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ABSTRACT

The roles and responsibilities of the emerging position of "inclusion specialist" were studied through a review of the literature, analysis of job descriptions and other documents, classroom observations, and interviews with relevant personnel. The literature review briefly examines the historical background of special education reform movements (especially mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion), the relationship between regular and special education, professional development of regular and special educators, teacher collaboration, and the emergence of the inclusion facilitator role. Two rounds of classroom observations and interviews with a total of nine teachers were conducted and eight written job descriptions were analyzed. The study found that few positions had formal job descriptions in place. Several schools used "Full Time Employment (FTE) Schedules" to combine a description of responsibilities and scheduling into one document. Tracking of various roles performed and time spent on specific activities found there was a wide variety in the amount of time spent on the four most common activities: business aspects, working for children, working with adults, and driving. Results suggested there were two types of inclusion facilitators, "teachers with empty classrooms" and "consultants working with adults." The merging of regular and special education and greater collaboration among all teachers is suggested as an alternative to the inclusion specialist role. Appended are the interview guide and FTE service guidelines. (Contains 21 references.) (DB)

What is an Inclusion Specialist?
A Preliminary Investigation

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Running Head: What is an Inclusion Specialist?

Introduction

Professional Background

As a new teacher emerging from a special education Master's program, I was interested in the current status of professional opportunities in special education. My recent education has prepared me to obtain my Severely Handicapped Learner endorsement: a certification to teach students with severe disabilities. Through research, practica experiences, and job exposure I have found that I am pursuing a degree and certification in a field that is undergoing dramatic changes. The nationwide movement toward inclusive education, a merge of the existing dual system of general and special education, is redefining teacher roles. As the structure of and services provided by special education programs are changing, the roles of those with SHL-type endorsements are also changing. In recognizing that my future roles and responsibilities within schools could vary within a broad range of jobs and tasks, I was interested in finding out more about the role of special educators within inclusive educational programs.

During my undergraduate years I spent time volunteering in general education classrooms and after school programs. I worked closely with and tutored many students for whom English was a second language. Following graduation, I spent a year as both a substitute and permanent educational assistant (E.A.) working in a county program that runs self-contained classrooms for students with severe disabilities. Working as a substitute exposed me to multiple settings and styles of self-contained education. Finally, I have spent the last year in the Specialized Training Program working to obtain a Master's degree in Special Education and Rehabilitation.

My educational experience with the STP has provided me with a range of opportunities to learn about current educational practices. This year I was a member of a work group researching Oregon School Reform. Studying current national school reform movements

provided me with insight and understanding to the process of change within our educational systems. This work has also enabled me to gain a more thorough understanding of current educational trends and practices within our state. Additionally, my course work has provided me with a plethora of opportunities to study multiple aspects of the movement towards inclusive education: practices, trends, backlash against inclusion, and theories and examples supporting its implementation.

This year I have had three practicum experiences in schools that are pursuing inclusive education. First term I worked in an elementary school classroom in which one student with severe disabilities was being included in the general education system. This school is in a district that has separate programs and classrooms for kids with disabilities; the classroom in which I worked was not the norm. The teacher was doing things that had never been tried in her school. Winter and Spring terms I worked in two other schools that are working towards full inclusion. These schools are in a district that is trying to merge special education and general education practices to provide inclusive educational experiences for all of its learners. These practica experiences exposed me to a variety of ways in which inclusion is being approached. Each school was implementing inclusion slightly differently, yet they were all striving to provide positive, effective, authentic educational programs for all their learners.

Questions to Ponder, Answers to Pursue

I have been exposed to a variety of educational practices. I have worked across a continuum of special and general educational services. In my experiences volunteering, tutoring, teaching, and studying I have realized how fast our educational programs are changing. I have seen special educators functioning in a wide variety of roles with a diverse range of responsibilities. Through these experiences I have recognized a common trend emerging from inclusive education: the creation of the "inclusion specialist" role.

School districts across the country are developing a position for a consultant/facilitator to specialize in inclusion. Typically filled by teachers with special education backgrounds, many people with my qualifications are finding themselves in this type of a position. Unsure of my future place in the changing scheme of educational practices, I was interested in this emerging role. All of these changes piqued my curiosity and provoked me to conduct an action research project investigating the impact of inclusive education on the role of special educators. I wanted to find the answer to the fundamental questions: what is an inclusion specialist and what do they do?

I knew there were several avenues I should pursue to investigate the emerging role. First, I thought I should review what current literature is saying about the position. Second, in an attempt to understand this job I wanted to investigate the roles and responsibilities as described by school districts employing inclusion specialists. Finally, to understand the daily activities of people in this position I wanted to learn about specific tasks and jobs that various inclusion specialists are currently performing.

Research Agenda

After defining the objective of my research project, I developed a research agenda. First, I planned to investigate current literature on inclusion and the implications for personnel and staffing patterns. I wanted to research what people had to say about the future role of special educators and the new position of inclusion facilitators. Second, to learn about the specific roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists as they are currently defined, I planned to solicit job descriptions from districts across the state to compare and contrast the similarities and differences. Then, in an attempt to understand what inclusion specialists are actually doing I developed an interview guide to interview various inclusion consultants across the state. With the interviews I hoped to learn about the job from the specialists' perspective. I

thought that they could provide great insight to the realities of the existing job and how it compares to the official job descriptions. Finally, I hoped to conduct on-the-job observations of several of the specialists that I interviewed. Through the observations I hoped to get a better feeling for how inclusion specialists spend their time. Through the literature review, document collection, interviews, and observations, I hoped to answer some of my questions and increase my understanding and awareness of the emerging role of the inclusion specialist.

Literature Review

Historical Background

Special education emerged near the turn of the century as compulsory education laws took effect. Laws that required children to be educated diversified the student body and forever changed our educational systems. Educational practices, systems, and teachers were so challenged by educating all students that "special" education emerged in an attempt to accommodate the diversified school population (Ferguson, in press b; National Association of State Boards of Education, 1992). With the emergence of special educational systems, the dual general/special education system was created, a system that we still see today. Special education developed its own set of curriculum and teaching strategies designed to match the ability and performance of its identified students (MacMillan, Jones, Meyers, 1976).

Although education was compulsory by law, simply getting an education was not an easy task for many children with disabilities. Students were educated in separate, segregated facilities and schools, or even entirely excluded from formal education altogether (NASBE, 1992). During the 1960s and 1970s more changes began to occur; teachers, parents' movements and legislation helped previously excluded children obtain education (NASBE, 1992). The landmark legislation of the 1974 Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EHA, P.L. 94-

142) mandated the free and appropriate education of all children, regardless of the severity of their disability. The 1974 EHA law was updated and reauthorized in 1990 as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476). The laws are based on the following five premises: (1) a free and appropriate education must be provided for all children; (2) due process and protective rights must be ensured for all children and parents with disabilities; (3) students must be educated in the least restrictive environment possible; (4) educational programming will be individualized, every student will have an Individual Education Plan; and (5) parental involvement is required for the decision making process regarding educational services and programming for children with special needs.

As a result of the legislation, youths with severe and multiple developmental disabilities previously "excused" from the legally required education began to receive some educational services (Ferguson, in press b). As the diversity of the student body increased, so did teaching techniques, as noted by Ferguson (in press b):

> . . . These newest members of the school community, like their more able predecessors early in the century, challenged the current teachers in both general and special education, spawning still more specializations within the field . . . . (p. 4)

The prevalence of this type of specialization is still common in both general and special educational practices today. The laws emphasized that all children with disabilities will receive educational services, the actual outcome or product of the services was not the primary focus (NASBE, 1992).

Reform Movements

Like the legislative changes affecting special education services, there have been several educational reform movements that have drastically altered the nature of special education in our country. With various titles and strategies, the placement and education of students with disabilities has been a controversial educational topic. "Inclusion," the current reform affecting special education, is the legacy of the previous "mainstreaming," and "integration" reform movements (Ferguson, in press b). Understanding the features and objectives of each of these reform movements is helpful in understanding the history of special education and the path that has led to inclusion.

Mainstreaming

Mainstreaming emerged as a strong reform movement in the 1960s as people began to question the separate educational programs for children with mild disabilities (Ferguson, in press b; in press a). Advocates of mainstreaming argued in favor of placing learners with mild disabilities in the "main stream" of education for part or all of the school day. Students receiving special education services were frequently taught in remedial programs, typically referred to as "pull-out programs." Such programs separated learners from their peers to provide adapted instruction. With mainstreaming, kids were "pulled out" to be "remediated" and then put back into the mainstream when the remedial objectives were met and the learners were ready for other instruction.

