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ABSTRACT

This paper describes how Clive School, a small rural K-9 school in Alberta (Canada), used a team teaching approach and the best practices of staff development to facilitate the inclusion of special needs students into general education classrooms. Since September 1989, the staff at Clive School have been involved in developing their school into a Cooperative Learning Demonstration School. In contrast to the traditional special education pull-out program, cooperative learning (CL) involves co-teaching partnerships between the classroom and the resource specialist teacher. In June 1990, the school received a 2-year grant to provide CL training, technical assistance, and consulting services to the Clive school staff; identify key tools, strategies, and ideas that empowered staff at Clive school; and create a videotape explaining the project. Following a half-day CL inservice, teachers decided to focus on CL as the primary professional development project for the next 2 years. Specifically, the 2-year project aimed to help teachers understand distinctions among competitive, individualistic, and cooperative goal structures, as well as the five basic elements of social learning. During this period, teachers developed a team action plan describing how CL would be implemented based on the best practices of staff development, implemented CL in their classrooms, formed peer coaching relationships to help each other learn CL teaching strategies, and elected to become an Alberta CL demonstration program so that other teachers could observe CL strategies in the classroom. (LP)

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BEST PRACTICES IN RURAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT:
THE CLIVE SCHOOL STORY

Setting the Stage for Implementing Change

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In Sergiovanni's (1989) ideas regarding professional knowledge, he elaborates on Kozlov's concept of mindscapes, a metaphor for educational viewpoints. There are three primary mindscapes that guide educators as they engage in the application of professional knowledge. These mindscapes are identified as Mystics, Neats, and Scruffies. Sergiovanni's (1991, p. 4) concept of mindscapes serves as a point of reference for teachers as they apply their professional knowledge to the art of teaching. Mystics see education as a non-science where theory and research have little relevance to professional practice. Neats view education as an applied science totally connected to theory, research and the resulting practices of teachers in the classroom. Scruffies, unlike Mystics and Neats, express their teaching in the form of a practical, craftlike science. Scruffies are the practioners of education.

Theory and practice are also important to Scruffies, but only as one of many sources of information. Theory and research don't prescribe practice, they enhance practice. Sergiovanni's Scruffies first reflect and then act upon important information. Schon (1983) and Blumberg (1989) reinforce the critical value of reflective practice. Schon's (p.50) construct of "knowing-in-action" is the actual behavior displayed by the educator as she thinks, reflects, decides, acts. The resulting informed teacher behaviors are applied in the context of "practioners dealing with situations of uncertainty, instability, uniqueness and value conflicts." According to Schon, teaching is a "messy business." Reflective practices like knowing-in-action broadens the practical, craftlike science of teaching. Blumberg's ideas regarding "the art like craft of teaching" describe how the mind, heart, and head produces useful things. Blumberg describes this teacher action as having a "refined nose for things."

Inherent in each of these teacher reflective behavior explanations is the ultimate goal of empowering teachers to become more Scruffy-like in their teaching. The very points Sergiovanni, Schon, and Blumberg make in their ideas surrounding the Scruffies "knowing-in-action craftlike behaviors", served as the primary foundation for the Clive School Story. As the details unfold describing how Clive School teachers became involved in the use of best practices in staff development to expand their professional knowledge, each phase of the program was constantly viewed through the lens of practical applications influenced but not driven by theory and research. The staff had to see the value inherent in the development of their professional knowledge as a response to need, not as a top-to-bottom directive for change. They indeed did see

this need and the results have been very positive for staff and students alike.

The Clive School Story: The Beginning

In the fall of 1989, the County of Lacombe # 14 in Alberta, Canada, hired a new resource specialist teacher. He was assigned to an itinerant special education position equally split between Clive School and another school 15 minutes down the road. At this juncture in the "new" resource teacher's career, he had previously availed himself of three different types of special education teaching experiences. In his first year of public school pre-PL 94-142 teaching, he served in a pre-school program for high risk 3-5 year olds. The next 8 years were devoted to grades 1-12 as a resource teacher in three different learning communities. These classroom experiences plus 8 years as an educational specialist in a statewide staff development program for the state of California, created a catalyst for asking the hard question: "Isn't there a better way to enhance the learning of students who learn differently?" The answer to this question is a hearty yes!

