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ABSTRACT

The academic progress and self-concept of North York (Ontario, Canada) learning-disabled and educable retarded students were studied, with particular reference to the effectiveness of placement in mixed exceptionality versus single exceptionality programs. Information was gathered from the published special education literature, students' files, pre-post assessment of changes in academic achievement and self-concept, and questionnaires administered to 28 parents and 78 teachers. Subjects involved in the study were aged 9-11, with 17 learning-disabled (LD) students in mixed exceptionality classes, 45 LD students in single exceptionality classes, 5 educable retarded (ER) students in mixed exceptionality classes, and 25 ER students in single exceptionality classes. Analysis showed that the LD pupils in single category classes fared best in terms of academic gains in reading, spelling, and arithmetic. No significant self-concept changes were found. Most parents were satisfied with their child's placement. Only modest differences were noted in teachers' views regarding effect of single and mixed exceptionality programs. Appendices contain a literature review, case studies of six students, copies of the parent and teacher questionnaires, and detailed data from the questionnaires. Includes 10 references. (JDD)

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THE ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT PROGRESS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION:  
MIXED-EXCEPTIONALITY VERSUS SINGLE-EXCEPTIONALITY PROGRAMS

Sandra Sangster, Sally Erling

December, 1986

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I INTRODUCTION	
Background: What is Special Education?	1
The Focus of This Study	1
II STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SKILLS AND SELF CONCEPT	4
Academic Skills	4
Self Concept	5
III PARENT PERCEPTIONS	7
IV TEACHER PERCEPTIONS	11
Current Special Education Programs and Prior Experience	11
Comparison of the Impact of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Programs on Students	13
Comparison of the Impact of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Programs on Teachers	16
Teachers' Views Regarding the Value of Assessment Data for Program Planning	17
Evaluations of the Practice of Placing Special Education Students in Comprehensive Programs	20
Professional Development Resources for Special Education Teachers	21
V CASE STUDIES	23
VI SUMMARY	24

	Page
VII APPENDICES	
A. Literature Review	28
B. Parent Questionnaire	38
C. Teacher Questionnaire	42
D. Comments Regarding Placement of Learning Disabled Students in Comprehensive Programs	56
E. Comments Regarding Placement of Educable Students in Comprehensive Programs	59
F. Parents' Concerns Regarding their Child's Special Education Program	61
G. Teachers' Comparisons of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Program in Areas related to Classroom Teaching	62
H. Comments Regarding Placement of Learning Disabled Students in Comprehensive Programs	64
I. Comments Regarding Placement of Educable Students in Comprehensive Programs	65
J. Case Study Summaries	66
Case 1	66
Case 2	67
Case 3	68
Case 4	69
Case 5	70
Case 6	72

## I INTRODUCTION

### Background: What is Special Education?

Special Education programs and services are intended to serve exceptional students whose needs are not being met in the regular classroom or through Program Modification. Such students are defined as having "behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical or multiple exceptionalities" which require specialized program placement.

The legislated procedures for the identification and placement of exceptional students are carried out by an Identification, Placement and Review Committee (I.P.R.C.), which reviews individual assessment information - educational, psychological and/or medical - subject to specific admission criteria delineated for each type of program. The committee is then responsible for identifying the exceptionality, determining the type of service required to meet these needs and recommending program placement. The degree of exceptionality determines the level of service (i.e. the amount of time in special education) offered.

It is expected that a Special Education program will be individually planned and modified to accommodate the type and degree of each child's exceptionality, as assessed by the continuous evaluation and diagnosis of their needs. The completion of the Student Information and the Program Plan Review forms facilitates this process. The actual provision of an appropriate program is the responsibility of the school, although the I.P.R.C. has responsibility for reviewing the placement at regular intervals.

### The Focus of This Study

Typically, North York's special education programs are evaluated through reviews of the delivery of service as initiated by the Special Education Advisory Committee (S.E.A.C.) and the Board. These reviews include soliciting feedback from the professional and teaching staff responsible for special education and regular programs, as well as from community groups, usually by the submission and/or presentation of briefs.

This year, S.E.A.C. recommended a more comprehensive study of the progress of students in special education with particular reference to the effectiveness of placement in mixed-exceptionality (Comprehensive Home School) versus single exceptionality (Special Education) programs. In the context of program placement and level of service, S.E.A.C.'s primary goal was to assess the **academic progress** of special education students. A secondary concern included an examination of possible changes in self concept. This study focuses on learning disabled and educable retarded students, receiving various levels of service in either comprehensive or single-exceptionality programs.

A number of specific research questions which provide a focus for the report, along with the sources of information that are relevant to each question, are outlined below:

1. Is there any published evidence that integrated, resource or self-contained programs differ in effectiveness for students who vary by type and severity of exceptionality? What are the common methodological difficulties inherent in these evaluation studies? To what extent do these difficulties limit the conclusions that can be drawn? To what extent can the findings of published studies be generalized to North York's special education programs?
2. What changes in achievement and self concept have occurred in the interval between pre and post-testing on the Wide Range Achievement Test and the North York Self Concept Inventory for learning disabled and educable students placed in Home School Comprehensive Programs versus Special Education Programs?
3. What are teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of mixed versus single-exceptionality programs in terms of:
  - a) teachers' responsibilities in the classroom
  - b) progress in areas such as achievement, self concept, social adjustment, and in meeting individualized program objectives for students with various types and severity of exceptionality?
- 4.a) How familiar are parents with the nature of the special education program in which their child has been placed?
  - b) Have parents noted significant changes in their child as a result of the child's participation in special education?
  - c) What aspects of their child's special education program do parents feel has been most effective and what changes would they like to see in their child's program?
5. For students included as case studies, what evidence is there that progress has been made in attaining the specific individualized objectives outlined in the Program Plan of the Student Information Form?

A wide variety of methodological difficulties and constraints are common to many of the studies which have attempted to evaluate the effectiveness of special education programs. Appendix A provides a review of the literature evaluating the effectiveness of special education programs. The methodological issues as they apply to the published research literature and to the situation in North York are also discussed.

Because of these ethical and methodological constraints, it was impossible to conduct a controlled evaluation of special education programs which would allow definitive conclusions about the type of programs that are most effective for children whose exceptionalities differ both in terms of type and severity. Therefore, the study which was conducted consisted of five inter-related components, each of which drew on different sources of

information and was designed to address the key research questions pertaining to student progress in special education from slightly different perspectives. One component involved the collection of relevant data from all learning disabled and educable students in the special education programs selected for study. From this sample of students, a small number of cases was selected for more detailed analysis using a case study method. Information was also gathered from parents and teachers regarding their perceptions of special education programs.

It was thought that this multi-faceted approach would maximize the amount of interpretable information available regarding the effectiveness of North York's special education programs within the constraints outlined in Appendix A. The components of this evaluation are described and the results are presented in the following sections:

- II. Student's Academic Skills and Self Concept
- III. Parent Perceptions
- IV. Teacher Perceptions
- V. Case Studies
- VI. Summary

## II STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SKILLS AND SELF CONCEPT

A sample of 12 Special Education classes was chosen to represent ER and LD single-category Special Education Programs and mixed-exceptionality Home School Comprehensive Programs in North York. For each of these three groups, pre and post-test data re self concept and academic progress in the basic skills, were collected and analyzed in the context of program placement.

According to class lists provided by the Special Education department, five comprehensive classes, four LD classes and three ER classes were originally selected as the sample. These were chosen from junior level special education programs (i.e. students ages 9, 10 and 11) at six different schools.

Although these same classes are still included in the sample, the special education designations of some of them have been changed. After all the data had been collected, inconsistencies in the designations were discovered in four out of 12 cases i.e. the class designation varied depending on the source of information. In those instances we assigned classifications that best described the students in the classroom, irrespective of the official classroom designation. As a result, the final mix consisted of:

LD (single)	6 classes
ER (single)	3 classes
Comprehensive (mixed)	3 classes

### (a) Academic Skills

A pre/post assessment of academic skills as measured by the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was conducted in January and again in June. This test was individually administered to each student by a representative of Psychological and Assessment Services and the results reported as a standard score rather than a grade score. Pre and post scores were obtained on three subtests - Reading, Spelling, Arithmetic.

The following table presents mean scores and standard deviations (pre and post) by subtest for students in each of the different types of classes. A test of statistical significance (t-test) was applied to determine if the pre-post differences in scores were significant; those sets of scores marked below with an asterisk showed differences (i.e. improvements) significant at the .05 level.

<u>Comprehensive LD</u>	(N = 17)	Pre-test (January)		Post-test (June)	
		Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Reading		81.1	12.3	78.8	14.4
Spelling		82.4	10.9	81.5	11.2
Arithmetic		86.2	14.5	90.5	14.7
<u>Single-Category LD</u>	(N = 45)				
Reading		76.6	13.2	79.1	13.8 *
Spelling		76.1	12.3	79.1	13.2 *
Arithmetic		79.9	12.9	83.3	14.6 *



Comprehensive ER (N = 5)

	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
Reading	65.2	21.5	64.0	20.2
Spelling	66.8	13.4	67.6	15.0
Arithmetic	62.0	5.8	63.0	13.0

Single-Category ER (N = 25)

Reading	70.4	13.2	69.1	13.5
Spelling	69.9	11.5	69.9	11.6
Arithmetic	70.6	12.1	74.4	11.3 *

These results indicate that, at least in this limited sample, the learning disabled pupils in a single-category class fared the best in terms of academic improvement over the six month period. However, it should be noted that in absolute terms, learning disabled students in comprehensive classes showed similar improvements in arithmetic as learning disabled students in single-category special education programs. Due to the smaller sample size, these gains just failed to reach statistical significance.

Educable pupils in a single-category class also showed significant gains in Arithmetic but no change and a slight decrease in Spelling and Reading respectively. Students in the mixed-exceptionality or comprehensive classes did not show any significant changes in any of the subtests over this period. However, because of the very small sample size, no conclusions can be drawn regarding the progress of educable students in comprehensive classes.

**(b) Self Concept**

Pre/post scores of self concept were compiled for the same time interval (January-June) as the achievement data. The North York Self Concept Inventory was administered by a representative of Research & Evaluation Services using the primary level with educable pupils and the junior level with the learning disabled pupils. The mean scores and standard deviations obtained in the pre and post-tests are tabled below.

<u>Primary Self Concept /40</u>	Pre-test (January)		Post-test (June)	
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
. Comprehensive ER	33.6	3.0	34.8	3.0
. Single-Category ER	35.3	5.3	32.9	5.8
<u>Junior Self-Concept /30</u>				
. Comprehensive LD	16.3	7.3	16.2	8.4
. Single-Category LD	17.3	5.7	18.8	6.1

When t-tests were calculated for these scores, no significant pre-post differences were apparent for any of the groups. The following table provides normative data from North York for the primary and junior level Self Concept Inventory by grade level.

Means for  
Primary Level/40

Grade 1 - 33  
Grade 2 - 32

Means for  
Junior Level/30

Grade 2 - 20  
Grade 3 - 19  
Grade 4 - 20  
Grade 5 - 20  
Grade 6 - 21

As is evident, educable students achieved scores comparable to grade 1 and 2 students, while the average scores for learning disabled students were slightly below those for the norm group.

### III PARENT PERCEPTIONS

The third set of data derived from this sample of special education students in mixed and single-exceptionality programs was parental perceptions of the special education program, with specific reference to:

- . their understanding of the program goals and activities
- . their child's attitude to school
- . attention to individual needs
- . effects on/changes in child
- . most effective aspects of the program
- . suggested changes or modifications

In late May a questionnaire (provided in Appendix B) was mailed to the parents of all children in the twelve classes of the sample. A postage-paid, self-addressed envelope was provided to facilitate returns. Of the 87 questionnaires sent, four were returned undelivered (i.e. no longer at that address). Twenty-eight completed returns or 32% of the sample were received by the Research Department. In view of the small number of respondents, the findings below will be reported for the whole group rather than by type of program and will be presented as numbers rather than percentages.

The first set of tables outlines some characteristics of the special education programs which the respondents' children attend.

	<u>#</u>
Age of child:	
9	4
10	9
11	12
12	3
Grade Placement:	
. 3	2
. 4	6
. 5	14
. 6	2
. Ungraded	4
Type of Special Education Program attended:	
. Special Education, Learning Disabled	14
. Special Education, Educable	11
. Home School Comprehensive Special Education	2
. Don't Know	1
Amount of Time Spent in Program:	
. More than half-time	12
. About half-time	6
. Less than half-time	8
. Don't Know	2

Location of Program:

- . in the local home school 20
- . in another school/special education centre 8

Judging by the small number of comprehensive programs mentioned but the predominance of local home school locations, it would appear that parents have under-reported enrolment in the Home School Comprehensive Programs - perhaps tending to associate more readily with their child's identified exceptionality (i.e. - LD, ER) when reporting, as opposed to their actual program placement.

