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ABSTRACT

The case study, one of a series on model mainstreaming programs, describes the history and current status of one of the first public schools designed for children with handicapping conditions. One of its several special education classes is highlighted, the physical setting and its teacher described. Among program features noted are the teacher's motivational and instructional techniques. Five mainstreamed students with physical and neurological disabilities are described in terms of their characteristics and their interactions with others. Social isolation within the classroom and separation among groups (disabled, typical, gifted, Blacks and Whites) are noted. Curriculum information, the transitional focus for preparing for junior high school, and the role of supportive services are discussed. Summary statements touch upon the minimal integration of students within the school, the value of the system of individualized academic instruction, and the high expectations placed on the students. (CL)

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"They Think They Can Fly!"

MacMillian Elementary School
Sixth Grade Class

Michele Sokoloff

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The School

When the MacMillian School opened in Central City in 1929,

visitors from
around the world came to see one of the first public schools designed
for children with handicapping conditions. Disabled children, grades
kindergarten through twelve, were housed in the brick building located
on top of a hill. After World War II, typical children living within
walking distance began attending the school also, but not in the same
classes. In the 1950's the school population was over 600. Many students
had either Cerebral Palsy or Polio. Today, MacMillian has a total
population of approximately 262 students in grades kindergarten through
sixth.

The neighborhood surrounding the school consists of post-World War
II box shaped working class houses that are well preserved. A curving
drive leads to the large rectangular school building. During school about
fifty cars are parked on either side of the drive near to the main entrance.
A smaller entrance leads to a ramp and is used by the physically disabled.
The brick two story structure looks faded and worn by weather, time and use.
Tall windows cover many of the exterior walls and have cracked, peeling
wood surrounding each small window pane.

While the exterior of MacMillian is rather decrepid, the interior is
in continual rejuvenation. Wide hallways, fresh white walls, large murals,
monthly exhibits of pictures illustrating historical events, and colorful
student art are reminders of the effort to sustain the interior life of
the school despite the crumbling facade. The two floors are connected by
a flight of stairs which many children with disabilities cannot negotiate.
Handrails are fastened to the walls on the rust-colored carpeted first
floor. Wall water fountains are two feet off the floor.

MacMillian has fewer students than other elementary schools in Central City. Rumors about the closing of the school smolder. Not being able to sustain enrollment is often blamed on the school's reputation or "stigma" as being a school strictly for students who have disabilities.

It was known as a school for retards. You ask most people and no matter who they are, they'll tell you that's a school for retards.

Once a stigma is set, you never lose it. Somehow people don't hear the good things.

For those in the school, a number of aspects are praised and there is a general feeling of being part of a proud family. A woman who has worked in the school cafeteria for a number of years said:

Kids are responsible for themselves here. This is more like the old way, the better way. We know all the kids and they know us.

A teacher discussed "small classes and good instruction."

Mr. Murray, the principal, describes another view of this specialness:

What we've got here is acceptance and the lack of mean situations between Black and White. More kids know each other. There's more feelings of security. I know most of the kids and the teachers know the kids that they had last year and the year before. Especially in the city where so many of our kids are in all kinds of bad situations in the home and in the neighborhood, I think the smaller school is better.

While MacMillian is described as a "neighborhood school" approximately eighty students (30% of the total 262 student population) with disabilities are bussed from as far as an hour away.

If they are needing a program and they are on the elementary level, then this is the school where all those services are centralized... In the MH class, the older kids, they can stay here til they're twenty one years old.

Those services include physical therapy, occupational therapy, a small pool heated to 90 degrees for therapy, four full-time reading assistants, a math teaching assistant, and some 63 full and part-time aides and volunteers. Some classes have two or more aides and volunteers assigned to them while other classes have none. The majority of the aides assist in the seven special education classes. When added to the seventeen classroom teachers, there are about eighty adults interacting with children each day.

There are ten regular or "neighborhood" K-6 classes, seven special education classes and two pre-first or developmental classes "for kids with emotional problems who could not handle first grade." All special education classes are on the first floor along with a few "neighborhood" regular classes. The number of students in the classes varies considerably: some have twenty six or more and some (the pre-first and special ed) have twelve or less.

Teachers, aides and volunteers' ages range from twenty to over fifty. Most are women. Many of the staff have been at MacMillian for many years.

A lot of those teachers have been there for twenty plus years of teaching. They're like peas in a pod.

Beginnings of Integration

In 1973, on a limited basis, the integration of children with handicapping conditions into regular, "neighborhood" classes began.

Most of the neighborhood classes were upstairs so the kids in wheelchairs couldn't get up there. I think that would have some bearing on the integration process.

Gradually more "neighborhood" classes moved down to the first floor.

There were, however, very few teachers willing to take disabled students into their classes at first. One teacher said that it had only been in the past year that some teachers had been willing to take younger disabled children. In order for a student to be considered for placement in a neighborhood class, the disabled child's teacher must pursue a placement.

The principal has his philosophy about mainstreaming:

If a new handicapped kid comes here, he goes into a handicapped class. We try to find out where this kid is academically. We try to find out what his limitations are. The teacher working with him might say, 'This kid is a good reader and he's coming along. He can go out in the neighborhood.' So we'll try him with reading.

When kids get mainstreamed, it's based on those kids who can handle it.

If a student "meets certain criteria" then that student is discussed with regular education teachers who might accept the student. A teacher states:

I had to be in on the meeting and I had to agree to take her in the first place. If I had said no, then that's it.

The principal noted a problem in meeting the criteria:

Almost all the kids with a physical problem have been tested out to be retarded too. If a kid can't move a limb, he'll have trouble with most of the tests that are out nowadays. These tests don't really show the abilities of these kids.

One of the reading assistants further explains the placement of a student into a regular class:

The process of integration is easier here in this school compared to another school that is bigger and where you didn't have the contact between staff members which you have here. This school is kind of a unique situation because even our neighborhood teachers have been around our kids (disabled) and they're very understanding.

The Class

The class involved in the present study is a regular sixth grade class located on the first floor. It is immediately to the left of the entrance and the only sixth grade class in the school. It is rectangular. The wall opposite the door is mostly tall windows that are completely covered with thick, grey buldging plastic, a barrier to the cold. There are three or four pictures of basketball players on the small space of wall between windows. The far right wall is a blackborad. Bulletin boards, on the wall with the doors, are covered pictures of foods that look like a nutrition lesson, pictures and stories about careers, the names of class members written in an unusual cursive style, and other papers. Just about every space is covered. The wall just to the left of the door contains a coat closet that extends ten feet where students place their belongings. It's sliding wood doors are rarely shut.

Most desks face the wall with the door. For the most part desks are lined up in six rows with 4-5 in a row. Two bookcases overflowing with books, boxes and materials jut out into the room. There is a space inbetween the bookcases where a rug is placed. This is a private area where students can work or read.

The only desks not situated with the others belong to students who have some disabling condition. "I don't have a desk. There's no room and I don't know what I'd do with it if I had one," the teacher said.

Time Schedules

The class of twenty nine sixth grade students remains with the sixth grade teacher except for reading, music, art and gym. One or two students go to a speech teacher or occupational therapy regularly. The schedule of events changes some from day to day depending on special projects,

speakers, and trips but there are certain regularities. They include an hour of math and an hour of reading in the morning. The math and reading are team taught by two teachers. Math is the principle subject taught by the sixth grade teacher in her room and reading is taught by a fifth grade teacher in her room. While both teachers have different teaching styles, this sharing of students and subjects is a plus for both. Three afternoons a week the sixth grade teacher has a gifted class composed of students selected from the fourth, fifth and sixth grades. She enjoys this, spending a good deal of time in preparation.

The Teacher

Mrs. Day is a woman in her late thirties and stands about five feet, four inches with short hair just long enough to be curly with a permanent. She is a bit chunky especially around the middle. Occasionally she wears lipstick and rouge. She wears casual but neat pants with a top sticking out one day, and switches to a pink, soft blouse with a white wool skirt another day. Whenever Mrs. Day is not teaching in her room, she is smoking incessantly. When she pours her milky coffee from her long thermos, one can observe her hands shaking ever so slightly.

