

THE INCLUSION MOVEMENT AND TEACHER CHANGE: WHERE ARE THE LIMITS?

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ABSTRACT. The current reform movement in special education promotes the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms as the total responsibility of regular classroom teachers. While many assume that ideology will enjoy an easy transition to classroom implementation, this assumption is problematic and not based on current research.

This paper discusses whether regular classroom teachers can actually meet the demands of the inclusionary movement. At issue are teacher attitudes, teacher skills, and competencies, and the supports required for successful inclusionary practices.

RÉSUMÉ. Le mouvement de réforme actuel en intégration scolaire soutient que l'intégration des élèves handicapés dans les classes dites régulières doit être entièrement du ressort des enseignants qui en ont la charge. Même si beaucoup croient que cette idéologie peut facilement se transposer en classe, ce postulat est douteux et ne s'appuie sur aucune recherche actuelle.

L'auteur de cet article se demande si les enseignants des classes régulières peuvent relever le défi du mouvement intégrationniste. Le problème tient aux attitudes, aptitudes et compétences des enseignants et à l'appui dont ils ont besoin pour mettre en oeuvre avec succès les mesures d'intégration.

The ongoing educational reform movement in Canada has brought numerous educational issues into sharp focus. Few have received the attention and generated the controversy and polarization of perspectives as has the movement to include all children with disabilities into regular classrooms.

In the late 1980s, the term *inclusion* first emerged in the special education literature when researchers called for "the joining of demonstrably effective practices from special, compensatory, and general education

to establish a general educational system that is more *inclusive*, and better serves all students, particularly those who require greater-than-usual educational support" (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987, p. 394, italics author's). Three years later, one could not pick up a special education journal without coming upon at least one paper on inclusive schooling.

Although inclusion is an ongoing movement and the term is widely used, both in concept and in implementation it defies easy interpretation. Today's movement hosts a range of theoretical positions concerning the precise meaning of the term, who should be targeted for inclusion, and the nature and extent of regular classroom provision. The spectrum runs from radical or full inclusionists to those who would retain much of the status quo.

Different views lie along a continuum. At one end are full inclusionists, those who contend that inclusion should apply to all students with disabilities and believe that all students belong in regular classrooms all the time. Fully inclusive means that children are taught in the general education classroom for the full day; support services are brought to the child rather than the child removed to a segregated setting. The basic goal is to not leave anyone out of school and classroom communities from the very beginning, and the focus is on the support needs of all students and personnel (Stainback, Stainback, & Jackson, 1992).

Further along the location spectrum are those who support partial inclusion and hold that only students who meet certain standards should be integrated into regular classrooms full time. General classrooms, they say, may be the most appropriate placements for many students with disabilities to receive their education, but research clearly does not support the assertion that all students can be managed and taught effectively in general classes (e.g., Braaten, Kauffman, Braaten, Polsgrove, & Nelson, 1988; Lundrum, 1992; Walker & Bullis, 1991).

Implicit in inclusive settings is the assumption that learners who are exceptional can be served equally as well in diverse mainstream learning settings as in segregated or pull-out programs. Those promoting fully inclusive practices declare that it is no more than good general education and that all teachers must be prepared to teach all children effectively (Kauffman, 1996).

The most important person in the school environment is the general education teacher and any change that intends to alter the quality of education for children who are exceptional depends primarily on the

teacher (Rogers, 1987). When schools reform to accommodate the diverse needs of students, teacher roles change and the circumstances of regular education personnel take on substantial significance. By placing students with exceptionalities into regular classrooms where general classroom teachers are expected to duplicate the results of special education and the treatments associated with them, inclusion represents a basic change in who does what, to whom it is done, where it is done, and how resources support what is done.

