

January 2009

Co-Teaching and Inclusion: A Model for Effective Implementation

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Co-Teaching and Inclusion: A Model for Effective Implementation

Abstract

Teachers with training in special education are found in most schools. Why are some special education teachers teaching students in a 'pull-out' model while others are teaching in a 'push-in' model? For those students who are "pushed in", are they supported in the classroom? And if so, how? If it is by a co-teaching model, what is the most beneficial way of teaching special education students in a general education classroom? What are some of the attitudes of special education students who are pushed into a co-teaching classroom?

Co-Teaching and Inclusion: A Model for Effective Implementation

Submitted
In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in Education

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Spring, 2009

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Titled: Co-Teaching and Inclusion: A Model for Effective Implementation

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the

Degree of Master of Arts in Education

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1

Introduction.....	4
Research Question.....	5
Significance of Problem.....	5
Definition of Terms.....	7
Organization of Paper.....	8

Chapter 2

Historical Background.....	9
Definitions of Co-Teaching.....	10
Models of Co-Teaching.....	12
Components of Co-Teaching.....	15
Preparations for Co-Teaching Model.....	16
Co-Teaching Considerations.....	18
Summary on Co-Teaching.....	20

Chapter 3

Historical Background.....	21
Definitions of Inclusion.....	22
Making It Work.....	23
Viewpoints on Inclusion.....	29
Summary on Inclusion.....	31

Chapter 4

Introduction.....	32
-------------------	----

Student Perceptions.....	33
--------------------------	----

Teacher Attitudes/ Perceptions.....	37
-------------------------------------	----

Summary.....	38
--------------	----

Chapter 5

Introduction.....	39
-------------------	----

Teaching application.....	40
---------------------------	----

Summary.....	45
--------------	----

Chapter 6

Conclusion.....	45
-----------------	----

Recommendations.....	48
----------------------	----

References.....	49
-----------------	----

Chapter 1

Introduction

I am currently teaching a first grade classroom of twenty students in a rural/ urban district. In this classroom three students have Individual Education Plans (IEP), one student is on an intensive plan in the Instructional Decision Making Process (IDM), two students are on supplemental plans in the IDM process, and one student is on a behavior intensive plan in the IDM process.

The IDM process works as follows. Students who need extra assistance are first put on a supplemental plan. If on a supplemental plan students are not making growth then they are moved to an intensive plan. If on an intensive plan students are not making sufficient growth they are then recommended for special education. With having so many students with special accommodations I have been given two co-teachers, one during math instruction and one during writing instruction.

Time and attention spent on each student is very challenging with such a diverse classroom. At times I have felt as though my higher students are suffering because I spend so much time redirecting and assisting my lower special education students. As I have been working with these teachers I have wondered if I am co-teaching correctly and if my special education students are receiving enough accommodations in the general education setting. First grade is a crucial year for development of several skills: reading, basic math, writing, and other social skills. If attention is not paid to all students we are hurting their right to an equal education. Higher students need just as much attention as my lower students but their attention is in the adaptations of lessons to fit their needs. It seems as though co-teaching and inclusion are the up and coming trend in education.

For each teacher who co-teaches and each teacher that teaches students with special education, we owe it to students to co-teach special education students effectively so that they can benefit. If this is how education is moving then teachers need to be taught how to co-teach and ways to teach students with disabilities who are fully included. I have set out to research the benefits of co-teaching with special education students in the general education classroom.

Research Question

Teachers with training in special education are found in most schools. Why are some special education teachers teaching students in a 'pull-out' model while others are teaching in a 'push-in' model? For those students who are "pushed in", are they supported in the classroom? And if so, how? If it is by a co-teaching model, what is the most beneficial way of teaching special education students in a general education classroom? What are some of the attitudes of special education students who are pushed into a co-teaching classroom?

Significance of the problem

As a first grade teacher in a large rural/ urban school district this author regularly hears the concerns and frustrations of other teachers concerning the current co-teaching model being implemented. Generally, complaints include teachers and co-teachers feeling not more valuable than a paraprofessional. Additionally, teachers believe they are forced to co-teach, but not allowed an adequate amount of planning time for it to truly be beneficial for the students.

A survey was conducted on co-teaching and full inclusion. Based on the results of this survey several noticeable themes are evident. First, it appears that teachers believe there is not enough planning time to plan for special education students and co-teaching. One teachers comment portrayed that there is not enough planning time to plan for her general education students let alone for special education students or with another teacher. However, it was reported that co-teaching would be valuable for any classroom regardless of special education students.

The second theme that was very evident was that several teachers believe that they have not been trained on an effective way to co-teach. Some teachers even mentioned that they have received no training. With the need for students to achieve one year's growth teachers need to spend time together to plan how to meet the needs of their students. Another theme that was also evident was that not ALL special education students should be fully included. It was noted that it would depend on the severity of the student and the disability.

With the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) mandate IEP's are taking on a different shape. Starting in about 2002 students with disabilities who were included in the general education classroom started to receive more attention from the state in regards to the inclusion model. This full inclusion phase has led to the development and the initiation of a co-teaching model for classrooms. Because effective teaching is so important it has become particularly important to provide quality education for all, the co-teaching model is one way. Many school administrators have implemented co-teaching in their teachers' classrooms but are experiencing full inclusion of special education students. However,

the majority of teachers that are involved in co-teaching did not volunteer. Rather, their administrators told them that participation in co-teaching is mandatory.

In order for special education students to benefit from full inclusion, the co-teaching model needs to be implemented effectively. Most importantly, teacher participation should be on a voluntary basis and those teachers must be willing to implement this new change. School administrators, teachers, and parents have already recognized the importance of providing a co-teacher in the room. However, administrators still struggle with the correct implementation of the co-teaching model.

Definition of terms

The following terms are commonly used when discussing co-teaching and inclusion.

No Child Left Behind (NCLB): Mandate that was established in 2001, created to ensure that all children receive a high quality education with the incorporation of accountability measures for the schools, districts, and states. NCLB has two main goals: 1) raise student achievement 2) decrease achievement gaps between students of different ethnicities, languages, and abilities.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): An IEP is a document that documents special education services for special-needs students. The IEP includes any modifications that are required in the regular classroom and any additional special programs or services.

Inclusion: "Inclusion, as it is currently defined, refers to the instruction of all students, with or without disabilities, in the general education classroom, unless substantial evidence is provided to show that such a placement would not be in the student's best interests." (Austin, 2001)

Co-teaching: "For inclusion to be possible, students must be provided with services and supports within the general education environment. One such service delivery option for students is through the use of co-teaching between general and special education teachers." (Murawski and Swanson, 2001) The co-teaching model has four basic components to it: 1) "one teach- one assist" 2) "station teaching" 3) "parallel teaching" 4) "alternative teaching." (Tobin, 2005)

Organization of Paper

The focus of this paper is to examine the usefulness of the co-teaching model. Specifically, it will focus on elementary school classrooms where full inclusion of special education students is currently taking place. First, I will define co-teaching and ways that it has been implemented. Second, I will define inclusion and how it has been implemented. Next, I will discuss attitudes and perceptions of teachers and students in co-taught inclusionary classrooms. Finally, I will discuss ways that districts/ administrators can effectively implement the co-teaching model with full inclusion students.