Originally from the Central City, Mrs. Day spent her K-12 years in a parochial school. In undergraduate school she majored in languages and focused on Spanish. Her husband was in the Armed Services in Washington and commuted on weekends to Central City. He then got a transfer to a neighboring town where they lived for awhile. Mrs. Day obtained a teaching job at the state college at the age of twenty three. "They needed women or anyone and were hiring them. It wasn't the way it is now." She taught there for three years. Mrs. Day got involved in some workshops with some people working for the Central City School District and met the current principal of MacMillian. He was then the principal of another

elementary school and he offered Mrs. Day a teaching position in a program in which she taught half-time and worked half-time on her masters degree in Urban Education. She was able to discuss in the afternoon what happened in her class during the morning.

It was the best learning situation because I could bring my daily problems to class and they would discuss them as a case... My second year out I had six student teachers. I didn't know anything and we used to sit and plan the greatest programs for kids. We didn't know what would work but we produced some pretty good kids.

After four years at the Massey School, the principal changed to the MacMillian School and asked Mrs. Day to teach there. Mrs. Day's role in the MacMillian School is more than just teacher. She gathers people together to work on projects to figure out new and different activities, programs, and curriculum for the students and the school. She and the other teachers are not concerned with glorifying themselves as much as they are interested in doing these activities for the students.

Mrs. Day began mainstreaming when she started teaching at MacMillian four years ago. Her first classroom was on the second floor and the integration of two students designated handicapped was influenced by the principal. He said

'You'll love this program I've got in my head.' He's the biggest salesman you ever saw. He kisses people in the morning and calls me his 'Little Flower'. He's terrific.

The one boy was on crutches and he came up those stairs every day. The other gal was my gem. She was classified legally blind. I kept both of them for three years.

Then Mrs. Day moved down to the first floor and more students from the special ed classes began to come to her room. At the time of this research she had five students designated as handicapped in her room. Some are only there on a part time basis.

I knew that there was going to be trouble when he (the principal) said, 'How would you like to move downstairs?' He said that he was always upstairs looking at what was going on and said that he was too old to climb the steps. He's thinking all the time.

Mainstreaming students with disabilities has not altered Mrs. Day's approach toward teaching. In fact, unless one is aware of the varied ability levels of individuals in her class, one would not be able to identify the five who are designated handicapped (with the exception of the three physically disabled students). In reference to those who are mainstreamed, Mrs. Day has said, "The main thing I think is most important is I don't treat the handicapped kids any differently than any other kid." Mrs. Day avoids using the words "handicapped" or "disabled". At times, as if she does not see handicapping conditions. Even scheduling for students who need additional assistance in math, speech, or occupational therapy, is done so that the students do not have to leave the class very much if at all.

It is very important that any things that make kids different are not emphasized with the other kids or they'll get teased for it.

Much of the emphasis in this class revolves around the accomplishment of math skills. Success is often measured in terms of any student understanding or "getting" a new concept and moving on to another level.

The kid passes a level that he's been pouring over. That's success. If a kid says, 'I get that; it's so easy.' That's success. As you've been beating your head against the wall for two weeks with this one concept. When they say, 'I get that. Why didn't ya tell me that's how ya did it.' That's success. Socially it's when everybody can get along together. They really don't pick on anybody and try to help each other. That's success.

Teaching Techniques

At times, Mrs. Day's classroom is like an old time sweatshop, all that goes on there is work. Students are given specific tasks for which they are responsible. In the morning when attendance is being taken, everyone does the four or five "Math All" problems that are placed on the board. These problems are checked by Mrs. Day and the number of correct problems is written in her book. When the classes switch for math and reading and the first math class enters, students look at the wall next to the main door to see pieces of paper that have written on them what their individual task is for that day. The students locate the worksheets and any books they will need to complete their task.

Most students were diligently working on different pages and different types of concepts. Some were graphing dots in order to form a star. Others were dividing fractions. A few students were adding and subtracting decimals. A couple of boys sat at a table and were reading about the mean, median, and mode from a book.

Once a worksheet is completed, they go over to Mrs. Day to have her check it. If there are any mistakes, she questions to help them understand what they did wrong and how to correct it. The student then goes off to correct the mistake. Some dittoed sheets take longer than others so students are not swarming Mrs. Day every second. But there are times when four or five students are waiting.

Mrs. Day is like an octopus with many arms or tentacles all working at the same time and very conscious of what each is doing.

She would ask three different questions of three different students and not forget what she asked within six seconds. Then she would deal with each one individually. (e.g., it was like seeing several darts or spears being thrown one right after the other with each one reaching their target.)

Mrs. Day gradually evolved her own system of teaching. She observed after her first year of teaching that many of her students were bored, not doing anything or were behind in their work.

I gradually began individualizing. I knew I had to find a way to involve all of them. It's harder in many ways but much better for the kids.

As Mrs. Day explains her present approach:

You can motivate a kid to do anything if you do it right. You can have them just die to take that test if you introduce it right... You have to be the world's greatest salesman. The kids often times have their heads in that crazy TV. They sit there and get the best shows and you have to give the best show you can. If kids can be sold to buy goppy glue or something on a TV show, you've got to sell them that they've got to have this as a life skill, for success... There's the straight approach, or if you do the opposite of what they expect, that's another technique.

No one is tough to motivate. Except in one condition; if they're afraid of it. By the time you get to sixth grade it's so ingrained that you've got a problem. Greig is so afraid of math he's paranoid. So you go back. You're gonna spoon feed him all the way and you're gonna tell him how easy it is and this is terrific and this, that and the other. And hopefully if it doesn't look like anything that he's afraid of, then he'll do it.

Large boxes sit on top of shelves in many locations in the room and are crammed with folders and worksheets. These crowded boxes are bulging with papers of all sizes and colors. Some papers are placed inside the boxes lopsided and some straight. The teacher explains that:

It took me three years to compile all this stuff. I look through old textbooks and take out those topics that I need for my kids. I scavenge through waste baskets too. It's all good material. I'll often thermofax a page to make it into a ditto and then I can always make more copies if I need it. Or I type up certain parts that are good and run it off. People throw out old books and I find all kinds of good things to use in them.

I don't like the whole group doing a lot of anything unless it's a discussion or something. They just think it's baby stuff. Those kids are so workbook oriented. I use no workbooks. I make my own self-help dittos. They're doing my stuff that's written on the board.

The manner in which Mrs. Day has structured her instruction lends itself to the district-wide required and prescribed "Levels Curriculum".

The "Levels" consist of twenty five or more stages of achievement in both math and reading. Each grade level has their own levels tests throughout the school district. The teachers and administrators had found that every teacher had been covering different material in math and reading and when the students went to the junior high school, there was no continuity in what everyone had learned. So they decided to create levels. When the committee created the levels tests, they knew it would be necessary to revise it every three years or whenever the New York State Regents changed their academic criteria or standards.

Mrs. Day was involved on the five person committee to create the Levels tests. The Levels tests cover the concepts that the teachers need to teach to their students. Mrs. Day explains that "the entire district uses it but every teacher teaches the material in a different way.

Mrs. Day explains now the Levels are in her classroom:

Everyone is working at a different level and there are worksheets that cover the concepts they need to know so that they can pass the Levels test. The more advanced levels deal with algebra and even geometry. I have a few who can handle that.

The Levels Curriculum and Mrs. Day's system of individualizing combined with her own teaching and motivational techniques contribute to a casual and calm, yet directed, atmosphere in the classroom. All three forces are essential elements at work in this classroom. The ways in which Mrs. Day assists and stimulates in the continued work by her students are varied.

Her expectations for all of her students are high.

I expect them to do the best of their ability. I don't care what their ability is, but they have to do the best they can do. We had these Health projects. David did five sentences on the large and small intestines. He drew a big chart and I helped him recolor it. And he got a "B" on it. That's all he could do and it was marvelous that he could do it. Now Michael T. I expect a lot and I got a four page report on the reproductive system. He gave a speech to the class and was very well done. But he got a "B" too because he didn't have any illustrations. He wasn't up to his par.

Mrs. Day expresses her high expectations as the students are working on their tasks.

One girl sitting at the far end repeatedly said, "I can't do this, Mrs. Day." Mrs. Day proverbially responded with, "Yes, you can. Try it."

Many of her comments seem to ignite and pump the students up.

Raymond says to Mrs. Day that he thought the math problems were beyond what he could do. She says to him, "I bet ya a nickel you can do it." He starts working on them.

They respond by tackling their work, grinning privately and/or desiring more work. The students appear to be enjoying themselves with tasks that involve tangible results. These results enable each student to be productive in the sense that they are producing findings and results as well as progressing through the steps or levels required of them.