At Clive School, through the courage and educational leadership of Mr. Marv Pickering, Principal and Mr. Dennis Bennett, Assistant Principal of Clive School, a new direction for meeting the educational needs of students with identified learning differences was launched. The new direction was to disband the traditional special education pull-out program and implement co-teaching partnerships between the classroom and the resource specialist teacher. Through the use of co-teaching partnerships, a teacher's professional knowledge would expand and mature. This new way of thinking and behaving would be ignited by incorporating the best practices of staff development into a longitudinal professional development program.

My name is Steve Street. I am that resource teacher and with Dennis Bennett, the current principal of Clive School, we will share how our school's utilization of the best practices of staff development resulted in success for the staff and students of Clive School. We refer to this professional development (PD) adventure as The Clive School Story.

Clive School in Clive, Alberta, Canada is a rural Early Childhood (kindergarten) to grade nine school serving approximately 280 students who live in the eastern portion of the County of Lacombe. At the time of this study, the Clive School staff consisted of 12 educators; one for each of the 10 grades, a teaching principal, and a resource teacher. The village of Clive is approximately halfway between Calgary and Edmonton. In this rolling farmland rich in agriculture, cow-calf farming operations, and petroleum wells, the driving time from Clive to either of the two primary urban centers is approximately two hours, unless of course the roads are closed due to ice, snow or white-out conditions with temperatures at -35 degrees Celsius. In a phrase, Clive School fits the criteria of a rural learning community and indeed, it is this key characteristic which has enhanced the development of a school culture focused on the number one responsibility of public education, serving its students.

Since September 1989, the staff at Clive School has formally been involved in developing their school into a Cooperative Learning Demonstration School. Cooperative Learning (CL) is the primary teaching strategy which totally changed the special education program at Clive School. The theory, research, and practical tools of CL fit extremely well with the concepts and practices outlined above by Sergiovanni, Schon, and Blumberg.

As a resource teacher, I often see learning and teaching differently from the general education teacher. My way isn't better; it's simply another perspective on teaching and learning. I am influenced more by the processes of learning a student acquires, rather than what a student learns. When I was hired as the new resource teacher for Clive School, the principal, Mr. Marv Pickering, encouraged me to do different things in the special education program. At this time in special education, the concept of mainstreaming was quite popular. Mainstreaming functions on the premise that a student who is found eligible for special education resources and services, should spend some time with their peers in the general education classroom. On the other hand, the new special education concept making in-roads into public school thinking was inclusion. Inclusion's point of reference is different than that of mainstreaming. Inclusion's focus starts within the general education classroom before consideration is given to taking the student out for assistance. Students with special education needs can thrive in this least restrictive environment when the classroom teacher's professional knowledge is enriched with tools and strategies that not only serve students with unique learning differences, but other students who are also in need and fail to officially qualify for direct special education support.

At the very first staff meeting in September 1989, I offered to do some teaching in the general education classroom in order to "see first hand how my students with special needs responded to the general education environment." I was particularly interested in how students with special needs responded to the general education teacher's oral and written directions, the expectations regarding student behavior and the social skills of all students as they worked together. Equally important, I wanted to establish some credibility as a teacher with my new colleagues. In my previous special education teaching assignments, I often heard remarks like, "what do you really know about teaching, you only see 4 or 5 students at any one time?" Before the staff at Clive School would seriously consider me as a "resource" teacher, I had to establish credibility as a teacher first. The only way to establish credibility with a classroom teacher is to teach in a general education classroom. In this experience, I had the opportunity to showcase some of the basic tools and strategies of CL. The teachers liked these and wanted to know more about CL. The unexpected payoff for me was gleaning some insights into the classroom teacher's expectations for her students. Instead of being segregated down the hall in my resource room guessing at how the general education classroom was managed, I now knew first hand. This assisted me greatly in shaping my students IEP goals in the context of successful learning in the natural learning environment, the general education classroom.

It was a new experience for Clive staff to consider having the resource teacher as a co-

teaching partner in their classroom. In this new way of doing things, I would be available to directly support the teacher as she worked with my students with special needs as well as those who weren't identified but required some additional assistance. Not all teachers participated in this new idea, however three teachers did volunteer for the co-teaching partnerships. As a result of their experiences, these three teachers encouraged others to participate. In fact, one of the best measures of the program's success, is best illustrated in the following anecdote. Two teachers came to me independent of one another after the first staff meeting and clearly announced "not only do I not want to see you in my classroom, I don't even want to see you in my end of the building! Take these kids who can't learn and get them out of here!" In April 1990, again independent of each other, these same two teachers came to my resource room and asked the question, "Why don't you ever come to my classroom?" The word was out. The teachers were very interested in some of the ideas being shared in the co-teaching partnerships.