Chapter 2

Introduction/ Historical Background

“As early as the 1960’s, co-teaching was recommended as a strategy for reorganizing secondary schools in the United States as well as in England.” (Warwick, 1971). “A variation of co-teaching, team-teaching, in which teachers share planning responsibilities for instruction while they continue to teach separately, was adopted in many open-concept schools during the 1970s.” (Easterby-Smith & Olive, 1984) As the United States becomes more diverse in population so do our schools. Schools are now more commonly than ever including students from bilingual homes and from economically deprived families. According to a researcher named Ramirez as much as 40% of our school enrollment will consist of these demographics in the next decade. As this number increases so to does the number of students that may have significant learning or behavior problems. This raises the questions of whether our teachers will be able to meet the need of such diverse population as well as whether our traditional method of pull-out service is appropriate. Along with the numbers of students with special needs increases so to does the demand for a method to teach these students. Eligibility requirements for special education and Section 504 are becoming tighter. The diversity of general education classrooms has changed to include students with disabilities. It has become ever more important to work together in collaborative partnerships. There are many solutions to this demand: collaborative consultation, mainstream assistance teams, teacher assistance teams, and cooperative teaching. One of these solutions has become very popular: cooperative teaching. Cooperative teaching is

different than the other models in that it involves the ongoing support of colleagues and classroom participation. Cooperative teaching is an option for special education teachers to share their responsibilities for students in self-contained classrooms. Supporters of this method suggest that collaboration in mainstream settings will enable many students with disabilities to achieve greater academic and social skills. "One additional benefit often derived from co-teaching is the avoidance of the labeling, with the resultant stigmatization and devaluation, that often results from students with school problems who receive traditional segregated remedial services. Also, in any classroom many students have significant learning and behavior problems but fail to "qualify" for special services." (Bauwens, Hourcade)

Literature Review

Definitions of Co-Teaching

As the practice of co-teaching becomes more popular it becomes important to understand exactly what co-teaching is. I will explore these questions: What is co-teaching? And how do you implement it, particularly effectively? This chapter will examine the definitions of co-teaching of several researchers as well as components that are essential for its success.

A common researcher for co-teaching named Bauwens defined cooperative teaching in 1989 as "...an educational approach in which general and special educators work in co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach heterogeneous groups of students in educationally

integrated settings (i.e., general classrooms). In cooperative teaching both general and special education teachers are simultaneously present in the general classroom, maintaining joint responsibilities for specified education instruction that is to occur within that setting. (p.18)”

Since Bauwens research on co-teaching other researchers have shortened the definition to

“two or more professionals delivering substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space.” (Murawski and Swanson, 2001)

Lynne Cook and Marilyn Friend mention that this definition has four major components to it. The first component is that co-teaching involves two educators, and occasionally more. One of these educators is typically the general education teacher and the other a special education teacher. It is important to note that in some classrooms extra support by paraprofessionals, parent volunteers, and older student volunteers is not considered to meet the definition of co-teaching. The second component of co-teaching pertaining to their definition is that the educator must deliver substantive instruction. This means that they can not support a single student or monitor students while listening to a guest speaker. The third component is that educators teach a diverse group of students, including students with disabilities. Typically co-teaching involves a special education teacher because students with Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) have educational needs that can be met by moving their supports to the general education

classroom through the co-teaching model. The fourth component is that the co-teaching model involves instruction being delivered in a single classroom.

Models of Co-teaching

These two researchers also discuss when the model of co-teaching is an appropriate instructional option. They have five major questions to consider:

- 1) Is the content of the general education curriculum appropriate for the student?
- 2) How much and what type of modifications and other support will the student require to benefit from the general education curriculum?
- 3) Does the student require direct intervention or instruction that is entirely different from instruction other students receive?
- 4) Is the ecology of the classroom appropriate for diverse learners?
- 5) Do other students in this classroom need modified curriculum or instruction?

Once determining whether or not to use the co-teaching model it is important to think about what it will look like. According to Cook and Friend there are five types of co-teaching: 1) one teaching, one assisting 2) station teaching 3) parallel teaching, 4) alternative teaching and 5) team teaching. In the first method, one teaching, one assisting both educators are present. However, one takes the lead while the other observes and assists students. This is the simplest approach which involves limited planning and still provides basic support for students with diverse learning needs. The second method, station teaching involves both teachers dividing the instructional content into segments

and presenting it in separate locations. Teacher may teach have the group and then switch and teach the material again to the other half. A student with diverse learning needs benefits from this method because it is a smaller teacher-student ratio. Parallel teaching, the third method, the teachers plan together and each delivers the content to half the group. This is a more challenging method because teachers have to essentially deliver the same instruction in the same amount of time. Examples of this type of co-teaching are: drill and practice activities, projects that require close supervision, and discussion activities. Alternative teaching involves one teaching instructing a small group while the other instructs the large group. This method can be useful for pre-teaching and re-teaching. "The greatest risk in this approach is stigmatizing students with disabilities by grouping them for re-teaching repeatedly, with or without other students included as group members. This risk can be avoided by varying groupings and ensuring that all students are periodically included in a group." (Cook & Friend) The last method is team teaching. Team teaching involves both teachers sharing the instruction of students. Teachers who use this method might take turns leading a discussion or modeling a method while the other speaks. This method requires the most of both co-teachers for trust and commitment.

There are several suggested ways to co-teach. Bauwens and Hourcades list three program options that teachers can use to insure that both the general education teacher and the special education teacher are working together on the instructional process. These three options are: team teaching, complementary instruction, and supportive learning activities. Team teaching consists of a common subject content and shared responsibility between both cooperative teachers. Both the general education teacher and

the special education teacher plan and teach the academic goals to all students. An example of team teaching is shadow teaching, one teacher presents the material and the other follows up with further explanation. The second option is: complementary instruction. In this option the general education teacher maintains primary responsibility for teaching specific subject matter and the special education teacher provides instruction on specific strategies or skills to all students. Specific strategies that the special education teacher might teach include: note taking, identifying main ideas in readings, summarizing, memory strategies, and other techniques that facilitate learning academic content. The third option that Bauwens and Hourcade suggest is supportive learning activities. This refers to the activities that supplement the instructional content of lessons. The cooperative teachers meet to determine instructional goals and identify activities that can reinforce and enrich the content. In this option the general education teacher maintains responsibility for delivering the essential content of the instruction.

