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ABSTRACT

The goal of this practicum was to have building-based special education personnel support classroom teachers so that mildly disabled elementary students in an inner city school could be included in the classroom successfully. Through inservice education sessions, the staff were provided with current information on facilitating the inclusion of mildly disabled students, and then staff collaborated to develop solution strategies appropriate to their setting. A collaborative school-wide restructuring of support services was implemented, altering special education support from three separate, vertical programs to three horizontal support teams responsive to the needs of the classroom teachers in each team. Special and general educators worked together to address students' academic needs. At the completion of implementation, all target students were receiving individual or small group instruction for a minimum of 90 minutes daily. Nine of 10 teachers were "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the new service delivery model and wished to continue with the model. Appendices provide copies of questionnaires and administrative materials. (Contains approximately 70 references.) (JDD)

Facilitating the Inclusion of Mildly Disabled Elementary Students in an Innercity School: A Service Delivery Model

by

Sharon Clarke

Cluster 50

A Practicum I Report
Presented to the Ed. D. Program in Child and Yoth Studies
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Education

Nova University

1993

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

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Date

This practicum report was submitted by Sharon Clarke under the direction of the advisor listed below. It was submitted to the Ed.D. Program in Child and Youth Studies and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

Date of Final Approval of Report

Barry W. Birnbaum, Ed.D., Advisor

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This practicum was designed to facilitate the inclusion of mildly disabled students in an elementary innercity school. The inclusion of mildly disabled students had been cited as the most pressing problem in a setting where teachers dealt daily with a wide array of social and academic problems, exclusive of the inclusion of students with serious learning problems. The goal of the practicum was to have building based special education personnel support classroom teachers so that mildly disabled students could be included in the classroom successfully.

The writer and two other support teachers coordinated a collaborative school-wide restructuring of support services so that special education support was altered from three separate, vertical programs from kindergarten to seventh grade to three horizontal support teams that were responsive to the needs of the classroom teachers in each team. Special and general educators worked together to address the academic needs of the mildly disabled students in the school.

Analysis of the data at the completion of implementation revealed that 9 of 10 teachers were "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied" with the new service delivery model. Nine of the 10 teachers wished to continue with the model for the balance of the year. Waitlists had been eliminated and all mildly disabled students were receiving individual or small group instruction for a minimum of 90 minutes daily. Seven of the 10 teachers no longer rated the inclusion of mildly disabled students as the most pressing problem in the school.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Description of Community

The city where the writer works is a generally affluent, coastal community which is expanding quite rapidly and currently has a population of approximately 250,000. It is a popular retirement site with only 11% of households having school age children. One in seven of these children attends a private school while the remaining 11,500 students are educated in 15 public secondary and alternative schools and 40 elementary schools ranging from kindergarten through seventh grade. The district employs approximately 1,100 fulltime equivalent teachers.

Over the past several years, the city's public school district administration and Board of School Trustees have been actively working toward the inclusion of both mildly and severely disabled students into their neighborhood schools. Most separate facilities for the severely disabled have been closed so that students can be mainstreamed, as have some segregated classes for the mildly and moderately disabled.

During the 1991-92 school year, the district incurred a $8.5 million deficit that has resulted in the loss of 125 full-time teaching positions district-wide. The impact of these cutbacks has been felt directly in the classroom as the pupil/teacher ratio has risen somewhat for the current school year. The average intermediate class, fourth through seventh grades, houses 28 students while the average primary

class is somewhat smaller. This represents an increase of two or three students per teacher compared to the same time last year.

Writer's Work Setting and Role

The school in which the writer works is situated beside a housing project that is uncharacteristic of the affluence that predominates in the city. The majority of the inhabitants receive social assistance or work at low paying jobs. The crime rate is significantly higher than average for this city and many social problems are evident in the students attending the school. Alcoholism, drug abuse, sexual and physical abuse, neglect, hunger, and a variety of other problems have been documented, through a school-wide, interagency survey, to affect the lives, to varying degrees, of 92% of the school's students.

Attempts have been made to address the fundamental problem of child hunger. Not only is it unconscionable to staff that children should go hungry in a wealthy country but, from a pragmatic point of view, it is counterproductive to attempt academic instruction when students are unable to concentrate owing to a lack of nourishment. To ensure that students receive some nutritious food during the day, an informal "Toast Club" is run by students in the fourth and fifth grades before the first bell in the morning and a lunch program is also provided for any families who wish to participate. This program may be paid for wholly, partially, or is provided free of charge for those who cannot pay.

The school is ethnically diverse with minority groups comprising 35% of the population. The predominant minorities are First Nations (Native Canadians, Vietnamese, and Chinese, with many other nationalities represented in smaller

numbers. English as a Second Language (ESL) support is an important aspect of the school owing to the number of students whose first language is other than English. The school houses a reception level ESL class for primary-aged new immigrants as well as an integration level ESL program for students who have acquired some English proficiency and are now registered in general education classrooms.

A district-wide class for students with severe behavior disorders (SBD) is housed in the school. These students are integrated to a small degree with teachers who choose to take the students into their classrooms for a portion of the day. Similarly, the teacher of the SBD program provides assistance with behavior management to the school's teachers.

The school is organized into 10 multi-aged, ungraded classrooms. All classrooms, with the exception of kindergarten, contain two chronological grade groups. This would correspond to the traditional "split class". Students are not retained because of their inability to complete a specified curriculum but remain with their age peers, moving along the learning continuum according to the principles of continuous progress. This movement of students creates a high level of heterogeneity in classrooms that is further increased by the inclusion of mildly disabled students.

In September 1987, this school was the first of two schools in the district to pilot a resource room classroom. The writer was the pilot teacher of the program at the time. The model was designed to bring students back to their neighborhood school from self-contained special education classrooms for the educably mentally handicapped (EMH) and the severely learning disabled (SLD) that were located at a number of schools throughout the district. Under the old model, students were bussed to self-contained classes out of their neighborhood and experienced very

few opportunities to integrate into general education classes. Furthermore, they were unable to form friendships at school with their neighborhood peers. It was believed that this dislocation from the students' social milieu exacerbated social problems and contributed to low self-concepts among EMH and SLD students.

The new model enabled students to be registered in the general classroom while receiving varying amounts of instruction in reading and mathematics in the resource room for a maximum of 60% of the school day. The program's teaching assistant worked with some of the students in their classrooms to offer support in subjects such as science and social studies. The program accepted up to 15 catchment area students between first and seventh grades who had been designated as EMH or SLD by a district screening committee in accordance with provincial guidelines. This program continues to operate at the school and is now staffed by a teacher other than the writer.

The school also has the services of a full-time First Nations teacher and assistant. This type of program receives federal support and is established in schools with a First Nations population in excess of 25 students. The teacher attempts to bridge cultural differences and make education relevant to First Nations students in an effort to reduce the dropout rate in this population. Small group academic support is provided on a pull-out basis for all First Nations students who are below curricular expectations for their age. As well, the program offers First Nations drama, dance, and art to all interested students as a means of increasing self-esteem and sharing their cultural heritage with others from different ethnic groups.

The school has the services of a full-time family counselor, as well as an itinerant staff that includes a speech and language pathologist, educational psychologist, two counselors, teacher of the visually impaired, school nurse, and

occupational therapist.

The writer's position was that of learning assistance (LA) teacher. Central to the role of the LA teacher is the support of students who do not qualify for categorical services. There is recognition at the provincial level that without adequate support and program modifications, the students in question may eventually qualify for categorical programs. The emphasis is on preventative intervention and support in the classroom so that the least restrictive environment can continue to be a viable placement for the student. These students are from six months to two years below curricular expectations for their age and requirespecialized teaching or additional support to achieve satisfactorily in the classroom.

The writer is responsible for the assessment of students and, in collaboration with the classroom teacher, referral to other specialists such as the speech and language pathologist or the educational psychologist. The coordination of services for students is an important aspect of the position.

Approximately 80% of the time is spent delivering direct services to students on a pull-out or in-class basis, depending upon classroom teachers' preferences. The remaining 20% is used for consultative services with staff members and administrative responsibilities such as assessment, referrals, and the coordination of the school-based team. The school-based team is a problem solving group of professionals who are involved with a specific student and who meet to develop action plans to ameliorate a given problem the student is experiencing. The problem may be academic, social, behavioral, or medical.

Prior to this practicum, students who had been waitlisted for the resource room were the responsibility of the LA teacher. These students might have remained on the waitlist for a year or longer and it was necessary to coordinate the

writing of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), consult with the classroom teacher, and provide direct service to the greatest degree possible. As a result of this practicum, the writer's job description has undergone revision that will be described in detail.

The writer holds a master's degree in special education and has 13 years of experience working in general education classrooms and 7 years experience working with mildly disabled and at-risk students.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

Few teachers have had special education training or inservice training to prepare them for the realities of working with the mildly disabled. As a result, many feel unprepared for the challenge of instructing these students. Those who have special education training, do not have time to deal with the wide range of academic needs in the heterogeneous classroom. Furthermore, inclusion has progressed without input from classroom teachers on the district level. Teachers have not had the opportunity to state their needs vis-a-vis providing an appropriate education for this population. Teachers in elementary schools are generally not well prepared to work with the mildly disabled and have not been included in the decision making process regarding these students.

The inclusion of mildly disabled students poses unique problems in virtually any setting. However, the level of difficulty encountered in the writer's work setting is exacerbated by many preexisting problems related to the school's population that impinge upon teachers' ability to include successfully.

The staff of the school at which the writer works has been conducting school-wide surveys for the past three years to ascertain the types of problems affecting the students. The categories investigated relate to students' cognitive and environmental difficulties. Table 1 contains a summary of some of the categories examined that have an impact of the school's population.

