 school year. New teachers replacing these teachers for 1985-86 were not included in the study as they had either no previous teaching experience with mentally handicapped students or had not yet been hired. Also included in the study were the Assistant Superintendent of Schools (Programs), the District's Coordinator of Special Education, and the peripatetic area counsellor whose specific duties include consultative assistance and instructional services to the programs for mentally handicapped students.

A number of secondary data sources were employed in the study. An external evaluation of the Severely and Profoundly Handicapped Program was carried out in the spring of 1985. The findings and recommendations of this comprehensive evaluation were used to validate data obtained from primary sources and were consulted in the development of Chapter Five. Two of the three secondary schools in the study were accredited during the 1984-85 school year. Included in both the internal and external reports constituting the accreditation process were the schools' special programs.

The accreditation teams' observations and recommendations relative to the Moderately Handicapped program and the Severe-Profound program were reviewed and considered in the formulation of the framework of support contained in Chapter Five.

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the Burrard School District had made a decision to reorganize the delivery of programs for mildly mentally handicapped students at the elementary level, effective September 1985. This reorganization consisted of the creation of three Resource Room Programs in each of three elementary schools. These three programs will, starting September 1985, replace mildly mentally handicapped programs located in Beta Elementary School. Each new Resource Room Program will consist of a primary resource room and an intermediate resource room. A discussion of the reasoning behind this new configuration together with the likelihood of its anticipated pedagogical benefits were included in the interviews with the teachers involved. The in-house discussion document which contains a description of the Resource Room Program is contained in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Interviews with the 14 teachers of mentally handicapped students were tape recorded. After each interview, including those with District personnel, field notes were written condensing the researcher's impressions into three major categories related to the questions posed in the study—integration, program planning, and professional development. Reviews of

the interview tapes led to the development of sub-categories in these three major areas and themes within each sub-category.

During the process of reviewing the tapes verbatim quotes were transcribed onto file cards and classified according to type and level of program within the following sub-categories: integration, IEP's, program concerns, the Curriculum Guide, and professional development. As the data were classified, preliminary patterns or themes were identified.

Once the transcriptions were complete, plausible connections and explanations were sought and the data were repeatedly compiled into new clusters to form alternate configurations. In this way, recurrent patterns or themes that emerged on a more or less regular basis were highlighted for the researcher. Based on these patterns or themes, interpretations of the findings were derived. The researcher endeavoured to capture, in the interpretations, both the attitudes and expectations of the teachers in an attempt to determine the social, psychological, and educational significance of the data. A draft of the findings which outlined the predominant themes and patterns of the data was given to each of the teachers for comments and clarification. The final version of these findings constitute Chapter Four of the thesis and reflect the final categories and themes derived from the data.

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Note: The following questions were used by the interviewer only as a guide. In most instances, wide variability occurred throughout the interview in order to maintain the nature of a reflective conversation.

1. **Do you think integration is an appropriate goal for mentally handicapped students?**

   Probes: What is your understanding of the term integration? Can you tell me what integration means to you?

   In your opinion, what factors influence integration?

   Probes: What about the principal, teacher, or staff? What factors have you found promote successful integration?

2. **What would you say are some of your concerns regarding instructional programming for your students at this time?**

   Probes: For example, IEP's, materials or program planning problems you may have.

   Would you say developing IEP's is a concern of yours at this moment? In what ways?

   Probes: Do you develop IEP's for all of your students? Do you find IEP's useful? In what ways? What problems do you have developing IEP's? What types of help would you like in developing IEP's?

   Are you familiar with the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement?

   Probes: Do you find it useful? In what ways? Can you describe how you use the Guide in your work?

   How do you feel about your program planning activities?

   Probes: Do you feel your time is well spent? Do you work closely with other teachers? How do IEP's and the Guide fit into your current program planning practices?

   What other program concerns do you presently feel are important? (e.g., materials, facilities, access to services.)

Probes: What areas do you feel are lacking in your program?

3. **What are your feelings about inservice?**

Probes: Are you satisfied with the present level of professional development services? Why?

What types of inservice and professional support would you like to receive?

What types of inservice activities have you found most useful in the past?

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

I. INTRODUCTION

The major concern of this study was special education teachers' perceptions with respect to three areas of change - beliefs, teaching approaches, and materials for purposes of developing a framework of support in a particular school district. Using the reflective open-ended interview described in Chapter Three, teachers' ideas related to the concept of integration, program planning, curricular material, and professional support were obtained. This chapter contains a description, discussion, and interpretation of teachers' comments based on "repeatable regularities" (Kaplan, 1964) that suggested emergent themes or trends. As understanding the specific context of teachers' statements is vital to valid interpretation of the data, both within program and cross-program patterns were examined.

Table 4.1 summarizes the various categories of data that were collected from teachers in the six different programs which are reported in the beginning of this chapter. This is followed by a section that outlines the perceptions of district personnel associated with services for mentally handicapped students. The chapter concludes with a summary of the major findings of the study.

Table 4.1

Categories of Data Collected in the Study

Program		Data Category		
Type	Level	Integration	Program Planning	Desired Support
Mildly Mentally Handicapped	Elementary			
	Secondary			
Moderately Mentally Handicapped	Elementary			
	Secondary			
Severely/ Profoundly Handicapped	Elementary			
	Secondary			

For purposes of illustrating the narrative text and displays, segments of teachers' interviews have been extracted and quoted as items. A parenthetical note follows each item indicating the subject and program source. For purposes of brevity the following abbreviations were employed.

Table 4.2

Abbreviations for Item Sources

Abbreviation	Term
S1, S2, S3, ...	Subject 1, Subject 2, Subject 3, ...
Mod	Moderately Mentally Handicapped Program
Mild	Mildly Mentally Handicapped Program
S/P	Severely/Profoundly Mentally Handicapped Program
E	Elementary
S	Secondary
Examples:	S1, Mod-S = Subject 1, Moderately handicapped program, secondary level
	S9, S/P - E/S = Subject 9, Severe/Profound Program, elementary and secondary levels

II. THE BELIEFS OF TEACHERS CONCERNING INTEGRATION

The Concept of Integration

With the exception of one teacher, all respondents from all programs indicated they feel integration is an appropriate goal for mentally handicapped students. Forms of successful integration that were cited by teachers from all programs include reverse integration and peer tutoring.

> Everybody should have at least one experience where they are integrated in some way.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

> We hope that we've set a standard. That we've said, "Well, these kids did cope with being in a regular school system. If they've handled that then they can handle something decent and

> appropriate for them in the community." It puts the onus on the community for providing something reasonable . . . and not extended care.
>
> (S10, S/P - E/S)

> The [students] have got the best of both worlds. They've got the best of being with the regular kids; they've got the best of having time with their own peers that they can feel successful; plus get their individualized training.
>
> (S11, Mod-E)

The one teacher who expressed ambivalence about the notion of integration suggested that integration may not be suitable for many mentally handicapped students for the following reasons: 1) an integrated environment is not a natural artifact of our society; 2) many students feel threatened by large, unprotected settings; and, 3) the concept of "normal" is overrated. These reasons are illustrated in the following excerpts from the interview.

> We are more segregated in life than we are in school. We do not hang out with people we feel uncomfortable with . . . school is a false place.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

> I don't know. I'm really torn. I think for some kids it serves a purpose . . . but I think it's really difficult for some kids to be integrated.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

> My attitude is normal is no big deal. I never felt being normal was anything to write home about.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

Numerous teachers from all programs (9 out of 14) referred to integration as a process of change. Some teachers' comments indicated

they consider the process of change to be gradual and evolutionary in nature, while other teachers noted the striking differences in service delivery that have come about in the last decade.

> When I look at what's happening now I can see the change and the contrast and how far we've come.
>
> (S10, S/P - E/S)

> I think the integration has to be very gradual. I think it has to be done very slowly with a lot of thought, a lot of planning.
>
> (S12, Mild-E)

Most teachers offered thoughtful and well articulated definitions and concepts of integration in their discussions. To this end, many teachers suggested that the type of integration one pursues with a student would determine its appropriateness.

> We don't use the word integration at our school because it seems to imply . . . mainstreaming . . . so we use the word inclusion. The minute we use that word, that terminology, it throws a whole different light on what we're trying to do. It makes people feel more comfortable.
>
> (S10, S/P - E/S)

> Some types of integration are [appropriate]. I think there are three types: physical, social and instructional integration. I think it depends on the student. As with everything else I think it's individual . . . It may be detrimental to the odd student who loses some freedom by coming to an integrated setting.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

Benefits and Limitations of Integration

Teachers consistently cited six benefits they feel often accrue as a result of integration. These benefits are listed in the following frequency table.

Table 4.3

Frequency of Teachers' Ideas Regarding the Benefits of Integration

Benefits of Integration	N
• Being part of society and the local community	7
• More normalized behaviours	5
• Greater tolerance and acceptance by regular students	5
• Acquisition of new skills	4
• Greater access to facilities and activities	4
• Improved self-concept	4

The most frequently cited advantage to integration is that mentally handicapped students hold citizenship in society and membership in their local school.

> The children will be with their own peer group which is very important. They can go home and say I'm in grade one. And their parents can say over coffee in the morning to their next door neighbour, my child is in grade one; without saying he or she is in skill building, resource centre or whatever. That seems to be very important to parents—to be part of the group, part of society. This is where the children are going to function—out there. Why not start having them function in a regular classroom so they can learn what it's all about, if they are only there for a short period of time?
>
> (S12, Mild-E)

Benefits noted by teachers also include highly visible gains that mentally handicapped students manifest directly. These are: (1) more normalized behaviours; (2) the acquisition of new skills; and, 3) improved self-concepts.

> The biggest bonus which didn't evolve right away is their whole presentation of self. Their gait has changed, the way they dress has changed. Now they're demanding the latest in clothes. They're walking and talking and they picked up more appropriate behaviours . . . as well as language.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

> Some kids really benefit and learn something. [They] learn the skills they can carry on with.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

> Some of the changes I've seen are more self-esteem. They see themselves more at one with their peers.
>
> (S1, Mod-S)

Some teachers also noted that integrated students have greater access to a wider range of facilities and activities in and around the school.

> There is so much more happening in a regular school than in a segregated school or an institution. You just can't get that wide a variety of activities to get the kids involved in.
>
> (S8, S/P-S)

Additionally, many teachers suggested that the benefits of integration extend beyond the mentally handicapped population, indicating there is a two-sided effect to the process of integration. It appears that teachers perceive non-handicapped students to gain a greater tolerance and understanding of their fellow students when integration occurs.

> For [non-handicapped] children, I think [integration] gives them an opportunity to understand and to help and to learn cooperation. I think it teaches them a lot of things that they might be able to use because they're going to be living with everyone in the real world and that's part of life.
>
> (S13, Mild-E)

> We've seen such a change . . . since we first came here [to the regular school]. We were definitely in a fishbowl [and] now the [regular students] are in [the classroom] to help, they're in here to socialize, they're in here to play. There has been such an acceptance that I can't help but see that carry over into their adult life. If they're in business or in positions of hiring they would be much more open and willing to accept our graduates.
>
> (S11, Mod-E)

However, some teachers (n = 4) cautioned against expecting too much from the process of integration. They noted that integration may put a student's self-concept at risk and that the jeopardy may be greater with students at the higher functioning levels and higher grades.

> You can only push integration so far. By integrating students we are not going to make them normal. . . . The kids at highest risk in our program are the highest functioning kids who are very aware of the differences.
>
> (S4, Mod-S)

> Maybe because they're younger they're much more accepting of their lot and they don't worry about a lot of different things or consider other possibilities. I think maybe after they've been here for a few years they start to look around and they see kids their own age going out to places and they become conscious of the difference.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

Finally, numerous teachers from all programs (8 out of 14) noted that, for a variety of reasons, opportunities for integration are more limited and inappropriate at the secondary level than at the elementary level.

> They fit in beautifully [in the elementary years] and then there is just no way they can be integrated. All of a sudden a gap opens up . . . [and] it is completely inappropriate to put them in a grade 8 class.
>
> (S8, S/P-E)

> Nothing happens at noon hour [at the secondary schools]. The kids hang out and our kids have a lot of trouble with that. There's not much going on in the gym. There's no organized activity. It all happens after school and our kids aren't here.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

> I think a lot of secondary teachers still are teaching their subject and not the kid.
>
> (S7, Mild-S)

Factors Influencing Successful Integration

A summary of teachers' comments with respect to factors they perceive influence successful integration is provided in the table below. No patterns or trends were noted within or between specific programs.

Table 4.4

Factors Influencing Successful Integration

Factor	N
• Positive attitude of school staff	11
• Administrative Support	7
• Cooperation between regular teachers and special education teachers	5
• Support to regular teachers	5
• School location and facilities	5
• Proceeding gradually	3
• Inservice	2
• Preparation time (regular teacher)	2
• Teacher workload	2
• Parent attitude	1
• Student's previous experience	1

Note. Subjects frequently cited 2 or more factors in their response; therefore total N = 44.

A majority of teachers emphasized the key role attitude plays in successful integration. The strength of their responses suggests that a positive attitude on the part of the school as a whole is essential. More specifically, teachers' comments frequently highlighted the critical need for an accepting and understanding teacher in the integrated setting.

> A supportive staff in the right areas is certainly also very necessary. That's vital for our population.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

> Probably the main thing would be an accepting teacher. That teacher would have to be willing to come down in her expectations. There is no way our kids are going to be able to go into the regular classroom and keep up with the regular class kids.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

Similarly, half of the teachers interviewed perceived administrative support to be vital when attempting integration. It appears that teachers perceive principals and school district administrators to not only set the tone for change to occur but to provide the necessary back-up for the special education teachers' integration efforts.

> Very definitely administrative support. I think that is the key. If you don't have that you really have nothing . . . or it is extremely untenable for you.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

A number of teachers noted that cooperation and involvement between regular teachers and special education teachers facilitate the integration process. Additionally, numerous teachers expressed the notion that integration would likely fail if adequate follow-up and support, particularly by assisting personnel, were not provided to the regular class teacher.

> You can't just expect a teacher with 35 kids to take 3 more without a lot of backing, a lot of follow up . . . and aide time.
> (S14, Mild-E)

Other factors teachers considered to influence successful integration include:

- Proximity to community services and physical facilities;
- Implementing change slowly;
- Providing inservice for the school staff and parents;
- Teacher workload;
- Parental support; and
- Students' previous experiences in regular classes.

In conclusion, it appears that the overriding theme to emerge from teachers' perceptions of factors influencing integration is that people make the difference. Teachers often stressed that without a positive attitude and the provision of substantial personnel support integration attempts can easily fail.