While enthusiasts have advocated radical changes in teacher responsibility and many hold that all general education teachers can and should accommodate students with disabilities, other observers are more cautious within the current reality of teacher responsibilities and accountability. They question whether regular educators can actually support these changes, whether general education can transform itself into a more responsive, resourceful, and humane system to deal with children it has avoided in the past (see Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994), and whether regular education teachers will accept the loss of the safety valve called special education. More pointedly, can special educators teach teachers to teach children they have failed in the past? Can we expect classroom teachers to welcome and successfully teach and manage students who are disruptive or those with severe and profound disabilities? How likely is it that teachers can change their techniques to accommodate children with special needs? Will teachers be able to take on additional work loads and anxieties, devote extra time to assessment and referral, and find time to work on teams to develop, implement, and evaluate programs? Will the needs of special children completely eclipse the needs of teachers? What consideration should be given to other students whose educational programs may be disrupted by the presence of children with serious behavioural disorders?

This paper addresses the supposition that ideology will enjoy an easy transition to educational practice, that is, that we can proceed from an ideological and value-laden stance – inclusion in the regular classroom is the most appropriate form of schooling for all children – to classroom practice; that we can reduce theorizing to the technical problems of resources, management, social groupings, and instructional design; and that teachers will automatically change to accommodate an even greater diversity of learners. It discusses the overarching questions of whether fundamental changes are possible in the majority of today's public schools and whether all teachers can or should be expected to accommodate all children with special needs.

The debate here is not on the merits of inclusion as a basic philosophy but on the capacity of the educational system to accommodate such a restructuring. The paper examines the relationship between regular classroom interactions, children with disabilities, and important facets of the inclusion movement. Issues include teachers' attitudes and expectations, tolerances, and limitations; the characteristics of regular classrooms; teacher time and skills; the availability of resources and supports; and issues of teacher collaboration.

Teacher roles

Regular classrooms are characterized by myriad instructional variables. Every day, teachers orchestrate a wide diversity of skills, activities, groups, and materials as they instruct, motivate, evaluate, and manage large numbers of children. Teachers may find as many as five grades of instructional levels per classroom (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, & Bentz, 1994). Elementary level teachers will lead these 20 or 30 children of varying abilities, interests, and backgrounds through an array of instructional activities in a variety of subject areas daily. Secondary level teachers will prepare for and teach a number of classes, often at different levels (see Slavin, 1988).

Today's schools have become intervention sites for numerous learning and social problems affecting students. The current trend is for ever increasing demands on teachers who are faced with increased student variability, increased student diversity, and new management problems. Add to these declining resources, time restraints, larger class sizes, additional responsibilities, more diffuse obligations, and an explosion of knowledge that must somehow be addressed in the curriculum (see Malouf & Schiller, 1995).

Teachers similarly confront external organizational constraints. The expanding range of educational goals in an era of declining resources has reinforced the demand for higher accountability practices; politicians, policy makers, and parents are asking for more clarity and certainty in educators' claims of knowledge and competence. One potent manifestation is a formalization and standardization of curriculum and testing. Teachers feel obligated to teach the standard curriculum and to hold students accountable for learning it. Within this framework, innovation is difficult, teachers' reflection and discretion is reduced, and their ability to meet individual students' needs may be jeopardized.

Of the changes brought about by the recent inclusive efforts in special education, the most extreme would alter the fundamental responsibili-

ties of regular classroom teachers. As inclusion implicitly acknowledges and accepts the value of regular school provisions, all teachers must be prepared to teach all children. Teachers will see an expansion of their traditional roles, with greater emphasis given to serving the educational, social, and behavioural aspects of student development.

With a more varied student population, mounting responsibilities, and increased accountability, to what extent is it realistic to expect regular classroom teachers with classes of 30 or more children to accommodate and adapt programs or students with special needs? Can the connotations of reform meld with the realities of contemporary classroom life?

For the process of inclusion to be successful, both common sense and research suggest that reduced class size is essential. Teachers agree class sizes should be reduced to fewer than 20 students if those with disabilities are to be included (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996); however, in Alberta, for example, a huge 87 % of teachers reported no reduction in class size (Buski, 1997).

Discussions of inclusion have highlighted some of the requirements for success. Together with class size these include, to wit, restructuring to merge special education and regular education to create a unified educational system; appropriate teacher training; positive teacher attitudes with realistic expectations and widened tolerances; resources and supports for teachers; individual supports for students with disabilities, including materials and personnel; developing shared responsibility for students through regular and special education teachers working side by side with heterogeneous groups of students; and teachers sharing their specialities via collaborative teaming.