Table 1

School-Wide Survey of Student Concerns - February 1992

	Number of Students	Percentage
Highly at-risk behaviorally	40	16%
Highly at-risk emotionally	53	22%
Highly at-risk academically	69	28%
Psychoeducational assessment	61	25%
Learning Assistance services	44	18%
Speech services	26	11%
Speech assessment	49	20%
Attendance/tardiness	33	13%
Resource Room/waitlist	21	9%
Single family	120	49%
Unkempt	34	14%
Physical abuse	14	6%
Sexual abuse	16	7%
Emotional abuse	33	13%
Social Assistance	56	23%

The problems that have been cited created a need for services to support students in the classroom. For example, 25% of the population had been identified as having academic difficulties of such magnitude that they required psychoeducational assessments by the school psychologist. Language delays and

articulation difficulties resulted in 20% of the population being referred for speech/language assessments. While specialist are available to help diagnose difficulties, remediation is most often left to the classroom teacher and the support staff. Eighteen percent of the school population received pull-out support from the learning assistance teachers and yet there was a waitlist of approximately 20 students who could not be seen owing to lack of space. Student difficulties thus became the concern of classroom teachers, most of whom had no training to assist them in working with special needs students. Nevertheless, each teacher in the school was left to deal with students for whom additional support was not available. As of 1987, mildly disabled students returned from self-contained classes around the city and now comprise 9% of the population. The inclusion of these students added to the strain on teachers and services that were already overburdened by a population presenting such high levels of academic and social difficulty.

A disturbing aspect of the longitudinal data is the fact that a variety of problems have been worsening over the last three years. There has been a 5% increase in the number of students who were rated as being highly at risk behaviorally and emotionally, a 6% increase in the number of families who are financially destitute, having great difficulty feeding and clothing their children, and a 3% rise in the number of families who are known to be involved in drug and alcohol abuse. All categories of abuse and neglect have risen slightly but one. Services had not risen proportionally, increasing the length of waitlists for all types of support and diagnostic services. Training opportunities to provide teachers with some of the skills necessary to work with this type of population have actually decreased as a result of budgetary cutbacks.

Evident from these descriptors is the fact that the student population of this school presents educational and behavioral challenges to the staff. The inclusion of

the mildly disabled was particularly problematic under these conditions. Teachers, administrators, and students alike were affected by problems that rendered it more difficult to respond to each students' individual needs. When the particular needs of the SLD, EMH, and SBD populations must also be taken into consideration by classroom teachers, the straw that might break the camel's back was added.

Problem Documentation

The writer's role in the school involved daily contact with all classroom teachers. During structured interviews, teachers had frequently cited their frustration relative to their inability to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled in their classrooms.

In the spring of 1992, the Future Directions Committee, a school-based staff committee, of which the writer was a member, circulated a survey to determine the most pressing problems that staff wished to address in the 1992-93 school year (see Appendix A). Results of this survey are found in Table 2. The inclusion of special needs students, defined as SLD, EMH, SBD, and at-risk, was cited almost twice as frequently as the second most pressing problem. This documentation supported the writer's contention that inclusion was highly problematic in this setting.

The second most pressing issue raised related to the annual School Initiated Planning (SIP) process. It was felt that each year too many goals, areas to explore or improve, were selected. Six school days are designated annually for professional development sessions that relate to annual school goals. The result of setting too many goals was fragmented professional development days that attempted to cover a wide variety of topics and, in the final analysis, few of the goals were pursued in

depth and a number were not met at goal evaluation time. The consensus of the staff was that our efforts were both disjointed and exhausting. A more productive approach to initiating school-based change would be to focus upon the one or two problems that were of greatest concern and apply a concerted effort in that area.

Table 2

Future Direction Survey - Spring 1992

Issues Raised by Teachers	Frequency of Responses Concerning the Need for Change
Focused school-based professional development	7
Ensure health and welfare of individuals and staff as a unit	4
Cohesion between Primary and Intermediate groups	7
1 or 2 annual goals for entire staff	14
Clarify and discuss role of counselors	7
Effective inclusion of special needs students	26
Involve students in planning	7
Careful planning of class groupings	6
Long-range behavior concerns of some students must be considered	4
Plan change carefully	5

It became evident to the staff, based on the data presented, that the primary concern in this setting was the inclusion of mildly disabled students. Teachers stated that they did not have time to individualize work for these students. Others stated that they lacked the expertise to plan appropriate lessons for the mildly disabled and that the students became behaviorally disruptive when they were frustrated. It was felt that the current level and type of support was insufficient to assist teachers in meeting the needs of these students. It was the consensus of the staff that the most appropriate means of addressing the most significant concerns cited was to streamline SIP goals for the 1992-93 school year. As the inclusion of special needs students was rated as being the most pressing issue for teachers, it was decided that ways of facilitating inclusion would be the primary focus for the upcoming year.

A total of 37% of the student population was designated as SLD, EMH, or highly at-risk academically. At-risk academically was defined as more than a year below curricular expectations as established by the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised (Woodcock, 1987) and the KeyMath (Connolly, Nachtman, & Pritchett, 1981). Professional development efforts were to concentrate on finding ways to assist classroom teachers in providing academic services for these students.

In the fall of 1992, a questionnaire was distributed to classroom teachers (see Appendix B) to gather information about their levels of training, opinions about current inclusion policies, and whether or not they felt able to meet the academic needs of mildly disabled students in their classrooms. Survey results are outlined in Table 3. An abbreviated form of each of the questions has been used in Table 3. The total number of respondents was 10.

Table 3

Special Needs Services Questionnaire

Abbreviated question	Number of responses	
	Yes	No
Special education training	4	6
1. Input into District policy	0	10
2. Agree with District policy	2	8
3. Input into inclusion policy at the school level	6	4
4. Should teachers be involved with inclusion policy	10	0
5. Satisfied with academic support for mildly disabled	4	6
6. Able to meet needs of mildly disabled in 1991-92	4	5
7. How did you meet needs?	(anecdotal responses)	
8. What would help you meet needs?	(anecdotal responses)	
9. Possess skills/strategies to work successfully with mildly disabled	5	5
10. Have adequate time to address needs	0	10

In response to question 7, teachers who stated that they were able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled, reported using the following techniques or supports; special programming, peer tutoring, cooperative learning, learning assistance services, resource room, teaching assistants, knowledge gleaned from inservice, and support from the administration.

Question 8 asked teachers who did not feel they were able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled, to consider what modifications or services would assist them in achieving this goal. Two problems that were repeatedly cited were inadequate training and insufficient time to deal with the range of abilities in their classes. Teachers cited a number of solution strategies that they felt would assist them in their efforts with special needs students.

Causative Analysis

Educational restructuring in this province over the past five years has led to the inception of ungraded, multi-age classrooms where students progress at their own unique academic rate without the fear of failure or grade retention. At first glance, this would appear to be a positive structure for a school where so many students are at-risk academically. However, this restructuring was not without certain problems. It resulted in classrooms with even higher levels academic of heterogeneity.

Six of the 10 classroom teachers at the school had no special education training at the university level. Of the four who have taken courses, one had not worked in special education and another was trained and experienced in working with severely, not mildly, disabled students.

The inclusion of the mildly disabled is a relatively new phenomenon. The

average age of teachers in the district is approximately 41 years. Training in special education was not given to preservice personnel at the time these teachers attended university. Universities have been slow to respond by changing their programs to include special education courses for all future teachers. Of the three universities granting education degrees in this province, the maximum number of courses in exceptionality that is required for all students is one.

Inservice funding in this district has focused, for the past several years, on the implementation of the new primary program developed by the Ministry of Education. Inclusion of the mildly disabled was occurring simultaneously but funding for inservice relative to this population was eclipsed by the need of teachers to understand the implications of the new primary and intermediate programs. Fiscal difficulty has resulted in a dramatic decline in inservice funds. Inclusion is now a fact but monies are not available to train teachers to work with the mildly disabled if they received no training in their preservice educations.

The superintendent of the district is committed to the inclusion of the vast majority of all categories of exceptional children. Restructuring of special education support services has occurred in a "top down" manner. While special education teachers had limited possibilities for input at program meetings, classroom teachers, who would ultimately be responsible for the delivery of service, had no opportunities for input. Two of the 10 teachers surveyed supported the district's policy of inclusion, one conditionally upon sufficient classroom support. All 10 stated dismay at an implementation process that excluded them.

Interviews with teachers at the school clearly demonstrated a sense of low morale. In the first strike in the district's history, teachers believed they had secured a clause that would limit class size. In the aftermath of the strike, the

district administration cited exceptional circumstances to override the class size clause. Within six months, 125 teachers were declared excess, class sizes began to rise, and the inclusion of the disabled continued. The contract signed by teachers specified that if they had an SLD or EMH child in their class, they were entitled to a minimum of three and one half hours of assistant time a week. Cutbacks resulted in the removal of this support. A frequent response from teachers in the school was that they were being asked to do more and more with fewer and fewer resources.

Relationship of the Problem to the Literature

The movement of exceptional children from distal and restrictive environments to less restrictive environments closer to the student's neighborhood school has been a gradual process that began early in this century (Reynolds, 1989). In the mid-80s, authors began to examine the relationship between special and regular education and to build a rationale for inclusion in the general education classroom (Stainback & Stainback, 1984).

Since Madeleine Will (1986) wrote Educating Students with Learning Problems: A Shared Responsibility, the literature has included a great number of research articles and position papers related to what came to be known as the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Jenkins & Pious, 1991; Jenkins, Pious & Jewell, 1990; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987).

The majority of general education teachers who are now responsible for the educations of the mildly disabled are not trained in special education (Baker & Zigmond, 1990; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). Teacher training institutions have changed their requirements for education students very little and

students may still emerge from the university with no or limited course work and a similar amount of field-based experience in a mainstream classroom (Kearney & Durand, 1992). Even teachers who have received preservice training, have difficulty implementing effective teaching practices owing to limited field-based experience (Billingsley & Tomchin, 1992).

The results of no training for teachers with mildly disabled students is evident in the classroom. Baker and Zigmond (1990) found that teachers continue to teach to the whole group and use the same materials for all students despite a wide range of abilities. Data collected from parents, teachers, and students was subjected to detailed analysis and no evidence was found of individualization of instruction.