Mainstreaming is still a frequently used term in the field of education. Some educators see it as an option in trying to place learners in the "least restrictive environment" possible (NASBE, 1992). Although an effort to meet the educational needs and best interest of the children, the mainstreaming effort has left many students with a disjointed, fractured

education; as the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) described (1992):

> . . . this common practice [mainstreaming] has left many students with fragmented educations and feeling that they neither belong in the general education classroom nor the special education classroom. At the same time, problems of communication and collaboration among the several kinds of teachers serving a child with disabilities have mounted steadily . . . .

When the location of the education is the objective or priority of the reform, teachers have felt that many students have been simply "dumped" into existing programs and their educational needs are neither addressed nor accounted for (Ferguson, in press b).

Integration

The movement towards "integration" drew on a social and political discourse (Ferguson, in press b). Emphasizing the civil rights of youths with disabilities, integration was an attempt to overcome segregation and exclusion on the basis of ability. Integration, like mainstreaming, is a movement that emphasizes the ability level of the student and the location of services provided. As Ferguson explained:

> . . . What was essentially a policy about not excluding or segregating students with disabilities dominated professional discussions about appropriate educational remediation of student learning and ability deficits. The concept of

> integration alone did not well-define what exactly was to be done in place of exclusion or segregation, resulting in many different interpretations and examples, (Ferguson, in press b).

In some instances the word "integration" simply replaced "mainstreaming" (NASBE, 1992). Integration's goal of an educational program that would tolerate, and hopefully incorporate, diversity in ability level of the learners remained largely unfulfilled (Ferguson, in press b).

While many individuals were physically included in general education settings, without being treated as equal members, they were functionally outsiders participating in somebody else's program. Simply being in a classroom did not automatically make these students true learning members of the class (Ferguson, in press b). Results such as this created the need for and foundation of the movement towards inclusion.

Inclusion

Emerging as a special education reform effort in the 1980s, inclusion began as a movement to include all students with disabilities into the general education program (Ferguson, in press a). According to this philosophy, all students should be included, from the beginning of their schooling years, in the opportunities and rights of the public school programs (Ferguson, in press b). For example, students should attend their neighborhood schools with same-aged peers. Unlike integration or mainstreaming, inclusion is neither simply about placement nor services provided, rather it is the foundation of a different approach to educational practices. The new approach to schooling was grounded both in civil rights and focused on the authentic learning of the students. Still focusing on the students with disabilities, the original push towards inclusion worked to challenge the logic of attaching services to places and funding to disability labels (Ferguson, in press b).

While this reform agenda is still relatively new, people are beginning to agree on some of the features of successful inclusion. Inclusive schooling serves all children in regular settings, at their neighborhood schools, with diverse peer groups. It means providing all students with appropriate educational programs that are geared towards their capabilities and needs, are challenging, and provide support or assistance that they and/or their teachers need to be successful (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). By recognizing that all learners have individual, unique, "special" needs, educators can better provide all students with the supports they need and deserve to meet their potential (Shriner, Ysseldyke, Thurlow, and Honetschlager, 1994). In inclusive programs all kids are equal, contributing members of their classrooms; labels are de-emphasized and learning styles and preferences are acknowledged. As Stainback and Stainback explained:

> . . . An inclusive school is a place where everyone belongs, is accepted, and is supported by his or her peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met (1990).

Through descriptions like these, it is clear that changes must be made in the existing educational programs to achieve inclusion.

As agreement on the central features of inclusion becomes more common, people are realizing that inclusion is not just a special education reform movement. Creating an inclusive educational system is creating a system that works for all children (Sizer, 1992). Becoming increasingly common in the educational arena today, many people are writing about the values of inclusive education and how it can be achieved (NASBE, 1992; Ferguson, in press b; Stainback and Stainback, 1988; 1990; Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). Although the original theories emerged

out of the special education movement of including students into the general education sphere, inclusion is no longer a special education reform movement (Ferguson, in press b). Taking the original movement further, Ferguson refers to "systemic inclusion" as the merging of the two spheres of education. "Systemic inclusion" will be the result of combining professional training and teaching the practices of general and special education to form one educational system serving all kids.

Creating Systemic Inclusion: Merging the Dual Systems

The call for inclusive schooling requires considerable reform and restructuring efforts within our educational systems (Ferguson, in press b; in press a; Stainback and Stainback, 1990; NASBE, 1992). In an attempt to achieve inclusion we must accomplish a fundamental shift in our traditional educational practices: we must merge our general and special education programs (Stainback and Stainback, 1990). As long as the two entities remain separate and divided, so will the students and services. The merge of the two spheres of education must occur on all levels of education, from professional development and personnel preparation programs to every day practices of planning and teaching (Fogarty, 1991; Goodlad and Lovitt, 1993; Ferguson, in press b; Shriner, et al, 1994). With such changes, teachers will become comfortable and adept at designing curriculum and lessons which address the needs and pique the interest of a truly heterogeneous group of students.

Professional Development: Preservice and Inservice Training

Neither special nor general educators can currently meet all the needs of all learners. If the two schools of education merge, share resources, knowledge, and personnel both will function as integral parts of one system: an inclusive system (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). The personnel, resources, and training of higher education special and general education teacher preparation programs must be merged to prepare for achieve inclusion on all levels. Past, and

many current, training programs, both at the preservice and inservice levels, often tend to perpetuate the separate systems and specializations of special and general education (NASBE, 1992). Both general and special education teachers have traditionally been trained to work with only a clearly defined population and frequently feel untrained and incapable of working with other students (NASBE, 1992). In an attempt to change these roles NASBE recommends that State boards provide incentives for institutions of higher education to take a lead role in merging their departments of general and special education (1992):

> . . . Merged pre-service programs, substantially restructured for all prospective teachers, can have many benefits. Such programs can prepare graduating candidates to teach all children, including those with disabilities. These graduating students would then be prepared to approach all students as individuals who have unique needs . . . . As a result of this restructuring, prospective teachers would be prepared to teach a broad spectrum of students, rather than a narrow category of students.

We can see examples of this new thinking around merged preservice and inservice programs across the country. Schools are recognizing the need to prepare their teachers-in-training to work with an increasingly diverse student body and are beginning to break the barriers between the separate systems and merge their special and general education teacher training programs (NASBE, 1992). For example, the College of Education at the University of Oregon has developed a merged undergraduate teacher preparation program that will prepare future teachers to work with a diverse range of learners in a variety of settings. Similar

mergers have occurred at institutions of higher education across the nation: Syracuse University, the University of New Hampshire, and the University of Vermont are just a few.

Teamwork in Schools: Collaboration for Planning and Teaching

As the two systems merge there is also a call for increased collaboration amongst personnel. In an attempt to meet the needs of all learners curricular expansion is becoming increasingly common. More students will find their needs being met as the two programs merge and teachers from general and special education collaborate to utilize the knowledge base and resources that previously functioned separately. All students can benefit from the values of individualized curriculum. As Ferguson illustrates:

> Individually tailored curriculum and teaching has always been done by good teachers to some degree. They have always known that teaching and learning were two-way, involving transactions between teachers and students negotiating anew with each lesson and each new day. What is different about this period of reform is that the emphasis on each student's learning accomplishments is replacing the old "official" curriculum and its underlying logic . . . . (in press b).

Examples of this type of successful, authentic teaching are frequently documented. Robin Fogarty's article on integrated curriculum and the webbing process demonstrates the successful planning, teaching, and learning that can be accomplished through collaborative efforts (1991). Strategies such as these help facilitate the merge of the separate systems. Similarly, through published modules and graduate and continuing education courses, the University of Oregon's Specialized Training Program has developed and advanced innovative

theories and practices around individually tailored learning and strategies for developing inclusive curriculum (Ferguson, Ralph, Meyer, Willis, and Young, 1993).

Creating Supportive Networks

Many districts working to create inclusive educational programs have developed strong support networks for their teachers, parents, and students. Both formal and informal supports provided by community members, administrators, peers, specialists, students, or parents can be helpful in creating inclusive communities, and when combined with technological and physical supports, a comprehensive support network for teachers and students can make the learning membership goals of the inclusive schooling movement a reality (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). Support networks are utilized to provide people working towards inclusion with resources, assistance, guidance, feedback, and ideas (Stainback & Stainback, 1990). During this educational transition, networks that provide a range of supports to both teachers and students can help ease the transition while working towards inclusion.

Examples of support networks can be seen at all levels of education. At the teacher level we see teacher work groups that provide educators with an opportunity to share ideas and work towards a common goal; behavior management teams that work as a group to discuss and manage school-wide behavior issues; and site councils that foster school leadership and provide guidance in school decision making. These networks of support are becoming increasingly common and even mandated. Oregon's 21st Century Schools reform acts (House Bill 3565) has mandated all schools to develop a site council by September 1995. At the student level there are many formal and casual support networks created, such as the Circle of Friends, Dream Teams, and peer buddy systems (Perske, 1988). Many educators, students, and parents find utilizing different types of support networks makes the transition to inclusion easier.

