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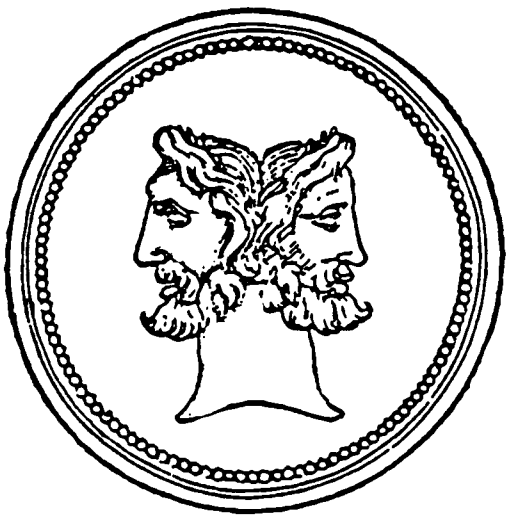
ABSTRACT

This report presents findings of a Canadian national study of 1,492 regular classroom teachers, administrators, resource teachers, special class teachers, and university students on the inclusion of students with disabilities into general education classrooms. Three data sources were used in the research: an Educator Opinion Questionnaire, voluntary spontaneous written comments from the last page of the questionnaire, and individual, in-depth interviews. Results indicate that the educators' attitudes toward inclusion divided into two major areas. The first related to strong reservations about work load and the effect of inclusion on regular class teachers, adequacy of preservice and inservice professional development, and administrator support for teachers who were including special education students in their classrooms. The second area of concern centered on positive beliefs regarding inclusion and teacher ability. Generally, positive attitudes were held regarding professional ability to accept primary responsibility for included students, the ability of regular class teachers and resource teachers to work collaboratively, and the effect of inclusion on both regular and included students across social and academic domains, particularly the social. Implications of the findings are discussed, including the need for greater collaboration among government agencies, schools, and families. Appendices include the interview questions and a discussion of results. (Contains 63 references.) (CR)

RESISTANCE AND ACCEPTANCE

EDUCATOR ATTITUDES TO INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents findings of a national study of educator attitudes toward inclusion of students with challenging needs. The term inclusion is used to indicate full time regular class placement, and to differentiate it from integration and mainstreaming, both of which may mean part time or full time regular class placement. Regular classroom teachers, administrators, resource teachers, special class teachers, and university students participated. Practicing educators were drawn from traditionally structured school systems having both regular and special education structures, and inclusively structured systems having regular class structures, but few special education structures. The research team was complemented by research partners representing school systems across Canada, provincial ministries of education, the Canadian Teachers' Association, the Canadian Association of Community Living, the Canadian Council for Exceptional Children, and the Centre for Integrated Education and Community.

Data and Findings

Three data sources were used in this research: an Educator Opinion Questionnaire (Bunch, 1992); voluntary spontaneous written comments from the last page of the questionnaire; and individual, in-depth interviews. This report is based primarily on analysis of interviews of regular classroom teachers, school administrators, resource teachers, and special class teachers across Canada. Educators at both the secondary and elementary levels of traditional and inclusive school systems participated. Discussions of questionnaire responses and spontaneous written comments appear as appendices to the full report.

Results indicated that educator attitudes toward inclusion fell into two predominant themes. The first related to concerns. Strong reservations were held with regard to work load and effect of inclusion on regular class teachers, adequacy of preservice and inservice professional development, and administrator support for teachers including students. The second theme centred on positive beliefs regarding inclusion and teacher ability to deal with it. Generally positive attitudes were held regarding professional ability to

accept primary responsibility for included students, the ability of regular class teachers and resource teachers to work collaboratively, and effect of inclusion on both regular and included students across social and academic domains, particularly the social.

The controlling factor for a substantial number of educators appeared to be concern for workload and support. Regardless of aspect of inclusive practice considered, workload and support concerns were brought out by many study participants. However, educators in both traditionally and inclusively structured systems felt inclusive practice possible, beneficial, and appropriate if supports were in place. Furthermore, data indicated what teachers meant by support, which could be divided into two types: that which calls for increased funding, such as additional educational assistants, and that which does not require additional expenditure, such as empathetic support by administrators.

Implications of Findings

A major focus of the project was interpretation of findings in terms of implications for government, school systems, support/advocacy organizations, and faculties of education. Research partners participated fully in drawing out implications.

For government, implications included consideration of a "Ministry of the Child" to bring together policies and resources presently spread over a number of ministries in each province, the issue of right to inclusive placement, the need for adequate funding when students are included, the manner in which inclusive practice alters the roles of educators, stimulation of school - family collaboration, and clarification of government policies on inclusion.

Implications for school systems focussed on consideration of right to inclusive placement, clarification of system policies toward inclusion, need to prepare the system for increased placement of students with challenges in regular classrooms, leadership, and professional preparation.

Support /advocacy agencies were seen to have a valuable role in supporting inclusion. Implications for support/advocacy agencies revolved about the issue of child rights, need for collaborative relationships with educators in support of families, provision of resources, and research into the

nature and effect of inclusion.

Faculties of education were seen to have a role to play in fostering collaborative relationships. The primary implications for faculties of education were the development of preservice courses and other activities focussed on equity in educational provision for all groups in society, the development of teacher competency for inclusive education, and practicum experience in inclusive settings. Development of model programs, collaboration with school systems and teacher federations on inservice and professional development, development of resources, and initiation of active research agendas around inclusive education were also seen as appropriate activities for faculties.

A final, overall implication was that the movement toward inclusive education was a continuing movement and one which challenged both government policies and models of educational which provide separate settings for many special students. Findings of this study strongly suggested that the structures of the past cannot be applied effectively to societal reconceptualizations of education for students with challenging needs. Positive steps must be taken now to assist the frontline regular class teacher who bears the greatest responsibility for and burden of response. Canadian educators believe inclusive education to be educationally sound practice, to be within the competencies of supported regular class teachers, and to be beneficial to all students. Given this basic attitude set, significant progress in inclusive practice should be possible once support needs are addressed. Much can be done in this direction without additional expenditure of funds if government, school systems, support/advocacy agencies, and faculties of education work collaboratively and creatively.

EDUCATOR ATTITUDES AND RESEARCH

This study represents an attempt to understand why educators react as they do when they consider the concept and practice of including students with challenging needs in regular classrooms. Educator attitude is regarded as a controlling factor within educational response to increased inclusion. We know that inclusion as common practice is resisted by many educators, but accepted by others. We also know the types of concerns which give rise to resistance. But we do not have a clear view of underlying reasons for educator attitudes, nor what implications these hold for those agents of society responsible for support of what appears to be a firm societal decision to educate more students with disabilities in regular classrooms. This study probes for both underlying reasons and implications.

Kerlinger (1984) is one of many who have offered definitions of attitude. He suggests:

> *[Social] attitudes are enduring and organized structures of social beliefs that predispose individuals to think, feel, perceive, and behave selectively toward referents or "cognitive objects" of attitudes. (p. 5)*

Kerlinger's definition was chosen for this study as it fits well with educator response to inclusive education. He suggests that there are two attitudinal generalizations which assist in explaining complex social thinking. These are conservatism and liberalism in general, and what Kerlinger refers to as traditionalism and progressivism respectively in terms of educational thought.

> ***Traditionalism** is a set of educational beliefs that focuses on ultimate truths and principles, the intellectual aspects and standards of education, subject matter, spiritual and moral values, tradition, discipline, and the authority of the teacher, and education as preparation for further education and for life.*

> ***Progressivism** is a set of educational beliefs that is characterized by*

emphasis on the needs and interests of the child, the freedom of the child and the teacher, permissiveness, life experiences as educative, quality of teacher and student, democratic citizenship, and physical, emotional, and social development and thus education of the "whole child". (p. 23)

Two educational responses fitting at least roughly into this dichotomous model, appear to have emerged with regard to inclusive theory and practice. One, which might be considered representative of traditionalism, appreciates placement of many students with challenging needs in segregated settings, the so-called "cascade" system. The traditional practice of maintaining two parallel systems of education, regular and special, picks up on beliefs relating to standards of education, subject matter, tradition, discipline, focus on the teacher, and school as preparation for further education. The other view is that segregation is not in the interests of the segregated child, nor of regular students, nor of society at large. This view may be considered to represent progressivism with its stress on the needs of the child, child rights, the value of all life experiences, and development of the whole child.

As noted, this study is designed to specify factors outlining educator attitudes to inclusion and to probe beneath factors for underlying beliefs. This, too, is an approach favoured by Kerlinger in the examination of social attitudes, but not common in attitude research focussed on inclusion. A further useful aspect of Kerlinger's definition of attitude is the idea of beliefs directed toward defined "cognitive objects", or referents, in the environment of the individual. The "objects", when inclusive education is considered, are students with challenging needs. As is evident in terms of traditionalism and progressivism, educators are divided in terms of the beliefs they bring to the issue of including or not including students with challenging needs in regular classrooms.

What Research Says

The bulk of available research has been concerned with integration or mainstreaming, earlier models of placement in regular classrooms of school systems which maintained both regular and special education structures.

Inclusion is a newer concept which advocates movement to inclusion of all, or almost all, students in regular classrooms with concomitant reduction of special education structures. Little research is available on the practice of inclusive education or of teacher attitudes toward it.

The research that is available suggests that teacher attitudes have serious impact on the effectiveness of mainstreaming (Barnatt & Kabzems, 1992; Gans, 1987; Riek & Knight, 1992; Siegal & Jausovec, 1994; Thomas, 1985). Indeed, there are those who believe teacher attitude to be the single most important factor contributing to the success or failure of mainstreaming (Darvill, 1989; Goupil & Brunet, 1984; Johnson, 1993). Extant knowledge in this area, as Siegal and Jausovec point out, is that "there is overwhelming evidence that teachers have negative attitudes towards inclusion and teaching students with special needs."

Hardman, Drew, Egan, and Wolf (1990), in their summary of research, suggest that not only were regular classroom teachers not supportive, but that "the integration of exceptional students into a regular education school and/or classroom may be met with frustration, anger or refusal on the part of teachers" (pp. 66-67). This holds true, in particular, if appropriate supports are not provided. Vaughn, Schumm, Jallad, Slusher, and Saumell (1996) and Yasutake and Lerner (1996), in more recent research, continue to find concerns regarding support. Similarly, Charles and Malian (1980) noted that students who require accommodation, individualized instruction, teaching methods, materials, and services "not provided for non-handicapped students" are not willingly accepted by regular teachers. Concern has existed that programs will be diluted if children with exceptionalities are placed in regular classrooms (Bradfield, Brown, Kaplan, Rickert, & Stannard, 1973), that classrooms will be disrupted (Vacc & Kirst, 1977), that fair division of teacher time would be a problem and that teacher effectiveness would be affected negatively (Gersten, Walker, & Darch, 1988). A number of studies have lent support to the belief that many regular class teachers consider special classes to be the optimal placement for students with special needs (Glickling & Theobald, 1975; Hudson, Graham, & Warner, 1979; Minke, Bear, Deemer, & Griffin, 1996; Moore & Fine, 1978). It is obvious that, regardless of any philosophical appeal of including all students in regular classrooms, teachers hold considerable reservation related to practice.

A number of trends revealing of educator attitudes are evident in the literature. These trends bring together various individual findings and represent an attempt to formulate global characteristics of attitude.

Teachers are concerned with "degree of difference" of students with challenging needs. Time and effort are spent identifying how children differ and strategies to make them fit regular classrooms. There is preoccupation with category and degree of disability, definition of categories too challenging for regular class placement, and at what point children might be separated on the basis of difference. Such an approach to difference recalls characteristics of the psychometric and the medical models, both of which appear to be operating in the formation of attitude in many educators.

Teachers tend to see the student as the problem in a "blame the victim" scenario. A set of expectations exists for regular class placement. It is up to the student to meet these expectations, and not up to the educational system to meet the needs of the students by differentiating regular classroom expectations.

The perception of teachers that they lack expertise is a clear issue. Feelings of incompetence and lack of skill and/or knowledge are common reasons for reluctance to include. A common solution to the issue is to place the child, whether segregated or in the regular classroom full or part time, under the responsibility of someone else, most often a specialist teacher, but at times under an educational assistant.

A further tendency is to focus on maintenance of standards of education. Educators are concerned that included students will lower standards in two ways. Firstly, their own academic progress will be modest with resultant low grades. Secondly, their presence in the classroom will affect the progress of other students negatively. Traditional emphasis on the lockstep curriculum and meeting standards for the next grade is viewed by many as appropriate and necessary. Hence, those who cannot meet these standards should not be in the classroom under the responsibility of regular classroom teachers.

Finally, research has indicated that regular classroom teachers hold deeper reservations regarding regular classroom placement than do administrators or teachers trained in special education. There is a significant gap between administrators, who are responsible for student placement, and the regular classroom teachers who receive the students, and a similar, though

lesser difference, between special educators and regular classroom teachers.

In contrast to an abundance of information concerning teacher resistance, research has not dealt, to any matching extent, with what teachers find positive in placement of students with special needs in regular classrooms. Additionally, research has made little effort to probe beneath attitudinal factors to discover their sources. Overall, available research points to educator attitudes being more aligned with Kerlinger's traditionalist position than with the progressivist.

THE PROJECT

This project was designed to obtain insight into the attitudes of educators to the increasingly common practice of including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. As such it is an investigation of factors which lead regular classroom teachers and others to accept such students in the ordinary classrooms of community schools, or to resist their presence.

This was a complex undertaking for the nature of education presents barriers to clear understanding of why educators function as they do. Available research has barely scratched the surface of attitude formation in this area. A significant challenge in a project such as this is that the thinking of educators is conditioned by upbringing, personal experience, and other such factors beyond the control of the research team. Notably, there are many uncontrollable variables which contribute to attitude formation. However, it is possible to control for variables found in the educational system to some extent. A number of variables likely to influence the attitudes of educators in this study were of interest and were considered in selecting the study population. Specifically, we focus on study population and measurement systems.

Study Population

Education is complex in the number of roles educators fill at the community school level. Each role may exert its own influence on attitude formation. For the purposes of this investigation the roles of interest were those which held direct influence for the acceptance or rejection of inclusive placement and programming.

The regular classroom teacher (RCT) is the person into whose classroom a student with challenging needs is placed. The RCT has primary responsibility for the overall social and academic program of all students in the class. In the instance of included students, this responsibility means careful assessment of abilities and needs, adaptation and modification of short term and long term program tasks, presentation of a positive model, and coordination of program with resource personnel.

The resource teacher (RT) is the professional colleague most relied on

relied on by the regular classroom teacher. The resource teacher advises the RCT on program needs, often provides direct instruction to included students or assumes responsibility for the larger class while the regular classroom teacher works with included students, participates in academic and social assessment, participates in planning meetings, often coordinates external resources, and collaborates on reports.

The special class teacher (SCT) comes into play when students are included in the regular classroom for part of their school program and withdrawn for other parts. In this study a teacher is considered an SCT when in charge of a group of students identified as exceptional in a separate class setting for a significant part of their program, even though the teacher may be supporting integration at other times. The split focus of the SCT suggests the possibility of attitude formation differing from that of the resource teacher who normally works in support of inclusion only.

An administrator (AD) is the principal or the vice and/or assistant principal of a school. Principals influence placement and programming of students with disabilities through development of school philosophy, staffing decisions, regulations and routines, organization of planning meetings, arranging for external support personnel and other resources, and liaison with the community.

A second factor relating to the roles described above is that they exist at both elementary (E) and secondary (S) school levels. The student age groups at each level, differences in professional preparation, and the relative sizes of the two types of school, along with other factors may influence the manner in which educators differ in appreciation of inclusion. This study covered both elementary and secondary levels.

A third dynamic is the fact that the very thing being studied, inclusion of students with challenging needs, is an aspect of educational reform already in flux. Whereas the great majority of Canadian school systems include some students identified as exceptional in regular classrooms, at least for part of the school day, they may be considered traditional (T) in that they maintain segregated special education structures for sizeable numbers of students. A lesser, but increasing number of school systems, have eliminated or significantly reduced special education structures in favour of placing all students in regular classes. These are referred to as inclusive (I) systems. This

study involved both T and I systems.

A further consideration was that the body of educators may be viewed as having two parts, those presently serving the system and those studying at university to become teachers. Both groups have developed attitudes toward inclusion, and may differ due to varying experiences, particularly that of being responsible for a classroom. Therefore, university students preparing as future teachers (U) were a part of the study population.

Finally, the study population was selected to represent educators across Canada. It is entirely possible that the great distances characteristic of our nation and provincial responsibility for elementary and secondary education, with no direct federal control or guidance, could result in regional differences in educator attitudes. Therefore, it was determined that the population be national in scope. Centres of study activity were established in Western, Central, and Atlantic Regions. National coordination was a function of Central Region.

Measurement Systems

Three measurement systems were employed to achieve triangulation of data: one on one interviews; survey questionnaire; and spontaneous written commentary.

Educator Opinion Questionnaire

The Educator Opinion Questionnaire or EOQ (Bunch, 1992) was employed to survey educator attitudes to inclusion. The EOQ (see Appendix B) comprises 70 items drawn from a review of relevant literature, a review of existing survey forms in the area, interviews with school personnel, parents, and advocates for inclusion, and individuals with disabilities. Though the 70 items were distributed randomly through the questionnaire, they divided into ten sets of seven items each. Each item set was associated with a central issue of inclusion as identified from the above sources. These ten issues focussed on working conditions/relationships or on professional/personal attitude to inclusive education. Some 2250 surveys were distributed in cooperating schools with a return of 1492 or 67 per cent. Discussions of results may be found in Appendix C.

Spontaneous Written Comments

The final page of the EOQ provided opportunity for respondents to offer spontaneous written comments. Comments were read through, divided by topic, and coded. Categories so generated were reviewed and reduced in numbers as it became apparent that some topics could be collapsed. Method of category generation followed Bogdan and Biklen (1992).

Voluntary spontaneous comments were offered by 345 survey respondents. Discussion may be found in Appendix D.

Interviews

Interview participants were selected through a call for volunteers from among survey respondents. Volunteers were selected from among the regular classroom teacher, administrator, resource teacher, special class teacher, and university student teacher groups.

Interviews were arranged confidentially on an individual basis at a mutually convenient time and place. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were tape recorded. A set of prepared questions guided interviews (see Appendix A). The full research team including research assistants reviewed a draft of questions and reworked these to unanimous satisfaction during a lengthy preparatory meeting. Care was taken to control possible sources of unreliability as noted by Mueller (1986) and in accordance with guidelines provided by Bogdan and Biklen (1992).

Interviews provided the richest information on educator attitudes of the three data sources. It is via interviews that educator and researcher have opportunity to discuss the pluses and minuses of inclusion most completely. The researcher can delve beneath the surface of responses to examine the bases of attitudes held.

It is within this analysis that discussion extends past mere presentation of data to interpretation. A picture and explanation of why educators respond as they do, rather than the simple presentation of how educators respond, is developed. Thus, the bulk of the findings in this report are based on interview data.

Note that participant statements have been quoted verbatim. Some quotes may contain grammatical inaccuracies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Interview transcripts were analysed to develop categories for discussion using qualitative procedures suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1992). This process resulted in the development of seven categories.

- Soundness of concept of inclusion
- Concerns of regular classroom teachers
- Regular classroom teacher and resource teacher
- Administrator support
- Regular classroom teacher responsibility
- Effect on regular students
- Effect on included students

SOUNDNESS OF CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

Inclusion, to be accepted and successful, before anything else, must be viewed by educators as educationally sound practice. The fact that including some students might be challenging in terms of teacher workload, teacher stress, availability of support personnel and materials, or lack of teacher experience, is as true for other educational reforms as it may be for inclusive education. These practical factors may be dealt with over time as appropriate adjustments are made. Moreover, if educators believe any reform to be educationally without merit, acceptance of that reform will be halting at best, and eventually it will be discarded.

Do educators believe inclusion to be sound educational practice, to have merit? Opponents of inclusion, including educators, researchers, and parents, argue that any merit is exceeded by drawbacks. Waldron (1995) lists 15 perceived drawbacks. Only one concern, having to do with the possibility of rejection in the regular classroom and resultant lessened academic and social

development, touches on whether or not inclusion is educationally sound. All others dealt with funding, lack of educator preparation, and such. Indeed, the strongest argument, that "there is not yet enough empirical evidence to support the superiority of one educational setting over another for delivery of service to exceptional pupils" (Stanovich and Jordan, 1995, p. 4), begs the question of educational soundness as these authors also point out that "the alternatives, including segregated placement are ineffective." To the best of our knowledge, the question of whether educators across the board consider inclusive practice to be educationally sound remains unanswered.

The question of educational soundness was seen to be of such fundamental importance for inclusionary practice that it was the first question asked during interviews. As noted previously, interviews were regarded as offering the greatest potential for delving beneath surface reactions to the genuine wellsprings of educational response to inclusion. For example, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) suggest that the interview approach possesses particular respect as a means of understanding "in considerable detail, how people such as teachers, principals, and students think and how they came to develop the perspectives they hold" (p. 2).

Interview questions for the present research were designed on the basis of previous survey (EOQ) based studies (Bunch, 1992; Bunch & Finnegan, 1993; Valeo, 1995) which served to provide general indications of educator attitudes to a variety of issues regarding inclusion. From these earlier studies, and from other sources, it became obvious that some educators held positive attitudes toward inclusive practice and saw much merit in it, whereas others questioned it vigorously. What remained unclear was whether this second group saw any merit in inclusion. Perhaps concern with practical challenges of implementation cast an opaque shadow over other aspects of the thinking of this group.

Responses on the Educator Opinion Questionnaire (EOQ) in this study

were helpful in this sense, but not as revealing. At the statistical level EOQ respondents were slightly more positively than negatively disposed toward considering inclusion as educationally sound. Elementary level educators tended to be somewhat more positive than were their secondary colleagues, and administrators, resource teachers and special class teachers tended to be more positive than their regular classroom colleagues. A final leaning was for elementary teachers in inclusively structured systems to see inclusion as more educationally sound than other groups, sometimes at a level of significance. The present EOQ analysis revealed general positionings on the issue, but did not reveal underlying reasons for positions taken. A more detailed discussion of EOQ results may be found in Appendix C.