Teacher attitudes

The possibility and pace of change are dependent on educators' wills and ideological dispositions. Implementation of change involves interactions between teachers' perceived competence in making the change, the values they hold with respect to the task, and the concerns they hold about the interpretation of the change (see Buysse, Wesley, Keyes, & Bailey, 1996). Of these interactions, teachers' values and attitudes play a central role in the success of inclusive programs (Heron & Harris, 1993; Stein & Wang, 1988; Wilson & Silverman, 1991).

Because teacher beliefs about the value of the disabled and their professional responsibilities toward them correlate with teaching practices in serving children who are exceptional, complete inclusion and

acceptance of students with disabilities will only happen if there are long-term changes in the attitudes of educational professionals. In order to become effective with students who are disabled, teachers need more than high levels of personal, interpersonal, and creative abilities; they must also be receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion.

Many teachers support the philosophy of inclusion but many also identify critical problems in its implementation. A recent national study of 1,492 Canadian teachers found that more than two-thirds of teachers believe that inclusion is academically beneficial to children with special needs and their peers in regular classrooms, and 90 % of teachers cite social benefits (Galt, 1997; Alberta Teachers Assoc., 1997).

Philosophical acceptance, however, far outstrips commitment to implementation. For example, submissions from the Alberta Teachers' Association (Alberta Teachers Assoc., 1993, 1997; Buski, 1997) showed that, in general, many teachers supported the philosophical underpinnings of inclusion, but overwhelmingly expressed a deep concern that in too many cases the inclusive process is not working and was, in fact, creating educationally unsound situations. Some feel that there is a failure to meet the needs of either regular or special education students.

When Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) used 28 survey reports of 10,560 teachers from the United States, Canada, and Australia from 1958 to 1995, they found that a majority supported mainstreaming and a slight majority were willing to implement it in their own classes. A substantial minority, however, believed that students with disabilities would be disruptive to their classes or demand too much attention. Only a minority of teachers agreed that the general classroom is the best environment for students with special needs, or that full time mainstreaming or inclusion would produce social or academic benefits relative to resource or special class placement.

A questionnaire given to a school district in Colorado in which inclusion was practised revealed that 70% of respondents agreed or agreed strongly that inclusion worked well, but 49% doubted that inclusion was the best way to meet the needs of exceptional students, and 28% thought it was detrimental to their education (Pearman, Barnhart, Huang, & Mellblom, 1992). Fulk and Hirth (1994) found that among 517 regular education teachers, about one-half were personally supportive of inclusion, but a majority felt that inclusion was being forced on them.

Even teachers who are generally supportive of inclusive principles agree that placements may influence their teaching effectiveness (Simpson & Myles, 1989). It is not surprising, then, that although many teachers support the concept of inclusion as an abstract principle, many prefer the current system (e.g., Coates, 1989; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). While pull-out programs are sometimes perceived as nonpreferred, stigmatizing, disruptive, and not leading to long-term academic gains for students, studies indicate that both regular and special education teachers are not dissatisfied with the pull-out model. In fact, the majority of teachers in one study (Semmel et al., 1991) perceived special education classrooms as more effective and more preferred than regular classrooms for students with mild disabilities.

The attitudes of teachers toward particular students seems to be more important than the general attitude toward inclusion which makes the nature and degree of a child's disability germane to issues of placement and curriculum. Teachers regard students with disabilities in the context of procedural classroom concerns and have definite opinions about the types of disabilities they are most willing to accept. Overall, teacher willingness to teach students with disabilities, consistent with their support for inclusion, appears to covary with the severity of the disability and the amount of additional teacher responsibility required (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). Generally, the more severe the disability, the more negative the attitudes teachers have toward inclusion (Wisniewski & Alper, 1994).

Both prospective and experienced teachers report more positive attitudes toward students who can learn and who do not inhibit the learning of their peers (Wilczenski, 1993). Many general education teachers specifically disagree with the placement of students with intellectual disabilities and behavioural or emotional difficulties in the general classroom (Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit, 1997); sensory and physical disabilities are preferred to behavioural disorders and cognitive difficulties (Johnson, 1987).