Mrs. Day gave a checked paper to a boy who had been going gang-busters through his sheets that day. She said, "Take this home and show it to your parents." She did not say that often to her students.

The desire to continue on is not for the teacher's benefit but their own.

As Mrs. Day was taking attendance she asked one boy who had finished his "Math All" problems if he would like some more. He nodded and she made up three problems on a scrap piece of paper. He takes it and buries his head in it.

Mrs. Day directs questions to her students and waits patiently for an answer. If she gets it she will ask another right away to see if the student can comprehend an additional step or progression. She tries not to give any work that her students cannot handle. If they are having trouble, she usually spots it quickly. Her words of encouragement range from "alright!", "ok!", to "go to it, Toots", or "that's it, Sweets".

You're cookin' today. You're going to be able to get up to level 18 very soon. And then you'll be ready for algebra.

There are a few additional instructional strategies that Mrs. Day uses to coax, challenge and lead her students to arrive at correct answers and understandings. She does not believe in telling her students the answers to problems. Sometimes by providing the answer to one part of a problem a student can then fill in the rest by filling in the missing pieces. As Mrs. Day says:

If you give them an answer, they'll just sit there and think about a basketball game while you do it for them. You break it down and if it's wrong, let them correct it.

In order to make some of the tasks more meaningful and relevant, a tangible example or object is utilized with some of the students.

One slight, pretty, well-dressed girl kept coming up to the teacher to show her some answers to her word problems. There must have been something missing because she was verbally quizzed each time she came up and then sent back to figure out something else. Mrs. Day made up questions right on the spot. One time she handed the girl a pencil and said, "I'll give you \$100 for this pencil and \$5 tax. How much will you get?" The girl was hesitant but her eyes lit up and she smiled at the question. Others sitting and standing nearby snickered and made short comments about the example.

Teaching Strategies and Learning Styles

There are a number of students in the class who seem to labor, spend more time and need more assistance in the class. Those students include those who have been mainstreamed as well as those who have not come from a special ed class. By continually breaking an idea or concept into parts, Mrs. Day discovers what or where the problem lies for a student.

You can't do it the same way twice unless you go through the entire gamut and then go back again. You can't keep teaching it the same way over and over. The kid didn't get it the first time that way.

The teacher treats all her students similarly but there are some differences directed toward the mainstreamed students. All of the mainstreamed students are academically slower. The teacher is often demanding, pushing, and impatient with those students who are slower in responding and getting their work finished. Many of the mainstreamed students need to be told what comes next in whatever they are doing. Some of the students can accomplish more work within a certain time slot than other students. The ones who do not show their work at each incremental step are usually the academically brighter ones. Those who are used to making mistakes check with Mrs. Day in order to insure that they do not make too many. She is usually guiding and making sure that kids get their work completed with the minimum of mistakes. The teacher's demands, high expectations, and pushing of the mainstreamed students are not as obvious with the rest of the class.

Mrs. Day would not blame a student for a wrong answer but rather place the "blame" on carelessness. Her attitude was that they "obviously" knew the correct answer so why not "fix" it. She did not do this with everyone; only those who would be able to correct their mistakes. This treatment was convincing, nonjudgemental, and even reassuring.

Sometimes Mrs. Day would say to a student, "You wouldn't believe this. Take a look at this." She would then show the student something they got wrong and say, "Go and fix it."

All it takes is giving them something they can handle, letting them know you think they can do it and praising them when they do.

If a disabled student demonstrates to the special ed teacher that they can conform to social standards as well as have some academic strength in at least one subject, then the student may be considered for some mainstreaming.

The principal at MacMillian roams in and out of the classes throughout the school daily and has a low-key, nonthreatening relationship with most of the staff. He explains his role in mainstreaming.

If I wonder why a kid can't be mainstreamed I might go in there and ask the teacher a question like, "Would there be any chance that you might do it?"

A parent can also influence the mainstreaming of a student. One of the sixth grade students described how the change began for him.

My mother was the one that started having me going to the regular classes. I don't know what she did but it's a lot nicer in the regular class than it was in special ed. They're a lot nicer here.

The willingness of a receiving regular ed teacher is also an important factor in the initial stages of mainstreaming. According to a teacher:

Not everybody is willing to do it. Even though the staff has been here so long, it's just been the last year that they have been willing to take the little handicapped kids in regular classes. I had to agree to take Jane in the first place. If I had said no, then that's it.

The process of integrating students into regular classes from special ed classes is done on a gradual basis. For some of the students the period of time extends to three years before they are integrated on a full time basis. During that time the mainstreamed students usually remain with the same regular ed teacher and do not change or go on to different grades. Those students also receive less and less services outside of the class. It is as if they shed their past identity as "handicapped" when they are granted entry into the world of "the neighborhood". The sixth grade teacher explains:

Rosemarie is doing marvelous because we got her out and let her fly. We went slow and it took three years to get her in. She came to me for math first. I think the next year we put her into math and reading. She stayed the rest of the morning with me. So I had her half time first and then full time. It took three years to get there and that worked.

We've had these kids for so long, it's like they are part of our shoelaces.

Description of Children Defined as Handicapped

Timmy

Timmy has been at MacMillian school for eight years. He is fourteen and had been in special ed classes since kindergarten before he began entering the regular ed classes at eleven years old. Timmy remembers that the special ed class was

A lot different than the neighborhood class. They treat ya differently. When I was in special ed, they treated me like I was somebody else. They didn't treat me like a regular person; like a four year old.

Timmy has spina bifida and is paralyzed from the waist down. He has had numerous operations. He has a shunt tube in his head, kidney problems and other complications. Timmy moves about in his wheelchair with ease.

I'm the only one in a wheelchair in my class. But there are others that are handicapped. I'm just treated like any other kid.

When he arrives at school in the morning, he usually has a crocheted blanket wrapped around his legs and lap. The blanket is made with shades of light blue and looks like a baby blanket. Timmy's hair often looks wet and is slicked back either with water or Brilcreme. His hair is kept in a crew-cut that dates back to the 1950's.

Timmy enjoys watching basketball and sometimes goes with his father to local college games. Timmy has joined a wheelchair basketball team as its youngest player. The flip-top desk that Timmy uses was built by his father. The height was designed so that Timmy can move his wheelchair beneath the top of the desk and still comfortably rest his arms on the top.

Timmy's mother has been active in her son's educational programming. She has been quite adamant about Timmy not attending the school that her daughter attended which is across the street from their home.

Timmy has been in Mrs. Day's class for two years. "I feel like he is a part of me; like my left arm. I mean I know the mother and everything," Mrs. Day explains. Mrs. Day has said that certain students attempt to "play games" in order to get the attention they need and in order to avoid doing their work. "It's often the disabled kids that have a lot of these games."

Timmy tries to prove he is right which is another game. I sometimes let him get away with his games and other times I let him know that I know it is a game and I'm not going to play along.

Timmy has a math lab teacher working with him in the classroom during math time. They work on the Levels curriculum and Mrs. Day believes this assistance is good for Timmy.

His head is always somewhere else and he needs a lot of one-to-one. You give him a book and he'll try to make a flower stand out of it.

Timmy passes level 16 even though he missed a few sections. I said, "Tim I don't have any champagne but if I had it here, we'd have a champagne party. You would all sit here and watch me drink it to the last drop." He passed that test. He was so thrilled he couldn't stand it.

Timmy's Relation to Others

Timmy keeps to himself most of the time, seldom joining others in conversation. His voice is going through adolescent changes: it jumps around in pitch whenever he talks. When the class lines up to go somewhere or to get some food, Timmy waits until everyone has passed by him before he leaves. Timmy's desk and wheelchair are situated within inches of the table where Mrs. Day sits. Often students must straddle and squeeze past Timmy and his wheelchair. Raymond, another student with a handicapping condition, sits very near Timmy. He interacts with Timmy more than most of the others. They have been in the same school together since kindergarten. Their interactions are often similar to a cat and mouse game where one pokes or pushes the other. Sometimes their games look like a form of torment or power play.