Many questions emerged from the Clive School staff as we ventured forward with the idea of implementing co-teaching partnerships from an inclusion point of view. Teachers were asking questions like "how can we teach students who arrive in our classrooms with such a diversity of needs; those with identified special needs, those with unidentified unique learning needs and maintain the learning environment for those students who are already succeeding?" In my judgment, this question is best answered by teachers who first see themselves as professionals. A professional educator would see the need for identifying and developing new teaching skills and pursue a course of PD that ensured two critical issues were being addressed simultaneously: first, their professional knowledge was being upgraded to meet the challenges of teaching to the needs of their students and secondly, the education of all their students was being addressed. This was the path Dennis and I offered to the staff at Clive School. They liked it, they selected it and it worked.

Dennis and I believe all students can learn. We also believe all educators can learn. Most of our colleagues at Clive School heartily agreed. The challenge, not the problem, is how to teach the diversities of students that cross the school's threshold everyday. In truth, the 280 students enrolled in Clive School represent 280 different ways of learning. Models of teaching that are well researched offer teachers menus of how to teach. Curriculum standards for language, math, science, and social studies guide the teacher's efforts in what to teach. The Clive School staff was interested in a teaching strategy that would facilitate as many learners as possible. What to do?

In March 1990, Dennis and I co-authored an Alberta Teacher's Association grant for \$1200.00. In June 1990, a grant of \$700.00 was awarded to Clive School. The purpose of this two year grant was to:

1. provide Cooperative Learning training, technical assistance and consulting resources to the Clive School staff.
2. identify key tools, strategies and ideas that worked at Clive School which

empowered staff to be “teacher driven as they implemented a new teaching strategy.”

3. create a videotape explaining The Clive School Project.
(Title: Integrating Students with Special Needs: A Team Approach).

As I participated in the co-teaching partnerships, I often used the CL teaching strategy developed and researched by Drs. Roger and David Johnson at the University of Minnesota. I received my formal CL training from the the Johnson brothers during my staff development assignment in California. I offered to share what I had learned to the Clive School staff and encouraged them to consider the possibilities CL offered all students! Let me say at this point, CL is a great teaching strategy **and** it isn't the panacea for all teaching situations. The Johnson's would agree. What Clive staff said they liked best about CL was the fact it simultaneously addressed the academic and social skills for all learners. The model lessons I used in the co-teaching partnerships were getting the message out. We were off and running.

As the assistant principal, Dennis was responsible for Clive School's professional development (PD) program. Teachers approached Dennis and asked if the staff could receive a half-day CL inservice. I presented a basic CL overview in the spring of 1990. At the conclusion of this half-day, Dennis approached the staff and requested what additional CL activities they desired. They responded with “more CL training.” I met with Dennis and discussed the next CL level which would involve a five day “brown book” basic training. The outcome of this PD investment would result in teachers understanding the distinctions between competitive, individualistic, and cooperative goal structures as well as a knowledge level understanding of the five basic elements of social learning. If indeed the teachers wanted to develop their CL teaching skills, it would require a commitment on their part to a long term effort which would include the basic information on CL as well as research from the change theory literature regarding peer coaching and co-teaching. Training teachers in CL without attending to its implementation would result in a disaster. I recommended to Dennis that if Clive School wanted to seriously develop their CL skills, a PD program designed with the best practices of staff development as the centerpiece was crucial. He agreed.

Dennis presented a recommendation to the Clive staff for a two year CL professional development program. At the conclusion of his recommendation, he stated, “this is the only PD activity we will be doing for the next two years. Do you still want to do this?” The response by all staff members was a resounding “yes!” Dennis' leadership in the form of taking a stand to do PD right, set the course for success at Clive School. In Roland Barth's (1990, p.46) work at the Harvard University Principal's Center, he describes this leadership behavior displayed by Dennis this way: “The most crucial role of a (school administrator) is as head learner, engaging in the most important enterprise of the schoolhouse-experiencing, displaying, modeling, and celebrating what it is hoped and expected that teachers and pupils will do.” Clive School was poised for an adventure that would enhance the learning of all its members in this tiny, rural, progressive thinking Canadian village.