Research points out that elementary and secondary teachers tend to differ on their views of integration and the kinds and numbers of accommodations they make (Olson, Chalmer, & Hoover, 1997). Findings show a tendency of secondary level teachers to be less accepting than others of students with special needs in regular classrooms (Savage & Wienke, 1989).

Difficult-to-teach students

Many researchers (e.g., Lilly, 1988; Little, 1988; Pugach, 1988; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1988) hold that special education is really nothing more than a thoroughly good ordinary education and assume that the same sort of generic teaching skills, attitudes, and beliefs will be effective regardless of students' characteristics. However, research does not support the contention that all students can be taught successfully in general classes and many disagree that regular educators can assume responsibility for education and programming for all students with disabilities (e.g., Algozzine, Maheady, Sacca, O'Shea, & O'Shea, 1990; Braaten et al., 1988; Lieberman, 1991; Walker & Bullis, 1991). They note that a careful analysis of what would be required of general educators if they were to take responsibility for teaching most or all children with disabilities suggests that very substantial changes would have to occur. Most teachers would need to alter their instructional and behaviour management strategies dramatically (Carnine & Kameenui, 1990; Lloyd, Keller, Kauffman, & Hallahan, 1988).

Of the three groups who present the greatest challenges to inclusion – those with significant disabilities, adolescents at the end of their school careers, and those with serious behavioural disorders – the latter group equates with significant fear on the part of teachers. Indeed, there is considerable resistance among teachers to including students with behavioural disorders. A 1993 report from the Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA), for example, contained disturbing testimonials from teachers who said that students with special needs were often highly disruptive in their classes and failed to learn in any meaningful way. A 1994 follow-up study still found that teachers broadly supported integration but that the fear of regular educators had grown even more acute (ATA, 1993, 1994).

Some hold that if regular classroom teachers would work diligently toward altering behaviour they find intolerable, inclusive decisions would become a simple matter (see Lundrum, 1992). Many others question the premise that regular classroom teachers will increasingly welcome more difficult-to-teach children as they become proficient in the use of effective instructional skills unless accompanied by a change of attitude (Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988). Still others argue that expecting general education teachers to welcome, successfully teach and manage, and tolerate the most disruptive students is extremely naive and illogical, both from the viewpoint of common sense and from the perspective of available research (Fuchs, Fuchs, Fernstrom, & Hohn, 1991).

Students with behavioural disorders are viewed by many teachers as the most difficult to teach and the least likeable (Kauffman & Wong, 1991). Moreover, students are not included in a vacuum. They are in real classrooms in which the characteristics of teachers, children, and programs differ markedly. Teachers vary greatly in their attitudes, standards, tolerances, and expectations. Teachers' belief systems determine the standards they maintain for students, what behaviour they will tolerate, how they expect individual students to behave, and the way they approach the tasks of instruction and management (Kauffman & Wong, 1991).

It would be assumed that more effective teachers would more readily accept and more competently handle students with behavioural disorders. However, while more effective teachers are distinguished by different ways of instructing and managing students and tend to be characterized by higher standards for students and lower tolerance for behavioural excesses, even effective teachers may find themselves unable to accommodate the varied needs of some of these children (Kauffman, Gerber, & Semmel, 1988).

For one thing, effective teachers are often resistant toward accepting students with disabilities into their classes (Lundrum, 1992). Research finds that teachers who use very effective teaching techniques are often those who are least accepting of the behavioural and cognitive difficulties that often characterize students with disabilities (Gersten, Walker, & Darch, 1988; Walker & Rankin, 1983). Regular classroom teachers hold fairly narrow perceptions of the types of behaviours they consider critical for success in classrooms (standards) and the types of behaviours they find least acceptable (tolerance).

Second, traditional approaches to managing problem behaviours have not been responsive to the behavioural and learning characteristics of students with chronic behavioural problems (Carpenter & McKee-Higgins, 1996) while many of the practices known to be effective with children who are difficult to teach are not accepted by general educators (Lloyd et al., 1988). In fact, many proposals for educational reform advance adoption of instructional strategies known to fail with many difficult-to-teach students (Carnine & Kameenui, 1990).