Vance L. Austin suggests that research offers three other models of co-teaching: the consultant model, the coaching model, and the teaming model. The consultant model involves the special education teacher serving as a consultant to the general education teacher in areas of curriculum adaptation and assessment modification. The coaching model involves the general education teacher and special education teacher coaching each other on areas that they consider themselves 'experts.' The third model, teaming involves the special education teacher and the general education teacher sharing the responsibility of lesson planning, implementation, and assessment.

Components of Co-Teaching

Susan and Frank Gately suggest that there are eight components of co-teaching. Each of these eight components has a beginning stage, a compromise stage, and a fully collaborative stage of co-teaching. These eight components are: 1) interpersonal communication 2) physical arrangement 3) familiarity with the curriculum 4) curriculum goals and modifications 5) instructional planning 6) instructional presentation 7) classroom management and 8) assessment.

In the beginning stage of interpersonal communication co-teachers are guarded and careful of communication. As they progress to the compromising stage they start to give and take with communication. The last stage the collaborating stage involves open communication and interaction as well as mutual admiration. In the physical arrangement component teachers are striving to move from the special education teacher having an assigned 'spot' in the room to instead both teachers having control and are cognizant of each other's position in the room. In the collaboration level students are all participating in cooperative group assignments. The third stage, familiarity with the curriculum involves the teachers to move from just the general education teacher being familiar with a specific content to both teachers planning and teaching the content. This component goes along with the next component, curriculum and goals. This component involves both the general education teacher and the special education teacher being responsible for the success of all students in the co-taught classroom. Teacher will need to an extensive amount of planning to discuss goals, accommodations, and modifications. Instructional planning is the fifth component which incorporates the importance of co-

teachers having common planning times to appropriately plan. In the beginning stage of this component one may see two different curriculums being taught, one by the special education teacher and the other by the general education teacher. As teachers progress towards the compromising stage one might see the general education teacher instructing and the special education teacher assuming the role of an assistant. Mutual planning and sharing of ideas becomes the norm at the collaborative stage. Instructional presentation, the sixth component, is similar to the fifth. In the beginning stage students might see one teacher as more of the "boss" than the other. In the collaborative stage both teachers are engaged in the lesson and activities. In this stage, students address questions to both teachers. The seventh component, classroom management involves structure and relationships. In this component co-teachers are striving towards the development of a classroom management plan that is effective for all students. The last component, assessment is extremely important for the co-teaching model to be effective. In the beginning stages of this component there are two separate grading systems for each teacher. As the progress towards the compromising stage they start to explore alternate assessment ideas together. In the collaborative stage co-teachers have a variety of assessment options to benefit all students.

Preparations for Co-Teaching Model

When districts, administrators, and teachers embark on the method of co-teaching they need to take into the account of planning. According to Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land "comprehensive planning is essential to the lasting success of innovations."

There are several items to plan and consider before individuals may begin the co-teaching

program successfully. The beginning of the planning should start at the district level.

These three researchers mention how important it is to consider any potential consequences that a new program might have on the district. Planning thoroughly together will help reduce frustration, confusion, and competition between schools.

The next stage of planning after the district is at the building level. Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land mention "As inclusive models are introduced, it is important for building level teams to resist temptation and allow themselves adequate planning and preparation time before new services are implemented." "Planning a year in advance allows administrators, staff developers, teacher, and related services providers time to gain school and community support, recruit willing and qualified co-teachers, visit model sites, conduct staff development sessions, conduct Individualized Education Plans (IEP) meetings and make appropriate decisions regarding students placements, teaching assignments, and planning schedules." A key phrase that they mentioned is willing and qualified co-teachers. It is important to find willing participants because co-teaching requires so much additional time and effort. Walther-Thomas, Bryant, and Land mention that co-teachers should stay together for at least 2 years. Staff development should be included to provide effective co-teaching models, supervised practice, and time for partner to discuss their concerns, solve problems, and formulate new implementation plans. Appropriate co-taught classrooms can not rely on the computerized make-up of a classroom. Effective co-taught classrooms must be scheduled by hand. "Ideally in a class of 25 students no more than 6 class members should have identified disabilities in the mild to moderate range or other related problems that make them candidates for school failure." Another consideration when planning for a co-taught classroom is

planning time. Co-teachers ideally should have a minimum of one scheduled planning period (45-60 minutes) per week.

Following the building level of planning is the classroom level. Walther-Thomas found five planning themes among co-teachers who considered themselves to be effective co-planners. First, skilled planners trust the professional skills of their partners. Second, effective planners design learning environments for their students and for themselves that demand active involvement. Third, effective co-planners create learning environments in which each person's contributions are valued. Fourth, effective planners develop effective routines to facilitate their planning. Fifth, planners become more skilled over time they report feeling more productive, comfortable, and creative over time.

At the classroom level planning of co-teaching it is important to start out by just getting to know each other. It is important for co-teachers to become familiar with each other's professional skills, including their strengths, weaknesses, interests, and attitudes. A focused interview may be part of the initial staff development process. New co-teachers also need to plan and prepare before beginning work together. They also need time to develop classroom routines that both co-teachers support and are committed to. As co-teachers begin to start planning together it is important that they address these questions: 1) what are the content goals? 2) Who are the learners? 3) And how can we teach most effectively?

Co-teaching Considerations

Bauwens and Hourcade also mention the importance of teachers getting to know each other before they begin co-teaching. They suggest that the general education

teacher and the special education teacher negotiate on the basic mechanics of a cooperative instruction arrangement. Considerations include:

1. The specific cooperative teaching arrangements (i.e., exactly who does what and when)
2. Scheduling
3. Classroom organization and overall management
4. Classroom rules and discipline techniques
5. Joint planning time
6. Student and parent communication
7. Paperwork responsibilities
8. Program monitoring
9. Assignment of grades
10. Acquisition and utilization of materials and equipment

Susan and Frank Gately not only mention the importance of getting to know your co-teacher previous to teaching with them but to also monitor your instruction once you do begin to co-teach. They developed a co-teaching rating scale that can be used by co-teachers as well as their supervisors to examine the effectiveness of co-teaching classrooms. Susan and Frank Gately developed a scale for the special education teacher as well as the general education teacher. This rating scale can form the beginnings of professional discussions for the co-teachers as they evaluate their perspectives of their work in the co-taught classroom. "By using a scale that focuses on the specific components of the co-teaching relationship at the each developmental level, teachers and

supervisors can determine the effectiveness of classroom practices and develop strategies to improve programs.” The co-teaching rating scale is a way to highlight important aspect of collaboration that has contributed to success of the co-teaching model. This then allows the ability to enhance the success of and experiences for the students and adults in the classroom.

