ABSTRACT
            This study assessed which factors early childhood regular
education classroom teachers, grades kindergarten through third, perceive as
promoting or hindering the successful practice of inclusion. Three research
questions formed the basis of this study: (1) How do early childhood
classroom teachers (K-3) describe their perceptions of inclusion? (2) How do
they describe their perceptions of successful inclusion? and (3) How do they
describe their perceptions of unsuccessful inclusion? Six teachers were
randomly selected from survey respondents to participate in four interviews.
Findings showed that the teachers all shared the same basic beliefs regarding
the importance of inclusion. Teachers' comments regarding successful versus
unsuccessful inclusion revealed four themes: training, class load, support,
and time. Recommendations drawn from the study include the following: (1)
keep class size to a reasonable number; (2) keep case loads of resource
personnel reasonable; (3) provide each regular education classroom with a
consistent paraprofessional assigned for no less than half a day; (4) do not
expect regular education teachers to deliver the instruction alone; (5)
provide time for planning and collaboration; (6) keep inservice training
practical and relevant; (7) advise and evaluate new para-educators at the
time of hiring regarding new tasks that come with inclusion; (8) provide
comprehensive training; (9) have administrators spend time teaching in an
inclusive classroom; (10) provide for evaluation; and (11) provide a mediator
for teachers. (Contains 26 references.) (EV)

Running head: EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF INCLUSION

Early Childhood Classroom Teachers'
Perceptions of Successful Inclusion:
A Multiple Case Study

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Introduction

In 1993, The U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, reported that nearly five million children, ages 3-11, with special needs were receiving special education services. Sixty-nine percent of those children with special needs were included in regular education classrooms 40% of the time (in Winter, 1997). Regular education classroom teachers in early childhood settings of grades kindergarten through third grade are the teachers who give students and parents the initial exposure to inclusion, as well as to the school experience itself. These regular education teachers are often the first to diagnose students with special needs. Even when the student comes with a diagnosis established, these teachers will be responsible for providing for the needs of that student, as well as the needs of the rest of the class, while maintaining a classroom of mutual respect and academic standards. This initial experience is critical since it forms the foundation upon which the later school years and experiences depend; and the positive and negative perceptions, thoughts, and experiences of these early childhood regular education teachers are at the core of the issue of successful inclusion.

Why are some early childhood regular education classroom teachers successful with inclusion, while others are not successful? Can individual schools and school districts help to maintain or increase the rate and level of success for individual early childhood regular education teachers? Recent research has been done on the current practices of inclusion but this research cannot answer these questions satisfactorily. Many of the recent studies have been quantitative, or did not address in depth, the personal perceptions of the regular education classroom teachers, the ones responsible for the implementation of the practices of inclusion (Banerji & Dailey, 1995; Sapon-Shevin, 1996; Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995). Recent literature has called for interview studies with groups of teachers as being "beneficial in identifying the specific complaints about mainstreaming" (Bender, Vail, & Scott, 1995, p. 93). Even in cases of studies that have been qualitative, most of those have been done with teachers involved in the traditional classroom with pull-out programs for the students with special needs. There has been little done with the perceptions of teachers who are currently working in an inclusive setting with support from special education (Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996).

Inclusion is not going to go away. Students "will continue to be mainstreamed. Thus, valid and effective procedures and methods for successfully integrating children...into regular

classrooms must be identified and employed" (Myles & Simpson, 1990, p. 238). The issue is not whether inclusion works. The issue is how and why it works. Where inclusion is working, we should be asking teachers what or who is helping them to be successful; and where inclusion is not working, we should be asking those teachers what or who is keeping them from being successful; and we should further investigate whether that situation can be changed for the better. We should be asking teachers "what *they* are experiencing, how *they* interpret their experiences, and how *they* themselves structure the social world" (Psathas in Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 32) of the inclusive classroom.