The great disparity between teachers' perceptions and expectations and their experiences with difficult-to-teach students paints a murky picture of inclusion for such children. Negative patterns of student-teacher interactions do not make regular classrooms safe havens for either teacher or child. The energy and resources needed for success in the

regular classroom may not be commensurate with the questionable gains achieved (see MacMillan, Forness, & Gresham, 1996).

A second major placement issue is whether students with severe intellectual disabilities should be based in regular or special education classrooms in home schools. When asked to include students with severe or profound disabilities, teachers feel they have limited resources, are not properly trained, and may not believe that these students really belong in regular classrooms (see ATA, 1993; Dahl, 1986). They cite the inordinate amount of time these learners take away from their peers without disabilities and the traditionally required high ratios of learners to teachers (Schaffner & Buswell, 1991).

Whether inclusion into regular secondary classrooms meets the needs of adolescents with disabilities is a third critical issue. Many argue that the regular curriculum does not match the needs or provide older students with the skills and competencies they require to negotiate a transition to the adult world and to be successful in occupation and living (see Fox & Ysseldyke, 1996; Nesbit, 1990).

Curricula and instruction

The practical expression of inclusion is found in curriculum and instruction. Advocates of inclusion hold that good teachers can teach all students because only minor adjustments need to be made to accommodate special learners. Teachers will find that the strategies, techniques, modifications, and inspirations that have always produced effective instruction and management in their classrooms work equally well in integrated settings (Weber, 1994). Skeptics counter that inclusion requires extensive retraining of both regular and special education teachers in personal communication, team teaching, teacher problem solving, and curricula frameworks (Hueffner, 1988).

Observational studies have confirmed that the parallels between regular education and special education are multiple; the two fields are far more similar than different. Still, differences are seen in programming and implementation. The focus of general and special education teachers tend to be dissimilar in terms of instruction, curriculum, materials, teaching styles, and expectations (see Ryan & Paterna, 1997).

The backbone of special education is providing intensive, goal-directed individualized instruction. As Kauffman (1996) observes: "Compared to the general practice of education, special education is instruction that is more urgent, more intensive, more relentless, more precisely

delivered, more highly structured and direct, and more carefully monitored for procedural fidelity and effects" (p. 206). The techniques are different because, if not treated differently, these children will not succeed (Lieberman, 1991).

Within the regular classroom, special education students "are educationally starved by the standard instructional diet" (Kauffman, 1996, p. 205). Many students, particularly those with mild disabilities or those at risk, do not respond to traditional teaching techniques used in general education such as recitation, lecturing, rote learning, and so on (Boyle & Yeager, 1997).

Students can experience success only when the teacher is able to meet their individual learning needs through appropriate curriculum modifications (Haman, Issacson, & Powell, 1985). Different adaptations and modifications are needed depending on the child's type and severity of disability.

Individualization of this intensity rarely occurs in general education classrooms. The planning frame of regular classroom teachers is the whole class; curriculum adaptations are not a part of classroom life. In general, regular educators teach to single large groups and incorporate little or no differentiation based on student need (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995b).

Evidence documents the inability or unwillingness of regular educators to incorporate strategies into general education approaches (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995a). Teachers make few modifications in general classrooms for learners who are gifted (Archambault, Westberg, Brown, Hallmark, Zhang, & Emmons, 1993) and those who qualify for special education (Bateman, 1993).

In a survey of adapted instruction (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Wotruba, & Nania, 1990) teachers did not specify classroom adaptations made for students with disabilities; they considered adaptations desirable, but often not feasible. Later, Gottlieb and colleagues (1994) found that regular classroom teachers were unclear about the forms of support that would be required to retain children in general education classes. Only 10% of the teachers presented activities that could reasonably be described as curriculum adaptations. Teachers will make physical accommodations but are less favourable to behavioural and academic accommodations (Wilczenski, 1992). In the Ysseldyke study, adaptations related to social well being or motivation such as positive reinforcement and encouragement were seen as more feasible; least feasible

adaptions included adapting regular materials, using alternate materials, and providing individual instruction.