> I think [integration] could be negative but a lot of it depends on the attitude of the people involved and how much work you put into it. I think you have to be really committed.
> (S13, Mild-E)

III. THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS REGARDING PROGRAM PLANNING

Individual Education Programs (IEP's)

All but two teachers expressed a positive attitude toward IEP's and indicated they feel IEP's should be an integral part of a special education teacher's program planning activities. All teachers appeared to be aware of the Burrard School District's requirement that IEP's be developed for each student beginning September 1985.

> The student has a right to a very specific program geared to his needs. . . . Everybody deserves that individual program and attention to it. I like the fact that things are written down and I know what I'm working towards.
>
> (S9, S/P-S)

Even teachers who were not developing IEP's seemed to hold a positive attitude toward the task.

> I think they'll be really valuable for seeing where you are. It'll force me to be organized. It'll be wonderful for parent teacher interviews. I think they're a good idea and I'd really like to do them. I think they'll be a tool I'll use . . . to get organized and stay on track with kids.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

Teachers (S3 and S8) who did not feel positively towards IEP's and did not find them useful cited the cumbersome format and the inordinate amount of time required to develop IEP's as reasons for their unfavourable view.

The extent to which IEP's are currently used by teachers of the mentally handicapped appears to vary substantially between programs.

Teachers from the moderately and severely/profoundly handicapped program reported developing IEP's for all students while teachers from the mildly mentally handicapped programs reported developing IEP's for only a few students or none at all. These findings are displayed in Table 4.5. The variation in the extent of use of IEP's between programs suggests there is a relationship between the need for IEP's and the severity of the handicapping condition.

Table 4.5

Teachers' Reported Use of IEP's

Program / Age Level	Severe/ Profound	Moderate	Mild
Elementary	High	High	None
Secondary	High	High	Low

Generally, teachers using IEP's reported the process of developing IEP's to be useful for one or more of three purposes: (1) focusing on individual student needs; (2) improving home-school communication; and, (3) evaluation and reporting. More specifically, this study revealed that:

1. A majority of teachers using IEP's (8 out of 10) suggested that the process of developing IEP's directs their attention to the individual and specific needs of students.

> For one thing [the IEP] forces you to look at the individual and lets us see some things that we can do with him.
>
> (S4, Mod-S)

2. Many of the teachers using IEP's (8 out of 10) and all but one teacher of severely/profoundly and moderately handicapped students, indicated they find the IEP planning meeting to be a viable vehicle for gaining home/residence support and improving communication between the school and parents/caregivers.

> [IEP's] are also useful in involving the parents and residences in setting up the program. It's a means of finding out if parents do have some strong preferences or concerns, so that they do feel they have some input into the kind of program their child is going to have.
>
> (S5, Mod-S)

3. Most of the teachers using IEP's (8 out of 10) indicated they perceive the IEP to be a useful tool for formal and informal evaluation and reporting.

> If you focus on one particular thing . . . then you can really see the improvement. That's nice to see. It's a sense of accomplishment. . . . I think [the IEP] would effectively eliminate much of the subjective reporting.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

Problems developing and using IEP's cited by teachers appear to be idiosyncratic and highly situational revealing no overall pattern or trend. Examples of these problems are: lack of time; the technical writing of goals and objectives; and, lack of follow-through on the written plan both at home and at school.

Overall, most teachers of the mentally handicapped appear to hold a very favourable stance toward developing IEP's. The author believes this trend is due to the fact that the majority of teachers agree with the

philosophy of individualized programs and perceive the IEP document to be a functional tool in a variety of proactive program planning activities and evaluation and reporting tasks.

General Programming Concerns

The program development concerns that teachers expressed during the interviews did not appear to display an overarching trend that spanned across all programs. However, a number of concerns seemed to be common to more than one program. Cross-category program development concerns that were cited by teachers are exhibited in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6

Cross-category Program Development Concerns

Program Concern	Mildly (E)	Mildly (H/S)	Moderately (E)	Moderately (H/S)	Severe/Profound (E, H/S)
• Nature of parental involvement			X	X	X
• Need for increased non-educational support services			X	X	X
• Inadequate counselling services for students		X		X	X
• Poor physical fitness programs		X	X	X	
• Dissatisfaction with life skills/ work experience programs		X		X	

The nature and degree of parental involvement was cited as a problem by numerous teachers (8 out of 10) in the moderately and severely/profoundly handicapped programs at both the elementary and secondary levels. While one teacher noted out-of-neighbourhood travel as an obvious hindrance to parental participation in school activities, most teachers' comments revolved around parental/custodial issues that demand a high degree of sensitivity and outside class time. It seems that parental concerns, resulting in increased pressures on teachers, intensify in proportion to the severity of the handicapping condition and the age of the student. Unfortunately, it appears that the local associations are not perceived by many teachers to offer a constructive liaison between parents and the school district.

> I would like to see someone who could help us more with the parents. I think we need someone in a social worker capacity as a liaison between us and parents. . . . It would take the pressure of us. . . . A lot of what we do revolves around a tremendous amount of parent counselling. . . . The load is somewhat exceptional in our case.
>
> (S10, S/P - E/S)

> The associations are pushing advocacy too strongly because it's becoming adversarial.
>
> (S4, Mod-S)

The desire for more non-educational support services, such as, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and music therapy was expressed by a number of teachers (N = 6) in programs where students' needs are greatest. It is interesting to note that teachers' concerns may be an unfortunate reflection of recent provincial fiscal restraint measures that curtailed services provided to schools by the Ministries of Health and Human Resources.

While the district counselling service offered at the elementary level was noted by a variety of teachers (N = 5) as invaluable, teachers at the secondary level in all programs (N = 6) cited lack of appropriate counselling services for students as a major problem. This is likely due to the fact that, presently, the district special counsellor's duties do not extend to all mentally handicapped students at the secondary level.

> Our kids don't get the same opportunities for counselling as the [other] high school kids do—to sit down and talk about their real concerns, how they perceive themselves. There is group counselling but unless there is a very obvious problem there is no-one to sit down and talk about their future. They don't have someone else to go to.
>
> (S1, Mod-S)

Most teachers at the secondary level in the moderately and mildly handicapped programs (6 out of 7) consistently expressed consternation at the difficulties inherent in providing a functional life skills and a community living program in a high school setting. Their concerns appear to focus on the scheduling and timetabling of students into school programs and community activities simultaneously and the provision of real rather than simulated experiences within the context of the school setting.

> The life skills aspect I think should be the core of absolutely everything we do with them. I get worried when I start falling back into traditional print oriented busy sessions with these kids which is not what they need at all. In that I'm not doing enough real life experience things outside of here.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

Moreover, numerous teachers noted that the work experience program is far from satisfactory, citing inadequate student preparation and on-site

follow-up as persistent problems. One teacher illustrated a student's lack of understanding of the concept of 'work' with the following example. During a class discussion on various kinds of work options, a student from the mildly handicapped program at the secondary level asked his teacher, "And what do you do for work?"

> We send them out on work experience . . . but they're not being supervised closely enough . . . We're setting our kids up to fail.
> (S3, Mod-S)

Providing an appropriate and adequate physical fitness program was perceived to be a problem by a number of teachers (N = 5) from three programs where students have considerable mobility but are not adequately skilled to be integrated into regular physical education classes. Secondary teachers indicated it is essential yet difficult to maintain an emphasis on lifelong sports and recreation.

> I think sports and recreation have to be a big part of it. I think it's an area where you can do a lot of integrating and [it] can be fun.
> (S3, Mod-S)

All teachers noted it is difficult to obtain convenient access to the gym due to scheduling difficulties. It is possible, however, that secondary teachers will find access difficulties ameliorated next year due to a decreased demand for gym facilities. This situation will likely result from the revised graduation requirements which delists physical education as a compulsory subject in grade 11.

Finally, a number of teachers' concerns appear to reflect the unique features of their particular programs. A summary of idiosyncratic program concerns is provided below:

1. Teachers from the severely/profoundly handicapped program noted the constant "battle between custodial care and educational services", the difficulties of providing age-appropriate activities and appropriate curriculum, and the necessity of maintaining a flexible program that incorporates multidisciplinary staff and activities.
2. Numerous teachers (4 out of 6) from the moderately handicapped program at the secondary level commented from a variety of perspectives on teacher aides. Comments included such topics as paraprofessional training, inservice, staff communication, and evaluation. This program employs the largest number of teacher aides of any special program in the district.
3. Teachers from the mildly handicapped program at the elementary level appeared to express concerns that were primarily managerial and technical in nature. Scheduling students, securing adequate planning time for IEP's and teacher consultation, and obtaining suitable materials were common problems the teachers were anticipating. Given the impending changeover in this program to the Resource Room model in September, 1985, it is understandable that teachers' concerns reflect the day-to-day management issues that have yet to be resolved in practice.
4. The teacher of the moderately handicapped program at the elementary level noted a lack of continuity from elementary to secondary school

indicating there is "a bombardment of academics" in the primary and intermediate years and "a vocational approach" in the secondary years.

IV. TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE CURRICULUM GUIDE

All teachers reported being aware of the availability of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement. Two teachers indicated they were not familiar enough with the Resource Book to comment on its purpose or usefulness. However, all other teachers commented positively on the Guide while the majority of teachers (10 out of 14) noted that they use the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement in some type of program planning activity.

> Every time I wanted to do something I was just pulling things out of my head. I was pleased to see that most of those things were listed here [in the Core Curriculum]. And there were lots of things I hadn't considered. I'm really glad it's out.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

Teachers' explanations for liking the Guide commonly refer to the notion that the Curriculum Guide supports their current practices and philosophical rationale.

> It's a good reference point. You think you're doing the right thing but then all of a sudden you think "Oh my gosh, am I off track?" And everybody else has got a curriculum guide so you go back and check it and it's fine.
>
> (S7, Mild-S)

> [We use it] basically to justify what we're doing. In the Core Curriculum it does justify the fact that when a student reaches a certain age, you should be working specifically on functional academic subjects, with a heavy emphasis on vocational, which I think is very appropriate. No matter what the level of the student you have got to start looking at where he's going to go in the future. The Core Curriculum does handle that very well.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

It appears that the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement articulates and makes explicit some of the instructional concerns facing teachers of the mentally handicapped. This suggestion is supported by the fact that teachers frequently mentioned that the Guide is useful as a reference or framework for curriculum planning, particularly with respect to developing IEP's.

> I use it more for an overall picture of what is expected or a place to head; what areas the children should be working on; what's required of them. I think it's good to have that framework—so you know you're headed in the right direction.
>
> (S13, Mild-E)

> I tend to use it more as a reference, particularly this year in setting up the IEP's and trying to make up almost a catalogue of goals in an area. For that it was very useful.
>
> (S5, Mod-S)

Teachers of severely/profoundly handicapped students indicated that while the philosophy contained in the Curriculum Guide reflects their beliefs with respect to an appropriate education for the mentally handicapped, they do not consider the listing of goals and learning outcomes to be suitable for the skill level of their student population.

> Getting down to the nitty-gritty, you cannot realistically or practically apply it. But in the philosophical sense, it said basically what we want to do with this population.
>
> (S10, S/P - E/S)

Those teachers using the Curriculum Guide for instructional planning reported variations in their frequency of use from occasional use to regular daily use. It did not appear that extent of use or frequency of use is related to an individual teacher's length of teaching experience. However, it was noted by several teachers that they feel the Curriculum Guide would be particularly useful to new teachers in the special education field.

> I don't pull it [the guide] out a lot but when I do it's usually at IEP and report time [to] just look back and see if I'm missing anything. It's a nice guideline.
>
> (S11, Mod-E)

> I use it [the curriculum guide] all the time. I find it's a really good framework and it really keeps me on track.
>
> (S7, Mild-S)

> If I was a beginning teacher I would find [the guide] extremely helpful.
>
> (S11, Mod-E)

V. THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS REGARDING THE PROVISION OF SUPPORT

In general, teachers' comments regarding the nature of their jobs and available services indicated a pervasive need for ongoing professional development, inservice, and district support. Teachers' statements appear to evidence a desire for continuing accomplishments in their practice and opportunities for rewarding professional affiliations with colleagues.

> By and large you feel great—you feel refreshed after going to conferences, workshops, [and] inservices. It would be great for all of us to do more of these kinds of things because it does revitalize you even if I can come back with one thing.
>
> (S5, Mod-S)

> I would like a hot line to somebody. To say, "Would you please come over here? I have some things I want to straighten out. I have some problems. I want some advice." I'd love that.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

More specifically, a majority of teachers of the mentally handicapped (N = 9) suggested they want further inservice opportunities in order to gain more expertise.

> That is a necessary thing to do every two or three years--to look at what you're doing and try to improve it and change it.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

> The most benefit for me would be in more training. That [Oregon] conference really kept me going for quite a while with ideas. It changed the whole focus of a lot of things. The district [should] provide more inservice things for ourselves but also things that included the aides.
>
> (S5, Mod-S)

Furthermore, an equal number of teachers' comments suggest that the provision of inservice is reassuring when no one right answer exists and students' progress is slow.

> You feel there is someone else out there having the same problems. I think that's essential.
>
> (S4, Mod-S)

> I don't always know that I'm doing the right thing. I'd like some guidance on where best to start and how best to know when to move on and how much to expect.
>
> (S11, Mod-E)

Half of teachers' comments with respect to their own professional development indicate a sense of isolation and losing touch with other colleagues. Additionally, several teachers noted the high degree of specialization that occurs due to the nature of their teaching experiences.

> I don't want to become obsolete. I don't want to become so specialized in one area that I don't have any options of moving.
>
> (S1, Mod-S)

> We are in the somewhat unique position of being in a school where you are considered a district program. The principal has an interest in us but really doesn't know our kids or the situations we face.
>
> (S10, S/P-S)

While teachers' need for inservice and support programs appears to be well articulated in numerous interview statements, teachers' comments with respect to how professional development should be delivered and structured seems to be less elaborated than other topics covered in the interview. This trend suggests that teachers do not perceive the organization and construction of inservice activities to be a part of their jobs and look to district leadership to provide expertise in this area.

> I think that is something someone in district office should be planning. Pro-D days are planned for the district—they should be looking around to see who could provide service for us.
>
> (S9, S/P-S)

A number of teachers from a variety of programs (N = 6) stressed the importance of including aides and other staff members from the school in professional development activities.

> I don't really have any idea [how inservice should be constructed] to be honest. I'd like them to hit all staff not just specialist teachers, but teachers' aides and regular class teachers. I think it's important that you have it all together.
>
> (S2, Mod-S)

Otherwise, teachers' expressed preferences regarding the structure of inservice evidenced no notable trends. Individual teachers' comments included the desire for regular meetings, teacher participation in the planning of inservice activities, visitations to other special education programs both within and outside the district, and a directed focus for inservice activities.