General education teachers are less able than special education teachers to plan individualized programs (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992; Zigmond & Baker, 1990) and the modifications that are implemented by general education teachers tend to be those related to procedures rather than more substantive alterations, such as altering the level of difficulty or employing a new strategy (Jenkins Leicester, 1992; Munson, 1987; Myles & Simpson, 1989).

Lieberman (1985) likened the merger between general and special education to a wedding at which someone had forgotten to invite the bride. He was referring to the fact that the impetus for inclusion has come from special education theorists. General education teachers would ultimately be responsible for the education of this population, but, at no point were general educators asked if they wished to assume this responsibility, if they felt prepared for it, or what assistance might be required to support them in their efforts. Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, and Lesar (1991) queried whether policy advocacy had preceded policy analysis with negative results

for classroom teachers and mildly disabled students. The implications of negative attitudes towards the disabled were not considered during the initial phases of implementation (Feldman & Altman, 1985; Semmel, Abernathy, Butera, & Lesar, 1991). The lack of involvement in decision making on issues that will have a direct impact on working conditions, is negatively correlated with the successful adoption of innovation (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Fullan, 1991).

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Goals and Expectations

The goal of the writer was to assist classroom teachers so that they would have the training and support required to be able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled 80% of the time. To this end, a series of outcomes were developed that were designed to reflect the meeting of this goal. It was expected that, to a large extent, the academic needs of the mildly disabled could be meet in the classroom with appropriate support and training for teachers who did not receive special education instruction during their preservice training.

Expected Outcomes

The following goals and outcomes were projected for this practicum.

1. At least 8 of 10 teachers will develop individualized plans for the mildly disabled in reading and mathematics, where necessary, as witnessed by plans developed at weekly meetings with the writer.

2. At least 8 of 10 teachers will state on the final questionnaire (see Appendix C) that 90% of the time, they or a member of the support team, work on an individual or small group basis for a minimum of 60

minutes daily with mildly disabled students.

3. At least 8 of 10 teachers will report that they are "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with academic support services for their mildly disabled students on the final questionnaire.

4. At least 8 of 10 teachers will report on the final questionnaire that the inclusion of mildly disabled students is no longer the highest priority in the school.

Measurement of Outcomes

The achievement of the stated goal was witnessed by the achievement of the four outcomes. If teachers were able to respond that the factors raised in the evidence gathering phase have been addressed, then the picture would look considerably different at the completion of implementation.

Gathering baseline data for the development of outcome statements was achieved through the distribution of a questionnaire (see Appendix B) at the first staff meeting of the year. Teachers were asked to return the anonymous questionnaires to the writer's mail drawer within three days. Most of the questions required "yes" or "no" answers but provided space for open-ended responses and explanations.

A questionnaire was developed for this purpose because it is an information gathering tool that is very familiar to members of this staff. Over the last several years, a number of questionnaires have been distributed on a variety of topics.

Teachers appear to view questionnaires as a positive means of sharing their opinions about school-based practices. The results of previous questionnaires have been used in the amelioration of problematic situations and have provided an opportunity for teacher input and consultation. Given this positive history and familiarity with the format, it was decided that this would be an appropriate means of information gathering.

Self-report data has been criticized as not being entirely reliable (Nisbett & Wilson, 1977). However, other authors have rebutted these criticisms and maintain that the gathering of reliable data is possible through self-report measures (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Bishop, 1992). The writer believes that the nature of the information to be gathered will have a bearing on the reliability of the data. Teachers responding to questions 6 and 9 of the initial questionnaire (see Appendix B) may have preferred to answer "yes" to these questions for fear of appearing inadequate if they selected "no". However, the remainder of the questions were of a more neutral nature and would be less likely to be answered inaccurately. Furthermore, there was discussion prior to the distribution of the questionnaires that placed the measure in the context of previous discussions relative to the difficulties of inclusion that had been cited by staff the previous spring. The atmosphere established was supportive and the desire to address teacher concerns with future action was made clear. It is hoped that this setting resulted in accurate self-appraisal.

Follow-up assessment was related to observable, quantifiable behavior that was designed to alleviate concerns raised by self-report methodology (see Appendix C). The gathering of data was to be coordinated by the writer. The assessment of whether or not teachers were developing individualized plans with the assistance of the support teacher was to be determined by weekly meetings. A sample form was provided as a potential guide (see Appendix D). The support teacher was

responsible for overseeing the development of individual plans in necessary subject areas and saving the plans for future reference and analysis.

In order to determine whether or not mildly disabled students had been worked with on a daily basis by either the classroom or support teacher, the follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix C) was distributed upon completion of implementation. The questionnaire required respondents to check "yes" or "no" to a question that asks if mildly disabled students were receiving a minimum of 60 minutes service daily. Weekly meetings with teachers were also used for the purpose of monitoring outcome achievement. Furthermore, the three support teams met on a monthly basis to coordinate their efforts and monitor services to students.

The follow-up questionnaire was again used to ascertain teachers' level of satisfaction with support services (see Appendix C). The same questionnaire determined how many teachers cited the inclusion of the mildly disabled as the highest priority problem in the school. Structured interviews were carried out with teachers at the midpoint of implementation and at the conclusion to add depth to the information that was gathered through the questionnaire.

The written follow-up questionnaire was presented and explained at the first staff meeting held after the conclusion of implementation. Unlike the first questionnaire (see Appendix B) which required "yes" or "no" answers but also provided for open-ended responses, this questionnaire required respondents to check the most appropriate responses. Written comments were welcome at the conclusion of the questionnaire so that respondents could elaborate on their responses. Time required for completion was approximately 10 minutes.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGY

Discussion and Evaluation of Solutions

Classroom teachers do not have the training or the support to be able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled.

The literature offers a wide variety of solution strategies to assist teachers in their work with mildly disabled students. The importance of the work that is being done by researchers cannot be understated. The following comment was made by Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, and Danielson (1990):

> Special education must do more than focus on issues of access and inclusion for children with disabilities in these times of reform and change. In order to achieve better results, special educators and parents must assertively seek the knowledge and innovations needed to expand the provision of effective educational experiences and support not only through special education but in regular education, at home, and in the community. (p. 110)

Prevention and Prereferral

Pianta (1990) called for a system of preventative instruction for high-risk groups of children as one way of preventing increased pressure on already overburdened special education services. Parts of the author's plan sound very much like the learning assistance services already offered in this province.

Prereferral interventions and diagnostic teaching have been shown to reduce

the number of students who are referred for expensive psychoeducational testing and later referred for special education placement (Graden, 1989; Pugach & Johnson, 1989). An important assumption is that the classroom teacher plays a central role in interventions. Collaborative efforts are devised by special and general educators working together to intervene before a student has developed serious educational difficulties (Greer, 1991).

Consultation

In order to assist teachers who may not have special education training, the special education specialist can work with the teacher to offer suggestions and problem-solve in a collaborative manner (DeBoer, 1986; Graden, 1989; Idol, 1989). The development of a consultative program necessitates a shift from exclusively direct services to students to more indirect services through their teachers (White & Pryzwansky, 1982). The special educator then becomes an agent of change affecting teachers' classroom practices and an inservice facilitator who can teach teachers techniques that have been found to be effective with this population (Margolis & McCabe, 1988; Robinson & Magliocca, 1991). Schulte, Osborne, and McKinney (1990) demonstrated that the students who had received a combination of direct services and consultation showed a small, statistically significant advantage over students who had been receiving exclusively pull-out resource services.

Differing somewhat from collaborative consultation, is expert consultation (Fuchs, Fuchs & Bahr, 1990; Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, & Ferguson, 1992) in which the special education teacher with a particular expertise models and trains the classroom teacher in the use of the technique. These authors found that referrals for testing and placement were reduced compared to a control group.

Team Teaching - In-class Service

In keeping with the themes that have appeared in the preceding sections, team teaching relies on the merging of general and special education so that teachers learn from each other (Garvar & Papania, 1982; Prager, 1983; Proctor, 1986; Tutulo, 1987) and coordinate their efforts to provide services for mildly disabled and at-risk students in the classroom (Hampton University Mainstreaming Outreach, 1988).

The special education teacher has the opportunity to model strategies in the classroom for the classroom teacher so that the possibility of carry over into the teacher's repertoire is increased (Zvolensky & Speake, 1988). One of the goals of in-class service is the reduction of feelings of stigmatization that may be associated with pull-out services (Conroy, 1988) and to reduce the child's dependency on the resource room (Prager, 1983). Having another teacher in the room to assist students may reduce referrals to special education. It has been found that students being left to carry out individual seatwork while others are involved in small group instruction, increases the likelihood of placement (Cooper & Speece, 1990). The second teacher can ensure that more students are on task and can assist with problems as they arise.

Student Preferences

It has been stated earlier that an ingredient of any successful strategy is the involvement of those who will be directly affected by service. Just as classroom teachers appear to have been omitted from the decision making process, so it seems, have students. It has long been assumed that self-contained or pull-out programs have a deleterious effect upon student self-concept (Cooley & Ayers, 1988; Kistner, Haskett, White, & Robbins, 1987). However, this hypothesis may

prove to be an oversimplification of a complex issue.

Forman (1988) concluded that student self-concept is related to the attributes of the social comparison group. Some students in resource rooms reported more positive self-concepts than mainstreamed disabled students. The author postulates that this is due to the availability of an alternate reference group (resource room students) with whom the student compares favorably. Students with no resource room component have only general education students as their reference group. Some of the poorly achieving students reported awareness of an unfavorable comparison with their general education peers. These findings would tend to negate the blanket criticism of the stigmatizing effect of pull-out programs for some students.

Some researchers have found that both general and special education students have positive perceptions of pull-out programs (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989; Vaughn & Bos, 1987). It was noted that preferences for service delivery alter with age. Older students reported a preference for pull-out services (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989) and it is essential to student self-concept and success to allow them a measure of input into program planning (Anderson-Inman, 1987; Marglit & Zak, 1984; Taylor, Adelman, Nelson, Smith, & Phares, 1989).