Approximately three-quarters of the respondents agreed that the Identification, Placement & Review Committee (IPRC) made appropriate decisions in both the identification of their child's exceptionality and his/her placement in a special education program. About one-fifth of the parents did not know or did not respond. Of the few who expressed negative reactions to the IPRC decisions, the following concerns were expressed:

"If she repeated grade one none of this education would be necessary. They said she only needed one hour a day for a few months. It's been four years."

"It doesn't help much. My son was good at math, he went in for reading and now he's weak in all areas. He's been in Special Ed. for three years."

"Teachers teach, therefore they should know the subjects the students need help in."

At least eight out of every 10 parents were satisfied with their level of involvement and participation in the IPRC process and felt they had an adequate understanding of their child's educational needs. Three-quarters of them recalled having the assessment results from the IPRC shared with them; usually by someone in their child's school i.e. the Special Education teacher or the principal. In other cases this was done by a psychologist, an IPRC representative or in a mailed letter of assessment.

Parents were also asked a number of specific questions about their child's program and their response was very positive. The chart below indicates the extent to which they agreed or strongly agreed with these statements.

	<u># in agreement</u> (N=28)
. I have an adequate understanding of my child's special education program.	25
. I am aware of the activities and experiences that my child pursues in his/her special education class.	24
. Generally, my child's special education program is individualized to meet his/her particular needs.	24
. I am satisfied that the program recommendations from the IPRC are being addressed.	25

- |   | <u># in agreement</u><br>(N=28) |
|---|---------------------------------|
| . I am kept well informed of my child's progress.                                       | 27                              |
| . I am satisfied with the progress my child is making in the special education program. | 23                              |

Generally, the amount of time my child spends in a Special Education program is:

- |               |    |
|---------------|----|
| . about right | 21 |
| . too much    | 4  |
| . not enough  | 2  |

Parents also reported that their child's attitude about being in a special education program could best be described as:

- |                     |    |
|---------------------|----|
| . very enthusiastic | 7  |
| . positive          | 11 |
| . indifferent       | 7  |
| . negative          | 3  |

Just over one quarter or eight of the parents said their child received additional tutoring or instruction outside of the school and in every case they identified themselves as the source of instruction.

When asked about any noticeable or significant **changes in their child** as a result of participation in special education, the response by parents was primarily positive.

- | i.e.   | <u>#</u> |
|--|----------|
| . Better attitude towards school and/or school work, positive about achievements, enthusiastic about school, likes program | 9        |
| . Improved self confidence; improved self image  | 8        |
| . Improved progress; learned more; verbal and writing skills improved  | 6        |
| . More relaxed; happier; more social and extroverted   | 6        |
| . More independent   | 3        |
| . Others (Single responses): Improved behaviour, more creative   | 2        |

On the negative side were attitude problems and low self-esteem (2) or a lack of communication between the special education and regular teachers, with the child caught in the middle (1).

According to the parents, the most effective aspects of the special education program for their child were -

- . the smaller groups/classes, with good teachers who are able to provide more individual attention and one-on-one instruction (13)
- . consistency, clear expectations, discipline, proper direction and/or positive reinforcement (7)

Others identified particular subjects (i.e. Art, Sports, Computer) or noted, for example, a better understanding of or improvement in their child's work; that the program is well suited to child's needs; that the child is more expressive.

The majority of parents either did not feel any changes were necessary in their child's special education program or his/her placement or did not respond to the question. Of those who did comment, four said they would like to see their child attend the regular program; two said they would like to see special education included to the maximum throughout public schooling (i.e. carried over into high school), and two others suggested having a clear cut plan of learning and teaching in place, particularly when more than one teacher is involved. Remarks from three parents implied that the range of ages within a class was too wide. The remaining comments were single responses.

Although parental responses to these survey questions were extremely favourable, it should be kept in mind that the selected sample of 12 classes was relatively small to begin with and that responses were based on only one-third of the 87 questionnaires sent. However, to summarize the perceptions of the parents who did respond, it was evident that most (75% or more) of these parents, with children in Learning Disabled, Educable and Comprehensive Special Education Programs at the junior level, were satisfied with:

- . the IPRC decisions and their involvement in the IPRC process
- . their awareness and understanding of what the special education program entails
- . the program meeting their child's individual needs, as recommended
- . their child's progress
- . the amount of time spend in the special education program.

Almost every parent noted some positive change(s) in their child's attitudes or disposition as a result of their special education experience and many felt that factors such as the smaller classes, individual attention, clear and consistent expectations and proper direction were the most effective components of the program. Very few changes were recommended for either the child's placement or program.

#### IV TEACHER PERCEPTIONS

A questionnaire (provided in Appendix C) was sent to all junior level special education teachers (n=132). Completed questionnaires were received from 78 teachers, representing a return rate of 59 percent. Topics covered included the following:

- . type of special education program and students for whom they are presently responsible
- . prior experience teaching students with exceptionalities differing from those in their current caseload and teaching different types of special education programs
- . perceptions of differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in terms of:
  - effects on achievement, attitudes and behaviours for learning disabled and educable students
  - teacher activities such as monitoring student progress, defining objectives and programming
- . perceptions of usefulness of various types of assessment data in the development of program plans for students
- . opinions regarding the suitability of Home School Comprehensive Programs for learning disabled and educable students
- . frequency of contact with parents regarding student progress
- . concerns expressed by parents regarding their child's placement
- . use and helpfulness of various professional development activities and resources.

##### (a) Current Special Education Program and Prior Experience

Teachers who responded had an average of 18 years of teaching experience, with slightly more than eight years prior experience in special education. The following provides a break-down of the types of special education programs for which these teachers were responsible in 1985-86, and the average years of experience teachers had in their current type of program.

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>% of Teachers</u>	<u>Years of Experience in Current Program</u>
. Home School Comprehensive Program	65	3.4
. Learning Disabled Special Education Program	15	3.6
. Educable Special Education Program	6	3.8
. Multiple Programs (L.D., Educable and/or Comprehensive)	9	2.3
. Other	3	1.5
. No Response	1	1

Teachers were also asked to provide a summary of how many students of each exceptionality were in their 1985-86 caseload. Ninety percent of these teachers were responsible for learning disabled students. More than 50 percent of teachers had educable, behavioural and/or remedial students. Their responses are summarized below:

<u>Exceptionality</u>	<u>Average # of students</u>	<u>Range in # of students</u>	<u>% of Teachers</u>
. Learning Disabled	8.4	2 - 23	90
. Educable	3.5	1 - 14	69
. Remedial	4.3	1 - 15	53
. Behavioural	2.1	1 - 8	51
. Other exceptionalities (e.g. gifted L.D., language, E.S.L., limited vision, physically handicapped)	1.7	1 - 3	17
. Regular students	8	(8)	1
. Monitored students	13	(13)	1

Teachers were asked to describe their special education teaching load, given the needs of the students for whom they were responsible in 1985-86. Fifty-three percent of the teachers of comprehensive programs felt that their load was "much" or "somewhat" too heavy. The remaining 47% indicated that it was "about right". Slightly less than two-thirds of the teachers who were responsible for programs other than comprehensive thought that their teaching load was too heavy. The remaining 35% rated their load as "about right".

Of the teachers who responded to the survey, 64 percent indicated that they had taught special education programs differing in type from the ones for which they were responsible at the time of the survey. Their prior experience is summarized below in terms of the types of special education programs taught, and average number of years experience with each.

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>% of Teachers</u>	<u>Average Years of Experience</u>
. Self-Contained	60	3.3
. Resource	40	3.7
. Comprehensive	13	2.0
. Itinerant	5	2.3
. Integrated	3	1.5
. Other (e.g. trainable mentally retarded; Behavioural summer camp; institutionalized educable mentally retarded)	5	1.5

About 68% of teachers indicated that they had previously had experience with students differing in exceptionality from those who were in their 1985-86 caseload, although two teachers failed to specify the exceptionalities involved. Their prior experience is described below:



<u>Exceptionality</u>	<u>% of Teachers</u>	<u>Years of Experience</u>
. Learning Disabled	51	4.7
. Educable	42	4.6
. Behavioural	26	3.7
. Multihandicapped	10	1.8
. Speech/Language	9	1.2
. Gifted	6	2.7
. Physically Handicapped	1	2.0
. Hearing/Vision	1	4.0
. Other (e.g. trainable; early intervention)	5	3.5

**(b) Comparison of the Impact of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Programs on Students**

Teachers were asked if they thought there were any differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in areas related to student achievement, attitudes and behaviour. They made their responses to each question first with reference to learning disabled students, and subsequently for educable students. Their responses are summarized below, with percentages based on the total number of teachers who returned questionnaires.

<u>Relative to single-exceptionality classes:</u>		<u>For Learning Disabled</u> %	<u>For Educable</u> %
. Academic achievement in comprehensive classes is:	- higher	26	18
	- same	21	27
	- lower	23	26
	- don't know	18	17
	- depends on circumstances	1	-
	- no response	12	13
. Students' ability to get along well with others is:	- greater	29	22
	- same	23	27
	- less	21	22
	- don't know	15	17
	- no response	12	13
. Students' behaviour at school is:	- better	21	22
	- same	32	31
	- worse	18	17
	- don't know	12	18
	- depends on circumstances	3	-
	- no response	15	13

	For Learning Disabled %	For Educable %	
. Students' self concept is:	- more positive	28	32
	- same	23	17
	- more negative	19	19
	- don't know	17	18
	- depends on circumstances	-	1
	- no response	13	13
. Students' attitudes toward school are:	- more positive	27	33
	- same	28	14
	- more negative	17	21
	- don't know	14	18
	- depends on circumstances	-	1
	- no response	14	13

In summary, some modest differences were noted in teachers' views regarding effect of single and mixed exceptionality programs on learning disabled and educable students. Comprehensive classes were more often rated as improving achievement and social functioning, and less often rated as improving self concept and school attitudes for learning disabled than for educable students. In many instances, however, opinions were fairly evenly split regarding whether comprehensive programs made a difference in the achievement, attitudes and behaviour of learning disabled and educable students.

Teachers were also given an opportunity to comment further on the relative advantages and disadvantages for learning disabled students of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs.

Fifty-one percent of teachers in the sample responded. Of the teachers who commented, 25 percent cited advantages which they thought were associated with comprehensive special education programs, such as improved self esteem, social skills, achievement and more positive attitudes towards school. Others thought that students in comprehensive programs were less likely to be labelled as special education students. Twenty percent of teachers offered neutral comments or indicated they had not had sufficient experience with both single-exceptionality and comprehensive programs to make a direct comparison. The remaining 55 percent of the teachers who commented cited problems they've encountered or potential problems associated with comprehensive special education programs which may arise depending on the mix of students and other circumstances. Most commonly noted problems associated with comprehensive programs included:

- . effects of classmates, misbehaviour on the learning of students who are very distractible
- . greater difficulties in meeting the needs of a diverse group of students, and the need for smaller classes
- . greater risks to the self esteem of learning disabled students when they are placed with students of lower intellectual abilities

A detailed summary of teachers' comments relative to learning disabled students may be found in Appendix D.

Teachers were then given an opportunity to comment on the relative advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs for educable students. Thirty-three percent of the teachers responded. Of the teachers who commented, 31 percent cited advantages for educable students which were associated with comprehensive programs, such as self concept and social gains, and increased opportunities for the development of peer relationships. Other teachers commented on possible gains in achievement related to higher academic expectations in comprehensive programs. Thirty-eight percent expressed neutral comments or indicated that they had not had sufficient experience with either comprehensive or single-exceptionality programs to compare the two. The remaining 31 percent cited potential problems or actual difficulties they've experienced in teaching comprehensive programs. Among the problems cited most often for educable students in comprehensive classes were the following:

- . educable students realize they are not learning as fast as others in the class
- . educable students may have difficulty fighting for their share of the teacher's time.

A detailed list of teachers' comments relative to educable students is provided in Appendix E.

Following their assessment of the relative effectiveness of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs, teachers were asked how frequently they contacted the parents of their special education students regarding progress, difficulties or program changes. Slightly more than 50 percent of teachers reported contacting parents anywhere from once every couple of months to once or twice per term. Their responses are summarized below:

	<u>% of Teachers</u>
. more than once a month	14
. about once a month	14
. once every couple of months	27
. once or twice per term	26
. other responses (it depends on the parents or the child; for some it may be very frequent)	13
. no response	6

Teachers were also asked if any parents had expressed concerns about the type of program in which their child had been placed. Sixty-two percent indicated that parents had not expressed such concerns whereas about thirty percent reported that some of the parents had done so. The remaining teachers did not respond to the question. All 24 of the teachers who indicated that parents had expressed concerns provided comments. The concerns ranged from the level of service received, the need for a more intensive, self-contained program and the extent of individualization of the child's program to issues related to student progress, the mix of students in the class and the stigmatizing effects of labelling. These comments are summarized in Appendix F.