> I think the best way to use it [inservice funds] would be for our [special education] classes [in the school] to pick a focus such as revamping and expanding the work experience program, and really going into that thoroughly and setting a very strong program. And getting the knowhow from other programs around the province.
>
> (S6, Mild-S)

No pattern or trend was evident in teachers' comments with respect to preferred content and format of inservice activities. Teachers' preferences appeared to vary according to each individual's learning style and professional interest. Sixteen different inservice topics were suggested by teachers covering a wide range of educational areas such as counselling techniques, computer use, alternative communication systems, advocacy, IEP's, and ethics on the job. Format suggestions included lecture, demonstration, case-study, informal sharing, and practice with feedback. Additionally, several teachers (N = 5) noted that the need for professional development is not limited to teachers of mentally handicapped students

and that considerable inservice is required by parents, regular education teachers, teacher aides, and the regular student population.

In conclusion, it appears that ongoing inservice and professional development is considered by many special education teachers to be an area of continuing need. Teachers' comments suggest this is particularly so for teachers of mentally handicapped students due to the nature of the job. Interestingly, the need for support seems to be pervasive despite the fact that numerous teachers (N = 6) praised the school district administration and special education support staff for the provision of notable services.

> I've always found that whenever I'm in trouble and I need help it is forthcoming right away.
>
> (S14, Mild-E)

VI. PERCEPTIONS OF DISTRICT PERSONNEL

Interviews were conducted with three individuals in Burrard School District who have direct responsibilities for programs for mentally handicapped students: an Assistant Superintendent; a District Coordinator of Special Services; and, a District Special Counsellor. Each educator was queried with respect to perceptions regarding the needs of the programs, work priorities for this coming school year, and perceptions regarding the provision of teacher support. The following section contains an overview of findings from each interview.

Assistant Superintendent: Programs

The Assistant Superintendent identified two areas related to programs for mentally handicapped students that are priorities for the Burrard School District this coming year. They are implementation of a Resource Room Program for mildly mentally handicapped students at the elementary level and improvement of the Work Experience/Life Skills Programs for moderately and mildly mentally handicapped students at the secondary level. In general, the Assistant Superintendent's observations of these programs were consistent with data collected from other participants in the study, particularly at the district level.

The Assistant Superintendent indicated the Resource Room Program was chosen as the new service delivery model at the elementary level for mildly handicapped students because it provided the most flexibility for individual student programming and at the same time maximized opportunities for integration. While he acknowledged that District and school adoption of the model occurred very rapidly, he noted that the Burrard School District expects institutionalization of the Resource Room Program to require several years of support. To this end, he indicated an interest that the recommendations arising from this study assist implementation of the Resource Room Program.

The Assistant Superintendent's comments regarding the Work Experience/Life Skills Programs were, for the most part, general in nature reflecting many specialist teachers' concern for developing a viable and effective program that offers students greater vocational opportunities following graduation from school.

With respect to the provision of teacher support, the Assistant Superintendent indicated that professional commitment and school-based inservice have been two areas of focus for the Burrard School District this past year. To this end, he referred to the Professional Commitment Document that suggests teachers should assume primary responsibility for their own professional development and that the role of the School District is to assist such endeavours. Additionally, the Assistant Superintendent indicated that school-based inservice, as part of a larger school improvement effort, has been strongly advocated by the Burrard School District. He noted that school-based staff development activities benefit both individuals and groups of teachers and at the same time take into account the needs of particular schools.

Coordinator of Special Education and Counselling Services

The Coordinator of Special Education and Counselling Services indicated his most prevalent program concerns are for the provision of more appropriate services and placements for mildly handicapped students. He noted there are several reasons why services for mildly handicapped students are needed at this time. First, because people recognize obvious handicaps more readily than invisible handicaps, issues surrounding more seriously handicapped students are often less ambiguous than those surrounding mildly handicapped students. Second, programs for the mildly handicapped have followed a traditional segregated model in the Burrard School District. Unlike other special education programs, little innovation in the service delivery system has occurred. Third, the educational goals

of mildly handicapped students are often close enough to the goals of regular education as to be unclear. This situation requires that integrating teachers adjust their classroom demands and the curriculum to an appropriate form and level for the individual students.

The Coordinator indicated that non-categorical Resource Rooms will be established in three different schools for purposes of providing a wider range of placement options for elementary mildly handicapped students this next year. He described the service as "essential, broad and flexible", indicating the time students spend in the Resource Rooms would vary according to individual need. He noted that support would be provided to schools in the form of teacher aides and staff development to assist with implementation of the new program.

It was clear from the Coordinator's comments that implementation of the Resource Room Program is considered to be a major area of focus this coming year. His stance towards the new program suggested a high level of philosophical commitment to the principle of integration and suggested a keen awareness of the practical issues involved in implementing the program. To this end, he indicated a desire to allocate substantial resources towards the program to make it a success.

Special Counsellor

The Special Counsellor provides student counselling and teacher consultative services approximately 3-1/2 days per week. When asked about the nature of services provided to each of the six programs for mentally handicapped students, the Counsellor indicated her degree of

involvement varies with each program. For example, no direct student counselling is provided to students in the severely/profoundly handicapped programs; however, students in the moderately mentally handicapped programs are given group and/or individual counselling once a week. With respect to teacher support, the Special Counsellor noted that for the most part, assistance is provided to individual teachers upon request. Types of assistance include help with instructional planning, family counselling, and individual student counselling.

The Counsellor noted that her job priority remains the same each year—to maximize the appropriate integration components of each student's program. She indicated that next year, the integration thrust for the moderately handicapped program at the secondary level will be in the non-examinable subject and activity areas. When asked what concerns she has with respect to any or all of the programs, she commented that it is important that the instructional content of the programs be "geared to the ability levels of the students and to their personal futures." Additionally, she stated that the curriculum should maintain an emphasis on the daily affairs of the community and society so students develop "an awareness of what's going on in the world." To this end, she noted that the sex education program she teaches is a continuing priority next year.

When asked about her role of providing teacher support, the Counsellor suggested that her present duties will change with the implementation of the Resource Room Program. She noted that she will likely be more involved in direct instructional planning activities with teachers, specifically in the

area of developing IEP's. Additionally, she anticipated that the newest specialist teachers and the Resource Room teachers will require the most support. With respect to inservice priorities, the district Counsellor indicated that classroom teachers will need to be involved in IEP planning and consequently, a considerable amount of inservice should be directed at personnel in those schools implementing the Resource Room Program. More specifically, she felt that inservice in the area of using the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement to develop IEP's may be of some help to all teachers involved in the integration process.

VII. A SUMMARY OF MAJOR FINDINGS

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of major findings presented throughout this chapter. The following summary represents the expressed beliefs of 14 teachers of mentally handicapped students from the Burrard School District that were obtained through personal interviews. Major findings are reported for four different areas that were the focus of this study: the concept of integration; teachers' program planning practices; use of the curriculum guide; and, the provision of support.

The Concept of Integration

The majority of teachers of the mentally handicapped expressed the following beliefs:

1. Integration is an appropriate goal for mentally handicapped students provided the type of integration is suited to an individual student's needs and does not jeopardize the student's self concept.
2. The process of integration is a beneficial experience for all students in that handicapped students are awarded full status in the school and community and regular students learn to have greater tolerance for others. Additional benefits to handicapped students that teachers cited include: more normalized behaviour; greater skill acquisition; improved self-concept; and, access to more facilities and activities.
3. A positive attitude on the part of school staff is essential to successful integration. Other factors teachers believe influence successful integration include: administrative support; cooperation between regular staff and special education personnel; support and assistance to the integrating regular class teacher; and, the school's location and facilities.
4. Numerous teachers noted that opportunities for appropriate integration are more numerous at the elementary level than the secondary level.

Program Planning Practices

1. Most teachers' comments (12 out of 14) regarding developing instructional programs indicated they hold a positive attitude toward Individual Education Programs (IEP's) and feel IEP's could be a valuable part of a teacher's program development activities. This was true even of teachers who do not currently use IEP's.

2. It appears teachers' use of IEP's varies according to the type of program they teach. IEP's are used most by teachers of the moderately and severely/profoundly handicapped and least by the teachers of mildly mentally handicapped.
3. Numerous teachers considered IEP's useful for purposes of: directing their attention to an individual student's needs, improving home-school communication, and evaluation and reporting.
4. Problems that teachers cited in developing and using IEP's appear to be idiosyncratic to the individual teacher. Individual problems included: lack of time, the technical writing of goals and objectives, and lack of follow-through on the written plan.
5. Some specific concerns which were raised by teachers from several programs include: inadequate counselling services, the need for increased non-educational support, lack of parental support, poor physical fitness programs, and dissatisfaction with the life skills/work experience programs. Reasons for these problems appear to be inherent in the nature and type of program associated with the concern.
6. A variety of program specific concerns were noted by teachers. Teachers from the severely/profoundly handicapped program indicated that tasks such as finding age appropriate activities and curricula, managing a multi-disciplinary program, and providing custodial services were constant problems. Teachers from the moderately handicapped program at the secondary level were concerned with the use of teacher aides and maintaining a functional life skills focus. At the elementary level, the teacher noted a lack of continuity between the secondary

and elementary programs. Teachers in the mildly handicapped program at the elementary level indicated concerns related to scheduling students, securing adequate planning time, and obtaining useful materials.

The Curriculum Guide

1. A majority of teachers (12 out of 14) commented positively on the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement and many indicated they use the Guide as a reference in curriculum planning and developing IEP's.
2. Teachers' comments indicate they perceive the Curriculum Guide to be consistent with their philosophical beliefs regarding the provision of services for the mentally handicapped. Similarly, numerous teachers noted that they feel it supports their current teaching practices.
3. Teachers of severely/profoundly handicapped students noted that while the Curriculum Guide is philosophically consonant with their beliefs, the listing of goals and learning outcomes is not well suited to their student population.

The Provision of Support

1. Overall, teachers' comments regarding their professional practice indicate a pervasive need for ongoing professional development and support despite a somewhat common view (6 out of 14) that present support services are adequate.

2. A majority of teachers indicated they desire more inservice opportunities in order to gain more expertise, to be reassured of the soundness of their present practices, and to maintain professional affiliations with colleagues.
3. Half of teachers' comments regarding the nature of their work suggest a prevailing theme of isolation. This isolation seems to stem from the high degree of program specialization which results in decreasing contact with other colleagues and limited use of a broad repertoire of teaching skills.
4. While individual teachers expressed particular preferences regarding the format and content of inservice activities, teachers offered few ideas related to the structure, organization, and delivery of inservice. Moreover, they indicated that they perceive inservice to be the responsibility of school district personnel.
5. A number of teachers (n = 6) indicated they feel it is important for teacher aides and regular staff members to be included in inservice activities.
6. Individual teachers indicated they desire regular meetings, teacher participation in inservice planning, program visitations within and outside the district, and a selected focus for inservice activities over a year.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE STUDY IN RETROSPECT

I. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

It was the contention of this thesis that teachers of mentally handicapped students are witnessing comprehensive changes in the field of special education. Moreover, it was speculated in Chapter One that implementation of new innovations, such as service delivery models that maximize opportunities for integration, and new curricular planning methods and materials, may constitute significant and substantive alterations in teachers' beliefs and practices. However, the data of this study suggest that while changes in special education teachers' practices are needed, no significant alterations in their beliefs are required. Given widespread evidence that the implementation of educational changes can easily fail (e.g., Fullan, 1982; Sarason, 1971) and that large-scale projects often bear poor results (e.g., Silberman, 1970), the focus of this study was on the development of recommendations that would support special education teachers' change efforts emphasizing the use of local school district resources.

The general purpose of this study was to develop a school district framework of support for teachers of mentally handicapped students. Three specific problems were addressed in this study. First, this study attempted to ascertain special education teachers' beliefs with respect to three aspects of their professional practice—the integration of handicapped

students, program planning activities, and use of a provincial curriculum. Second, it sought to determine the need for the provision of teacher support. Third, a framework of support was constructed that addressed the concerns of teachers of mentally handicapped students and reflected the priorities and available resources of the school district.

The research methodology used to investigate these problems was, as described in Chapter Three, qualitative in nature. As the delivery of professional development is most commonly administered at the district or teacher association levels and as special education programs fall under the jurisdiction of individual school districts, a case study of an urban school district was undertaken. Open-ended interviews were conducted with teachers and district personnel involved with programs for mentally handicapped students in an attempt to determine shared perceptions and concerns and to understand the complexities of the social context of the district. Additionally, relevant district and provincial documents relating to policy and programs for mentally handicapped students were reviewed.

An analysis of data collected from the interviews revealed a number of trends and suggested particular themes that are presented in Chapter Four. Significant findings related to teachers' concerns and district priorities provided the foundation and direction for the conclusions and recommendations of this study presented in the following sections of this chapter.

II. DISCUSSION OF CONCLUSIONS

The Beliefs of Teachers Regarding Integration

Findings of this study suggest that teachers of mentally handicapped students are committed in principle to the concept of integration. Their beliefs are derived not from provincial or district policy, with which they agree, but from principles regarding human rights and an appropriate education for all. Specialist teachers' conceptualization of integration seems to incorporate two moral tenets: the notion of equal educational opportunity for all handicapped students in the least restrictive environment and the principle of normalization (Wolfensberger, 1972). Articulation of these precepts in their discussions suggests that teachers of mentally handicapped students share a common and relatively sophisticated ethical belief system that focuses on moral and humanitarian issues.

The stance of these teachers does not imply an absolute position regarding the translation of integration into practice. Specialist teachers appear to be aware of the benefits and limitations of the integration process and have a critical understanding of the factors influencing its success. Their comments regarding the confounding technical and administrative problems of practice suggest that they view the decision to integrate as a relative one. The specialist teachers are circumspect in their advocacy of integration insofar as they feel that the benefits of integration are related to the degree to which the District dedicates financial, consultative, and moral support to participants in the process. Moreover, they view the implementation of integration as an array of relationships involving personal

attitudes, values, and roles of special educators, regular teachers, administrative support staff, and students. They perceive the implementation of integration as requiring more than just the acquisition of knowledge or specialized teaching techniques. They suggest that regular educators need to become aware of issues related to handicaps, recognize a need for change, and become conscious of their own attitudes towards the problem.

Special educators characterize integration as a problem of initial sensitization followed by constructive, collaborative action. Their perceptions regarding the nature of integration as a change process provide support for numerous authors' arguments that educational change problems cannot be solved solely by the efforts of individual teachers. Collective cooperation with reference to the various social contexts of education is required (e.g., Goodlad & Klein, 1974; McLaughlin, 1976).