Integrated Classrooms

The Integrated Classroom Model (ICM) was pioneered in Washington State (Affleck, Madge, Adams, & Lowenbraun, 1988). Classroom makeup consists of 24 students, up to 8 of whom may be either SLD, EMH, or SBD. Each classroom is staffed by a teacher and a full-time assistant. Staff has access to an array of specialists dependent upon need (i.e. speech pathologist). Efficacy for LD students in ICM classrooms and resource rooms showed no significant differences. General

education students in the ICM demonstrated no difference from students in traditional classrooms on the California Achievement tests. The authors claim that it is more cost effective than the resource room. This model is also found to be consistent with the preferences of intermediate students (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989) who reported that they do not wish to have in-class services from a specialist and that receiving all their support from regular staff was the only alternative preferable to pull-out services.

The Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM) incorporates 12 critical design dimensions (Wang & Birch, 1984) that clearly specify classroom practices and techniques. As with the ICM, heterogeneous groups of students receive all instruction in the general education classroom with program assistance available from consultants. Comparisons between ALEM and resource room on achievement, behavior and attitudes, incidents of desirable classroom process, and cost effectiveness are preliminary but they found greater efficacy in favor of ALEM.

Follow-up research by Wang and Zollers (1990) demonstrated a high degree of feasibility of program implementation in a variety of school settings when systematic support was provided. The authors concluded that "when general classroom teachers and specialized professionals work collaboratively to provide coordinated and inclusive instructional support in an integrated educational setting, all students can benefit" (p. 18).

The results of research into the Minnesota Educational Effectiveness Project (MEEP) were not as positive as those cited above (Deno, Espin, & Maruyama, 1991; Deno, Maruyama, Espin, & Cohen, 1990). These authors found no significant differences in academic achievement between MEEP schools and students enrolled in resource rooms in control schools.

Resource Room-Pull-out Services

As the REI gained momentum, resource rooms and pull-out services were critically examined by a number of authors who cited a variety of shortcomings. such as disruption of classroom routines, removing responsibility for low-achieving students from classroom teachers, stigmatizing students, failing to achieve transfer of academic skills, and poor coordination between general and special education Anderson-Inman, 1987; Jenkins & Heinen, 1989).

Despite criticisms, the resource room continues to be the most popular vehicle of special education service delivery (Vaughn & Bos, 1987). Support for the model continues (Kauffman & Pullen, 1989; Reynolds, 1989) and some researchers have found consistently favorable results relating to attending and time on-task behavior in the resource room over the general education classroom. Academic achievement is equal or superior to attainment in other settings (Deno, Espin, & Maruyama, 1991; Myers & Bounds, 1986; Rich & Ross, 1989).

Students in the intermediate grades reported a preference for pull-out services, noting that it was humiliating to have their skills deficits revealed to their classmates (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989). If they must receive academic support and it cannot be provided by their regular teacher, they would prefer that it be carried out in private setting.

Inservice Training

Inservice training has been found to be an effective vehicle for assisting teachers in the accommodation of the mildly disabled (Brady, Swank, Taylor, & Freiberg, 1992). Not only do teachers require assistance with the technical aspects of instructing this population, it is also necessary to help teachers overcome resistance to new approaches and to develop realistic expectations for the mildly

disabled (Margolis & McGettigan, 1988).

If sufficient time is provided for teachers to assimilate new knowledge, practise their skills, receive follow-up support from inservice personnel, and examine attitudinal issues, durable change can be effected that improves the performance, behavior, and academic achievement of mildly disabled students (Larrive, 1986; Leyser, 1988; Truesdell & Abramson, 1992).

Continuum of Service

In 1962, Reynolds (Reynolds, 1989) postulated the idea of a continuum of services that would offer a graded series of more restricted environments dependent upon the level of student difficulty. Explicit in the structure was the understanding that the student would be placed in the least restrictive environment of the options necessary to address their personal needs. Settings ranged from institutions to separate schools, segregated classrooms within schools, resource rooms, and the general education classroom with or without support of some description.

A number of authors continue to support the idea of a continuum of services that will provide flexibility in an attempt to meet the needs of the disabled population (Kauffman & Pullen, 1989; Lieberman, 1985; Reynolds, 1989). The range of needs within this group is enormous when we consider all types and severities of disabling conditions that exist. A continuum of services is designed to provide for a wide range of individual differences.

Educational Change

The successful implementation of change within an institution or organization requires the gathering of input from the workers who will be directly effected by the changes that are proposed (Fullan, 1991; Zaleznik, 1989).

One format for the introduction of change is Strategic Planning (McCune, 1986). The author describes the five steps as being; a) creating a base for planning and change; b) developing the strategic plan; c) developing the implementation plan; d) implementing and monitoring the plan; and, e) renewing the plan (p.39).

McCune (1986) referred to the importance of "stakeholder participation" (p. 58) in the restructuring process. Teachers in this district will not, in all likelihood, influence the administration's continuation of the inclusion process. However, the lack of teacher participation in the development of service delivery models has been cited as a problem in the current context that can be rectified at the building level.

It is the writer's contention that the only way to construct a mode of service delivery that is responsive to the needs of those who are central to the provision of service, is to involve classroom teachers thoroughly in the process. Myles and Simpson (1989) found that teachers' acceptance of the presence of disabled students in their classrooms was contingent more upon teacher participation in the process than the availability of support services. This is a significant finding. It leads to the conclusion that the simple fact of asking people what they think is an important psychological factor that may outweigh monetary considerations of the provision of high levels of support.

Of the solution strategies that have been discussed, research exists to support their efficacy under a variety of circumstances. In varying degrees, prereferral interventions, consultation, team teaching, inservice training and resource room services are already implemented in the writer's setting. The proportions of such services have, heretofore, been dictated more by traditional styles of delivery that have evolved in the province, than by consultation with service recipients. The absence of consultation was addressed as part of the solution strategy.

Teachers at this school made it clear that they did not want to move to a predominantly consultative form of service. They voiced the preference that the bulk of services be in the form of direct services to students. What percentage of time would be allotted to consultation would perhaps vary from teacher to teacher but in all cases it would be less than 30%.

The issue of student preferences had not been addressed in this setting and it was felt that this situation should be rectified. Older students, in particular, stated clear preferences that effected their self-esteem and willingness to co-operate with the support teacher (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989). The power of teacher participation in decision making has been demonstrated and the logical extension of that knowledge was to include students, to a degree, through providing the opportunity to state where they would prefer to be instructed.

The Integrated Classroom models would not be possible in this setting owing to insufficient personnel to staff each classroom with an assistant. They were not economically feasible at the time. In a similar vein, the individual school could not dictate that the district maintain a continuum of services for students. However, within the school, it would be possible to maintain a continuum through the deployment of teaching assistant time according to the number of special needs students in each classroom and to vary amounts of direct service with support personnel according to individual needs.

Description of Selected Solution

One of the solution strategies discussed, Integrated Classrooms, was rejected, as not being feasible in this setting. The other solution strategies were either in place to some degree or could be woven into the framework of support services. The best method of discovering what services, in what proportions, teachers required was to include them in the planning of the solution strategy. A case has already been made for the inherent benefits of stakeholder participation. This approach also addressed one of the causal factors that had been cited; teachers were insufficiently involved in planning at all levels of the inclusion process. The caveats of good management dictated that personnel should be involved in the process of restructuring (McCune, 1986).

After reading the literature, it was the writer's belief that an eclectic and flexible approach, that incorporated all feasible solution strategies, was a requirement of working with a diverse body of individuals such as a staff. Will (1986) stated that building based pilot programs would be the key means of effecting change without altering funding allocations. Kauffman and Pullen (1989) stated that their research revealed that all of the solution strategies that have been outlined have been shown to succeed with some students and fail with others. There is no one right answer for all students or teachers. Therefore, it was the goal of the writer to ensure that a flexible continuum was maintained that could respond to the varying needs of students.

This practicum differs from many others in that the solution strategy was not devised by the writer in isolation. Rather, the writer provided the staff with the most current information available on facilitating the inclusion of mildly disabled students and then collaborated with the staff on solution strategies that were

deemed most appropriate by the staff in this unique setting. Therefore, the lines between this section of the practicum report and the succeeding section are quite blurred. In order to address this anomaly, the following section will incorporate both a description of the solution strategy that evolved and the report of action taken.

Report of Action Taken

The writer and the two other support staff persons, acting as leaders, planned one and one half professional development days. Using the principles of Strategic Planning (McCune, 1986), one day was set aside to provide inservice on the solution strategies that have been discussed. This information was designed to make teachers aware of the possibilities that exist. Discussion and clarification were scheduled throughout the day and teachers had the remainder of the week to consider the options that appeared most relevant to their needs.

The writer and other support staff discussed the redeployment of support staff. The school had a full-time Resource Room teacher, a full-time LA teacher, and a full-time First Nations teacher, as well as one full-time and two mornings only special education teaching assistants. Each of these programs had traditionally run from Kindergarten through seventh grade. It was proposed that rather than have three vertical programs, we have three horizontal programs. The staff elected to implement this service delivery model.

The end result was that each special education teacher and one assistant were assigned to only three, and in one case four, teachers rather than ten. Each of these teams would be responsible for the mildly disabled, at-risk, and slow learners.

Table 4

Support Services Team Composition

Team	Support Teacher	Grade Levels
A Primary	The writer Half-day assistant	K, 1, 2, & 3
B Middle Years	First Nations Full-day assistant	3, 4 & 5
C Upper Intermediate	Resource room Half-day assistant	5, 6, & 7

Attempts were made to see that all personnel were satisfied with this configuration and the option to change special education resource persons was available. The initial decision to divide teams in this manner was made by the three support teachers based on their years of working with staff to assure high levels of compatibility.