The purpose for conducting this study was to describe those factors that early childhood regular education classroom teachers, grades kindergarten through third grade, perceive as promoting or hindering the successful practice of inclusion. Three research questions formed the basis of this study:

1. How do early childhood classroom teachers (K-3) describe their perceptions of inclusion?

2. How do early childhood classroom teachers (K-3) describe their perceptions of successful inclusion?

3. How do early childhood classroom teachers (K-3) describe their perceptions of unsuccessful inclusion?

Method

Participants

Selection of the participants was made from the pool of early childhood staff who teach kindergarten through third grade in a small urban full-inclusion district, serving approximately 5,000 students, with ten elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. The central administration had information, from a phone survey conducted in March of 1996, that showed 50% of the total teaching staff considered themselves to be unsuccessful with inclusion, but there was no information as to why these teachers felt this way.

For the present study, a survey was sent to all K-3 staff members (n = 75) in the district. This comprehensive survey asked each staff member to rate themselves as successful or unsuccessful with inclusion. The responses were divided into the two categories of successful

(n=34) and unsuccessful (n=13). Three teachers were randomly selected from each category for a total of six participants for the interview stage of the study.

Qualitative research is usually based on purposeful selection of informants in an effort to select information-rich participants. However, the decision to make this selection randomly stemmed from two reasons. First, this random selection would present a balanced view of inclusion across the district. Second, since there was a small pool to draw from, the random sampling avoided any "perception of favoritism in selecting interviewees" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 87).

The six teachers selected all had, or were working on, their master's degree. Both male and female teachers were included; and all six were employed full-time. Two of these teachers had been with the district (0-5) years, two of them (6-10) years, and two of them (25+) years, with a mean of 13.67. The grades taught by these teachers were: kindergarten (1), first grade (2), first-second combination room (1), and third grade (2). These teachers represented four of the ten elementary schools in the district, with two of those buildings housing both a teacher with a self-rating of successful with a teacher with a self-rating of unsuccessful.

Procedures

Data collection. Each informant participated in four interviews, resulting in a total of 24 tape recorded interviews. An hour was allotted for each interview, even though some interviews were shorter or longer. The initial interview protocol of twenty questions was based on information from the literature that outlined strategies, teacher styles, management styles, and attitudes that have strong effects on inclusion in the regular education classroom. These question areas served to differentiate elements of successful inclusive classrooms from unsuccessful ones and were used as the basis for each participant's first two semi-structured interviews. Themes and patterns that emerged during the first two interviews formed the semi-structured basis for the last two interviews for each of the six teachers. Besides the transcribed interviews, memos, participant checking sheets, and an interviewer's running journal were also included in the data base.

The collection of data was done during the second semester of the school year so that the participants had worked with inclusion for more than one-half of the year; and the participants had had enough time to actually formulate concrete thoughts about inclusion as a whole rather than just give reactionary responses to individual instances. The goal was to obtain substantial descriptions

of inclusion during continuous contact during the last quarter of the school year. The examination was strictly limited to the issues that surrounded inclusion from the perspective of the regular education early childhood classroom teachers involved.

Design and data analysis. The advantages of using case studies allow one to enter unique situations that otherwise might not be available, to see those situations in a new light, and to feel no personal defensiveness about the situations (Donmoyer, 1990). In this study these advantages allow the reader to enter six distinctive inclusion classrooms and be able to understand those situations from the perspective of each classroom teacher.

A multiple-case study design allowed for patterns to emerge that would become systems of ideas linking the individual perceptions of the classroom teachers (Neuman in Creswell, 1994). Examining one classroom teacher, in one classroom, in one building, and in one set of circumstances would not have produced the broad picture that is needed to understand why, in the shared setting of one school district, some teachers feel successful with inclusion while others feel unsuccessful. By using the multiple-case design, similarities and differences were found between teachers and settings; and common themes were then explored in terms of providing a solid base for the practice of inclusion.

The actual data were repeatedly reviewed, evaluated, and studied for content. Steps for analysis, outlined by Tesch (1990), included a process of progressive decontextualization and recontextualization.

Validity and reliability. Internal validity in qualitative research is described by Lincoln and Guba (1985) as *credibility*. Credibility is achieved by conducting the data collection in such a way as to allow the findings to be reliable and to allow the participants to verify the findings. In this study, credibility was established by checking the transcriptions of the audio tapes, conducting member checks on three occasions, ensuring persistent involvement of the participants over a prolonged time frame, using rich description, and having an external inquiry audit conducted by a qualified but disinterested outside researcher.