By definition, integration means that a portion of most handicapped students' education will take place within regular classrooms. Findings from this study suggest that specialist teachers do not feel that a common belief system regarding handicapped students is held by regular educators. The comments of special educators suggest that translating the policy of integration into practice is not so much a matter of altering the belief systems of special educators as it is a matter of assisting special education teachers to become spokespersons for change within the context of regular education. Evidence from this study suggests that inservice efforts need to be directed at supporting professional relationships between regular educators and specialist teachers. It is speculated that the wider the

discrepancy between regular educators' beliefs and the beliefs of specialist teachers regarding integration, the more support will be required to translate the policy of integration into practice.

In summary, findings from this study reveal that the comments of specialist teachers regarding integration display a high degree of cohesion and philosophical reflection. The beliefs they hold regarding the integration of handicapped students are consonant with provincial and district policy. This suggests that specialist teachers have the potential of being effective advocates of the philosophy of integration. While this study did not attempt to ascertain the perceptions of regular educators with respect to the concept of integration, specialist teachers' comments indicate they do not believe that regular educators share the same commitment to integration. The findings suggest that inservice and support in the Burrard School District should not be directed at altering the attitudes and beliefs of special educators regarding education of the mentally handicapped. Rather, it should capitalize upon their knowledge and commitment to the principle of integration by encouraging them to act as change agents with their colleagues in the regular stream.

Teachers' Perceptions of Program Planning

In general, findings from this study suggest that the development and use of Individual Education Programs (IEP's) serve a stabilizing purpose with respect to teachers' program planning activities. They are vehicles through which parents are made aware of their responsibilities, school-parent partnerships are forged, and individual students' programs are

organized and articulated. The consensual nature of the IEP development process relieves teachers of the sole responsibility for program planning. At the same time, it provides a valuable opportunity for the home and school to share perceptions and concerns. The concrete nature of the plan appears to provide substantial security to teachers regarding the chosen direction and focus of an individual student's program. The IEP offers a specific written reference of agreed upon goals that serve the purposes of accountability, program articulation, and student evaluation. Most teachers' comments strongly suggest that they perceive the IEP to be an appropriate means of meeting the program planning needs of mentally handicapped students.

In 1983, the Burrard School District developed a regulation regarding referral and assessment procedures for exceptional children which recommends the use of IEP's by special education teachers. Despite this regulation and the favourable opinions of teachers regarding the value of IEP's, not all teachers employ them in their current programming practices. More specifically, this study reveals that teachers' current use of IEP's tend to associate with the severity of the handicapping condition of the student. Teachers working with students who have more serious handicaps appear to experience a higher need for explicit direction and focus in their program planning activities than do teachers of the mildly mentally handicapped. This may be due to the fact that the learning style of severely handicapped students demands a higher specificity of attention in programming and consequently, these teachers devote more time to program development activities. Additionally, the attention teachers give

to IEP's may be the result of more intense pressure from parents and local associations representing the more seriously handicapped population. Teachers from the moderately and severely/profoundly handicapped programs made frequent reference to outside pressure. The regulation governing IEP's was developed jointly by the Burrard School Board and a special interest group that, on the whole, represents highly indentifiable handicapped populations.

The interpretation above may well present a view of teachers' program planning practices that is incomplete. The finding that teachers' use of IEP's relates to the severity of the handicapping condition suggests that there is also a relationship between teachers' needs for developing IEP's and the complexity of the program planning task. Teachers may feel a greater need for IEP's when the instructional program is comprised of less conventional curriculum material and when the service delivery plan is complex and extended, as would be the case with more seriously handicapped students. In instances such as these, the IEP likely functions as a broad-based communication vehicle between professionals. As mildly mentally handicapped students' programs extend beyond the special education classroom this next year, it will be interesting to discover whether or not teachers find the IEP to be a useful communication tool with regular education teachers.

While teachers assign a high importance to IEP's, their current use of IEP's appears to be contextually bound. Teachers' need for developing IEP's seems to be associated with the type and complexity of program planning required in their practice.

Teachers' Perceptions Regarding the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement

Findings from this study suggest that teachers of mentally handicapped students perceive the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement (1983) to be a reassuring document. Teachers' comments indicate that the Curriculum Guide articulates a philosophy of special education that is consistent with their beliefs and sanctions a curricular emphasis that is reflective of their current teaching concerns. Although the philosophy contained in the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement reiterates Ministry statements made over the past ten years, teachers perceive the Curriculum Guide to represent a public provincial statement on services for mentally handicapped students that is long overdue. Teachers expressed considerable relief that the Guide makes explicit specific curricular practices that are of some debate; in particular, the provision of functional life skills and age-appropriate learning conditions. The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement seems to satisfy the need of teachers for a provincial authority that condones their beliefs and teaching concerns.

Most teachers reported they perceive the Curriculum to be a useful tool in proactive program planning activities by providing an organizing framework and ready reference for broad curricular outlines and directions. Numerous teachers' comments suggest that the listing of goals and learning outcomes contained in the Guide can be used in developing IEP's. While teachers indicated the skills listed in the Curriculum Guide are not applicable to the severely/profoundly handicapped population, it appears that the language used for the goals and learning outcomes is very appropriate for

students in mildly mentally handicapped programs. Moreover, it is speculated that the Curriculum accurately reflects mildly handicapped students' instructional levels and would require little or no modification for use in IEP's.

In summary, it appears that teachers' favourable attitude toward the Curriculum Guide can be attributed to the fact that the Guide makes explicit special education teachers' beliefs and concerns, and is perceived to be a helpful tool in designing students' instructional programs (see Doyle & Ponder, 1977). Based on teachers' perceptions, it seems that the Guide could aid in the induction of specialist teachers insofar as it would familiarize new teachers with the philosophy, curriculum, and service delivery issues relevant to the field. Additionally, this study suggests that the Curriculum Guide should be an integral part of inservice training that is concerned with curriculum development and individualized program planning, particularly in mildly handicapped programs. It is speculated that if the Curriculum Guide is an accurate and viable reflection of special education teachers' concerns regarding education for mentally handicapped students, it may serve as a useful communication medium with teachers in the mainstream who are integrating students into their classrooms.

Teachers' Desired Need for Support

Findings from this study indicate that teachers of mentally handicapped students evidence a particularly high need for ongoing professional support. This seems to be due primarily to the nature of their teaching assignments which are very specialized in many respects. Special educators appear to

experience different instructional and curricular concerns than do regular class teachers. This is due to the unique learning characteristics of their students which demand highly specific teaching methods and involve non-academic content areas. It appears that specialist teachers are professionally isolated from their regular stream colleagues even when housed in the same school because special educators perceive their program concerns somewhat differently than regular educators. Additionally, because all of the programs for the mentally handicapped are satellite programs, teachers are often separated from each other and seldom share concerns, unless part of a teaching team. Specialist teachers' needs for support stem from a sense of isolation from colleagues in both the regular and special education streams as a consequence of the specificity of their professional practice.

The extended role that teachers of mentally handicapped students serve in their assignments seems to be another reason why these teachers feel a particularly high need for ongoing support. Teachers' reported being engaged in a multitude of activities that go beyond the realm of classroom teaching and require extensive personal and professional resources. Such duties include providing consultative services for integrated students, obtaining specialized equipment, counselling parents with respect to the long and short term needs of their children, working effectively as a member of a multidisciplinary team, and acting as a liaison in the community.

Although teachers clearly expressed their desire for ongoing professional support, they have few concrete suggestions about the nature of this support and how it should be provided. It seems that even though

teachers are able to articulate their professional needs, they require assistance in translating these needs into specific professional development activities. Teachers' comments indicate they do not perceive the creation and organization of inservice to be a part of their job but look to the district for leadership in this area.

Several reasons may be advanced for the apparent lack of professional initiative on the part of teachers. First, the responsibilities of teachers of mentally handicapped students are beyond those of a regular teaching assignment. Involvement in orchestrating professional development activities is perceived simply as an added duty on an already long list.

Teachers' comments suggest there is considerable ambiguity and uncertainty regarding ownership of the satellite special programs in that the roles of central office and school-based administration are unclear. In terms of professional development, there appears to be some uncertainty with respect to whether or not it should have a school-based or district-based focus. However, it is quite evident from teachers' statements that they identify with the special education district staff. Teachers of students with mental handicaps look to district support personnel for guidance in their professional development.

Teachers' comments indicate they have little knowledge or information regarding the overall structure of inservice in the district. Teachers do not appear to be making full use of the various sources of professional development funding. Instead, teachers of mentally handicapped students view the special education department as the primary funding source. Teachers' comments also indicate they know little or nothing about the

basis upon which these departmental funds are allocated. Most stated that when they asked for specific funding assistance it was usually provided. There appears to be a lack of joint planning between the special education department and teachers of mentally handicapped students with respect to setting priorities for professional development activities. Individual teachers' needs are responded to on an ad hoc basis and the ways and means of the response are a mystery to most teachers.

It has been argued that planned professional development based on an assessment of teachers' concerns and needs is necessary if teachers of mentally handicapped students are to successfully implement changes in practice. Findings of this study suggest that if professional development support is to be effectively managed for specialist teachers, the structure and means by which the support will be provided should be made explicit to teachers. In this way, teachers of mentally handicapped students will be able to maximize their own professional development opportunities.

III. A FRAMEWORK OF SUPPORT

Introduction

The intended outcome of this study was the development of a framework of support for teachers of mentally handicapped students in the Burrard School District. The purpose of this section is to propose, in the form of recommendations, such a support structure based upon findings of the study and current literature related to best practices in the implementation of change.

A framework of support for teachers of mentally handicapped students should take into account both the needs and concerns of the teachers and district priorities and objectives. Relative to the issue of support, the findings of the study suggest that teachers of students with mental handicaps have three general concerns: opportunities for expanding their professional skills and knowledge, the need to reduce feelings of professional isolation from their colleagues in comparable programs and the regular classroom, and the ambiguities of program ownership.

The data derived from the interviews suggest that teachers of mentally handicapped students believe they are doing a good job, but require from time to time, assurances and acknowledgements to that effect. In fact, a major benefit of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement appears to be a significant step in the provision of such assurances.

The feelings of professional isolation and the issue of program ownership are, in part, consequences of the organization of programming for mentally handicapped students. Programs, though housed in regular schools, retain their satellite status. Ambiguity exists in respect to whether a particular program is a school program or whether it is a district program located in a particular school. Data suggest that the latter view is prevalent among the specialist teachers. They believe they are members of a district staff rather than members of a school staff. The fact that professional communication regarding the specifics of their practice is most often with District personnel rather than school personnel is indicative of this belief. This state of affairs contributes to a feeling of professional isolation within

the school and raises the question as to the appropriate role of the principal with respect to these programs.

Teachers wish to expand their knowledge and skill, however, they do not appear to be aware of any way of achieving this. The question of who bears the responsibility for professional development remains open. There does not, in the opinion of those teachers interviewed, appear to be an authentic collaboration between teachers and the planners and providers of inservice.

As alluded to in the conclusions, the desired outcome of effective integration and successful program implementation is not simply a consequence of equipping teachers of the mentally handicapped with the necessary encouragement and support. Teachers in the regular program must too be objects of any efforts toward program support. The speculation outlined earlier in this chapter was that regular classroom teachers may not share the same degree of commitment to integration as do the teachers most closely involved with mentally handicapped students. A necessary precondition to the integration of mentally handicapped students should be attention to the predispositions and skills of the regular classroom teacher.

Recommendations

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations for a framework of support are proposed. The recommendations outlined below define a direction the Burrard School District could adopt in order to optimize teachers' professional practices. Suggestions with respect to how the school district can actualize these

recommendations are constructed primarily from information contained in the implementation literature and the researcher's past experience.

1. Increase regular contact among teachers of mentally handicapped students to reduce isolation and enhance program practices.

   Opportunities should be created wherein teachers are able to visit comparable programs, meet regularly with colleagues in the same programs, and meet with all teachers of students with mental handicaps within the district. Such visits and meetings would address the issues of professional isolation and serve to create conditions whereby teachers receive the assurances necessary for continuing professional commitment. Additionally, teachers would be provided an opportunity to exchange information on recent developments and changes in similar programs, thereby establishing an informal communication network.

2. Increase professional initiative.

   It is implied by this recommendation that specialist teachers take greater ownership and responsibility for the articulation of their professional development needs and for the design of formal, informal, and job-embedded strategies to meet these needs. It is suggested that such an outcome can be realized through the establishment of an ongoing committee consisting of a teacher representative of each program and the District Special Counsellor. Specific purposes of the committee would be to articulate inservice needs, establish professional development priorities, and suggest some specific actions that can be undertaken at both the district and committee levels.

3. Enhance the specialized program planning techniques of teachers in the Mildly Mentally Handicapped Program.

The findings show that the formulation of IEP's and the use of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is less evident in programs for mildly mentally handicapped students than in the others. It is suggested that the following strategies can be enabling to this recommendation:

- Individual program development assistance to teachers by the district special counsellor.
- Opportunities to team, for short periods of time, with experienced teachers in other programs.
- The scheduling of an initial workshop directed at expanding practical skills and conceptual clarity with respect to the formulation of IEP's, with follow-up meetings for small group practice with feedback.
- Familiarizing teachers with the use of the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement for developing IEP's.

4. Increase contact between regular classroom teachers and specialist teachers.

If teachers of mentally handicapped students are to act as spokespersons for their students and at the same time, feel part of the larger educational schema, informal and school-based systems should be utilized to afford opportunities that will maximize contact between the regular and special education streams. Some suggestions in this regard include:

- At the elementary level, the provision of joint planning time for regular and specialist teachers to develop individual students' programs.

- At the secondary level, the means by which specialist teachers are informed of school decisions should parallel regular education practices.
- Various forms of reverse integration should be encouraged at the school building level, thereby providing reason for contact between regular and special educators.

5. Encourage greater commitment to the principle of integration among regular class teachers and building administrators.

As the fundamental issue underlying this recommendation is educators' values, attitudes, and beliefs with respect to the provision of services to handicapped students, support at all levels of the school system will be required to realize this recommendation. Moreover, it is critical that those holding leadership positions be articulate and well versed in the issues surrounding integration. Instructional leaders' expertise could be enhanced through formal inservice provided at the district level and visitations to model programs within and outside the district.

The district should signal its support of the integration process by scheduling district-wide inservice activities on this topic for regular educators. Additionally, schools housing satellite programs should participate in the planning and delivery of these sessions. Schools attempting integration should demonstrate their commitment to the change by incorporating the implementation effort into the school's philosophy, goals, and school-based professional development activities. Individual teachers' efforts towards integration should be acknowledged through job-embedded benefits that would lead to the enhancement

of the integration process, such as reduced class size and/or release time for planning.

6. Promote successful implementation of the Resource Room Program through planning and allocation of sufficient resources.