**(c) Comparison of the Impact of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Programs on Teachers**

Teachers were asked to assess whether there were any differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in such areas related to classroom teaching as defining objectives, monitoring progress, programming and classroom management.

Programming for the class as a whole in comprehensive classes was rated as being more difficult by nearly 60 percent of teachers who responded. Slightly less than fifty percent of teachers also thought that programming for individual students was more difficult in comprehensive classes than in single-exceptionality programs. Slightly more than one third of teachers have also found defining objectives, monitoring progress and classroom management to be more difficult in comprehensive classes.

<u>Compared to single-exceptionality classes:</u>		<u>% of Teachers</u>
• Defining individual objectives in comprehensive classes is:	- easier	5
	- same	38
	- harder	36
	- don't know	10
	- no response	10
• Monitoring student progress in attaining objectives in comprehensive classes is:	- easier	5
	- same	40
	- harder	35
	- don't know	10
	- no response	10
• Programming for individual students in comprehensive classes is:	- easier	4
	- same	29
	- harder	46
	- don't know	10
	- no response	10
• Programming for the entire class in comprehensive classes is:	- easier	8
	- same	12
	- harder	59
	- don't know	10
	- no response	12

. Class management in comprehensive classes is:	- easier	14
	- same	26
	- harder	38
	- don't know	12
	- no response	10

Fifty percent of the teachers commented further on the relative advantages and disadvantages of single-exceptionality and comprehensive programs. The majority of issues identified involved the difficulty of meeting students' needs given the variety of competing demands, problems in programming and organizing activities both for the special education class as a whole, and in conjunction with regular classroom activities, and difficulties in dealing with behavioural students. However, some teachers did not feel that comprehensive classes posed serious problems provided the age range is limited and special education teachers have enough time to conference with regular teachers. Some expressed the view that regardless of the type of program, teachers must still program for individual students. Teachers' detailed comments are provided in Appendix G.

**(d) Teachers' Views Regarding the Value of Assessment Data for Program Planning**

Teachers evaluated the extent to which they found various types of assessment information helpful in the development of program plans for their special education students. The types of information they were asked to evaluate included educational and psychological assessments and "Statement of Needs" documents. By far the majority of teachers indicated that all of these sources of information were at least somewhat helpful in their program planning. Their responses are summarized below:

	Helpfulness			No Response
	Very	Somewhat	Not at all	
	%	%	%	%
. Educational assessments	56	33	5	5
. Psychological assessments	47	41	5	6
. Other (e.g. multicultural, language, medical)	45	38	10	6
. "Statement of Needs" documents	55	28	10	6

The majority of teachers who rated educational assessments as very helpful indicated that they provided special education teachers with the child's current performance level and an appropriate starting point for the development of the child's program. These assessments provide information about the child's strengths and weaknesses, as well as potential. Teachers who rated these assessments as somewhat helpful commented that the teacher must still spend time with students to assess their problems and plan programs although the assessments may provide some initial assistance. Too often the educational assessments which are provided are vague and general, or limited

to a listing of disabilities with no suggestions for remediation. In other cases, the value of the assessment depends on the tests on which it was based, or the nature of the recommendations.

Of the two teachers who rated educational assessments as not at all helpful and who provided comments one indicated that the current educational assessment often does not arrive until most of the year is over. The other felt that the same information could be obtained from her own observations and informal testing.

Some of the teachers' comments regarding the value of psychological assessments were similar to those describing education assessments. The majority of teachers who found the former assessments to be very helpful remarked either that they provide an overall insight into students' potential, as well as their strengths and weaknesses, or that these assessments provide directions and suggestions for planning and specific program strategies. Other responses included the following:

- helps in understanding the underlying nature of the child's difficulties
- explains possible reasons for academic, social and emotional difficulties.

Teachers who viewed psychological assessments as being somewhat helpful tended to express a different viewpoint. The most frequent responses of these teachers included the following:

- the reports vary in the amount of detail provided and may not be specific enough
- the reports offer few guidelines or implications and/or few practical suggestions regarding remediation
- conclusions based on a one-to-one test session may differ from conclusions that would be based on classroom observation of social behaviour and may not reflect functional needs; the teacher may have already worked with the child informally for months before the assessment is done
- the quality of the assessment depends on the skill of the psychologist; some reports contain too much technical jargon.

The four teachers who rated psychological assessments as not at all helpful made the following comments:

- the reports are incomplete and artificial, without suggestions or guidelines that teachers can use
- teacher believes his/her own "gut" feelings are pretty accurate; one teacher uses these reports as a last resort
- the reports only provide information about "relative intelligence potential".

Teachers who viewed other assessment data (e.g. multicultural, language, medical) as helpful made the following comments most frequently regarding the contribution of these assessments:

- . clarify the nature of the student's strengths and difficulties, making it easier to devise a program to meet those needs
- . important to know if there are specific medical or language problems so that the program devised is appropriate
- . program ideas are usually specific and easy to implement
- . some of these assessments provide a profile of where the student is from and describes his/her background which provides additional insight.

A total of eleven teachers who regarded these other assessments as somewhat or not at all helpful commented on the limitations of such information. Their comments included:

- . their value depends on the nature of the child's problem and/or on the completeness of the report
- . multicultural assessments are often weak and of limited usefulness
- . these assessments can be inaccurate, difficult to understand
- . seldom receives such assessments.

Finally, teachers were asked to comment on the ways in which "Statement of Needs" documents help them to develop program plans for their special education students. The majority of teachers who viewed these documents as helpful provided the following comments:

- . these documents define the child's needs and the task involved
- . they provide a direction and focus for the teacher and a base point from which to work
- . the documents help initially but as the child progresses, needs and priorities change and programming must be adjusted.

Less frequent responses included:

- . helpful in reporting progress to parents; at the end of the month the teacher can determine whether the needs which were written down are being met
- . if a teacher has found an effective way of working with a student, that information should be passed on.

A small number of teachers expressed some concerns about the helpfulness of "Statement of Needs" documents. These concerns included the following:

- . their value depends on the expertise of those who completed the documents: they may be poorly written, too general or sometimes conflict with the teacher's own observations
- . the documents should be done in October but often come too late in the year

- for students remaining in their home school, the teacher is likely to already know the child. Thus, statements of needs documents may be just extra paperwork.

**(e) Evaluations of the Practice of Placing Special Education Students in Comprehensive Programs**

All teachers were asked to what extent they approved of the current practice of placing both learning disabled and educable students in Home School Comprehensive Special Education Programs. Their responses are summarized below separately for educable and learning disabled children.

% of Teachers

	<u>Learning Disabled</u>	<u>Educable</u>
Approve	50	42
Undecided	22	28
Disapprove	22	23
No response	6	6

On average, slightly less than half of the teachers who responded approved of the current practice. Although there were no differences in the extent to which teachers disapproved of the practice for students of these two exceptionalities, teachers tended to be slightly less approving of placement in Home School Comprehensive Programs for educable students than for those who are learning disabled.

Teachers were then provided with an opportunity to elaborate on their opinions regarding the practice of placing students in comprehensive programs. The comments which were made most frequently are summarized separately for learning disabled and educable students in Appendices H and I respectively.

Fifty-eight percent of teachers in the sample provided comments with reference to learning disabled students. The majority of comments indicated approval of the practice under certain conditions because of such factors as benefits for learning disabled students' self concepts. However, approval was frequently qualified by concerns about considering each case on its own merits, the suitability of specific comprehensive classes for particular students, and issues related to class size and individual programming. Teachers who disapproved most often cited difficulties giving learning disabled students sufficient attention, and the greater distractibility of such students.

Fifty-one percent of teachers commented regarding the practice of placing educable students in comprehensive programs. The majority of comments indicated that teachers approve of the current practice under certain conditions: the class size must be kept low, sufficient staff support must be available, self-contained programs should be available for students who need them. Some teachers who approved of comprehensive classes also thought that students of differing exceptionalities can benefit from each other's strengths. Teachers who disapproved commented that most educable students do not relate well to learning disabled students, their academic needs differ, and educable students' self esteem and/or achievement may suffer.



**(f) Professional Development Resources for Special Education Teachers**

Teachers were asked to indicate which of a list of professional development activities or resources they had pursued in order to better address the needs of their special education students. For each resource or activity listed, they also rated the extent to which such activities would be helpful to them in meeting their students' needs. They were then given an opportunity to list additional activities or resources which they thought would be helpful or which they had used.

A sizable majority (ranging from 76 to 92 percent) of teachers reported making use of school staff meetings, professional activity workshops, assistance from supervisors/program leaders and psycho-educational consultants, as well as Ministry courses and special education conferences to help meet their students' needs. Activities which were rated as most helpful included time for discussion with school staff/school staff meetings and professional activity workshops for special education teachers. Of the activities listed, Ministry courses were rated as being very helpful by only one third of teachers. Their responses are summarized below in greater detail.

Resources or Activities	Teachers who have used the resource	How helpful would these resources be in meeting students' needs?			
		Very	Somewhat	Not at all	No Opinion
	%	%	%	%	%
Professional Activity workshops for special education teachers	86	68	21	5	6
Ministry courses in the Toronto area	82	36	32	17	15
Special education conferences in the Toronto area	76	54	32	4	10
Time for discussion with other staff members/School staff meetings	92	76	15	3	6
Visits to schools with successful programs for these students	38	63	15	4	18
Assistance from supervisors/program leaders	85	63	17	14	6
Assistance from psychoeducational consultants	85	50	27	14	9
Professional Library resources	65	49	32	9	10
Interdisciplinary meetings	46	45	27	6	22
Curriculum guidelines designed specifically for these students	46	64	18	6	12
Training in curriculum/program design	40	62	23	5	10

Other professional development activities in which a few teachers reported engaging included the following:

- . medical, language or computer workshops
- . university courses
- . conducted parent workshops, home visits
- . memberships in special education professional organizations
- . consultation with O.I.S.E. Master

Additional activities or resources which some teachers thought might help them better serve their special education students' needs included the following:

- . additional time for paperwork and planning individual programs
- . regular meetings with colleagues who have similar classes to discuss problems and programs
- . establishment of a policy concerning behaviour problems
- . memberships in professional organizations; special education magazines
- . consultation with psychologists or social workers
- . Special Education Part 4

Finally, teachers who were responsible for Home School Comprehensive Programs were asked if there were any additional resources or activities which had helped them handle the particular demands associated with mixed-exceptionality programs. Slightly more than half (28) of the teachers with comprehensive classes listed additional activities. Their responses are summarized below.

	<u># of Teachers</u>
. support and co-operation from the school administration and staff, including programming with classroom teachers	9
. support/training from Dellcrest staff; working with an experienced special education team	4
. assistance from teacher aides	4
. help from parent volunteers and other community resources	3
. other responses (e.g. Friendship Village program, Special Education Centre at the school, able to use computer in class)	14

Teachers of comprehensive programs were asked to list any additional resources which would help them to meet the particular demands of such programs. Twenty-two percent of the comprehensive teachers did so. Their responses reiterated many of the same activities and resources which they had previously been asked to rate. The most frequently mentioned resource which they thought would help them to meet students' needs involved up-to-date strategies for programming, timetabling, pairing students and dealing with individual needs in mixed groups, as well as more guidelines from the Board. Other frequently cited resources were more planning time, staff meetings and workshops, as well as additional funds for special education supplies.

## V CASE STUDIES

Six students were selected for more detailed analysis from the twelve classes from which self concept and achievement data were collected. This selection process was not completely random since the objective was to select cases balancing for type of program and level of service for both learning disabled and educable students. However, at the time the cases were selected no information from the confidential files or teachers was available which might have biased the selection process.

Case summaries for these six students are provided in Appendix J to illustrate progress made by special education students and the types of difficulties students are continuing to experience. Four learning disabled students are included - one from a self-contained class and one from a comprehensive class who are both receiving more than half-time service, and one from each type of program who are receiving service less than half-time. Only two educable students are included - one from each type of special education program - since all of the educable students in the original sample of twelve students were receiving more than half-time service.

Examination of the case information indicated that only limited academic progress has been made by most of these special education students. Notable academic gains based on the WRAT pre-post assessment were made by only two of the six students:

- . a learning disabled student in a self-contained class who demonstrated considerable progress in reading and arithmetic
- . an educable student in a comprehensive class who made excellent gains in language arts.