External validity refers to the generalizability or transferability of the findings of the study to other contexts. This transferability depends on the similarity of the new context in relation to the one in which the study was conducted. However, even without knowledge about the other contexts, one can assume that the results would apply to other settings, provided there is an

absence of a reason why the results would not apply more generally (Maxwell, 1996; Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

This study is limited by the fact that both the teachers' ratings of success and the descriptions of classroom experience with inclusion were based on self perceptions rather than on observations. However, while one's perception may not always be accurate, that perception is often what creates a self-fulfilling prophecy in that people are often just exactly what they perceive themselves to be. Therefore, perceptions may be just as important as hard facts in determining what is real. Further, other sources cite teacher perceptions as a possible impediment towards the implementation of inclusion (Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995).

Findings

Teacher Beliefs Regarding Inclusion

Which students are considered inclusion students? The six teachers indicated a strong belief that children who are included are not just students with a special education diagnosis or label. Comments such as "we all have special needs" and "there's not a child in our classroom that's not at risk" indicated a conviction that while the focus was on children who are identified as having special needs, these six teachers considered that any student who has demonstrated a particular need--behaviorally, emotionally, educationally, or physically--should be considered a student with special needs regardless of whether a special education label had been assigned. For this study, the criteria for deciding whether a child had special needs was whether the teacher had referred the child to the Student Assistance Team. The Student Assistance Team (SAT) is a building team made up of the school administrator, psychologist, counselor, and other teacher representatives who serve as the initial group to hear about students with classroom problems. The function of this group is to help the classroom teacher find ways to accommodate the child in the classroom, or when necessary, recommend evaluation techniques for potential special needs diagnosis.

General perceptions of inclusion. The six teachers all shared the same basic beliefs regarding the importance of inclusion and those shared beliefs became the springboard from which to tell their stories. Both successful and unsuccessful teachers made positive remarks about the practice of inclusion, particularly from a stance of the critical value of a sense of community:

• I believe that socialization is extremely important, and that they [students with special needs] need to socialize with their peers.

• I've always had special needs kids in my room...it was always just refreshing for me to know that they could come in and they could feel safe, they could feel secure, they could feel accepted.

After reading how much these teachers believed in inclusion, one would readily agree that "to be against inclusion is like being against God, Country, Motherhood, and Elvis" (Long, 1994, p.14). But, however much these teachers believed in the concepts of inclusion, they each had concerns or qualifying remarks about inclusion:

• This [inclusion]would not work without the help.

• I feel like we're not certain what that child needs...and that sometimes those children have a lot of...lost time because we're trying to figure out...what will best meet their needs.

• I've had to deal so much with disruptive, destructive behavior that the group, as a whole, suffers...I have been kicked, I have been bopped in the head...I've been called a shit head...it's...been a very aggressive situation.

Emergent Themes

The teachers verbalized what made, or potentially made, the difference between a state of perceived successful inclusion versus one of unsuccessful inclusion. Analysis of the data revealed four themes:

• training: which included college, graduate classes, and district inservice,

• class load: which included class size, number of students with special needs, severity and range of needs of students, as well as extenuating circumstances,

• support: which included support provided by the regular education paraprofessional assigned to the classroom, the special education staff, as well as the building administration, and

• time: which included time needed for planning lessons, making adjustments to

lessons, making or procuring materials for students for special needs, as well as

time needed for collaboration with relevant personnel.

Theme I: Training. All six participants stated emphatically that their undergraduate training

did "nothing" to prepare them for inclusion. Since these teachers range from 1 to 40 years with

the district, their preservice training took place across a lengthy time spectrum; and, yet, they

indicated that they shared the same traditional lack of preparation for inclusion.

Only one teacher, with a master's in early childhood, felt graduate training helped with

inclusion. That training and the philosophy behind early childhood education gave this teacher "the

flexibility to look at kids differently...whole kids." Since graduate training seemed to prepare them

so little for inclusion, these teachers stated that the bulk of the preparation for inclusion had to

come through inservice training from the district.