Schumm and Vaughn (1991) investigated teacher planning practices. Of the kindergarten to grade 12 teachers, 98% rated their knowledge and skills for planning in general education as either excellent or good. Only 39% rated their planning for mainstreamed students as excellent or good. Further, on teacher planning, Jenkins and Leicester (1992) found that many of the teachers in their sample developed the ability to develop instructional plans that would help special students but in reality they rarely implemented the plans.

Many veteran teachers broadly resist mandates to differentiate curriculum and instruction for a wide range of learners (Behar & George, 1994) and may lack the skills required (Tomlinson, 1995). A review of five case studies of inclusive classrooms (Baker & Zigmond, 1995) commented that some elements of effective instruction were missing or infrequent, including adaptations, progress monitoring, and individualized attention.

Many classroom teachers are minimally equipped to provide for the needs of those not responding to group instruction. Few teachers in general education classes, for example, at present possess the breadth of knowledge or the competencies to meet the individual needs of students with learning disabilities (Wagner, Newman, D'Amico, Jay, Butler-Nalin, Marder, & Cox, 1991). While teachers recognize the low achievement of such students, they do very little that is different instructionally when these students are assigned to regular-content classes. A study of sixty social studies and science teachers who were seen as effective with students with learning disabilities by peers, principals, and self found that the teachers made few adaptations to meet special learning needs (McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1994). Another found that 60 percent of students with learning disabilities are not offered accommodations or modifications and yet are expected to meet the same academic standards as other students (Wagner et al., 1991). The one adjustment that is commonly made is to lower grading standards so that students who are learning disabled have a good chance of passing the course (Zigmond, Levine, & Laurie, 1985). It is perhaps not surprising that a recent study of settings where students with learning disabilities were included (Zigmond, Jenkins, Fuchs, Deno, Fuchs, Baker, Jenkins, & Couthino, 1995) failed to find academic benefits for students. Rather, they found that the achievement outcomes were "neither desirable nor acceptable" (p. 539).

Evidence further suggests that the extent to which accommodations and interventions are provided can determine success or failure for students with behavioural disorders (Lewis, Chard, & Scott, 1994; Meadows, Neel, Scott, & Parker, 1994). Nevertheless, when students with behavioural disorders are integrated into regular classrooms, teachers provide little academic support or modifications and almost no behavioural support and adaptations (Meadows et al., 1994).

General educators lack the necessary skills to adapt instruction, to meet the needs of students with disabilities, or to integrate specific strategies (Scanlon, Deshler, & Schumaker, 1996). Such negative findings about classroom adaptations should cause alarm. If teachers are reluctant, resistant, or unable to provide adaptations for students with special needs, then a child's academic career is seriously at risk. Lacking adaptations, inclusion becomes only a matter of where students sit, not where they are provided optimal opportunities to learn.

Resources and supports

Just as the target of equal education cannot be met without appropriate adaptations, placement of students with disabilities in the regular system without the supports needed to accommodate their particular needs is futile. Resources and supports include access to specialists, collaborative planning and decision making, appropriate environments and equipment, and the availability of paraprofessionals (see Miller, 1990).

Most regular classroom teachers do not feel that inclusion is possible without a strong support system in place (Lamond, 1995). In the recent national study, one respondent wrote that "All students have a right to a regular classroom as long as there is support (personnel and materials), [and] daily time to plan and conference" (Galt, 1997, p. A1).

Together with the issue of who should be targeted for inclusion, concerns over practical implications on a wide scale have resulted in much divisiveness among parents and educators over the merits of the inclusionary ideal (Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, & Widaman, 1998). At issue – can the ambitiousness of the proposed reforms be accompanied by resources adequate to implement them, and what kinds of resources for inclusion can teachers reasonably expect? Apart from class size, identified concerns include (but are not restricted to) preservice and inservice teacher training, and collaboration and consultation.

Teacher training

Changed delivery models necessitate training personnel to adapt to new roles. As most general educators do not have a thorough understanding of special education students and of their skills and needs (Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995), inclusion requires extensive retraining of both regular and special education teachers in personal communication, team teaching, teacher problem solving, and curricula frameworks (Hueffner, 1988).