Considerable care was given to phrasing the first guiding question and its conceptualizing introductory statement for the one to one interviews. To address any positive aspects of inclusion directly and to avoid focus on educator concerns only, the first interview question and its introductory statement became:

> *Many teachers indicate that they believe inclusion of students with exceptionalities to be good educational practice.*
>
> *Why would they hold this position?*

Though responses varied, a set of general reasons why inclusion was seen as good educational practice became apparent in analysis. These reasons have been interpreted as the source of positive attitudes toward the educational soundness of inclusive practice held by respondents, or attributed to others by respondents. In essence positive aspects were:

- Student Rights and Equity
- Diversity within Society

- Enhanced Learning
- Mutual Benefit for All Students
- Benefits for Included Students
- Benefits for Regular Students

Student Rights and Equity

As student rights and equity open a far reaching societal discussion, and one with fundamental impact on inclusive education, it is dealt with first. Inclusion as a student right and as equitable education was a central element for a number of interviewees. Some respondents came right to the point.

> *Because every student is entitled to as much of a regular education as possible.*

> *First of all, it comes back to one's rights.*

Others elaborated or provided a general discussion which, when taken together, suggested a positive attitude.

> *Experience has shown that the ghettoisation of children, in any capacity, where it be equity issues through race, or culture, whatever, does not help children blend in society .... It's not good for the dominant group ... because it gives them such a limited perspective on the world.*

> *I guess if you're a teacher .... and your heart is with the students .... you want to help them feel better about themselves, help them succeed, help them become the best that they can be as human beings, that you don't isolate or distinguish between different needs and different difficulties, or different gifts.*

On occasion a respondent made the argument in reverse.

To me the most over-riding factor (would be) that segregated classes, no matter what kind of a set up you have, the child in such a situation misses out on quite a bit of why students are educated in public schools.

Though couched in various ways, responses implied an attitude, among at least some educators, that **issues of equity and rights were involved in decisions to include students with challenging needs in regular classrooms.** This perception crossed all educator roles, elementary and secondary schools, and traditional and inclusive systems.

Diversity Within Society

A basic argument for a significant number of respondees focussed on the diversity of society and appropriateness of schools reflecting that diversity. Some interviewees were formal and articulate in their comments.

I think we live in a heterogenous society and the classroom should reflect our society as a whole. I don't believe that children should be put in homogenous groupings that are different from the real world.

Others were more terse and colloquial.

We all live in one world. And we all live here together. And I just think it's the philosophy of our society to include everybody.

A subtheme linking to an appreciation for the diversity of society was the value of diverse classrooms in preparing all students for eventual adult responsibility.

The biggest thing is that we live in an inclusive society, and so, by working on a daily basis in an inclusive school, in your classroom, you're helping all children .... So when you go out into the world of work, and pursue education past your local school, you're going to be

in an environment that deals with variety.

Teachers look at these students being part of society, long term. They need to be integrated with their peer group in order to be socially accepted, in order to be academically successful, and eventually an individual part of the working community.

Representatives of almost every educator group in this study made the diverse society argument. Interestingly, this perspective was not mentioned by special class teachers. Certainly it appears that one element forming the attitudes of educators to placement of students is **their appreciation of the diverse society about them, and the eventual role all students, disabled or able, will play in that society**.

Enhanced Learning

More interview respondents commented on the value of regular class placement in terms of opportunity for learning than on any other topic. Comments related to a range of perceptions. A view of the regular classroom as the most appropriate context for promotion of learning compared to other settings characterized various responses.

Because they see that the student gains a lot by being in a classroom and achieving ... achieving in a "regular" classroom, rather than being segregated by themselves in a little room.

Probably because it allows these students to function normally in a class.

Some students with exceptionalities can also learn from students in the regular population, good behaviours as well as some bad behaviours ... Some students will raise themselves to the level of students that they're with.

The regular classroom was regarded by others as the appropriate place for all learners, and that all children are learners.

My opinion is that, if you believe all children learn, all people can learn, then of course they should be included, as everyone should be.

Inclusion talks to that we are all learners. We are together in this society. We all have different things to contribute and learn from each other.

Such attitudes extended to one special class teacher. This individual provided possibly the most cogent statement of this view.

Many teachers believe that every child can learn, one way or the other. So they want them with them. Why not give them a chance? Everyone can learn.

On the other hand, one regular classroom teacher saw inclusion as the first choice, but believed it cannot be achieved in this world.

Well, it is good educational practice .... In theory, in a utopian world, it's the perfect way to educate, but this is not a utopian world.

Finally, a number of respondents simply stated that the regular classroom worked for all students and that is what teachers would expect.

Because it works. It works for that particular student. It works for the other students in the class. It works for the parents. And it can work for the teacher as well. It can work for everyone.

Many people hold that position because they've found through the actual experience that it works for them and it works for children.

Probably most teachers would say that .... because they really believe it probably is the best thing for <u>most kids</u> at most times.

A traditional system administrator summarized much of the above in one lengthy sentence.

I guess it comes from a basic philosophy about how children learn best and just the sense that all children can and should learn, that they should be together as much as possible, that there are social benefits, large social benefits, to children from all different backgrounds to be together in one setting.

One might suggest that some educators saw regular class placement as emancipating. It was seen as **a venue for some students with challenging needs to reveal their potential** and it widened the concept of who is a learner in our society. Such positive attitudes outweighed the views of the few who felt inclusive education desirable, but unattainable. Others inserted reminders that, while inclusion had value, it also presented practical challenges.

Mutual Benefit for all Students

In addition to the various quotes which suggest general values found with inclusion, other respondents indicated specific areas of benefit for both regular and included students.

A lot of times, I think that the children, not just the children that have the special needs, benefit, but also the children in the class, their peers.

Because they think students can learn from each other, from behaviours, and can learn from role models of each other.

Having them in the regular classroom allows students to be made aware of their positive attributes and they become more familiar with them. I think it benefits most of society in that way. And it also benefits those who are disabled in some way

Though most responses throughout these short discussions of what values may be found in inclusion are uniformly positive in nature and suggestive of fundamentally positive attitudes toward inclusive education, a few were equivocal.

A lot of teachers, with some general reluctance, agreed that it's

probably fair that, where possible, these kids have the right to be with other kids because ... there's enough of a trade off of the benefits versus the negative.

Nevertheless, the majority of educators interviewed appear to hold the belief that inclusion is good educational practice and/or understand why other educators might feel similarly. **A general positive effect for regular and included students was posited, as well as one for the wider society.**

Benefits for Included Students

Direct benefits to the education and self regard of students with challenging needs also were put forward. These clustered into three areas: socialization; peer models; and self esteem.

Development of social strength as an opportunity for growth was seen through regular classroom placement.

They're part of a normal setting to grow socially, and be part of the everyday affair of being at school, and not being put aside and given very, very special treatment.

They [teachers] see the benefits. At the primary level particularly where a lot of the curriculum revolves around socialization, and learning from others, and cooperative type strategies.

Again, while making a similar point, a special class teacher's phrasing suggested recognition of benefit, but with reserve.

Well, it gives the students a chance to interact with the regular education and not just be in a classroom segregated .... So it's just probably for the interaction.

Various responses indicated that having regular students as models produced positive effect. The belief that children learn from other children came through strongly. Socialization effect was tied closely to peer modelling.

Within a regular classroom children get the benefit of the social skills of the other kids.

They're able to model other kids. They're able to adapt to everyday situations more readily.

The change that I see in the dependent handicapped kids when they associate with our other students is phenomenal.

I think it's definitely sound for students with special needs to know what the norms are that they are striving to meet.

To some educators the opportunity for peer modelling and resultant socialization and other growth alters the sense of self of included students.

It reinforces self esteem for these students.

So that all students can feel part of a group, so that they don't feel excluded or separated from what everyone else is doing.

It gives those children a chance to be involved in the "normal" world, and not be segregated, or feel that they are different, or left out.

One traditional system regular class teacher spoke to the effect of placement, but from the opposite side of the coin.

With special ed classes, per se, there's a kind of mentality that's built in. Kids start to think they're dummies because they're in the dummy class.

Those educators noting specific benefits for included students **credited the regular classroom and those in it with considerable power and positive influence.** They believed that peer example would contribute to social development. Some also considered curriculum, cooperative activities, and exposure to the daily round of school affairs to impact on students with

challenging needs. A number pointed to higher self esteem as a spin off benefit of inclusion. These and other effects of inclusion on included students will be taken up again in a discussion focussed on that topic.

Benefits for Regular Students

Numbers of educators approximately equal to those represented in the preceding section found value for regular students through inclusive experiences. Development of a more encompassing understanding of the world and of people in it was regarded as a major plus.

> *There's a lot of learning in the classroom besides what applies strictly to the curriculum. There's a lot of social attitudes that are fostered in the classroom. It's important for us to relate to all types of people. That all people are special.*

Extending from this point, and mentioned with similar frequency, was the perception that exposure to those with differences was common sense, would enlarge conceptual understanding of differences, and pave the way for stronger interaction in the future.

> *Having them in the regular classroom allows students to be made aware of their positive attributes and they become more familiar with them.*

> *It's only common sense that ... the kids who are in the classroom should have experience working with people of different capabilities, different abilities.*

> *From my experience of the teachers, and my own opinion, that it's good to have as many different people in the classroom, so people learn to get along and appreciate, rather than to throw stones and to denigrate other people.*

> *I guess for the most part, it would be a social factor, as well as a learning factor, to accept people with disabilities.*

It allows all of us to become more aware of people, more accepting of people with differences, that it makes us open to change, and to new ideas.

Educators believe interaction between regular students and others with a diverse range of abilities contributes to social, humanitarian, and conceptual development. Comments suggest strong appreciation of the potential value of inclusion for the general populations of our school systems.

Summary of Soundness of Concept of Inclusion

Why would educators hold the position that inclusion is good educational practice? When asked this question regular classroom teachers, resource teachers, special class teachers, and administrators across Canada gave many reasons. Whether at the elementary or secondary level, whether practicing within school systems continuing to support both regular and special education structures, or in those having inclusive policies, educators found much of value in bringing all students together in the regular classroom. **While many interviewees noted challenges to implementation, there was little doubt that the great majority held positive attitudes with regard to the potential of inclusive education for all students.** Interviews, more so than surveys and spontaneous comments on survey forms, rendered this fact apparent.

Prominent among the values seen was that **inclusion reflected the diversity of society.** If society was diverse and that was accepted, why should schools not be equally diverse? Some tied this point to the larger societal issue of racial and cultural diversity. In doing so, they echoed an argument advanced by proponents of inclusion (Karagiannis, S. Stainback, & W. Stainback, 1996a; Sapon-Shevin, 1992; Waldron, 1996). Others advanced the view that **regular classroom placement was simple recognition of student rights and equity in practice.** This, too, was an argument noted by commentators on inclusion (Skrtic, 1996; Stanovich & Jordan, 1995).

Beyond this social argument, many educators noted the benefits of **enhanced learning from interaction in the regular classroom.** This setting was put forward as that which society had determined as the most appropriate

learning environment for learners of all kinds. A variety of educational advantages for both challenged and other learners, particularly in the social realm, but also in the academic realm, were mentioned.

If what educators say they believe, or understand others to believe, reflects attitude toward a particular educational practice, it is apparent that the educators interviewed for this study held and/or understood positive attitudes for inclusive practice. Likewise, it was apparent that educators had concerns regarding implementation. Subsequent discussions will examine concerns and values more intensively.

CONCERNS OF REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS

From earlier studies, review of relevant literature, and discussions with educators, it was obvious that teachers are concerned about the effect inclusion would have on them as individuals and as a group. Bunch (1992) found that "whereas teachers believe inclusion to be a positive practice and to have desirable effect, it is viewed as demanding of the teacher" (p. 130). Many teachers regard their present workload as too onerous and believe it inappropriate that they should be asked to do more (Waldron, 1995). Such concerns arise routinely in situations where teacher educators discuss the continuing move to include more students with disabilities in regular classrooms, as they did in interviews across Canada.

No doubt existed in the minds of interviewees from all educator groups in this study, that teachers held concerns in a number of areas affecting their roles and their capacities with regard to inclusion. Based on earlier research using the Educator Opinion Questionnaire, responses to two areas (Adequacy of Teacher Preparation, and Teacher Self-Confidence in Full Inclusion) were combined into this section, Concerns of Regular Classroom Teachers. Responses to the guiding stimulus question:

What specific concerns might teachers have?

stimulated forthright responses touching on many facets of inclusive classroom practice.

It is logical that people respond to a task in terms of their sense of whether or not they can undertake that task successfully given their professional capacities. The capacities of interest in this study, of course, are those of the classroom teacher.

Statements of perception may be seen as explanatory of attitudes of acceptance or resistance among teachers. Ajzen (1989) picks up on this point. Attitude to Ajzen is " an individual's disposition to respond favourably or unfavourably to an object, person, institution, or event, or to any other discriminable aspect of the individual's world" (p. 241). Responses of regular classroom teachers, resource teachers, special class teachers, and administrators indicate their favourable or unfavourable dispositions, their resistance or acceptance, to inclusion of students with challenging needs when effect on regular classroom teacher and regular classroom teacher workload are considered.

Interview data are particularly revealing. Responses fell into four areas:

- Professional Adequacy.
- Student Progress.
- Workload.
- Fear of Insufficient Support

Professional Adequacy

Response in this area focussed on perception of insufficient professional preparation and its effects. Effects of stress and professional and personal inadequacy were noted.

Teacher responses reinforce their view of teaching as a profession. Those entering first undertake a program of professional preparation designed to provide them with the basic knowledge and skills to adequately manage a classroom of students. It seems apparent that beginning teachers could be anticipated to consider their preparation in any area of education to be modest. However, responses from participants in this study suggest perception of deeper levels of inadequacy for including students with challenging needs than one would expect. All educator groups, however defined, commented directly on lack of professional preparation for the task of working with included students. Some offered broad statements to the effect that training in this area

had not been offered.

They might not feel they're prepared professionally and they might not have the educational background.

The concern is that they're not equipped. They're not trained.

Some respondents pointed to specific areas lacking in professional preparation.

A lot of teachers are afraid that they don't have the training to follow up with the children.

Some teachers are worried that they don't have the expertise to handle the problems that might come up with varying abilities in students.

Spontaneous comments from EOQ forms reinforced the view that teachers consider themselves insufficiently prepared as professionals.

My teacher training did not include courses on how to teach special needs students.

There has been zero to nil preparation on this topic at the Faculty of Education.

Lack of professional preparation results, for many teachers, in personal and professional feelings of inadequacy and stress. EOQ and spontaneous written comment analyses (see Appendices C & D) reinforce this interpretation.

Conversely, a few educators perceived professional and personal benefit for the teacher working to meet the needs of included students.

When we first started, I was really stressed out. I'll be quite honest with you, I cried several nights when I went home .... but, once we were over the hump, it was a matter of learning to let go and just go with the

flow.

It would affect them as individuals to see the capabilities that human beings have, who find themselves in different states through no fault of their own ... It would improve their character, I'm sure.

The degree of concern regarding professional adequacy for the task of inclusion found during interviews highlighted professional development as an area of concern. Such responses support the conclusion that educators across Canada find preservice education inadequate for preparing future teachers for inclusion, and inservice preparation insufficiently available.

In summary, **educators considered themselves inadequately prepared professionally for the task of inclusion**, indicating **a perception of minimal preparation in Faculties of Education and ongoing professional inservice at the system level.** Though a few suggested that initial stress and concern would be lessened with time, it was clear that inadequate professional preparation disposed educators to look on inclusion with trepidation.

Student Progress

Allied to perceptions of professional inadequacy were concerns about student progress. These divided into two areas: concern that teachers could not meet the needs of included students sufficiently, and concern that regular student progress would be affected negatively.

The first concern, that focussed on progress of included students, related directly to teacher self evaluation.

Feeling like you're not doing a good enough or a comprehensive job. It's you may not be able to see any effect on the students right away.

Stress. Stress .... I've been working with a special ed kid and I was trying to teach a kid how to read .... We went through all the things we could. I couldn't reach this kid. A teacher wants to teach.

It's extra stress that perhaps you're not doing enough. Are they

progressing at a rate that's acceptable? And could you be doing more? I find that's a constant nagging fear I have.

Stress. Wanting to do the best for everyone and not being able to do it.

There is little wonder that some teachers show evidence of resisting inclusion. It is well known that we tend to avoid areas in which we believe ourselves to be less than talented.

More frequently mentioned than issues of self evaluation in terms of progress of those included, were concerns regarding detrimental effect on the teacher's ability to spend sufficient time with other students.

I think the major concern at this point is how will I deal with the rest of the kids? How will it affect them?

A specific concern I think many teachers would have, that it [inclusion] would affect their ability to program for their regular students.

Educators other than the regular classroom teacher also were concerned about time availability for regular students, as these comments from support personnel indicate.

They may feel that the other children are being neglected, if they're spending too much time with the special needs child.

Probably worrying about their other students' progress at the same time as they might be concerned that they might get a student who might fall behind.

Perceptions of lack of progress for included students and insufficient time for regular students in inclusive settings are high level concerns for educators. Spontaneous written comments supported this view. Despite the fact that research evidence increasingly documents that included students perform as well as or better than they would in special placements,

that there are benefits for regular students through inclusion without loss of learning, and that it is possible to distribute teacher time appropriately to all students, many educators perceive the opposite with resultant effect on their attitudes to inclusion.

Teacher Workload

Attempting to create an inclusive environment where the teacher meets the needs of all students is seen by many to result in an inappropriate regular class teacher workload. This view supports the previously noted fears of stress and burn out. When asked about workload, study participants routinely responded that workload would be heavy. Some put it directly and simply.

> *Incredibly increased stress. Incredibly increased workload.*

Others elaborated their concerns to a degree.

> *They may have to do more work ... whether it's research or understanding what the students might need in the classroom, whether they might have to change their teaching styles.*

As with progress of included students, other educators shared RCT concerns.

> *They'd certainly be concerned about the stress .... in terms of the work they would have to do over and above the preparation for the regular students.*

> *Maybe the added workload of having to change, adapt lessons for a specific child.*

Two themes, one major and one minor, come through under workload. The first revolves around a general perception that workload would increase to the detriment of teachers. This view was certainly in line with spontaneous written comments on EOQ's (see Appendix D). RCT's were viewed as already working hard and including students with challenging needs as simply adding

straws to the back of the proverbial camel. The minor theme brought in the concern that work would increase due to new curricular demands. Teachers would need to learn new material, adapt and modify curriculum, and alter teaching approaches.

Respondents in this study **perceived inclusion as being an addition to what they could reasonably be expected to do.** A sense of students with challenging needs being over and above, and not a part of, the accepted regular class student body, was imparted. Included students were seen to require individualized curricular approaches and this would require more effort and more time.

Fear of Insufficient Support

Perhaps the most significant educational concern was that regular classroom teachers would be left to their own devices when including students. Fears that existing special educational supports would be withdrawn and expectations of the regular classroom teacher increased were most commonly reported.

Resources:

Our experience is that {resource personnel} gradually are pulled out of the system and then there is no one to assist these people [included students] with their physical needs.

Time:

Appropriate materials. Time to create those appropriate materials. Time to make sure that the student is staying on task.

Personal Time:

I've got these extra kids in my classroom. That means extra meeting time outside the regular classroom, outside the regular day.

Tied to the above concerns, and under the general heading of the teacher

feeling left alone to do a taxing job, are concerns regarding safety and accountability. A limited number of interviewees saw personal and professional liability as an issue.

> *One of the real concerns is that all children have to take the test, the department of education test every year .... We are judged on how well our students do on these tests.*

> *Lawsuits. Another one that we hear more and more. Am I legally responsible? Am I liable?*

> *Lifting. If you ever had to lift. This little girl got very heavy from the beginning of the year to the end .... I guess I was fearful for her safety a lot of times. We never left her without an adult being with her.*

Concerns such as those in the above discussion were very real and present to those advancing them. However, they were not held by all.

> *There's a lot of meeting time. You need to talk about certain students. You know there's an effect, but it doesn't bother me. Like, I think it's something that, as a professional, I do.*

> *In terms of physical disabilities that I've had with the teaching assistants there, it's not been particularly stressful. Nor do I feel I've had to dedicate any unusual amount of time.*

> *They're worried about all kinds of things ... They'll be worried about the students .... They'll be worried about responsibility. What happens if the student gets injured? .... But, you know, usually they {the worries] get alleviated once a person starts working.*

Summary of Concerns of Regular Classroom Teachers

Educator concerns regarding negative effect on regular classroom teachers was widespread, with particular focus on those in the regular classroom. **Professional preparation at both the preservice and inservice**

levels was viewed as inadequate. Perception of professional inadequacy resulted in **reduced self confidence and increased stress** in the view of many study participants. Concern for progress of included students and **equitable time for regular students** added to these feelings, as did **perceptions that teacher workload would be overly onerous.** Finally, many educators were convinced that RCT's would be left to their own devices, without resources and time, to deal with the needs of students in an inclusive classroom.

REGULAR CLASS TEACHER AND RESOURCE TEACHER

A primary support for the regular classroom teacher is the resource teacher. Respondents from all educator groups made this point. Despite general appreciation for resource teachers, views differed on whether RT support should be delivered in the regular classroom or in a designated resource room, and whether support should be in the form of teaching, advice, or provision of materials. Some respondents were of the belief that the RT had a coordinating role for included students, whereas others found the RCT to hold primary responsibility. Still others regarded the RCT - RT relationship as one of equal responsibility for students with special needs. Likewise, opinion differed on whether the RT should share teaching roles for both included and regular students with the RCT. Finally, a number of interviewees saw no need for any change for RT's, and a few stated that they did not know enough about the RT role to suggest what it might be in an inclusive environment.

Resource Teacher as Support to the Regular Teacher

Programming role.

By far the most common view of the RT was that of support person. As noted, support was interpreted in various ways. One major interpretation was that of RT as a source of programming information which would enable the RCT to teach included students with increased effect.

The resource can be used to help you set up programs within your classroom. So, again, you're taking ownership of that child or setting

up the program.