Inservice training provided by the district received mixed reviews. No clear division of

thought, or agreement, was evident between successful and unsuccessful teachers. Two of the

participants positively stated:

• It's [inservice] always beneficial...you always learn one or two new things.

• Everything I've learned [about inclusion] has come from inservices.

Another participant's remarks about a recently held inservice session on inclusion stressed negative

feelings:

• I was very disappointed. I wanted some solutions...I didn't want the research. I

wanted to hear what to do with it.

The teachers acknowledged that problems with training related directly to the characteristics

of inclusion itself:

• I don't know that...anybody can do that [provide the answers the teachers want].

That is what is so difficult about inclusion. There isn't one group of children that

are the same [as another]. There is not any teacher that's going...to deal with these

situations or scenarios the same way.

Training for inclusion could lead more directly to personal feelings of success for each teacher. At

this point, the relationship appeared to be rather haphazard or arbitrary:

• I used to think it was training [that would help with inclusion]. I used to think I

needed training...and I don't think that any longer, that that's really possible,

because everyone is so different...I don't think there's a formula. I think you have

some strategies that you would use for any child. I just think we need more

certified people.

Theme II: Class load. For positive experiences with inclusion, a classroom should have

six or less students with "identified disabilities in the mild to moderate range or other related

problems that make them candidates for school failure, and if the identified disabilities are more

severe and necessitate more support, fewer special education or at-risk students should be added to

these classroom rolls" (Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996, p. 257). How did the

classrooms of the six teachers in this study match up with those standards? And, how much did

class size or load relate to individual teacher's perception of success or lack success with inclusion?

Briefly put, the teachers who perceived themselves as successful with inclusion had smaller

sized classes and fewer students with special needs than did the teachers who perceived themselves

as unsuccessful with inclusion.   Of those who considered themselves successful, class sizes

ranged from 13 to 21, with as few as two and no more than four special needs children included.

For those who considered themselves unsuccessful, class sizes were slightly larger, ranging from

18 to 21, but the number of special needs children included were much higher, with seven in two

cases and eight in the other.

Furthermore, there were also disparities in the conditions and severity of the special needs

children in these classrooms. Among the successful teachers, one had a class containing one child

with ADHD and two non-readers, one with hearing impairments.   A second teacher had a class

with two children diagnosed as clinically depressed and two non-readers, one of whom was also

receiving speech services. The third had a class with one autistic child and one language impaired child. By contrast, among the teachers who perceived themselves as unsuccessful, one teacher's class contained one autistic child, one child with severe speech impairments, one who received other speech services, and four students qualified for services in the area of reading for students who are considered at-risk. A second teacher in this group had a class where four children showed behavioral disorders, two of them identified to receive special services while the other two were not. Of the two identified students, one was on medication for hyperactivity disorder while the other one was not since the parents had declined to explore the situation more fully. Further, an additional student was diagnosed with autism and two more required speech services. In the classroom of the third unsuccessful teacher one student required speech services, while seven others showed behavioral disorders or attention deficit disorders. Only two of these students with behavioral disorders had been officially identified at the time of the interviews.

So, for these teachers' perceptions about their success with inclusion, how important were these disparities between the two sets of classrooms in terms of class load? Prior research evidence indicated that attitudes towards inclusion "covary directly with the intensity of the mainstreaming/inclusion and the severity of the disability categories represented (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996, p. 71). For the teachers in the current study, their collective comments highlighted the impact and severity of the disparities. The teachers who perceived themselves as successful with inclusion made remarks that were more positive or less intense than those of the teachers who perceived themselves as unsuccessful with inclusion. For example, in describing an autistic child in the classroom, a successful teacher said:

> • He is able to come in and is able to sit down now, and kind of get in with what we're doing, where at the beginning of the year...he just yelled out or made noises.

A teacher who had a self-rating of unsuccessful had more intense remarks about an autistic student in that classroom:

> • By the end of the day...I need ten minutes away...or I'm going to scream because no matter what he has on his mind, he has to tell you ASAP...he is also off task

90% of the time. He will get nothing done unless you sit with him one-to-one.