Despite the specific gains made by these two students, many of their stated needs have remained unchanged.

Self concept scores remained about the same in the period from January to June 1986 for three of the case study students. Lower self concept scores were found for one of the learning disabled and one of the educable students, whereas some improvement was noted for a learning disabled student.

Thus it appears that the progress of the special education students who were selected for detailed study was quite idiosyncratic. No factors such as the type of special education program, exceptionality or level of service could be clearly related to student gains in either self concept or achievement. That limited progress was shown by these special education students is consistent with the results reported in the evaluation of various special education programs in Scarborough. Dilling et al. (1980) indicated that the remedial programs studied did not raise performance to levels in line with the child's potential, although the programs were effective in preventing serious academic losses.

## VI SUMMARY

The specific research questions pertaining to student progress in special education which provided a focus for this report were based on a variety of sources of information. Included was information gathered from the published special education literature, students' files and a pre-post assessment of changes in academic achievement and self-concept, as well as questionnaires administered to both parents and teachers. This multi-faceted approach to the evaluation of the progress of learning disabled and educable students in mixed versus single-exceptionality special education programs was necessary because methodological and ethical constraints made it impossible to conduct a controlled, experimental study.

A number of trends were identified in the literature examining the efficacy of different placements for learning disabled and educable students. For objectives related to achievement, social adjustment and self concept, the evidence favours placement of educable students in regular rather than self-contained programs.

In contrast, where differences between placements are found for learning disabled students, the results suggest that self-contained or partially segregated programs produce greater benefits academically and socially than placement in regular classes. However, it has also been suggested that learning disabled students may make achievement gains in regular classes provided instruction is modified appropriately. As is the case with studies of educable students, not all of the investigations involving learning disabled students have shown differential effects of regular, resource and self-contained placements.

Given the many methodological problems and the potential confounding of important factors which exist in the majority of studies, it could be argued that research has yet to demonstrate satisfactory outcomes associated with either special or regular class placement (Strain and Kerr, 1981). In a similar vein, Rhodes (1977) concludes that the results of efficacy studies do not reveal enough consistent and unambiguous differences in placements to permit definite conclusions.

Since none of the research has explicitly examined the efficacy of mixed versus single-exceptionality placements, any generalizations would be tenuous. However, this body of literature may suggest a number of hypotheses regarding the impact of mixed and single-exceptionality programs for learning disabled and educable students which future research should attempt to address. These possibilities are discussed in detail in Appendix A.

It has been suggested by some educators that the ability, achievement and behaviour problems of mildly to moderately handicapped students, whether learning disabled, educable or behaviourally disordered, are highly similar. Furthermore, the appropriate intervention practices (e.g. teaching methods, curriculum needs) for mildly handicapped students also tend to be essentially similar regardless of handicap category (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983). Based on these two assumptions, it has been argued that it may be unreasonable to group special education students with mild or moderate handicaps on the basis of traditional categorical distinctions such as learning disabled, educable or behaviourally disordered.

There has been very little scientific study of the assumptions on which mixed-exceptionality special education is based, although some recent findings appear to challenge these assumptions (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983). Evidence that these groups of students differ in terms of learning styles, abilities, and patterns of maladjustment has been found. These findings raise doubts about the extent to which mildly to moderately handicapped pupils of differing exceptionalities have similar characteristics (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983) requiring similar interventions.

The pre-post analyses of achievement in this sample of junior level special education students indicated that, at least in this limited sample, the learning disabled pupils in single-category classes fared best in terms of academic gains in reading, spelling and arithmetic. However, in absolute terms, learning disabled students in comprehensive classes showed similar improvements in arithmetic which were not statistically significant due to the smaller sample size. It is noteworthy that learning disabled students in comprehensive classes were achieving at higher levels on the pre-test than those in single exceptionality programs, suggesting that students with less serious learning disabilities were more likely to be placed in comprehensive programs.

Educable pupils in single-category classes also showed significant gains in arithmetic, but no change and a slight decrease in spelling and reading respectively. Students in the mixed-exceptionality comprehensive classes did not show any significant changes in any of the subtests over this period. However, because of the very small sample size no conclusions can be drawn regarding the progress of educable students in comprehensive classes.

Examination of the pre-test achievement scores suggested that lower achieving educable students were being placed in comprehensive programs, contrary to the expectation that single-category programs would be more appropriate for students with greater handicaps. Further exploration of this possible trend with a much larger sample is required before any conclusions can be drawn.

No significant self concept changes were found for educable or learning disabled students in either mixed or single-exceptionality programs. Furthermore, examination of the records of the six case study students provided little evidence of gains in self concept or academic achievement. Although progress was made in specific areas by some students, the Statement of Needs for most of these students continued to reflect ongoing difficulties similar to those present at the time of initial placement in Special Education. No factors such as the type of special education program, exceptionality or level of service could be clearly related to changes in either self concept or achievement for these case study students.

Completed questionnaires were received from 32% of the parents who were surveyed regarding their perceptions of their child's special education program. Although the sample was small, it was evident that most (75% or more) of these parents were satisfied with:

- the IPRC decisions and their involvement in the IPRC process

- . their awareness and understanding of what the special education program entails
- . the program meeting their child's individual needs, as recommended
- . their child's progress
- . the amount of time spent in the special education program.

Almost every parent noted some positive change(s) in their child's attitudes or disposition as a result of their special education experience and many felt that factors such as the smaller classes, individual attention, clear and consistent expectations and proper direction were the most effective components of the program. Very few changes were recommended for either the child's placement or program.

Based on the small number of comprehensive programs mentioned by parents but the predominance of local home school locations, it would appear that parents have under-reported enrolment in the Home School Comprehensive Programs - perhaps tending to associate more readily with their child's identified exceptionality (i.e. learning disabled or educable) when describing their child's program, as opposed to their actual program placement.

Questionnaires were sent to all junior level special education teachers with replies received from 59%. Of interest were teachers' perceptions of the advantages and disadvantages of mixed versus single-exceptionality programs in terms of the following:

- . student progress in such areas as achievement, self-concept, social adjustment, behaviour and attitudes;
- . teachers' responsibilities in the classroom (e.g. defining objectives, monitoring progress, programming and class management).

Some modest differences were noted in teachers' views regarding effect of single and mixed-exceptionality programs on learning disabled and educable students. In many instances, however, opinions were fairly evenly split regarding whether comprehensive programs made a difference in the achievement, attitudes and behaviour of learning disabled and educable students.

About half of the teachers commented further on the relative advantages and disadvantages for learning disabled students of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs. Benefits were cited by about one-quarter of the teachers who commented. These included improved self esteem, social skills, achievement and attitudes toward school for learning disabled students. Slightly more than half of those who commented cited actual or potential problems associated with comprehensive programs. The most commonly cited difficulties for learning disabled students included:

- . the effects of classmates' misbehaviour on distractible students
- . difficulties meeting the needs of a diverse group of students given the caseload, and the number of students in class at any given time

- risks to the self esteem of learning disabled students when they are placed with students of lower intellectual abilities.

One-third of teachers provided comments on the advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive programs for educable students. Slightly less than one-third of those who commented cited benefits of comprehensive classes, while a similar proportion focused on difficulties. The remaining 38% of teachers were unsure or felt they did not have enough experience with both types of programs to make such comparisons. Benefits cited by some teachers included possible self concept, social and achievement gains. However, among the problems cited most often by other teachers was the possibility that self esteem may suffer when educable students realize they aren't learning as fast as other students.

Programming for the class as a whole in comprehensive classes was rated as being more difficult by nearly 60% of teachers who responded. Slightly less than 50% of teachers also thought that programming for individual students was more difficult in comprehensive classes than in single-exceptionality programs. Slightly more than one-third of teachers have also found defining objectives, monitoring progress and classroom management to be more difficult in comprehensive classes.

On average, slightly less than half of the teachers who responded approved of the current practice of placing both learning disabled and educable students in Home School Comprehensive Programs. Roughly one quarter of teachers were undecided. Teachers tended to be slightly less approving of placement in Comprehensive Programs for educable students than for those who are learning disabled.

Although the majority of teachers' comments indicate that they generally approved of the current practice of placing educable and learning disabled students in comprehensive programs **in principle**, they also qualified the extent of their approval by raising a number of important concerns. These concerns focused on such issues as the following: class size, staff support, difficulties in providing individual programming, the appropriateness of the specific class in which a child would be placed, and the need to provide self-contained programs for students who need such service.

## APPENDIX A

### LITERATURE REVIEW

Mixed-exceptionality special education is the term used to refer to the provision of educational services and resources based on what students need for learning, without respect to their handicap category (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983). In recent years this approach has begun to influence the provision of special education programs and policies.

Under ideal circumstances, a study to evaluate the relative effectiveness of mixed versus single-category programs in promoting academic achievement and improved self concept among learning disabled and educable retarded children would require random placement of children in these programs. A secondary feature of such a study would be the addition of a second factor to the design which would provide information about the impact of level of service. "Level of service" is the term used by the North York Board of Education to signify the intensity of special education programming replacing the terms "resource" versus "self-contained" and "moderate" versus "severe" to describe special education programs and students, respectively.

Thus, we would have a study incorporating four factors: (1) Type of exceptionality (L.D. vs. E.R.); (2) Type of program (mixed vs. single-exceptionality programs); (3) Level of service (less than half-time vs. half-time or more); (4) Time of testing (pre vs. post-testing on achievement and self concept measures).

However, in practice, such a design is not feasible due to nonrandom procedures for placement of children in each program. Children are assigned to level of service primarily on the basis of problem severity. Those requiring a high level of service are more likely than others to be assigned to single category Special Education programs. On the other hand, children whose disabilities are less severe are more likely to be assigned to Home School Comprehensive Programs, which by their nature include students with more than one exceptionality. Thus, the level of service is to some extent confounded with (i.e. not independent of) the type of program in which children are placed (mixed vs. single-category). Other considerations such as the availability of appropriate special education support in the home school, and the child's personal, family and social resources also play a role in placement decisions. Thus, children placed within these two programs represent nonequivalent groups which differ on a number of important variables.

In addition to initial differences in achievement levels between children placed in single-category and comprehensive programs, it is likely that these groups of children also differ in terms of the rate at which they will show maturational changes (Judd and Kenny, 1981). These differences in rates of progress are likely to exist between children who differ in problem severity regardless of whether they are placed in special programs. Since the most disabled children are likely to improve at a slower rate, we might erroneously conclude that single-category Special Education Programs are less effective than mixed Home School Comprehensive Programs or that full-time placement is less effective than a lower level of service.



The main emphasis within the literature evaluating special education programs is focused on the relative advantages and disadvantages of mainstreaming versus special class placement for various types of special education students. Similar methodological problems and issues are discussed in the literature evaluating special education programs. Highlights of this evaluation literature are summarized below.

Little published research is available which evaluates the effectiveness of single versus mixed-exceptionality special education programs on student achievement and self concept. It is suggested that some of the conclusions drawn based on the mainstreaming literature may provide tentative hypotheses regarding the efficacy of mixed versus single-exceptionality programs for students of varying exceptionalities. Finally, some recent findings which appear to challenge the assumptions of mixed-exceptionality special education programs are summarized.

### **Carlberg and Kavale (1980)**

An extensive review of studies comparing the efficacy of special class versus regular class placement for exceptional children was conducted by Carlberg and Kavale (1980). In their view, the equivocal and contradictory findings of many of these studies suggests that the philosophical commitment to mainstreaming on the part of many educators is firmer than the empirical evidence warrants. Carlberg and Kavale (1980) suggest that there are three plausible explanations for the lack of conclusive findings in this literature:

1. type of placement may actually have minimal effects on exceptional children;
2. many efficacy studies have low statistical power, and thus, small but real treatment differences tend not to be statistically significant;
3. because students are very seldom randomly placed in different treatments, one class may have started with an advantage which influenced the results of the study.

To clarify the inconclusive findings, Carlberg and Kavale (1980) used meta-analytic techniques to combine and re-analyse the results of a large number of studies comparing regular and special class placements for exceptional children. Their analysis indicated that the effect of special class placement depended on the students' exceptionality. For example, on a variety of outcome measures ranging from achievement to social and personality functioning, students whose main problem was low I.Q. were at a significant disadvantage in special classes compared to similar students placed in regular classes. Children in this category of exceptionality included educable students (with measured I.Q. ranging from 50 to 75) and "slow learners" (with measured I.Q. ranging from 57 to 90). In contrast, children who were learning disabled or behaviourally/emotionally disturbed fared significantly better on all outcome measures when they were placed in special classes. Carlberg and Kavale (1980) conclude that the present trend toward mainstreaming by regular class placement may only be appropriate for certain children, particularly those whose main difficulty is low I.Q.