At this point in time, the Burrard School District has indicated its support of the Resource Room Program in the form of an in-house document describing the program, the identification of school sites, and contact with the staffs and administrations of each school. Additionally, the Resource Room Model, as a service delivery system, affords teachers of mildly mentally handicapped students an opportunity to put into practice many of their philosophical beliefs regarding integration discussed in Chapter Four. Commitment at the district and school levels appear to be in place. However, as there is a high degree of ambiguity among Resource Room teachers with respect to the nature and extent of change expectations associated with the program, it is likely that individual teacher commitment to the program will require further articulation of change expectations from both principals and district staff.

As the implementation phase begins this Fall, a plan of action should be designed jointly by participants in the programs and district staff to ensure an optimum chance of success. This plan should include:

- The provision of inservice to specialist teachers, and regular staffs both separately and together, regarding philosophical issues and instructional practices.
- Regular meetings at school sites involving the principal, special district counsellor, Resource Room teachers, and regular teaching staff who are involved in integration for

purposes of clarifying problems, resolving areas of difficulties, encouraging adaptation, and providing assurances and recognition.

- Parent meetings for purposes of gaining community support.
- The initiation of informal evaluation procedures that are based on school and program goals and objectives.
- Networking between schools involved in the Resource Room Programs in the form of class visitations, joint planning and inservice meetings, and coaching teams.

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APPENDIX A

A Description of Special Programs

(Taken from Special Programs: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines, Rev. 1984)

3.27 - MILDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED (E.M.H.)

3.27.1 DEFINITION

On formal psychological tests, mildly mentally handicapped students usually score between two and three standard deviations below the norm.

As a general guideline, educators could anticipate that many mildly mentally handicapped students are capable of attaining an academic level equivalent to upper intermediate grades. These students may be able to progress satisfactorily in standard programs in regular classrooms although modification of curricular materials and instructional methods may be required.

The Ministry recognizes that approximately 1.35% of the school population may be mildly mentally handicapped. In order to qualify for Ministry special education funding under Function 3 of the Financial Management System, mentally handicapped students must be receiving an additional or direct service related to their handicap, on a regular basis, for the majority of their school hours.

3.27.2 IDENTIFICATION/PLACEMENT

The mildly mentally handicapped student is not usually recognized as delayed during the preschool years. There may, however, be slight delays in speaking, language development and walking. When these students enter school and have difficulty in learning the required cognitive subject matter, their deficit becomes more apparent.

There are two components necessary for identifying mildly mentally handicapped students:

(a) An observation of the student's learning strengths and weaknesses. An assessment of these skills should indicate where the student requires additional educational support to attain age appropriate coping skills and higher academic levels.

(b) A psychoeducational assessment to determine the student's level of cognitive functioning.

The most frequently used tests in assessing mental handicaps are the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised. The results on these tests should be seen only as indicators of present mental development. Assessment should also

include such instruments as the Vineland Social Maturity Scale, the Caine-Levine Scales and the Adaptive Behaviour Functioning Index (A.A.M.D.). A profile of the child's performance levels in all skill areas should be determined. Test scores should be regarded as indicators rather than as being definitive in nature. School districts are urged to use them with extreme caution. The purpose of an assessment should always be to assist in deciding the nature of programming for a child.

A district screening and placement procedure should be the vehicle to process referrals to programs for the mildly mentally handicapped. This would ensure consistency with regard to the student population being served.

All students admitted to the program should have a recent individual psychoeducational assessment which includes information on academic skills, perceptual skills, personal and social adjustment and specific aptitudes.

Parental approval must be obtained in writing before performing an individual psychoeducational assessment or obtaining medical or psychological reports.

Medical assessments should also be carried out prior to placement and should be available on all students indicating any visual, auditory, motor or other deficits.

School districts should develop and publish entrance and exit criteria for all programs. Specific procedures for monitoring and reviewing individual placements and progress should be established.

3.27.3 PROGRAM

In their elementary school years mildly mentally handicapped students may be able to progress satisfactorily in regular programs with modification to curricular material and/or supplementary (tutoring) assistance.

At the secondary school level their academic programs should become more functional. Special care should be taken to ensure that mildly mentally handicapped students have access to the elective programs where they can succeed. The Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is available from the Ministry of Education to assist educators in planning appropriate educational programs.

Work experience and job training should be an integral part of the high school program for mildly mentally handicapped students. These

experiences should be conducted in accordance with relevant Ministry Guidelines (Handbook of Operating Instructions for Work Study - Work Experience Programs in B.C. Secondary Schools, 1982). These programs are often most effective when coordinated by the special education teacher and the work experience teacher.

The intention is for mildly handicapped students to graduate into actual jobs, for which they have been adequately prepared.

An individualized educational program should be planned for each mildly mentally handicapped student who is identified as needing a special program. The written IEP should be developed by the special education teacher with input from the classroom teacher, the school-based team and parents/guardians. The program should include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, the long range goals and short term instructional objectives, the services to be provided, an evaluation procedure, the anticipated duration of services and a date for reviewing the program.

Student progress should be recorded regularly and stated in objective, as well as subjective, terms.

School Districts should establish program/placement criteria, develop specific program entrance and exit criteria and specify procedures for monitoring or reviewing individual placements.

3.27.4 SERVICE DELIVERY

In keeping with the Ministry's position of education in the least restrictive environment, many mildly mentally handicapped students would be appropriately placed in the regular classroom with the provision of support services. Full or part-time special class placement should only be considered upon the recommendations of the district screening/placement committee.

If special class placement is considered necessary, the following instructional options should be considered:

(a) Enrolment in a regular class with a percentage of time spent in a special class setting for specialized, individualized and concentrated assistance. The time spent in the special setting would vary (up to 90%) depending upon the individual needs of the student.

(b) Part-time enrolment in a special class, with a percentage of time (up to 80%) spent in regular classes, depending on the educational needs of the student. The size of the special class should be determined by the needs of the students.

3.27.5 EVALUATION

School districts should have an ongoing process to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs for mildly mentally handicapped students. Please consult the Ministry's Evaluation of Special Programs: Resource Materials for information on evaluation.

3.27.6 PROGRAM PERSONNEL

It is the Ministry's expectation that teachers involved in mildly mentally handicapped programs be qualified and experienced. It is further expected that all teachers involved with the program have training in special education and especially in the area of the mentally handicapped.

As mildly mentally handicapped students receive a large part of their educational programming in regular classrooms, relative inservice should be made available to regular classroom teachers.

For those mildly mentally handicapped students with additional physical handicaps "Program Chance" personal attendants may be used. Please refer to the Program Chance Guidelines already distributed to the system (Schools Department Circulars R.44 and R.49)

3.27.7 RESOURCES

Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is available from the Ministry's Publication Services Branch.

3.27.8 FACILITIES

Please refer to the B. C. School Facilities Building Manual - Part 2 Space Standards and Part 3 Design Guidelines.

Mildly mentally handicapped students do not require extraordinary facilities. At the secondary school they may require additional time in shops and or labs to complete assignments.

3.27.9 CONSULTATION

The services of the Provincial Coordinator, Mentally/Physically Handicapped and Autistic are available to assist school districts in the implementation of educational programs for mentally handicapped students. Further information may be obtained from the the:

Provincial Coordinator
Mentally/Physically and Autistic
Division of Special Education
Ministry of Education
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 2M4

3.21 - SEVERELY AND PROFOUNDLY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED

3.21.1 DEFINITION

Severely and profoundly mentally handicapped students range in ability from individuals who are capable of learning self-care skills and basic communication to individuals who require intensive intervention to maintain and develop responses to external stimulation. Frequently these students will have sensory and physical disabilities in addition to their mental handicap.

The Ministry recognizes the incidence of severe/profound mentally handicapped conditions as approximately .09% of the school population.

In order to qualify for Ministry of Special Education funding under Function 3 of the Financial Management System, students with severe or profound mental handicaps must be receiving an additional or direct service, related to their handicap, on a regular basis for the majority of their school hours.

3.21.2 IDENTIFICATION/PLACEMENT

Severely and profoundly handicapped students are generally identified in the first few months of life. However, the handicap may also occur later in life due to illness or trauma.

A district screening/placement procedure should be the vehicle to process referrals to programs for the severely and profoundly mentally handicapped to ensure consistency with regard to the student population.

All students admitted to the program should have a current individual assessment provided by a multi-disciplinary team which may include: educators; speech/language pathologists; physiotherapists; occupational therapists and psychologists.

Parental approval must be obtained in writing before performing any individual psychoeducational assessment, obtaining medical or previous psychological reports and placement of a child in a special program.

3.21.3 PROGRAM

An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) should be developed for each severely and profoundly mentally handicapped student. The

program should be developed by the special education teacher with input from school district personnel and parents/guardians or caregivers. The written IEP should include: a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance; the long range goals and short term instructional objectives; the services to be provided; an evaluation procedure; the anticipated duration of services and a date for reviewing the program. An IEP will assist the educators in planning for the maximum independence in age-appropriate mobility, self-care, communication and work related skills.

For many of these students, transfer of learning cannot be assumed. Skills mastered in the classroom often do not generalize to other settings. For this reason, care should be taken to use natural settings for instruction whenever possible. These settings may include shopping malls, recreation centres, public transportation and job sites. The primary goal is to increase the level of independent functioning in adult life including the areas of self-care, recreation leisure, communication and home-living skills. Student progress should be recorded regularly and stated in objective, as well as subjective terms.

School districts should establish program/placement criteria, develop specific program entrance and exit criteria and specific procedures for monitoring or reviewing individual placements.

3.21.4 SERVICE DELIVERY

Wherever possible, severely and profoundly mentally handicapped students should be integrated into regular school buildings which have students of a similar age range. They should be receiving instruction in the least restrictive environment in which appropriate instruction can be offered, given the available resources and given the available medical and/or other necessary non-educational support services. At times it may be necessary to deliver the special education program in a non-school setting.

Due to the limited numbers of students in this category it is anticipated that in some school districts severely and profoundly handicapped students may be grouped with other mentally handicapped students.

The inclusion of severely and profoundly mentally handicapped students into the regular classroom will frequently be limited to non-academic and social interaction. The provision of opportunities for non-disabled students to interact with, and provide stimulation for the severely and profoundly handicapped students are encouraged.

3.21.5 EVALUATION

School districts should have an ongoing process to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs for severely and profoundly mentally handicapped students. Please consult the Ministry's Evaluation of Special Programs: Resource Materials for information on evaluation.

3.21.6 PROGRAM PERSONNEL

The expectation of the Ministry of Education is that all teachers working with the severely and profoundly mentally handicapped will display the competencies to implement a functional and realistic program plan for each severely and profoundly handicapped student in the program. These competencies will have been developed through training and experience both in general and special education.

Teachers should demonstrate ability to coordinate a transdisciplinary team which frequently includes a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist, child care workers, aides and others.

Medical personnel should assume responsibility for such routines as catheterization and administration of medications. Where medical personnel cannot be in full time attendance, they should assume responsibility for the training and the supervision of school personnel carrying out these tasks. Procedures should be outlined in writing by the appropriate medical personnel and have signed parental/guardian approval.

Personal attendants (provided by MHR funding through Program CHANCE) and Teacher Aides may be used to assist severely and profoundly mentally handicapped students. Please refer to Program Chance Guidelines (Schools Department Circular R.44 and R.49).

Trained personal attendants and paraprofessionals may carry out a portion of the program under the direction of the teacher.

Due to the unique needs of these students, the inservice needs of staff will be varied. Inservice opportunities should be made available to both teachers and non-professionals working with these students. Regular meetings with the entire team should be scheduled so all can attend.

3.21.7 RESOURCES

Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is available from the Ministry's Publication Services Branch to assist educators in the planning of IEP's for these students.

Disabled Living Resource Centre
Kinsmen Rehabilitation Foundation
2256 W. 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C.
V6K 2N5

Wesbrook Children's Technology Centre
School of Rehabilitation Medicine
University of British Columbia
2194 Health Sciences Mall
Vancouver, B.C.
V6T 1W5

Dependent Handicapped
Curriculum Guide (Revised Edition 1983)
Alberta Education
11160 Jasper Avenue,
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 0L2

3.21.8 FACILITIES

Please refer to the B.C. School Facilities Building Manual Part 3 Design Guidelines.

As many severely/profoundly mentally handicapped students are non-ambulatory, existing buildings may require modification.

3.21.9 CONSULTATION

The services of the Provincial Coordinator, Mentally/Physically Handicapped and Autistic are available to assist school districts in the implementation of educational programs for mentally handicapped students. Further information may be obtained from the:

Provincial Coordinator
Mentally/Physically Handicapped and Autistic
Division of Special Education
Ministry of Education
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C.
V8V 2M4

3.20 - MODERATELY MENTALLY HANDICAPPED (T.M.H.)

3.20.1 DEFINITION

Many moderately mentally handicapped students generally function two to three years below their actual age level. The deficits are frequently evident in language acquisition, cognition, fine and gross motor skills, self-help and socialization.

On formal psychological tests, moderately mentally handicapped students usually score between three and five standard deviations below the norm.

As a general guideline, educators can anticipate that many moderately mentally handicapped students are capable of attaining academic skills to the upper primary level and some to the lower intermediate level.

The Ministry recognizes the incidence of moderately mentally handicapping conditions as approximately .36% of the school population. In order to qualify for Ministry special education funding under Function 3 of the Financial Management System, moderately mentally handicapped students must be receiving an additional or direct service, related to their handicap, on a regular basis for the majority of their school hours.

3.20.2 IDENTIFICATION/PLACEMENT

It is anticipated that moderately mentally handicapped students will be identified as being delayed in their development prior to admission to the school system. The initial identification may be as early as at birth when definite physical characteristics may be evident. In other cases during the first five years of life there will be measurable delays in achieving certain predictable milestones and general cognitive development. If a child's mental handicap is not identified before entering school a complete assessment involving an inter-disciplinary team should be obtained.

There are two components necessary for identifying moderately mentally handicapped students.

The first is an observation of the learning strengths and weaknesses of the student. These findings would indicate where the student requires additional educational support to attain age appropriate coping skills and to reach his/her educational potential.

The second is a formal psychoeducational assessment to determine the student's level of functioning.

The most frequently used tests in assessing mental ability are the Stanford-Binet and the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised. The results of these tests should be seen only as general indicators of present mental development. Assessment should also include such instruments as the Vineland Social Maturity Scale, the Caine-Levine Scales and the Adaptive Behaviour Functioning Index (A.A.M.D.). A profile of the child's performance levels in all skill areas should be determined. Test scores should be regarded as indicators rather than as being definitive in nature. School districts are urged to use them with extreme caution.

A district screening/placement procedure should be the vehicle to process referrals to programs for the moderately mentally handicapped to ensure consistency with regard to the student population being served.