Furthermore, perceptions were complicated by extenuating circumstances that both sets of teachers described as impacting the classroom and the practice of inclusion:

> • These days we have so many kids walking through the door with emotional
> needs, it's a wonder any of 'em learn. We're seeing kids coming to school
> dressed...inappropriately, not having had nourishment. They've got maybe a
> different Dad every month. I've heard it all. Like maybe the police came last night.
> They [the children] never know what's going to happen.

Moreover, all the teachers interviewed agreed that the behavioral needs were getting stronger and more difficult to handle. In addition, these were the students for whom it was difficult to get any help since the norms for identifying these students are very narrow, and the identification process takes a long time:

> • I'm stuck in a room with four walls and some kids who are not safe--dangerous
> children...I have been kicked. I have been bopped in the head...I've been called a
> shit head...it's...been a very aggressive situation...we have had some choking and
> punching.

Therefore, there exist several extenuating circumstances that also need to be factored into the equation when examining class load. Every class has an inherent or natural range of needs because of the simple dispersement of individuals in those classrooms. In that natural range, the highest student will likely be five times higher than the lowest student (Jenkins, Jewell, Leicester, Jenkins, & Troutner in Minke, et al, 1996). However, when one factors in the ratio load of the room and any extenuating circumstances, one can see that the teacher's perception of success or lack of success with inclusion will be affected. The class load is "geometric instead of numerical." One must look at the three-dimensional pattern, the numbers in context, rather than just the numerical representation.

Using the entire sample of 47 returned surveys to further investigate the relationship of simple class size to teacher perception of success with inclusion, a point-biserial correlation was calculated (r_{pb} = .38, p<.01). In the present study, the continuous variable was class size, which was obtained from the district monthly enrollment report. The dichotomous variable was the teacher's self-rating as successful or unsuccessful with inclusion. Thus, the smaller the class size, the more likely teachers were to perceive themselves as being successful with inclusion.

Theme III: Support. Regular classroom teachers involved with inclusion may feel pressure from the additional load in the classroom. This situation is one that "the effective involvement of additional people may ameliorate" (Thomas, 1992, p. 20). Adding additional people, or hands, is assumed to be good, no matter what; but the reality is that "co-teaching is like a professional marriage" (Friend & Cook, 1996, p. 50). Each person in the relationship must exhibit a willingness to change or modify styles and preferences, to work with the others even when there is not agreement, to share the responsibility and the rewards, to rely on and trust the other to handle tasks that one handled alone and in one's own way previously, to make the advantages of this relationship outweigh the disadvantages, and to provide benefits for children (Friend & Cook, 1996; Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bahr, 1994; Thomas, 1992). Further, the "marriage" in the classroom must have a shared ethic about work, and a shared philosophy of teaching (Minke, et al, 1996).

The six participants interviewed agreed that "the teacher can't do this [inclusion] alone." The regular classroom teacher needs helping hands, both literally and figuratively. The sources of support for inclusion represented substantially in the data were the classroom paraprofessional, the special education teachers, the special education paraprofessionals, and the building administrator. The quantity and quality of such supports had a role in the individual teacher's perception of success, or lack of success, with inclusion.

The successful teachers, who had 3, 4, and 2 students with special needs, respectively, reported conditions that ranged from satisfactory to ideal. One teacher had only 1-1/2 hour of a regular education paraprofessional each day, and one-half hour of pull-out assistance from the special education teacher. However, this was satisfactory because of the team-teaching situation in which this teacher was involved. Another teacher reported assistance from regular and special education paraprofessionals, as well as from the special education teacher. These 3 people rotated

throughout the day, spending forty minutes each time one of them arrived:

> • I always have someone for reading. I always have someone for math. Everyday.
> I always have somebody ever session of writer's workshop...they are here and
> they see the lesson that I present, then they know how I'm teaching it...we're
> consistent that way.

The third successful teacher also had very positive and complete coverage, with an hour and a half each day from the regular education paraprofessional, with special education paraprofessionals covering the two students with special needs during anytime that those students were in the regular classroom.