If the teacher is a resource teacher, then that teacher needs to be a resource to the classroom teacher, to find those programs that are available, to help with the child, to deal with outside agencies.

Strategies role.

Alternately, RT support was reported in the form of suggested teaching strategies which the RCT would put into play.

They are the person who should have the expertise in terms of providing the strategies ... to all teachers.

I prefer the resource teacher should use her allocation of time by researching, writing down some strategies that I could try.

Expanded service role.

Broadening of the strategies role to that of a provider of an extended range of supports was favoured by other respondents.

As a co-assessor. Someone to help plan, provide resources for the actual planning, inservicing teachers.

It would be positive if the resource teacher could meet with the regular teacher weekly on planning time, to discuss program, how it's running, what could be changed to make it better .... to do some analysis and observation of the students.

Certainly being part of the collaborative team ... bringing the parent and the school together, and setting goals and objectives. Sometimes timelines to meet those goals and objectives. Any kind of assisting with materials or alternative ways of assessing.

First and foremost, a provider of ideas, perhaps materials, and emotional support. They should attend case conferences, and interview

parents as much as they can.

Consultant role.

All of the above place the RT in a partially consultative role. The notion of a full-time consultant role was attractive to a number of educators. Some administrators indicated clear preference for employing the RT as a consultant.

> *I see the resource teacher being more of a consultant, a professional colleague of the regular class teacher as opposed to the person who's "responsible for and provides the program for the special kids."*

> *They should be like a consultant in the school and they should be a key part of the collaborative team effort.*

A number of other educators suggested consultative functions for the RT. The majority of regular class teachers and a number of resource teachers and special class teachers preferred the resource teacher to deliver service directly to students in the classroom with few favouring consultant services. Principals, in contrast, emphasized the consultant role. This may be an indication of different positionings on the role of the RT between administrators and other teacher groups.

Facilitator/Coordinator role.

Other views of the appropriate role of an RT were advanced as well. Some respondents suggested that the RT be a facilitator, a person who prepares the way for included students and deals with a variety of other support personnel.

> *[The RT] has to be a facilitator with good communication skills, able to deal with a lot of personalities, a lot of frustration, a lot of uncertainties.*

> *Facilitator I guess .... Helping where they can. We've gone to a*

resource facilitator model here .... It's more of a staff development role.

The facilitator model is one of a number of conceptualizations of the RT role specifically associated with inclusive practice as compared to mainstreaming or integration practice as they are commonly practiced. It contains elements of the coordinator model, a model which some see as a cross between facilitator and decision maker.

[The RT should] be the person who keeps the overview of the child .... Particularly because that person is more likely the one who ... can pass [information] on to the next teacher.

Advisor, partner in the preparation of materials and curriculum, and meeting the needs of the students. And case managers.

All of the above interviewee comments reinforce the belief that **regular class teachers and resource teachers can work together to meet the needs of included students.** Multiple perspectives of ways in which the RT can function to support both students and RCT's were noted. Differences in exact functions and levels of responsibility of RT's emerge from the data, but there is unanimity in the belief that these two professional groups can work together with value. This finding echos responses to the EOQ, responses which indicated positive attitudes regarding the working relationship between regular classroom teacher and resource teacher.

Site and Type of Support Delivery

Regular classroom.

By far **educators considered the optimum site of RT support delivery to be the regular classroom.** That was where the RCT was and that was where they believed the RT should be.

The person [RT] has to become a human being. Cannot be sitting out in his office or her office. Cannot be seen as someone not aiding the classroom teacher .... Get into the classroom. Don't theorize. Get into

the classroom where you're working with the teacher and the student.

The relationship between the RCT and the RT was open to interpretation in various ways, but there was strong belief for cooperation within the regular classroom. Some educators believed the proper focus of the RT in the regular classroom to be the included students.

The best role for the resource teacher is in the classroom, working with those children, lowering the PTR, aiding the individuals, giving them the one on one time they need.

The first thing [is] as a resource. Teacher second. You're there as a resource to the [included] kids, as a resource to the teacher. And you also have to recognize the rest of the class.

We have a resource teacher work in the classroom with students to help the integration process. We also have resource teachers who work in a confined classroom with only students who are getting resource help.

More educators, however, saw the in-class role as going beyond teacher to included students, one of partner and team teacher. The two professionals were seen to share responsibility for all students.

The resource teacher should be there to help the classroom teacher with teaching the whole class .... kind of like team teaching.

To work together as a team. Nobody has any set job. I think they should work it out together.

Partnership.

Special class teachers and resource teachers were particularly strong in the belief that a partnership should exist between the RT and the RCT. Those who preferred the partnership model pointed out what they perceived as salient strengths.

If the student is integrated, or is included in the classroom, so should the resource teacher .... This person can team teach ... and show some different teaching styles ... some different techniques.

It should almost be like a team teaching role. Where you can meet with the teacher in the classroom, but then, other times, where you can meet and plan things together out of the classroom.

Some respondents, however, argued that within the partnership there should be no doubt that the regular classroom teacher had a leadership role in coordinating activities within the classroom. Comments making this point came from regular classroom teachers.

Together. The classroom teachers have the final say, but they {RCT & CT] should be together. They should be professional.

The resource teacher should understand that they're not in charge .... Your role is to support the teacher, to support the student.

Strong support existed for the creation of a **partnership between regular classroom teacher and resource teacher,** whatever the agreed role of the RT. There was indication that educators believed that a strong working relationship could be developed. It is interesting to note, however, that a fair number of resource and special class teachers made a point of arguing for an equitable partnership while some regular teachers emphasized that the RCT was, in fact, senior partner with ultimate responsibility for the entire regular classroom program.

Pull out preferences.

Whereas the majority view favoured a model with the RT working within the regular classroom, some respondents saw a place for the withdrawal or pull out or withdrawal model. Suggestions included a combined "in-class cum withdrawal model":

They should work cooperatively with the main classroom. Once in a

while as a pull out ... It could be the regular teacher.

Others preferred a straight forward withdrawal approach. Secondary level respondees in particular elected this latter approach.

The resource teacher is better served to have a resource centre. The "old [withdrawal] have the student come to them [model]."

Consultant. A support person where if the student is having a lot of difficulty in the class, they should be able to go to a resource teacher ... instead of staying in the class and struggling.

It may be worth noting that the **exponents of the straight forward withdrawal model were limited to teachers who self identified themselves as working in special class situations** (SCT's). It is worth noting, as well, that the resource room model is characteristic of many traditional and inclusive system secondary schools working with students with special needs. There are often differences, however, in how the resource room is used, for what subjects, and for what amount of time.

No need for roles change.

Finally, some educators foresaw no need for change in the roles of resource teachers from those already established. Reasons varied from, "I guess I can't relate to that [question] because the secondary panel doesn't have resource teachers", to satisfaction with present levels of support, and to the difficulty of altering already set roles. Such responses were in the minority and stemmed entirely from the regular teacher group.

Who Determines Resource Teacher Role?

It is obvious that various possibilities exist in the minds of educator groups with regard to the role of RT's in inclusion. A reflection of these differences may be seen in variation in preference for who should determine the roles of the RCT and the RT in support of included students. Already noted are variations with regard to that role among educator groups. When asked:

Who should be involved in determining the roles of the regular teacher and the resource teacher?

the majority of respondents preferred a team approach. However, variation in the format of the team, as well as other non-team designs were put forward.

Triad team model.

A team consisting of various combinations of school staff only was the most common response. Within this, and overall among responses, preference was for a small team consisting of regular class teacher, resource teacher, and principal.

It should be a three way street between administration, the teacher, and the resource teacher.

The administrator involved ... the person charged with coordinating inclusion or resource facilitators ... the teachers should be involved.

A few teachers suggested a conflict resolution role for the principal, possibly indicating some element of friction between RCT and RT.

The resource teacher and the classroom teacher. They should be able to define who's doing what .... Sometimes, however, if the teacher's not willing to take on ownership, perhaps the principal has to intervene.

The regular teacher can sort it out with the resource teacher supposedly. If there's a conflict, the principal should support the regular teacher, 'cause they're there with the child the majority of the time.

Argument for the principal having a somewhat different, more superior role than other members of the three person team was advanced in other comments as well.

Those people [RCT & RT], plus the principal, the V.P., etc. But the

leadership has to come from the principal.

You need input from both [RCT & RT], but the administration still has the clear and final say.

Others, particularly resource teachers, saw the regular classroom teacher having a central role as the person to whom all students in a class are assigned.

The regular teacher to start with, because it's primarily their classroom. Then the learning support teacher [RT], and with the support of the administration, and the school.

The regular teachers have a big say in that because they're the ones' who are dealing with the kids all the time.

Diffuse team model.

Though the preferred team model was the triad, some saw the team as more diffuse. The majority of such positionings brought in system personnel from beyond the school, while others argued that it was up to the school staff to determine roles jointly.

The [system] administration, the principal, the superintendent of special programs.

The school board sets broad parameters, and then it's up to the school team.

Both teachers definitely, and your school administrator, and I think, sometimes maybe curriculum supervisors.

A minority group believed the team should extend past the school and the system to parents, and even to students.

Both the teachers concerned and the administration. Also the parents

have to have some say.

The resource teacher should be involved in that. I think the regular teacher should be involved. I think administration has to be involved. And, partly, the parents. And, you know, I don't see any reason why the students couldn't's be involved as well.

Principal model.

Counterbalancing the majority view that a team should determine the roles of RCT's and RT's, a solid number of participants saw the responsibility to lie directly with the principal.

It's the principal [who] sets the tone of the school. It's her job and I think she should be responsible and involved directly.

All policy that comes from the Ministry ... has to be interpreted by the principal. The involvement of the principal will drive the philosophy of the school.

This view of the predominance of the principal in deciding roles within the school was second only to that of the triad of regular teacher, resource teacher, and principal. Even in the triad some pointed to the leading role of the principal. The strength of this perspective may be recognition that the principal is the school leader, and that other educators expect that person to set and model the direction of the school. It's weakness may be the that collegial decision making may not be characteristic of some schools.

Summary of Regular Teacher and Resource Teacher Relationship

Educators see value in having resource teachers in support of regular teachers and included students. The actual activities regarded as appropriate to the RT vary considerably. Provision of direct assistance to the RCT through programming suggestions, ideas for teaching and management strategies, provision of resources, consultative advice, facilitation of inclusion for students with special needs, and coordination of the inclusion program were among the many suggestions made. There was some indication of

difference of opinion between AD's and other educator groups on appropriate role deployment of the RT. **AD's tended toward the consultative role more so than the in-class role.** In this regard a difference within other educator groups may be seen as well, with some favouring the in -class, direct support model, and some agreeing with AD's in favouring the consultant role.

The majority of educators, however, clearly viewed the place of work of the RT to be the regular classroom. Distancing oneself from the regular classroom distanced one from the teacher and the students requiring support. Once in the regular classroom, however, another difference in deployment of the RT role surfaced. A number of educators perceived the role as focussed on included students. More, in contrast, believed the RT to be a partner with the RCT in working as a team to the benefit of all students.

Some support was given to the withdrawal of students with challenging needs for special teaching in a resource room. The majority of educators recommended that withdrawal could be undertaken by the RT, but some suggested this role for the RCT. The resource room idea was favoured more at the secondary level than at the elementary.

The differing positions taken on the role of RT suggest either differing practices from school to school, and even within the same school settings, or lack of attention to defining and clarifying the role of the RT. That this latter case is true in at least some situations was one of the findings of Zarowsky (1995). Compounding the differing views on RT role was the finding in the present study that **three distinct models were suggested for who should define RT role**: a triad model of RCT, RT, and AD; a diffuse team model involving these three, but also others; and a model in which the principal has responsibility.

Overall, four points stand out: **educators believe that a resource teacher in support of the regular classroom teacher is desirable; these two professionals can work well together; views of the RT role vary** considerably, even from school to school of the same system; **views differ on whom should be responsible for determining RT roles in a school.**

ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORT

The inclusion/integration literature is replete with statements that school administrators are key to providing successful experiences for students included in regular classrooms and for their teachers (Henry, 1996; Lupart, 1996; Lupart & Webber (1996); Sage, 1996; Schaffner & Buswell, 1996; Vandover, 1995). Administrators are seen as leaders who will set the tone for schools, assemble necessary supports, work collegially with parents, and extend the school program through community involvement. Schaffner and Buswell (1996) believe it is the responsibility of the school administrator "to set the tone of the school and to ensure decisions are made, challenges are met, and interactions and processes are supported that are consistent with the school's philosophy" (p, 51). However true this may be, a note of caution was sounded by Bunch (1992) who noted that "confidence [among teachers] in administrator support was equivocal to begin with and became more so with experience" (p. 130).

Given the key role seen for administrators in inclusion/integration, and the more than ambivalent perceptions of educators regarding actual support, this topic was a primary area of exploration during interviews. Two questions probed educator attitudes to administrator support directly. These were:

1. *What types of support do regular classroom teachers (RCT's) want from administrators (AD's)?*

2. *What type of support do administrators offer?*

As both RCT's and AD's, as well as resource teachers (RT's) and special class teachers (SCT's), were in the interview group, it was possible to obtain a wide ranging view from these questions.

When asked directly to comment on administrator support, responses centred around: a) the administrator as provider of resources, b) the administrator, discipline, and placement, c) the administrator as back up, d) administrator program leadership and example, e) administrator as mentor, and f) the empathetic administrator. The first three may be seen as direct

support, while the latter three may be seen as personal support. A final perception considers the view of some respondents that AD's did not provide any substantial support.

With regard to the two guide questions, it is worthy of note that some respondents did not deal with the second question on actual AD support, but chose to continue discussing hypothetical, desired supports. Respondents were challenged in providing examples of actual support more so than examples of desired support.

Direct Support

Administrator as provider of resources.

Analysis of interview data revealed that RCT's, RT's, and SCT's saw a major role for administrators through provision of various direct resources to the inclusion/integration program. More comments were made in this area than in any other. This is not a surprising finding, given the centrality of personnel and material resources as direct supports for the RCT in conducting the daily program.

Resources desired were varied. Many responses were general appeals for appropriate resources if and when required. However, a number of specific resources were advanced by a few interviewees and are worthy of mention. In addition to the resources discussed below, respondents indicated that RCT's wanted administrators to provide concrete materials and opportunities for advancing professional knowledge through inservice and conferences. The administrator was seen also as the person who could come up with money when it was needed to obtain some resource. These types of resources were not as frequently mentioned as time and resource personnel, however.

Time:

Above all else, respondents believed that RCT's wanted administrators to provide time to meet the real and perceived demands of increased range of ability levels in the regular classroom. Time for planning, time to meet the general needs of the classroom, time for preparation, and time for consultation were mentioned specifically. Other responses suggested a common perception that time was an issue and as it was the administrator who controlled time, the administrator should solve the problem.

Calls for "time" were concentrated in the RCT group more so than in the other three educator groups, though some representatives of all three recognized it as an issue. Regular classroom teachers were more specific than were other educators in the uses to which "time" would be put.

They [AD's] need to consider extra planning time for the teacher with special needs students.

If you have a special needs kid in your classroom, that they [AD's] try not to load your class with a lot of other students, so that you've got a little bit of extra time.

In response to the question regarding what kind of support administrators provided, a limited number of RCT's did state that their administrators worked to provide time. This view tended to be more characteristic of resource teachers and administrators than of other educators. Of interest is the fact that, though the questions were focussed on AD support for RCT's, resource teachers responded in terms of time needed for them to perform their duties. This tendency for respondents to respond in terms of their own roles in the inclusion/integration program, rather than in terms of RCT role, was found throughout this exploration of administrator support. Need for more time was a priority among RCT's and apparently among other educators, but, on the basis of responses, it appeared to be a priority often unmet.

Additional personnel:

Next to time, the resource seen as most desired by RCT's was that of resource personnel. Actual use of resource personnel was not clarified in responses. Some respondents recognized that school level administrators were not in full control of assigning additional resource personnel.

Hiring extra staff.

I want to know that when our enrolment comes up for special needs students that our administrators are fighting to get resource personnel.

Personnel wise, they need to present a case for you to the higher echelons.

Respondents believed RCT's wanted administrators to support them with educational assistants (EA's), resource teachers, and other specialist personnel when such were needed. A number of administrators indicated awareness of the desire for additional resource personnel in their responses.

When it came to stating what AD's actually provided in the way of support, personnel were not frequently mentioned. This discrepancy suggests that this type of support was often not available. However, it was apparent in some responses that AD's were sensitive to the need and acted on it.

[Our principal] did the negotiations at the board level to get us EA's and the support people, and he always tried to keep as many support positions in the school as possible.

[I provide] both personnel and material resources.

Two concrete resources, **time and additional personnel were mentioned with considerable frequency.** The school administrator clearly was seen as the person who had control of these resources, and as the person who should work to provide them to meet school needs. However, in many instances, the AD was seen as clearly to be unsuccessful in acquiring or delivering these resources in sufficient amount.

A relatively thorny issue around these two concrete resources appears to have developed with quite different perceptions between principals and regular classroom teachers.

The administrator, discipline, and placement.

Two other direct contributions teachers could see AD's making were in the areas of placement of included students and the discipline of students. A number of respondents appeared to want the AD to step in when they encountered particular challenge in a student acting out.

Discipline .... When I send a kid out, I want the administrator to

support me.

If there's a problem in a case of... a violent student, that the administration of the school take care of it in a very prompt and effective manner.

Similarly, the AD as ultimate authority on where any student was placed was seen by some as a solution to an anticipated difficult situation. Solution could be in the form of removing a student or protecting class composition or size.

I would like to see the administrators willing to say "No, this is not beneficial for the child, or for the other children in the class. The kid with this exceptionality is not going to be mainstreamed."

If you have a special needs kid in your classroom, that they (AD's) try not of load your class with a lot of other students.

Though all educator groups indicated some favour for the AD holding the final say with regard to discipline and placement, there was significant concentration at the secondary level. Many responses conveyed the perception that inclusion/integration was an option, that the AD saw it as such, and could act if she or he wished.

When asked what supports administrators provided, very few RCT's, RT's (resource teachers), SCT's (special class teachers), or AD's mentioned discipline or amendments to class composition/size. The few comments made related more to attempts to control class size than to other areas.

It is clear that the administrator is regarded as the final arbiter in questions of discipline and class composition/size. Few would disagree that such is, and should be, the case. Equally obvious is that the power of the AD is limited in both areas due to system policy and/or local practice.

Marked differences in perception were found with regard to whether AD's actively supported RCT's in the area of including students with special needs. Which views are closer to the truth as experienced in practice cannot be answered by this study. However, the difference in

perceptions suggests a need for increased communication at the school level.

The administrator as back up.

The final area of direct support seen as desired of their administrators by RCT's was that of back up with parents, with teacher initiated discipline, and for a teacher's approach to teaching in general. Of these, the first drew the most comments. The others, while important to those mentioning them, were far less in number. Members of all four educator groups contributed in this area.

> *When dealing with parents or an outside agency, the whole gamut, they want to feel the administrator is supporting them.*
>
> *They want them to be there for them, to back them up, if there is a problem with special needs, say behaviourally.*
>
> *Facilitation. Don't stand in my way. I've explained what my needs are. Now would you kindly facilitate.*

When interviewees were asked what supports AD's actually offered, references to being backed up were few. Of these most were of AD's backing up RCT's in interactions with parents and of AD's being generally supportive of RCT's including students with challenging needs. An interesting suggestion related to the need for back up with parents, was that there will be some type of conflict over the program offered an included student.

Teachers do look to their school administrators for support of their decisions, whether they be interpersonal or pedagogical. In this way, as in others, for instance when a conflict arises between RCT and RT, teachers are accustomed to seeking an arbiter who will see the value of their position, or at least who will settle the situation. The fact that educators point to back up as a way AD's could support RCT's, but rarely refer to it as a support that AD's actually deliver, may suggest a number of interpretations. One may be that **administrators and regular class teachers differ on need for and appropriateness of AD intervention in various situations.**

In terms of direct, concrete supports such as time, additional personnel,

intervention as a disciplinarian, control of class composition and size, and back up in conflict situations, regular class teachers and other educators looked to the principal. Even taking common limitations on the ability of the principal to deliver all the support a teacher would want under the best of circumstances into consideration, **there was a significant lack of indication that principals were successful in delivering desired supports.** It is hypothesized that administrators and other educators view the job of a principal, with regard to support provision, somewhat differently. This, in turn, is **suggestive of lack of communication between the two groups on issues such as those noted.**

Indirect Support

The following comments turn from direct and fairly concrete supports for which teachers look to AD's, to support through leadership and example, mentorship, and empathy for the challenge of the task of inclusion/integration. Such things figured prominently in educator perceptions of what RCT's wanted as support from AD's.

Leadership and example.

Support through leadership and example are combined for discussion, as they overlap in a number of responses. In general, however, leadership through conceptual and philosophical commitment to bringing as many students as possible together in the regular classroom may be seen as prerequisite to demonstration of that commitment. As Sage (1996) states, "The manner in which administrators exercise symbolic and cultural forces through their attitudes and behaviour is particularly significant when modelling the actions and attitudes necessary for an inclusive environment to prevail" (p. 112).

All educator groups in this study commented in one form or another on the desire of teachers to see their administrators as leaders in creating a positive environment for students with challenging needs, supporting that environment, and monitoring it. Though this topic was mentioned infrequently by RCT's, RT's, and SCT's, it formed a core theme for administrators.

[RCT's] want to see there's a commitment to it. The administration of the school is responsible for the school, sets up the training process, the idea of education, where it's going.

[RCT's] want to see them setting the tone so that other people are accepting.

The subject teacher needs to know the administration is fully supportive of it [inclusion/integration], prepared to provide resources where possible.

Example gives life to commitment. A small number of respondents suggested ways in which the AD could be seen as supportive and understanding of the inclusion of students with challenging needs in a school. Respondents felt that administrators should know how the school and classroom operates with inclusion:

Really only one thing. They [RCT's] have to believe that the administration sees what's going on with the whole program for special ed kids. Classroom teachers are not convinced that the administrator has a clear idea of what's going on.

Talk to the student, work with the student, and see what the teacher has to cope with in the classroom.

Some respondents suggested that administrators should be visible in the school and the classroom, wherever children with challenging needs are involved.