Before students are admitted to a program for the moderately mentally handicapped they should have had a recent individual psychoeducational assessment which includes information on academic and life skills, perceptual disorders, personal and social adjustment and specific aptitudes.

Medical assessments should also be carried out on all students prior to placement indicating any visual, auditory, motor or other physical deficits.

Parental approval must be obtained in writing before performing an individual psychoeducational assessment and before obtaining any medical or psychological reports.

3.20.3 PROGRAM

An Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) should be planned for each moderately mentally handicapped student who is identified as needing a special program. The program should be developed by the special education teacher with input from the classroom teacher, the school based team, and the parent/guardian or caregiver. The program should include a statement of the student's present levels of educational performance, the long range goals and short term instructional objectives, the services to be provided, and evaluation procedure, the anticipated duration of services and date for reviewing the program.

IEP's will assist the educators in planning for the maximum academic, vocational and social development of moderately mentally handicapped students. IEP's should include goals in a variety of domains including self-care, social-emotional, communication, vocational, pre-academic or functional academic, recreation and leisure, home-living skills, mobility, community orientation and family life. A number of additional considerations relating to IEP's are:

- Long range goals should be broken down into short term, attainable objectives defined in measurable terms.

- Student progress should be recorded regularly and stated in objective, as well as subjective terms.

- As students get older an increasing number of IEP objectives should define community environments for skill instruction, maintenance and generalization.

- In the last years of school, IEP meetings should include discussion on anticipated post-school environments for the students.

School Districts should develop and publish entrance and exit criteria for all programs. Procedures for monitoring and reviewing individual placements and progress should be established.

The Ministry of Education has published the Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement to provide guidance to educators in developing individualized programs for mentally handicapped students..

Schools, in partnership with parents and community, should prepare these students to assume some type of meaningful work upon reaching school leaving age.

3.20.4 SERVICE DELIVERY

Wherever possible, moderately mentally handicapped students should be integrated by class or individually into regular school buildings that have regular students of a similar age range.

Although special class placement may be necessary, it is in keeping with current practice and Ministry philosophy to integrate these students into regular classrooms wherever possible. This may take the form of attending only non-academic subjects like physical education, art and music. However, some individuals may also benefit from inclusion in academic areas.

3.20.8 FACILITIES

Please refer to the B.C. School Facilities Building Manual Part 2 Space Standards and Part 3 Design Guidelines.

To accommodate most moderately mentally handicapped students, minimal adaptation will be required for the physical plant. However, easy access or private washrooms may be required.

3.20.9 CONSULTATION

The services of the Provincial Coordinator, Mentally/Physically Handicapped and Autistic are available to assist school districts in the implementation of educational programs for mentally handicapped students. Further information may be obtained from:

Provincial Coordinator
Mentally/Physically Handicapped and Autistic
Division of Special Education
Ministry of Education
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, B.C. V8V 2M4

While these students are frequently receiving instruction in a curriculum which is different from that which their non-handicapped peers receive, care should be taken to maximize opportunities for social integration.

A peer tutor program should be considered in order to maximize contacts with peers and increase opportunities for direct instruction.

3.20.5 EVALUATION

School districts should have an ongoing process to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs for moderately mentally handicapped students. Please consult the Ministry's Evaluation of Special Programs: Resource Materials for information on evaluation.

3.20.6 PROGRAM PERSONNEL

It is the Ministry's expectation that teachers involved with moderately mentally handicapped programs be qualified and experienced. Training in special education and especially in the area of the mentally handicapped is recommended.

In schools where mentally handicapped students are attending, inservice on teaching the mentally handicapped should be available for all the staff.

Young, moderately mentally handicapped students and moderately mentally handicapped students with a physical disability may require additional assistance in the classroom. Personal attendants provided through MHR funding may be used to assist these students. Please refer to the Program Chance Guidelines (Schools Department Circulars R.44 and R.49).

Trained paraprofessionals working as special class aides may carry out many of the instructional sequences under the direction of the classroom teacher.

3.20.7 RESOURCES

Special Education Core Curriculum Supplement is available from the Ministry's Publication Services Branch.

APPENDIX B

A Sample Teacher Interview

APPENDIX B

Date: June 14, 1985 Protocol Number: 2
Interviewer: S. Stark Interviewee: S2
Time: 10:30 a.m. - 12 noon Program: Moderately - Secondary
Subject: A Framework of Support
Location: School Classroom

1. I: With integration, do you think integration is an appropriate goal for mentally handicapped students?

   R: I think some types of integration are. I think there's three types--there's the physical, the social and the actual instructional integration, and I think it depends on the students, as in everything else it's individual. I think in some situations it may be even detrimental to the odd student who can't handle and loses some freedom by coming to an integrated setting.

2. I. Can you tell me about that or give me an example?

   R. A specific student, for instance? Okay, Mary E. for instance. I think that although she's gained a little bit as far as she has a cafeteria to go to and that type of thing, I think in a lot of ways she's having to be more controlled.

3. I. Is this since she's moved from a segregated school?

   R. Yes. At that school for instance, we could put her out in the courtyard. She needs that freedom to be more spontaneous and to be loud if she wants to be loud and that kind of thing. We've lost that with her. So I'm not saying it's detrimental to her, but it's on the verge with her. She's gained some things but she's lost some things too. And there are other students. Well no, I can't really think of any other students like that in our particular program. But you know, kids with very severe behaviour difficulties, I think yes, you can lose because you have to restrict their behaviours so much that they lose a lot of their freedom. But on the whole I think most of the other students have gained a great deal and none of the other ones are any worse off.

4. I. Can you tell me in what ways they've gained?

R. Socially. They think more highly of themselves. Again it varies. O.K., look at their self-image. For some students it has really improved their self-image. They are going to high school like everybody else and that is really great for them. For other students, sometimes the higher functioning ones, they all of a sudden see that they are no longer within a handicapped population and compare themselves to the normal population. It damages their self-image. So it very definitely again depends on the individual. So social is one plus though. Just the facilities that they have access to; you know the school facilities and the cafetaria, the school store, that type of thing, computer rooms, the library. That is the biggest source of integration I think that our students have. But I also see it on the other side. There is always a negative. You know, so many of the activities at this school happen after school hours and that's where we have not done a good enough job—to make sure that they are integrated. Like to come to the football games and basketball games. The parents are not getting them to them. Even our very best kids that come on public transportation and can get here by themselves are not involved and that is the most appropriate area. That I see is something we really have to work at.

5. I. What do you see doing towards this?

R. Well, publicizing the events a lot more so that the parents can get here. Maybe contacting the parents individually and saying, "look this is an appropriate event for so and so. Please try and get them here." A carpool, get a group of parents, maybe a parents' advisory thing so that every parent does not have to come to every event. Maybe use some of our own time and auxiliary staff time to actually supervise the students. Most of us have a Class 4 and can drive the bus. We could pick up a group of students; it wouldn't kill us; and come to a football game. That is maybe a more appropriate use of auxiliary staff or to have our input into extracurricular activities. Rather than say, this year we plan a hockey team which is dwindling fast because our best players every year get out. Maybe instead we should try that. We should start looking at using after school hours to do some other types of things. It has to be done on an individual basis. Not every event is appropriate for every person. Before I came here I thought well, all these things happen at noon hour. Isn't it wonderful that we'll be part of that. We will have mixers and an old sock hop. Nothing happens here at noon hour. The kids hang out and our kids have the most trouble with that.

6. I. During the noon hour?

R. Yes. There's not really much going on during the noon hour. There is not really much organized activity in the high school. It all happens after school when our kids are not here. I think that's a real area we should work at. So, basically as far as integration, those are the types of things, the social and the physical integration. Instructional, I don't really see our population as having a great deal of input into it except for P.E. and the C.R. areas. I think there is great potential there.

7. I. So how is it working now?

R. It really is not. But next year we have two more teachers that will be teaching the C.R. course and I don't see why selected students could not join in that. They are some who think that they have to have the skills before they go into the P.E. class and that they have to bring up their skills to that level. I don't think that that is necessarily true. I think that it maybe called tokenism by some but there is a point to tokenism. If it makes them feel good about being in that class and if they have to be there with a peer tutor or a one-to-one staff. Well that's fine, if they feel good about that experience. I would not want to see the whole week programmed that way, but I think everybody should at least have one experience where they are integrated in some way.

8. I. I hear you have a runner in your class; some student that can really do the track?

R. Yes, really well. So there are really some skills there. I think that that is another way we could use the peer tutors too is integrating into those classes. There are a couple of kids who may be going to an art class with a peer tutor and some kids going into a sewing class. They don't have to work on the same thing that everybody else does. Even if they were in the same room sewing at the same time as everybody else. I think that it would be a really nice experience for two or three of the girls.

9. I. You use peer tutors now?

R. Yes, in the LAC setting or functional academic types of activities. We have not really used them to integrate yet.

10. I. Do you think that that might work?

R. I think that it is a possibility. We have not pushed integration into the classrooms yet and we have waited for it to come from the other side and last year it did. We had an art teacher last year who was extremely interested and took some of our students up for art. It was a really nice experience except she was laid off. You can push but then there is a point where pushing is just putting our kids in a very untenable situation too. So it's a hard one to balance. I think you can probably talk our Home Ec teacher into doing some of the sewing. We are not asking her to teach students, at least in my mind we are not. We are just asking her to allow us to be in the room with her group. The cooking teacher up the hall has had a couple of our students in just for a one-hour session when she was doing some specific things like baking bread. A couple of our blind students went up just to smell the smells and see what is happening. So she is quite amenable to having our students up there. So there again, why not? One of our students working in a station could be making something entirely different. She does not have to be making what everybody else is making but she could be doing it in the same room. That is the kind of thing that I can see working on in the future. If it improves their self image and makes them feel good then it's more than worth it right there. Our population is changing too. Our population used to be much higher functioning. Where we may, at one time, have had a student who could have gone into auto mechanics or something like that; we really don't have anybody right now who could handle that kind of a course in a meaningful way. But certainly they could handle it with support and just for their own interest.

11. I. You had mentioned earlier that having the teachers say "yes, I want to have this kid in my room" as a factor that influences whether or not integration can work.

R. I think the point is that first of all, we laid back and said, "We will have them come to us." I think that is necessary for the first couple of years. I think now the point is for us to very positively approach them. Again, I would not approach somebody who I knew was going to be negative and miserable. I think we have to make the approach and say, Would you mind? It is not going to be any big deal for you. We are just going to be in a

corner of the room and gradually work our way up to the front of the room, so to speak. And music is another area where they have been very willing to have anybody we would want to send in.

12. I. Oh, well that's good.

R. That would really, I think, do so many neat things for our very severely handicapped population because they could be there just as an audience and I'm sure would enjoy listening to the band. The problem there now might be the sound effects. Would we be disruptive? I don't know. If we could just let the students in on a one-to-one basis, I think that they could sit and listen to it and quite enjoy it. The same in the P.E. classes. That is something I would like to see happening. Some of our students, I'm sure, would enjoy going down to the gym and watching what they were doing and it is something we really have not gone into yet and its overdue. Any criticism we are getting in that area I think is deserved. I think it's a process too that you have to find yourself first. It is something that we really should get down to do.

13. I. What other factors do you think you would attend to in order to make your integration attempts in this area successful?

R. Well, the things that we would have to deal with are the schedules. We really do not have the personnel to do it mainly. Freeing up the appropriate personnel. Also, I very firmly feel that the teachers in the district need to have an ongoing evaluation process. I think that it is very important that we do inservice work with them and it is something which is in our accreditation goals to do.

14. I. You mentioned peer tutoring. Do you see that as facilitating integration in any way?

R. Oh yes. If we could do it with peer tutors that would be the prime way to go I would think.

15. I. Really.

R. Yes, because they have had some excellent kids in here. They have to be trained and shown what kind of guidelines you want but that is really far preferable to having a staff member with the person. The staff member should only be there for the students who are very difficult to integrate. I do see peer tutors as being one of the most positive things that has happened since we have been here. I mean I really can praise that program to the sky. I think that it is beneficial to both sides of the school population. We see people coming in at the beginning very hesitant and by the end of the year are very comfortable with our students, handling some of the most difficult ones. It is good for the regular population because these kids aren't your academic stars. Often these kids are just excellent as peer tutors. It is maybe the only A on their report. It is a really nice experience for them too.

16. I. What other factors do you think would influence successful integration, maybe not even just in your setting but in other settings. Could you think back maybe to some of the higher functioning students you have had?

R. Very definitely, administrative support. I think that is the key. If you don't have that you really have nothing or it is extremely untenable for you. I think we were lucky to come in with an administrator who was extremely supportive and did it very wisely. She did not push it down anybody's throats. She did it very nicely but there was never a question that we were coming. She was also very well respected by the staff and that makes a difference. I think that coloured the tone of the student body as well. That I think is number one and can make or break it. This year we also have an extremely supportive administrator in a different way. A little bit maybe less physically involved but very supportive nonetheless. And then of course the staff. I mean, as long as they don't spit at you in the halls, it's O.K. Not everybody is going to love special ed kids and that's O.K. Not everyone has to love them. As long as they are fair and don't throw roadblocks in your way. A lot of high school teachers I think tend to be basically apathetic. If it is not going to involve them or step on their toes, then you can be there or not be there, it doesn't really matter. But a supportive staff in the right areas is certainly very necessary if you are going to have the non-academic areas involved. That's vital I think for our population. Academic areas too if you are looking at mildly mentally handicapped students. Also the physical location of the school is important. Because I think you can't sacrifice a program just for the sake of integration. You have to maintain the integrity of a good program for the students.

17. I. What are some of your concerns about program planning right now or instructional issues that you have with the kids?

R. First of all, the same thing we talked about at the earlier meeting, is that instructional things that I think should be taught are basically what are in the curriculum guide. I think it is a very good guide and the problems I have with that now are differences between ourselves and the parents. And that is still very much there.

18. I. Can you tell me about that?

R. Well, they are still hung up on the primary reading programs. They think that their children should still be reading 'see Spot jump' type of things when they can't read the word 'Enter' on a door. And that is perpetuated. Because that is their main drive, I find that that is also very much the students' main drive because that is where they see their self-worth. Mum doesn't care if you are reading the word on the door but she wants you to read in a book, well then that is of course going to be the students' emphasis as well. And so it makes them feel badly about themselves. I would rather see them going up to the library and looking at pictures in an appropriate magazine if they weren't reading or picking up the odd word in a magazine, rather than reading "See Spot jump". Yet the kids themselves wouldn't, because they have been taught that that's the whole ball of wax, you know, that's their self-worth. I guess, to a degree I think it's happening maybe because it's over-emphasized in the primary levels. I think that's the appropriate place to take them as far as they can go in a structured reading program. But somehow you've got to get the message across that that's not their whole self-worth; that there's other things they can do that are every bit as valuable—make you even a better person than whether or not you can read from a simple reader.