Of the three unsuccessful teachers, with 7, 7, and 8 students with special needs, respectively, only one reported sufficient support. This teacher had a three-hour period of coverage from the regular education paraprofessional, as well as coverage provided by rotating special education paraprofessionals for the times that the children with severe special needs were in the classroom. However, another teacher in the group received only 40 minutes of coverage from the regular paraprofessional, and only one hour and fifteen minutes of coverage from a special education paraprofessional; but the last paraprofessional was regularly pulled from this room:

> • Oh, I just don't plan for them to show up. Because my students are not
> physically disabled...or they have to have meds administered through tubes...mine
> [paraprofessionals] are the first to be pulled.

The third unsuccessful teacher reported a lack of support. This teacher had a classroom paraprofessional from August to February, but one who was not helpful:

> • She [the paraprofessional] wasn't doing what I wanted her do do, even though I
> had written all my expectations out.

Even though a new paraprofessional came in March, there was not sufficient time to completely regroup. Further, the only other support was coming from a special education paraprofessional for

a half hour in the morning and afternoon. And, this paraprofessional was regularly pulled to:

• Help a child in a wheelchair who needs help going to the restroom, who needs help going to recess...it's very legitimate. I still don't think it's right.

Comparing the comments of the successful and unsuccessful teachers, one can see that the quantity and quality of the support did make a difference in the teachers' perceptions of success with inclusion. The classes with a lighter load had more positive support; and the teachers perceived themselves to be successful. Two out of three classes with the heavier load had less support; and the teachers perceived themselves to be unsuccessful.

There existed no evidence, from either group, of special education teachers sharing delivery of instruction to incorporate cross-disciplinary practices (King-Sears, 1996):

• In the...years I've been here, I have never experienced, even come close to experiencing, that situation.

Two of the successful teachers were positive about the building administrator's support for inclusion, in terms of procuring funds for materials, finding people to help, or just listening. The other teacher did not find the administration supportive at all, but was not bothered by that because of other supports.

One unsuccessful teacher reported that administrative support for inclusion was available, but that support had to be sought out by the individual teacher. The other two teachers were less positive. One simply said that the administrators do not know the problems with inclusion in the classroom. The last one had more pointed remarks to make:

• I think that if somebody transferred to my building and they've been in a building where there was a really high level of success with inclusion because of the building administrator's support...if they came to my building, oh, my gosh, they, they wouldn't know what to do.

Teachers, to feel successful with inclusion, need an administrator who is not merely supportive of inclusion but wholeheartedly believes in the broader concept of inclusion as one that will make education better for all children (Blenk & Fine, 1995). As one of the participants, self-rated as unsuccessful, pointed out, there needs to be supervision:

> • You have the administration come down, the people that are trained in this area, you have them look at it and you have them assess it, and you have them say, "This is working, this isn't working. We need to look at this. We need to change this."

This is where administrators make the difference between teachers who feel successful with inclusion and those who do not.

Theme IV: Time. Time is a valuable commodity in any classroom, or for any teacher, especially because of the unique sense of it as a resource. "Time is irreversible and irreplaceable, moving at a fixed and invariable rate, regardless of whether one wishes to spend it or save it" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 78). However, time becomes even more valuable for regular classroom teachers when inclusion is a part of that classroom. If students with special needs are going to remain in the classrooms, regular education teachers may feel a concern that "they are already overburdened with job responsibilities and have inadequate time to complete their present work" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). Inclusion creates a demand for even more work, and, therefore, the need for more time.

Both sets of teachers, the ones who rated themselves successful with inclusion as well as the ones who rated themselves unsuccessful with inclusion gave time from their private lives to school and planning for students. This indicated a lack of time to plan in general; and such a lack of time is one of the disadvantages of inclusion for many teachers (Sardo-Brown & Hinson, 1995). Inclusion is part of school reform; and "the single most essential ingredient in any school reform effort is usually reported to be time" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 79). Yet, when considering teacher use of time, if both groups contained teachers who were using their lunch time, bathroom time, or home time to plan, why did one group consider themselves to be successful while the other group felt unsuccessful?