Having established teams, it was necessary to begin determination of what type or types of service would be offered by each team. The second half-day professional development session involved the selection of solutions that individual teachers felt were most pertinent to them and their students (see Appendix E). As a result, Table 5 outlines responses that led to three slightly different models of service delivery, driven by the personal philosophies of the teachers involved.

Table 5

Service Delivery Options

	Responses	
Type of Service	Yes	No
Consultation exclusively	0	10
Consultation/direct service - 50%/50%	0	10
Consultation/direct service - 40%/60%	0	10
Consultation/direct service - 20%/80%	9	1
Team teaching/In-class service	2	8
Resource room/Pull-out service	8	2
Informal inservice/Modelling	7	3
Formal inservice/Pro D	1	9
Maintain a continuum of service	9	1

It was clear from the information that teachers provided that direct service to students was felt to be more valuable than consultative services. Also, teachers did not elect to have formal inservice sessions at this time. Interviews revealed that teachers wanted informal inservice that was highly specific and germane to their concerns about particular students. They were not as concerned with general theory or inservices related to problems that may not exist in their classrooms.

The teachers in Team A decided that they preferred a high percentage of pull-out service from the support teacher but a high percentage of in-class service

from the teaching assistant. They believed that the large skill gaps presented by mildly disabled students could best be addressed through intensive, small group instruction (Reynolds, 1989). The distractibility of many of these students led the teachers to believe that a quiet atmosphere would be more conducive to high levels of time on task (Rich & Ross, 1989). On the other hand, they elected to have the assistant in the room with them to read orally with students, tutor individuals or small groups in specific skills, or assist with math groupings. Teachers also felt it was important to keep the students in the general education classroom as much as possible and that the presence of the assistant would make this time more productive (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989).

Early intervention and prevention of serious learning difficulties had long been an important consideration in this setting. Pianta (1990) stated that intensive early intervention had been shown to reduce the number of young, at-risk students who would later be referred for special education placement. Teachers were concerned that students generally were not referred for resource room placement until about the third grade. They felt that earlier support, of a more intensive nature than that offered by learning assistance, might reduce this necessity.

The model developed by Team C, or the upper intermediate teachers, was very similar to Team A with similar philosophical underpinnings in terms of pull-out services for mildly disabled students. The classroom teachers and the support teacher wanted the students to have a voice in their place of service delivery. The students were asked whether or not they wished to attend the resource room or receive support in the classroom. As Jenkins and Heinen (1989) pointed out, most of the students elected to attend the resource room so that they would not be embarrassed by their skills deficits before their peers. Two seventh grade boys elected to remain in the classroom with in-class support from the special

education teacher for five 40 minute blocks weekly.

Team B differed from the other two teams in some substantive manners. The teachers in this group agreed with Tutulo's (1987) perception that a sense of truly belonging in the class is of paramount importance. They did not feel that this could be achieved if students were withdrawn from the classroom for prolonged periods each day. Furthermore, they agreed with Jenkins and Heinen's (1989) discussion of all the negative aspects associated with pull-out services. These authors cite disruption of classroom routine, poor transference of skills from one environment to another, potential stigmatization, and lack of coordination and planning between special and general education. For these reasons, it was decided that the support teacher and two of the classroom teachers would team teach all the children in three groups. Groupings would be somewhat heterogeneous but within limited parameters of one academic year in terms of skills, and that the groups would be rotated from one teacher to the next every six weeks. Changes in groupings would be made as test results demonstrated differential growth. Garvar and Papania (1982) found that students enjoyed this model of instruction and that their academic scores increased as a result.

Having developed the framework for each team, it was necessary to establish caseloads for each team. Eleven mildly disabled students were already attending the school who had been identified in previous years. During the course of implementation, one student designated as mildly disabled moved in and four young students were identified as being mildly disabled.

The at-risk caseload was determined through teacher referrals to the support teachers using the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test-Revised (WRMT-R) (1987) and the KeyMath (1981). Students who were between six months and two years below curricular level were considered for service and those with the largest deficits were

given highest priority.

In this manner, the first difficulty was discovered. Following assessment, it became evident that Team B's caseload, far outweighed the caseload of Team A. The two support teachers met with their respective teachers to discuss the problem. It was mutually decided that the writer would assume responsibility for a third/fourth grade class and the support teacher for Team B would pick up the kindergarten class. In this manner, greater equality of workload was achieved.

While the group of mildly disabled students receiving service has remained constant, at-risk groupings have fluctuated throughout implementation. This is due to the fact that many groups were seen for a period of a from two to six weeks and then other students would receive support services, as determined by the classroom teacher in consultation with the support teacher. Table 5 contains caseload information based on Week 12 of implementation.

Table 6

Team Caseload Information

Team	Mildly Disabled	At-risk	Combined Number
A	6	18	24
B	5	26	31
C	8	15	23
Totals	19	59	78

The discrepancy between the number of previously stated identified mildly disabled students, totalling 16 and the number of students recorded as mildly disabled and receiving services on Table 5 is explained by the fact that the writer provided "resource room" services for three students who were experiencing great difficulty in the classroom but who had not, as yet, been identified as mildly disabled. Parental approval was obtained for all students involved.

Team A Schedule

The writer worked with mildly disabled students from 8:50 - 10:10 each day. The remainder of the day was broken into two 45 minute blocks and two 40 minute blocks to work with at-risk students. Of the 20 weekly blocks for at-risk students, three of them were in-class service working with heterogeneous groups on a variety of projects or assisting the teacher with the whole class.

Because of the youth of the mildly disabled students, all in first through third grades, a period of one hour and twenty minutes was deemed sufficient by those involved to provide a significant focus on reading skills. The writer's half-day assistant was deployed for one daily block in each classroom to provide math support or assistance in other areas as required by the teacher.

The writer also maintained her school-wide responsibilities related to assessment and referral of students for psychoeducational and speech and language services, coordination of all external support services, such as occupational and physiotherapy, and the coordination of the school-based team. In recognition of these additional demands, the writer maintained one daily 40 minute block for administrative purposes.

Team B Schedule

This team's schedule was the most complicated of the three. Three First Nations students, aged 12 to 14, worked in the First Nations room all day. The support teacher taught two or three half hour lessons to the students and the balance of their day was spent with the First Nations teaching assistant. These students had developed a very strong bond with the First Nations teacher and had been unsuccessful in all other settings. It was the consensus of the team that the First Nations teacher was the key reason that these students continued to attend school. Therefore, every attempt was made to accommodate their needs.

For the period of time before recess each day, the support teacher worked with these three students and a group of kindergarten students on a pull-out basis. After recess, the support teacher team-taught one 45 minute block of reading and one 45 minute block of mathematics.

The afternoons were divided into three blocks to work with at-risk students on a pull-out basis. These students were drawn from the classes of the two teachers with whom the support teacher team-taught.

Team C Schedule

Because the academic gap between mildly disabled students and their peers tends to widen as they progress through the grades, the resource teacher set aside the entire morning for the six mildly disabled students. The half-day assistant was in the class at the same time working with students. During this time, some small groups of at-risk students would come in for instruction as well.

The support teacher's afternoons were divided into 9 blocks for direct service to students. Five of these blocks were taken up with in-class support for

two mildly disabled seventh grade students who were integrated for the entire day. The remaining blocks were spent in providing pull-out instruction with at-risk students. The balance of four afternoon blocks were reserved for consultation, assessment, and preparation time.

Support teachers met frequently, two or three times weekly, for two weeks preceding implementation and for the first two weeks of implementation. Formal meetings, that included all the school's support staff including assistants, were held monthly to discuss problems, solutions, perceptions, and to keep each other fully informed as to caseloads and mode of service delivery. Each support teacher established mutually convenient meeting times with their respective teachers so that planning for individuals could proceed. A complete description of implementation procedures can be found in Appendix F.

A second unexpected event occurred in the third week of implementation. The writer had established a group of six students to receive resource room support. Because of scheduling demands, two days a week, this number rose to ten students at four distinctly different levels of achievement from first to third grade. The writer felt that the students were not being provided with the intense support that they required. The writer's assistant had been assigned to classroom teachers before three additional mildly disabled students were referred to the primary resource room. The writer first consulted with the other support teachers and then met with the teachers of Team A to discuss the situation. The teachers agreed to relinquish one weekly block of assistant time each so that the two busiest days of the week would function more smoothly. The writer also secured the assistance of a fifth year education student from the local university to volunteer one morning a week.

From this point onward, implementation continued without further difficulty

or unforeseen circumstances. Informal feedback to both the writer and the building principal, was positive throughout the implementation period.

The Service Delivery Follow-up Questionnaire (see Appendix C) was distributed at the first staff meeting at the conclusion of the implementation period. Each question was briefly discussed to ensure clarity and teachers were allotted time to complete the survey during the meeting.

CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results

Classroom teachers have not had the training or support to be able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled. In an attempt to address this problem, the writer proposed to make teachers more aware of mainstreaming strategies from the literature that had been shown, through research, to be efficacious. The final phase of the solution strategy was to implement an altered service delivery model that divided the school into three service delivery teams. The type of service delivery of each team was largely dictated by the informed preferences of the teachers on each team. This plan allowed for classroom teacher involvement and the development of support that was responsive to their individual needs.

In order to ascertain if the solution strategy were effective, a series of expected outcomes were devised and examined at the conclusion of implementation through teacher feedback to a questionnaire (see Appendix C).

The first goal stated that at least 8 of 10 teachers would develop individualized plans for the mildly disabled in reading and mathematics, where necessary, as witnessed by the development of plans at weekly meetings with teachers.

As service delivery evolved, support teachers were responsible for the bulk of instruction in reading and a percentage of instruction in mathematics. For this reason, classroom teachers were required to write only a limited number of

individualized lesson plans. Support teachers reported writing plans 100% of the time for the students in their programs. Classroom teachers were kept apprised of progress and subject matter covered at regular meetings. For the balance of the day, when students were integrated, classroom teachers responded that they wrote individualized plans for various percentages of instruction. These data are displayed on Table 7.