Summary

Research suggests that there is much that needs to be considered when planning for and implementing co-teaching. As classrooms become more diverse the need for the co-teaching framework rises. Hopefully, districts, schools, and classrooms will take everything into account when planning for and implementing the co-teaching framework. According to Cook and Friend it is important to think about four things when deciding to use the method of co-teaching. 1) Increase instructional options for all students 2) Improve the program intensity and continuity 3) Reduce the stigma for students with special needs 4) Increase support for teachers and related service specialists. It is important to think about all students because gifted and talented students may also benefit by having more options for individualized learning. Allowing for special education students to stay in the classroom allows for a more continual process. It has been estimated that students who leave the classroom one time each day for a special education service are losing 75 minutes of instructional time each week just to get to their services. Not to mention the amount of time it takes for that student to get refocused once they are there. It is important to think about the stigma for special education students. Pulling students to the side to receive their instruction is often times more detrimental for that

student and is considered a “pull in” or “pull aside” approach. Each researcher has his/her own definition of co-teaching as well as their own models of co-teaching, but they have all stated that co-teaching occurs with two or more professionals and is a way to deliver substantive instruction to a diverse, or blended, group of students in a physical space. Researchers have also stated that cooperative teaching requires lots of planning, and is an on-going process of learning for the teachers involved. Workshops, teacher inservices, teacher education programs, conferences, and professional development courses are needed to guide teachers toward the effective ways of co-teaching.

Chapter 3

Introduction/ Historical Background

In 1997 there was an amendment to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) which emphasized the need to serve students with disabilities in the general education setting whenever possible. This new emphasis was based on the principle that students are best served in settings most like those of their non-disabled peers. This new emphasis has come to be known as inclusion. According to Zigmond and Baker (1996) there were two main models that existed prior to inclusion and still do exist: resource room and pull-out. A resource room model permitted the student to receive instruction individually or in a group in a special room in which the emphasis is on teaching specific skills that the student needs. At the end of the lesson the student returns to the regular classroom. A pull-out setting would be a more temporary setting in which instruction would help children organize themselves for increased independent

learning so that they will be able to eventually return to normal classes. In 1993 a report was conducted by the U.S. Department of Education. The report indicated that across the nation, fewer than 25 percent of students with learning disabilities are placed in separate classes or separate schools; 54 percent of students with learning disabilities are based in general education classes and receive part-time special education services for 21-59 percent of the school day; but 22 percent of students with learning disabilities are in general education classrooms at least 80 percent of the school day.

This chapter will present literature by researchers in regards to the inclusion of special education students into the general education classroom. According to Sheila Feichtner and Thomas O'Brien the term "special needs" students refers to individuals within the following classifications: mental retardation, speech impaired, hearing impaired, physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed and socially maladjusted, socio-economically disadvantaged, educationally disadvantaged, culturally disadvantaged, and the gifted. (Feichtner and O'Brien, 1976) This research should raise several questions in regards to the use of inclusion with the co-teaching model and its benefits. First, what are the strategies that research and experience have shown to be most effective in working with special education students? Second, what is the likelihood that these strategies can be employed consistently and effectively in regular schools and classrooms?

Literature Review

Definitions of Inclusion

In the last 20 years the use of the inclusion model has become quite controversial in American education. The popularity and growth of inclusion has grown tremendously

since the 1990s. The use of inclusion meant that all students with disabilities should be provided services in the general education classroom. The term inclusion can mean several different things to different people. A researcher names Gary Peltier defined inclusion in 1997 as:

“...inclusion involves keeping special education students in regular classrooms and bringing support services to the child, rather than bringing the child to the support services. In an inclusionary setting, special education teachers work with regular education teachers in regular classrooms.”

Another definition of inclusion was stated by the Learning Disabilities Association in 1993.

“Inclusion, as it is currently defined, refers to the instruction of all students, with and without disabilities, in the general education classroom, unless substantial evidence is provided to show that such a placement would not be in the student’s best interests.”

(Austin, 2001)

Making it Work

When thinking about the inclusion model it is a different way of thinking. It is important to note that “inclusive schools are places where students, regardless of ability, race, language, and income, are integral members of classrooms, feel a connection to their peers, have access to rigorous and meaningful general education curricula, and

receive collaboration support to succeed.” (Theoharis and Theoharis, 2009) The most important item to note is that in an inclusive school students do not have to leave to learn. Instead, services and supports are brought to them. Educators at inclusive schools see every child as a permanent member of a general education classroom. A student might receive a more restrictive setting if they need short- term support (temporary crisis or medical need). Theoharis and Theoharis discuss in their research what is needed to make an inclusive classroom: committed leadership. When starting a new initiative it is important to always start at the top with the superintendent and administrative team.

“Leadership is always key to meaningful and lasting reform.” (Theoharis and Theoharis, 2009) The superintendent and administrative team must decide on and articulate a vision and a commitment to philosophy and practice of inclusive education for all.

Administrators should develop open and reflective conversations about inclusion and develop an inclusive student placement process. Students with the most significant disabilities should be the center of conversations and the center of general education classrooms. These two researchers also mention how important it is to commit to the idea that student membership is not contingent upon readiness or behavior, but rather to be fully supported so that all students are prepared to participate in an inclusive society. The next step that these researchers discuss is to stop funding and creating separate spaces for students. They mention that once these spaces are created they are used to separate students who are seen as different. Instead, resources should be put into building strong general education classrooms where teachers and students have the support that is needed. The last component Theoharis and Theoharis mention to creating a successful inclusive society is that school leaders must provide explicit training to teachers and staff

to build their capacity to support all kids in inclusive settings, to differentiate instruction, and to collaborate.

While there are many researchers who list ways to incorporate inclusion into a general education setting, most theories of inclusion fall under what Theoharis and Theoharis mentioned or the research of Banerji and Dailey. Banerji and Dailey represent a philosophy that promotes the participation of children with disabilities in all aspects of school and community life. These two researchers refer to the components and strategies that are essential for educational delivery models. They list six characteristics of a full inclusion program model as:

- 1) All students attend schools to which they would go if they had no disability.
- 2) A natural proportion of students with disabilities occurs at each school site.
- 3) A zero rejection philosophy exists so that typically no student would be excluded (from educational opportunities) on the basis of type and extent of disability.
- 4) School and general education placements are age and grade appropriate with no self-contained, special education classes operative at school sites.
- 5) Cooperative learning and peer instructional methods receive significant use in general instructional practice.
- 6) Special education supports are provided within the context of the general education class.

Marchbanks, Richardson, and Flanigan describe in their research that the form

inclusion comes in is sometimes vague. They mention there are three models of inclusion: full inclusion, partial inclusion, and no inclusion. In the first model, full inclusion, researchers state that inclusion should provide an opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in standardized testing. Full inclusion means incorporating the existing special education model with the already embedded general education model. Teachers of special education collaborate and teach with regular educators in a shared classroom. Some researchers have debated whether or not having fully included special education students in a general education classroom affects the amount of instructional time provided to the regular education students. Researchers Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, and Palombaro (1995) concluded that "the presence of students with severe disabilities in the regular classroom did not significantly affect the level of engaged time of classmates without disabilities." The second model, partial inclusion, is the most accurate term for how special education is implemented in most situations. This model was created by section 5045 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 "Where a handicapped child is so disruptive in a regular classroom that the education of other students is significantly impaired, the needs of the handicapped child cannot be met in that environment." The Public Law 105-17 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1991 emphasize the delivery services of students in the least restrictive environment. The special education student's least restrictive environment is determined by their Individualized Education Plan team that consists of parents, teachers, administrators, psychologists, and others. The third model, no inclusion refers to the traditional pull-out model.