Raymond

Raymond's morning ritual during the winter is to come into the room, drop his books off on his desk, take his coat off and hang it in the closet and then sit down on the rug area to take off his black rubber boots. He struggles to get his boots off each time. Raymond can walk with a bit of effort. He has cerebral palsy. His legs move as if he was peddling a bicycle but in a slow, crooked manner. Crutches were ordered for Raymond by a school doctor who saw him once a year but Raymond never used them. Raymond has been in a regular class setting for 3-4 years. Mrs. Day expressed her familiarity with Raymond:

I practically raised Raymond. He thinks he can fly! There isn't anything he thinks he can't do.

A reading teacher assistant describes Raymond as "a real live wire. And he's a fantastic artist." Whenever the class goes outside after lunch to play, Raymond is usually found sitting on a ledge drawing. A couple of years earlier an art curriculum department head called up Mrs. Day concerning Raymond. The local newspaper then did an article on "a mainstreamed student with an art talent" that appeared in the Sunday edition. When the reporter who wrote the article wanted to meet Raymond and see his work, it took Raymond several weeks before he remembered to bring in his art work. Mrs. Day expresses that Raymond has a lackadaisical, uncaring disposition.

Raymond, there's somebody trying to help you and you're pulling this flake stuff. He says, "Yeah, I know, what can I do?" Put it next to the front door, write yourself a note. He literally wrote himself a note and stuck it in his pocket. He remembered but the guy didn't come back for another week. You know how neat his whole area is. He's the one with the pile of junk all over the floor. By the time that guy came, it had been stepped on. Raymond said, "Well, you know, that's what happens."

Raymond's Interaction With Others

Raymond moves easily from being apart of the larger group or "one of the boys" to being off on his own.

David was sitting by himself in the hallway with his back against the wall. Timmy was alone as well as Rosemarie. Raymond was sitting amidst a group of kids.

Raymond was walking past a group of four boys who were dancing. He stood for a bit looking at one of the boys who usually leads others. Raymond was standing very close to this boy. The boy smiled at Raymond and motioned for him to dance. Raymond almost did but stopped on the verge of starting and then walked away.

He is an accepted member of the class. He knows what to do to enable himself to be included in joke telling, discussions and horsing around in the class. Raymond is the only disabled student accepted by the rest to the point where he can engage others in conversation.

The boy who told the joke about the coke bottle came over to where Raymond was sitting on Mark's desk. He says, "Hey Raymond, have you heard this joke?" Raymond listens and responds with a smile and some comment.

There are times when others tease Raymond.

One of the boys in the class walked by Raymond and took a french fry off of Raymond's platter. The boy smiled slyly and Raymond did not acknowledge him at all; totally ignoring him.

The "new" Black boy who wears a black hair net on his head a lot got in Raymond's way as many of the kids were haphazardly lining up by the door. Raymond loses his balance and falls. Two boys reach down to help pull Raymond up onto his feet. They have a hard time getting him up and it is not clear that their assistance was helping or hindering Raymond to establish his balance. No words were expressed by these boys. Once Raymond was standing he does not turn around to look at anyone. The "new" kid walks by again and jabs Raymond. This time it was a bit more blatantly. One of the boys who had helped before and was standing behind Raymond said, "Hey watch it." Nothing more was said.

Raymond becomes the teaser whenever he is near Timmy. Their desks are among the few that are not situated with the majority of the desks in the room and are within arms reach of each other. Raymond will often stare at Timmy sternly. It is a game and Timmy plays along. But it is also a form of harassment.

Timmy rarely if ever defends himself. But one time a yard stick was resting on Timmy's desk and Timmy grabbed hold of it. Immediately he began to point it at Raymond and was about to do something with it, when Mrs. D. took it away from him. She just placed the stick somewhere else.

Raymond came ambling and wobbling into the room smiling and making cheerful sounds to himself. He pushes Timmy out of his way to get over to his desk. They make some sarcastic remarks back and forth to each other. "I'll punch you out." Raymond lightly jabbed Timmy with his fist. Timmy played along with this playfulness. But when Raymond pushed and squeezed past Timmy again, Timmy had a sour cringe on his face.

David

David is the tallest boy in the sixth grade class, is fifteen years old and does not talk very much. David has never been officially labeled because his mother never wanted him in a special ed class. However, David was currently being considered for a junior high school program and his mother realizes that in order for David to receive the special services he needs, he would have to be officially labeled.

Various people have described David as "neurologically impaired" and "brain damaged." He does have epileptic seizures. Students in David's class know that at twelve o'clock David goes to get a pill. At one point during the year, the class was having a discussion about epilepsy. Mrs. D. asked David if he wanted to tell the class about it and he did.

At MacMillian, David's schedule is arranged so that he does not have to go away from the regular class during conspicuous times. When the students switch for math and reading, David goes to either physical therapy or speech training.

"We worked out his schedule to accommodate what he needed while making it not look like he is one of the dummies. But the kids know."

In the classroom, David's desk is situated the farthest away from the rest of the class. It is among the few desks against the side blackboard close to the door.

There are one or two desks between David and Raymond. David is catty-cornered to Timmy.

Mrs. D. explains that David sits on that side of the room because "he always sits next to me or on top of me or around my neck or someplace."

David accomplishes the most work when Mrs. D. is working closely with him in a concentrated way.

"He really needs one-to-one if he's going to do anything."

"David couldn't benefit from a purely oral curriculum. He needs a lot of one-on-one help. But he wants to please. You have to do a lot of drawing things out with David."

The social worker at the school has worked with David and says that "he can read

but has a language difficulty." Mrs. D. explains that David is working at a sixth grade level in math. "But he has trouble understanding phrases and fitting words together. He's a good kid and wants to learn."

David's Relation to Others

There is another boy in the class who lives next door to David. Mark and David have been described as "best friends." Yet, during this research, little interaction took place between them during the school day. Mrs. D. remarks about a widening split in their relationship because of diverse ability levels.

"David knows something is wrong now too. It really is heart breaking for me to see this happening. His best friend has an IQ of 140 and has the patience of the gods but the difference between them is beginning to show. David says to me, 'I know I can do it and that you just showed me but there's something that makes me not be able to do it.' So he knows."

David usually sits alone at his desk either staring at the blackboard, a book, or out into the room. He rarely speaks with other students and they do not extend themselves to him. On one occasion, his birthday, what was meant to be some friendly attention became a venting of some unspoken hostility towards David.

Someone said it was David's birthday and David was just arriving. Mark seemed excited and rushed out to the hallway as well as several other boys. Something was up. Maybe they gave him some spanks or punches or pounced on him out in the hall. Who knows what went on out there. David finally enters the room and a couple of boys try to get close to him. It was hard to tell what the boys were trying to do to him. One boy, Danny, began acting like a lion tamer with a whip, pushing David back until David had to defend himself with his back against the wall. There was a short tussle between the two boys. It was not one of those friendly spats, either. It ended with them separating. I think David lost his balance and landed on the floor. He stayed there awhile; safe.

Rosemarie

Rosemarie is fifteen years old, has shoulder length sandy hair that looks curled from a permanent. She is taller than most of the other girls in the class and is very thin. She has a lanky, awkward appearance about her with her arms hanging down long and loosely in front of her as she walks. With hunched shoulders

and shuffling feet, she looks more disabled than she really is. The braces on her teeth create the image of the typical teenager she is. She usually wears pants, as all the girls do, that are a bit shabby and worn looking. Rosemarie's mother works as an aide in the school. Teachers have described her as "making her daughter cry in front of her class and humiliating her." During the observation period, Rosemarie's mother was not seen.

Rosemarie has a physical disability which affects the joints in the feet, legs, arms and other parts. When Rosemarie walks it looks like she may fall down any second. She does fall quite a lot.

Mrs. D. is walking out of the courthouse with Rosemarie. All of a sudden Rosemarie falls into the fake greenery that lines the front windows in the lobby. Mrs. D. immediately pulls her back on her feet. Rosemarie smiles weakly and so does Mrs. D.. Some of the other kids who are nearby also smile and two girls try to hold back their laughter by putting their hands over their mouths. Mrs. D. says, "She's trying to become a tulip." "You don't look like a tulip," I said. She smiles and Mrs. D. chirps in, "More like a rose."

Rosemarie was gradually mainstreamed over a period of three years before she was in the regular ed class on a full time basis. The contrast between special ed and regular ed is very clear in Rosemarie's mind.

"The work was a lot easier in special ed. I didn't have to work so much. But now I'm at level 16 in math and level 14 in reading. At the beginning of the year I got a "D" in math and now I'm getting a "B."