[RCT's] would like to see their administrators visible. And in their classrooms.

Various interpretations of such comments may be taken. That **teachers would like to see their administrators more visible in the school and getting involved in interactions with included students to get a first hand**

idea of the teacher's task, and that such is often not the case, is perhaps the most obvious. That mention of leadership and example were quite infrequent among all educator groups when asked how administrators actually delivered supports this interpretation.

Administrator as mentor.

Teachers, whatever their role in a school, look to their administrators for mentoring support. AD's are often regarded as fonts of knowledge due to the extent of their professional development and experience, and to their position of responsibility. It was not surprising that **teachers wished to look to their administrators for advice and guidance** when faced with the task of inclusion/integration.

Guidance and advice may take many forms: knowledge of available board and external support services; knowledge of professional development opportunities; treating teachers as professionals; suggestions for specific strategies; and serving as a sounding board being among them. Most frequently mentioned were professional development opportunities, being treated as a professional, and serving as a sounding board.

A number of respondees intimated by their responses that they wanted to obtain more information and expertise regarding inclusion/integration. They looked to their administrators to tell them of professional opportunities and to make time available for professional development.

> *The ability to find out what is out there in conjunction with your resource or your regular teachers and keeping them abreast of it, and letting your regular teachers be given ... inservices, to updates, to conferences.*

> *They need time for inservices.*

> *Help them find ways of increasing their competence ... give them support to find other ways of doing things.*

A few responses contained the suggestion that **some teachers felt themselves not treated as knowledgeable, capable professionals by their**

administrators. Even if present in only a restricted set of teachers, such a belief is disturbing if teachers are to accept responsibility for managing increasingly diverse and challenging classes. **Teachers wanted recognition as competent professionals as well as support.**

Generally, it is useful that we are treated as professionals.

I want an administrator who treats me like I've got some intelligence.

Serving as a collegial consultant was high on the list of "soft" administrator supports viewed as desirable. In a variety of ways educators look to administrators as mentors.

I'd certainly like them to be available if I have a problem, or I had to discuss something ... I would expect that they would be able to research or have some extra knowledge that I would need.

They need to know that the administrator is there to listen and to be able to offer some kind of suggestions.

Though a fair number of respondees indicated in various ways that a collegial consultative role between regular class teacher and administrator would be desirable, few stated that it was among the supports actually offered by administrators. Two RCT's did find that AD's provided information on available services and the system stance on inclusion.

What they'll let you know is the legality of a situation, not the actuality. Exactly what the board stands for and what the board can do and can't do.

And also in what services are available to you.

It is apparent that a **considerable numbers of teachers wish to see their administrators offering mentor-like assistance.** A number of forms this assistance might take were culled from interviews: advice on professional

development opportunities; time for such development; treatment as a professional; collegial advice. From the number of times these types of assistance were noted as being desired and the much lesser number of responses indicating actual assistance, it would appear that desire was not matched by performance.

The empathetic administrator.

Only one other category of response approached the number of responses indicating that teachers wanted administrators to provide personnel and material supports. This was the belief among all groups of educators that **RCT's saw empathy as a significant administrator support.** Many respondees advanced the idea that simple understanding by administrators of the quality of the task of including students with challenging needs, the challenge it presented to teachers, the demands it involved, and that teachers did their best constituted support. If the number and variety of their responses are indicative, regular class teachers felt this strongly.

> *They want an administrator that realizes the person in the trench is the classroom teacher, the one that probably has the most definitive idea of what a particular student may need at a given time.*

> *First of all, recognition. I think there are times when teachers really go all out, and there's absolutely no recognition.*

> *The knowledge, or just the reassurance, that they understand .... You're not having to do it on your own.*

> *I think we just need to know, if we were having a bad day, the administration wasn't going to think of us as bad teachers. Just sometimes a shoulder to cry on or someone to hug.*

Other educators held similar attitudes. Even though the question was framed in terms of what the RCT wished in terms of AD support, the phrasing at times implied that those in other roles saw value in empathy and understanding for them as well.

Moral support. Support with helping out. You know, if you have to go to a meeting, they'll fill in. Mostly, it's the emotional support.

To know that we're being appreciated for the role we play. I'm not sure that's always conveyed.

They want to know that their administrators recognize the stresses, the anguish they feel, the fears they feel.

Administrators, themselves, expressed their recognition that RCT's required moral and emotional support, an encouraging word.

They want some support in terms of just empathy and understanding.

The staff member, logically, from time to time is going to need some moral support from the administrator.

Most importantly, they often need to hear that they're doing some of the right things.

Examination of administrator responses shows that administrators perceive exactly what RCT's want in the way of empathetic support, as do RT and SCT responses. What do they do in this area? Few respondees from the RCT, RT, and SCT groups, having just outlined what was desired of administrators, indicated that such support was offered. Some limited responses were noted indicating empathetic support of particular administrators.

Well, I don't want to lose my job. I find my personal experience in two different schools in particular. This is going to be quite a safe answer, because I am saying two schools. In one school administrative support was ... excellent, because they would even, almost on a daily basis, drop by and stick their head in the door and say, "Hi." You know, stop the teacher, and say "Good day."

Ours are very good here. I mean they will come down and give you a break in the day.

Responses from RCT's, RT's, and SCT's did not indicate that administrators offered or provided empathetic support. A number of administrators, however, saw it as part of what they provided in support of inclusion.

I try to [be] there when they need you.

Both personal and material resources.

I try to give them encouragement and respect.

Doubtless, some administrators do offer empathetic support. Quite possibly, some RCT's, RT's, and SCT's do not recall having received such support, or did not regard it as such. People do have differing perceptions and differing ways of doing the same thing. However, **the degree of difference between those who believed RCT's wished such support and those who believed it to have been offered by administrators, suggests a large gap between key players in inclusion/integration.**

Anomalous and Nonspecific Responses

Beyond the above categorizable responses, a variety of responses were made which spoke to the issue of administrator supports, but in ways which did not lead to clear understanding of types of desired support or types of administrator supports offered. The quality and number of many of these responses provide additional insight into educator attitudes with regard to administrator support in inclusion/integration.

No support.

Some responses suggested that RCT's, RT's, and SCT's did not see that administrators were involved in any way in supporting regular classroom teachers educating students with challenges to their learning.

I'm sure that they do [offer support]. I hope to God they do, because I sure don't see them out in the trenches. Other than to physically accommodate students, I don't see anything that would be visible. I mean their presence.

I don't feel right now, any. For myself. I try to get extra help .... When I voiced my concerns to the people who were to take it downtown, who could make the decision of whether I could get help or not, it sort of was "Well, you know, there are other children who have more needs."

They don't offer. I don't think they offer unless they really have to. It's rare.

None. Not in my experience.

They do put some money into, they do keep teacher aides around. I am grasping. I don't think I can think of too much for the types of support administrators do offer.

I've found that in this school, special ed is sort of at the low end of the totem pole .... What makes us the low person on the totem pole ... it's sort of a majority rules ... and it's sort of a numbers game.

Whatever the basis for such statements, they speak to a negative perception of administrator support on the part of at least some regular classroom teachers, resource teachers, and special class teachers. Other respondees elected not to deal with the question of actual administrator support.

I think that's a really difficult question, because it's too general. I think there's such a variety from school to school, of involvements of administration that I can't speak directly to that.

To the regular classroom teacher? As far as inclusion, not much. I mean that I don't really know that there is any direct communication

between a classroom teacher and the administrators as to how they're going to back them in inclusion.

Depends. I don't know because I don't work that closely with regular classroom teachers. When I send my students to integration classes, I call them, I send my students just for fun and socialising with other students.

They don't really offer any, but then I haven't seen that there's been any need for them to offer us any. And they've been certainly supportive of our special ed department.

They do what they can .... They like to say that we're extremely competent individuals and they know we're doing the best job we can. And that's true.

Administrators that I've worked with have done their best to offer the support that's necessary.

Some RCT, RT, and SCT respondees vacillated, giving a response that neither stated that administrators offered or did not offer support. These responses, perhaps, pointed to a lack of consistency among administrators with regard to provision of support for students with challenging needs. Often, respondees noted that their particular administrators were supportive.

That depends so much on the administrator. Here it's just been fabulous.

I think sometimes they do. Some administrators do. Some administrators have difficulty relating to teachers ... or get tied into the power aspect of it.

Generally speaking, I think there are a lot of administrators out there who may not like special needs students, are not aware of how to deal with special needs students, and because of those kinds of things, may

not be able to support their teachers.

It depends. Some administrators don't offer any. You know, I think it's the luck of the draw.

Responses of this type echo those which avoided direct answer to the query about actual AD support. Taken together, the two sets of responses suggest reluctance among some teachers to be specific on this issue. This supposition gains some strength when one recalls that the same teachers had just prior been much more specific with regard to types of support RCT's want of their administrators.

Full support, but unspecified.

Other respondees, while not being specific in many cases, made it apparent that their administrators supported the inclusion/integration program fully. Responses of this type did not deal with administrators as a wide spread group, but as within particular schools.

Our administrator offers whatever support you want, as long as you tell him what you want.

I couldn't say exactly, but whatever support he has been giving, it has been working .... So something is being done right.

I can't speak from experience with high needs students in my classroom, but from what I see in our school, the administrators are great and provide whatever they can.

Ours do [give us what we want]. I mean we're, it's great here.

This type of response, and the earlier noted willingness of some respondees to praise specific administrators, intimate variance among AD's in support for inclusion. Other responses suggest forms of actual administrator support. Responses indicated that some administrators, albeit a minority, are active in leading and supporting teachers charged with including students with

challenging needs.

Summary of Administrator Support

Teachers view in-school administrators as an important resource for regular classroom teachers including students with challenging needs. Interviewees left no doubt that they have definite expectations of their administrators. Likewise, most left no doubt that they did not view administrators as meeting these expectations.

Supports desired from administrators fall into two primary categories: concrete supports and interpersonal supports. Administrators appear to be somewhat more successful in providing concrete than interpersonal supports.

Concrete supports divide into provision of resources such as additional personnel, materials, and effective school management systems, assistance with discipline, back up in conflict situations related to inclusion, and assignment to classes of appropriate size and student composition. Paramount among desired resources was provision of resource teachers and educational assistants. Principals were expected also to establish school management systems which would allow teachers time for planning and meetings around inclusion. Secondary teachers in particular, but also elementary teachers, wanted administrators to step in and impose discipline, or back up teachers in the disciplines they imposed. Both elementary and secondary level teachers believed principals should support them when their views conflicted sharply with other staff or parents regarding included students in their classrooms. In addition, teachers looked to principals to protect them in terms of class size and numbers of students with challenging needs in any class. It was apparent from interview comments that teachers as a group felt strongly about the need for concrete support and that many were frustrated by lack of success in obtaining supports they considered appropriate. On the other hand, some respondents applauded the efforts of their administrators and success in providing them with concrete supports.

The second category involved supports of a quite different nature, but of obvious importance to the many respondents mentioning them. They are characterized by being of an interpersonal as compared to a concrete nature. Many teachers wanted to see their administrators as active leaders in support of inclusion and setting an example for staff and students. They also wanted

administrators to act as mentors in provision of advice and guidance in areas such as professional development and design of teaching and student management strategies for inclusion. Other respondents wished their administrators to recognize that including students with challenging needs presented pedagogical challenges which they did their best to meet. Interestingly, interview comments from administrators indicated that they were aware of the types of support desired by classroom teachers, even though few suggested that they were responding strongly to such desires.

A third category could be interpreted from interview data, though in actuality it might more accurately be referred to as a non-support category. A number of secondary and elementary classroom resource, and special class teachers stated that administrators provided no support of any kind, or skirted questions regarding administrator support. Secondary teachers, in particular, contributed to this "non-support" category.

Whereas it was apparent that the great majority of interviewees believed their administrators could do more in providing them with support for inclusive education, others stated clearly that they had solid support. Two interpretations might be hazarded. One is that most administrators did not believe they had particular reason to be more active in supporting inclusion of students with challenging needs. A second is that administrators lacked knowledge of how to support inclusion and that senior administrators had not clarified their roles for them in this regard.

REGULAR CLASS TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY

Proponents observe that a key to successful inclusion for students with challenging needs is that the regular classroom teacher (RCT) take responsibility for the delivery of programming within a team of resource personnel, administrators and parents (Lupart, McKeough, & Yewchuk, 1996). As Stainback and Stainback (1996) note, "It is critical that individuals who seek inclusionary classrooms, make every effort possible to gain a commitment from the general education teacher to full inclusion. This includes his or her acceptance of any previously excluded student as an equal and valued member of the class" (pp. 51 - 52). Implied is a positive attitude

on the part of the general or regular classroom teacher, and a belief that inclusion can be managed with appropriate support systems in place.

The following discussion probes the views of regular classroom teachers regarding whether they believe that they "should" accept responsibility for the education of students with challenging needs. To bring this hypothetical question closer to practice, a follow up question explores attitudes to whether RCT's "could" accept responsibility. To deepen understanding of this issue, the responses of resource teachers (RT's) and special class teachers (SCT's), and administrators (AD's) were sought as well. The two guide questions were.

1. *Do you believe regular classroom teachers should take primary responsibility for students with exceptionalities?*

2. *Do you believe regular classroom teachers could take primary responsibility?*

To ensure that interviewees understood that taking primary responsibility dealt with program and did not mean unsupported responsibility, the following introductory statement framed the guide questions.

> *Advocates of inclusion believe that regular classroom teachers should hold primary responsibility for the program with the support of resource personnel and administrators.*

Support of resource teachers and administrators is fundamental to inclusion. Both those who prefer that all or almost all students be included, irrespective of type or degree of disability, and those who argue for a spectrum of services agree that the regular classroom teacher (RCT) not be left with all the responsibility for included students (Bunch, 1992; Council for Exceptional Children [CEC], 1993; Olsen & Pratt, 1996). If a student is included, supportive personnel and other resources appropriate to meet the needs of that student should be in place. It was in the context of RCT leadership within a shared responsibility format and appropriate support that the guide questions were set for examination of this aspect of educator attitude to inclusion.

Two positions characterized responses. By far, **all educator groups felt RCT's should and could accept primary responsibility.** Often, conditions were attached to positive responses. **A minority of respondents believed acceptance by the RCT to be inappropriate.** These varying positions, and their various shades of meaning, are summarized below.

Should? Yes

Unequivocal yes.

The majority of RCT's responding positively to the first guide question stated unequivocally that they should assume primary responsibility for program.

Absolutely, No argument there. Nothing else to say. Absolutely. The classroom teacher is responsible for all those children in her classroom and for the programming. Yes.

Of course. Yes .... Like, if one student who takes more time to include, well you're still responsible to make sure he does the task one way or the other.

A number of participants explained that simply having a student included in your class meant that you had responsibility.

Sure. [The included student] is like any other student in the classroom, so they [RCT's] should be responsible.

Yes, I do. I think it's important. That child is in your class, and you're responsible for their learning.

Members of each of the other three educator groups, the RT's, the SCT's, and the AD's, asked this question echoed the RCT's straight forward positive response.

Definitely .... That child is one of the 25 other children that are in a class. That child is on your register. That teacher does the report card.

Absolutely. The classroom teacher has ownership for all the students in the classroom.

Those providing "unequivocal yes" responses represented all three regions, all four educator groups, both elementary and secondary levels, and both traditional and inclusive systems, indicating a commonality of belief in this area among many educators. Approximately one in four respondents providing interpretable responses to the first guide question gave such answers. Relatively more RCT's than other educators were in this group.

Yes. With support.

The majority of all groups stressed that the RCT could accept responsibility if appropriate support were provided. At times the wording of responses suggested that interviewees had either missed that the guide questions assumed resource personnel and other support, or that support was viewed as so fundamental a need that it required emphasizing. To many RCT's the direct assistance of a resource teacher was sufficient to assert that inclusion could be realistic. Others mentioned other supports including professional training, time, and materials.

Yes. I believe that within my program, I'm primarily responsible for it. But I would like some support. Let's say resources, some time allocated ... perhaps someone else in the room when I'm teaching ... someone to help me out.

It's all coupled with proper training, preservice and inservice, and the structures that are needed .... It should be the classroom teacher. Given a student in a course, that course teacher should have primary responsibility, with support from other specialists.

As with "unequivocal yes" responses, some members of the other educator groups joined with the RCT's who said "Yes, but conditional on support". Relatively more members of the RT groups than the other groups made their responses conditional in this manner.

Yes. Yes. They're the ones in the secondary level who are doing the credits. They are the content experts. I'm a resource to the teacher. I'm a resource to the students. I'm a resource to the parents. But they are the one that ultimately are accountable for the credit.

I guess when we're talking about inclusive education, the teacher should really be the primary responsibility, because they see the student on a day to day basis. They know what they're going to cover. So I don't think the teacher has much of a choice when it comes to primary adaptations .... I really believe that the support should be there. They should have someone so they know who to turn to.

Part of me says, "Definitely yes." And the voice that comes from the wilderness says, "Probably where applicable" .... But, because I've never had a kid like this before ... I'm going to need some growth .... I'm going to need some help.

Very much so. Every child in their classroom is their responsibility. We, meaning the administration, have a responsibility to provide the support.

"Yes. With support" was the most common response of all educators, but barely ahead of "unequivocal yes". This was the response of choice for the greatest number of resource teachers and the second choice of other groups. The emphasis on support recalls earlier discussion under Concerns of Regular Classroom Teachers. Appropriate support is clearly required and is in keeping with the positions of advocates both of inclusive models and of the spectrum of services model.

Yes. In a team format.

A third positive response was offered with the requirement that the RCT be a member of a team or collective. This carried with it the idea of shared responsibility. All RCT's making this type of response were from the Western Region and included elementary and secondary level respondents from both traditional and inclusive systems. Though it is possible that responses under

"Yes. With support", particularly those noting need for the support of other personnel, implied a sharing of responsibility, it was substantially Western Region participants who made the "team" point directly.

> *I think they should take joint responsibility for students with exceptionalities, but ... the new relationship comes down to the teacher, the parent, and the school. It's a joint responsibility.*
>
> *Maybe it should be a co-responsibility with the resource personnel that previously may have had the student. In terms of actually grading them or whatever, as to what they're learning, I think it has to be the primary responsibility of the classroom teacher.*

Again, representatives of the three other educator groups made the same type of response. The team format was the preferred response of administrators and included those from all three regions, though a definite concentration in the Western Region was noted. The very few RT's and SCT's giving this response also came from the Western Region.

> *I guess if you have to have one person, that's the obvious person. However, I prefer to see it as a joint responsibility between the classroom teacher and the support person.*
>
> *No. I believe that we all need to take primary responsibility for the student .... I don't think it should be just one student or just one teacher dealing with those responsibilities. I think it has to be a team effort.*
>
> *I'm a Junior High School principal and, therefore, I know that every kid in the school has between 6 and 7 teachers. And, therefore, my answer is "No". The classroom teacher does not have the primary responsibility. The team has.*
>
> *No. I believe that's the reality of what's occurring. But I don't think that's realistic .... We have to really look more carefully as a collective for children. I think the parents have to be in there .... And we have to*

come together to do a lot of talking, and there will be aspects of the child's development that all of us must hold responsibility for.

The team format, though preferred by only one in six RCT participants and all of them in the Western Region, was a clear third preference for all educator groups combined. It was the format of choice for administrators, and slightly ahead of the "Yes. With support" response when all educators were considered.

Many professionals agree that a team approach to programming for students with challenging needs in regular classrooms is appropriate. Lovitt (1993) notes "that special and general education teachers communicate more when the two sets of teachers share responsibility for youngsters' development" (p. 62). Others, such as Olsen and Pratt (1996) point to various teaming models which support the increase of communication and collaboration necessitated by regular class placement. The views of those in this study advocating the team approach are supported by those of others who have spent considerable time reflecting on the most effective approach to inclusion.

Summary of Positive Responses

The three response formats all accept that RCT's could accept responsibility for students with challenging needs in their classrooms. **A sizeable number of regular classroom teachers, supported well by other educators, stated that, if a child was placed in a class, the RCT held primary responsibility.** An even larger group of **respondents felt RCT's could assume responsibility even if certain supports, mainly personnel, were in place.** This was the preferred choice of RT's, and the second choice of RCT's and AD's. **The team response was preferred by AD's and a number of RCT's,** almost all in Western Canada. Over half of respondents in each of the four educator groups believed that RCT's could assume responsibility for included students, with many mentioning need for resource support and the need for a shared responsibility format.

Should? No

No.

Every fourth respondent believed that RCT's should not take responsibility for included students. Reasons varied among the four educator groups, but a number of common concerns emerged. Approximately 10 % of RCT's and SCT's believed dealing with students with challenging needs too specialized a task for the regular classroom teacher.

> *I don't think so. We're running into a specialist almost, depending on the degree of the exceptionality. You'd almost be asking me to walk into a doctor's office with only a background in university biology.*

> *Absolutely not. And I would say, largely because: A. I don't have the expertise; B. I don't have the time to plan for that individualistic kind of program.*

> *Not now. They don't have the background.*

The perceptions of these respondents reflect belief in the expert model which has been a foundation stone of special education since the days when special education first emerged as an educational variant of the medical model. A number of respondents clarified that it was the resource teacher who was the expert and who should have the responsibility.

> *No. No, I do not .... I would prefer that part of it's retained by the resource teacher.*

> *No. I don't. Regular classroom teachers up to now don't have the training .... And to place that responsibility on them, I don't think is fair. I think it should still be the responsibility of the special ed teacher.*

Those making the RT argument formed the largest of the "No" groups, though relatively smaller compared to each of the "Yes" groups. No administrators and almost no regular class teachers advanced this argument.

A similarly limited number, primarily RCT's, considered the numbers of regular students and associated planning too great to permit inclusion.

> *I would say no .... I'm speaking from having three different preparations of three different sizes .... And to have primary responsibility of X number of special needs students on top of that. You just don't have the time.*

> *No, I don't. I would put the primary responsibility for these students on the resource teacher. I think that's their job. I think they're trained for it .... I think the regular classroom teacher has got 300 kids to teach. I think you're asking way too much.*

An even smaller number, almost entirely AD's, considered inclusion to be attainable only in an ideal world, and that, therefore, RCT's should not be expected to assume primary responsibility. Almost no RCT's, no RT's, and no SCT's argued this position.