### Strain and Kerr (1981)

An extensive review of efficacy research spanning a longer time period was conducted by Strain and Kerr (1981) and focused on the impact of regular versus special class placement for educable students. The main trends in the literature which they noted are summarized below for educational and social outcomes, along with their tentative explanations for some of these research trends.

Firstly, educable children in special classes do not show significantly better educational achievement than educable children placed in regular classes. If anything, the trend has favoured regular class placement, confirming the conclusions drawn by Carlberg and Kavale (1980). Secondly, educable students who receive individualized instruction fare better on measures of educational outcomes. In many investigations, mere placement in special classes with fewer children apparently did not guarantee that such individual instruction took place and that greater gains were made. Their final conclusion regarding educational outcomes is that educable children consistently achieve below their expected mental age level, regardless of the type of program in which they are placed.

Strain and Kerr (1981) advance a number of hypotheses to account for these findings. With regard to group differences in educational outcomes, the social climate in regular classes may be more likely to encourage academic competition, which in turn may lead to superior performance. Variation in curriculum content between regular and special classes may also play a role in explaining group differences. The objectives of some special classes may focus more on personal development and growth, and to a lesser extent on academic goals.<sup>1</sup>

The findings of research on social outcomes, including such measures as self concept, social adjustment, and social status as judged by teachers and classmates, are often ambiguous although two trends seem fairly reliable. The first is that a clear relation was noted between the era in which studies on social adjustment and social status were conducted and the direction of the

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<sup>1</sup> The possibility that the outcome measures used to evaluate the effectiveness of different programs may be biased in favour of a particular program has been discussed at length by Leinhardt and Seewald (1981). Biased program evaluations may be obtained if the programs being compared have differences in curricula that affect the match between the content of what is taught and the content of the test used to measure student progress. The results will clearly be biased in favor of the program with the greater overlap. Various approaches for dealing with this problem are suggested by Leinhardt and Seewald (1981). The issue of evaluating progress in reading of learning disabled students using standardized tests, as opposed to direct assessment by the teacher, has been discussed by Lovitt and Fantasia (1980). These authors conclude that the degree of correspondance between what is taught and what is tested can greatly affect a pupil's score.

findings (Strain and Kerr, 1981). In all the studies reported from the 1970's onward, integrated educable students were viewed more favourably than their special class counterparts. Secondly, although the data are somewhat equivocal, educable children in integrated classes appear to have more positive self concepts than similar students in special classes.

Strain and Kerr (1981) point out that many studies suffer from methodological problems. For example, efficacy studies have often failed to demonstrate that children placed in regular and special classes were roughly equivalent initially on indices related to academic achievement. Matching on such variables as chronological age, mental age or I.Q., or the use of statistical techniques such as analysis of covariance cannot ensure that students in different programs are equivalent on all of the variables which are known to be relevant to academic success and social adjustment (e.g. economic, personality and motivational variables). Since students are rarely randomly placed in different programs, these variables are likely to be uncontrolled and may in some instances account for the apparent advantage of regular class placement. Furthermore, special class placement decisions are often based on problem behaviours or accompanying physical handicaps. Students who are placed in regular classes may be less likely than those in special classes to have such additional difficulties, leading to additional biasing of results in favour of regular classes.

Strain and Kerr (1981) suggest that changes over time in the direction of findings regarding social adjustment may reflect the following educational and social/political trends:

- . the possible inadequacy of regular class services for educable children prior to the 1970's;
- . differences in the instructional goals of regular and special classes;
- . improvements from the 1970's onward in specialized instruction for students in regular classes;
- . greater allocation of resources over time to regular classes and increasing political controversy over segregated placement.

The following working hypotheses were advanced to explain the trend for educable students to have more positive self concepts in regular classes (Strain and Kerr, (1981):

- . segregated children almost without exception have been labelled as retarded, whereas children of equivalent I.Q. in regular classes are less likely to be labelled;
- . research on the effects of labelling indicates stereotyped perceptions and negative behaviours towards mentally retarded persons;
- . labelling a child as retarded, and as one who is in a special class for the educable retarded may produce the illusion that the children in such programs represent a homogeneous group. This may inhibit seeking individualized solutions to academic and social deficits.

### **Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982)**

Like Carlberg and Kavale (1981) Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982) used meta-analytic techniques to summarize the trends in research on the effects of class placement on the social adjustment of educable students. This review illustrates the considerable effect that the source of information may have on the direction of the results. Ottenbacher and Cooper summarized their findings as follows:

- . comparison of special versus regular class placement revealed significantly better social adjustment of educable students in special classes;
- . ratings by teachers and peers indicated better adjustment for educable students in special classes;
- . no differences were found in the social adjustment of educable students placed in special versus resource classes;
- . self reports of social adjustment revealed no significant placement differences;
- . ratings by adults other than teachers tend to indicate superior social adjustment in regular or resource classes.

In general, Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982) concluded that educable students fare better on measures of social adjustment when they are placed in special, as opposed to regular classes. This appears to contradict the conclusions drawn by Carlberg and Kavale (1980) and Strain and Kerr (1981). Despite the general trend noted by Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982), they also found differences in the direction of the results depending on the publication date of the study. Investigations reporting better social adjustment in special classes appeared earlier than those reporting no difference or superior adjustment in regular or resource classes. Since later published studies were just as likely to use peer and teacher ratings as studies published earlier, differences over time in the direction of results were not simply due to changes in the type of outcome measure used.

If only the more recent evidence summarized by Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982) is considered, however, there is agreement among these three major review articles on the superiority of regular as opposed to special class placement for educable students. Both Strain and Kerr (1981) and Ottenbacher and Cooper (1982) indicated that the shift in the direction of findings occurred in the late 1960's and early 1970's.

### **Dilling, Johns and Cheng (1980)**

One final study will be summarized here in some detail because virtually all of the research just discussed was conducted in the United States. A study conducted by the Scarborough Board of Education (Dilling, Johns and Cheng, 1980) evaluated the impact of four types of programs on the academic performance of children with varying degrees of specific learning disabilities. Possible placements included the following:

- . regular classroom with adjustments to the program and/or consultative help from the teacher;
- . regular classroom plus withdrawal for individual help;
- . comprehensive class (with a maximum of twelve students);
- . specific learning disabilities class (with a maximum of eight students).

In the Scarborough Board, placement in comprehensive classes, which are usually located in the home school, does not require that the classification of the learning problem be specified. Thus, such classes may have a variety of students such as the following:<sup>2</sup>

- . students without specific learning disabilities whose learning problems stem from other sources;
- . students with mild specific learning disabilities where the learning disability was not the main reason for placement;
- . students with moderate specific learning disabilities where that was the primary reason for placement.

Analysis of students' achievement indicated that no group made significant gains over the six month period of the study. This does not mean that students made no academic progress, only that for all types of programs, the academic progress which occurred on average was no greater than would normally be expected for students with these pre-test scores. No group of students improved their relative rank position to one more appropriate for their intelligence level.

Factors related to the academic progress which was made included the following:

- . reading gains were related to the amount of time spent on-task, smaller class sizes, teachers' disagreement with the notion that students can be trained to concentrate regardless of noise levels and to a lesser extent, severity of the disability (i.e. the more disabled students tended not to make much progress);
- . spelling gains were related to the amount of individual contact with the teacher, the amount of teacher experience in special education, and a tendency for teachers to disagree with the idea that learning disabled students need rote memory drills;

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<sup>2</sup> Given the description provided by Dilling et al. (1980) of the type of students who may be placed in comprehensive classes, the nature of comprehensive classes in the North York and Scarborough Boards may be quite different in most instances, but similar for specific classes. The admission requirements for specific learning disabilities programs are more formal than for comprehensive programs, and are described in the Scarborough report.

- arithmetic gains were related to teachers' tendency to agree that problems with attention are primary and students can be trained to make fine visual discriminations. These gains also related to the severity of the disability (i.e., those who were most disabled made the greatest gains).

That learning disabled students did not improve their relative rank on achievement tests to one more appropriate for their intelligence level is "reasonably typical" of studies in this area. These investigators cited evidence in the literature to suggest that students with specific learning disabilities may actually suffer academic losses over a four or five year period despite remedial help. Regarding Scarborough's special education programs, the various remedial programs studied were effective in preventing serious academic losses even if they did not raise academic performance to levels in line with the child's potential.

Two of the major conclusions drawn in the Scarborough investigation concern the move toward either mainstreaming or the creation of generic remedial classes, and the need for professional development for teachers. Dilling et al. (1980) conclude:

Alternatives to the existing system of Special Education, such as increased mainstreaming or the creation of a single generic remedial class, have not been proven to be effective. The results of this study, identifying class size, individual student-teacher contacts, and disability level as three relevant predictors of academic gains, are not consistent with educational policies embracing these alternatives. Rather, an up-grading of the existing system is indicated. (p.162)

Dilling et al. (1980) also emphasize the need for teachers of both regular and special classes to interact with each other and to maintain contact with other professionals working in the area. In their view, teachers might also benefit from greater availability of teacher aides, as well as increased assistance and training by Special Education consultants in programming and in the use of various and appropriate instructional methods.

### Summary

A number of trends can be identified in the literature examining the efficacy of different placements for learning disabled and educable students. For objectives related to achievement, social adjustment and self concept, the evidence favours placement of educable students in regular rather than self-contained programs.

In contrast, where differences between placements are found for learning disabled students, the results suggest that self-contained or partially segregated programs produce greater benefits academically and socially than placement in regular classes. However, it has also been suggested that learning disabled students may make achievement gains in regular classes provided instruction is modified appropriately (Rhodes, 1977). As is the case with studies of educable students, not all of the investigations involving learning disabled students have shown differential effects of regular, resource and self-contained placements (Dilling et al., 1980).

A wide variety of factors may account for these research trends (Coleman, 1983; Ottenbacher and Cooper, 1982; Strain and Kerr, 1981). Alternative explanations which have been discussed in the literature include the following:

- . social and political trends affecting attitudes toward segregated placement of exceptional students;
- . advances in programming for exceptional students;
- . effects of labelling on students' self esteem;
- . effects of providing students with multiple reference groups for social comparisons with other students;
- . curriculum differences between programs;
- . suitability of academic outcome measures for programs with differing curricula;
- . differences in qualifications for teachers of regular and special classes;
- . methodological issues related to non-random assignment of students to programs and to bias based on initial differences between students in various placements.

Given the many methodological problems and the potential confounding of important factors which exist in the majority of studies, it could be argued that research has yet to demonstrate satisfactory outcomes associated with either special or regular class placement (Strain and Kerr, 1981). In a similar vein, Rhodes (1977) concludes that the results of efficacy studies do not reveal enough consistent and unambiguous differences in placements to permit definite conclusions.

#### Implications for Mixed-Exceptionality Special Education Programs

Since none of the research has explicitly examined the efficacy of mixed versus single-exceptionality placements, any generalizations would be tenuous. However, this body of literature may suggest a number of hypotheses regarding the impact of mixed and single-exceptionality programs for learning disabled and educable students which future research should attempt to address.

For example, one could hypothesize that since educable students appear to benefit academically and socially from placement with regular students, they may also make greater gains when placed with learning disabled children than when they are placed in a self-contained educable program. Educable students in mixed programs may be less likely to be perceived by other students and adults as retarded. This may benefit the self concept and social adjustment of educable students. They may also benefit academically from higher standards for achievement which may characterize mixed special education programs with a wider range of intellectual abilities represented.

In contrast, the greatest academic benefits for learning disabled students appear to come from self-contained classes, with social and emotional benefits deriving from self-contained or resource, rather than regular class placements. Coleman (1983) demonstrated the importance of learning disabled students having both regular and learning disabled peers as reference groups to evaluate various aspects of self worth. An unresolved question concerns the impact of a reference group which includes educable children on the self concept of learning disabled students of average intellectual abilities.

According to a review of the literature by Epstein and Cullinan (1983), mixed-exceptionality special education rests on two assumptions:

- 1) that the ability, achievement and behaviour problems of mildly to moderately handicapped students, whether learning disabled, educable or behaviourally disordered, are highly similar;
- 2) that intervention practices (i.g. teaching methods, curriculum needs) for mildly handicapped students are essentially similar regardless of handicap category.

Based on these two assumptions, it has been argued by some educators that it may be unreasonable to group special education students with mild or moderate handicaps on the basis of traditional categorical distinctions such as learning disabled, educable or behaviourally disordered.