The teachers who perceived themselves to be successful with inclusion had some positives

that the other teachers did not have. One teacher definitely spent a lot of extra time at school for planning, and stated that the issue of time was "stressful because I think, how am I going to get all of this done?" However, a second teacher had a very workable arrangement for time created by the flexible scheduling of special classes and multi-age teaming. Both of these teachers used indirect collaboration, which took place before school or during school, "when you're walking down the hall together, when you're sitting down over lunch," during those "snatched moments" that work appropriately for those involved in the collaboration (Gable & Manning, 1997). The third successful teacher was not concerned about the time issue this year, since an aide planned or adapted for one student with special needs, while the one other student with special needs in this class could be accommodated rather easily. However, this teacher did point out, that in the past, planning and adaptation did take a tremendous amount of time.

The teachers who perceived themselves to be unsuccessful with inclusion had larger, even more negative, issues regarding time than did the successful teachers. One teacher had a much larger group to begin with and a higher number of students with special needs. This teacher was facing a time crunch in that even coming in on Saturday mornings did not give her enough time to deal with all the adaptations necessary:

> • How can I adapt this lesson? How can I make it fit them? Sometimes you can,
> but sometimes you can't...I plan for my other kids, but then, so often, I run out of
> time and I leave those special needs kids...out of my true plans.

Simply putting ideas down on paper does not answer the question of time for planning. The procurement of materials or the making of adjusted materials must be included in that time. Even the 5 to 10 minutes of "snatched moments" mentioned by one of the successful teachers for daily planning with special education, would have been helpful to this teacher. The lack of even this level of planning opportunities indicated that haphazard implementation of inclusion practices was taking place (King-Sears, 1996).

The second unsuccessful teacher perceived that her job of planning, adaptation, and procurement of materials was not being shared by anyone:

• It's just like we're going each day almost into the unknown...five or six different ways of presenting a lesson every day...If you had that collaboration time, you would not be...trying to do it on your own. There is not time to collaborate with special ed.

While "it is quite human to look to others and conditions outside oneself for the reasons why one's time seems to slip away unproductively" (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995, p. 81), this could hardly be the answer to the situation when this teacher had eliminated even lunch and bathroom breaks. The fact that there was "not time to collaborate with special ed" in conjunction with the size and ratio of this class, indicated that the time system was out of balance in this case.

The third unsuccessful teacher's planning time "mostly occurs at home. And for the reason that I'm exhausted." The teacher's exhaustion was because of having to deal with large numbers of behavioral situations with the large number of students with special needs in the class:

•Honestly, I would say fifty percent of my day is spent with those kids that need special attention.

This teacher had only minimal collaboration, that is, special education involvement in referrals to the Student Assistance Team, a process seen as too lengthy and unsatisfactory in its present form, with the process often taking more than two-thirds of the year. This teacher, as well as the other two in the group with self-ratings of unsuccessful with inclusion had less time for planning, in relation to the group needs and size, than the teachers in the group with self-ratings of successful.

In summary, neither the successful nor the unsuccessful teachers had a significant amount of time for planning and collaborating. Generally, however, the balance was tilted in favor of the teachers who felt successful with inclusion, and against those who felt unsuccessful. Overall, one can infer a relationship between perceived success or lack of success with inclusion and teacher control over time.

Recommendations and Conclusions

Success with inclusion is the desired outcome of any setting in which inclusion exists. Therefore, the basic goal is to create inclusive classrooms that are modeled after the ones described by those teachers in this study who described themselves as successful with inclusion.

Recommendations

1) Class sizes need to be kept to a reasonable number, especially in relation to the load of each individual classroom. The fact that the numbers of students in a class may work on paper does not insure that the load of each class will work in practice. Individual consideration must be made for the number of children with special needs in relation to the class size, as well as for the severity of the needs of the students with special needs.

2) The case loads of the resource personnel need to be kept reasonable in the same way as in regular classrooms. If these resource teachers are overloaded, they are prevented from being able to commit to a specified time to work in a particular regular education classroom because of the pull of the needs of other children on their case load rosters.