The Emergence of a New Role

Another common trend across districts working towards inclusion is the creation of a new position: the inclusion facilitator. The main objective of the inclusion facilitator is to help foster and create inclusive schooling environments through collaboration and support (Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Ferguson, et al, 1992). I found four central characteristics in the literature about the emerging role: labels and titles, key features of the job, suggested strategies, as well as a lack of specific data and documentation.

Labels and Titles

The literature about this role describes a plethora of titles for the new position. Called "Supported Education Consultant," "Inclusion Facilitator," "Support Specialist," or any combination of the three, the new position has been labeled in many ways (Ferguson, Meyer, Jeanchild, and Zingo, 1992; Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Lashie, Shapiro-Bernard, Dillon, Schuh, Jorgensen, and Nisbet, 1993; Thousand and Villa, 1990; Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). In spite of these different labels, many of the descriptions are similar.

Features of the Job

Although the literature's descriptions of some of the specific responsibilities of this emerging role vary, the fundamental, skeletal job remains constant. According to one article, the three central purposes of the position are for the specialist to: (1) access necessary and appropriate resources; (2) function as a facilitator of support networks; and (3) work in a collaborative manner with teachers, administrators, support staff, and families (Stainback, Stainback, and Forest, 1989). The description of these roles has also been described as broker, collaborator, and adaptor (Ferguson, et al, 1992). Although different authors stressed different aspects of the position, the main objective was similar: the inclusion facilitator accesses and provides necessary supports to teachers and students in inclusive settings.

Suggested Strategies

Many of the articles discussed the different ways in which the facilitators' responsibilities can be fulfilled. In comparing the articles on the potential roles of the inclusion specialist I found some common themes reappearing. Many authors talked of the facilitators as team members, resource collectors, collaborators, team teachers, curriculum adaptors, and educational consultants (Stainback and Stainback, 1990; Ferguson, et al, 1992; Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). Through team teaching and collaborating for the education of all students, the facilitator can provide useful supports. Working closely with classroom teachers and other school personnel the collaborator can encourage natural support networks for teachers, and students within inclusive settings(Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

Stainback and Stainback have done extensive writing on the potential roles of the support facilitator. Through delineating the responsibilities of this role they have explained some of its possible benefits. They make a strong case for the use of a support facilitator:

> While there are many individuals within a school who can provide support to each other . . . there is no individual responsible for facilitating supportive relationships and other supports that may be needed. As the supports are recognized and developed, there is a need for the personnel knowledgeable in the facilitation of supportive relationships . . . . This role could be assumed by former special educators, consultants, supervisors, or other educators interested in assisting classroom teachers to coordinate support networking (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

The authors stated that the skills needed by a support facilitator are similar to those used by an educational consultant: providing technical assistance, communication, and coordinating programs. They explained that the difference between the two roles is that the technical assistance provided by the educational consultant is for mainstreamed settings and the assistance provided by the support facilitator is for all students in all settings. The support facilitator must have knowledge of the structure, the implementation, and the resource implications and options, and he/she assists teachers in selecting the appropriate choice out of the given options (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

The most current literature specifies that the inclusion facilitator should provide supports to all students. As the literature describes, merging special education services with general education will provide better services for all children, regardless of labels or types of abilities and disabilities (NASBE, 1992, Ferguson, in press b). Thus, all learners should have access to and benefit from the support the specialists provide. Many of the authors agreed that support facilitators or inclusion specialists should not only be working with students with special education labels; they should work with and for all students and teachers (Gartner and Lipsky, 1987). As we do away with the separate educational entities it will be natural to provide all children with the same range of supports, the supports they need to succeed in our schools.

The Lack of Documentation

Although the articles provide many suggestions concerning the potential roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists, I did not find any documentation of people currently fulfilling the positions. I did not find any data base or studies of actual districts and schools that have people in this position. While there are many authors writing about how and why this position is valuable, there seems to be a void in actual qualitative case studies investigating the

success of such positions. This lack of information piqued my curiosity and stirred some questions for me.

More Questions to Ponder and Answers to Pursue

I found myself wondering about how this role is actually being fulfilled in districts and schools. I had many unanswered questions that I wanted to pursue: How do these people spend their time? With whom do they work? What are their specific responsibilities and roles within the schools? What are their job titles and descriptions? What do they see as the future of their job? How were they prepared to specialize in inclusion? How could we better prepare teachers and the community at large for inclusion in the future?

As all of these questions emerged I began to plan my investigation of the roles and responsibilities of inclusion specialists. These were the questions that would guide my study; a study that would hopefully shed some light on this new position.

Methods

The Research

The research for this project consisted of three parts: document collection, observations, and interviews. I chose these types of investigation hoping that each aspect of the research would provide different types of information about the emerging job of the inclusion facilitator, the roles, and the responsibilities. In addition to the planned action research, I informally collected information and insight about the facilitation of inclusion through casual conversations with individuals (educational assistants, classroom teachers, principals, parents, and students involved with the inclusion process at each of my observation sites and practica settings), and through phone conversations with educators and administrators while soliciting job descriptions.

Observations

I looked to observe people that were functioning in a capacity of an inclusion facilitator. I selected individuals known to me through the University of Oregon faculty. Although their job titles varied according to their school district, each person was filling a role of facilitating inclusion. Table 1 is a record of information about each of the three specialists I observed and interviewed (see Table 1). When I contacted each of the potential participants I explained my project and the types of information I would be seeking. Each of the three specialists I observed read and signed a consent to participate form and was informed that she could terminate her involvement at any time throughout the study. Also on the consent form was the explanation of the measures taken to ensure confidentiality (pseudonyms, etc).

The day of observation was chosen according to each of the specialists' preference, convenience, and schedule. Each observation consisted of my shadowing the individual throughout one day of work. The purpose of spending one day of observation at the work site of each inclusion specialist was to increase my understanding of the daily roles and responsibilities of people working in this capacity.

Each observation period began at the inclusion specialist's work site and lasted the entire work day (the specific hours and length of time varied). At each site I met the individual in the morning, we would take some time to discuss the upcoming activities of the day, and we would allot approximately 45 minutes to an hour for time for me to interview them about their job. I would then follow them throughout the day's activities, observe their tasks, and take notes on chronological observation data forms. The forms consisted of four columns: activity/task being performed, time and length of activity, with whom the activity occurred, and anecdotal notes about my observations.

Table 1

Information about the Initial

Observations and Interviews of Three Inclusion Specialists

Contact (and others)	Job Title	Type of Community	Type of Contact	Jurisdiction	Documents Collected	Professional Work Experience
Anita (clsrm & resc tchrs, E.A.s, & principal)	Support Specialist (unofficial title)	Small town	Two interviews One day of observation (7 hrs.)	Serves elementary schools (5) and early intervention program within the district	Current and proposed job descriptions Qualifications FTE schedule	3 years as Inclusion Specialist
Betty (Supp. Ed. Team, clsrm. tchrs, E.A.s, parents, kids)	Supported Education Consult. (official ESD title)	Metropolitan area	Two interviews One day of observation (10 1/2 hrs.)	Employed by ESD Works with team of 3 inclusion consultants Time contracted by individual districts	Inclusion literature Qualifications FTE schedule and service guidelines Personal calendar	5 years as self contained SPED teacher 3 years SPED conslt. 4 years Sup. Ed. Cnslt
Cecilia (E.A.s, kids, principal & parent)	Inclusion Facilitator (unofficial title)	Small town	Interview One day of observation (8 1/2 hrs.)	Employed by district Serving 2 (next year 3) elementary schools	Qualifications Old job description Sample of mapping Personal calendar	1 year in self cont. SPED classroom 3 years as Inclusion Specialist

Document Collection

The document collection consisted of my soliciting job related documents from inclusion specialists and people providing related services across the state of Oregon. I collected job-related documents from five inclusion specialist, one director of special education, and one special education supervisor. Specifically, I first asked each of the initial three teachers I observed and interviewed for copies of their official job description, FTE schedule, daily planner/calendar, and the list of job qualifications. I received one proposed and two current job descriptions, two FTE schedules, one list of FTE service guidelines, three lists of qualifications, and copies of two personal calendars.

Secondly, upon conducting interviews with the second round of three inclusion specialists and a special education teacher I asked each of them for a copy of their current job description.

During my conversation with a director of special education, I solicited the current inclusion specialist job description in his district. In this round of contacts I received two drafts, and one sketched out, skeletal idea of the job descriptions.

Finally, I solicited job descriptions from ten additional Oregon school districts that employ inclusion facilitators. Of these contacts I received only two documents; they were both current, up-to-date job descriptions for two new positions at an ESD. All of the other districts I contacted did not have a current job description for the new position. When soliciting job descriptions I contacted 17 Oregon school district employees and I only received a total of eight documents. Eleven (out of 17) districts contacted had no job description for their inclusion specialists.