The second goal required that at least 8 of 10 teachers state on the final questionnaire that 90% of the time, they or a member of the support team, worked on an individual or small group basis for a minimum of 60 minutes daily with mildly disabled students.

All teachers with mildly disabled students in their classes responded that their students were worked with individually or in small groups for a minimum of 60 minutes daily at all times. Due to some rearranging of class lists, one teacher did not have mildly disabled students in the classroom. This is reflected in the one teacher who responded "no" to this question. Furthermore, the mildly disabled students of primary age were worked with for 100 minutes daily and many of the upper intermediate students received almost three hours of daily support.

The third goal stated that one measure of the success of the practicum would be that at least 8 of 10 teachers reported that they are "Satisfied" or "Very satisfied" with academic support for their mildly disabled students on the final questionnaire.

Of the 10 respondents, 9 stated that they were "Very satisfied" or "Satisfied". One teacher's response was, "Neutral". The teacher who reported neutrality went on to state that, while the new model was an improvement, more time was required for assessment and that they wanted to see the model continue for the balance of the year.

The final outcome required that at least 8 of 10 teachers would report on the

final questionnaire that the inclusion of mildly disabled students was no longer the highest priority in the school.

Seven of the 10 teachers reported that inclusion was no longer the most significant concern of the school. One of the teachers who stated that inclusion remained as the highest priority cited the fact that we continued to need more time in face of the extremity of the problems in this setting. The teacher added beside this question, "I like how we've adapted." Another respondent who replied that inclusion continued to be a very high priority was new to the school and, therefore, had no prior experience with the old service delivery model or the student population.

Table 7 contains a summary of responses to the follow-up questionnaire (see Appendix C). The total number of respondents was 10.

Table 7

Service Delivery Follow-up Questionnaire Results

Questions Posed	Number of Responses
1. Are you developing academic plans for your mildly disabled students in reading and mathematics?	
Yes:	9
No:	1
For what percentage of the school day?	
100%:	3
80-99%:	0

60-79%:	3
40-59%:	2
Less:	0
2. Do you, or member of the support team work with mildly disabled students individually or in small groups for a minimum of 60 minutes daily?	
Yes:	9
No:	1
3. If not, how much time is allocated daily per mildly disabled student?	0
4. How satisfied are you with changes that have been implemented with regard to support services?	
Very satisfied:	6
Satisfied:	3
Neutral:	1
Mildly dissatisfied:	0
Very dissatisfied:	0
5. Would you rank the inclusion of the mildly disabled as the most significant concern in the school?	
Yes:	3
No:	7
6. Do you think that the academic needs of the mildly disabled are being better met	

since the implementation of the new service delivery model?

Yes:	8
No:	1
Not sure:	1

7. Do you wish to see the new service delivery model continued throughout the year?

Yes:	9
No:	1

It is interesting to note that the one respondent who replied that they did not wish to see the service delivery model continued for the balance of the year, reported being "Very satisfied" with the model. No written explanation for this apparent paradox was offered and subsequent interviews with teachers did not provide edification.

The written comments that were added at the end of the questionnaire help to illuminate some of the feelings of the participants. A selection of comments follows:

"Need more time to serve these students in math and for behavior problems. Need more time to work with and discuss programs, etc. with support staff." "The present plan, in my opinion, is the most logical and practical plan that has occurred in this school for some time." "I'm not sure. We're still dealing with mildly disabled plus the LA guys with a waiting list of more LA guys and only so much time so they are still not getting enough."

Figure 1 shows the comparison between some of the data gathered prior to implementation and after implementation. The contrast between the two sets of data helps to illustrate the changes that have taken place in this setting.

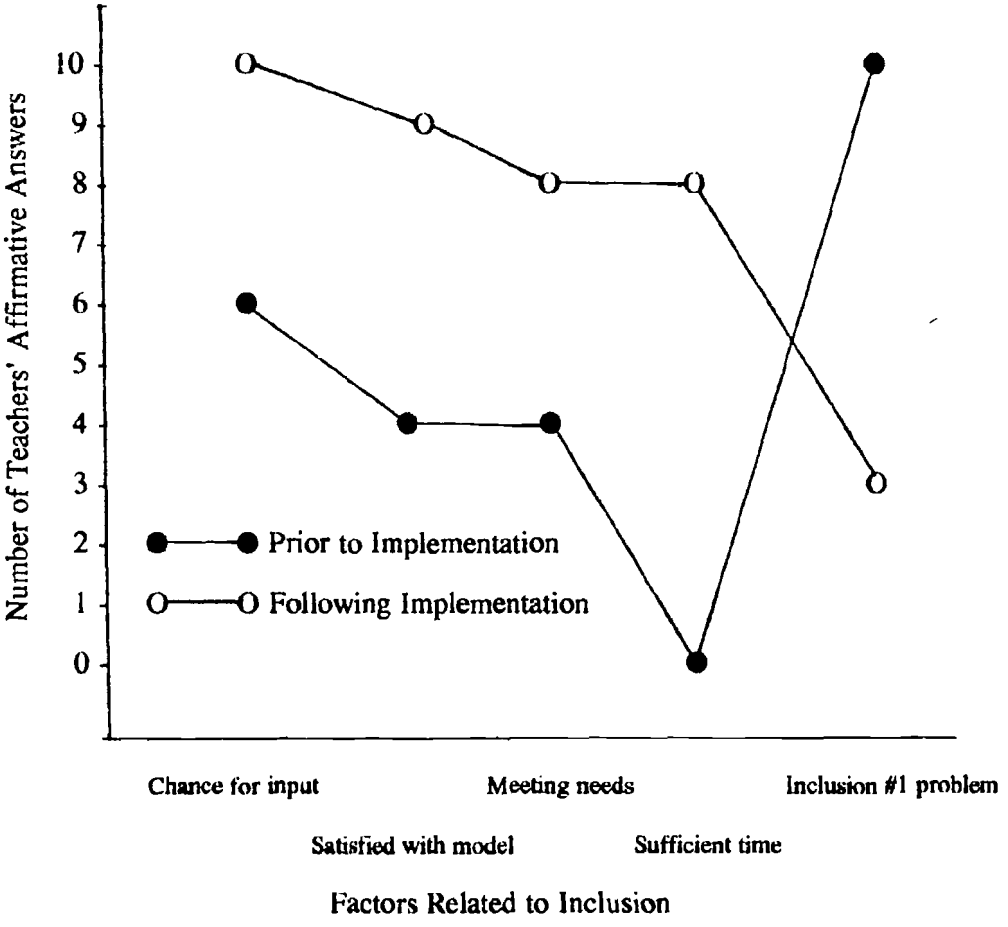

Figure 1. Comparison of number of teachers' responses to selected factors relevant to the inclusion of mildly disabled students prior to and following the implementation of a new service delivery model.

Support staff, assistants and teachers, were also invited to complete questionnaires. Responses from support staff were even more positive than those of classroom teachers, with one exception. The support teacher for the upper intermediate students expressed ambivalence as follows:

> I get the sense that more students are being seen, i.e., primary resource room students. Scheduling is still awkward even though I'm seeing fewer teachers. I am servicing more students and juggling the significant needs in math, reading, writing, and "counseling"! The emotional needs of the students sometimes override the academic needs. The difficulty is meeting these needs. From my perspective, I see more needs and feel overwhelmed at times.

This support teacher reported being unsure about a desire to continue with the service delivery for the remainder of the year. All other support staff stated unequivocally that they wished to continue.

Student progress was monitored through pre- and posttests using the WRMT-R and the KeyMath. The vast majority of students showed progress that met or exceeded projected expectations based on last year's data for those students for whom information was available. Those students whose progress was below expected levels were the subject of meetings at which instructional decisions were made. In the case of three of these students, a referral was made to the school psychologist following several unsuccessful attempts to modify instruction for greater academic gains. The recommendations of the psychologist will be used following the completion of assessment to devise new programs for these individuals.

Discussion

The desired outcomes of the practicum were met or exceeded in all but one case and the teachers of the school have recommited themselves to the solution strategy that was implemented. The success of the practicum can, in the writer's opinion, be attributed to a number of causes.

It was felt that it would be far easier for support teachers to maintain close communication with only three or four teachers, rather than ten. Classroom interruptions were limited as students received services from one teacher rather a few going to the resource room, a few going to learning assistance, and another group going to the First Nations teacher. This modification addressed concerns raised by Jenkins and Heinen (1989). A potential off-shoot benefit was that the possible stigma of resource room placement may have been lessened with each member of the support team replicating the services of the other. This part of the solution strategy responds to criticisms of resource programs cited in the literature (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989).

The writer's goal was that teachers would have the training and support to be able to meet the academic needs of mildly disabled students 80% of the time. One expected outcome of meeting this goal would be appropriate individualization of academic subjects for the mildly disabled. Walberg and Wang (1987) found that academic growth was maximized when students' programs were individualized whenever necessary. Data on student growth would support this finding as the students involved in this practicum were provided with individualized programs and those for whom longitudinal data was available demonstrated increased growth

compared to previous forms of service delivery with few exceptions.

Teachers reported that owing to class size and academic heterogeneity, they were unable to work with mildly disabled students either individually or in small groups on a daily basis. The combination of assistant time and availability of the support teacher for a larger portion of the day ensured that either the classroom teacher or the support teacher was able to spend more than 60 minutes daily with the mildly disabled.

Teachers reported their dissatisfaction with the level of input into services that had been accorded to them. The solution strategy allowed for the development of flexible planning that was responsive to teachers needs and styles. Myles and Simpson (1989) found that teacher input into decision making with regard to mildly disabled students was a highly significant indicator of their willingness to accept these students in their rooms. Leiberman (1985) criticized special education for its failure to include general educators in their plans for inclusion. The solution strategy corrected this imbalance by according the classroom teacher control over the types of services that would be offered and respected their central role vis a vis mildly disabled students in their charge.