3) Each regular education classroom should have a consistent paraprofessional assigned for no less than a half a day, and preferably for a whole day. Teachers in a study by Minke, Bear, Deemer, and Griffin (1996) stated that they felt that their protected resources (two teachers and at least one part-time paraprofessional to 35 students) were not sufficient to allow them to effectively meet the needs of all the children. Those teachers had only inclusion students with mild disabilities. By such standards, each classroom of over 15 students, with a range of inclusion students, should have a full-day paraprofessional.

4) Regular education teachers should not be expected to deliver the instruction alone (King-Sears, 1996). Support help should be in the classroom at least an hour at a time, so that both the regular education teacher and the resource teacher can "have opportunities to present to the large group, monitor group and individual work, clarify concepts, and supervise practice" (Walther-Thomas, Bryant, & Land, 1996, p. 261).

5) Time must be provided for planning and collaboration. "Collaboration is not a natural thing for teachers to do in the classroom" (Thomas, 1992, p. 31). Regular education teachers and special education teachers need a minimum of an hour a week of shared planning time, in addition to individual planning time. Collaboration must be added to job descriptions and evaluations to

give the message that this is be a regular feature of the school program (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996).

6) Inservice training must be made practical and relevant. Those hired to do inservice training should be advised of this. Training should focus on the noncategorical merging of "professional training programs so that general and special educators participate together in experiences directly related to enhancement of their skills to collaborate and instruct a heterogeneous group of learners" (Villa, Thousand, Meyers, & Nevin, 1996, p. 43). Administrators should attend the group inservices to hear and understand the immediate concerns of the classroom teachers regarding inclusion.

7) New paraeducators need to be advised and evaluated at the time of hiring regarding the new tasks that are expected of them with inclusion. Training for future and present paraeducators should be offered in the areas of medical management, teaming and collaboration, and other related early childhood and special needs activities (Wadsworth & Knight, 1996). Besides training, paraprofessionals need a stable salary, and one that is commensurate with the duties that they perform. This monetary base is one that can potentially help with the high turn-over in the ranks of the paraprofessionals. Paraprofessional longevity is needed to insure the constancy and consistency that is needed for inclusion settings.

8) Coordinate comprehensive training. A logical base of common knowledge should be provided to all personnel (special education personnel, paraprofessionals, and administrators) involved with those classes because of inclusion.

9) All administrators need to spend some time teaching in an inclusive classroom. The leaders must be committed to inclusion and understand fully the impact of the change to inclusion. Unless these administrators have taught in an inclusive classroom before becoming an administrator, they may not understand the situation in depth until they experience it.

10) Provide for evaluation--program evaluation, teacher evaluation, and administrator evaluation-- in regard to inclusion. Without this provision, there is a substantial risk that certain teachers will carry more of the load of the students with special needs, or that some buildings will not be coordinated well enough for the distribution of the work load with inclusion. Evaluation should include such assessment of assorted components of inclusion, such as the rate at which needs were met, amount of planning, productivity of individuals in relation to the whole picture,

and the outcomes that were satisfactorily achieved (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995).

11) Teachers need a mediator. Even if classrooms start out workable in August, there is no guarantee that they will still work in May. A mediator must be named who can impartially evaluate the needs of teachers as they arise. The mediator needs to be credible by being given authority to act and a budget with which to act, otherwise the role will simply become one of therapist.

Conclusions

Fundamentally, inclusion is an administrative issue. Even if teachers have good training, there are still the issues of load, support, and time to consider. Knowing what to do is not sufficient. Load, support, and time must be addressed and these are factors that only administrators are responsible for . Teachers cannot affect these on their own. Without effective administration meeting these issues, teachers are left in a situation of having a general responsibility for inclusion without the authority to change the particular details.

Administrators can help teachers be more successful with inclusion if they arrange smaller sized classes with workable numbers of students with special needs, provide for consistent, sufficient, and effective additional help, and facilitate personnel schedules so that staff can plan and collaborate effectively. These administrative actions would increase a teacher's sense of efficacy and ultimately provide a climate in which teachers are more successful with inclusion.

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