Interviews

I conducted two rounds of interviews. The interviews were casual, informative conversations guided by a skeletal interview guide I developed for the project (see Appendix 1). The persons selected for the interviews were known to me through the faculty of the University of Oregon. I did an initial set of interviews with the three inclusion specialists I observed. Then I conducted a second round of four interviews: three with specialists and one with a special education teacher who works with an inclusion specialist. Table 2 delineates each of the contacts I made during the second round of interviews (see Table 2). Upon requesting their participation, I described my objectives and topic of study. Each of the people involved signed a consent to participate form and was aware of the confidentiality procedures.

The first round was a set of three interviews combined with the one-day observations. At the beginning of each of the observation periods I sat down with the inclusion specialist and we spent approximately an hour discussing the job, roles, and responsibilities. I used the interview guide to help cover all of the topics in which I was interested. The interviews were tape

recorded and later transcribed with the use of pseudonyms. In addition to the morning interview, I asked questions at the end of the day to clarify and further my understanding of some of my observations.

Table 2

Information about the second round of Interviews with Inclusion Specialists

Contact (& others)	Job Title	Type of Community	Type of Contact	Jurisdiction	Documents Collected	Professional Work Experience
Deborah (SPED drctr.)	Supported Ed. Spec. (official title)	Small town	One interview in person (1 1/2 hrs.)	Employed by school district (team of 2) Serves all grade levels	Draft of new job description	3 years as Inclusion Specialist
Elizabeth (SPED drctr.)	Support Specialist (official title)	Small town	One interview in person (1 hr.)	Employed by a district, works in a high school	Skeletal idea of potential description	4 yrs. P.E. teacher 1 yr. teacher of self contained SPED rm. 1 yr. Supp. Ed. Spec.
Franklin	SPED Dir. (Juanita is the Supp. Specialist)	Small town	Brief conversation (30 min.)	Special Ed. Director	Skeletal idea of potential job description	Not Available
Georgene	HL teach. (wrks w/ sup. spec)	Small town	Phone interview (30 min.)	High school SPED teacher	None	1 yr. as Handicapped Learner Specialist
Heather	ESDsuprv (hiring new case mgrs.)	Large town	Brief conversation (15 min.)	ESD Special Ed. Supervisor	Qualifications Job descriptions	3 yrs. experience w/ ESD classroom Master's degree
Isabelle	Supp. Ed. Consult. (official title)	Metropolitan area	Phone Interview (30 min.)	Employed by ESD Contracted by distcs.	Same as Betty's	5 yrs SPED teacher 2 yrs Supp. Ed. Consl.

The second round of contacts was a set of three interviews with inclusion specialists, one interview with a teacher, and conversations with two special education administrators. Two of the interviews were conducted in person and the other four were conducted on the telephone. Following the first round of interviews, I was able to reflect upon my findings and increase the

breadth and depth of questions and topics covered in my interview guide. With a revised interview guide, the second set of interviews increased my understanding and exposure to the role of the inclusion specialist. Like the initial interviews, these, too, were taped and later transcribed. The length of the phone interviews averaged approximately 45 minutes.

Findings

What I Learned about Inclusion Specialists

Through document collection, observations, and interviews I learned about the designated responsibilities of inclusion specialists, the many roles they fill, and the various activities they perform. My findings enabled me to better understand the way this job is being defined, interpreted, and executed. I discovered that inclusion specialists must perform great juggling acts in an attempt to effectively and efficiently execute their job.

Document Collection: What the Papers Say about Inclusion Specialists

By reviewing job descriptions, qualifications for the positions, and calendars from each of the people I was able to collect information representing both current and former practices. This range of documentation provided a broad spectrum of information.

Job Descriptions

Out of the eight job descriptions I received, two were new job descriptions (both for new positions created for this fall at an urban ESD), four were drafts of new job descriptions (two detailed and two vague and skeletal) yet to be approved by the district office, and two were old, out-of-date descriptions for teaching roles that no longer exist. Well over half of the people I contacted told me that either no description existed or that they just have the job description of the non-existent, self contained special education teacher position on file. Whether an

updated description either simply did not exist or was still in the draft stage, the most common response I heard during my inquiries was that it is "difficult to define or describe the job as it continues to evolve and change."

Some of the inclusion specialists I spoke with expressed frustration with the lack of documentation about their professional roles and responsibilities. Cecilia, who is working under a self contained teachers description, rationalized, "Oh, my responsibilities change every year. It is just sort of up to me to figure out what to do . . . through trial and error." Georgene explained, "I have been told to create my own job description, but I do not know when they expect me to find the time." Having written and proposed a draft, Anita told me that she herself has created a current description, but it still has not been approved by the district.

I found many commonalities between the drafts and new job descriptions . Table 3 shows the main responsibilities of each of the job descriptions (see Table 3). All drafts and new job descriptions describing the position included the following responsibilities: support to staff involved with inclusion; assist in planning and implementing the IEPs; facilitate transitions; assist in the development of behavior support plans; help staff adapt curriculum to meet the needs of the learners; and plan and/or facilitate staff development and/or training.

Some of the new descriptions included things like: provide a linkage to families and the community; arrange for specialized equipment and supplies; collect on-going data on student performance; scheduling for students and staff; coordinate for itinerant services with regional support programs. I found some of the wording on the descriptions to be vague and confusing, for example: "perform ongoing collection of formative and social information."

Table 3

Job Description Information about the

Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

	Observation & Support	Curriculum	IEPs	Staffing	Training (others)	Other
Anita (draft & old)	Organize data base, evaluate students.. records/reports	Use task analyzed curric	Develop appropriate IEPs for kids	Supervise SPED staff	Train teachers and EAs	Coordinate the transitions and early intervention programs
Betty (FTE sch.)	Visit, observe, and support gen. education teachers	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist w/ IEP planning and implementation	Provide leadership to Supp. Ed. Team	Facilitate inservice requests	Research grant and presentation oppurtun. Facilitate COF, MAPs
Cecilia (old)	Not described	Provide individualized learning programs	Write, meet, & . implement IEPs for all kids	Supervise all SPED support staff, coordnt. support services	Train E.A.s	
Deborah (draft)	Serve as resource to teachers	Assist teachers in dev. curriculum	Assist in developing and monitoring IEPs Annually review	Assist staff in implenet of IEP goals	Lead training sessions for teachers, parents, volunteers, etc	
Elizabeth (outline)	Observe and evaluate students	Work w/teachers to adaprt/support curriculum	Facilitate IEP meetings	Supervise all SPED support staff	Provide mini-inservices for h.s. staff	"Trouble-shoot" Paperwork Facilitate COF, MAPs
Franklin (draft)	Provide release time for teachers	Assist classroom teachers in adapting curriculum	Facilitate IEP meetings	Not described	Coord. and provide training to staff	Facilitate the transition of students to their neighborhood schools
Heather (new)	Observe programs and provide feedback to staff	Conduct informal obs. of instructional. delivery	Monitor devel., review, implem. of IEPs	Not described	Dev. and coord. staff develp. activ.	
Isabelle (new)	Visit, observe, and support gen. education teachers	Assist with curricular adaptations	Assist w/ IEP planning and implementation	Help train and support supp. ed. team members	Training consultation workshops, team builder	Facilitate COF, MAPs

Qualifications

I collected lists of qualifications required to become an inclusion specialist from five districts across the state. Table 4 outlines the main responsibilities on each of the lists of qualifications I collected (see Table 4). The most common requirements were three years of classroom teaching experience and a valid Oregon SHL or HLE. Other common requirements were: training and experience in facilitating group process such as the McGill Action PLanning

System and Circle of Friends (Vandercook, York, and Forest, 1989; Perske, 1988); teaching and experience in multi-level instruction, cooperative learning, integrated curriculum, and outcomes based education; and planning and implementation of curriculum adaptations. There was a wide variety of specific teaching techniques that inclusion facilitators should be able to perform. For example, one of the qualifications for Deborah's position is "to have training and experience in prescriptive education and precision techniques." To be qualified for Anita's position one must be "able to diagnose educational problems and relate positively with Special Education students." Finally, Cecilia had to "have knowledge of computer technology, essential learning skills, and evaluation techniques" to obtain her position. Like the job descriptions, the level of detail and description varied immensely across the lists.