Finally, the inclusion of mildly disabled and at-risk students was cited as the most pressing problem in this setting. The writer ascertained that this is no longer true for 7 of the 10 teachers following implementation of the solution strategy. The service delivery model that was implemented supported the inclusion of these students so that inclusion was no longer cited as the most significant problem in this setting. However, 3 teachers continued to feel that inclusion remains the most significant problem in the school. This practicum outcome was not achieved as stated. Reasons given by teachers included the fact that, while they approved of the new model and felt that student needs were being met more frequently, the level of

need in the school was such that demand continued to outstrip supply in terms of assistance. This area remains a serious concern and will be discussed in greater detail in a subsequent section of the practicum.

A continuum of service that was responsive to teachers' requests enabled the provision of flexible programming within each team. This met the needs of a wide variety of students with varying degrees of difficulty in the classroom. This aspect of the solution strategy responded to Kauffman and Pullen's (1989) call for resistance to single strategy solutions for complex human problems. These authors stated that it was imperative that education be tailored to individuals and that educators must resist the urge, however nobly motivated, to insist that all students fit one mold. One teacher expressed this idea as follows:

> I like to see lots of flexibility with service, i.e., 1. that students are not locked in for the entire year, 2. as they become more skilled and independent they can be dropped from the program and other needy students can be introduced, and, 3. in this way more students will be able to get service. This service model is working with my students.

Strengths of the Solution Strategy

The solution strategy addressed the need for special and general educators to work together in a collaborative manner. Reynolds, Wang, and Walberg (1987) called upon all teachers to end the segregation of their roles and begin to work together as a unified team for the improvement of services for students. It is the writer's opinion that this is one of the greatest strengths of the solution strategy.

Greater numbers of students were able to receive service and waitlists were reduced to a very few students. The service that was offered on a daily basis was

more intensive as each support teacher was able to spend more blocks with each group of students.

The teachers in this setting subscribe to widely varying philosophies. By teaming teachers of like mind, it was possible to create harmonious working groups that were able to demonstrate the flexibility necessary to respond to the requests of a variety of different schools of thought. This is evident in the development of three different models of service delivery.

Because of reduced numbers of team members, it was possible to provide in-class support for some teachers with fully integrated students. Similarly, more time was available to each support teacher to work in the classroom with the teacher in a more informal way to observe other students not receiving direct assistance and to offer consultative advice (Greer, 1991). This was not possible when the support teacher was working with 10 teachers and would often have groups that were drawn from the classrooms of two or three teachers.

The primary program in this province incorporates ungradedness and the principle of continuous progress. It was thought that the format of the program would facilitate the inclusion of a wide range of abilities. Furthermore, it is very difficult to gather accurate information about very young students through psychometric testing. For these reasons, students were often approaching third grade before they were placed in a resource room. Primary teachers in this setting had frequently voiced their displeasure with this process. They felt that intensive early intervention was necessary that was not forthcoming. Pianta (1990) strongly recommended that our focus as educators be upon the young students who may show dramatic benefits as a result of early intervention.

The new model made it possible for the support teacher to work with young students in a resource room model for almost one third of the day. The students do

not need to have gone through a formal screening process for designation as special needs. This has meant that, given parental permission, more early primary students were receiving intensive support than in any other year at this school.

The flexible nature of Canadian support services makes it possible for special education teachers to alter their roles to suit the needs of a given school. As long as the students who are designated as special needs are receiving full services, the teacher is free to include any other students that may benefit from services. Strong distinctions between special and general education do not exist in this country making it easier to develop creative solutions to school-based problems.

Problems with the Solution Strategy

Having said all that precedes, the writer would like to add a note of caution with regard to the solution strategy that has worked well in this setting. The structure of the teams was largely determined by the teachers involved. This format was highly successful in a setting with committed, experienced, and talented teachers. Not all settings are fortunate enough to have a staff possessing all these skills and dedication. It is possible that the solution strategy would not be replicable in some other settings. Furthermore, the support teachers must trust their staff's abilities enough to relinquish a measure of professional control. This is not to say that the support teacher becomes the "assistant" of the classroom teacher but that a delicate balance is struck. It is necessary for the support teacher to remain aware at all times that the students are the primary concern and that the classroom teacher, however important to the joint endeavor, is secondary. In cases where the support teacher cannot agree with decisions that are made for a mildly disabled student, the support teacher must voice concerns and be prepared to discuss differences of professional opinion with the teacher in question or the

administration if no satisfactory solution can be found.

Furthermore, it was the goal of the writer to assist classroom teachers with training that would enable them to work more effectively with mildly disabled students. It is the writer's opinion that this area presents a weakness in the solution strategy. Perhaps the nature of the classroom, particularly in a setting fraught with the difficulties that have been outlined, is such that it is not possible for teachers with any amount of training to be able to provide effective services for all students. Fuchs, Fuchs and Bishop (1992) concluded that this may be a fact of life in today's classrooms and that it might be unreasonable to expect teachers to be all things to all people. Be that as it may, the writer noted that the solution strategy enabled support teachers to work with greater numbers of students but demand approached the point of outstripping supply, even in a school with the high level of support that has been described. If the number of students with learning problems continues to rise, the saturation level of services will be met and surpassed again. It was precisely this problem that led Will (1986) to state that we must prepare classroom teachers to work with educationally different populations as there is not enough money in the coffers to provide specialized environments for all who appear to need them.

By encouraging teachers to help shape service delivery, it was evident that the majority of services would be provided by a support teacher in an environment other than the classroom. Inservice to provide teachers with strategies to support students in the classroom was a low priority. Perhaps this is a "chicken and egg" argument. Even if teachers had been provided with all the training to assist students, they may not have had the time to implement strategies and therefore, wish to see the students instructed by another teacher. We then return full circle to the problem of too many students with difficulties and not enough support personnel

to assist them.

Finally, it must be asked if teacher satisfaction is sufficient grounds to state that a solution strategy is indeed most efficacious for students. Working in difficult circumstances, it is not inconceivable that a model that delivers teachers from a higher proportion of difficult students is viewed as highly desirable. This is not to assume callousness, but the natural inclination of a person under great pressure. It will be necessary to closely monitor the progress of students and to continue to work with teachers so that they understand that it is not possible for the support staff in this setting to work with all students who are below curricular level as this would entail an unmanageable number of students.

Finding sufficient time to meet with teachers was another area of difficulty. Whereas, the model started with fixed times for meetings between support staff and classroom teachers, this quickly became difficult and onerous. Funds were not available for the teachers to be released from the classroom so it was necessary for teachers to meet on their own time. As it became clear that the bulk of direct instruction in core areas was to be undertaken by the support teacher, meetings became less formal and involved less co-planning.

While it would appear that there are many positive aspects of the solution strategy that was implemented, there are a number of pitfalls in teacher-driven solutions. It behooves us to take careful and critical stock of our situations before attempting to adopt such solutions.

Recommendations

There are a number of recommendations for future implementation. These include:

1. A careful internal audit of personnel to determine whether or not a teacher-driven solution strategy is deemed appropriate in a given setting should be undertaken prior to implementation. This would also include giving consideration to the compatibility of teachers and support staff.

2. All assessments of students should be carried out before the deployment of teaching assistants or the setting of the final configuration of teams.

3. All support staff should feel comfortable with the performance of all the duties of both the resource room and the LA teacher. While it is possible for support teachers to assist each other, it places an additional strain on the participants.

4. It is a requirement that the local educational system allow for this type of flexible grouping without jeopardizing special education funding. This should be verified before any steps are taken.

5. Consideration should be given to setting aside a percentage of the budget to allow for release time for general and special education teachers to meet to confer about plans and individuals. A heavy burden is placed upon teachers, particular at the inception of implementation, and teachers can tire of any proposal that appears to be making extra work for them. Meeting time is essential, however, as the

classroom teacher needs to be kept informed of instruction that is happening away from the classroom. In this model, the classroom teacher maintains "ownership" of the student and remains an active participant in instructional decision making and coordination of programs.

6. Consideration might be given to ensuring a stronger component of inservice sessions for teachers. This could be achieved by being slightly less open-ended in the development of the service delivery model. A strong case could be made for the benefits of using support staff as resources on professional development days. This might help to inculcate the idea that the support staff in an innercity school will not be able to work directly with all students in need. The building of a strong program of inservice sessions may help to empower teachers to view themselves as capable of working successfully with a wider range of students.

Dissemination

The entire staff of the school has been involved with evolution of the solution strategy. Apart from the members of the staff, the writer was visited by a learning assistance teacher from another school as she had heard that this school was in the process of developing a new model of service delivery. She then returned to her school to examine the feasibility of implementation in her setting.

The ability to attempt implementation of the solution strategy is contingent upon the availability of sufficient support staff. This prerequisite would preclude adoption in a large number of settings. On the other hand, settings exist in similar schools where sufficient personnel could be called upon to develop a team approach.

A possibility exists that the writer and other members of the support team who might be interested in assisting, will present sessions at upcoming conferences to explain the rationale for the approach that was taken, the steps involved in the development of the solution strategy, and some of the findings at the completion of implementation. It is the writer's belief that other schools may be able to benefit from the experience, learning, and growth that has taken place in this setting.

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APPENDIX A

SCHOOL DIRECTION INVENTORY

Appendix A

School Direction Inventory
Elementary School
April, 1992

name_____

This copy is intended for interested staff members to respond.

1. Is our process and direction clear to you with regard to where we are going: (if no, please comment on what you believe needs clarity or suggestions for improvement).
   a) **Primary Committee**- (e.g.multi-age grouping, Year 1-2 program, integration of special needs students)

   b) **Intermediate Committee**- (e.g. ungradedness, anecdotal reporting, integration of Special Needs students)

c) Short-term goals and priorities (e.g. school logo, Cooperative Learning, Writing Process)

d) Long-term goals and priorities (e.g. Computer & Technology, recycling, multiculturalism)

e) **other programs & services** (e.g. Counselling, Speech & Language, district services)

2) At present, we utilize several committees to plan and implement change. The principal ones include S.C.C., Primary, Intermediate, and S.I.P. committees. Comment on whether these are working effectively or whether you would recommend changes to our structure (i.e.- amalgamation or elimination of committees, changes in processes, etc.)