There is little evidence that general educators are receiving the kind of training they need to support students with disabilities comfortably (Heumann, 1994; Reiff, Evans, & Cass, 1991). Efficient training is absent at both preservice and inservice levels. In the United States, less than 5% of all general education teachers have been formally prepared to work with students with special needs in inclusive settings (Smith & Luckasson, 1995). Currently few teacher training programs at Canadian colleges or universities focus on the educational practices required for inclusive education (Action for integration, 1993).

While good general education programs should prepare teachers to work with all students effectively, explicit efforts to prepare teachers in training to work with students with exceptionalities is a relatively recent phenomenon and teacher education programs are not providing adequate preparation (Kearney & Durant, 1992; Maheady, Mallette, & Harper, 1996). In one study (George, George, Gersten, & Grasenick, 1995), two-thirds of teachers of children with behavioural disorders reported that their college course work was poor preparation for their teaching environments. Jack and colleagues (1996) found that only 5% of the teachers in their study indicated that they learned about the management strategies they used in their classrooms from course work; most learned them from other teachers. Nor do the traditional special education courses work very well. Goodlad and Field (1993) found in a national US study that preservice teachers rated their own abilities to teach children with disabilities as the lowest of twelve domains of perceived instructional competence.

Very few, if any, general education teachers have received the ongoing professional development needed to include successfully (Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). In the field, teachers are too often given a one-day workshop or shown a video and expected to know how to teach in inclusive environments successfully. An Alberta study showed that

only 26% of Alberta teachers including students with disabilities had available inservice training dealing with integration. (Buski, 1997).

Inclusion requires extensive retraining of both regular and special education teachers, but often adequate training is not available. Even when it is and teachers are offered specialized training and ongoing support, substantial variability exists in the extent to which regular educators are able to implement inclusive programs and in the progress that students with disabilities achieve as a result (see MacMillan, Gresham, & Forness, 1996).

Consultation and collaboration

Inclusive practices do not presume that all teachers possess all the expertise needed to include all children. In inclusive programs, assistance is provided in the areas of curriculum modification, participation, and social integration by special education teachers, para-professionals, and nondisabled peers.

Ideally, when children with disabilities are in regular classrooms, teachers receive support in the form of training, help, and consultation from special education teachers and other personnel, instructional aides, and so on. Supports are brought to the classroom to the child; the child is not removed to access the supports. However, in an Alberta study (Buski, 1997), 33% of teachers integrating students with special needs reported the unavailability of professional support such as speech therapists and psychologists; 31% lack paraprofessional support. There were no special materials or supplies in 64% of cases.

Support modes similarly demand collaboration, a process that involves an interdependent relationship among two or more people to achieve a common goal (Salisbury, Evans, & Palombaro, 1997). Collaborative problem solving forges a different relationship between special education and regular class teachers. By working with special education teachers, general educators learn about special education skills such as assessing learning styles and abilities, modifying curriculum, using various teaching strategies to meet student needs, and providing emotional support for students (Hanson, 1996).

There is little research on the use of teams to facilitate inclusion and the picture is murky. The extant literature does suggest, however, that often general and special education personnel are not motivated or prepared to participate in collaborative planning and instruction (Gersten, 1990; Gersten, Walker, & Darch, 1988).

Teachers tend to be autonomous. Most teachers are accustomed to working alone, making decisions alone, and planning and teaching by themselves, not well linked to other teachers. It is not surprising that many teachers feel that the hardest part of inclusion is planning with another person (Roach, 1995).

The transition to collaborative planning may confound many special education teachers who formerly taught in separate programs or schools and who are now acting in consultant, co-teaching, or teaming roles, sometimes in addition to their direct service delivery responsibilities. Special educators may resist inclusion when they find themselves forced to work in ways that are new, such as collaboration and in-class support. Hanson (1996) reports that in some inclusive classrooms, a co-teaching relationship has served to lower the status of the special educator. Rather than working as equals, the regular teacher treats the special educator as an aide.