Classrooms that successfully include students with disabilities are designed to

welcome diversity and to address the individual needs of all students, whether they have disabilities or not. "It's not inclusion if the supports are not in place." (Sharpe, 2001)

Wesley Sharpe mentioned some characteristics of an effective inclusive classroom. The first that he mentioned is that in effective inclusive classrooms kids are clustered in specific classes but distributed across all teachers. Second, students receive instructional supports that maximize their participation in the general education curriculum and their engagement in the general population. Third, teachers use a variety of strategies, including curriculum and instructional adaptations, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, and layered curriculum. "When this kind of educational program is in place, inclusion is practically invisible. That's why it is meant to be." (Sharpe, 2001)

Zigmond and Baker are two researchers that expand upon the adaptations and strategies that general education teachers use when special education students are included in their classrooms. A quick list of these strategies are: adaptations and accommodations for the whole class (examples: repeating directions. Reading aloud textbooks, and reading aloud tests), reducing work load (examples: modifying amount of written work and shorter spelling lists), accommodations for a specific student (example: highlighting important words on work sheets, homework assignments, or tests), focused instruction on skills or strategies, peer partners (example: pairing a high child with an identified child), small group instruction (example: a parallel lesson to the one being taught to more competent students by the general education teacher), and individual instruction (examples: teacher stopping by while student working, pulling of small group to hallway, parent volunteers one-to-one support).

When creating an inclusive classroom it is important to think about all the support systems that are involved. The two most important support systems are collaboration and instructional methods. Collaboration involves the special educators being part of the instructional/ planning team. This team approach is used for problem-solving and program implementation. Teachers use their joint planning time to problem- solve and discuss the use of special instructional techniques for all students who need special assistance. Instructional methods are an important support because it's critically important that teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to select and adapt curricula and instructional methods according to individual students needs. Monitoring and adapting instruction for individual students is an ongoing activity. It is also important for teachers to foster a cooperative learning environment and promote socialization. Marchbanks, Richardson, and Flanigan also mention what is needed for the inclusion model to be successful. First they mention that more research on inclusion is needed. Then they mention the importance of effective training programs. "School personnel considering incorporating inclusion into their programs will need extensive training programs for both regular and special education teachers." These researchers also mention for the inclusion model to become a prevalent service delivery model teacher training programs will need to dramatically change. Institutions will need to offer specific classes on inclusion to prospective teachers in regular and special education. Prospective teachers will need the training and preparation necessary to ensure that inclusion can be an effective method of educating students.

Viewpoints on Inclusion

There are many views of the use of inclusion versus the traditional 'pull-out' model of special education. Some of these viewpoints support full inclusion 100%, some are in the middle, and others are against it. First, the benefits of the inclusion model according to Sharpe, 2001. Sharpe lists four main benefits: The first, inclusion improves learning for both classified and non-classified students. It is suggested that when students with disabilities are included in the classroom the non-disabled students do better academically. A teacher with special education students included in the classroom typically breaks down instruction into finer parts or repeats directions frequently. The second benefit of inclusion is that children learn to accept individual differences. It is suggested that to help break down misconceptions about students with disabilities the best way is to integrate to two groups of students. The third benefit, children develop new friendships. Children who are included into general education classrooms are able to develop friendships in their home communities. As opposed to students who are sent to regional special education programs. The fourth benefit, parent participation improves. "When children with disabilities are integrated into local schools, parents have more opportunity to participate in that school and in the community where the school is located." (Sharpe, 2001). Peltier also mentions benefits of inclusion according to other researchers.

- 1) Reduced fear of human differences accompanied by increased comfort and awareness (Pech et al., 1992).
- 2) Growth in social cognition. (Murray-Seegert, 1989).

- 3) Improvements in self-concept. (Peck et al., 1992; Peck et al., 1990; Voeltz and Brennan, 1983).
- 4) Development of personal principles (Peck et al., 1992).
- 5) Warm and caring friendships (Amado, 1993; Strully & Strully, 1985; Voeltz & Brennan, 1983).

Other researchers discuss viewpoints that do not support inclusion. Jobe, Rust, and Brissie mention that with change comes differing opinions. "Opponents of inclusion have argued that it does not save money and actually probably cost more to implement than the old pull-out approach." (Woelfel, 1994). These researchers mention that the Learning Disabilities Association believes that inclusion is a violation of the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Another critic of inclusion, Albert Shanker, mentions that disabled children placed in regular education classrooms are supposed to get special services so that they can participate academically and socially without disrupting other students' learning. As states adopt full inclusion to save money, such services are unlikely to be provided to special education students. "Requiring all disabled children to be included in regular classrooms is both unrealistic and downright harmful to the children themselves (Shanker, 1994, 1995). (Peltier, 2007). According to Marchbanks, Richardson, and Flanigan (2001) a student's transition from special education to general education is often a difficult one. There are several obstacles that may exist for students in this transitional experience. One obstacle is that students master the special education curriculum only to find the curriculum incompatible with the regular education curriculum. These researchers also found that students with disabilities

often have difficulty socially. It was also noted that students with disabilities are faced with learning to adjust to various teaching styles, degrees of structure, or complex activities.

Summary

Full inclusion, by its nature, dictates that the existing special education model be embedded into regular education. Teachers of special education collaborate and teach with regular educators in a shared classroom. "The view of the faculty is that all students, including those with the most significant disabilities, should participate in the general education curriculum. What changes is how instruction is designed for students and the types of supports they are provided." (Sharpe, 2001) While the regular classroom may not be the best learning environment for every child with a disability, it is highly desirable for all who can benefit. It provides contact with age peers and prepares all students for the diversity of the world beyond the classroom. Many schools have chosen to implement some form of inclusion in order to educate students with disabilities in the regular education classrooms. The majority of researchers believe that realizing the benefits of inclusion for all students will require active promotion of the experience by teachers. "Inclusion is not clearly defined and school districts are often ill equipped to successfully implement programs that adequately meet the needs of both special and regular education students." (Marchbanks, Richardson, Flanigan, 2001). "If enough research is conducted and effectively put into practice, inclusion may very well revolutionize the way we education our students." (Marchbanks, Richardson, Flanigan, 2001).