3) Comment on your present level of satisfaction with the following. Please include recommendations for improvement:

-**selection & development of S.I.P. goals**

-**School-Based Professional Development** (i.e. coordination, timing of Pro-D days, usefulness, support of Year 2000 initiatives)

4) What are your thoughts about the way we might provide support for our special needs (E.S.L., L.A., Resource Room, N.I.E.D.) during next year?

APPENDIX B

SPECIAL NEEDS SERVICES QUESTIONNAIRE

Special Needs Services Questionnaire

Thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire. Please do not include your name as all the information gathered will be confidential.

Number of years of teaching experience: _____

Do you have special education teaching experience? **No** _____ **Yes** _____ **How long?** _____

Have you completed any university courses in special education? **No** _____ **Yes** _____ **How many?** _____

Do you have a degree or post graduate work in special education? _____

What is your age? _____

The School Survey (Spring, 1992) cited service to special needs children as the school's most pressing concern. The purpose of this questionnaire is to gather more specific information about your concerns as they relate to the mildly disabled in the classroom. The definition of the mildly disabled (high incidence students) includes severely learning disabled, mildly mentally handicapped, and severe emotional or behavior disordered.

1. Do you feel you have had an opportunity for input at the District level regarding the integration/inclusion policy concerning mildly disabled students? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

2. Do you agree with the District's current integration/inclusion policy as it relates to the mildly disabled? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

3. Do you feel that you have had input at the school level regarding integration/ inclusion decisions as they effect your particular classroom? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

4. Do you think teachers should be involved in integration/inclusion policy making for the mildly disabled? At the District level? At the school level? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. Were you satisfied with the level and/or type of academic support services mildly disabled students in your classroom received during the 1991-92 school year? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

_____

6. Do you think you were able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled students in your classroom during the 1991-92 school year? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**
(If you answered "yes", please go to Ques. #7 next. If you answered "no", please proceed to Ques. #8 next.)

_____

_____

_____

_____

7. If you think you were able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled, how do you think this was accomplished? i.e. programming, peer tutoring, teacher assistant, Learning Assistance/Resource Room support, inservice, etc. Please list all the factors that you feel were important.

_____

_____

_____

8. If you do not think you were able to meet the academic needs of the mildly disabled, what modifications or services do you think would assist you in achieving this goal? Mention any and all that you think are important.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

9. Do you feel that you have the skills, teaching strategies, and techniques necessary to work successfully with this population? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

10. Do you feel that you have adequate time to work with students who may require frequent repetitions or additional instruction? **Yes** ____ **No** ____ **Please explain.**

_____

_____

_____

Please use this space and the back of the sheet to add any additional comments you wish or to expand upon your answers to any of the preceding questions.

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX C

SERVICE DELIVERY FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix C

Service Delivery Follow-Up Questionnaire

1. Are you developing individualized academic plans for your mildly disabled students in reading and mathematics? **Yes** ____ **No**____

   How much of the time?
   _____ 100%
   _____ 80- 99%
   _____ 60-79%
   _____ 40-59%
   _____ less

2. Do you, or a member of the support team, work with mildly disabled students individually or in small groups for a minimum of 60 minutes daily?
   Yes ____ **No** ____ *(If you answered "yes", please go Question #4.)*

3. If not, how much time is allocated daily per mildly disabled student?

   _____

   _____

4. How satisfied are you with changes that have been implemented with regard to support services?
   _____ Very satisfied
   _____ Satisfied
   _____ Neutral
   _____ Mildly dissatified
   _____ Very dissatisfied

5. Would you rank the inclusion of the mildly disabled as the most significant concern in the school? **Yes** ____ **No**____

6. Do you think that the academic needs of mildly disabled students are being better met since the implementation of the new service delivery model?
   Yes ____ **No** ____

7. Do you wish to see the new service delivery continued throughout the year?
   Yes ____ **No** ____

Please write any comments that you may wish to add on the back of the sheet.

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL LEARNING PLAN

Appendix D

Individual Learning Plan

Student:_____ Grade/Year:_____

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.
Reading HBJ Level_____					
Skillbook					
Other:					
Phonics Explode the Code____					
Other:					
Math Series: _____					

Notes:_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX E

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Service Delivery Options

Please select the types of service delivery options you would like to see implemented. You may select more than one option, keeping in mind current staffing levels. This is not a "wish list", but rather suggestions for what we can do with what we have.

	Yes	No
1. Consultation exclusively	____	____
2. Consultation/direct service - 50%/50%	____	____
Consultation/direct service - 40%/60%	____	____
Consultation/direct service - 20%/80%	____	____
* If a proportion you would like to see is not listed, please include it under "Other" at the bottom of the sheet.		
3. Team teaching/In-class service	____	____
4. Resource Room/ Pull-out service	____	____
5. Informal inservice/Modelling	____	____
6. Formal inservice/Pro. D.	____	____
7. Maintain a continuum of service with a variety of options; i.e., in-class, pull-out, Resource Room, self-contained classrooms.	____	____
8. Early intervention/prereferral	____	____

Other:_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX F

CALENDAR PLAN

Appendix F

Calendar Plan

Prior to implementation:

- Obtained permission from the building principal and district administration for the proposed plan.
- Discussed the possibility of a revised mode of service delivery with all three support teachers to determine if support for the plan existed. Support staff wished to pursue the idea.
- Ascertained the level of teacher interest in pursuing the proposal at staff meeting. Response to the initial proposal was positive.
- Planning sessions with all three support personnel began and a meeting time was scheduled.
- Met with all teachers and administration to discuss solution strategies elaborated in Chapter IV and forms of service delivery that could be offered to teachers. Allowed the remainder of the week for teachers to assimilate the material that had been discussed and to begin formulating their choices.
- Reconvened for the half day session, at which discussion continued and the Service Delivery Options survey (Appendix E) was distributed.
- Survey results formed the basis of discussion and the establishment of three teams who would work together throughout implementation.
- Support services staff, including assistants, will meet to discuss results, formulate plans, and discuss any concerns that had arisen.

Week 1 - Support staff began the assessment of all mildly disabled and at-risk

students to establish an academic baseline. The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised and the KeyMath were used.

- Based on the results of assessment, it became evident that an inequity existed between the caseloads of Team A and Team B. Following the support staff meeting, the two teachers involved met with their respective team teachers to discuss the problem. As a result, two teachers changed teams and more equal caseloads were established.
- Mutually convenient meeting times were established between support teachers and individual teachers on each team.
- Support staff met again to finalize plans, caseloads, and timetables.

Week 2: - Instructional plans for each student were developed jointly and implemented for each student.

- Instructional blocks began.

Week 3: - Individual lesson plan development assessed at the weekly meeting with the classroom teacher. The bulk of the lesson plan were

- generated by the support teacher with input from the classroom teacher. As the vast majority of service delivery is being carried out on a pull-out basis, it seemed logical for support teachers to generate the plans.
- Support staff met to coordinate efforts and assist each other with academic and implementation problem-solving. The support teacher for each team was responsible for deciding if alterations were required to the solution strategy and may call a meeting for all the classroom teachers with whom they work to discuss issues that arose.
- The writer called a meeting with team teachers to discuss a problem

when on two particular days, ten students were in the room at once but the writer did not have the services of an assistant as the assistant was working in classrooms. Because the teachers wanted the students to continue to receive the services of the support teacher, each teacher relinquished a block of time to return the assistant to the writer during the two busiest days.

- Two students experiencing great difficulty were referred to the school psychologist for assessment.

Week 4: - Continuation of implementation with on-going analysis of problems and redirection when required. The problems that were addressed at this stage had primarily to do with each support person's comfort level with the broad variety of responsibilities that the new model required of them. Support and suggestions were made at each meeting with each specialist able to contribute their particular expertise.

- Weekly meetings with teachers to plan for individual student needs.
- Caseload of at-risk students altering as new students move into the school. Some short term interventions with at-risk students were terminated and new groups of students filled the blocks.
- Monthly meeting with all special education personnel and assistants in the school.

Week 5: - Regular meetings with individual teachers.

- Each team met at the end of the week to discuss progress and any issues that needed to be resolved. Interviews were carried out to determine if the solution strategy was on target in terms of achieving

desired outcomes.

- Support teachers were released from their classrooms for one afternoon to develop a new report card form that would be more descriptive of the new model of service delivery.

Weeks 6 - 12:

- Continuation of the pattern outlined. As service was on a pull-out basis, weekly meetings seemed to be excessive. The support teacher was doing the bulk of the planning and instruction with the target students. Therefore, weekly meetings were reduced to informal discussions weekly, at recess or some other relaxed time, and more formal meetings were held every two weeks to discuss progress and coordinate instruction with what was happening in the classroom, if possible.
- Monthly meeting of support staff in Week 8 and 12.

Several more students were referred to the psychologist and speech and language pathologist for updated assessment data or for and initial assessment.

Week 13: - On Wednesday, the final questionnaire was distributed at the staff meeting and returned to the writer for collation.

- Support teachers reassessed students who had been receiving support to determine the amount of academic growth that had taken place. The same instruments, using alternate form of the Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised, were employed.
- Collected data was distributed to all teachers in Table form. At this time, teachers elected to recommit themselves to the solution strategy

and to continue with the service delivery model for the balance of the year.

- The writer remains concerned about the degree of reliance upon special education support personnel for the delivery of services to mildly disabled and at-risk students. One of the goals of the practicum was to assist teachers to become better trained personally in working with special populations. As this goal has not been satisfactorily met, the writer and two other support teachers have been given approval by the administration and the staff to lead another partial day inservice session to address this issue. This session was held in the spring of 1993 and focussed on the difference between at-risk and mildly disabled students and the methodologies employed by support staff to assist the students with whom they were working.