Table 4
Central Features of the Qualifications
to be an Inclusion Specialists

	Experience	Training	Education	Certification
Anita (old)	None Stated	Ability to diagnose educat. problems and prepare remediation plans	None Stated	Valid teaching certificate w/ either SHL or HLE
Betty (new)	3 yrs. classroom experience w/ disabilties or inclusion	Multi level instruction, DAP integrated curr., curric. adaptations MAPS, COF	Desired: Completion of Master's degree program	Valid Oregon teach. license w/ or w/o SPED endorse. or pers. serv. endorsement
Cecilia (old)	None Stated	Computer technology Human development Current curriculum devel.	Completion of coursework for Oregon HLE	Certification not specified, only the coursework
Deborah (new)	3 yrs. classroom exp. w/ multi-disabled/emotionally handicapped students	Training in prescriptive ed. & teaching techniques	Desired: Master's degree in SPED	Current Oregon SHL or HLE
Heather (new)	3 yrs successful exper. teaching in ESD room	None Stated	Master's degree in SPED	A valid Oregon SHL or HLE

Many districts did not have updated qualifications on file. In the districts in which Anita, Cecilia, and Deborah work, the qualifications for the special education, self-contained teaching positions were used to describe them as inclusion specialists.

FTE Schedules

The FTE schedule is a schedule of "Full Time Employment." Some inclusion consultants have substituted the FTE schedule for their job description. The schedules delineate how much time will be spent on various tasks and at various sites. They also outline the roles and responsibilities of the position.

Betty and Isabelle and their supported education team at the metropolitan ESD have a detailed outline of their FTE service guidelines (see Appendix 2). When contracted by various districts, the staff of four divides the FTE and the school responsibilities, and each consultant follows the FTE guidelines for the schools with which they work. The combination of these two documents provides a detailed description of job responsibilities and a breakdown of how the time is spent.

Anita also uses an FTE schedule to divide her time between the five schools and one early intervention program that she serves. At the beginning of the year she sent copies of the breakdown to all of the people she works with so that they would be familiar with her schedule. These FTE schedules exemplify an approach to combining a description of responsibilities and scheduling into one document.

Calendars and Planners

I collected calendars and planners from two different inclusion specialists. Each specialists used an 8 1/2" by 11" sheet of paper on which they recorded their engagements and events. The calendars and planners demonstrate what a juggling act each of these individuals must perform to meet the diverse range of needs of all the people they serve. The planners and calendars show the balance of time the specialists spend across multiple schools, districts, meetings, and training sessions.

The calendars also depict the variety of ways these people plan and implement their services. Through looking at Cecilia's calendar it is apparent that she relies upon this organization and planning . . . the pages are covered with times, dates, names, meetings, and schools visited. She spends an abundance of time in meetings every week; I counted up to eleven meetings in a week in February. She described, "My weeks are booked with meetings. Meetings, meetings, meetings. I just try to schedule my visits to schools around them." (p. 4)

With a different approach to the calendar, Betty's simply states what days she will spend at what schools; she explained that she uses it to send to schools to let them know her schedule. Not working for a single district, Betty also uses the calendar schedule to record her time allotted to each district and to make sure it matches her FTE schedule.

Observations and Interviews: What I Saw and Heard about Inclusion Specialists

My observations and interviews gave me a great deal of information about the diverse roles and activities of inclusion facilitators. Table 5 depicts some of my interview and observation findings about these roles and responsibilities (see Table 5). I found inclusion specialists performing great juggling acts in an effort to be both effective and efficient. Within each activity, the specialists were fulfilling several professional roles.

Table 5

Interview and Observation Findings about the

Roles and Responsibilities of Inclusion Specialists

	IEPs	Supervisor	# of sites	Support to E.A.s	Provides Inservice	Consult w/ teachers	Data collection	Facilitate teams
Anita	Write all IEPs	Principals & SPED Dir.	1 district, 5 schools all elementary	Train, schedule & support	Helps plan, & recruit	Informally touch base	Formal & frequent Admin. tests	Informal supports (COF, MAPS)
Betty	Support in develop. of IEPs (MAPS)	SPED Dir. of ESD	2 districts ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Help set up systems	Supported Ed. Teams & MAPS, COF
Cecilia	Write all IEPs (MAPS)	Principals & SPED Dir.	1 district 2 schools 2 elementary	Train, schedule & supervise	Plans & recruits	Rarely	Formal & frequent	MAPS, COF
Deborah	Write part or or all of IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 district 7 schools 4 el., 2 m., 1 h.	Train	Plans & recruits	Informally touch base	Help set up systems	Informal supports
Elizabeth	Write all IEPs	Principal & SPED Dir.	1 district 1 high school	Train, support, supervise, & schedule	Plans & recruits	Rarely	Sets up some systems	Informal supports
Franklin (Juanita)	Support in develop. of IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 district ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Not a lot	Facilitates Supp. Ed. Teams
Georgene	Write all IEPs	Principal & SPED Dir.	1 district 1 high school	Train	None Specified	None Specified	Formal	Informal supports
Heather (Kelly)	Support or write IEPs	SPED Dir.	1 county ? schools	Supervise	Plans & recruits	Frequent consultative support	Sets up system	Facilitates Supp. Ed. Teams
Isabelle	Support in develop. of IEPs	ESD SPED Dir.	3 districts ? schools all levels	Support & collaborate	Plans, recruits & facilitates	Frequent consultative support	Helps set up system	Facilitates Supp. Ed Teams

The Roles of the Inclusion Specialist

The roles of the specialists varied across both times and settings. They functioned as teacher, trainer, secretary, advocate, consultant, assessor, professional developer, and supervisor, and often had to adapt to situations and alter their roles accordingly. Within each role there is a range of tasks and objectives which often require different skills. Many of the

activities and objective overlap. In an attempt to be effective and efficient, inclusion specialists often must prioritize their roles which means they cannot do everything.

Attempting to fill the different roles is similar to a juggling act. The specialists must juggle a variety of roles and tasks, each one similar to a ball or a flamed torch being tossed from hand to hand, floating through the air. As more tasks are added the juggler must pick and choose which to keep in the air and which to drop. With more tasks or roles added, the uniqueness of each one becomes blurred, they blend together and it is difficult to identify them or tell them apart. Like the juggler playing with multiple objects, the inclusion specialist's roles overlap and become intertwined, unidentifiable, and sometimes difficult to separate.

The Activities of the Inclusion Specialists

I have categorized the four most frequent activities I observed during the time I spent with Anita, Cecila, and Betty as: business work, working for children, working with adults, and driving. Within each of the activities I was interested in what roles the specialists fulfilled and how they performed the tasks. Table 6 delineates the break down of the time each specialist spent on each activity during the day I observed (see Table 6).

Table 6
Amount of Time each of the Observed
Inclusion Specialists Spent on Different Activities

	Phone calls, administrve. business, paperwork, & meetings	Observe &/or teach in general ed. setting (pull-out)	Observe &/or teach in general ed. setting (w/peers)	Talk &/or work w/ teachers & parents out of classrm.	Drive	Lunch	Interview with me
Anita	27 minutes	2 hours	50 minutes	38 minutes	50 minutes	30 minutes	1 hour, 20 min.
Betty	3 hours, 50 min.	none	1 hour, 45 min.	2 hours	1 hour, 55 min.	working lunch	30 minutes
Cecilia	4 hours, 5 min.	none	5 minutes	1 hour, 40 min.	30 minutes	30 mintues	1 hour, 10 min.

Business

The purpose of the business aspects of the job, which include administrivia, scheduling, and paper work, is to manage and perform all of the roles and activities effectively and efficiently. In the business related aspects of the position the specialists are filling roles of "secretary". In this role the specialists perform a variety of business-related tasks that might vary from coordinating schedules and meetings, to solving day to day scheduling problems, to managing messages and phone calls. During my observations Cecilia spent over 4 hours on paperwork and in meetings, while Anita spent less than 27 minutes.

A business-related activity I observed the specialists perform was keeping in contact with other schools and checking their messages several times throughout the day. Working at multiple sites, each of the specialists had to try to meet the needs of several people from different schools simultaneously. For example, both Anita and Cecilia called their other schools several times during the day just to check in and see how things were going. Cecilia felt that the different types of staff at her two schools determined how often she checked in:

> . . . the staff at Franklin Elementary I can trust to make great decisions on their own. The E.A.s are very independent and self-sufficient. Over at Deerborn they rely upon me for everything. It is really hard. They call me over here [at Franklin] . . . saying, 'what *do* I *do*?' The staff can make a big difference . . . . (p. 2)

At Franklin Cecilia works with a full-time supported education assistant who "acts as a liaison" between herself and the other E.A.s. This alleviates some of her paperwork and business at Franklin but she still fills the role of the secretary.