Although there has been very little scientific study of the assumptions on which mixed-exceptionality special education is based, some recent findings appear to challenge these assumptions (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983). Evidence that these groups of students differ in terms of learning styles, abilities, and patterns of maladjustment has been found. These findings raise doubts about the extent to which mildly to moderately handicapped pupils of differing exceptionalities have similar characteristics requiring similar interventions.

In their own research, Epstein and Cullinan (1983) found that behaviourally disordered and learning disabled students differed significantly in achievement, particularly spelling and reading. They concluded that such results do not support the idea that intervention practices should necessarily be the same for moderately handicapped students of different exceptionalities. For example, substantial differences in reading rate which were found appear to call for different instructional objectives, teaching materials and techniques, student groupings and other remedial features.

Epstein and Cullinan (1983) conclude that there is a clear need for research addressing the mixed-exceptionality issue (i.e. cross-categorical). However, in their view:

A core issue remains the shortage of techniques, curricula, programs and other practices that demonstrably deliver effective educational services. Until substantial advances are made on this front, choosing from among service-delivery modes (e.g. categorical versus cross-categorical groupings) should not be of primary significance (Epstein and Cullinan, 1983, p. 307).



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PARENT PERCEPTIONS OF SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

Please take a few moments to share your views about your child's current program.

1. What is the age of your child?      8   9   10   11   12
  
2. What is his/her grade placement?      3   4   5   6   Ungraded
  
3. Which of the following special education programs is she/he attending?
  - . Special Education, Learning Disabled
  - . Special Education, Educable
  - . Home School Comprehensive Special Education
  - . Other \_\_\_\_\_
  - . Don't know
  
4. How much time does your child spend in the above program?
  - . More than half time
  - . About half time
  - . Less than half time
  - . Don't know
  
5. Where is your child's special education program located?
  - . in the local home school
  - . in another school/special education centre

Yes No Don't  
Know

6. Do you feel the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC) made appropriate decisions in:

- a) . the identification of your child's exceptionalty?
- b) . her/his placement in the special education program?

If you have answered "no" to either (a) or (b), please explain:

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Yes No Don't  
Know

7. Are you satisfied with your level of involvement and participation in the IPRC process?

8. Were the assessment results from the IPRC shared with you?

If "yes", by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you feel you have an adequate understanding of your child's educational needs?

10. Your child's attitude about being in a special education program could best be described as:

Very  
enthusiastic

Positive

Indifferent

Negative

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the next series of statements:

- |   | <u>Strongly</u><br><u>Agree</u> | <u>Agree</u>             | <u>Disagree</u>          | <u>Strongly</u><br><u>Disagree</u> |
|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 11. I have an adequate understanding of my child's special education program.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 12. I am aware of the activities and experiences that my child pursues in her/his special education class.          | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 13. Generally, my child's special education program is individualized to meet his/her particular needs of my child. | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 14. I am satisfied that the program recommendations from the IPRC are being addressed.                              | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 15. I am kept well informed of my child's progress.   | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 16. I am satisfied with the progress my child is making in the special education program.                           | <input type="checkbox"/>        | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>           |
| 17. Generally, the amount of time my child spends in a special education program is:                                |                                 |                          |                          |                                    |
| . about right   | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                          |                          |                                    |
| . too much  | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                          |                          |                                    |
| . not enough  | <input type="checkbox"/>        |                          |                          |                                    |
| 18. Does your child receive any additional tutoring or instruction outside of school?                               |                                 |                          |                          |                                    |
| Yes   | <input type="checkbox"/>        | No                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |                                    |

If "yes", by whom? \_\_\_\_\_

19. Have you noticed any significant changes in your child (either positive or negative) as a result of his/her participation in a special education program?

(Note: This may include changes in your child's attitudes, behaviours, abilities and/or feelings about self.)

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20. What aspects of the special education program do you find to be most effective for your child?

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21. What changes, if any, would you like to see in your child's:

(a) current program?

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(b) special education placement?

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Please return your completed questionnaire in the enclosed postage-paid envelope by Monday 16 June.

Teacher Questionnaire for the Evaluation of Special Education

**A. Background Information**

- 1. a) How many years have you been teaching in total? \_\_\_\_\_
- b) How many years have you been teaching Special Education? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 2. a) Please check the type of special education program for which you are presently responsible:
  - Learning Disabled - Special Education Program
  - Educable - Special Education Program
  - Home School Comprehensive Special Education Program
- b) How long have you been teaching this type of program? \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. a) Have you ever had responsibility for special education students differing in exceptionality from the ones with whom you are presently involved.
 

Yes                       No

If yes, please indicate which of the following types of exceptional students you have taught, and the approximate years of experience with each. **Note: If you have previously taught mixed exceptionality (i.e. Comprehensive) programs, check the box labelled Comprehensive, specify which types of exceptionality were involved, and the number of years experience with Comprehensive programs.**

	<u>Years of Experience</u>
Learning Disabled	_____
Educable	_____
Behavioural	_____
Multihandicapped	_____
Physically Handicapped	_____
Speech or Language Disabled	_____
Hearing/Vision Impaired	_____
Gifted	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____
Comprehensive (specify exceptionalities)	_____
_____	_____

3. b) Have you ever had responsibility for special education programs that differed from the one in which you are currently involved in terms of the structure of the program?

Yes

No

If yes, please list the types of programs with which you've had experience (e.g., Resource, Self-Contained, Itinerant, Comprehensive, etc.) and indicate the approximate years of experience with each

<u>Type of Program</u>	<u>Years of Experience</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

4. How many students of each of the following types do you currently have in your caseload?

	<u>Number of Students</u>
Learning Disabled	_____
Educable	_____
Behavioural	_____
Remedial	_____
Other (specify)	_____

5. Given the needs of the students for whom you are responsible this year, how would you describe your present special education teaching load?

<u>Much too heavy</u>	<u>Somewhat too heavy</u>	<u>About right</u>	<u>Somewhat too light</u>	<u>Much too light</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Questions 6 to 11 apply only to teachers who have a student selected for individual case study. If one of your students was selected his/her name appears below. Questions 6 to 11 refer specifically to this student. If no name is listed, please go on to Question 1 on page 6.

6. a) How much time each day does this student (name: \_\_\_\_\_) spend with you? \_\_\_\_\_
6. b) How many other students of each type of exceptionality are typically present when this student is receiving his/her special education program?

	<u>Number of Students</u>
Learning Disabled	_____
Educable	_____
Behavioural	_____
Remedial	_____
Other (specify) _____	_____
_____	_____

- c) Do you think that the time spent by this student in special education is:

Too much                      About right                      Too little  
                                                                                       

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the main program objectives for this student? (Please List)
- a) \_\_\_\_\_
- b) \_\_\_\_\_
- c) \_\_\_\_\_
- d) \_\_\_\_\_
- e) \_\_\_\_\_



8. a) Is this student progressing as expected in terms of **academic performance**?

Yes

No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) In your view, what continue to be the main areas of **academic difficulty** for this student? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

9. a) Is this student progressing **socially and interpersonally** as expected?

Yes

No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) In your view, what continue to be the main areas of **social difficulty** for this student? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

10. What changes have you seen (if any) in this student this year, compared with the beginning of the year? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

11. a) In your view, has this been the best possible placement for this student?

Yes

No

If no, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

b) If this has not been the best placement for this student, what do you think might have been a more appropriate placement? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c) Additional comments about this student: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please go on to page 6. The remaining questions are to be completed by 1 teachers.

**B. Implications for Students**

1. In your view, are there any differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in any of the following areas related to student achievement, attitudes and behaviour for **learning disabled students (LD)**?

Compared to LD students in single-exceptionality classes:

	Much Higher	Higher	Same	Lower	Much Lower	Don't Know
a) The academic achievement of LD students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The ability of LD students in comprehensive classes to get along well with others tends to be...	Much Greater <input type="checkbox"/>	Greater <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	Less <input type="checkbox"/>	Much Less <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
c) The behaviour at school of LD students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	Much Better <input type="checkbox"/>	Better <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	Worse <input type="checkbox"/>	Much Worse <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
d) The self-concept (feelings about self) of LD students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	Much More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Much More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
e) The attitudes toward school of LD students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	Much More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Much More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
f) Other (please be specific) _____ _____ _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Do you have any additional comments to make regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs in areas related to the achievement, attitudes and behaviour of learning disabled students?

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3. In your view, are there any differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in any of the following areas related to student achievement, attitudes and behaviour for **educable students (EMR)**?

**Compared to EMR students in single-exceptionality classes:**

	Much Higher	Higher	Same	Lower	Much Lower	Don't Know
a) The academic achievement of EMR students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) The ability of EMR students in comprehensive classes to get along well with others tends to be...	Much Greater <input type="checkbox"/>	Greater <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	Less <input type="checkbox"/>	Much Less <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
c) The behaviour at school of EMR students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	Much Better <input type="checkbox"/>	Better <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	Worse <input type="checkbox"/>	Much Worse <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
d) The self-concept (feelings about self) of EMR students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	More Much Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Much More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
e) The attitudes toward school of EMR students in comprehensive classes tends to be...	Much More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	More Positive <input type="checkbox"/>	Same <input type="checkbox"/>	More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Much More Negative <input type="checkbox"/>	Don't Know <input type="checkbox"/>
f) Other (please be specific) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Do you have any additional comments to make regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs in areas related to the achievement, attitudes and behaviour of **educable students**?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

5. How often do you usually contact the parents of each of the special education students for whom you are responsible, regarding issues such as student progress, difficulties or program changes?

- more than once a month
- about once a month
- once every couple of months
- once or twice per term
- only at the time of the Program Plan Review and through formal report cards

6. In the current school year, have any parents expressed concerns about the type of program in which their child has been placed?

Yes

No

Please describe the nature of their concerns:

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C. Implications for Teachers

1. In your view, are there any differences between single-exceptionality and comprehensive special education programs in any of the following areas related to classroom teaching?

<u>Compared to single-exceptionality classes:</u>	<u>Much Easier</u>	<u>Easier</u>	<u>Same</u>	<u>Harder</u>	<u>Much Harder</u>	<u>Don't Know</u>
a) Defining individual objectives for <b>comprehensive</b> classes is..	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Monitoring student progress in attaining objectives in <b>comprehensive</b> classes is....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Programming for individual students in <b>comprehensive</b> classes is...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Programming for the class as a group in <b>comprehensive</b> classes is...	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Class management in <b>comprehensive</b> classes is....	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Other (please be specific) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
_____						
_____						

2. Do you have any additional comments to make regarding the relative advantages and disadvantages of **comprehensive and single-exceptionality special education programs** in areas related to classroom teaching?

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3. To what extent do you find that each of the following types of assessment data helps you to develop program plans for your special education students?

a. Educational assessments

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not at all helpful

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Psychological assessments

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not at all helpful

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

c. Other (e.g. multicultural, language, medical) Assessments

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not at all helpful

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

4. To what extent do you find that "Statement of Needs" documents help you to develop program plans for your special education students?

Very helpful

Somewhat helpful

Not at all helpful

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. To what extent do you approve of the current practice of placing **Learning Disabled** children in **Home School Comprehensive Programs**?

Strongly  
approve

Somewhat  
approve

Undecided

Somewhat  
disapprove

Strongly  
disapprove

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

6. To what extent do you approve of the current practice of placing **Educable** children in **Home School Comprehensive Programs**?

Strongly  
approve

Somewhat  
approve

Undecided

Somewhat  
disapprove

Strongly  
disapprove

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



**D. Professional Development**

1. A wide variety of activities and resources may help educators meet the needs of exceptional students. Have you participated in any of the following activities or used any of the following resources to address these needs? **Read list. Check if "Yes".**

- a) Professional activity workshops for special education teachers
- b) Ministry courses in the Toronto area
- c) Special education conferences in the Toronto area
- d) Discussion with other staff members/  
School staff meetings
- e) Visits to schools which have successful programs for these students
- f) Assistance from supervisors/program leaders
- g) Assistance from psychoeducational consultants
- h) Professional Library resources
- i) Interdisciplinary meetings
- j) Curriculum guidelines designed specifically for these students
- k) Training in curriculum/program design
- l) Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2. On a scale of "1" to "5", where "1" means "Very helpful" and "5" means "Not at all helpful", what resources or activities would be helpful to you in meeting the needs of the students for which you are presently responsible? (Read list. Check rating.)

	<u>Very Helpful</u> 1	2	<u>Somewhat Helpful</u> 3	4	<u>Not at all Helpful</u> 5	<u>No Opinion</u> 9
a) Professional Activity workshops for special education teachers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Ministry courses in the Toronto area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Special education conferences in the Toronto area	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Time for discussion with other staff members/School staff meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Visits to schools with successful programs for these students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Assistance from supervisors/program leaders	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Assistance from psychoeducational consultants	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) Professional Library resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
i) Interdisciplinary meetings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
j) Curriculum guidelines designed specifically for these students	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
k) Training in curriculum/program design	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
l) Other (specify) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

For teachers in Home School Comprehensive Programs:

3.a) Are there any additional resources or activities that have helped you to handle the particular demands associated with mixed exceptionality classes?