Chapter 4

Introduction

The most recent reform in education is the move from special education being isolated to a more inclusive special education program. Therefore, reducing self-contained classrooms by teaching all students in the regular classroom. "Most recent law governing special education states that school districts are to promote and carry out the Regular Education Initiative through a merger between special education and regular education." (Bergren, 1997). The purpose of this chapter is to determine whether students and teacher attitudes toward special education students affects attitudes towards co-teaching. Specifically this question: Do learning disabled students in cooperative teaching programs have more positive feelings about themselves and feel more accepted by regular education students and teachers than do learning disabled students in traditional resource room programs? Based on the literature, this paper will describe student perceptions of students with special education as well as without special education. It will also describe teacher perceptions and attitudes about the inclusion model and co-teaching. "Idol, Nevin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb (1994) pointed out that general education teachers' attitudes and beliefs toward students with disabilities are among the most important issues influencing collaborative efforts between special and general educators." (Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover, 1997).

Student Perceptions

A few studies have attempted to evaluate the experiences of students with and without disabilities in inclusive/ integrated school settings. A study by Pugach and Wesson found three themes from interviews with nine learning-disabled fifth grade students, nine of their non-disabled fifth grade peers that were selected at random from 55 5th grade students, and three teachers (two male and one female). This study was conducted in the fall of 1989 in an urban school district in a Midwestern city. Perspectives were put into these three themes: classroom social climate, instructional effect, teacher roles and tasks. The classroom social climate was taken from comments about attitudes toward self, peers, teachers, and school. The overall consensus concerning attitudes was that general and special education students alike felt good about themselves, their teachers, and their peers. "Half of the students used the word 'fun' to describe school; of these nine, six were learning disabled students." (Pugach and Wesson, 19995). Students also commented that giving and receiving help was a norm, everyone needed help from time to time and everyone gave help from time to time. Students mentioned that they were able to receive help not from the teachers but also from other students. This expectation of giving and receiving help was consistent with the cooperative learning strategies put into place in these classrooms. When students were asked what they would do if the teacher was busy and they had a question, four learning disabled students and four general education students reported that they would ask a classmate. The second theme, instruction and its effects, dealt with the structure of the classroom work and its effects. It was reported that seven of the nine learning disabled students and all of the general education students interviewed commented

positively on the variety of instructional activities. In this study students were asked where they preferred to be located when receiving small group assistance. "Six general and seven special education students preferred to receive such help in a room other than the large classroom; two preferred a small group within the large classroom, and one student responded that it did not make a difference where, and that either classroom was all right, 'cause it isn't embarrassing.'" It was noted that when students are assigned to learning disabled classrooms their perceptions of themselves may suffer. To some students just belonging in the general education room and being identified with it was important. The third component, teachers' roles and tasks are related to the roles of the three teachers and the degree to which instruction was coordinated. In general the students did not see the special education teacher as directing help only to a specific group of students with problems. Only one instance did any student identify the special education teacher as a teacher for children with disabilities. This same students also saw this special education teacher as a teacher that could relieve the general education teacher when there was an emergency. All the students mentioned that the special education teacher had the leadership role of organizing small group work.

Madge, Affleck, and Lownbraun conducted a three year study that included 13 classrooms in three buildings, grades 1 through 6. The integrated classrooms consisted of one-third special education students with mild disabilities and two-thirds average to above average non-special education students, all of whom are educated in the same classroom for the entire school day. Teachers in the integrated classrooms are certified in special education as well as regular education. Measurement of peer perceptions was conducted through positive and negative peer nomination scales and peer rating scales.

"Each child was called from the classroom individually in random order and presented with the statement. 'Pretend (teacher's name) gave you five stickers to hand out to five members of your class. Give me the pictures of the five class members you would select.'" This was completed until all children were chosen. Numbers were then added together for each child to obtain a core indicating where that child was ranked in the class according to every other child. It was noted that in both settings, pull-out of special education students and inclusion of special education students, special education students chose each other more often in the top quarter to the middle half. In the classroom where special education students were pulled out of the general education students were more likely to choose the special education students in the lower quarter of the class. In the integrated classroom special education students were just as likely to be chosen in the middle two quarters as they were the lower quarter. This shows that real social problems may accompany the learning disability. "It would appear that some students with learning disabilities will not be well accepted regardless of their placement, others will be better accepted in a less stigmatizing environment, and very few will be accepted regardless of placement." (Madge, Affleck, Lowenbraun, 1990).

Two researchers, Whinnery and King, developed a study to compare attitudes of students with learning disabilities who receive services in traditional resource rooms and those being education in regular classrooms through cooperative teaching. This study included 48 elementary school students in grades 2-5 in a rural southeastern school district. This study included 32 students with learning disabilities (16 in resource rooms and 16 in cooperative teaching classrooms) and 16 regular education students. Students who received resource room assistance were in the resource room for less than 12 hours a

week. Student surveys were developed to assess student's feelings about themselves, their perceptions of their classmates' and teachers' attitudes toward them, and their view of the special education services being provided. It is noted that the resource room students received a 17 item survey, the cooperative teaching students received a 15 item survey, and the general education students received a 16 item survey. Survey items required a yes or no response. Results of the survey were organized into four categories: students' feelings about themselves, students' perceptions of acceptance by peers, students' perceptions of acceptance by their classroom teacher, and students' feelings about special education services. In the first category, students' feelings about themselves, learning disabled students in both the resource room model and cooperative teaching model responded positively to the statements "I like myself." However, it was also noted that resource room students responded yes to the statement "I often feel dumb" more often than the cooperative teaching students or regular education students. The second category, students' perceptions of acceptance of peers, relates to how they perceive their acceptance by their peers. "Both cooperative teaching and resource students responded that they were liked by their classmates, but resource students were more likely to feel that students in their class made fun of them than students in the cooperative teaching program." (Whinnery and King, 1995). When the question was asked about feeling left out of class activities only 6% of cooperative teaching students and 19% of regular education students responded yes. However, almost half, 44%, of the resource students gave the response of yes to this question. The third category, students' perceptions of acceptance by their classroom teacher, provided a general positive response. Although, it should be noted that almost half of the resource room students responded that their

classroom teacher sometimes embarrassed them in front of other students. The last category, students' feelings about special education services, generated an overall response between the two groups of cooperative teaching and resource room that their learning disabled teacher helped them obtain better grades. "One hundred percent responded that they liked the learning disabled teacher working in their classroom, but 19% stated that they would prefer that students work with the learning disabled teacher in the resource room. One hundred percent of the regular education students responded yes to the statement, 'If I were having trouble learning something, I would like the learning disabled teacher to help me.'"

Teacher Attitudes/ Perceptions

"Teacher attitude is one of the most important variables in determining the success of innovative programs in special education." (Jobe, Rust, Brissie, 1996). Three researchers, Jobe, Rust, and Brissie conducted a study on teacher attitudes toward inclusion of students with disabilities into regular classrooms. 162 participants were randomly selected from public schools in the United States. Only 29 of these teachers had special education teaching experience. An attitude scale called Opinions Relative to the Integration of Students with Disabilities was used to examine teacher attitudes toward inclusion of all handicapped children in the regular education classroom. Results from this scale showed that male teachers had significantly more negative opinions about inclusion than did females. Teachers without a special education background also showed a more negative opinion as opposed to special education teachers. Teachers who had some in-service training on inclusion had a more positive attitude toward inclusion

than those without any training. Respondents made it clear that the teachers' attitudes toward inclusion depended on what type of disabilities the children have. Teachers seemed much more eager to make accommodations for children with physical disabilities compared to cognitive, emotional, or behavioral problems.