Finally, collaboration requires considerable release time. Teachers report that they need one hour or more a day to plan for students with disabilities (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996). An investigation into the workload of 17,000 Canadian teachers (King & Peart, 1992) found that 77% of teachers felt that they had insufficient time to provide adequate help to students having difficulties and those with special needs. In Alberta, Buski (1997) reported that 87% of teachers including students with special needs did not have extra preparation time. In a Colorado study, an enormous 91% of teachers did not believe that adequate time was provided for cooperative planning between regular and special educators (Pearman et al., 1992).

Maintaining needed support is an enormous task that requires high degrees of commitment, communication, cooperation, collaboration, and funding. But the support picture is, in many ways, bleak. Today's schools are at the intersection of political and social ideals and economic realities and, as public education policies attempt to reconcile more expectations with fewer resources, special education represents a problem of resource management. A common complaint is that human and financial resources once directed toward educating special students in special schools and classes has not followed the students into regular classrooms (Butler, Copland, & Enns, 1996). Provinces such as Alberta that are either unwilling or unable financially to support the integration of exceptional students have left teachers ill-equipped to fulfill their obligations to all of their students (Butler, Copland, & Enns, 1996).

Conclusion

As the prevailing philosophical assumptions, theories, and visions that surround the current inclusion movement find their way into real-life educational situations, they are, of necessity, applied in the context of attendant political pressures, sociocultural differences, community expectations, and parental influences. Especially, theories and ideas in schools and classrooms meld with professional problems, teacher attitudes and expectations, and teacher responsibilities and accountability.

As educators grapple with equitable treatment for all students, the question of how the integration of students with disabilities is to be accomplished remains a hotly debated issue. Discussions on the merits of inclusion as a philosophy are not as prominent as apprehension about its implementation. Few dispute the contention that every child, regardless of type and severity of disability, has the right to a free and appropriate education in a setting as normal as possible. However, the question of how the integration of students with disabilities is to be accomplished remains a hotly debated issue among educators, parents, and child advocates. Most of the argument centres on how integration strategies can be implemented without deleteriously affecting the lives and educational programs of other students or impacting negatively on the professional lives of teachers.

In addressing this issue, this paper looked at the reality of classrooms within the connotations of reform. It asked whether all general education teachers could or should include all children all the time and looked specifically at teacher attitudes, teachers' willingness and ability to provide adaptations and modifications for learners with special needs, the skills and supports to accommodate difficult-to-teach students; other supports in the form of personnel and resources, and cooperation and collaboration.

A general conclusion is that neither research nor common sense espouses a radical restructuring of special education as represented by full inclusion. While acceptance is the responsibility of every teacher, not all have the skills needed for successful inclusion, nor are all receptive to the principles and demands of inclusion. Canadian teachers philosophically support the ideology, but deep concerns have emerged within the context of regular education, the issue often expressed as a concern about the boundaries of teacher responsibilities.

Teachers' concerns revolve around a number of areas that are prompted as much by the objectives of special education as they are by the

pressures of the school system. Not only are teachers being asked to cater to students displaying a range of social and academic problems, but classes are more heterogeneous than ever before with varying rates of skills and learning rates. Add to this time restraints, larger class sizes, widespread debate about standardized achievement testing and teacher accountability, an explosion of knowledge that must somehow be addressed in the curriculum, limited resources and insecure funding from external sources, and lessening job security. As these factors combine with concerns over lack of training and expertise in special education and declining support services, it is little wonder that teachers may look askance at the prospect of including students with very special needs.

The two groups who present the greatest challenges are those with significant disabilities and those with serious behavioural disorders. Severely disabled, however defined, has always been a boundary condition that determines the success of any reform. Even if schools become relatively comfortable, or at least resigned, to children functioning below the norm in intellectual, physical, or social domains, they remain resistant to accepting students with severe behavioural or intellectual disabilities.

Full inclusion is a radical reform to be approached cautiously. Barriers remain complex, diverse, and numerous. Implementation is dogged by ambivalent teacher attitudes, large class sizes, inadequate teacher training, lack of outside supports, and concern about the inclusion of certain groups of students. Although full inclusion for all students with disabilities may be a laudable goal, such a dramatic shift must be referenced to the needs of children with special needs, the requirements of the regular classroom, and the circumstances of regular classroom teachers.

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