19. I. Are you saying that this shift from sort of primary basic skills training and academics into more functional skills training . . .

R. . . . yes, is a very wide one. And ideally, if you have a huge population of handicapped students I guess you can do it by making a junior high setting a transition stage. We don't have the numbers to do that here so, therefore, it makes it very difficult. Because all of a sudden they are going from a very primary elementary program to a high school. Although there

is an intermediate class in the elementary school, it's still quite primary focused, and there's not much difference between it and the primary class. So it's a shock for the parents. It's also been true for years and years, before integration was a word on anybody's lips, that the parents seem to get through to the teenage years with their kids before anyone ever tells them that their kid is handicapped. That's an exaggeration, but you know what I mean. All of a sudden you end up with a 15 or 16 year old student in your class and Mum is still saying, well when is he going on to the grade two reader, and the kid can't even read his name yet. It's certainly not a personal thing, but because you try to word things in reporting systems nicely and positively, you end up virtually lying or misrepresenting the child and I think that's unfortunate. I don't know how you solve it because we have tried so many reporting systems, it's incredible. Nothing seems to work for more than a year, you know. You want to be positive, so you do that by leaving out all the negative things. But it's sad when the parent comes to you and says, "Why isn't Johnny reading yet?" Well, because Johnny hasn't got the capability at this point. It makes a negative relationship between the parent and the school when at some point the school program has to say, "Sorry, he can do a lot of things and he can read in certain areas, but he's never ever going to be reading at the grade six level which you hoped he would be." I know this is a problem not just for us, it's a problem with the mildly mentally handicapped students too. No parent wants to accept that their child's handicapped, and you can't knock them for that, because it's a hard row to hoe, it really is.

20. I. Do the IEP's help in any way, through meeting together can you get closer to these instructional goals?

R. They may eventually. I don't find ours to be particularly helpful in that sense yet, because responsibilities to be done with the parents don't tend to get done.

21. I. So the ones that you identify in your meeting with parents ....

R. Yes, you say this is your part of responsibility and they just don't get done. And it's silly in a sense, because you're only working with about 8 or 9 kids but it's hard to keep on top on them all. And I think that's an area for an incredible amount of inservice. I mean, I've taken courses on IEP's and written a lot of them, but I still feel I could take another 16 courses and still not be really great at it. I think I still make them too broad so

that you're not really seeing those steps. The one thing I think that you have to have is an absolute accurate assessment of where the student is at this time, whether it's in washing dishes or whatever. And that takes an incredible amount of time. Because there's no written test that I know of, it's just a case of observation. Okay, go wash dishes and let me see what you're doing. And where do we find the time to do that? And if you don't have that, then you're just doing a guestimate.

22. I. So, is part of it the time that it takes to actually determine where this kid is, his skill level on functional tasks?

R. Exactly. You think you're breaking it down small enough. But, no, washing dishes was not a good goal. Putting the plug in the sink might have been the appropriate goal. You know, "Remembers to put the plug in the sink" but then, you know, you're just guessing. So that makes them very hard to accomplish that. Not that IEP's are not good at identifying the area you're working on. The thing is, for the parents' sake, they're not saying yes, oh gosh, he did that before. I'm saying that yes he's made a lot of progress in that year. I also see that the same goal is going to be appropriate for him for the next five years down the road. But, the parents don't see that. And that's our fault, I think, for not writing them correctly. So that's an area I think a lot of inservice is required in.

23. I. What kind of inservice would you like?

R. Just practice, I think. Practice.

24. I. Simulated case studies?

R. Well no, probably I find those really frustrating.

25. I. Your real kids?

R. Real kids, yeah.

26. I. Your own kids, your real kids.

R. Yeah, kids that you're actually working with. The District Counsellor has been really quite good in doing a couple of them, and, I just think we need more and more and more practice at that.

27. I. So, if release time was provided, would you like to do it with other people, or alone?

R. No, together. Well, we have some staff that think they do wonderfully well and they do. And we have staff who don't think they do wonderfully well and they don't. So whether they would all be amenable to that, I don't know. But yes, I would like to see that. Because of the way we work in a team, I think it has to be a team. So to have the team sit down and say okay, we'll take so-and-so, and we'll all write an IEP in the area of vocational skills or something, for this person. Because it's the wording you get hung up on, you know, it really is. And you can't have somebody like the District Counsellor come in for 16 days and say we'll do this for 16 days in a row. But it does need some intensive inservice for myself. Even though I know the rules, when I'm actually writing it, it doesn't seem to come out right.

28. I. So would you like somebody to be able to come in and . . .

R. Yes, I would, I really would. For maybe a couple of days of really intensive practice. That, and the time, to test and to find out exactly where the students are. Some of it I think we can do. Some of it we'd be getting into terminal checklists. For example, this week I'm just going to check every kid and see how he washes dishes. But making those up so they would be useful is difficult. We've done that before in the past and as I say, they ended up in the file cabinets, never used. So making them up, having the time to use them, and then because of the way we work, it would be a lot easier to work them in a self-contained classroom. When they're yours and you have them in every area, it would be a lot easier. We don't do that because of just the way the high school runs and the block system we're on. So you're kind of put into the situation where you may see 25 - 30 students for cooking, and it might only be once every 3 weeks you see them. So, it's a weird system, and it's hard to keep your finger on every little thing. It makes communication between teachers very difficult. Like I say, it's kind of a system which has a lot of pluses for it too, because the students are more on a high school model; they go from place to place and

from teacher to teacher. So there is the plus side too and that's why we've stuck with it. But it makes it very difficult for good communication between staff. Although I think we work fairly well as a team, every team has its personality problems. It wouldn't be normal if we didn't. But, on the whole, I think we work very well together.

29. I. What do you think the value of doing IEP's is? What have you found useful about them? Because you do them, and you obviously feel they're important.

R. Well, I guess, number one, it focuses on an area for that child. For instance, every kid in the cooking room works on every task at one point. And if you focus on one particular thing for them, even though they do the other things, then you can really see the improvement, and that's nice to see. It's a sense of accomplishment; well, that kid couldn't do it before and now he can do it. Isn't that nice that we can leave that and go on to other things. Also, I think it does force the parents to look at the program and not have their head in the clouds so much. Okay, they say, "I would like MaryAnne to ride the public bus." Great, you don't have to say, "well, not on the best day of her life will she ever ride the public bus". You can say, "okay, what's the first step? Can she walk from her house to her corner? Oh she can't?" Well, that's something we have to work out. And when she can do that, then we can get to the next step of crossing the street. So you're not saying to the parent, we're not going to work on that, that's really a stupid thing to work on, you're saying, "yes, okay, this is the first step". So it's helping them to see their child in a more realistic way. That's part of the process and I think it does prevent some of the adversarial parent-teacher things happening. But I'm contradicting myself, because we still have that happening, but not in every parent, for sure. I think it helps the parents feel that they have some input into the program and I think that is good. I think an IEP that gets updated every month, with our student population, is not necessary. I think that they should be reviewed to see that things are happening properly, maybe every second month, and I think yearly IEP's are really appropriate for our population.

30. I. Is that what you do now?

R. Well, pretty well, we're in the process of changing the time of the year we do the review, but, pretty well.

31. I. What time do you do it?

R. We usually do it in September and we will again this year, just because we ran out of time. But we are going to do it right now, in May-June, so that we can have that in our minds as we're doing the groupings for the fall of the next year. And that makes a lot more sense. In the last few days of school, we're all scheduled for next year, and then we find out that so-and-so's IEP's are all in cooking and she only gets one pudding every six months. And we end up having to change a lot, so that's the reason for that. And also, I think it is an effective final reporting session. You can look at the old IEP and say well, this is what's happened, and make a new one for the next year. In September-October it's nice to be able to get right into the program, where you're not hanging around, waiting for some program to be developed. They're time consuming to write, that's for sure, but I was also going to say too, that I think they're quite useful as far as teacher aide and auxiliary staff are concerned, because you can show them the IEP and make sure that they understand what the student's emphasis is. It includes behavioral methods of handling the student and that type of thing. I think that's useful. You still have to have lots of discussions with them but it gives them a gist of the student's program.

32.. I. You said that time is a real hassle. That they take a lot of time to do.

R. They do, yes. I think that is part of refining the process. I would hate to see, for instance, a provincially mandated IEP form. I think that that would be a disaster and fairly useless. I think there are certain things that should be included but every program has one that works better for them, and every person has one that works better for them, but you've got to have a little bit of commonality in there.

33. I. Are you aware of the directive that came out from the Ministry of Education, that indicated the tying in of IEP's to funding?

R. No, I didn't, no. Is that what they're thinking of now?

34. I. Well, I understand that in May there was something that came out that said, this is your funding and we expect that if we do

an audit you will be able to supply us with an IEP. Because the dollars are tied per kid.

R. Yes, well, maybe I'm missing something, but I don't see that as being bad. You know, I think, why not? I think it makes us more accountable. In the long run, once you have the work done, I think it makes it easier in a lot of senses. You know what you're doing. You know specifically what you're doing, and I think it would effectively eliminate much of the subjective reporting that we're getting. Well, I won't say just from the young grades because it's not in just the young grades, it's all through. You know it's very easy to say that so-and-so's progressing and it's true. But you know, it's much more specific to say, well he now can do this little bit. I'd like to see reporting get much more specific; although it may be boring as heck for somebody to read, to say, well, now he makes the first tie in the knot on a shoe, rather than say he's progressing in shoe-tying. Because it doesn't mean anything to anybody.

35. I. Right. Well, it's really task specific . . . ?

R. Yes. I'd almost like to see in a sense, a massive checklist. But I know that's impossible because of the time it takes you to do it. And students lose skills too—they may have had it three months ago but things need to be updated. That, I think, also should be part of the IEP process. Maybe once they have a skill, it should go on to a main sheet. These are the things over the last 2 or 3 years that the students have, and just to go through them, say every year-end, you can make sure they still have them.

36. I. An accumulated . . .?

R. Yes. It would be interesting for me to see, for instance, if a child's had an IEP for years, just to see what has been on that IEP. And to say, oh, he can do that--let's see if he can do it, you know. And if he can't, he's lost it, or never did have it. But it would be interesting to know that. Also, I think testing, not actual testing, but the general educational psychological testing should happen periodically for our students, not just when an emergency situation arises.

37. I. How does it work now?

R. Well, when we have a case that we would really like to see tested, we refer it to the District Counsellor and then to the Board Office. For instance, we had parents say, "he could read last year." Well ... he can read at a grade three level, yes, but is he understanding what he's reading? Answering those kind of questions, that's what we usually refer for and for recommendations. You know, what kind of a program should this child be on? Should he indeed be on a structured reading program, or is that not appropriate? By the time you refer and get it dealt with, because their load is very heavy, it could be a year. I would like it to be an ongoing part of somebody's agenda that, say, every two years or every three years, especially when they change schools, that it automatically be done. Because then you could say, this is where the child tested. Okay, let's test him at the end of this year if you're really concerned, we'll see if he's lost or that sort of thing.

38. I. Do you want psychometric testing done, like actual WISC's, and things like that? Or what do you see as part of the battery?

R. It's hard to say with our group. I'm not that familiar with many of the tests. I've never taken courses in that.

39. I. What kind of information would you be looking for?

R. Realistic appropriate programming material in the academic areas, I guess, basically. That's the question we have to answer the most. And that's the question that's the hardest to see. I mean I know IQ doesn't mean a darn thing, and a lot of WISC scores and whatever don't mean a darn thing either, but whatever materials they use, I trust them to know that a little of this test and a little of that test will tell how the student is learning, what modality he's using. You know, should he be on a phonics program or should he be on a sight word program? At the age of 15, are we still beating a dead horse by using phonics? What's the most realistic thing for that child at this time in his life? Keeping in mind that there are only so many years of school left.

40. I. I know that you've used the Core Curriculum in the past. Can you tell me about how you've used it and ...

R. Basically to justify what we're doing, I guess number one. I haven't really used it yet in IEP's, but I'm getting more into that. Taking the actual phrases out of the book.

41. I. Tell me more about what you just said, though, "justify what we're doing".

R. Well I think that in the Core Curriculum it does justify the fact that when a student reaches a certain age, you should be working specifically on functional academic subjects, with a heavy emphasis on vocational, which I think is very appropriate. No matter what the level of the student, you've got to start looking at where he's going to go in the future. The Core Curriculum does, I think, handle that very well. You know, I forget how many percentage, whether hours should be in that, but we've used that statement, for instance.

42. I. So you use it with parents, to say this is the direction we're going and this is supported by . . .

R. Right, and I also use it as a curriculum guide. Like, we do music, and recently I thought, well, I'm not very happy with the music that we're doing, you know, let's look and see what I should be doing. And it mentioned, they should know different kinds of music, folk from classical from . . . and I thought, yeah, that's a good idea. So I'm using it almost as a resource as a curriculum. Or art, the same thing. And something that we have neglected in our program recently is science and social studies. What should we be focusing on there, and how best to do it? I think hopefully next year one thing we have noticed is that our students have terrible movie manners which is a leisure skill, and we really haven't hit social studies for a few years. So we're going to start getting more films in and start hitting the two things at once, and seeing if science can be brought in that way too. So that's the type of way I'm using it. I find it very good. I find it's really hard to use, in the 0's and X's. You know, there's always kids that fall between the cracks, are they an 0 or are they an X? It's not a firm guide that says, this has to be done, but sometimes I think the untrained could perhaps misuse that because it hits, some pretty high skills for some of the kids, unless you say well, I think he should be doing that. Well it's not on the best day of his life is he ever going to do that. And, is there one for severely and profoundly handicapped? Or is there one in the process?

43. I. No. That's supposed to be the whole ball of wax, right there.

R. Well, it doesn't touch our severely handicapped. They don't even come on to the first page, you know, and that's unfortunate because that's something that's very necessary. And other curricula have some things that touch them. That's something that's sadly needed in this area, because it's a population we're seeing more and more of. Maybe the one for physically handicapped would touch it to some degree, I don't know.

44. I. The purpose of putting the X's and 0's was to indicate age-appropriateness and hopefully there's a point at which you say, forget this noise, we're moving on to the next skill.

R. Yes. It almost needs printed at the top of every page in bold type. Every student is still an individual, and will fit somewhere into this. You know, people just seem to forget that. My kid's an 0 and that's it; an 0 should be doing that, well by golly he should be doing that. And you can't break the steps down any further, because the steps are different for each student.

45. I. Yeah. I think that's the problem too, especially with the severely/profound ones. How do you write a curriculum for all those kids?