Mrs. D. adds that "she is doing marvelous. It's because we got her out and let her fly. We went slow. It was a wonderful idea in her case."

Rosemarie's desk is situated separately from the majority of the students, next to one of the bookcases that jut out into the room. She is on one side of the partition and another girl's desk is on the other side. Rosemarie can often be seen staring and doing nothing.

Rosemarie's Interaction with Others

Rosemarie has spent most of her school years in special ed classes at MacMillian and interacts with many of her past friends from special ed.

Rosemarie mingled with the kids with disabilities by joking and laughing with them. When she sat down to eat in the cafeteria, she sat with another girl who was extremel, heavy and looked a lot older than the other students. They talked a little bit but not very much. They sat at the end of a long table which went down the middle of the lunchroom not far from the table of kids with disabilities.

Although during the time of this research teasing directed toward Rosemarie was never observed, Rosemarie is quite conscious of anyone teasing her.

"I liked the special ed class better. I didn't get teased there. When I had braces on my legs I got teased. But when I was in special ed we had a real nice art teacher. Now I have Mrs. X. in art and I get teased. When I got / braces on my teeth, I got teased too."

April

Before April enters the sixth grade classroom for math class, a young man comes into the room carrying a few books. He is told by the teacher to drop them off on any empty desk. About five minutes later, April slowly comes in with the use of her crutches. She is fifteen years old and is being mainstreamed for the first time this year. April seems to be as calm and natural as the rest of the students. But a closer look would reveal that she does not have control of all her actions. Sometimes a spastic-type motion will occur with her head or her arms and then at other times she will be still. When April is working on a task, she has difficulty concentrating on what she is doing for very long. As she bows her head down toward a paper on the desk, she occasionally falls into a motion that is rapidly repeated eight or more times. She pushes her glasses into her nose in the middle and then sticks out her tongue wetting her lips. Both actions happen at once and very fast. April goes about her work extremely slowly and spends most of her time erasing much of what she writes on any paper as if she did not understand what she was suppose to do. Mrs. D. has some reservations about the placement of April.

"April has got a whole bunch of problems. I don't even know if it was a wise decision to get her in there. See, I never went to the Committee on her. She was just popped in on us from another school district and boom she qualified on this thing and boom she was in there."

Mrs. D. tells how bad April's basic skills are and how she had been in special ed classes for a long time. When April first came into Mrs. D.'s class and was given a new task, April would cry. Mrs. D. told her, "That won't work in here, sweetie. I won't fall for that game."

"She is working fine but the crying is like eighty five percent. About three weeks ago she cried for the entire week. Her dog died. I mean I'm suppose to teach this kid math?"

A potential problem has arisen in placing April in classes that are appropriate to her ability level.

"She doesn't go to Joann for reading cause her reading isn't up to that level. And where her reading is, we cannot mainstream her into a third grade. That doesn't make sense either. So where they fit, we put them in. If they don't fit, they can't go out." (into the neighborhood and regular ed)

Even though Mrs. D.'s system of instruction is individualized, it is believed that April could not function there during other periods.

"We could look at it from a kid's point of view. I think April is on a second or third grade reading level. And I have sixth grade kids. I teach these kids seventh grade material and sixth grade material; some high sixth, some low sixth and I teach these kids fifth grade material. Some kids get fourth grade stuff. But how's it gonna look if she's all by herself doin' third grade stuff? The kids know. It wouldn't be good psychologically."

On the few occasions when April spoke to Mrs. D., her speech was distinct and understandable. During the research period, April never spoke to anyother students. At the end of the hour math class, April gets up, leaves and the young man comes to get her books.

BOXING AND SEPARATING DISABLED CHILDREN

One of the emphasized aspects of mainstreaming in the MacMillian School and in the sixth grade class is "treating everyone the same." Once the children defined as handicapped are mainstreamed, their designated labels are all but thrown out the window and they are treated like members of "the neighborhood." For many of the mainstreamed students this sense of belonging and being "one of the big kids" is a new phenomena. In spite of the matter of fact manner in which the mainstreamed students are included in all activities in the school and in the classroom, one can observe a number of ways in which those children are very much separated or "boxed."

Social Boxing

The predominant way that the handicapped students are "boxed" is through the lack of social interactions with other students, particularly typical children. It is assumed that all children have the necessary skills by which they can mingle, tease, joke and talk with their peers. Many of the mainstreamed children have not had years of experiences with large groups of different children. Even the entire second floor of the school is inaccessible to sixty two children in the school.

"Of course the social stuff is a big consideration but the kids with disabilities don't socialize. They don't mix academically either and really don't mix in anything," said Mrs. D..

At the Valentine's Day Dance there were many adults standing on the side of the gym not far from the children or young adults in wheelchairs. Some of the adults would move the kids in wheelchairs to the right and then the left in a gentle swaying motion. They would loop around and do circles as they pushed the chairs moving their bodies in time to the music.

In the sixth grade class, most of the children designated handicapped have their desks situated very much apart from the rest of the class. This kind of "boxing" or isolation removes many opportunities for peer interaction to take place. Sometimes when students go over to the pencil sharpener they get in the

way of Timmy, Raymond or David but this is usually rare.

When the class is involved in a large group activity and the students are working together in small teams, the mainstreamed students often end up together. By not mingling with other students, the typical and the disabled students do not have the chance to get to know or help one another.

Timmy wheels back and tells Raymond, David and the "new" boy that they had gotten it wrong. Someone said, "I told you that was not right." All four of these boys were sitting at the far table working "together" or in the same area. All of them had been labeled. They were not progressing through the directions as quickly as others in the class.

On the occasions when the class goes outside for ten to twenty minutes after lunch, the disabled students either do not go outside at all or they do something by themselves. The only person who sometimes will lean on a ledge and draw is Raymond. This kind of "boxing" occurs when students do not make the effort to join in activities, do not know how to be included, and when the typical children do not think to involve anyone else. One sixth grade girl tells about one time everyone was included in a game.

"Some of them just stay inside and others will go out and stay on the concrete part. Last year we played soccer and everyone played. We would push the kids in wheelchairs to the bases."

When the disabled children arrive at school in the morning, they have a separate entrance into the school. Their dismissal is also scheduled forty five minutes sooner than the rest of the school.

When a class trip is arranged, anyone in a wheelchair has to have their own bus take them. On one class trip to the city court house, Timmy was taken by himself in a large school bus that could accommodate his wheelchair. The rest of the class jammed into another bus.

Timmy sat there at the end of the hall by himself waiting for the signal to go. How strange that they would use a regular large bus just for Timmy and not even consider having others ride with him... We get out of the bus and the kids line up outside of the building. Timmy's bus was behind the first bus. The driver helps him out and wheels him up to the rest of the class. He was by himself.

The disabled are also "boxed" according to their academic abilities. None of the mainstreamed children qualify for the gifted program and all of them are working on the lower numbered math levels. These students make up a category sometimes referred to as "the dummies."

Mrs. D. told a boy to sit in Raymond's desk and Raymond to stay where he was. The boy murmured, "Now I'll flunk and Raymond will get a hundred."

When the Gifted Class meets three afternoons a week, the rest of the class that are not included are divided into two groups according to academic ability. All of the children designated handicapped go to one room and the rest go to another. This obvious "boxing" was evident on one occasion when the Gifted Class was going on:

As I walked past Mrs. G.'s classroom, I see kids sitting at desks and on the window ledge all facing in one direction; toward the back of the room away from the teacher's desk. They were all watching the television. The expression on the student's faces reminded me of someone who is bored and in a dull stupor. It was the TV blank-out, turn-off blues. These were the kids who were considered not too bright... While the "gifted" kids were being actively engaged and stimulated, the others were penalized by boredom and dull, ordinary work.

TYPICAL CHILDREN

The typical children live in the small surrounding residential community and most walk to school each day. Their families are, with some exceptions, middle class. The range of ways in which the sixth graders come dressed to school include brightly colored dungarees that are the appropriate length, fitted plaid shirts, colorful, jazzy t-shirts, down vests, crisp skirts and tops, as well as frayed dresses and pants, shirts that were too large or too small, sweaters with holes, shoes with heels and, of course, sneakers. Many of the sixth graders are conscious of the appearance of their hair. There are students with long braids, curly permanents, short pixie-like, and medium straight length as well as crew-cut, butch, hair in eyes, long, and medium to short lengths.