> *In a perfect world. It's not out there. I haven't seen it yet. In other words, if that teacher were given adequate preparation time, if he or she were given adequate class size.*

> *In the best of all worlds, yes they should. Are we there yet? No, we're not.*

Other reasons, none with any significant number of advocates, were offered as to why RCT's could not be responsible for included students, particularly those with higher levels of need. The three "Should? No." perspectives discussed, however, each found some degree of support, with **the "expert" view drawing the greater number of exponents.** Nevertheless, **total support for the "No" hypothesis was much less than that for the "Yes".** It appears that the greater proportion of most educator groups, sizeable majorities in the case of RCT's, RT's, and AD's, believed RCT's had the ability, when supported, to assume at least shared responsibility for the programs of included students.

Could?

Yes.

Response to the question:

Do you believe regular classroom teachers could take primary responsibility?

for included students was designed to move from a hypothetical "should" situation to comment on "could", or actual practice. Wording of responses, however, and a number of statements suggesting that the second guide question was viewed as redundant, indicated that some educators did not respond in our "Should? - Could?" modes. Partially for this reason, total numbers of interpretable responses were reduced for the second guide question. Nonetheless, the general pattern of responses was similar to those to the first question. **More than 50 % all respondent groups believed RCT's could assume responsibility.**

This included RCT's themselves. The majority indicated that they believed they could assume responsibility. **Many specified that appropriate conditions must be met.** These conditions included having resource personnel in a support role, having parental involvement, and having sufficient professional development for the role. Also mentioned were time, teacher motivation, and that the included students be mildly disabled only. Small groups of RCT's specified that responsibility was for classroom program only, or for a team format situation. Typical responses were:

With the proper pretraining, with the proper knowledge of the difficulties that might be coming into their classroom, and providing that teachers felt confident that they were able to cope with that student, yes they could.

Yes. I think that what would make it possible, is that the teacher does have a lot of background, to be able to identify the needs of that child and start creating the program work for the child.

With the support you can do it confidently .... I wasn't confident at first, but then I learned to be more confident.

The greater proportion of resource teachers agreed, as did that of special class teachers and administrators. These groups also specified conditions of support and collaboration. **Overall, RCT's, RT's, SCT's, and AD's exhibited confidence in the ability of RCT's to take on the task,** though a number of administrators suggested that ideal conditions would need to exist. No major differences were found across traditional or inclusive systems.

No.

A range of reasons why RCT's could not accept responsibility were offered by a minority of respondents. These tended to reflect the same concerns as exhibited in response to the initial "Should?" guide question, except that no particular clustering occurred around any reason. By and large, those who answered in the negative to the first question, responded in like manner to the second. Such respondents were few in number (approximately 25 % vs 75%) compared to those who believed RCT's could accept responsibility, given appropriate support.

Summary of Classroom Regular Teacher Responsibility

The majority of regular classroom teachers believe they "should" and "could" accept primary responsibility for included students once those students are placed in their classrooms. This belief is based on their acceptance of the fact that what happens to all students in their classrooms is their responsibility.

Relatively few educators feel the regular classroom teacher should not be expected to take on primary responsibility for students with special needs placed in the regular classroom. The most frequently offered explanation is that regular classroom teachers do not possess the necessary background.

Those who see the regular classroom teacher accepting responsibility, and this represents the majority of all educator groups, have one major caveat. **Appropriate personnel and material support must be in place. And the regular classroom teacher should have professional preparation for the**

task. The literature supports this finding. In any case, it appears that educators, if given support and training, believe that regular classroom teachers can do the job, and should do the job.

EFFECT ON REGULAR STUDENTS

A common concern associated with increased inclusion is that of negative effect on the other students in the classroom. Waldron (1995) points this out that this issue is one of 15 arguments employed in resistance to the move toward regular class placement of students with exceptionalities. There is concern "regarding equity vs. excellence, wherein the education of average and gifted learners will become 'watered down' to meet the needs of learners with disabilities" (p. 44). It is difficult to find evidence of any negative effect on regular students in the literature, however. On the other hand there is evidence of social gain for regular students in inclusive situations, and evidence that inclusion does not lower the academic achievement of average children (Giangreco, Edelman, Cloninger, & Dennis, 1993). Olsen and Pratt (1996) also point to research indicating that tutoring, a strategy encouraged in inclusive education, results in positive social behaviour both in and out of school for regular students. With arguments on both sides, and little solid supporting research evidence on either, this area remains unclear.

Though the present study did not attempt to compare academic and social levels between inclusive and non-inclusive classrooms, it did look directly at whether educators believed that inclusion had positive or negative effect on regular students.

Guide questions were:

Advocates for inclusive placement argue that other students will find it a positive experience to have students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom with them.

1. What would be some of the possible positive effects?

2. What would be some of the possible negative effects?

The great majority of educators interviewed believed that educating regular students and students with challenging needs in the same classroom environment contributed positively to the social and academic development of regular students. Social contributions were mentioned with greater frequency and variety than were academic.

Social Effect

Being educated with students with challenging needs contributed to a clearer understanding of the diversity of the general population, to awareness of the equity issues related to it, to the development of self esteem, and the development of self understanding among regular students. **In general, mention of negative social effect was infrequent and oriented primarily on insufficient teacher support more so than direct negative effect on regular learners.** Responses in this area were much more in line with the qualities of inclusion suggested by its advocates than with its detractors.

Diversity and equity within the general population.

Educators from all groups, however defined, believed that regular students, through contact and interaction with students with challenges to their learning, obtained **understanding that society was diverse in membership, that everyone was accepted, and that all could function in concert with one another, regardless of differences.** This view was exemplified in RCT responses such as:

> *More tolerance. Realizing that there are people with physical and mental capacities that may not match theirs, and that's the way it is. And they'll be able to get along with everybody.*

> *It's important to realize that for kids to be exposed to students that are not like them, in terms of their academic ability, because we're going to be exposed to those kind of people all our lives. And they need to know those kinds of people are a part of our society and are perfectly functioning as members of our society.*

Resource teachers, special class teachers, and administrators echoed the

belief that inclusion offered regular students the opportunity to develop a fuller appreciation of the diversity and equity of the larger community. This appreciation involved the recognition of acceptable differences, acceptable similarities, and the growth of an ethically based understanding of human worth and human rights.

> *Students begin to accept exceptional students as people rather than just looking at their disabilities first.*
>
> *The demystification if you would, of people with handicaps. And acceptance of others who might be a little bit different than themselves.*
>
> *Ethically, the learning to accept everyone as an individual and looking for the abilities and what the other person is worth, is something that cannot be taught from a book.*
>
> *It would help them in the community to be aware of access issues, and, you know, the rights, issues of rights of people with disabilities.*

Learning, such as indicated in the above comments was viewed as social, but with academic impact as well. The number and clarity of such comments from a range of educators suggested that such learning was viewed as more accessible through direct contact in the classroom than through text-based learning. No educator indicated negative effect in these areas and very few found no effect one way or the other.

Heightened self esteem.

Educators found regular classroom interaction of regular and special needs students to result in heightened self esteem for regular students. **Regular classroom teachers were most aware of positive effect on self esteem,** with resource teachers being fairly well aware, and special class teachers and administrators less so, if frequency and strength of comment is to be taken at face value.

> *If there is such a thing as a regular student, the underlying thing is self*

esteem ... For them to be able to see persons who may be mentally or physically different and to be accepted by their peers, also allow them [the regular students] to accept themselves and to be accepted.

If you have kids who are ... not quite competent in reading or something, if they help a student with special needs with their reading ... then that boosts their confidence as well.

If they can make a contribution, in some way to teaching other children, or something in the classroom, it's so good for their self-esteem.

Because they're taking a teacher role ... it helps build the self esteem of the non handicapped student.

Educators believe there is benefit in terms of self esteem for regular students who interact in a supportive manner with included students. Of particular interest is the positive effect seen by some RCT's on those students who, while not being labelled exceptional, are considered marginal or somewhat academically challenged. That they are able to help others is seen to be a personal plus for them.

Development of self understanding.

Akin in some ways to the development of a stronger understanding of the wider community and the place of a diverse population within it, was indication that **educators saw the development of a stronger sense of self among regular students.** RCT's and RT's commented on this dynamic with some frequency; AD's and SCT's relatively infrequently. These latter two groups, often, have less intensive and extensive contact with regular students than do RCT's and RT's. This may account for differences in perception in this area.

They learn to appreciate their own gifts, their own talents. They learn, also, to value of each human being, no matter what their gifts are.

I think it was good learning for the kids to realize they all make mistakes or they all say things that may be not always appropriate. And that makes them just like everybody else.

Kids compare themselves to other kids, too. But sometimes your own problems seem very small when you see how much someone else has to struggle. And that's good for some of them.

Insight into the self is a valuable asset. It would appear that development in this area is noted with some frequency by educators among regular students in routine contact with students with challenging needs by some educators.

Negative Social Effect

Almost no educators, whatever their roles in the schools, perceived direct negative effect for regular students of being in inclusive classroom situations. A number of interviewees stated clearly that they were unaware of any negatives. *"Socially, I cannot see that there would be any negative effect."* One area of concern, mentioned by a few, was the possibility that regular students might pick up on inappropriate behaviour.

One of the little girls has temper tantrums quite often. And if you don't watch it, the other students will think that's acceptable and they can do it too.

Socially, I know from my experience that because you treat different children differently, children who are non disabled perceive that a disabled child is getting away with stuff .... And so they try. They do a lot of testing to see how far they can go.

No other direct social effects of negative nature were mentioned by more than individual educators. No particular group of educators made such comments more often than did other groups. It was noted that respondents made use of different wording in the statement of negative effect when compared to that for positive. There was greater use of conditionals and

subjunctives, suggesting that direct experience of negative effect was infrequent, but that respondents could hypothesize negative effects.

Academic Effect

Academic effects were perceived in interview discussions, though not with the definiteness and variety characterizing social effects. **Almost all academic effects noted were beneficial.** Already suggested under positive social effects was that increased understanding of the wider community had academic implication, even though the social may have been more evident. Two distinct areas of positive academic effect were that of peer teaching and of benefits accruing to regular students with modest academic abilities.

Peer tutoring.

Educators, particularly RCT's and RT's, but also SCT's and AD's, **found academic benefit for regular students through peer tutoring interaction.** Such interaction was viewed widely as solidifying knowledge already gained.

> *If they understand one concept and help out the person sitting beside them who maybe doesn't quite understand it yet, so they're forced to rethink their own understanding and then put it into words and explain.*

> *Peer learning is one of the strongest ways that kids can learn .... I can see that it would be beneficial, academically, in most cases.*

> *It would allow them to become peer helpers, peer coaches, and, therefore, strengthen their academic skills.*

Such comments at times pointed to specific areas of academic benefit. Included were motivation, leadership, communication, cooperation, creativity, acceptance of responsibility, and team building.

> *They really develop their communication skills ... because they will actually communicate the work that they've learned and try to teach it*

to others.

As far as an attitude about other people and caring, and learning to look after others, and help others, and work cooperatively, there are lots of advantages.

The ability to think creatively would also be a motivating factor for other students in the class.

They take responsibility for their own learning. They take responsibility for helping someone else do something differently.

Academically, certainly in the areas of cooperative education or working in small groups .... Kids learn team building skills.

Educators believe that the act of teaching peers has considerable and wide ranging positive effect. Members of all groups, at both elementary and secondary levels, and in both traditionally and inclusively structured systems, agreed.

Benefits accruing to regular students with modest abilities.

A collateral positive effect for regular students, particularly those with some degree of academic challenge, was noted. Pedagogical strategies implemented for the benefit of students with challenging needs were found to have wider academic effect.

Realizing there are different ways to evaluate, I can also apply that to the other students.

Academically, sometimes, some of those slower students that are in the regular class will benefit from the extra instruction that the special needs student may require. So, instead of singling just one out, they can make it a small group.

There may be some program changes in the way education is

delivered in that classroom by the teacher, that helps other students, some of the other learners as well.

It is interesting to note that this spin off benefit for some regular students was not found in the available literature other than in general statements that inclusion was good for everyone (Karagiannis, Stainback, & Stainback, 1996a).

Negative Academic Effect

A number of educators suggested negative effects on the academic learning of regular students. That **of most concern was the disruption some students with challenging behaviours can create in a classroom.**

In my experience, the most negative effect tends to be around children who have behavioural challenges. Because they can disrupt the regular classroom and cause a lot of grief for the other kids.

Negative effects tend to happen when there are behaviour problems. When the exceptionality is behaviour related, because it is distracting to the teacher, there is time taken away from the regular stuff going on in the class.

The number of educators noting concern regarding disruptions was not large. Nonetheless, **it appears that inappropriate behaviour draws attention, at least in part, to reduction of learning for other students.**

In addition to concerns regarding distraction, **some individuals noted that a slower pace of instruction may affect faster learners; that some students with challenging needs may act violently; and that workload may not be evenly distributed in joint projects. Such points were infrequent.**

More frequently mentioned were dynamics which affected the regular classroom teachers and thence the regular students in the class. These related to insufficient support for RCT's, rather than to negative impact of inclusion itself on regular students.

Summary of Effect on Regular Students

Effects of inclusive educational experiences on regular students are not well understood among many educators. Those who question placement of students with challenging needs in regular classrooms believe there will be negative effect. Those who support increased diversity of ability in regular classrooms argue the opposite.

Interviews, however, indicated that **almost all educators involved saw undeniable social benefit for regular students, as well as academic benefit.** On the social side students were seen to recognize the value of, and need for, equitable acceptance of diversity within society, and to form ethical views regarding difference. Growth in self esteem and self understanding were noted as well. **Many interviewees were unaware of any social downside to inclusion as far as regular students were concerned,** though a number pointed to the possibility that inappropriate behaviours might be imitated. A widespread positive view was more than discernible in interviews, though concerns existed relative to teacher support.

In like manner, **little negative academic effect was found for regular students,** though some concern was evinced regarding the possibility of classroom outbursts and resultant distraction from classroom work. Again, **expressions of concern regarding effect on the teacher were more common than expressions of concern regarding effect on regular students.** Two specific areas of positive effect were described. In particular, tutoring was viewed as cementing the tutor's own learning. Secondly, a strengthening effect of teaching strategies associated with including students with challenging needs on the learning of less able, regular students was apparent to some educators. Finally, some respondents found a general positive academic effect to be associated with the social benefits outlined previously.

Results of this study strongly suggest that regular classroom teachers, resource teachers, special class teachers, and administrators find academic and social benefit in inclusive experiences for regular students. The latter three groups find higher levels of benefit than do regular classroom teachers. **Negative effects are few.** Respondents were more concerned with the need for teacher support for inclusion than they were of any negative effect in their classrooms in general.

EFFECT ON INCLUDED STUDENTS

The primary argument for inclusion is that students with challenging needs will find greater social and academic benefits from experiences in regular classrooms than from those in special placements. This is a controversial issue among educators as it calls for rethinking the effects of special placements in comparison with regular classrooms. Traditionally, educators have acted on the assumption that special placements were superior, particularly in the case of students with high levels of challenge. Those students who had lesser degrees of challenge might be placed in regular classrooms for a part of their education, but responsibility for academic progress specifically, tended to reside with special class teachers (SCT's) rather than with the regular classroom teachers (RCT's).

A number of studies, particularly those from the 1970's and early 1980's, point to various special education programs being superior for some types of students (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Madden & Slavin, 1983; Sindelar & Deno, 1979). Other studies suggest an advantage for regular class placement (Schulte, Osborne, & McKinney, 1990: Truesdell & Abramson, 1992). At this point, the evidence is equivocal at best.

Recent advocacy for regular classroom placement and some growing educator support have altered the pattern of education for many students with disabilities. Expectations of regular classroom teachers are changing rapidly while many question the practice of inclusion for various reasons. At this time, it is unclear to what degree RCT's and their resource teacher, special class teacher, and administrator colleagues accept or reject that inclusion has benefits for students with disabilities.

This study was designed to investigate the attitudes of educators on this point. EOQ data, as well as spontaneous written commentary, shed light on educator perceptions of the academic and social effect of inclusive placements. On the academic side, survey respondents indicated finding positive effect. Regular classroom teachers were cautious in this regard relative to other educator groups, though all were positive. Written comments supported this analysis in the main, with representatives of both traditionally and inclusively structured systems noting reservations. Social benefit was

more apparent than academic to all groups. General social gain was noted, as was evidence of heightened self esteem.

A variety of questions designed to probe educator beliefs on issues surrounding inclusion were posed during interviews with these four groups of educators. Two guide questions were developed to investigate the attitudes of educators to the main issue of effect on included students. The questions and a preceding framing statement were:

Advocates claim that inclusion has positive academic and social effect for students with exceptionalities.

1. What would some of the possible positive effects be?

2. What would some of the possible negative effects be?

Positive Social Effects

Considerable numbers in all four educator groups saw more social benefit in inclusive situations than they did drawbacks. Benefits seen could be organized under areas such as value of a peer model, belonging to a group, growth of self esteem, and general positive effect. **Negative effects were seen also. These could not be grouped as clearly**, though a general category, lack of acceptance, was developed. Respondents continued to express concern for teacher support throughout interviews.

Value of a peer model.

More educators, overall, pointed to the **positive effect of students with challenging needs being surrounded by average elementary and secondary students** than to any other specific positive or negative effect. It was the most common response category for RCT's, SCT's, and AD's. No differences were found among the various groups of educators with regard to appreciation of modelling effect. Some respondents pointed to specific benefits. Others were more general.

They emulate the other children that might be functioning at a higher level, which will motivate them.

Learning to get along with others. Learning how to cope when there are lots of people around you .... Learning the proper behaviour.

Socially, it would be role modelling.

The students that I've had have, I agree, it has had a positive effect on them. And I think a lot of it has had to do with mentoring and role modelling of other children.

For that particular student, the exceptional learner, the benefit is to see what appropriate behaviours and appropriate responses, if you will, are.

Modelling was viewed as resulting in increased motivation of included students, greater strength in general social situations, understanding of social roles, perception of appropriate and inappropriate social behaviour, and the development of social relationships between individuals. A number of comments suggested that the positive effects of modelling reached beyond the classroom to participation in general society.

Belonging to a group.

A goodly number of educators, almost all them RCT's, found that **included students considered themselves part of the larger group.** Most spoke in terms of the classroom, though a few educators extended this to experiencing society beyond the classroom.

Socially, it's amazing. That's a whole new world has opened up to them that they didn't have before.

It's like opening a window on the world. I mean nobody could doubt that they could benefit them.

Interestingly, it was almost solely the RCT's who referred to the benefit of belonging to the group and of having the larger society more open to

included students. They related having opportunity to interact with a larger, regular school group to acceptance and fitting in, friendships, and a wider world in which to obtain experiences.

Growth in self esteem.

Members of each educator group, particularly administrators, pointed out **positive effect on self esteem.**

Self esteem. Feeling part of the crowd, part of a group .... When they feel good about themselves, they'll learn better .... kids seem happier.

First and foremost, socially. Self esteem. Self confidence. She's [a particular student in grade 10 science] extending herself, I think more in that situation than she would have if she had a room to go into in a totally modified program.

The same for any learner. Enhanced self esteem. Progress, as in measurable achievement. Increased socialization. The opportunity to contribute .... Happiness. Contentment.

Interacting in a regular class environment added to the personal image of students with challenging needs in the view of various respondents. **Self esteem was seen as related positively to various areas of social and academic life: friendships, achievement, cooperative activity, happiness.** A number of respondents made direct comparisons to non-integrated settings in pointing to benefits of inclusion.

General social benefit.

In addition to those who nominated specific benefits of inclusion, a variety of interviewees spoke to general or generic benefit. Resource teachers were a strong contingent within this group of respondees.

It has been positive in both cases. It has been very positive in a social sense and in an academic sense.

I compared their behaviour and their academic standing from one year to the next .... Once we integrated them, we found that their behaviour improved .... With respect to academics ... by the end of the year, their final mark was pretty much, I'd say, between 5 to 6 % higher or lower than where they were .... And they aspired to higher levels.

A large cross section of educators pointed to general and specific social benefits of inclusion. The wording of many comments indicated that statements were based on familiarity with effects of both regular placements and special placements. Though the focus of analysis was on social benefits, various commentators extended to academic benefit as well. The academic area is discussed in detail further on in this section.

Negative Social Effect

Though many respondents suggested a variety of positive social effects, a lesser number also suggested possible negative effects. The **total suggesting negative effects did not equal positive.** Comments tended to be phrased in a more hypothetical fashion than were those for positive effects. Use of terms such as "could" and "might" were frequent in response to the guide question:

What would some of the possible negative effects be?

The single area of concentration for comments was that **regular students might not be accepting of included students.** Statements in this area were characterized by a number of rejecting behaviours regular students might display. In addition to comments noting negative effect on students with challenging needs, respondents suggested that lack of support for the regular classroom teacher and lack of regular classroom teacher interest were negative dynamics, which they connected to social and academic progress.

Lack of acceptance.

Respondents suggested that **lack of acceptance could be demonstrated through a variety of behaviours** and, at times, attributed to a tendency toward general unpleasantness in some regular students. Teasing, ostracism, and general evidence of rejection were raised. Of these teasing was

the most frequently mentioned. A number of spontaneous written comments also indicated that some educators found a few regular students rejected their included peers.

> *Their peers can also be ... the ones that hurt you the most. There can't be the protection as much from just plain peer interactions and teasing and name calling.*

> *You do get some students who, no matter how well you train them, or how well you educate them, still have that penchant towards nastiness.*

> *The negatives area socially ... whether or not they're accepted, whether they're teased or ignored.*

Such comments formed the larger portion of the sparse comments on possible negative social effects. Also mentioned, albeit by even fewer participants, were the notions that inappropriate behaviours might be learned from regular peers, that self concept of included students might decline, and that social development might be fine at younger ages, but would decline toward adolescence.

An interesting pattern in some responses to the question on possible negative effect was that the negative dynamic might be lack of support for the RCT or disinterested teachers. Such responses do not bear directly on effect of inclusion on included students, but, doubtless, have indirect effect. They might be indicative of depth of concern regarding support and of the attitude of some educators.