In a "secretarial" capacity, Isabelle, Deborah, Anita, and Betty each discussed the paperwork and administrivia required to coordinate and document the work they do at each of the multiple sites they serve. Deborah told me that when she began the job she tried to record the time she spent at each school so she could document her FTE schedule. When I asked her how her required hours break down between kids and buildings she commented:

> . . . I do it by kids in the IEPs. I used to do it by the week, then by month, and now I do it by the year. It gives me more flexibility. I used to try to keep track, but it is hard. I do not have the slightest idea now because I no longer keep track. (p. 20)

Isabelle, Anita, and Betty allot a certain amount of FTE to each school they serve in an attempt to balance time between sites. These three specialists try to keep a record of their FTE spent at different schools with the use of a monthly calendar documenting their scheduled visits.

I saw each of the specialists functioning in the role of a "fire-fighter." Rushing from problem to conflict, the specialists seem to "put out fires" throughout the day. For example, the first hour of my visit with Cecilia was spent solving problems. Two of the E.A.s that work with her students in general education classroom had called in sick. Cecilia called other E.A.s to see if they could arrive to work early and then she walked around the building to touch base with the rest of her staff to talk about schedule adjustments she made to accommodate for the under-staffed morning.

After solving the E.A. scheduling dilemma, an E.A. informed Cecilia of a flat wheel chair tire. Cecilia walked around the building looking for the custodian to inquire about fixing the flat,

and because he could not do it she returned to her phone to try to find somebody who could. Interrupted by a call from the office, Cecilia was asked to call one of her student's parents to obtain permission for the student to go on a field trip. Before she could make the phone call, an E.A. arrived at her door requesting Cecilia's help in collapsing a wheel chair. Like the juggler I previously described, Cecilia had to try to balance and prioritize each demand effectively and efficiently. A self-proclaimed fire-fighter, Cecilia spends most of her time managing crises, solving dilemmas and "putting out fires."

Working for Children

The roles inclusion facilitators play when working directly and indirectly for children vary dramatically. As "teacher," "planner," "consultant," or "advocate," the juggling act requires the inclusion specialist to fill a plethora of roles executing a variety of activities for the benefit of the learners. Some of the specialists spend a lot of time working directly with students, others almost none, they provide indirect services and supports.

For example, the role of teacher is fulfilled in several ways. In some of the classes I visited the inclusion facilitator would serve one or two students working on separate activities, unrelated to the rest of the class. In other rooms the facilitator would visit, interact with, and observe all of the students working on similar activities. Visiting and touching base in classrooms meant different things to each of the specialists.

Anita, for example, prioritized her time with the learners, claiming that without it she would be out of touch. Like a classroom teacher, Anita makes a point of teaching small group activities on a regular basis. As she illustrated:

> . . . it is my way of keeping in touch with the kids and modeling for the E.A.s, it works well for everyone involved . . . . (p. 2)

In several classes we visited she sat down and assisted in teaching. Each of the students I saw her work with was working solo or in homogeneous groups within the classroom. The story of Tony is a good example:

> Tony is a third grade boy with a fabulous smile and big blue eyes. His laughter can fill any room with an inconceivable joy. He does not talk much, but he sure can communicate. Anita and I arrived at Tony's school at lunch time. As we walked into the lunchroom I saw all of the other students enjoying an indoor recess while Tony was sitting between two adults, eating his lunch. Not having finished before the bell, Tony was whisked back to class by another adult without play time. Anita casually followed while talking with the educational assistant. Upon entering class, the teacher informed the students that it was time for "units." As every student found her or his favorite play station, Anita and the occupational therapist pushed Tony's wheelchair into a corner and "played" with cardboard boxes. Following this activity, it was time for recess. Anita pushed Tony back to the gymnasium and pulled him in circles while he held onto a jump rope.

Interactions such as this one were common throughout the day. Anita spent substantial time interacting with, teaching, and observing her students doing separate activities. She portrayed an image of a teacher with an empty classroom, going to other peoples' rooms to teach her kids. She is the special education teacher going into general education classrooms to teach her

students doing separate things. Although the students were in the general education rooms, they were still her kids, and therefore, not members of their class.

Creating educational plans is a process in which most support specialists are involved. Functioning in the role of a "planner," developing IEPs is another activity that specialists perform for their students. All of the specialists I spoke with had some involvement with the IEP process. Half of them were directly responsible for developing, writing, and facilitating the entire process, the other half claimed to provide a range of assistance in the IEP process.

The day I observed Cecilia she spent most of the day at her desk writing an IEP for a student making a transition into middle school. After finishing the paperwork, she facilitated a two hour IEP meeting. Much of her interaction was at the adult level, planning with E.A.s, support staff, and parents.

Isabelle, Betty, and Juanita frequently function in a consultative role. Most of their classroom visits consist of observations, note taking, some casual interaction with students, and conversations with teachers. They focus on observing the classroom activities and providing the teacher with feedback. For example, at one school I visited with Betty, she walked in and stood to the side as she took notes about her observations. She waited until recess time to approach the teacher and share her perceptions and ideas. When the kids returned, she continued the writing. As we left the room she casually placed the paper on the teacher's desk.

As consultants, many of the people I spoke with spend substantial time conducting assessments, both formal and informal documentation about the learning process of their students. Anita is responsible for administering all of the formal assessment tests at the elementary level within the district and Deborah and Cecilia manage formal data collection systems for the schools they serve.

The type of consultation that Isabelle and Betty conduct are good examples of the informal assessment that inclusion specialists provide. Both specialists prioritize the supports they provide for classroom teachers. By visiting classrooms, listening to frustrations and concerns, and sharing ideas and feedback, the specialists support the teachers and indirectly serve the kids. With this type of informal assessment and consultation, the children benefit from the ideas and input that Betty and Isabelle provide.

When Franklin, a Special Education Director for a small Oregon school district, described Juanita's support specialist position he specifically said that she functions in the role of a consultant:

> . . . As a consultant she can target the young learners, focus on incoming students. With successful consultation she can facilitate inclusion in the first years of a student's education. The way we look at it . . . with this approach we will undoubtedly have full inclusion within 12 years. (p. 2)

In a consultative role Anita also focuses much of her efforts on incoming students. By working with families and students in the early intervention program, Anita has a sense of the needs of her students before they enter school. As she explains, " . . . with some of my kids I serve them during early intervention and then help them transition and then my goal is to have the school take over." (p. 9)

Another way in which specialists work for their students is in the role of an advocate. Although many of the roles and activities I have discussed demonstrate a type of advocacy for the education of students, some activities are performed for the sole purpose of advocacy. For

example, Elizabeth discussed advocating for her students' needs and rights through the "public relations" she performs with a group home. She explained:

> . . . Many of my students live in a group home together. A lot of my time is spent working with the staff that work there. I feel like I am constantly working on some type of "PR", advocating for the students needs. It is tough and it takes a lot of time . . . but it has to be done. (p. 2)

Cecilia has spent many hours working with the Children Services Division to help meet the needs of one of her students, Tad. One example of her efforts with CSD on Tad's behalf is an attendance plan. Due to Tad's incredibly low attendance record, Cecilia and Tad's CSD case manager developed a plan to help him increase his attendance. In the morning Cecilia calls Tad at home, usually waking him up, and lets him know that she is looking forward to seeing him that day. Seeing her advocacy pay off helps Cecilia to continue her efforts. She explained:

> Although it means more work, I feel our efforts are paying off. . . . Sometimes I forget, but overall it has gone well. His attendance is up and he is learning that people at school care about him. (p. 5)

Working with Adults

Many support specialists spend considerable time working in a variety of roles working with adults. As trainer, consultant, supervisor, or driver, specialists are interacting with colleagues. Specialists indirectly support the needs of the children by educating and training teachers, administrators, assistants, and parents in inclusive education.

As trainers, all of the inclusion specialists I spoke with were responsible for planning, recruiting, and/or facilitating inservice programs on supported education. For example, after being requested to conduct so many workshops this year, the supported education team that Isabelle and Betty work with has allotted 1.2 FTE for next year's consultants to "provide inservice to individual teams and conduct regional workshops as scheduled by request" and to "research grant and presentation opportunities."

Functioning as trainers, many specialists work with teachers and assistants to meet IEP objectives or adapt curriculum to meet students' needs and learning styles. For example, although Deborah serves multiple schools, she feels a need to work with as many E.A.s as possible:

> . . . I spend a lot of time going over IEP goals with E.A.s, adapting curriculum, and training E.A.s to implement a system we develop. It takes a lot of time . . . training, and retraining . . . . (p. 9)

Cecilia also talked about the time she spends training E.A.s on curricular adaptation. Like Deborah, she seemed frustrated by the constant training and retraining. She felt that some of the ideas clicked for some people, while others could never generalize the concepts.

Some of the specialists work directly with the classroom teachers, providing assistance in classrooms through one-on-one support or consultation. The schools in Juanita's district supervise all of their own E.A.s, so she does not spend time supervising and managing E.A.s, instead she works with teams of educators to train people on certain approaches to teaching. When Franklin described Juanita's job he said:

> . . . her real job is to get herself out of a job. She provides training to teachers and E.A.s. and helps them develop independence in working with all kids. (p. 2)

In approaching their roles as consultants, Betty and Isabelle prioritize the work they do with teachers and assistants. Referring to support networks, Isabelle exclaimed, "It is such an important and effective way to share information and provide support," (p. 1). While a lot of their consultation is indirect support for the students, it is also a way to provide assistance that teachers feel they need.