The Clive School Story: Applications of Best Practices in Staff Development

Our purpose in implementing the best practices of staff development to influence the professional knowledge of the Scruffy behaviors of Clive School staff was to empower the staff to become more responsible. The use of the descriptor "responsible" is not to suggest that any of the staff at Clive School was being irresponsible in their teaching duties. This is far from the truth of this dedicated body of professional educators. Being responsible in the context of this PD activity was defined to mean fortifying the ability to respond to the individual needs of all learners at Clive School. To accomplish this, the staff agreed to enrich and expand their professional knowledge.

At the outset of the implementation planning, many factors influenced the decision to "do this right." The following items were identified, discussed, selected, and applied throughout the initial and continuing planning of the project. Johnson and Johnson's (1989) practical applications of Cooperative Learning served two primary purposes: first as an appropriate teaching strategy to meet the learning needs of all Clive's students and secondly, it created a school climate which fostered the principles of a learning community. In Berman and McLaughlin (1976) and Loucks (1983), the research on staff development suggested that a PD program must be seen as a long term investment. It is conceivable that it may take as long as 3-5 years to fully develop the program's expected outcome. Krupp's (1978) thoughts on adult learning were significant to our PD project and indeed led us to the work of Hord, Rutherford, Huling-Austin, and Hall (1987). In this research, attention was given to the change process and how it affects adult learners. Adult learners experience learning from a concerns-based developmental point of view. Developmentally, educators first learn new things from a personal issues perspective, then move to concerns regarding their students, and finally wonder how they can apply these exciting new ideas to a variety of settings. Practice time, discussion, reflection and refinements regarding the potential of the new ideas are essential elements for professional educators as they master any new teaching strategy. Simply attending a 2 hour workshop after a long day of teaching will not support the construction of new teaching skills. The literature regarding change theory and adult learning has historically screamed and continues to scream "If you want teachers to master their craft, an investment of time and resources, not 2 hour after school workshops, is absolutely critical to serve our primary responsibility, our students."

Each of the research contributions above provided the basic building blocks for the formation of Clive School's template for change. To insure its intended success, specific attention was given to the work of Joyce and Showers (1986). Peer coaching, or that professional responsibility to actively support a colleague in the process of learning something new, was essential to the development of Clive's PD course of action. Without the inclusion and application of the principles of peer coaching, the CL training program would never have taken root at our school. Teachers talking to teachers about the art and craft of their teaching is the most powerful tool that influences a school's climate and culture for meeting the needs of their students.

The following plan illustrates Clive School's long term PD commitment and investment in its staff and students.

Phase 1: Introduction and Training - Fall '90 & Summer '90.

* Clive Staff received a half day CL inservice; decided to focus on CL as a primary PD project. Staff members were invited to participate at a time when they were ready.

* 6 members of the Clive Staff volunteered to participate in a four day CL Summer Institute along with 50 other teachers from throughout Alberta. The outcome of this training was a team action plan describing how CL would be implemented based on the best practices of staff development.

Phase 2: Skill Practice with Coaching - Fall '90 and Spring '91.

* Teachers "tried out" CL in classes of their choice. Videotaping of beginning CL experiences was utilized to assist the coaching pairs who had selected to participate in the Clive School PD program.

* Peer coaches supported each other by helping with the planning of CL lessons, observing their coaching partners teaching the lessons, and providing feedback to each other. At this time, the role of the "in-classroom consulting resource teacher" was highlighted and made available to all teachers requesting assistance in the general education classroom.

Phase 3: Skill Application with more Coaching - Fall '91.

* Teachers and coaches targeted CL as a major teaching strategy for a particular subject area of their choice. Videotaping of CL lessons continued for the sole purpose of increasing the professional knowledge of the teachers.

Phase 4: Demonstration Program - Spring '92.

* Teachers determined when they felt ready to open their respective classrooms to other teachers in the County of Lacombe and the Province of Alberta.

* Teachers elected to become a CL demonstration program for the Province of Alberta. 3-5 "demo days" are scheduled each year for two purposes: first, to invite other educators into the school and secondly, to visit each other's classroom.