Academic Effect

A substantial number of respondents, in addition to those above, noted academic benefits of inclusive experiences. In general, comments were not as specific as under social effects and the effect not as marked. Three categories were formed: academic motivation; general academic benefit; and no academic benefit.

Academic motivation.

A number of regular classroom teachers and resource teachers found **the regular classroom to have motivating influence on the academic effort of included students.**

> *They're also given a chance to work to a higher level than what might be expected. They are given, for example, the full lesson. They might only be asked to do part of the assignment. But if they wish to challenge any of the harder questions, they're certainly welcome to that.*

> *If they're in a regular classroom, they'll try to act more like a regular student. So that pulls them up academically.*

A variety of factors appear to be at work. Among these are simply **seeing the work habits of others; tutor - tutee interaction; exposure to higher level expectations and possibilities; and desire to function like peers.** These are among the benefits of peer modelling and interaction seen by authorities such as Andrews (1996) and Falvey and Rosenberg (1995).

General academic benefit.

Educators found specification of particular academic benefits challenging. As one noted, *"The academic benefits for us were hard to evaluate."* Despite this, a considerable number of participants believed academic benefit to be present for included students. The definite message that interaction with regular peers who model learning would be beneficial was given. All groups were represented in this belief.

> *Academically their exposure would be greater.*

> *Academically, even though a lot of the work is individualized for that student, I think they will pick up a lot of other things that are being taught within the classroom. I think, a lot of times, even their parents are surprised at their accomplishments.*

There can be academic benefits, but you've got to have the support services. You've got to have the training and smaller class size.

Academically, the growth can be minimal, but I think kids can be taught to learn things that will benefit them as far as life skills.

For the academic ... they can profit from being in with students of regular ability or higher.

Academics. The same sort of thing with the modelling effect from other students. They can see how different approaches that students take, as opposed to their way of thinking.

Academically, I think by having students together, they see and understand the expectations of all students, and good students make sure that students perform to the best of their own ability.

These various responses suggest academic advantage of regular classroom placement. Though generally phrased, the sense of **belief in a positive academic effect is clear.** An impressive number of participants suggested that simply being exposed to the academic activities characteristic of a regular classroom and interaction with other students would produce effect. Included in this positive view was the admonition that the RCT must be supported for effect to be realized.

Restriction of academic effect.

A limited number of respondents, primarily RCT's, believed that positive academic effect was absent or dubious, at least for some included students. Most referred to severity or category of disability as being a major restriction.

That would depend on the level of disability .... The students that I have had ... their level of disability was to such a degree that I honestly can't say that I observed any noticeable effect.

That would depend on the type of exceptionality, or the type of need that's required. But certainly, some students benefit academically from that, but not all.

Restriction of academic progress in terms of severity or type of disability is a logical concern. While this is true, few respondents in this study suggested that no academic progress was apparent, or that progress was dubious. These **concerns regarding category and severity of disability** were shared by those who contributed written comments on survey forms. **Some educators believe high levels of disability would render regular class placement questionable.** Others would feel the same with regard to specific disabilities, such as behaviour which was mentioned a variety of times. Nonetheless, the majority of respondents indicated that they found academic progress to be the case more often than not.

Summary of Effect on Included Students

It is safe to say that **interviewees perceived both social and academic value for included students.** Similar, but not as marked, value was indicated on survey responses and in written comments. Though growing strength in regular classroom placements was noted, few respondents were able to quantify or specify growth.

More significant progress was seen socially. Peer interactions through direct modelling and simple proximity appeared to increase self esteem and to develop a sense of belonging to the class group. Some rejection by peers was experienced, but not to the degree of acceptance and support. The majority of educators addressing social aspects of inclusion were positive in their views.

Pinning down academic development was challenging. Many educators spoke of a general academic effect and noted its relationship to interactions with regular students. However, this effect, while real, was amorphous.

Some concern regarding category and severity of educational challenge was evident in the responses of a limited number of interviewees. The majority, however, were quite certain that included students benefited from their experience. Once more, however, comments were laced with

caveats regarding support and professional preparation.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Discussion of findings was based primarily on interview data, the richest of three data sets in terms of probing beneath more surface level survey information (EOQ) and spontaneous written comments on survey forms. These latter two data sets served to round out interview data (see Appendices C & D).

In depth qualitative analysis of interview data revealed that educators found much of benefit in inclusive education and much which concerned them. A number of issues emerged, each of which stimulated considerable thought, and each of which is summarized below.

Soundness of Concept of Inclusion

Interviewees offered a goodly number of comments which focussed on whether or not inclusion was a sound educational concept. One of the ten issue areas of the EOQ also dealt with soundness. The majority of educators was more positive than negative regarding the soundness of inclusion.

Groups of educators found inclusive education to be educationally sound in that:

- Inclusion is directly related to issues of equity and rights.
- Inclusion provides students with challenging needs opportunity to reveal their learning potential.
- Inclusion possesses general benefit for all students, regular and included, more so than it possesses negative aspects.

Concerns of Regular Teachers

Though the majority of educators found inclusion to be educationally sound, they also exhibited definite concerns regarding its effects on regular classroom teachers. This was supported in three of the ten EOQ issues (Adequacy of Professional Preparation, Effect on Regular Classroom Teacher,

and Teacher Workload), of spontaneous written comments, and of interview comments.

Central aspects of concern were:

- Educators had insufficient preservice and inservice professional preparation to feel confident in inclusive situations.
- Progress of both regular and included students would be affected negatively, though for differing reasons.
- Workload would be too heavy with resultant teacher stress.
- Regular classroom teachers would not be supported adequately in terms of personnel, concrete resources, time for planning, and time for consulting.

The issue of negative or positive effect on regular and included students recurs in subsequent discussion. Overall data indicate, though concern did exist among some educators, that the majority believed that inclusive experience would benefit all students.

Regular Class Teacher and Resource Teacher

Support for regular class teachers comes primarily from resource teachers and administrators, but most directly from resource teachers. Whether classroom teachers believe they can work successfully with resource teachers, and what forms resource teacher support will take are important. Interview and EOQ responses indicated that educators believed a positive relationship could be forged. Interview data focussed on the forms of that relationship and brought forth the following:

- The role of the resource teacher was seen differently by various groupings of respondents. It was seen as focussed on assistance with programming, as provision of strategies for instruction, as being both of these and more, as being a consultant, and as being a facilitator/consultant. Administrators leaned more to the consultant model than did other educators.

- Most educators believed resource teacher support should be delivered in the regular classroom. Some saw it as a partnership between educators. Within this group, a few suggested that the regular classroom teacher should be the senior partner. A smaller group, all special class teachers, favoured a withdrawal model, rather than an in-class model.

- Who determines resource teacher role drew suggestions for differing models, with some type of collaborative teaming being preferred. Some educators, however, saw responsibility for setting out the role of resource teachers as reserved for administrators.

Administrator Support

The administrator is second only to the resource teacher as support to the regular classroom teacher. In certain areas of support, the administrator is crucial. Unfortunately, all analyses indicated that many educators hold minimal confidence, at best, that administrators will support them well in the task of inclusion. Regular teachers look to administrators for:

- Adequate time to plan for inclusion and for consultation.
- Provision of additional support personnel.
- Support in matters of discipline.
- Classes of manageable size and composition.
- Back up on various matters to do with parents, students, and resources.
- Leadership and example in inclusion.
- Mentorship.
- Empathy and understanding.

Two contradictory pictures of administrator support emerged. Comments on actual delivery of support suggested that the majority of study participants did not see administrators as providing adequate support. Contrasted to this picture was one painted by a minority of respondents whose experiences of administrator support were very positive. Administrators tended to regard themselves as supportive. One interpretation may be that

when any administrator turns attention to inclusion and the need to support classroom teachers, much can be done.

Regular Class Teacher Responsibility

A central concept within inclusive education is that it works best when the regular teacher assumes primary responsibility for all students, regular and included. EOQ results suggested that educators, in general, believe that the classroom teacher can assume responsibility. Within this general belief, the overall patterns referred to earlier are apparent. In depth interviews followed up on responsibility and revealed that:

- The majority of educators do believe regular class teachers should take primary responsibility for all students.
- The majority of eductors believe regular teachers could take primary responsibility.
- Acceptance of primary responsibility is conditional on adequate support.
- A team approach to responsibility was preferred by many.
- A limited number of educators considered it inappropriate for the regular teacher to accept primary responsibility.

This latter group of respondents considered the task of inclusion too specialized for the regular teacher, class sizes too large, and the resource teacher to be a specialist with whom primary responsibility should reside.

Effect on Regular Students

Despite earlier indication that some educators were concerned that regular students would experience negative effect through inclusion, when this point was pursued directly, the majority of respondents indicated that positive effect outweighed negative.

- Positive social effect was seen in experiencing diversity as appropriate as society itself is diverse.
- Inclusion was viewed as equitable educational practice.

- Inclusion was seen to heighten self esteem of regular students, with particular reference to those regular students with modest academic abilities.
- Regular students were viewed as gaining in development of self understanding through routine interaction with students with challenging needs.
- A few educators found negative effect for regular students. Concern was expressed that inappropriate behaviour would be learned.

Academic effect, similarly, was considered to be far more positive than negative. However, effect was not as marked in teachers' minds and, as noted earlier, regular class teachers tended to be less convinced than were other educators.

- Peer tutoring was seen to benefit regular students through cementing of previously learned material.
- Strategies implemented for included students were of benefit to regular students with modest academic abilities.
- Concern was expressed regarding effect of disruptive behaviour by included students.

Effect on Included Students

The main argument for inclusion is that it will have positive impact on those included. If this were not the case, and research is seen by many as unclear on the issue, the educational soundness of inclusion would be suspect. However, as previously determined, the majority of educators in this study find inclusive education to more sound than otherwise. The following perceptions of benefits of inclusion on students with challenging needs may be explanatory, at least in part, of this fundamentally positive view.

- Being with regular peer models was held to have general positive effect on behaviour of students with challenging needs in an beyond the classroom.

- Included students regarded themselves as members of the larger group despite the challenges of the regular classroom.
- A number of educators, particularly administrators, credited inclusive experience with positive effect on self esteem of included students.

The overall picture, nonetheless, was not that inclusion was without blemish A few respondents were concerned that regular students might not be accepting of their included peers, and that rejection through teasing and ignoring might result.

Some educators were concerned regarding academic effect on students with challenging needs. The primary concern was that no academic effect was obvious to them. Linked to such perceptions were others which regarded students with certain conditions of disability or certain degrees of challenge as inappropriate for inclusion.

Conversely, a much greater number of educators found positive academic effect for inclusive placement. Articulating specific academic effects challenged respondents and comments tended to be general.

- Regular classroom experience motivated students with challenging needs to achieve. Salient factors were exposure to work habits of regular students, tutor - tutee interaction, higher level expectations and challenges of regular classrooms, and desire to emulate regular peers.
- Though academic effects were difficult to pin down, many educators were persuaded that a general positive effect existed.

IMPLICATIONS

Presentation and discussion of research findings suggest policy and practice implications for various organizations having responsibility at some level for education of students with disabilities. Discussion in this section draws out a variety of these implications and organizes them under the general headings of government, school systems, support/advocacy organizations, and faculties of education.

Research partners from all of the above groups in regions across Canada were invited to participate in the project. Partners contributed to the design of the study, provided access to schools for survey and interview purposes, engaged in group discussions focussed on derivation of policy implications, and participated in refining this section of the report.

Three policy derivation meetings were held across Canada: one in each of the Western, Central, and Atlantic regions. Prior to meetings participants received preliminary drafts of findings from surveys, spontaneous written comments, and interviews. The agenda for these full day meetings was discussion of implications for the education of students with challenging needs based on combined data analyses and the experience of partners. Policy and practice derivation meeting records were blended with research findings to create the following discussion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

Policy group participants favoured a central role for government in supporting students with disabilities when included in regular classrooms. Policy implications for government included: 1) the suggestion that a Ministry of the Child might serve the needs of children more strongly than the present "disciplinary" ministerial (departmental) structure; 2) need for clarification of whether placement in regular classrooms as first choice was an issue of child rights; 3) equity in funding; 4) need for clarification of government policies regarding inclusion; 5) changing educator roles in inclusive situations; 6) appropriate assessment of students with challenging needs; and 7)

governmental stimulation of school - family collaboration..

Ministry of the Child

A number of research partners stated that their experience with inclusion of students with challenging needs, particularly those with higher degrees of need, led them to believe that successful practice was significantly limited by Ministerial (Departmental) structures. Ministries are structures separately aligned along traditional disciplinary lines. Education, for example, has a completely separate mandate from Health, though both will support many children with needs in certain aspects of their school careers. Interview participant references to areas in which the support of Health and other Ministries was required to facilitate regular classroom placement supported the analysis of research partners. For some years it has become increasingly apparent that the needs of children would be more adequately served through an interdisciplinary (interministerial) structure, or a blended, single ministry structure encompassing educational, health, and social aspects of child and youth care.

One of the policy group participants referred to such a structure as a Ministry of the Child. The argument that no one ministry, as presently structured, could serve the diverse needs of children, particularly those with challenging needs, was put forward to considerable approbation. Certainly, a number of survey and interview participants made the point that teachers saw themselves attempting to be social workers, psychologist, and health workers, and that they were not qualified to take on such responsibilities. The expectation of increasing inclusion, however, brings with it the realization that students with medical, social, and emotional needs will be placed in regular classrooms with regular teachers. Transformation of educators' understanding of their roles with regard to all children, and of who might be a student in the regular classroom of a neighbourhood school, calls for change not only in the education system, but in society and government as well.

Impetus for a restructuring of government service and responses has been gained by realization within every Canadian educational system that most, if not all, young people may be served more appropriately in regular classroom situations with their peers, than apart from them in special placements. As the number of decisions made to

maximize regular classroom placement has risen, so, too, has the degree of challenge in some children successfully educated in local schools. In certain contemporary Canadian educational systems with inclusive placement policies, almost every degree of intellectual, physical, emotional, and sensory ability is encountered in regular classrooms. Many of these children have health and social needs being met by ministries other than Education. Attempts to coordinate and deliver services from the various players has been widely supported as a frustrating experience, often breaking down under differing regulations and expectations. Despite evidence of such difficulties, continued movement in the direction of regular class placement of students with challenging needs appears apparent in educational policies at the provincial ministry and individual school system levels.

Changes in educational placement decisions for children and youth with challenging needs have strengthened the argument of those who see value in reform of government support structures. Changes in where students with disabilities are placed educationally are viewed as positive. Various advocates have called for positive change in government structures as well. Put another way, the increased diversity in ability levels and needs of students in regular classrooms of community schools requires that Government must similarly broaden its outlook. **This broadening may be seen as the blended delivery of educational, health, and social services at levels not feasible under the present, typical single mission format of government ministries.**

The Rights Issue

Various research partners and other invited policy group participants argued that, if inclusion as placement of first choice becomes "the norm" under provincial education policy across Canada, as appears to be happening, governments should be clear in their positions on inclusion as an issue of child rights. A number of discussants supported the view that inclusion in the regular classroom of the community school, with necessary and appropriate support services, was clearly an issue of child rights. Such proponents viewed parental wish, or that of an adult student, for integration to be the decisive factor in educational placement. Though the Supreme Court of Canada has limited parental preference in placement (i.e. Eaton v. Brant County Board of Education, 1996), many educators will continue to take parental and

individual desire seriously, even in the instance of students with high levels of challenge.

Other research partners advocated for additional guiding factors taking into consideration the concerns of educators regarding the individual needs of any learner. The discussion echoed comments from a number of survey and interview respondents in the research study. General agreement was reached that educators and parents must work together to provide the strongest possible educational program for all students, and that all students should be placed as closely as possible to the regular classroom.

Both groups of discussants were concerned that policy statements from various ministries did not provide sufficiently clear guidelines on which to determine placement decisions where differences existed between family and educators. An increasingly common, and regrettable, result of vagueness in governmental comment on the child rights aspect of educational placement has been appeals to the legal system for clarification. **Research partner representatives on both sides of the discussion preferred that placement decisions be the concern of family and educators and not of the judicial system. Clear statements on the nature of placement decisions under the child rights issue formulated by provincial governments would do much to prevent impasse.**

Funding

Government action in the area of funding was a concern of the majority of policy group participants. **Discussions did not focus on the provision of increased funds to support the educational move to inclusion, but, rather, on ensuring that available funds be directed with equity in the support of all students.** Some policy group discussants feared that necessary supports for included students, in terms of resource teachers, educational assistants, and other specialists, would be withdrawn or significantly reduced with resultant negative effect on students and teachers. Interview participants made it clear that they shared fears that funding cuts would hit programs for students with challenging needs more sharply than those for other students.

Such realignment of available funds would result from inappropriate understanding of necessary and appropriate supports for inclusion by system level financial decision makers, exacerbated by lack of direction by

government. **The position that government had to provide firm and clear guidelines in such areas, at a time both of reduced funding and change in policy and practice, was advanced.**

In a different vein, a minority of elementary and secondary level survey and interview respondents regarded the trend to inclusion as an undeclared strategy by government and school system administrators to reduce costs at the expense of teachers and the quality of education. As such, these study participants questioned the funding strategies of both sets of financial decision makers.

Research partner discussants took the view that in a time of reduced financial support for educational systems, all sectors of a system should be affected in equitable fashion. Reduced funding in any area of system activity should not be looked on simply as reason to cut programming and resources, but also as an opportunity to provide support in innovative and collaborative fashion without total dependency on previous support models.

Policy Clarification

Inclusion is viewed as most successful when school systems have sufficient flexibility to create and support change and when clear ministry policies are available for guidance. On occasion in the policy derivation meetings held across Canada during this study, it became apparent that school system officials believed their hands to be tied loosely or tightly by ministry policy and guidelines. Some revealing discussions during which ministry officials clarified government policy regarding degree of flexibility available to school systems in supporting students with challenging needs occurred. There was a marked tendency for school officials to minimally interpret, or to be uncertain regarding, ministry policy. Once clarification had been offered, those engaged in such discussions felt themselves in a much stronger position to answer local needs and desires.

It was apparent that communication of policy guidelines between ministry and field was often unclear with resultant limited effect on educational reform. **Clear statements of policy, of the flexibility available to systems desiring to pilot local initiative, and of the ability of systems to contact nominated ministry officials for clarification of policy would appear a positive step in support of the continued movement to inclusion**

in the educational community.

Role of the Teacher

The societal movement to increased inclusion of persons with challenging needs in communities in general is being felt in Canadian education. As noted earlier, one result is that a goodly number of regular classroom teachers are confused regarding the role they are expected to take in response to accepting responsibility for students with disabilities. Those charged with guiding teachers through educational reforms such as inclusion must ensure that as little confusion and as much clarity as possible exist for teachers when change occurs.

Policy group research partners were not surprised at the tension experienced by survey and interview respondents relative to responsibility and inclusion. The majority of regular classroom teachers and other school based educator colleagues assumed their professional roles in an educational world which believed placing students with challenging needs in special, segregated programs with specialist teachers for all or part of their school days, was appropriate and progressive education. They accepted and understood their roles in such a world. Most still function in systems which maintain separate special education structures. It should be anticipated that they are confused by requests based on the belief that regular classroom placement now is to be preferred.

Clarification of what is expected of educators as inclusion increases is viewed as the responsibility of ministries of education in the first instance. Responsible ministries set out the fundamental responsibilities of teachers. Though detailed explication would be an inappropriate expectation, oversight guidelines for school systems and faculties of education reinforcing policy statements regarding inclusion would be appropriate. Such oversight guidelines might well be found in ministry resource documents for field use. **For faculties of education, stated expectations that the teacher preparation curriculum would include preparation for (e.g. appropriate pedagogical strategies, curriculum modification/adaptation, assessment approaches, working with families and communities), and practica in, inclusive classrooms** would go a long way to ensuring that all future teachers obtained basic preparation for the task of including students with challenging

needs. **Discussions with teacher federations regarding the need to provide inservice education for practicing educators,** coupled with joint ministry/federation publications setting forth possible inservice approaches and listing resource personnel and print/audio/visual resource materials, would do much to engage the field as a whole.

Appointment of at least one ministry official to coordinate initiatives such as those suggested above would signal ministry resolve which few field or university educators could overlook. The ministry, with its unique provincial role, has a primary responsibility for province wide leadership and coordination in setting the tone for educational change.

Assessment

Assessment of the needs, abilities, and progress of students with challenging needs is a particularly thorny issue for the system. For many students with challenging needs traditional methods of assessment are inappropriate and produce misleading estimations of needs, achievement levels, and potential. That this area is a huge concern to educators at the school level was evident in survey responses and interview comments. Recent emphasis on testing for achievement levels across entire provinces was viewed at policy derivation meetings as inimical to inclusion if such assessment reinforces the views of some educators and others that any student to be placed in a regular classroom had to meet a set standard of performance for that classroom. This is a traditional view which leads to a view which might be termed, "Teach the best, and segregate the rest."

Inclusion calls for a view of students with challenging needs as learners in their own right, and as being appropriately placed with regular classroom teachers. If such placement is to be beneficial to the students, and if teachers are to make it so, skill in insightful assessment methods is required. Whereas some educators, parents, and community advocates are leaders in such assessment, the majority of practicing educators, including many special education resource personnel, are not closely familiar with such methods.

Ministries of education may stimulate appropriate assessment in five ways at least: 1) by ensuring that faculties of education offer instruction on assessment methods appropriate to inclusive education; 2) by encouraging school systems and teacher federations to provide

appropriate inservice by practicing educators; 3) by providing guides describing assessment approaches and resources; 4) by surveying the province for knowledgeable professionals and by circulating contact information; 5) and by encouraging school systems to include parents and other knowledgeable advocates in assessment design and activities.

School - Family Collaboration

Many contributors to the series of policy derivation meetings advanced the position that collaboration between school systems and parents was fundamental to successful inclusion. This was felt to be most needed where students with higher degrees of challenge were concerned, but applied to all students, challenged or not. Underlying this position was concern that, unless ministries spoke on the need for such collaboration in support of inclusion, it would not be realized sufficiently. A number of participants pointed to existing government policies regarding school councils, but believed that the voice of the minority group concerned with their challenged children would not be heard clearly. Others noted the existence of system level advisory groups composed of representatives of organizations relating to various exceptionalities. Again the concern was voiced that those advocating inclusion would be in the minority during the period of transition from traditional special education structures to more regular classroom based structures.