The diversity of students could be observed in their academic abilities as well. For example, during a math class students can be seen working on adding, subtracting, and dividing numbers as well as some basic algebra and geometry. Some students are working on a third, fourth, or fifth grade level and others on a seventh, eighth or ninth grade level. There are at least three students who have been tested to have IQ's above 140 and others who have tested below 80.

There are noticeable differences in the work styles of the students in the sixth grade. Some of the students are very self-reliant and can work on their own for long stretches at a time. Some students can accomplish more work within a given time slot than for other students.

There are also a number of students who need to be told what comes next in whatever they are doing.

The students who are used to making mistakes check with the teacher frequently. She is usually guiding them and making sure that students get their work completed with the minimum of mistakes. Sometimes the students are asked or permitted to work together as a team.

She says to two boys, who were about to work on the same math ditto, that if they wanted they could work on it together. Both boys smiled and were quite excited by this opportunity. They quickly find a spot together at a table.

Various students form groups. While the separation into groups is evident, they are not exclusive. When the teacher was in the process of planning a pre-seventh grade program, she identified several of these groups. They included: the mainstreamed students, those who are borderline in terms of ability (in "no-mans land"), those who will be retained and will repeat, and the gifted.

"These gifted kids are having a hard time with the other kids. They formed a click they named "The Pests." Their image to the other kids is that they are perfect and don't do anything wrong so they came up with that name. The other kids make fun of them. It's the same as with "The Dummies." They have problems too. The gifted kids develop what I call "The Big Head Syndrome" where they get too big for their britches." (Mrs. D.)

Mrs. D. introduces her daughter to Danny. He responds by saying, "Yes I'm Danny and I'm Gifted!"

David sits down fairly close to where I am. I ask him what is happening in the afternoon. "There's the gifted class and I go upstairs to another teacher."

In addition to the above groups, there is a clear social separation between the boys and the girls in the class. During a debate about the draft and women, the majority of the students expressed in a very matter-of-fact manner that men and women should be treated the same. However, this opinion does not demonstrate itself in this class. Examples from gym class competitions, separate seating in the classroom, dancing, talking, and lining up demonstrate that the sexes are quite separate. When the boys are on one side of the room and the girls on another, it is as if there are two different classes going on in the same room.

Another less obvious separation of groups in the class can be observed between the Black students and the White students. The White students do not sit with the Black students in the classroom or in the cafeteria. The boys seem to mingle with each other more so than the girls.

As the four White girls were talking, a Black girl had been looking on but she was seated two desks away from the four girls.

A record with a driving beat is put on and several girls begin moving around to the music. At first the only people moving were two or three Black girls.

INTERACTIONS AND HELPING

Among the students in the sixth grade class, there is a natural, spontaneous quality which enables them to respond to each other in a frank, familiar manner. They seem to be able to do or say just about anything with each other. If someone asks for some help from someone else, it is usually granted.

Rosemarie sits at her desk and Erin, one of the advanced students, walks by her. Rosemarie asked her a question and Erin stops to look at her paper. Erin responds in a matter-of-fact, easy way and then moves on.

One girl asked a boy near her if he could help her with the calculator. He went over to her and jiggled the wire in the socket and it worked again.

A reading teaching assistant explains that

"Mrs. D. has kids helping kids. If there is one who is good in one area, she's got another in the class who's having trouble in that area. You team them up and put them together."

One common way that the students, particularly the boys, relate to one another is through verbal put downs. A kind of "survival of the fittest" can be observed often between those in the class who do not have much status and those more respected members who can be teased or pounded upon. The person who receives the venting is usually someone who does not know how to defend her/himself. The teasing, poking, pushing and/or threatening statements can be directed toward anyone, typical or disabled. But it does not happen to

the strong-willed or the ones who can fight back. Once a student allows someone to take advantage once, that gives the person license to do it again. It is as if those who cannot defend themselves have not been told or taught how to do this. For some students this is a necessary skill to be learned in order to survive without a lot of hassles and problems:

Raymond goes over to Mark's desk and sits on top of it. Mark is the quiet one who reads a lot, doesn't like Disco and who made the intricate Valentine for Mrs. D.. He keeps to himself and doesn't talk a lot. He is academically extremely bright, I'm told. Raymond proceeds to pat Mark on the head. Mark, at first, ignored what Raymond was doing but couldn't help taking notice after the sixth pat. Perhaps he thought or hoped he would stop but Raymond didn't. "What are you doing, Raymond?" Mark asked. Raymond didn't say anything and even took Mark's cheeks between his hands and squeezed them together. Then Raymond did begin to get more fierce with his pats. It began to take on the appearance of minor physical abuse. (O.C. Mark was either extremely polite or just didn't know how to defend himself. I think it was the latter. Mark clearly did not like what was happening but could not figure out the tactic to stop what was going on.)

Mark goes over to the pencil sharpener and turns to the boy using the overhead projector. Mark says, "It should be raised. Up. You know up, not down. You get it? Up!" He demonstrates and accentuates with arm motions as he says those things. The other boy does not respond.

Raymond and Timmy were staring at each other for awhile as if they were having a who-can-come-up-with-the-most-fearless-or-toughest-face contest. Timmy turned away.

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Curriculum

At the MacMillian School different curricula are utilized for the regular ed classes and the special ed classes. For the five full time mainstreamed students and two to three part time mainstreamed students in the sixth grade class (who had come from special ed classes), the contrast between what they get in the regular class and what they get in special education is apparent in terms of both content and process. In the special ed classes four or five content areas are worked on the entire school year. The process by which the content is taught often involves asking a student to learn a particular concept continuously for months and even years. Many students reach a "critical learning stage" which is the point where a person is saturated and cannot or will not learn the concept. In the regular ed class, specifically the sixth grade class, all the required subject areas are covered and by presenting varied activities the students learn the basic material as well as additional content and concepts.

By doing multiplication or division or graphs, they learn something else... In special ed, they don't have to do sixth grade ancient history in social studies. They can do whatever they want. In Health you can say, The kids will learn self hygiene. They will learn how to wash their hair and clothes. Not much academics at all. They don't have textbooks like we have. (Mrs. Day)

I pass a small room where there are three kids in wheelchairs sitting in front of a TV monitor. Two of them were somewhat looking at it and the other looked to be asleep. It was like they were plugged into the TV as if it was insulin or penicillin. They sat there like zombies and the TV was baby sitting.

The mainstreamed students are exposed to more varied curriculum content material in the regular ed class and more opportunities to learn through the process of individualizing. Mrs. Day emphasizes the capabilities of her mainstreamed students. "Statistics show that kids moving from a special class to a regular class do considerably better."

David walked into the room after standing by the outside door with his thermometer. "WOW!" He exclaimed looking at the thermometer in his hand. "What happened?" I asked. "The temperature just went down so fast; like this." He motioned with his finger. (O.. Who says this kid is not getting something out of all this? How hard it would be to verbalize what he actually learned. Something this positive must be reaping some results.)

Timmy wheeled over to Mrs. Day and showed her his booklet which he had filled in. She immediately told him that he had the wrong numbers down for temperatures for the celsius readings. "There's no way you could have gotten that number. Go back and do the farenheit and celsius temperatures for three different locations in the room."

When a special ed student is mainstreamed, often the formalities of labeling and Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are either forgotten or not required.

To be in special ed you have got to have something wrong with you. If they are in a neighborhood class, then they are no longer labeled.

Some question exists around the value of the traditional IEP for the regular ed teacher as it is written at MacMillian. Mrs. Day expresses her thoughts:

I think the special ed teachers make up their own objectives. I think they make up their own units too. So in Health they probably do a whole thing on nutrition. Which was in essence on a ditto that said, 'Circle the fruit or a pineapple.' That's tough. You know, the way you'd do it would be to have the kids up to their ears in making lemonade. Then you give them this ditto and then they pass the IEP, see. Now if I had to do an IEP on the sixth grade material, I'd be writing for years. And for what?"

The sixth grade teacher was never involved in the writing of an IEP.

I think the major difference between special ed and the neighborhood classes is that they have to do IEP's which we don't. Which in the last four years I've never gotten a clarification on whether I'm supposed to do IEP's on my mainstreamed kids or not.

Getting Ready and Program Shopping

In the sixth grade, the teacher must keep in mind what her students are expected to know in the next grade. The Levels curriculum has assisted in standardizing the necessary content in math and reading. Much responsibility is placed on the teachers to get their students ready for middle school.