Yes

No

If "Yes", please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

b) Are there additional resources or activities which would be useful in helping you to handle the particular demands associated with mixed exceptionality classes?

Yes

No

If "Yes", please describe: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

ERES  
May/86

Comments Regarding Placement of Learning  
Disabled Students in Comprehensive Programs

<b>Positive</b>	<u># of Teachers</u>
• Comprehensive and/or integrated classes improve students' self esteem, social skills, attitudes toward school and/or achievement.	4
- Students with good oral skills can feel good about their abilities to discuss issues and don't feel so much pressure to do paper and pencil activities which may be beyond them because others in the class are also working at a lower level.	
• students often don't know what their exceptionality is or are less likely to feel they have been labelled as special education students	3
- emphasizes that students have special needs and their own strengths and weaknesses	
- students with various exceptionalities each have strengths and can help each other	
• L.D. students should not be in self contained classes for 20 hours a week or taken from their home school; strongly supports comprehensive classes and the principle of normalization	2
• just because all students in a class may be designated as learning disabled, it does not imply a single-exceptionality since they may have a variety of learning disabilities and other difficulties.	1
<b>Neutral</b>	
• have not had sufficient experience with both comprehensive and single-exceptionality programs in order to compare the two	6
• comprehensive classes probably do not place learning disabled students at a disadvantage	3
- the goal is always to meet individual needs regardless of the type of program	
- some students will do better in one type of program than in other programs	
- the effectiveness depends on the individual student, the mixture of students in the class and the teacher's abilities to integrate students' individual needs	

Negative	# of Teachers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in comprehensive classes, the poor behaviour of one or more students (e.g. behavioural students) may interfere with the learning of other students<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- learning disabled students can be quite distractible or excitable and may suffer academically</li><li>- extent to which this is a problem will vary with the mix of students in the class</li></ul></li></ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in comprehensive classes, class size is a more critical issue<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- students receiving special education full time should not be placed in comprehensive classes if the class is too large</li><li>- class size must be smaller in mixed classes due to the range in students' ages and needs</li><li>- diverse needs may negate the advantages of comprehensive classes because some students may demand a disproportionate amount of time</li><li>- teachers time is much more divided</li><li>- a full-time teacher's aide is required</li></ul></li></ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the self esteem or attitudes of learning disabled students (particularly the brighter ones) will suffer when they are placed with students of obviously lower intellectual abilities<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the attitudes of regular students towards learning disabled students may be more negative; the latter may feel stigmatized</li><li>- they may become reluctant to go to class</li><li>- learning disabled students are emotionally vulnerable and may react negatively to "jibes" from behavioural students</li></ul></li></ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• teachers may lose sight of the true abilities of learning disabled students when they are placed with students of lower ability<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- learning disabled students will suffer from the lower levels of discussions that come about when students of lower ability are present</li><li>- learning disabled and educable students should not be placed together; together they are a poor mix for motivational and discipline tactics</li></ul></li></ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in comprehensive classes, it is more difficult to group and provide programming for students<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- many types of activities may suit one type of child but not others</li><li>- best approach may differ for students of differing exceptionalities</li></ul></li></ul>	4

# of  
Teachers

- these problems limit the extent to which group interaction occurs
- the behaviour and achievement levels of learning disabled students is better when they are integrated with regular students 2
  - they should be integrated as much as possible
- comprehensive classes can create public relations problems because many parents strongly object to having their learning disabled child placed with "slow" 1
- other responses 2

Comments regarding Placement of Educable  
Students in Comprehensive Programs

<b>Positive</b>	<u># of Teachers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>considerable social gains are possible for educable students<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>allows more social interaction and the development of peer relationships which becomes more important with older children</li><li>better integration with peers improves self concept</li><li>students are less likely to feel they've been labelled as special education students</li><li>comprehensive classes provide social, behavioural and self concept benefits, although a strong, supportive teacher is needed to help educable students to relate better to their peers</li></ul></li></ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>educable students may achieve at a higher level in comprehensive classes in which academic expectations are moderately high and standards are approximately grade normal<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>more challenges are available</li><li>higher expectations and presence of learning disabled students of higher ability will tend to improve achievement levels of educable students (particularly at the junior high level)</li></ul></li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>comprehensive classes provide for more role models and peer tutoring<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>students with varying strengths can help each other</li></ul></li></ul>	3
<b>Neutral</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>insufficient experience with comprehensive or single-exceptionality programs to provide sound comparisons although some teachers offered the following speculations:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>based on success with a self-contained class, single-exceptionality programs may be best</li><li>based on success with a comprehensive class, that type of program may be best</li><li>when children work in pairs, it is best if the pair up with someone of similar cognitive abilities. This may not be possible in comprehensive classes due to the small number of students and the range in abilities.</li></ul></li></ul>	8
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>both types of programs are necessary so that children can be placed in the program best suited for them as individuals</li></ul>	1

- |  | <u># of<br/>Teachers</u> |
|--|--------------------------|
| • the type of program doesn't effect educable students, although it may effect other students who are placed with them | 1                        |
| - a full-time teacher's aide is needed in comprehensive classes  |                          |

### Negative

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| • educable students in comprehensive classes realize that they aren't learning as fast as the other students and are falling behind     | 3 |
| - self concept suffers  |   |
| - they may become afraid to take risks  |   |
| - others may call them stupid   |   |
| • educable students often can't fight for their share of time, particularly in large classes (not necessarily true for smaller classes) | 3 |
| - depending on the mixture of students, behavioural students may demand time at the expense of other students                           |   |
| • best teaching strategies differ for educable and learning disabled students so it is more difficult to meet students' needs           | 2 |
| - with the former, it is best to broaden their horizons. with the latter, it is best to "zero in" on individual problems                |   |
| - educable students will miss much more in a comprehensive class than a learning disabled student                                       |   |
| - homogeneous groupings permit more specific programming  |   |
| • the temperments of learning disabled and educable students differ and provide a bad mixture for motivational tactics and discipline   | 2 |
| - educable students are easily misguided by others (e.g. behavioural students)  |   |



Parents' Concerns Regarding  
Their Child's Special Education Program

	<u># of Teachers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parents feel their child should be in special education (in a small group) more of the day or all day<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- child needs a more individualized program</li><li>- child needs a more intensive, self-contained program</li></ul></li></ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parents have concerns about the mixture of students in the class<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- some parents are concerned about the impact of placing behavioural students with other exceptionalities</li><li>- concerns about quality of service and amount of teacher attention for each child given the class size and/or the mix of student ages and exceptionalities</li></ul></li></ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parents have expressed concerns about whether the placement is the best possible one, about student progress/homework, and about what they can do to help.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- some have concerns about child's progress during the part of the day when he/she is integrated in a large, regular class and about what will happen when child returns to regular program for the whole day</li><li>- regular classroom teacher is not modifying the program enough</li><li>- children often miss homeroom activities and trips due to timetabling problems</li></ul></li></ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• parents are worried about the stigmatizing effects of labelling children as special education students<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- children may carry that label forever and remain in special education; children may feel "different" or like failures</li></ul></li></ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• some parents want their children demitted from special education or put on monitor status in the regular classroom</li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parents have questioned policies regarding special education and the types of programs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- concerns expressed about how well their children will cope with junior high/middle school program</li><li>- some parents are reluctant to place students in a basic secondary school program, because the program is not available in the home school.</li></ul></li></ul>	3

APPENDIX G

Teachers' Comparisons of Comprehensive and Single-exceptionality Programs in Areas Related to Classroom Teaching

	<u># of Teachers</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in comprehensive classes, it is more difficult to meet students' needs because classes are too large or the ages and/or exceptionalities vary too greatly</li></ul>	14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- teacher time is too divided, particularly when the teacher must also try to modify the student's regular program</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in comprehensive classes, it is difficult to program for the group and to organize group activities</li></ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- students' group interaction is limited; they tend not to feel like a group when abilities and learning styles are so different</li><li>- difficult to teach such diverse groups (attention spans and behaviours differ, inhibiting some types of formal lessons)</li><li>- program modification should ideally be very different for educable and learning disabled students, but tends not to be in a comprehensive class (educables may benefit but learning disabled students may not receive the most appropriate program)</li><li>- bookkeeping, reports and reviews are more difficult</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comprehensive programs do not pose serious problems</li></ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- as long as the age range is not too broad</li><li>- teachers still must program for individuals regardless of the type of program</li><li>- students in single-exceptionality programs may also vary widely and programming can be just as difficult</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• it may be advisable to exclude behavioural students from comprehensive programs</li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- they demand and receive more attention at the expense of the learning disabled children</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• with comprehensive programs, it is difficult to juggle students' special education schedules around regular classroom activities and programs (e.g. French, P.H.E., field trips)</li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- organizational problems can be considerable depending on the age ranges in the class</li><li>- even in small schools, comprehensive teachers should be full-time to permit flexible scheduling</li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• extra and more flexible time to prepare and conference with regular classroom teacher is needed to co-ordinate the programs received by the child in a comprehensive program</li></ul>	4

	<u># of Teachers</u>
. comprehensive programs may adversely effect students' attitudes	3
- some students become less, not more, accepting of others exceptionalities	
- some learning disabled students may develop more negative attitudes because they don't want to be associated with the other students	
- social problems can occur if the ages are too different	
. can't comment because they have little basis for comparison	2
. effectiveness of comprehensive classes depends on the individual students and on the dynamics of the group which changes yearly	2
. other responses	3
- in comprehensive classes, learning disabled students make excellent peer models and helpers, which boosts their egos	
- since L.D. teaching is multi-modal, this style may also be more effective for educable students	
- some schools call putting ten or more regular students with several identified special education students a comprehensive class - "it should be called a zoo"	

APPENDIX H

Comments Regarding Placement of  
Learning Disabled Students in Comprehensive Programs

	<u># of Teachers</u>
<b>Approve</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>comprehensive programs help students feel more like regular students and leads to more positive self concept</li></ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>students realize that others (e.g. educable students also have problems</li></ul></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>approve of such programs provided that class size is small enough to permit individual attention and provided the program is sufficiently individualized and challenging</li></ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>each case should be considered on it's own merits regarding the suitability of placement in a comprehensive program</li></ul>	5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>some students will need to be withdrawn from the regular class for more time than others</li><li>suitability of comprehensive programs also depends on the make-up of the class in which the child would be placed</li></ul></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>comprehensive programs can permit greater awareness and co-operation from homeroom teachers</li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>both teachers can work to modify students' programs to permit students to be part of a regular class</li></ul></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>other responses</li></ul>	6
<b>Undecided</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>teachers could not comment because they have limited experience with comprehensive and/or single-single-exceptionality programs or indicated that it depends on the school, the teachers and/or the other children who would be in the class</li></ul>	5
<b>Disapprove</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>with learning disabled, educable and/or behavioural students all in one class, it is difficult to give learning disabled students the individual attention they need and deserve</li></ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>learning disabled students are not well served in comprehensive program</li></ul>	4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>they should be in single-exceptionality programs</li><li>they are distracted by the change-over in students during the day and by immature students</li><li>they need excellent role models and challenges from regular students</li></ul></li></ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>comprehensive classes are a step in the wrong direction (e.g. special education programs may become dumping grounds)</li></ul>	2

APPENDIX I

Comments Regarding the Current Practice of Placing of Educable  
Students in Comprehensive Programs

	<u># of Teachers</u>
<b>Approve</b>	
• approve of comprehensive programs provided that the class size is kept low enough and there is enough staff support	10
• students of different exceptionalities can benefit from others' strengths	9
- it is better for children socially and in terms of self concept and role models	
• approve because comprehensive programs may be good for most students program; however, segregated programs should continue for those who need them	9
- each case should be assessed individually	
<b>Undecided</b>	
• comprehensive programs may be unsuitable in some instances	4
- presence of students with behavioural problems will upset educable students	
- educable students may need greater stimulation than is possible in a mixed class	
- it depends on the type of child and /or the teacher's attitudes	
• not sufficiently familiar with comprehensive programs	2
• Other responses (e.g. suitability of comprehensive classes depends on the school, child and teacher's situations; sometimes role models can be good)	3
<b>Disapprove</b>	
• most educable students do not relate well to learning disabled students	9
- students of these two exceptionalities should be kept separate; their academic needs differ	
- comprehensive programs are not beneficial for students' self esteem or achievement	

Case Study Summaries

**Case 1: J.B. (D.O.B. 17/12/76) - Learning Disabled**

Initial Placement: October, 1984

Placement: Special Education Program - Learning Disabled (2 1/4 hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: - low academic achievement (repeated grade 1)  
- short attention span  
- lack of motivation  
- seeming fatigue in class

Specific findings

- Weaknesses were identified in grammar usage and in some speech patterns, as well as in auditory and organizational skills.
- Assessment of social-emotional functioning supported initial hypothesis that J.B. has low self esteem, lacks self-confidence and is an anxious child.
- J.B.'s specific learning difficulties, particularly in the auditory area, were interfering with his ability to concentrate and perform in a regular class setting. Thus, special education support was provided.