A role for government was seen in guiding school systems to recognize the value of working collaboratively with families at the system level and at the community school level. Government advocacy for such partnership was considered both to stimulate educators who might cling to the traditional separation of school and parents, and to realize the value of working with the parents who possess knowledge of their children's abilities and needs which might tax school assessment and programming resources.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL SYSTEMS

School system policy was viewed as flowing from the position of any system on the issue of child rights. If any child with disabilities has the right to regular classroom placement, whether or not the system is inclusive or

traditional in general, a series of policy implications follow. Research partner discussion considered the need for clearly stated system policies, alignment of system structures to support inclusion, working with the community, developing exemplary programs, collaborating with professional organizations, and inservicing staff regarding inclusive practice.

The Child Rights Issue

Whereas government is considered the appropriate agent to take leadership in clarifying the status of inclusion, or any other such issue, school systems, too, have an important role in ensuring that students and parents, both understand that they have certain rights as determined by society and that they receive the rights due them.

One fundamental right at the school system level should be that the needs of the student be considered over the need to proceed through a set curriculum at a uniform pace. In past years an unhealthy relationship, according to findings of the present study, has been built between some school systems and parents and advocacy groups due to lack of clarification of whether inclusion is a right. Disputes between some systems and parents have been carried into the legal arena, with accompanying surrender by both parties of an educational solution to a dispute. Those speaking in our policy derivation discussions to the human rights issue uniformly regretted the impasses which have arisen and would encourage school systems to work toward clarification of this pivotal area.

What school systems can do may be divided into two strands.

One strand is curricular in nature. All students, from the earliest stages, should understand that certain rights are inalienable and that discrimination in any form is unacceptable. With the increasing diversity of the regular classrooms of Canada comes increasing need to deal with rights and discrimination directly through curricular experiences. **School systems would do well to include equity for students with disabilities as a curricular concern in their planning.** In addition to recognition through the curriculum, recognition through the provision of auxiliary resources (e.g. videos, speakers, reading materials, etc.) are required.

The second strand deals with design and implementation of policy dealing with ability. Many systems have designed and disseminated proactive

policies regarding gender and racial/cultural equity. Few have such policies in the area of ability. **Given the recent moves of many provincial governments to formulate and announce policies supportive of integration as placement of first choice for all students, parallel policy statements by school systems for the guidance of administrators, teachers and other school staff, and parents would seem logical.** Policy group discussants agreed that, though diversity in the classroom may take different forms, all forms should be recognized and supported through proactive policy.

Policy Clarification

Policy implications are diverse for school systems. They include the need to understand ministry policy statements and guidelines effectively, and to develop suitable system-wide supportive policies for assessment, placement, collaboration with parents, collaboration with related agencies and associations, and to provide inservice for teachers and other support personnel.

As noted under Implications for Government, not all educators are sufficiently familiar with government policy regarding inclusion. Some adopt a minimalist interpretation seeing government policy as advisory only. Others view the same policy as directive with resultant concern regarding whether their system can comply with the directives they perceive. Added to these scenarios are the survey and interview responses of a number of practicing educators who are confused as to both government policy and that of their systems.

Contributions to policy derivation discussions by both government and school system participants suggested that such confusion is not uncommon. Reasons for confusion may be interpreted differently by various interested parties. **However, it appears advisable that those in school systems should press ministries for clear statements of policy accompanied by interpretive guidelines.** Clear communication between government and school systems should be a priority in the early stages of any new educational initiative. Where it is apparent that such communication is missing, school systems should press the ministry to provide it.

It was noted in discussion that many school systems, even in those

provinces with policies favouring integration, had not yet aligned their internal policies with those of the government. Educational change cannot occur smoothly unless school systems send unambiguous messages to all staff, particularly those in leadership positions. **In the instance of inclusion, clear statements of system intent and actions taken to realize that intent, are requisite.** Without supportive policy and plans for implementation, any educational initiative is certain to result in unnecessary confusion, resistance, and halting progress.

Key areas for policy and action are inservice teacher development, student assessment and placement, parental collaboration, and involvement of the larger community. These four areas may be seen as central indicators of the interest of system leaders and of their willingness to support words with action.

Designing Systems for Support of Inclusion

Inclusion can be viewed as dependent on the interweaving of two levels of school system structures, the pan-system level and the school unit level. Implications for the school unit level are dealt with elsewhere. However, experience with inclusion indicates that school level inclusion functions more powerfully when the entire system has planned for educating students with disabilities in regular classrooms of community schools. Even those systems which maintain special education structures need to plan proactively for those of their students with disabilities who are included in regular classrooms.

Participants in the research partner policy implication meetings devoted considerable discussion to strategic activities affecting entire systems. Discussion was based on familiarity with the findings of this study, experience with education of students in both inclusively and traditionally structured systems, experience in venues other than education, and wide ranging knowledge of related literature.

Implications apply to a variety of areas. They are not exhaustive in that they were developed on the basis of findings of this single study and the experience of an informed, but finite, group of discussants. Areas considered were: flexible staffing structures; relationship to the community and its resources; development of model programs; collaboration with teacher federations; and professional development of staff.

Staffing was a topic of intense discussion among the policy groups. It also was an item of frequent comment among the survey and interview participants. Two interrelated points predominated, that of placing responsibility for staff deployment at the school unit level, and that of providing specialist and other personnel support for regular classrooms.

The first centred on need for school administrators to meet local conditions speedily and effectively. The essence of discussion was that once central administration had assigned a total staff complement to a school, that the school should determine the most effective deployment of staff members. This move would permit the allocation of staff to grades or resource roles of particular need. It would permit a principal to use a teacher position to increase the number of resource teachers or educational assistants in a school, or a resource position as a regular class teacher position to reduce the pupil-teacher ratio. **While actual deployment strategies may be debated, the point is that school units be able to employ staff flexibly within their budgeted allotment to meet local and changing needs.**

Increased inclusion calls for close contact with the community served by the school system. The community was viewed as a rich resource of organizations, service agencies, and individuals. **Policy group discussion turned to the value of forging close links to such resources at the system level as an example to individual schools, and as creating a system of consultants/advocates/resources.** As schools continue to transform themselves to better serve students with challenging needs, the demand for and value of increased interdependence of schools, parents, supportive agencies, community organizations and businesses, and knowledgeable individuals has become more and more apparent.

For most school systems inclusion in regular classrooms of students with high degrees of educational challenge under the tutelage of regular classroom teachers is new and unknown. Though research and practice both support the effect and feasibility of inclusion, responses from participants in this study show great variability with regard to school and classroom organization, curricular modification, regular teacher and resource personnel relationship, administrative leadership, and equity of academic and social agendas. **Those at the policy group meetings voiced strong support for systems which set up model programs for teaching, curricular**

innovation, inservice work, and research. It was noted that cooperation with universities, community colleges, and/or community organizations would do much to support model programs.

Collaboration should extend to educator federations and associations at the national and provincial levels. Such organizations have significant potential in professional development, curricular design, advocacy, and resource development. **To policy group participants it appeared logical that school systems in concert with educator federations and associations should lead in ensuring availability of professional development in inclusive practice, that appropriate curricula and other necessary resources are designed, and that student rights are protected.**

Finally, under this heading, the issue of professional development was examined. It was again obvious to policy group discussants that the greater proportion of educators has not been well prepared for including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. This concern was attributed to regular classroom teachers, resource personnel, administrators, and educational assistants. Teacher preparation for inclusion was also the most frequently mentioned topic in spontaneous comments on surveys. Out of the many discussions and commentaries emerged the conviction that preservice and inservice teacher preparation was a priority need. Preservice will be discussed later. It was generally agreed that it is at the inservice level that school systems can have the greatest effect.

Given that faculties of education do not provide more than cursory attention to inclusion, teachers entering the profession and most of those already teaching are unfamiliar with the philosophy of inclusion, the related research, and the supportive strategies. **Inservice professional development is needed in these areas to increase teacher confidence, deepen skills, develop regular teacher - resource teacher working relationships, and develop teacher abilities to recognize, measure, and program for student needs.**

Educator Roles at the School Level

The regular classroom teacher and her/his attitudes toward, and knowledge for, working with students with challenging needs are key to successful inclusion. Also key are the attitudes and knowledge of resource

support staff and administrators. These three groups must function as an effective team with clear understanding of the rights of students and ways to fulfil those rights. Implications arose in this study for all three groups combined and for individual group.

A team approach.

The value of a team approach to integration was emphasized by participants in the research partner policy meetings, and was a topic of importance to many survey and interview respondents. Concerns related to formation of in-school teams, the roles of the three educator groups involved, the need to include parents routinely, and the roles of external specialists in inclusion. A number of implications were noted.

Individual schools should have guidelines for the development and operation of an in-school team charged with coordination of the inclusion program, acquisition of resources, local inservice development, collaboration with community agencies, and other pertinent matters. Teams should include parents and, where appropriate, specialists from the medical, social, and other related fields. Implementation of the team approach should consider educator concerns regarding areas such as planning time, administrator leadership, support mechanisms, and personnel (both paid and volunteer).

Regular classroom teachers.

As noted above, the regular classroom teacher is key to successful inclusion. This person requires support to be effective in the task of working with a diversity of students. As noted, among such supports are professional development opportunities, understanding and knowledgeable administrators, adequate planning and consultation time, and resource assistance as appropriate. Though many teachers may be positively disposed toward inclusive practice, it is the degree of support available in various forms which will determine actual willingness to include students with special needs.

Regular teacher concerns appear to be directed toward knowledge and support personnel. **Professional development through inservice at both the system and school level will provide required and desired knowledge.** Areas appropriate for inservice identified in this study are curriculum

modification, specifics about various challenging conditions, peer teaching models, behaviour management, working with paraprofessionals, assessment strategies, collaborating with parents and community personnel, working with resource teachers, team teaching, research, and forming appropriate expectations of students with diverse levels of academic and social potential.

Resource personnel.

Closely associated with the regular classroom teacher in working toward successful inclusion are resource personnel. These specialists team with the regular teacher on an in-school, routine basis and share responsibility for the academic and social program and progress of students with special needs. **Steps must be taken to stimulate and facilitate a close, professional working relationship.**

Resource personnel require professional development as do regular teachers. A program designed to provide a wide ranging familiarity with types of challenging conditions, appropriate curriculum modifications, inclusive strategies for varying degrees of challenge, community resources and agencies, and working effectively with colleagues, parents, and other resource personnel would do much to support this central role.

Case load of resource personnel must be such that they can carry out their responsibilities adequately. **Policy group discussants favoured flexibility of assignment of resource personnel at the individual school level to meet local situations and serve school population needs as they change both in numbers of teachers and students to be supported, and in the quality of challenge being experienced by the students.**

Administrators.

Administrators can do much to support both regular classroom teachers and resource staff as well as parents. This study points to considerable tension between teaching staff and administrators in the area of inclusion. This tension was noted both in the data gathering stage of the study and discussed at the policy derivation stage. In addition Canadian research has documented the differences between teachers and administrators in how administrators might best support teachers (Henry, 1996).

Administrators as the educational leaders of the school can have direct

and pervasive influence on inclusion. However, they require support from the system. Policy group discussants pointed out that it is an error to assume that administrators understand their role vis a vis inclusion simply by being appointed. **They, too, would benefit from inservice preparation suited to their roles in the system, preparation which would assist them in fulfilling their leadership responsibilities in this area in effective fashion.** Within this general implication, two specific points are central to the discussion.

Professional preparation of administrators should include components on inclusion as an educational practice already affecting thousands of students and the staffs of schools they attend, and as an educational design which will continue to grow and widen to the ultimate regular classroom placement of students with high degrees of challenge. Content of such professional development will vary, but certain elements appeared requisite. First among these are the need for **routine, personal support of teachers with taxing students** as well as support through organization of meetings and acquisition of resources, the establishment of school management systems which will maximize regular class time for all students, the planning of school strategies to deal with unexpected crises (e.g. a medical incident or a behavioural outburst), the involvement of parents and community in support of students with challenging needs, and stimulation of in and out of school professional development opportunities for all staff in the area of exceptionality.

Secondly, administrators should be impressed that they **need to lead in accepting that any student assigned to regular class placement has the right to that placement until events arise which prove otherwise.** The principal is the senior advocate for the most powerful educational opportunities for all students, regardless of the type or degree of their learning challenge. Policy discussants were agreed that the principal will set the tone for the school in terms of inclusion.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SUPPORT/ADVOCACY AGENCIES

Support/advocacy agencies were viewed as holding significant roles in furthering inclusive practice in community schools. It was apparent in policy

group discussion that research partners found such agencies to have a primary function in expressing the right of students with challenging needs to placement in regular classrooms. Achievement of this function implies that support/advocacy agencies collaborate closely with educators, work with educators to bring out relevant findings on research and methodology, and clarify the functional meaning of daily inclusion.

The Child Rights Issue

Research partners viewed advocacy and support agencies as leaders in establishing the right of parents and students to opt for regular classroom placement and appropriate support. Within this role a variety of supportive activities were suggested. Among these were development of **a clear position on child right to inclusive placement**, advocacy for parents' choice within government, legal, and educational provisions, the support of research clarifying the argument for inclusion with emphasis on the educational environment, the design of resources of value to schools and families, and continued demonstration that inclusion is a natural expectation in many community settings. **In essence advocacy and other support agencies should support schools through affirmation of the justice of including students.**

Collaboration with Educators

Participants in policy derivation meetings saw great need for **close collaboration between advocacy/support agencies and educators.** It was noted that at times the relationship has been marked more by mistrust and friction than by accord. One research partner participant from an advocacy organization suggested that "both sides put the guns away in the interests of the children". Discussion surfaced a considerable list of areas in which agencies and educators could collaborate with value. Research undertakings and design and provision of resources to support inclusion were two most frequently mentioned.

Clarification of the contribution to individuals and society of bringing a diversity of students together in the regular classroom was a major area. As various policy meeting attendees noted, indeed as was apparent in the

responses of many educators to survey and interview questions, as well as the recent Supreme Court decision, many continue to hold to the belief that special placements are more effective than are regular classroom placements, and that regular student progress is negatively affected by inclusion. If, as many support/advocacy agency personnel assert, the research finds differently the news needs to be brought to the attention of educators in many parts of Canada. **Development of a mutually supportive, working relationship with school systems, teacher federations, and individual schools will do much to permit advocacy/support agency personnel in bringing research findings to the discussion table.**

Clarification of inclusion in practice.

Similarly, the concept of inclusion as it translates into practice needs to be clarified. As study results demonstrate, confusion exists among educators as to the nature of the task facing them. If inclusion is to be manageable practice, flexibility of implementation must become widely understood. In too many places the tension between educators and parents and their supporters results in the perception of an all-or-nothing position on both sides. Inclusive practice, in the view of policy group discussants is not a knee jerk adherence to regular classroom placement every minute of every school day. It is not placement of students with challenging needs without support for the teacher. It does not carry with it the expectation that the teacher must bring the included student to the academic and social levels of the class group through heroic expenditures of time and effort. It is a flexible, mutually worked out system of educating students with their peers with all parties recognizing that good education for all is the objective. Such clarification by support/advocacy agencies of what inclusion means in actual practice in a community school would do much to diminish apprehensions of educators.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FACULTIES OF EDUCATION

The teacher preparation mandate of faculties of education across Canada was considered with the implication that faculties show leadership in response to the demand for knowledge regarding inclusive philosophy,

methodology, and resources. Discussants saw a need for review of preservice teacher preparation curricula with regard to inclusion of students with challenging needs, the development among future teachers of the understanding that equity must be applied to all groups, especially those traditionally treated differently by schools, the undertaking of research clarifying inclusive theory and practice, and the development of resources to support inclusive practice.

Preservice Teacher Preparation

Responses from survey and interview respondents and comments by policy group discussants made it evident that teachers felt themselves unprepared for the task of inclusion. Unpreparedness, in large part, was considered to emanate from lack of preparation for and exposure to inclusion at the preservice level. It would appear that few Canadian universities offer more than surface attention to the philosophy and practice of integrating students with disabilities in regular classrooms, and fewer still refer to inclusive philosophy and practice.

Policy group participants interpreted their own experience in education and the responses of other study participants as pointing to actions universities might take to prepare Canadian teachers for inclusion of students with challenging needs in regular classrooms. Among these actions were: the provision of preservice course work and practicum experience for inclusion/integration; collaboration with school systems and educator federations in establishing model programs; collaboration with both in designing and offering inservice professional development; the undertaking of research oriented to clarification of the effects of inclusion; and the design of appropriate curricular and management concepts as resources for educator support

Preservice Course Work, Practica and Equity

Two types of course work were suggested. One was a compulsory preservice course offering designed to promote competency in all future teachers in the conceptual underpinnings of inclusion, curriculum modification techniques, classroom management strategies for classrooms diverse in ability levels, peer support systems, roles of

support personnel, community resources, research findings, and such policy group participants emphasized that effort should be made to reduce the distancing effects of traditional special education practices such as identification and labelling, one on one teaching by support personnel, and other "centring out" dynamics. Moreover, practicum experiences in regular classrooms should include opportunities to work inclusively.

The second type of course work, to be woven through all aspects of the preservice program, was the recognition that all students had a right to regular classroom placement in the first instance, that diversity by ability should be regarded as part of the larger agenda of equity as are diversity by race, culture, or gender, that the teaching strategies appropriate for regular classrooms are also those appropriate for those differing by ability, and that social development is to be as valued as cognitive development already is.

Research

Faculties of education are mandated uniquely to engage in research and resource development. Both are needed by educational systems transitioning from one understanding of the most appropriate educational approach for students with challenging needs to another.

Inclusion of all, or of the great majority, of students with challenging needs is often considered a controversial break with accepted educational theory and practice. Though the majority of students with challenging needs, particularly those with mild to moderate levels of challenge, are presently placed in regular classrooms full or part time, many educator respondents in the present study espoused the view such placement should be questioned. Caution focussed on actual value to those so included, effect on other students, appropriateness of regular classroom instructional approaches, and effect on teachers. Such questioning, policy group participants pointed out, leads to "conditional participation" in regular classrooms, and is likely to result in segregation when imposed conditions are not met. Whereas emergent research points to more positive than negative effect in such areas, studies are few and do not appear well-known within the professional educator community.

Faculties of education, with their cadres of educational researchers in the area of exceptionality, numbers of graduate students, and

increasing attention to the teacher as researcher concept, were considered by policy derivation group discussants to be the logical centres for research study of various aspects of inclusion. Conduct of such research, however, would be dependent on faculty recognition of need to position preservice and graduate study within changing views of the place of students with challenging needs within the educational system, and the implications of such change for understanding both theory and practice.

The considerable opportunities for **research collaboration with government, school systems, professional associations, and support/advocacy organizations, as well as other agencies such as corporations and foundations at the national and international levels, should be recognized and developed.** Continuing funding allocations, strategic grant funding (such as that from the SSHRC/Disabled Persons Secretariat partnership which supported this study, but which is terminating this year), targeted contract research, resource development funding, and research opportunities created by community interests must be encouraged and pursued. A variety of research and development activities must be recognized as appropriate. The university cannot stand aloof from the needs of the field and should recognize the value of research designed to answer questions of practice as well as of theory and philosophy. **Findings should be disseminated throughout the teaching community as well as the academic.**

Supportive Resources

Resources in the form of Canadian texts, articles, instructional and management strategies, professional development systems, and the like are common products of faculties of education in support of educational practice in the field. To date most resources around students labelled as exceptional have been oriented to support of segregated programming. Among notable Canadian exceptions are works produced by Andrews (1996), Andrews and Lupart (1993), Lupart, McKeough, & Yewchuk (1996), Bunch (1996), Falvey, Forest, Pearpoint, & Rosenberg (1994), O'Brien & Forest (1989), and Snow (1994). Survey and interview respondees commented frequently on lack of resources designed to support inclusion in regular classrooms.

Policy group participants advocated that faculties of education

develop cooperative activities with school systems, government, organizations of professional educators, and community support/advocacy agencies in resource development for inclusion. The success of such efforts in the areas of gender and race and culture was noted as indicative of the progress that can be made when decisions are made within faculties to respond to societal desire for changes in teacher preparation based on issues of rights and supportive research findings.

Including all students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a relatively new educational practice. It challenges school systems as would any type of fundamental school reform. Inclusion challenges the understanding of educators in terms of who may be considered a student in a regular class, calls for re-evaluation of the value of individual levels of academic and social development, requires reconsideration of the roles of regular classroom teachers, resource personnel, administrators, parents, and the community, and requires flexible curricular practices. To meet these challenges faculties need to work closely with teacher federations, school systems, and other agencies in the development of model programs, and in other areas previously mentioned.

The university with its mandate to advance the frontiers of knowledge to new levels has a central role to play in examining and supporting societal changes such as that of inclusion.

OVERALL SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

Government

Ministry of the Child

- Blend delivery of educational, health, and social services to more effectively meet the varied needs of students with challenges.

Child Rights

- Formulate and disseminate a clear statement of government expectation under child rights legislation regarding right to inclusive placement as first choice.

Funding

- Ensure that available funds are directed to equity in support of all students and right to inclusive placement.

Policy Clarification

- Deliver clear statements of policy with indication of the flexibility available to systems regarding students with challenging needs, and of appropriate government officials to contact for policy clarification.

Role of Teachers

- Clearly state expectations of educators regarding inclusive responsibilities.

- State clearly that preservice teacher preparation would include preparation for inclusive responsibilities including appropriate pedagogical strategies, curriculum modification/adaptation, assessment approaches, working with families and communities, and practicum experiences.

- Develop discussions with provincial teacher federations and school systems regarding provision of inservice professional development around inclusion.

Resource Provision

- Lead school systems and professional organizations to design and disseminate resources supportive of inclusion.

- Simulate faculties of education to support understanding and practice of inclusion through adequate funding of research programs.

- Compile and disseminate provincial listings of persons knowledgeable about inclusion and willing to work with school systems, federations, and families.