For the mainstreamed sixth graders "getting ready" includes finding a junior high school program or class that can accommodate their needs as well as coincide with the philosophy of the teachers who have had the students for numerous years. Some of the mainstreamed students have been at the MacMillian School for nine or more years. Caring and concern for the future of these students characterize the actions of the staff.

We keep up with these kids and we know what's going on with them after they leave our school. We take care of these kids cause it's so small in this place, you can't help it.

They get put into a system where they are with about six, seven and eight hundred kids. And you know they aren't gonna get what they need and then they get lost in the shuffle. That's the sad part. But you can't keep them forever and you have to let them go... A regular kid is going to survive out there one way or the other. These handicapped kids, they've got more against them from the beginning. They either make it or they don't make it.

"It worries me that they are going to make it and I don't have to read about them in the paper. Last year when the newspapers had the graduates of Hutton only one kid of mine did I see in with the graduating class. I would have had thirty kids that I would recognize. I only recognized one name; you want them to make it and contribute to society. And not wind up in the front section of the Metropolitan Section."

One of the actions taken before "letting go" the mainstreamed students is to go on "Shopping Expeditions" for possible programs in other schools. These expeditions are done quietly and clandestinely by the sixth grade teacher, a school social worker and one to two other teachers (usually fifth grade teachers) because the district does not approve of such shopping. The principal has told them not to go with too large a group that would look conspicuous. They go during school time and aides or substitutes cover for the teachers. As Mrs. D. pointed out,

"You see there is a rule that you can't choose a program because of the particular teacher. But everyone does choose the program that way anyway. It's supposed to be based on the number of kids in the class and what they do."

The formal procedure is to send the names of the students needing a junior high school program to the main district administration building offices and then they will find a program.

"If we waited and sent the name down, they would end up in a gifted program and it takes a whole year to place them there." (fifth grade teacher)

During one such shopping expedition to a junior high school, the women were greeted by a school guidance counselor who led everyone to a small, glassed-in, sound-proof study room in the library. A teacher for the neurologically impaired (N.I.) joined the group. They discussed the capabilities and needs of four of the six sixth grade mainstreamed students. Then the N.I. teacher explained his program and philosophies. After an hour, everyone was discussing specifically the type of goals, materials and possible mainstreaming that would take place with various students:

The N.I. teacher wanted to know if they wanted to know how he felt today and if they wanted a decision that day. Jane piped in, "Well yes." He said that he wanted to see copies of David's records and said that he didn't make the final decisions. Jane said that she had to do an update of his psychological tests and then would send it to him. (O.C. All this talk about others making decisions sounded like such jargon. The people in that room were making decisions right then and there and no one would bother to call them on it.)

Problems that contribute to the difficulty of finding programs for the mainstreamed students include: schools that are inaccessible, programs that do not integrate or mainstream, assigning "proper" labels, programs with very low expectations, programs that do not teach basic skills, the lack of appropriate programs at all and teaching styles that offend the search group. Mrs. Day specifies the problems as:

In order to be served in many of these programs, these kids have to have a label.

If we can't do any more shopping, I have to go back on my promise that I said that we'd look for a program for these kids. We've looked and it doesn't look too promising.

I have parents of eighth and ninth graders to this day come back and tell me that these kids are going crazy because there's a math teacher in Murphy. If I hear once more about this math teacher at Murphy. She must have horns the way she's been described to me. The kids hate her and this, that and another thing. She doesn't teach like you. She doesn't explain to me. And they're all failing math.

PARENTS

The parents of the mainstreamed children have been involved at various stages of their children's sixth grade year. The parents are included in any Committee on the Handicapped meetings that are held during the year. The sixth grade teacher calls them to inform them on possible program changes as well as academic progress. Mrs. D. has expressed the importance of the parents having an ally such as herself:

"They (parents) have a lot of confidence and that is a big thing right there. So that what you say to them they know that you are trustworthy and that you're not trying to slide something over on them."

"Because it's (the school) so small, we have terrific parent involvement. But I've always been close to my parents. I think it's because when something new is going to happen, you talk it up a lot and then later people will say, 'What took you so long?' So he (a superintendent) talks it up and people hear about it till they're sick of it and then when a decision has to be made, everyone is for it and use to it... You talk to your parents. They know you. They know what's going on. You say here's what I want to do and they say, 'Well didn't you do it yet?' And that works for everything."

OTHER SUPPORTIVE PERSONNEL

Joe C. spends all of his time in a small room that is connected to the gymnasium. Within the room is a doorway leading to a lavatory recently built for wheelchair accessibility. A column of old lockers line one wall. The room is bare and stark with nothing on the walls and no bookcases. Joe is thirty three years old and has been a reading teaching assistant at the MacMillian School for seven years. He attended the school in the 1950's for eight years, went to a city high school and then went to the University of Illinois. Joe has cerebral palsy and requires a wheelchair to move about.

Joe sees thirteen students, each who have multiple disabilities, on a one-to-one basis every day. He sees himself as a reading teacher, a counselor, a friend and a role model for his students:

"There are a lot of intangibles to things other than the basic reading and writing. It's also contact and knowing that somebody cares and somebody is trying. There's somebody they can come and talk to and this kind of thing. I end up doing a little counseling on the side because I figure if a kid comes in and he's got a problem and he needs to talk that day, then that's the primary thing we should be concerned with. We can really do the reading later."

"Most of these kids have never seen somebody my age that's in a wheelchair and independent doing what I do. Because back a number of years ago when I first started, it took me about six months to convince the kids that I was one of their teachers. Because in their heads you can only be a teacher if you are walking around."

For several years Joe has taken a group of his students to his apartment on a field trip where he makes lunch for them:

"I feel better about teaching kids that way. I feel I have more to give by doing that than, in some ways, what I do here. In effect, anybody could sit here and do what I do. But not anybody could take the kids on a field trip like that and show them what it's like and what it's all about. It's really kind of a high for me."

Dealing with stereotypic images and negative attitudes toward disabilities is something Joe confronts directly.

"If it's on a one-to-one situation and a kid does something, then I have the opportunity. I'll call him over and sit down with him and talk to him a little bit. And nine times out of ten, he won't do that again. I just say, 'Hey, look, I'm different than you but you

have two feet and I've got four wheels. And that's about it. You can do some things that I can't do, but my head's on straight.' Nothing really heavy because if you do that, the kid's gonna not get it in his head anyway."

Joe sometimes sees some of the mainstreamed students but usually works with those with more severe conditions. Whether or not a disabled student ought to be considered for integration depends, Joe feels, on the severity of the disability.

"I've got one child now who I think is pretty bright but he's basically a non-verbal kid. That kind of limits things. We use the communication board. A lot of times I can tell what he wants and what he's trying to tell me before he really has to do it."

Integration is viewed as a "really good idea" by Joe and should be determined by whether or not a student needs to be further challenged.

"It's got to be done on an individual basis. You can't make any blanket generalizations. You just start someplace and you go from there. It's based on how positive the experience is... You don't just throw a kid in there and say let's see what you're gonna find."

According to Joe, integration is restricted at the MacMillian School for several reasons. One is the inaccessibility of the second floor. Second, not many of the students who are in special ed are being recommended for mainstreaming,

"There are kids I might try to do it with but I'm not in the position to do that. I'm just a little 'ole indian and not a chief."

Third is the receptiveness of regular classroom teachers to take a child from special ed.

"There are some teachers that are scared stiff that if you look at a kid cross-eyed, he's gonna cry or wet on the floor or something else. And that's not the way it works. It takes a long time to change attitudes."

When a student from special ed is about to be introduced to other students in a neighborhood class, Joe believes strongly in "the least preparation" of the class.

"If I was gonna come into your class and you say, 'Here's Joe and he's got CP and he needs help with this, that and another thing,' You put all the other kids on the defensive and they think my god, how will we deal with this kid. But if you just kind of invite the kid in there and your aide introduced me and you kind of let things happen naturally; and you don't sit there and let someone beat me over the head or something like that. There's certain information probably you'll need to

explain to the kids but don't give them any more than they need. Because it will mess up the natural process. You deal with me as a person and not with some special thing that's got a problem that you've got to bite your nails over.