Betty and her supported education team facilitate a monthly "Supported Education Meeting" for all people involved with inclusion in the districts they serve. The meetings are structured to be a support network, a forum for the exchange of ideas and feedback. On the day of my observation I observed the lengthy preparation process and attended one of the meetings. Meetings such as this require an abundance of planning and organization that takes substantial time. With high attendance at the meeting and a diverse group of parents, siblings, students, teachers, and support staff, Betty feels that her efforts pay off; she described, ". . . it is a great opportunity for people to come together from all over the area and share their experiences, ideas, and support." (p. 10)

As a supervisor, several of the people I spoke with were responsible for the staff supervision and scheduling. Cecilia articulated her frustration with this set-up:

> The staff supervision issue has been a hard one for me. I do not want, nor do I have the time to be in charge of them. I want them to be members of the classes in which they work. Part of me says that because it will be easier [for me], but

part of me knows that this is part of merging special education and regular education. (p. 12)

Cecilia's frustration was common with some other specialists with whom I spoke. She felt that she was supervising somebody else's staff. She went on to explain her feelings:

> . . . one thing I am learning is the balance between whose staff it [the E.A.] is. How do I make my staff into their [the classroom teachers'] staff? I think that we all need to figure it out. It should not just be my job, but somehow it is. That is definitely something I would like to let go of. I need to figure out that part consultative role. To teach or subtly let the classroom teacher get control. If I was to just say this is your E.A., do whatever you want . . they would freak! (p. 2)

On the Road

All of the support specialists (excluding Elizabeth) serve multiple schools and spend considerable amounts of time on the road. Driving from school to school, meeting to meeting takes a lot of time away from schools and kids. Functioning in the obvious role of a driver I wondered about the effectiveness and efficiency of this activity.

Some of the specialists talked about utilizing the time in the car to reflect on the day's activities and prepare for upcoming tasks. As Anita described:

> . . . I am definitely working while I am on the road. My mind is processing what I have been and will be doing. You know, I really like it, it is nice to have time to myself in the middle of the day . . . . (p. 11)

Learning that so many of the specialists spend so much time on the road made me wonder about their sense of belonging. When I asked Anita who her supervisor is she explained that since this issue is muddled she finds herself doing her own thing and functioning as an independent entity.

Also working for multiple schools, Cecilia discussed her feelings about belonging to a school:

> I think the schools really want to say, 'this is our staff person.' I think they are going to have to get away from that mentality. I think that is what the special education director is trying to create, so I do not have to answer to the school, specifically. Inhabitable like a CORPS [itinerant] person. (p. 11)

Without a sense of belonging, many of these teachers do not identify with a particular school or system; their time and energy is split between multiple programs.

Reflections

My observations, interviews, and document analysis provided me with information about the emerging position of the inclusion specialist. Reflecting on the roles and activities that the specialists perform has enabled me to understand the juggling act one must execute for the job. My findings led me to believe that this role is continuing to evolve with inclusion.

I believe that there are currently two ways in which the job is being fulfilled, and a third way which is emerging. The two types of inclusion facilitators I observed and heard about were what I will call the "teachers with empty classrooms" and the "consultants working with adults."

The third, emerging, type of inclusion specialist that I will describe is a combination of the two, a position that meshes the best features of the two approaches. Finally, I will discuss what I see as a need for a different type of specialization.

Teachers with an Empty Classroom

The teacher with an empty classroom is a specialist assigned a room in which to teach, but no kids filling it. During my research I discovered several special education classrooms filled with decorations, supplies, and a teacher, but void of students. The teachers of the rooms had been trained, certified, and often times, originally hired, to teach self contained classes for students receiving special education. Many of them still function like special education teachers, simply serving a number of kids in multiple classrooms. With this notion I question if these specialists are truly facilitating inclusion, or are they just supporting the integration of special education kids from a distance? Elizabeth describes her role as a roaming special education teacher:

> . . . my job is the same that it was before inclusion, now I just serve my kids in different classes. Yeah, I work with more adults and different curriculum, but it is the same kids, same teaching, same approach . . . . (p. 2)

As teachers at heart and by training, some of these individuals have had a difficult time transitioning to the multiple roles of the support specialist. They have tried to approach this complex job exclusively through the role of a special education teacher.

Teachers with empty classrooms are expected to fill roles for which they have never been trained, nor in which are necessarily interested. For the most part it seemed they were teachers who could not part with their primary role as teacher. Acting as assessor, secretary,

consultant, facilitator, support, trainer, supervisor, and advocate some of these educators were no longer given an opportunity to do what they do best, to teach children. Dissatisfied with the roles they must currently fill, some of the specialists are not fulfilling the position effectively or efficiently.

When teachers are removed from the students they were trained to teach it results in difficulties for the specialists, and inefficient, ineffective practices. For example, I saw specialists writing IEPs for students they saw only once a month. I saw students individually pulled out of their classrooms for all types of activities: swimming, math, eating lunch, toileting, napping, and reading. I heard about specialists scheduling and supervising E.A.s with whom they have minimal contact. Deborah told me about an extensive IEP she developed for a high school student and the E.A. bluntly told her she planned to ignore the documented IEP objectives. Deborah felt she could do nothing to rectify the situation and said, "it was out of my control."

When I think of these situations, I picture a juggler who has trained and worked for years to excel. As a master of her art; she performs for awed audiences and inspires young children. Then one day somebody begins to toss in flaming torches and sharp, shiny daggers for the juggler to include in her repertoire. Although she thinks she can juggle all the items, she is not exactly sure how to accomplish the task. She is hesitant to leave the comforts and success of her familiar bean bags, yet she feels forced to move on to the unknown . . . . I am concerned by the image of this juggler.

As I return to the image of teachers with empty classrooms I wonder if they are able to perform the plethora of roles and activities of the inclusion specialists effectively and efficiently. Like the juggler, I wonder if it is too many tasks to juggle at once, or if we are throwing the objects at a person unprepared for the responsibilities, or maybe at a person who does not have the interest in performing the new act altogether.

As former special education teachers still working under special education departments and directors, the specialists are part of a separate system. Functioning as teachers with empty classrooms sets the inclusion facilitator up to serve a specified population with particular types of services. This approach seems to perpetuate the dual system of traditional education. The role of the specialist must broaden, from its grounding in special education, to services and support that fully achieve and advocate inclusion. Until general and special education merge into one educational system, educational consultants cannot cater to the needs of all learners.

Consultants Working with Adults

During my research I discovered a second type of inclusion specialist, the consultant working with adults. Specialists functioning in this capacity approached the various roles and activities of inclusion facilitators differently than the teachers with an empty classroom. Working primarily with adults, these specialists were removed from the students and the direct teacher role. They primarily tried to approach the job through the role of consultant.

There were many ways in which different specialists approached the consultation role. Some of the people I spoke with were primarily responsible for scheduling, supporting, and collaborating with E.A.s. They had limited interaction with classroom teachers. Still grounded in special education , they worked with the people they always have, the itinerant staff and the classroom assistants. Like the staff they worked with, the educational practices they used remained similar to those of their former self contained rooms, but were located in a new setting.

While I saw many examples of the former self contained educational practices being applied to new settings, one stands out in my mind. When I was with Cecilia I observed Jamal, a fourth grade student. Jamal was sitting alone at a desk in the corner of an unused classroom

that had been converted into a storage room. With his head down, concentrating on his work, Jamal worked away independently. When I asked Cecilia why he was out of the fourth grade room she told me, "he cannot handle the fourth grade schedule, he needs to be alone, on his own schedule most of the time." Of course, being an observer limits my knowledge and understanding of the context in which decisions like this own had been made; yet, I was constantly surprised to see the frequency of the separate, different activities.

Other consultants worked to develop support networks at all levels: prioritizing Circle of Friends, MAPS, supported education teams, and other support networks was a common trend across consultants. Yet, I was interested in the fact that the services and programs are still grounded in special education. Such programs work to make up for time lost, or time not spent, in general education settings, where the supports would truly be natural. Like many of the resources grounded in special education, some of these types of supports may have valuable features and outcomes; some of the strategies are things that all kids may need at one time or another with varying levels of complexity and intensity. Regardless of their value, they are still separate services provided in an unnatural way, inhibiting the equal and authentic membership and involvement of all students.