Bergren (1997) also conducted a study on teacher attitudes toward included special education students and co-teaching. This study consisted of 150 regular and special education teachers. Participants were given a locally constructed Teacher Attitudes Survey. It was noted that the majority of teachers believed that special education students learn differently than non special education students, that they require more teaching time, and that it is necessary to modify instruction for them. The consensus was that special education student's benefit from co-teaching. "Analysis of the findings reveals a strong positive teacher attitude toward inclusive placement of special education and regular education students within the same classroom. They believe both types of students would benefit socially from this placement, but have reservations about meeting instructional needs of the special education student." (Bergren, 1997).

Summary

Whinnery and King state a good point in that we have to be careful how we rush towards the new movement of inclusion. We must keep in mind that some students simply cannot make satisfactory learning and social adjustments without significant program and instructional accommodations in classrooms in which some teachers are neither willing nor able to accommodate the diverse nature of individual students. Many

teacher participants in surveys given believed that there were instances in which inclusion was not always appropriate. Those that believed this typically referred to students with severe or multiple handicaps or emotional disturbances. All teachers believe that the support of a special education teacher is important and essential. As we look at student perceptions students who were moved to and from their regular classroom settings were missing the opportunities for belonging. Communities that exist solely in resource room setting allow for only a limited range of students with whom they can feel comfortable with. “With the inclusion movement gaining momentum, it is reassuring that teachers do not possess strongly negative attitudes toward it.” (Jobe, Rust, Brissie, 1996).

Chapter 5

Introduction

Since the amendment to IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1997 special education programs have begun to change. Many of these programs are changing to include the co-teaching model in the general education setting. As teachers incorporate the full inclusion of special education students it is important to think about how to effectively implement the co-teaching model with inclusion. “Co-teaching is considered a viable option for ensuring students have a ‘highly qualified’ content teacher in the room, while also ensuring that all students’ individualized education needs are met by an instructor who is highly qualified in differentiation strategies.” (Murawski, 2008). The purpose of this chapter is to discuss effective ways to implement the co-teaching model with inclusion.

Teaching application

Several researchers have suggested ways that teachers, administrators, and university training programs can effectively implement co-teaching and inclusion. One article written by Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover discussed seven themes that emerged from interviews, phone calls, and questionnaires of ten special education teachers and general education teachers. “These teachers a) described their own personalities as tolerant, reflective, and flexible; b) accepted responsibility for all students; c) described a positive working relationship with special educators; d) reported adjusting expectations for integrated students; e) indicated that their primary inclusionary attitude was showing interpersonal warmth and acceptance in their interactions with students; f) felt that there was insufficient time available for collaboration; and g) expressed reservations about fully including all students.” (Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover, 1997). These themes suggest several implications for university training programs, administrators of public schools, and researchers. The first implication was directed towards universities and their admissions procedures. They discussed the importance of screening for individuals with “humanistic attitudes” toward individuals with disabilities. General educators emphasized that the primary inclusionary practice that contributed to their success was showing warmth and acceptance of students with disabilities. Suggested ways to evaluate this is through a reference letter, personal interview, or pre-entry field experience. The second and most important implication is directed towards administrators of public schools. This implication is focused around time, time to collaborate and problem solve. “Educators must be given sufficient time to collaborate

and problem solve in order to meet the needs of all students.” (Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover, 1997). Suggestions for administrators on how to provide more time for collaboration are as follows: “a) teachers might cover classes for each other or teach interdisciplinary units using team teaching in order to free each other for small blocks of time on a regular basis; b) a number of individuals might conduct classroom activities or supervise groups of students so that teachers are provided collaboration time (e.g., paraprofessional, community volunteers, student teachers, principals, special education coordinators, and directors); c) “floating” substitutes might be hired for 1 day on a regular basis to provide small groups of teachers with blocks of time to collaborate.” (Olson, Chalmers, and Hoover, 1997). The third implication was also directed towards administrators. It discussed the importance of administrators configuring class loads to accommodate for teachers serving students with disabilities in their classrooms. It was also noted that it is important to recognize these teachers for their excellence in serving all students. The last implication expressed by general education teachers was the importance of not losing sight of the best interest of all students in each classroom. It was noted that some teachers expressed concern about integrating all students on a full-time basis. Teachers cited specific instance where they felt that full-time placement in general education classrooms would not work.

Susan M. Cahill and Sue Mitra discuss the importance of collaboration in meeting the demands of inclusion. Similar to Olson, Chalmer, and Hoover they believe that time spent collaborating is the most useful and accessible resource available to general educators. “Building relationships with special education teachers and related service personnel provides general educators with a basis for understanding their inclusion

students' strengths and limitations, as well as an opportunity to develop clear expectations about their performance in the classroom.” (Cahill and Mitra, 2008). Time is a big barrier for many co-teachers. It is important for administrators to support collaborative relationships by scheduling time for teams to work together. Three goals are mentioned to assist in collaboration, which will lead to strong working relationships and improve achievement for students with special needs. The first goal is to use varied instructional methods that meet the unique needs of the students. It is noted how critical it is that staff members work together in brainstorming, sharing, implementing, and evaluating ideas for specific students and classrooms. The second goal discusses the importance of support of the participation of students with special needs in the general education classroom. This support can be accomplished through accommodations, modifications, or a change in management techniques. An example includes a teacher developing a routine to review previously mastered skills prior to the presentation of new material. The third goal that is mentioned focuses on the importance of improving the achievement of students with disabilities overall. “Collaborating provides teachers and related service personnel opportunities to build on their existing knowledge of best practices and incorporate developmentally appropriate approaches to improve the quality of instruction.” (Cahill and Mitra, 2008).

Wendy Murawski discussed five key elements to effectively implementing co-teaching and inclusion. Some of the elements are very similar to what other previous researchers have mentioned: such as scheduling and planning. The first element is very explicit: ‘Know what co-teaching is and when it is needed.’ (Murawski, 2008).