Teacher Information

- Teacher reports in J.B.'s file in March 1985 and February 1986 focused on such areas as increasing his ability to stay "on task", complete work, interpret and follow written directions, improve fine motor control, and increase his auditory memory and oral expression skills.
- His teacher in 1985-86 provided the following information regarding his progress and the suitability to his placement:
  - . He needs constant prodding to work. Continued progress in all academic areas is needed.
  - . Socially, he is not progressing and the home situation appears to be "questionable". Although he is able to cope well in his small special education class, his temper is explosive at times and he has difficulty coping with situations involving larger groups.
  - . In the teacher's view, his placement in 1985-86 was the best possible one and the level of service received was "about right"

### Summary

- Academic progress has been slow in all areas and there is no evidence to suggest that notable gains have been made.
- In the area of self concept, J.B. showed considerable decline in the period from January to June, 1986. On-going difficulties in the home situation which are mentioned in the file and by the teacher may be a contributing factor in this decline.

### Case 2: D. W. (D.O.B. 29/10/75) - Learning Disabled

Initial Placement: September, 1985

Placement: Home School Comprehensive Program (2 hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: slow academic progress in reading and spelling

### Specific findings

- D.W. is performing considerably below level in language arts with weaknesses identified in the following areas: verbal abstract reasoning; expressive vocabulary; auditory memory; auditory and grammatic closure; auditory reception.
- She was provided with special education support because it was felt she would benefit from an individual program designed to improve her language arts skills.

### Teacher Information

- Teacher reports in June 1985 and March 1986 were virtually identical and focused on the following areas: improve auditory and language skills; produce more written work and make better use of time; improve vocabulary and reading comprehension; upgrade math level; develop self confidence and increase participation in group discussions.
- Her teacher in 1985-86 provided the following information about progress and the appropriateness of placement:
  - She is not progressing as expected academically and has shown a more negative attitude and decreased effort. She has continuing problems with spelling and word recognition.
  - In the area of social functioning she is progressing as expected and is not experiencing any particular difficulties. She is more willing to participate in groups and her self concept has improved.
  - In the teacher's view the time she spent in special education in 1985-86 was "about right". However, placement in this comprehensive program was not the best possible one. Because of the number of other students present in the class, she does not receive enough individual attention. The teacher thinks a comprehensive class with fewer full time special education students would be a more suitable placement.

### Summary

- Her stated needs have remained unchanged. There is no evidence to suggest a change in her status.
- Her self-concept scores showed a slight decline, but this small shift may reflect measurement error rather than actual decline in self concept. Her teacher believes that she has made progress in this regard.

### Case 3: M.D. (D.O.B. 11/11/74) - Learning Disabled

Initial Placement: February, 1984

Placement: Special Education Program - Learning Disabled (4 to 4½ hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: severe academic problems

### Specific findings

- Weaknesses were identified in the following areas: visual perception; visual motor co-ordination; auditory - verbal functioning; memory and attention span.
- At the time of the initial assessment she was in a grade two class, which was inappropriate because of her age and size. However, academically she was unable to function at that level. Her severe academic problems were beginning to affect her classroom behaviour. She was very frustrated and had a very poor self concept. Thus, full time special education support was provided.

### Teacher Information

- Teacher reports in M.D.'s file from February 1984, to March 1986 focused on similar difficulties which included the following:
  - . develop greater self control and attention to tasks;
  - . improve visual motor co-ordination and visual memory;
  - . increase vocabulary; develop greater confidence/fluency in reading;
  - . develop skills in oral and written expression; learn the conventions of written language and improve spelling;
  - . improve math skills and memorize number facts;
  - . develop more positive self concept and strengths in non-academic areas.
- Her teacher in 1985-86 provided the following information regarding her progress and placement:
  - . She is making academic progress but has continuing problems in visual memory, sequencing, reading, written language skills and arithmetic. She has a good understanding of things discussed orally. She can write a long and accurate account of an experience and she can use her imagination to write creatively.



- . In terms of social functioning in class, her behaviour has improved but she periodically gets into fights with children and adults outside the class (e.g. in the school yard) and can be quite disruptive in a regular classroom, depending on the support of the classroom teacher. She was eventually integrated with grade 6 rather than grade 5 students for gym and music and as a result of this more appropriate integration, M. D. has developed greater feelings of involvement with her peers.
- . She spent too much time in 1985-86 isolated from the mainstream. She has many strengths in Art, Music and Gym in which she could equal or surpass her peers and should have been placed with her peers from the start for these areas of strength. In some ways the placement was the best possible given the severity of her academic problems, but may not have been the best for her self image and sense of belonging with her peers.

### Summary

- Because many of the same difficulties are listed, there is little evidence to suggest that great improvements have occurred in the two years since her special education placement was made. However, in the period between January and June, 1986, notable gains in reading and arithmetic were made.
- Her self concept scores during this period showed little change and remained at a fairly low level.

### Case 4: S. D. (D.O.B. 15/09/76) Learning Disabled

Initial Placement: January, 1984

Placement: Home School Comprehensive Program (3 hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: - academic and behavioural difficulties  
- requires considerable teacher assistance  
- poor attention span; distractibility and restlessness were interfering with his progress

### Specific findings

- Weaknesses were identified in auditory memory, visual-motor co-ordination and some visual perception skills, with poor quality functioning in both receptive and expressive language.
- In his 1983 educational assessment, his vocabulary was at age level although he had no sight vocabulary. He was able to listen attentively in a one to one situation but would become immediately distracted in a group of three or four. He had poor gross and fine motor co-ordination.
- Because of the number and type of deficits exhibited and the crucial stage he was at educationally, it was recommended that he receive very extensive teacher assistance in a small class setting.

### Teacher Information

- Teacher reports in S.D.'s file from February 1984 to January 1986 focused on many of the same areas of difficulty. These ongoing needs included:
  - . improve his ability to stay at his desk and on task;
  - . improve fine motor co-ordination;
  - . develop language arts skills and improve auditory memory skills;
  - . improve basic math skills and concepts.
- His teacher in 1985-86 provided the following comments about progress and the appropriateness of placement.
  - . Academically, S.D. has made progress but is still not functioning at the grade 4 level. He completes his work more willingly and tries to get more work done in class than at the beginning of the year. However, he still has poor concentration when doing assignments.
  - . In the teacher's view he has progressed socially and is very friendly, usually trying to please. He can be somewhat immature, however.
  - . The time he spends in special education is "about right" since he needs to have some time for integration in French, PHE, Art and Environmental studies. The placement is probably the best possible even though he is quite far from home because he is used to the school and his peers. He doesn't easily adjust to changes.

### Summary

- S.D.'s needs have remained unchanged since his admission to special education. His achievement test results were virtually unchanged in spelling and arithmetic, and declined in reading. This decline may reflect poor concentration and distractibility during that part of the test session.
- His self concept scores showed some slight improvement during 1985-86.

### Case 5: R. F. (D.O.B. 21/05/75) - Educable

Initial Placement: September, 1982

Placement: Home School Comprehensive Program (4½ hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: - short attention span  
- academic problems; requires much individual attention  
- behavioural problems (loud in manner, explosive temper at times, poor peer relationships, difficulty following rules)

### Specific findings

- Based on her initial assessment, R. F. was functioning considerably below grade level academically and scored well below average intellectually. Because of her distractibility and lack of confidence, the test results probably underestimated her abilities.
- R.F. showed both behavioural and emotional difficulties which were interfering with her academic progress. She was immature, anxious and demanded a great deal of teacher time and attention. She also tended to resist adult demands. Because of the number and severity of problems, R.F. was placed in special education on a full time basis.
- Her 1986 assessments indicated excellent gains in reading and spelling although intellectually, R. F. was functioning in the same range. No gains in arithmetic were found.

### Teacher Information

- Teacher reports in R. F.'s file from December 1982 to March 1986, focused on the following needs: develop more positive behaviour, social skills, and independence; increase acceptance of responsibility for her actions and self control; improve her self-concept; improve mathematics skills, comprehension and written language skills.
- This teacher provided the following information regarding her progress and the suitability of placement:
  - She is progressing academically, particularly in language arts. Areas where improvement is needed include comprehension, basic number facts and arithmetic skills.
  - Specially she is not progressing as expected and can sometimes be violently aggressive. Although she has made gains in self confidence and self control, the lack of integration with regular students has hampered her. She is totally unaccepted by other students.
  - She is spending too much time per day in special education and should be partially integrated. The class group is too large for R.F. to receive enough individual attention. A behavioural class would be more appropriate.

### Summary

- R.F. has made excellent gains in language arts, although she has made no progress in arithmetic.
- Her self concept scores remained stable between January and June, 1986. Her teacher noted improvements in self-confidence and self-control which appear to be consistent with the improvements noted in the 1985 Behavioural Summer Camp final report. Despite these improvements, R. F. still is experiencing behavioural problems. Her teacher in 1986 indicated that R.F. needs professional help.

Case 6: A. V. (D.O.B. 27/09/75) - Educable

Initial Placement: October 1981 (Primary Multi-handicapped)

Placement: Special Education Program - Educable (4 hours/day)

Reason for Initial Referral: - academic and behavioural problems  
- inattentive and doesn't follow directions  
- speech mostly unintelligible

Reason for Supplementary Report: (June 1982) - since the initial assessment and as a result of intensive individual help, A. V. showed great improvement, particularly with regard to his behaviour and readiness skills (verbal communication and visual-motor co-ordination)

Specific Findings

- Based on the initial and Supplementary Reports (October 1981, June 1982), the following progress and difficulties were noted:
  - . well below average intelligence on both verbal and performance scores
  - . academically he progressed from a pre-kindergarten stage to a pre-primer level in less than one school year
  - . socially he has progressed from being uninhibited and undisciplined to being co-operative, well motivated and eager to learn
  - . attention span is still short and he still requires close supervision, as well as requiring encouragement when facing difficult tasks
  - . he has perfectionistic tendencies
  - . a pronounced hand tremor was noted
- The multiple handicaps, including behavioural problems, which A.V. demonstrated based on initial assessment warranted placement in a very small self-contained program (multi-handicapped). During his first year in special education "tremendous" progress was noted behaviourally and in terms of his readiness skills. Thus, he was transferred to a larger self-contained special education class (educable).
- Re-assessment in May 1986 indicated the following:
  - . Weaknesses in visual-motor co-ordination and visual perception
  - . cursive writing was done slowly and with great effort
  - . A.V. was noticeably tense in the test situation
  - . difficulties with oral expression and poor articulation
- Additional information noted in A.V.'s file includes: provision of daily E.S.L. support in 1981; evidence of family conflict.

Teacher Information

- The teacher reports have focused on many of the same needs, including:
  - . improve self concept; develop more positive behaviour and co-operation with peers

- . develop ability to follow oral and written directions
  - . master multiplication facts to 9
  - . improve reading comprehension, ability to recognize sequence of events in stories, auditory discrimination skills, spelling and vocabulary
  - . increase fine motor control
  - . increase self-control, attention span and independence in seatwork
- A.V.'s teacher in 1985-86 provided the following information regarding his progress and placement:
- . He is making academic progress but is continuing to have difficulties particularly in arithmetic, and has limited academic abilities.
  - . He has also made progress socially and is a happy child who willingly accepts adult direction. He is an only child who likes a lot of adult attention, although he no longer needs constant adult reassurance. He is beginning to take more responsibility for completing assignments independently. His behaviour is immature and he lacks self confidence when socializing with his same age peers.
  - . In the teacher's view, his placement in 1985-86 was the best possible and the level of service received was "about right" since he needs considerable attention on a one-to-one basis or in a very small group.

#### Summary

- Based on his 1986 re-assessment, it was concluded that A.V. will continue to need an intensive degree of special education support due to his intellectual limitations, his distractibility and his particular weaknesses.
- Achievement testing in 1986 suggested some limited progress in spelling and arithmetic. His attainments are still weak relative to children his age, but are essentially in line with his measured abilities.
- In terms of self concept, A.V. showed considerable decline from January to June 1986.