Many of these specialists placed great value on the one-on-one consultation they provided classroom teachers. These individuals were teaching and supporting adults in how to help teach and support diverse learners. Some people are doing such a successful job in this position it is perpetuating its existence, regardless of the fact that it is not effective. I am concerned by this. If the goal of inclusion is to teach teachers new skills and strategies to build local capacities to include learners, they are failing because they are creating an unnecessary dependency, a learned helplessness.

Furthermore, like the teachers with empty classrooms, the consultants working with adults are still grounded in special education. Contrary to what the literature recommends, none of these people facilitating inclusion are working with all kids in all settings. If always embedded in special education, the consultants will have a narrow range of services and supports they are able to provide and only be effective and efficient to a limited degree. Although some of what the consultants do may be successful we must encourage the evolution of their position to one which truly facilitates the merging of special and general education.

Merging the Best Features of an Inclusion Facilitator

If inclusion facilitators are to be effective in facilitating true inclusion we must utilize our knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of their current roles. By abandoning the practices which perpetuate separateness and by encouraging successful current practices, future inclusion facilitators will be more valuable to schools which are trying to do true inclusion.

Inclusion specialist must be able to effectively work with adults, and should have a knowledge base and resources to support all types of learners with a diverse range of abilities. As a consultant, the specialist must have a working knowledge of both general and special education curriculum and techniques for expanding the curriculum to meet the needs of all learners. They must pursue on-going professional development to broaden their breadth and depth of knowledge. Individuals filling this position must work for all learners in inclusive environments. To successfully work to facilitate inclusion one must be able to fulfill a variety of roles, in addition to that of a teacher.

While I have delineated some of the features I see as necessary traits of the position, I also see some things for future inclusion specialists to avoid. As previously stated, the facilitator should not be solely attached to special education funds or systems, s/he should serves all kids in need of support. The position should not just be filled by former special

education teachers, it should be filled by people interested in supporting all adults and learners in the process of inclusive education. Independent of a school affiliation, the facilitator should not write IEPs for students in another teacher's class. Similarly, they should not supervise or schedule the support staff working with the kids.

A Call for a Different Type of Specialization

It is apparent that the evolution of the role of the inclusion facilitator is in progress. While I believe people currently filling this position should work to maintain the best features of the job, I believe that as long as this job exists we will perpetuate the dueling systems and never achieve true inclusion.

As long as there are inclusion facilitators, there is still something to be "included." This image perpetuates the co-existence of the general and special education programs. While people fulfill such roles, teachers will never have to take ownership of their students' learning. Ideally, with systemic inclusion, the beneficial roles and activities performed by the current inclusion specialists will be fulfilled by all teachers. As the two spheres of education merge, all teachers in inclusive programs will be able to work simultaneously to increase the educational benefits of all children. Through collaboration, curriculum expansion, natural supports, and cooperative learning, educators will be able to mutually benefit and increase the authenticity of education for all.

Teachers will be encouraged to turn to their peers for ideas, support, and resources (be it curriculum, lessons, behavior issues, disabilities, community linkages, etc.). Educators will be able to work together with a broader knowledge base and a greater variety of educational practices to cater to the success of all students. As teachers emerge out of restructured

preparation programs they will be better prepared to support their colleagues to meet the needs of all students.

With this system, different teachers will still have different areas of expertise, similar to general education teachers today where some excel in the arts, and others promote multi-cultural awareness. While neither area of interest is better or worse, being able to draw on each others expertise can compliment each teacher's strengths and supplement their students' learning. With the systems merging, we will not abandon all of the expertise, ideas, and knowledge in the field of special education, we will simply access it differently. Like the teacher who promotes multi-, other teachers will find a special interest in disability and elevate awareness in that field. As administrators staff their schools, bringing together teachers who specialize in different areas will create a strong, successful team. As their professional development continues, teachers can increase the breadth and depth of their areas of specialization. With this type of an expanding knowledge base, all educators will build their capacity and comfort level to teach diverse students a wide range of curriculum.

Personal Interpretation

I began this study enthusiastically anticipating the outcomes. As a strong believer in systemic inclusion, I expected to find a position I would want to pursue. My limited understanding of the current role of the inclusion facilitator had piqued my curiosity. I thought, what a great way to advocate for inclusion, officially facilitate its existence. To my surprise, most of what I saw was not what I had imagined. My findings have provoked me to change my future professional plans.

After this project, I will not leave my current preparation program eager to find a job and teach special education, nor will I pursue a position as an inclusion facilitator. While I love working with individuals with disabilities I do not know if I could enjoy teaching in a segregated setting, or from a distance. Due to my hesitancy to perpetuate the dual educational system that I do not believe in, I have decided to return to school to pursue an additional certification. I have realized that to truly facilitate and advocate for inclusion I must be in a general education classroom teaching in an inclusive environment.

Due to the fact that state certification requirements for special and general educators have not yet merged, I have decided to merge them within myself. By pursuing a general education certification to compliment my SHL, I will be trained to teach all kids in multiple settings.

As this project has demonstrated the benefits of specialty areas and ongoing professional development, I hope to continue my inservice education to increase my knowledge and understanding of multi-culturalism, foreign languages, and behavior issues. I appreciate the awareness and insight this project has provided for me; what I learned from educators in the field is priceless.

Recommendations

Obviously, the capacity of this study was limited. With the small sample size, the findings in this research cannot be universally applied. Further studies about the performance of personnel in the position of inclusion facilitators can increase our understanding. A study investigating teachers and others who receive the services of inclusion specialists could provide additional insight into the effectiveness and efficiency of the role. Additionally, a study researching schools and districts that are pursuing inclusion without the formal support of a designated

facilitator would provide interesting information to compare and contrast with others who rely upon specialists for support. Finally, we could learn much if we knew what things general educators feel they need to learn or be able to do to increase their capacity to create inclusive classrooms.

Appendix 1

Investigating Reform Specialists

Interview Guide

Job

Tell me about your job.

- your responsibilities
- % of time on different areas
- who work with

Describe how you ended up in this job.

- previous work experience
- recruitment procedures

Students

Describe the students you work with.

- range of abilities

Tell me about the contact you have with kids.

- impact on curriculum
- IEP process
- impact on student outcomes

Tell me about some of your successes in this job.

Describe some of the obstacles you face.

- what would resolve them

Preparation

Tell me about how you were prepared for this position.

- teacher training

What do you think teacher training programs should teach people so that they can do this job well?

Future

What do you think about the future of this role in schools?

If you could make this position ideal, what would you change, and why?

Who else should I talk to, to get more information?

Is there something I didn't ask you?

Appendix 2

FTE SERVICE GUIDELINES

The amount of service will vary based on school need, district size, severity of student need, teacher attitude, in school supports, etc. Each District will negotiate a specific agreement based on their needs.

1.0 FTE (40 hours per week)

* Prep/planning
* Consultation
    - Initial
    - Planning - specific to child
    - Evaluation
    - Day-to-day implementation
* Circle of Friends
* Circle of Support
* Buddy Systems
* Team Communication
* On-Going strategies specific to classroom need
* Facilitate and/or participate in team meetings
* Curriculum ideas
    - Activity Matrix
    - Accommodations & Adaptations
* Assistance with:
    - IEP planning
    - Evaluations
    - On-going monitoring
    - Implementation with daily schedule
    - Behavior plans (observation, data, specific recommendations, reinforcement systems, and formal plans)
* Facilitate MAPS & PATH processes
* Video tape student's progress
* Facilitate parent participation, availability for open communication with parents, CDRC, Related Services, MRDD & Administrators
* MESD Supported Ed. Team Planning time
    - prep for inservices
    - reciprocal teaming with consultants in contracted districts (Mapping, PATH, etc.)
* Staff Training
    - Inclusion, Supported Ed.:
        : what it's all about
        : strategies to make it work
        : looking at all students
    - "Change"
    - Role of classroom teacher, "specialist"
    - Circle of Friends
    - Curriculum ideas, Activity Matrix

- 30-Minute Problem-Solving Techniques/Effective Meetings
- Role of Classroom Assistant
- Effective Communication with team members, within school/home
- Other staff specific training as recommended

* Pairing with designated person to work with throughout the year to assist with building-wide implementation of inclusion strategies
* Teaming Strategies
  - SAT - Student Assistance Teams
  - TAT - Teacher Assistance Teams
  - Grade level teams
  - etc.
* Facilitate Sup. Ed. assistant time - based on supported ed team's view of prioritized needs.

.5 FTE (20 hours/week)

Same as 1.0, but limited to a reduced number of schools/students.

.1 FTE (4 hours/week)

** Prep/Planning, travel time, preliminary consultation that might include: Circle of Friends, meeting with teacher to discuss students need, suggestions for district staff initiated school and home communication, intermittent trouble shooting, problem-solving and reinforcement.

Supported Education Assistant time: minimal - but to be negotiated based on supported ed team's view of prioritized needs across districts.

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