Although co-teaching can have several definitions Murawski says that co-teaching exists

when two professionals co-plan, co-instruct, and co-assess a diverse group of students and both teachers provide substantive instruction to all students on a daily, consistent basis. The second key element is: "Recognize that co-teaching is a marriage and you are the matchmaker." (Murawski, 2008). Co-teaching is sometimes referred to as a "professional marriage." Administrators that do not want their co-teachers to get divorced quickly can use strategies to help. One strategy that is listed is to send out a survey asking teachers their preference of grade, subject, and people with whom to collaborate with. Another strategy mentioned is to allow teachers the opportunity of choosing their own partners. Other strategies listed include: providing professional development, assuring common planning times, and allowing co-teaching partners to be rescued from other responsibilities such as lunch duty. The third key element to the successful implementation of co-teaching and inclusion is to make scheduling a priority. It is noted that when administrators create the class list that they should put students with disabilities in the master schedule first. Scheduling also relates to the proportion of special needs students to the typical student. "The key: Avoid having more than 30 percent of the class with special needs. Though it may be convenient to cluster more students with disabilities into one class, the desired benefits can be negated by this action, leading to lower academics, decreased behaviors and increased teacher frustration." (Murawski, 2008). The fourth key element is in regards to making planning critical. Several ways are noted to allow for planning: time before the end of the school year and during the summer to meet and begin planning instruction, common planning times, hire a substitute, use times when students are engaged elsewhere, administrator or teacher coverage, and provide stipends. The last key element is involves monitoring success,

providing feedback, and ensuring evidence-based practice. It is important when monitoring to provide feedback and observe that both teachers are equally responsible for the co-taught class.

Other researchers' (Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, and Hocutt) list three main characteristics of a successful inclusion classroom which are very similar to the previous researchers. The first deals with organization. Organization deals with the amount of time the students are on task with limited down time. Time spent planning and organizing transitions will limit the down time. Effectively taught routines will also assist having a successful inclusionary classroom. The second characteristic deals with planning. Successful classrooms planned hands-on activities and used manipulatives to engage students. Teachers also planned on the state benchmarks and standards along with the curriculum instead of just the textbook itself. Planning also included a continuous assessment cycle including but not limited to pre and post assessments. The third characteristic deals with teaching. The teaching in a successful inclusionary classroom involves the differentiation of instruction based on assessments of the needs of the students in the classroom. In these successful classrooms there was typically a short period of direct instruction followed by a wide variety of activities that engaged the students at different levels. These researchers also noted that another factor that influenced classrooms effectiveness is the class size, not necessary the amount of special education student but the total amount of students in the classroom. Researchers also noted that teachers felt strongly about the ability to choose their own co-teacher. Teachers also believed that the implementation of co-teaching and inclusion needs to be a

school wide practice supported by all. Decisions made about inclusionary classrooms affected everyone in the school not just that classroom.

Summary

Many of these researchers list similar ways to effectively implement co-teaching and inclusion. "Research has also focused on factors that support the successful implementation of inclusive and collaborative models of education, such as the need for scheduled time for teachers to plan, collaborate, and problem solve." (Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, and Hocutt, 2004). It is important for participation to be voluntary between the collaborative partners as well as to be flexible. Incorporating co-teaching and inclusion involve a commitment within the school that collaboration and inclusion are a process that will evolve over time.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

Several definitions of co-teaching were examined as well as ways to implement the co-teaching model. Researchers differ on parts of definitions but it is consistent to say that co-teaching involves two or more professionals delivering instruction to a diverse group of students in the same classroom. Several models of co-teaching were discussed many of them were similar to Cook and Friend's models: 1) one teach, one assist 2) station teaching 3) parallel teaching 4) alternative teaching and 5) team teaching. Researchers suggest that there is much to be considered when implementing co-teaching. One of the biggest and most important considerations is the students. It is important to

think about all students, including talented and gifted students. These students may benefit by having more options for individualized instruction. Special education students who stay in the classroom are allowed a more continual process of learning as opposed to students who leave the classroom one or more times during the day.

A brief history of inclusion was outlined in this paper as well as what inclusion is and how to effectively implement this practice. Inclusion was defined by the Learning Disabilities Association in 1993 as referring to the instruction of all students, with and without disabilities, in the general education classroom, unless substantial evidence is provided to show that such a placement would not be in the student's best interests. While not everyone is in support of inclusion many agree that the regular classroom is the best learning environment for those that can benefit. Marchbanks, Richardson, and Flanigan mention that inclusion is not clearly defined and school districts are often ill equipped to successfully implement programs that adequately meet the needs of both special and regular education students. If enough research is conducted and effectively put into practice, inclusion may very well revolutionize the way we educate our students.

This paper examined several studies that were aimed at student and teacher perceptions of inclusion and co-teaching. The studies examined were mainly focused at the elementary level (kindergarten through 5th grade). While there were only a few studies it was noted by several students that they preferred staying in the general education classroom because it gave them a sense of belonging. One example given by Whinnery and King was a 5th grader that was learning at the 2nd grade level. This student even though the material was hard in the general education classroom felt that he belonged there instead of the pull-out special education classroom where he was being

taught 2nd grade material, which he thought was dull and boring. Many teachers did report that the inclusion model may not be the best environment for students with severe or multiple handicaps or emotional disturbances, but would be successful for those who could benefit.

As school administrators begin to set agendas for these changes in education, policies regarding services for special education students should take into account the accumulated findings of studies that examine effects of inclusion and co-teaching. According to Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, and Hocutt (2004) there are many benefits for everyone involved in the model of co-teaching with inclusion. "Benefits identified for the students with disabilities in the inclusive setting included an increase in self-esteem and self-confidence, an increase in academic performance, improved social skills, and stronger peer relationships." Some general education teachers have expressed the concern of how having special education students in the classroom will affect the regular education students. Researchers have listed several benefits for the regular education students. Benefits include: improved academic performance, more time with and attention from the teacher, increased emphasis on cognitive strategies and study skills, increased emphasis on social skills, and improved classroom communities. (Laframboise, Epanchin, Colucci, and Hocutt, 2004). These same researchers identified benefits for teachers as well, including general and special education teachers. Benefits included an increased professional satisfaction, opportunities for professional growth, personal support, and increased opportunities for collaboration. "In 1995, the National Center on Educational Restructuring and Inclusion reported that co-teaching was the

most frequently used service delivery model for inclusion classrooms.” (Volonino and Zigmond, 2007).

Recommendations

There are a couple recommendations for further studies regarding co-teaching and inclusion: 1) more research on inclusion and the ways that it is effectively put into practice, 2) a focus on different perceptions of the co-teaching and inclusion model with parents and other shareholders.

First and foremost, administrators and teachers should use the outlined characteristics in this paper to design a co-teaching model with inclusion. It is suggested that administrators allow for teachers to select their own co-teacher and that class size with the amount of special education students in a specific class be monitored. It is also suggested that these classrooms be monitored by an administrator and feedback provided. Feedback to the teachers will allow for them to effectively implement the co-teaching model.

After researching the development and implementation of co-teaching and inclusion, it is evident that much more research is yet to come. Integrated special education students in the general education classroom is becoming more of a natural occurrence, and possibly very effective in motivating special needs students. It is up to researchers to continue to devise studies that measures students' achievement levels for special education students as well as general education students in a co-taught inclusive classroom. It is up to teachers and administrators to successfully implement co-teaching and inclusion so that all shareholders can benefit.

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