The Clive School Story: Successes and Even More New Directions

The development of the Phase 4 Demonstration Program was not part of Clive School's original PD script. It simply emerged. It was the right thing to do for a variety of reasons. In our profession, Dennis and I believe we as educators have a responsibility to all members of our craft no matter where it's practiced. Much like Wheatley's (1994) ideas regarding the concept of fields, we too believe all things are inextricably linked. Wheatley suggests that the concept of space should be replaced with that of fields. In her thinking, space suggests a distance between two points expressed in time and motion. She challenges the notion of distance. Everything is connected. Fields of energy flow across and throughout the universe. What happens in a preschool program in San Antonio, Texas is ultimately linked with the high school science program in Fargo, North Dakota. Applying the idea of fields works well for our Clive School program. We know that what happens in Brian McClelland's grade three language learning class has an effect on Garry Trarback's grade nine social studies class. When Holly Baines and Karen Klassen teach the social skill of listening to their respective grade one and two students, it has an effect on Jackie Taylor's grade five science program, Theresa Stephens unit on Pioneer Days and Rob McKinnon's outdoor education class. Realizing this, the need for updating and adding new fields of professional knowledge supported by the best practices of staff development, will continue to inspire the staff and others to tell the Clive School Story.

The following are just a few of the many Clive School stories we hope will encourage you and your school to take the risk and design a PD program based on the principles of effective staff development.

* Peter Senge's (1990) ideas regarding learning organizations, particularly the concept of personal mastery, and Covey's (1989) notion of "seeking first to understand before being understood", continues to serve as catalysts for conversations among our colleagues at Clive School. Often, teachers will disagree with the what and how of an idea. Disagreements are a good thing when they are accompanied by a rich conversation driven by different perspectives. This is fertile soil. Vella (1994) reinforces the significance of conversation as she defines the concept of dialogue. Dialogue best supports adult learning. "Dia" means between and "logus" means word. Hence, dialogue means the word(s) between us. This is one of the basic reinforcements for creating a CL demonstration program. When teachers visit our school, it affords the opportunity for Clive School staff to talk about what they have and are continuing to learn. In this dialoguing, there is a reciprocal learning opportunity for both the visiting teacher and the demonstration teacher. Teachers from Calgary, Edmonton, Ponoka, Camrose, Red Deer, and Morinville have visited Clive School.

* During the 1992-93 school year, I took a leave of absence from Clive School and taught in the Special Education and Rehabilitative Services Department at San Jose State University in San Jose, CA. While teaching, I had the opportunity to share with new resource specialist teachers how they can facilitate change as it relates to the inclusion of students with special needs. The focal point for this course of study was

The Clive School Story. As a culminating activity for the 17 resource teachers enrolled in this class, we participated in a live on-line video conference with teachers from Clive School. The purpose of the video conference was to discuss how resource teachers can utilize CL and the best practices of staff development to facilitate the inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom. The hour long dialogue between new resource teachers in San Jose, CA. and classroom teachers from Clive, Alberta was exciting, productive, practical and reciprocal for all parties.

* Presentations regarding The Clive School Story have been made at the Calgary Teacher's Convention, The Greater Edmonton Teacher's Convention, The Alberta Special Education Conference and the Nevada State Special Education Collaboration Conference. Dennis and Jackie Taylor, the Clive School grade five teacher, have presented at some of these and other conferences. As a result of our commitment to employing the best practices of staff development, our staff continues to grow professionally. The efficacy of this investment has made a difference in how teachers perceive the learning of their students. In Armstrong's book (1987), he challenges the definition of students who are learning disabled. His new idea centers on the notion that students aren't learning disabled so much as they learn differently. This perspective creates an opening for expanding the value of PD programs. The staff at Clive School lean heavily upon their professional knowledge and co-teaching partnerships in order to meet the needs of their students. Currently, Clive School is in the midst of another professional development innovation. The Collaborative Action Research Project in Reading, is a school wide reading program. Because of our school's history in institutionalizing the best practices of staff development, new ideas are more smoothly infused into Clive School's climate and culture. Dennis' remark captures the essence of this new reading program as it fits into Clive School's thriving learning community: "You should see the school during paired reading; cross-graded pairs of students are all over the place!" Implementing PD best practices works!

Throughout this adventure, we were constantly encouraged by two ideas. The first idea is captured in our school's PD motto: GO SLOW TO GO FAST. We took advantage of the research on best practices in staff development. We knew it would take us 3 - 5 years to make this work. By giving ourselves permission to take the time to insure a successful experience, we have made a difference for our students and ourselves. Secondly, a quote by Margaret Mead originally influenced our thinking and continues to do so. We encourage you to follow Margaret's lead.

"As we work together to achieve the vision, remember... never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does."

If you are interested in knowing more about Clive School's CL Demonstration Program, please feel free to contact Dennis in Clive, Alberta at (403) 784-3354.

Go slow to go fast, work together and have fun. You will be amazed with the results.

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