R. Well true.

46. I. Do you have any ideas?

R. I would write it—I don't know. Just, I guess, in the subject areas, for instance, in physiotherapy area. Giving some actual examples of what you might do in the area of physiotherapy and then it would be up to the person to look and say, okay, what's appropriate for this particular child? Okay, so maybe rolling over a big ball gives so-and-so a more increased balance. If I want my child to increase their balance, I'll try that. Because you can't say that this is for this child or that's for that child, there's just no way that two individuals are the same. Maybe some suggestions or a resource manual, perhaps, is better than a curriculum. In the area of feeding and eating and food preparation, you know, which at that stage is pretty well stimulation and that kind of thing. That's okay, there's lots of

things you can do within that realm. You can use communication to point to either drink or food, or whatever.

Because that population is coming in to the school, and nobody knows what to do with them, we go around from program to program and say, "what are you doing?" "Well, I'm doing this." "Oh, you're doing the same thing as I am." In a way, it's nice to see that, because you think at least you're doing the same things. But you're always looking for something better, because those tend also to be the parents who are just wanting more and more and more for their child, and understandably so, and they're also usually very strong advocates. It would be nice to say, okay, this is what the book says, or something with some authority. Because sometimes they look at you and think, well who the heck are you? Do you have any training? There's no training for teachers in that particular area. There's one course on multiply handicapped at UBC which I have taken, you know, at the 400-500 level, but that doesn't deal specifically with the severely mentally handicapped; that's for multiply handicapped. So there's no real place to go for information. The TASH workshop we were at was one of the best resources, and they had people in the field talking. And you know, people from Woodlands and other programs just saying what they were doing. And it was wonderful, just to get some ideas in the areas of communication and self-care.

47. I. With the Special Education Core Curriculum, did that do that for you? Did that say, yes, you're doing everything very well?

R. Yes, oh yes. It did generally. It justified what we had done in the past. Personally, I think this program's a little bit ahead of the Special Education Core Curriculum in many of the areas. So it was very nice to say, we've been criticized for this for years and we were right, so to speak. But then, you can't sit there forever either. I've been in this field for many years and part of the excitement is the change that's happening and for a long time the change was the vocational emphasis of the program. Well, we are getting a lower level of handicapped student. And vocational is still appropriate, very much so, but we've got to find other things as well, to make their lives richer. Where are we going to change next? That's the excitement. Take another look at another aspect of the program and say, okay, that vocational part, we're doing that fine, that's good, keep that up, and let's get something else really going to change it. That is, I think, a really necessary thing to do every two or three years—to look at what you're doing, and try and improve it, change it. I think of in our area most of the changes have come from the

field as opposed to being laid on. I don't know who sat on the committee for that Special Education Core Curriculum, but I know at one time when it was first called, they had a fair number of people from the field on the committee. And I think that was reflected in the book.

48. I. You started to talk a little bit about how you could use some phrases from the book in IEP's.

R. Well, the thing we have done up to now has been done with a model from the Oregon University, Eugene, where they made a catalogue of activities and said to the parent, okay, here's your catalogue of activities, pick an activity and this is what we'll work on. I find that's not really working out too well because the parents seem to want skills, never mind activities. No matter what you say, they want skills. So fine, we can work within that framework. You tell me what skill, and I'll put it into an activity. That's I think the route we're going to try next. So we have gone through the curriculum and picked out, for instance, all the general goal headings and skills, and we've listed them; all the ones that apply to vocational, all the ones that apply to housekeeping. Okay, now the parent can go down and pick that skill. Maybe it would be appropriate dressing, and we'll say fine, okay, great. Let's put that in the framework of going to the health club and that's what we're doing with that. You know, which is maybe a sneaky thing to do, but I think it will make us all happier, because it will make the parents happier thinking that they're working on a skill, and it'll make us happy because they're learning to use the health club at the same time. Nothing can be taught in isolation. So, perhaps that's an easier way to come at it, when essentially you're doing the same thing. And also we've found that the actual activities were very restricting because of where we are. We're out in the boondocks here. For instance, one in our catalogue was "visiting local exhibits and museums". Well, they're hard to get to from here. If you don't have the teaching staff who has a car who can take you one-to-one, you just don't get to it. So, it's a more realistic way for us, too, in times of staffing declining, to work as well, by looking at skills. Okay, this skill, maybe we can't teach it in the community. Maybe this one we'll have to compromise and teach it in the school in a simulated situation, but we're still teaching the skill. Rather than saying, well, I can't get to a museum, I can't teach that. So it just gives it a bit more flexibility by approaching it from the back door.

49. I. You talked about budget restraint, about the resources dwindling. If there were dollars available, how would you like to see those dollars spent? Say there were district dollars available to you, how would you like to see those dollars spent?

R. Only for special ed use?

50. I. Yes, let's say they were given to your program, would you spend it on inservice, would you spend it on hiring personnel to act as a support for kids being integrated, would you spend it on . . ?

R. Well, one of the things I would have said would be a computer. Okay, but we're getting a computer, so that's out. Another thing I would think of is spending it on providing some perks to the normal population if you want integration to happen. You just can't take, take, take and never give. I think special ed is already in the situation where we're going to feel a backlash because we're sitting pretty compared to most of the population, and that's got to be resented. And I don't blame it, for being resented. So, for instance, if I'm saying to the cooking teacher, I want this kid integrated and at the same time I can give help to you in some way, that, I think, would be a very good use of those dollars.

51. I. Could you give me an example?

R. Well, say that the cooking teacher was going to integrate a student without support because the student was able to handle it. Well, maybe we could give her a spare, or provide a sub at some other time, or provide an extra staff member in the school that could somehow give teachers more spares who attempt integration. Or, perhaps it would be in the form of buying a piece of equipment for say, the cooking room, that would make that program of more benefit to the regular population.

52. I. You're bribing them.

R. Exactly! There's nothing wrong with a good bribe now and then! I think it would also be a good PR move to say to the school, love special ed because this is buying you an extra point five music teacher or an extra point five English teacher, or something like that. I think you have to bring something as well

as take. Otherwise of course, all they see is us here, fully staffed, and taking all their rooms. And they're hurting. Their classes are getting bigger and I can see that as being a good way of using that money. Inservice would be my next one. Sure, hiring staff to do integration would be one thing, but not unless we improve the hiring techniques. Not when you have to hire from a seniority list with people who have no training or experience.

53. I. What kind of inservice activities would you spend the money on? Or how would you like to see those activities constructed?

R. I really don't have any idea, to be honest. I would like them to hit all staff, you know, not just teachers. I think teachers and teacher aides together. Regular class teachers, I think too. They're going to integrate some of our students, so that should be part of it too. Now, there again, you're drawing on their time, so some of that money should go maybe to help them in other areas. But I think it's important that you're all together, not to have the teacher aides go and do theirs somewhere and the teachers do theirs somewhere else. You should all be having the same experience, hearing the same speakers.

54. I. So are you saying you'd like to see it school-based?

R. I think so. Yes, yes. I think the way things are now, I think probably just with special ed staff. I don't think it's too realistic to include all teachers, except maybe the odd teacher. Because you wouldn't want to see it school-based for the whole school. Because I think most people would say, "Why are you wasting my time?". But if there were particular regular teachers that wanted to be a part of it, then, yes, I think that would be very beneficial. I think you have to be careful with that one, you wouldn't want them to feel that you were putting more on them, because I think they're pretty stressed right now. But as far as the teacher aides and the special education teachers are concerned, yes, school-based inservice should be provided.

55. I. What kinds of topics would you like covered at this inservice or what are some issues which you'd like dealt with?

R. Behavioural control, methods of handling behaviours. Communication. The same old ones that we hit forever and

ever. Actual programming. Why we do the kinds of things we do. Especially for the lower functioning population, which many of our teacher aides work with. If we get a computer—the use of the computer. That might be an area, because we'll want the aides to work with our students on the computer. Off the top of my head I can't really come up with many, many more. Ethics of the job, for instance. There are so many, you know, it's almost hard to pinpoint any specific thing. Ways of communicating—communication is very important. Self-esteem—how people view themselves. What makes them view themselves the way they do?

56. I. You were saying earlier, that there is this sort of gap between the primary/elementary years, where basic academic skills are taught, and then this shift into functional skills. Would you like to see some of the inservice activities directed towards teachers of mentally handicapped from both staffs? In other words, would you like to see the staffs have more joint inservice?

R. Some, but not a lot. Only because I guess I'm reacting to the traditional fact that a handicapped person is in elementary until the day he dies. And I think now that we've finally got him in to the secondary school, I want, in a way, to distinguish the fact that secondary is different from elementary. But some, yes. Some, I think would be very appropriate to be together. Without losing the fact that secondary has different problems. The kids are teenagers, they have different problems than they do when they're in elementary school. And I think, to be effective, you can't always deal with both sets of students at the same inservice. I think one group or the other group would monopolize the concerns. I think we should know about what's happening, and I think maybe more visitations back and forth would help. I think we should keep in contact for sure, but I think there are specific things to each area that don't need to be shared.

APPENDIX C

A Description of the Resource Room Program

PROPOSAL FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A RESOURCE ROOM PROGRAM FOR ELEMENTARY-SCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS

Background

Separate special education classes for slow learners have been in operation in the District of_____ for over twenty years. At their peak these classes reached 13 in number and enrolled between 150 and 180 elementary school-aged students. Enrolment was limited to children nine years of age and over.

Currently there are 4 elementary classes of this type referred to now as the skill-building program at_____School. 46 students are enrolled; the youngest is 5, the eldest is 14. There is also a Primary Language Centre at_____Elementary School which enrols 10 students. The Language Centre and the Skill-building Program are definitely established according to separate models and are set up to provide somewhat different services. Observations of students and programs over the years, however, point out overlap between these programs in relation to what is taught and who is taught in the Language Centre and Skill-Building classes. Not infrequently students from one program spend time in the other.

District programs for elementary students with pervasive learning difficulties have been responsive to the expressed needs for service in the schools. While the reduction to 4 or 5 classes from 13 may reflect declining enrolment to a minor degree, the major force behind this particular change has been generated by the corresponding development of Learning Assistance Centres in the schools. As a result of the L.A. program many more students are retained in their neighbourhood schools and are not referred to special programs for "slow" learners. The number of classes established each year has simply reflected the demand for that particular kind of service. A second type of need response at the elementary level has been the gradual movement towards providing intensified programming for younger students. It is no longer appropriate to have some children wait until they are 9 years of age before they are given the opportunity for intensified individualized educational programming.

Much of the foregoing activity in the direction of providing appropriate educational support programs has been very positive and responsive to needs expressed in the district. It would appear that it is important to respond further at this time to the total needs of students who require a moderately high degree of individualized special education programming in order to achieve their fullest potential.

Problem

The Ministry of Education establishes the categories of 3.26 - Severe Learning Disabled and 3.27 - Educable Mentally Handicapped for funding purposes under Function Three. Very sincere and thorough-going efforts have been made by this school district on behalf of these students. As the district learning assistance and skill-building programs have evolved and as Ministry funding procedures have changed, service to these two groups of students have developed in a direction which currently lacks maximum program flexibility and opportunity for integrated instruction. Young students during the important developmental years of their lives need flexible, intensive programming offered in the environment which is the least restrictive and the most normalized. This point of view is clearly supported by research evidence, by advocacy associations in the community, and by the Ministry.

The problems inherent in the present service delivery to SLD and EMH students are as follows:

1. The number of students enrolled in _____ Skill-Building (46) is too large to allow flexibility and appropriateness of integration for regular classroom instructional activities. (_____ catchment area enrolment - 173.)

2. Despite considerable effort, the skill-building students operate to a degree as a separate entity at _____. A good case could be made for the rationale that this is due in part to the way the classes are organized; i.e., the students are enrolled in separate classes. _____ staff has been very accepting of the special education students.

3. There are a number of severe learning disabled students in the district who need small group intensive instruction for a period of several months after they have completed the program at Diagnostic Centre I. Diagnostic Centre I is set up to clearly delineate and describe the learning problems of a student and then to develop a detailed I.E.P. for the student to follow at his home school. This approach works well in most instances but for some students the transition from the 6 to 1 student-teacher ratio program to the regular classroom is too sudden. Some students require a further period of carefully supervised instruction in academic subjects in order to develop the work habits and coping strategies required for continued progress in a regular classroom. This particular need has been felt in the district for some time.

4. Students enrolled in the Primary Language Centre at _____ are LD students and are funded under budget category 3.26. As such, they will need flexibility of programming and maximum opportunity for integration in regular classroom instructional activities.

Proposal

In order to deal with the problems as outlined, the following service delivery model is proposed:

1. Three centres (at 3 schools) would be established to serve the needs of students with major learning problems both of a pervasive (EMH) or more specific (SLD) nature. Each centre would consist of two resource room programs (primary and intermediate).

   - crowding at _____ would be overcome
   - continuity of school location (K-7) would be available for some of the students who require special education services for a long period of time. These students and their families would be encouraged to view the "host" school as their "home" school.

   - a few severely LD students requiring more small group instruction than is realistically available in an LAC would have that opportunity after completing the D.C. I program.

2. All students associated with the Special Education Resource Room Program would be enrolled in regular classrooms in the "host" schools. Some of these students might need to spend up to 50% of their school time in the Resource Room setting.

   - research evidence would be acknowledged
   - Ministry Guidelines would be met
   - advocacy group goals would be approached
   - the opportunity for greater or less integration in regular classrooms would be a part of the organization of the program
   - the students enrolled would achieve a higher degree of "full citizenship" which will be a societal requirement of them later in life

3. All students enrolled in the Resource Room would have a thorough, practical, written I.E.P. for the duration of their time in the program. I.E.P.'s would be regularly reviewed and revised.

   - district policy and Ministry guidelines would be met

PRO

1. The potential for offering a more flexible organization to meet the constantly changing needs of young students is much greater than the present model.

2. More students can be served in a greater variety of ways.

3. The important psychological and developmental implications of the principle of least restrictive environment are recognized.

4. The present potential for overcrowding in a single school is overcome.

5. The proposal is intended as a long-term plan which would ensure some future continuities of service for students and their families.

CON

1. Some movement on the part of students would be required. This would, of course, be minimized.

2. Providing programming for EMH and a few SLD students in the same Resource Centre would take some careful planning Enrolment in one Resource Centre might favour SLD in particular, for example. However, young students need to be educated in settings where the flexibility of programming and placement is built into the organization of the resource. Future outcomes should be related to levelof service and the appropriateness of programming and not predicted by a possible lack of range of experience and opportunity.

3. School administrators and regular classroom teachers may view the proposal as a reduction in special education service and as an increased load for them. The extra staffing (aide time) should provide the opportunity for more support in the resource centre and also in integrated activities in the regular classroom. The idea is to provide a more effective and intensive resource, not to reduce service. Schools "hosting" the Resource would, I suspect, realize some educational advantages from participation for their students.