Principal

Mr. Massey is a man in his late fifties. A short grayish-black mustache appears on his upper lip. He is thin in stature, about five foot eight inches and has a protruding belly that makes his shirts fit tightly. He wears checked pants and a patterned shirt. Mr. Massey does not pretend to be a city slicker and would more easily fit in any rural environment. When he talks he ends many sentences with a kind of uncomfortable, yet warm, smile.

One may be able to find Mr. Massey in his little office talking to staff, children or answering the school phone. Mr. Massey can also be found carrying things around the halls or in any one of the classrooms. He roams in and out, sits down in class for awhile or even covers for a teacher if the need arises:

I know all the kids and the teachers. I'm in all the classes almost every day. They don't think anything of it. They go right on with their work.

Mr. Massey peaks into a busily working classroom and tries to get the teacher's attention. She comes over to him and he asks her if she had decided on entering someone in a math contest. The teacher said she thought it would be fine, that she would fill out the sheet and give it to him. "This is a newly mainstreamed boy who has been doing so well in math and we think the math contest will be something he can do well," he says to me.

On one occasion, Mr. Massey spent an entire morning in a second grade class covering for a teacher who was attending a "Committee" or "team" meeting. This was a meeting concerning a typical child who was having problems in reading.

Mr. Massey has been able to get several special services located at his school. One is the inclusion of an occupational therapist. (Having an occupational therapist in the school had been illegal in the state.) The school already has a physical therapist. Another feature the school has of which the principal is proud is a heated swimming pool.

It's warmer than we'd really like but it's for them. It's a therapy as well as a recreational thing.

Mr. Massey has had something to do with the eighty or more teaching assistants, aides and volunteers who work at the school daily. He has also been instrumental in having a Pre-First grade class for developmentally delayed children at the school. Mr. Massey repeats often that when the children in the Pre-First class go back into a regular class, they will not have any special ed label attached to them.

Mr. Massey describes certain teachers in the school as "doing a marvelous job" and "good people". According to Mr. Massey an excellent teacher is someone:

"who is willing to work with any kind of kid. I'm talking about any color of any kind. Or a kid with a handicap who she feels she can do something for or something with or do something together. It is a teacher who, for the most part, is knowledgeable and is willing to individualize. Because if you're getting in the area of mainstreaming ninety nine times out of a hundred, you're going to come up with a kid who is behind grade level in one area or another by virtue of the fact that he's been out of school so long."

"You've got to have a teacher who respects children as individuals... Treat them with respect. And generally and usually it's going to be returned by the kid. The teacher cannot be a bleeding heart kind of a push-over. Do your own thing."

As Mr. M. sat down briefly with the sixth grade teacher, Mrs. D., he summarizes his feelings in regard to the teachers who are involved with mainstreaming by stating:

"You have to have good teachers like (Mrs. D.)."

"Teachers have to be willing to accept these kids and this is very important. If they aren't open, then it doesn't work very good."

IS MAINSTREAMING WORKING IN THIS ENVIRONMENT?

The integration of students with handicapping conditions in the observed regular sixth grade classroom is apparent. With four mainstreamed full-time and two to three others part-time, there are more students designated handicapped in this regular education class than in any other in this school. But the sheer numbers of students does not inform us of whether or not this integration is working or is successful. The ways in which the program is and is not working can be briefly summarized to help us understand the successful and unsuccessful aspects of this mainstreaming program.

The system of individualizing instruction is an important and strong aspect of this mainstreaming program and contributes to it's success. The standardized Levels curriculum that is used district-wide lends itself to allowing students to work at different levels of difficulty and abstraction. The sixth grade teacher has the creative foresight to organize and present the Levels curriculum so that the varied ability levels of the students might be challenged and developed. This kind of sequencing of concepts allows for challenging and successful completion of required tasks. By allowing the students more responsibility in their own learning, offering choices to the students and having concrete tasks for them to engage in, the students were progressing at their own rate.

Related to the individualized presentation of the Levels curriculum are the high expectations placed upon the students. While each student is working at his or her own developmental level, the teacher expects and demands as much from the disabled students as she does from the typical students. This takes some getting use to for the students who have come from special ed classes. But they do progress and achieve in this setting.

Even scheduling contributes to the smoothness of the program. When a schedule of daily activities is being proposed to mainstream a particular student from special ed into a regular ed class, the integration process is often organized

on a gradual basis. This allows for the academic and social adjustments to occur in a more humane, natural way for the student rather than overwhelming the student with change and newness all at once. When the classes switch for reading or math those students who are mainstreamed full-time receive out-of-class adjunct services such as occupational therapy, physical therapy or remedial help. For one student a math lab teacher agreed to come into the math class to work with the boy instead of requiring him to leave the class, a requirement which could add to feelings of difference.

In considering programmatic aspects that do not work in this setting, it is necessary to separate the total school environment from the in-class environment of the observed sixth grade classroom. While they definitely impact on one another, the success of one does not necessarily reflect the success of the other. The overall mainstreaming that occurs in the school in general cannot be considered a successful or even a good example of a mainstreaming program. The sixth grade class, however, could be viewed as successful. It does, however, have some problems that impinge on its smooth working.

The degree of integration of students with handicapping conditions within this elementary school is minimal. There are several factors that contribute to the prevalence of segregation of these students. One is the inaccessibility of the entire second floor of the school which limits the numbers of students from entering numerous classes. The disabled students are thus physically denied entry into "the neighborhood" and "real" world of the second floor.

Another contributing factor is the minimal involvement of parents, teachers and principal in encouraging and seeking more integration of more disabled students. Only in extreme situations are students considered for mainstreaming. The student must not be "too" physically disabled, must already be socially conforming, and be able to do "some" basic skills. If a parent requests a regular ed placement rather strongly and persistently, integration may occur. Even special ed teachers in the school do not advocate for a child's integration to occur. Teacher expect-

tations are extremely low in the special ed classes. Thus, the special ed program is not geared toward developing those skills and capabilities that are necessary to even be considered for regular ed placement. Further, there is no coordination of programming between special ed and regular ed teachers.

Consideration of regular ed placement for a disabled student is done so informally that it is not anyone's responsibility or concern. Difficulties in making placements have also resulted because of the lack of involvement of individuals involved with the disabled student. When integration is being discussed, it is essential to involve all of the staff who have and will have contact with the student. If this does not occur, then certain individuals will feel less responsibility for the already-made decision and in the success of the student in "making it." For example, on one occasion, the sixth grade teacher referred to April, one of the designated handicapped students, as "just popping into Math class one day. I didn't sit in on any of the meetings on her and I have reservations about her placement." Mrs. D. would, it seems, have more of a stake in April's success if she had been invited to those meetings.

One factor that ought to be considered in assessing how a program is working is the social integration of the students. Within the observed regular ed classroom problems of social isolation (I have called this "boxing.") exist among the mainstreamed students. If students are being "boxed" then this is contrary to the ideals of integration. This "boxing" of those who are "different" is viewed as the individual's problem and is thus not something that a teacher or principal thinks they can or should address. There is a contradiction here between the observed "social boxing" and the teacher's belief that "everyone is treated the same." That disabled students in the sixth grade are treated differently was discussed earlier. Even if peer teaching is utilized, it is often done among the lower functioning members of the class. No real efforts are made to deal with the separation of the mainstreamed students.

Lastly, the clandestine exploration of feasible junior high school programs for the graduating disabled students has become a real problem for the regular ed teacher and the continued workings of the mainstreamed program. "Adequate" programs are scarce and it is necessary to do scouting or "program shopping" to see what is available. If the district openly allowed and planned for those who have and feel responsible for the student to confer with others, there would be less of a feeling of dumping and sending the student "down the tube."

The P.H. School and the staff are dedicated to providing a good education for their students in a small, intimate environment. Past reputations about the school as a totally segregated setting are unfounded today. With small classes and experienced staff, the school resembles a private school environment. Various staff stress that when a student is mainstreamed that individual should have a "successful experience" and not be "low man on the totem pole."

I believe that the mainstreaming that is going on there is working well in regard to the academic aspects of schooling. The system of individualizing in the sixth grade class is one that ought to receive particular attention and can be a powerful model for others. Yet no program is without its potential weak points, aspects that need to be improved. Of particular concern are the social aspects discussed earlier. Perhaps through training workshops, in-service, etc. those teachers and administrators who are so dedicated to children can expand their awarenesses of the possibilities of enhancing the school's mainstreaming programs.

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