Child Rights

- Develop and implement policies supportive of inclusion as placement of first choice for guidance of school personnel and families.

- Include educational equity in the instance of difference by ability as a concern in curriculum development as well as difference by race, ethnicity, and gender.

Policy

- Press ministries/departments of education for clear statements of government policy regarding inclusion of students with challenging needs.

- Develop and disseminate clear statements of system intent and system action regarding inclusion of students.

Supporting Inclusion Throughout the System

- Place responsibility for flexible deployment of allocated staff at the school level to meet local needs.

- Develop close links with community organizations, service agencies, and individuals to forge a network of knowledgeable consultants able to work with schools in support of inclusion.

- Collaborate with professional federations/associations to ensure availability of professional development, appropriate curricula, and other resources, as well as protection of student rights.

- Ensure that all staff, including administrators, undertake professional development related to their roles within inclusion.

- Develop model programs for teaching, curricular innovation,

inservice professional development, and internal research and resource development.

- Collaborate with faculties of education in preservice and inservice teacher preparation, resource development, and research.

Educator Roles at the School Level

- Develop guidelines for and implement in-school teams charged with coordinating inclusive programs, acquisition of resources, local inservice professional development, collaboration with community agencies, and other pertinent matters.

- Determine relationship between regular classroom teacher and resource teacher in light of local needs and desires.

- Develop strategies to support regular classroom teachers through adequate time for meetings and planning, and through in-class assistance as appropriate.

- Forge ties with families and use their knowledge.

Support/Advocacy Agencies

Child Rights

- State a clear position with regard to right to inclusive placement.

- Press government and school systems to recognize and act on the right to inclusive placement as first choice for students.

- Bring relevant research, program models, and resources to the attention of government, school systems, professional associations, and teachers.

- Develop a positive collaborative relationship with local school

systems and local schools in support of inclusion.

Clarification of Practice

- Work with all relevant agencies and individuals to develop positive and practical models for inclusion.

Resources

- Develop and disseminate, individually and collaboratively, resources to support inclusion.

Research

- Stimulate, support and engage in research designed to clarify and support inclusive practice.

Faculties of Education

Preservice Teacher Preparation

- Develop compulsory experiences and courses designed to promote competency in all future teachers in the conceptual bases of inclusion, curriculum modification, classroom management, peer support systems, roles of support personnel, community resources, and research particular to inclusive education.

- Develop across all program offerings a faculty stance that diversity by ability requires the same equitable responses from educators as do diversity by race, ethnicity, or gender.

- Develop across all program offerings a faculty stance that the needs of students with challenges are best met through pedagogical approaches developed for all children, with modification/adaptation to meet individual characteristics.

Inservice Teacher Preparation

- Collaborate with government, professional associations, school systems, and other groups in developing and offering professional

development programs focused on inclusion.

Supportive Resources

- Collaborate with government, professional associations, school systems, and other groups in developing supportive resources.

- Ensure that preservice and inservice candidates become familiar with resources available within school systems, professional organizations, and the local community.

Research

- Support and stimulate research into inclusive education among faculty members, and graduate and undergraduate students.

- Collaborate with governments, school systems, support/advocacy agencies, and other groups on research projects on inclusion.

- Publicize and disseminate research findings both at academic levels and at field professional levels.

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APPENDIX A

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS, INTRODUCTORY STATEMENTS, & GUIDES FOR INTERVIEWER

Educational Soundness of Full Inclusion

Many teachers indicate that they believe inclusion of students with exceptionalities to be good educational practice.

1. Why would they hold this position?
2. Why would some teachers question the practice?
3. Under what conditions could inclusion of the majority of students with exceptionalities be achieved?
4. What prevents higher levels of inclusion now?

Adequacy of Teacher Preparation

Many teachers express concern about the adequacy of teacher preparation for inclusion.

1. At what level should teacher preparation for inclusion be concentrated; preservice or inservice?
2. How much effort should be expended at the (preservice/inservice) level?
3. Who should provide the inservice teacher preparation? (E.g. university, government, school board/division)
4. What form should preservice/inservice teacher preparation take?
5. What should be the focus on content? (E.g. factual knowledge regarding students with exceptionalities, program approaches, theoretical/conceptual aspect, teacher attitudes and responses, policy and legislation)

Teacher Self-Confidence in Inclusion

Regular classroom teachers vary in confidence that they can include students with exceptionalities, and may have doubts in some areas.

1. What types of exceptionalities do you believe regular class teachers might be more confident they could handle? (Elaborate. Get to root of belief.)
2. What types of exceptionalities do you believe regular class teachers might be less confident they could handle?

(Elaborate. Get to root of belief.)

A key responsibility for regular class teachers is adapting materials to meet individual needs of students with exceptionalities.

1. What challenges might regular class teachers encounter in adapting materials?

Regular Class & Resource Teacher Relationship

A change in the roles of regular teachers and special education resource teachers is implied by implementation of inclusive education.

1. What forms should the role of the resource teacher take?
2. Who should be involved in determining the roles and responsibilities of the regular teacher and of the resource teacher?

Administrator Support

1. What types of support do regular class teachers want from administrators?
2. What types of support do administrators offer?
3. What school-wide changes might administrators implement in support of inclusive education?
4. Should administrators have professional preparation for implementation of inclusion?
5. If so, what form should this preparation take?

Teacher Responsibility for Students with Exceptionalities

Advocates of inclusion believe the regular classroom teacher should have primary responsibility for the program with the support of resource personnel and administrators.

1. Do you believe regular classroom teachers should take primary responsibility for students with exceptionalities?
2. Do you believe regular classroom teachers could take responsibility?

3. What difficulties might make regular teacher acceptance of responsibility for students with exceptionalities a problem?

Effect on Regular Teachers

Many teachers are concerned about the effect inclusion might have on them.

1. What specific concerns might teachers have?
2. How could schools arrange to meet such concerns?
   (-time for planning
   - time for consultations
   - individual time for students with exceptionalities
   - teacher workload; class size, educational assistants, programming strategies)
3. How might such concerns be reduced or otherwise appropriately managed?

Effect on Regular Students

Advocates for inclusive placements argue that other students will find it a positive experience to have students with exceptionalities in the regular classroom with them.

1. What would be some of the positive effects?
   (Elaborate to obtain response in both social and academic areas.)
2. What would be some of the possible negative effects?
   (Elaborate to obtain response in both social and academic areas.)

Effect on Students with Exceptionalities

Advocates claim that inclusion has positive academic and social effect for students with exceptionalities.

1. What would some of the possible positive effects be?
   (Elaborate to obtain response in both social and academic areas.)
2. What would some of the possible negative effects be?
   (Elaborate to obtain response in both social and academic areas.)

APPENDIX B

EDUCATOR OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS AND FORMAT

The Educator Opinion Questionnaire (EOQ) is a 70 item survey designed to tap the attitudes of educators toward inclusion of students with challenging needs in regular classrooms. The 70 items divide into 10 sets of 7 items each. Four sets explore working conditions/relationships and six probe aspects of attitude relating to professional/personal areas.

Working Conditions/Relationships

1. Effect of inclusion on the regular classroom teacher.
   (Items 14, 16, 18, 20, 61, 64, 65)
2. Classroom teacher and resource teacher relationship.
   (Items 10, 11, 37, 40, 54, 62, 70)
3. Teacher confidence in administrator support.
   (Items 5, 9, 17, 23, 25, 29, 48)
4. Appropriateness of regular teacher workload.
   (Items 6, 8, 19, 27, 39, 45, 50)

Professional/Personal Aspects

5. Teacher self-confidence in inclusion.
   (Items 4, 32, 35, 55, 57, 60, 67)
6. Adequacy of teacher preparation for inclusion.
   (Items 2, 28, 30, 44, 47, 56, 59)
7. Teacher responsibility for included students.
   (Items 3, 21, 26, 31, 36, 42, 66)
8. Effect of inclusion on included students.
   (Items 1, 15, 33, 41, 52, 59, 63)
9. Effect of inclusion on regular students.
   (Items 7, 12, 13, 24, 43, 51, 58)
10. Educational soundness of concept of inclusion.
    (Items 22, 34, 38, 46, 49, 53, 68)

Cross-Categorical Nature of EOQ

The EOQ was constructed on a cross-categorical basis. Rather than

attempt to deal with one specific exceptionality or exceptionality after exceptionality, EOQ items relate to inclusion as an educational practice which might involve students with any type of challenging need. The cross-categorical design was selected, also, on the basis of argument in both inclusive literature and special education literature that, despite differences of labels, students with exceptionalities are better understood, and their needs more strongly addressed, if they are viewed as having needs in common, rather than as having needs unique to any one category. Additionally, a major argument supporting inclusion as part of educational reform is that regular classroom teachers, well supported by colleagues with resource and administrative responsibilities, will be able to apply familiar regular teaching strategies effectively across a range of learning needs. Extensive teacher background of the type associated with "special education" would be available to the regular classroom teacher through close cooperation with resource personnel. It was deemed logical, then, that a survey instrument in this area be cross-categorical.

Response Scale and Response Patterns

A six point Likert type scale was used. Respondents circle the number corresponding to their opinion on each item.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Agree Strongly	**Agree Generally**	**Agree Somewhat**	**Disagree Somewhat**	**Disagree Generally**	**Disagree Strongly**

Previous experience with the EOQ has indicated that respondents infrequently circle 1 or 6. This pattern of response effectively limits response range and requires interpretation of responses in terms of this limited. Broadly speaking the interpretation taken is that means near 2.00 are regarded as positive. Conversely, those in the area of 5.00 are regarded as indicative of considerable reservation. Those in the 3.00 and 4.00 areas suggest mild positive to mild negative positions.

EDUCATOR OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE

INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH CHALLENGING NEEDS

Students with challenging educational needs are students with needs of an easily recognizable nature. These needs may be sensory, social, behavioural, physical, communicative, or intellectual. Past educational practice has been to segregate such students in special classes or special schools for much of their educational experience. A contemporary movement in education is to place all students, regardless of educational challenge, in regular classrooms.

Appreciation of educator attitudes toward new educational practices is valuable in determining acceptance of these practices, and in determining areas areas if focus for teacher preservice and inservice professional preparation. This questionnaire surveys aspects of the practice of educational inclusion. Respondents are requested to circle the number most closely corresponding to their opinion for each statement made.

The categories of choice are:

1	2	3	4	5	6
agree strongly	agree generally	agree somewhat	disagree somewhat	disagree generally	disagree strongly

_____

Position_____

(e.g. classroom teacher, principal, science teacher)

Grade Taught_____ Professional Speciality_____

(e.g. Science, Biology, Reading, Art)

Years of Experience_____ Gender F M

1 agree strongly	2 agree generally	3 agree somewhat	4 disagree somewhat	5 disagree generally	6 disagree strongly

1. Challenging needs students will be institutionalized when their families can no longer care for them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
2. Regular classroom teachers possess the expertise necessary to work successfully with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
3. The educational plan for an integrated challenging needs student is developed jointly by the regular classroom teacher and the support resource teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
4. I am confident that I could teach students with:							
learning disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	
behaviour disorders	1	2	3	4	5	6	
mental retardation	1	2	3	4	5	6	
hearing impairment	1	2	3	4	5	6	
physical disabilities	1	2	3	4	5	6	
communication disorders	1	2	3	4	5	6	
visual disorders	1	2	3	4	5	6	
5. Administrators are too divorced from regular classrooms to have any effect on the day-to-day education of integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
6. Regular class size should be reduced when a challenging needs student is placed in the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
7. Being a classmate of an integrated challenging needs student is upsetting to regular students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
8. A full-time teaching aid is required in regular classrooms with integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
9. Principals take care not to overload regular classroom teachers working with integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
10. Resource teachers should work in the regular classroom when resourcing integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
11. Special education resource personnel recognize the positive contribution of regular classroom teachers to the progress of challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
12. Integrated challenging needs students will become accepted by their regular peers as routine members of the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

1 agree strongly	2 agree generally	3 agree somewhat	4 disagree somewhat	5 disagree generally	6 disagree strongly

13. Integrating challenging needs students drains resources from other parts of the school program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
14. Regular classroom teachers have sufficient planning and preparation time for challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
15. Integration into regular classrooms is beneficial to the social progress of challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
16. Sufficient time exists in the timetable of the regular classroom teacher for consultations regarding challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
17. Regular classroom teachers can rely on their principals to support them in educating challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
18. Techniques to support challenging needs students in regular classrooms can be developed without undue strain to the regular classroom teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
19. It is impractical to expect challenging needs students to blend well into the life of a regular school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
20. The integration of challenging needs students requires significant change in regular classroom procedures.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
21. The regular classroom teacher has primary responsibility for dealing with classroom problems involving challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
22. Students who cannot acquire the basic skills of regular students should not be in a classroom with those students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
23. If I have a new idea regarding programs for challenging needs students, my principal would support me in pursuing it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
24. The integration of challenging needs students is beneficial to regular students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
25. Administrators are active leaders in the movement to integrate challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
26. The regular classroom teacher is the major agent in encouraging the social progress of challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
27. Many of the techniques teachers use with regular students in a classroom are appropriate for challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

1 agree strongly	2 agree generally	3 agree somewhat	4 disagree somewhat	5 disagree generally	6 disagree strongly

28. Regular teacher preparation is sufficient to prepare teachers to teach challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
29. Administrators actively support regular teachers with challenging needs students in their classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
30. I feel that challenging needs students are placed in the regular classroom without adequate teacher preparation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
31. Reporting to and liaising with the parents of integrated challenging needs students is the job of the regular teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
32. I am confident that I can adapt materials and activities for integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
33. Integration into regular classrooms is beneficial to the academic progress of challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
34. The educational and social needs of challenging needs students should be the primary definers of their educational program.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
35. I am afraid I might expose myself to injury or illness through working with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
36. The academic progress of the challenging needs student is primarily the responsibility of the regular class teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
37. The regular classroom teacher and the resource teacher form a close team to work with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
38. Integration in a regular class is the appropriate educational placement of the challenging needs student.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
39. The average challenging needs student can work independently without constant supervision.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
40. Resource teachers expect too much of regular classroom teachers with integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
41. The self-concept of challenging needs students will be strengthened in the integrated setting.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
42. Regular classroom teachers must have routine input into the program and schedules of their challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

1 agree strongly	2 agree generally	3 agree somewhat	4 disagree somewhat	5 disagree generally	6 disagree strongly

43. Integrated challenging needs students are disruptive to routine classroom activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
44. Considerable inservice training is required to prepare regular classroom teachers to deal with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
45. An appropriate educational program for a challenging needs student student requires a detailed educational plan.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
46. All schools should accept and integrate the challenging needs students living within their boundaries.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
47. Special education training results in a view of the challenging needs as difficult to integrate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
48. Administrators establish systems which lead to effective integration of challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
49. Challenging needs students should be integrated whether or not they can benefit from the standard materials of their classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
50. A teacher of special patience and ability is required to work with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
51. Integrated challenging needs students will become accepted by their regular peers as routine members of the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
52. Challenging needs students feel most comfortable when with others of similar needs and abilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
53. It is most efficient, in educational terms, to classify challenging needs students in terms of their primary handicap.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
54. Special educators acting as resource consultants have sufficient knowledge of the regular classroom to give valuable help to the regular teacher.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
55. I am confident that I can develop educational plans for integrated challenging needs students with the assistance of support personnel.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
56. Regular classroom teachers need preparation in special education to work with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
57. I am confident that a challenging needs student would experience a positive environment in my classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

1 agree strongly	2 agree generally	3 agree somewhat	4 disagree somewhat	5 disagree generally	6 disagree strongly

58. Regular students do not learn as effectively when a challenging needs student is integrated into the classroom.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
59. Integrated challenging needs students will contribute to society as adults.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
60. I am confident that I can measure the achievement of integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
61. Regular class teachers have sufficient access to appropriate instructional and other material support services to work with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
62. I am willing to work closely with other teachers in planning for the needs student.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
63. Regular students will "pick on" their integrated challenging needs peers.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
64. Regular classroom teachers' timetables allow for sufficient instructional time with challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
65. Regular classroom teachers cannot affect the educational progress of the challenging needs student significantly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
66. The support resource teacher has the responsibility for developing the educational plan for a challenging needs child.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
67. I am confident that I can manage the behaviour of integrated challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
68. Segregation is the optimal placement choice for challenging needs students.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
69. Inservice preparation of regular teachers equips them to teach challenging needs students when supported by specialists.	1	2	3	4	5	6	
70. Support personnel (e.g. consultants, resource teachers) are able to support regular classroom teachers with challenging needs students in their classrooms.	1	2	3	4	5	6	

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Please use this page to record any additional comments you wish regarding inclusion of students with challenging needs.

APPENDIX C

DISCUSSION OF
EDUCATOR OPINION QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Code:

W = Western Region

C = Central Region

A = Atlantic Region

T = Traditional System

I = Inclusive System

E = Elementary

S = Secondary

U - University

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Analysis of survey results revealed consistency in attitudes of elementary and secondary educators across Canada whether respondents worked in systems which maintained both regular and special education structures or in systems which had moved to inclusive policies. Certain aspects, primarily those concerned with working conditions/relationships and teacher preparation, drew responses which indicated general levels of concern, but not of strong rejection. Others, primarily those relating to professional/personal areas, indicated positive views of inclusion generally, but not unconditional acceptance.

In general, respondents considered regular classroom teachers to be insufficiently prepared for inclusion. Teacher preparation was the issue of highest concern among the ten issue areas explored. Responses called for emphasis on professional development in no uncertain manner.

Respondents were concerned regarding expectations placed on regular classroom teachers. In terms of the survey instrument, the Educator Opinion Questionnaire (EOQ), the consistent pattern was to indicate that the workload of the teacher and effect of inclusion on the teacher had to be looked at carefully.

Ameliorating the degree of concern evident around effect on teacher workload were responses in other areas. When responding to items investigating whether educators felt regular class teachers were confident that they could work inclusively, responses concentrated on the positive side of the EOQ scale. Similarly respondents believed regular classroom teachers were the ones to take responsibility for included students. Finally, the majority of educators considered inclusion to be more positive than otherwise as educational practice.

Positive effects were seen for both included students and their regular class peers. Participants, on the average, agreed that inclusion was beneficial for both groups, more so than that it was not.

Within these general responses a number of interesting patterns of response for specific groups of educators were found. These patterns were more evident in their consistency across many of the ten issues explored, than they were in terms of statistical significance. Statistical significance was found,

however, in analyses for each of the ten areas for some intergroup relationships.

The most consistent finding was evident when educators were divided into regular classroom teachers and support personnel (administrators and specialist teachers). In almost every analysis using this breakdown, support personnel were more positive than were regular classroom teachers. This finding echos those of earlier research studies. Differences between those who are charged with accomplishing inclusion most directly and those charged with organizing and evaluating it (administrators) and those charged with resource support (specialist teachers) is an area which bears close scrutiny.

A second pattern was that of elementary level educators being more positively disposed to inclusion of students with challenging needs than were secondary. This, again, covered both traditionally structured and inclusively structured systems. This pattern, too, was found in a considerable number of analyses, though statistically significant differences were not always present. A point to keep in mind is that this pattern held true whether responses tended to view inclusion positively or with concern in terms of where averages fell on the EOQ scale.

Though not as consistent a pattern, there was indication that those who worked in inclusively structure systems were more positive or less concerned with regard to inclusion than those who worked in traditionally structured systems. This difference infrequently reached the level of statistical significance.

Finally, university teacher education students varied in their positions regarding inclusion relative to practising educators, depending on the issue under consideration. Often they showed the most positive responses. At other times their responses indicated the highest level of concern, or were in a middling position.

EFFECT OF INCLUSION ON REGULAR CLASS TEACHER

Items under this analysis probe whether teachers believe they have time to attend to activities around inclusion, whether they perceive need to alter established teaching routines, and whether they perceive their efforts as having effect.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Analysis of responses based on whether respondents were functioning as traditional system educators, inclusive system educators, or as teacher education students at university indicated caution relative to the effect inclusion would have on the regular classroom teacher. Means varied among the six groups involved (UE - University elementary; US- University secondary; IE - Inclusive elementary; IS - Inclusive secondary; TE - Traditional elementary; TS - Traditional secondary) from 3.88 to 4.56. All groups evinced concern regarding effect on the teacher. Concern increased from university students, who were at the "Disagree Somewhat" level, to inclusive system educators, and then to traditional system educators, who were between the "Disagree Somewhat" and the "Disagree Generally" levels.

For each pairing of elementary and secondary levels in the three basic groupings of traditional (TE & TS), inclusive (IE & IS), and university (UE & US), secondary level educators held greater reservation than did their elementary level colleagues.

Responses from elementary level university students were significantly different (.01) from all other groups except secondary level university students (USS). This latter group differed significantly from all other groups except elementary teachers in inclusive systems. The single significant difference among practising teachers was found between those at the elementary level in inclusive systems and all other practising educators in the study.

Patterns of Interest

1. General indications of reservation.
2. Means increase from university to inclusive to traditional.
3. Means increase from elementary to secondary.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR IDENTIFIED EDUCATOR AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

The same groups discussed in the above analysis are considered here. However, they are considered across the regional level (AIE - Atlantic Inclusive

Elementary; WIE - Western Inclusive Elementary; CIE - Central Inclusive Elementary; and so on for a total of 18 groups).

As might be anticipated from the preceding discussion, respondent group means indicated caution when considering effect of inclusion on the regular classroom teacher. Means ranged from 3.76 to 4.67 with 15 of the 18 groupings involved responding at more than 4.00.

University students, both elementary and secondary, were grouped closely together in holding the lowest means. Though not without exception, means then increased through inclusive system elementary to secondary educator groups and to elementary and secondary educators in traditional systems.

Despite difference in means, no significant differences were found among practising educators in traditional or inclusive systems at either the elementary or secondary levels. Significant differences were found (.05) for Central Elementary University students (CUE) against six, primarily traditional system, practising teacher groups. A single significant difference was found between Atlantic University Secondary students (AUS) and Atlantic Traditional system Secondary teachers (ATS).

Patterns of Interest

1. Progression through means across regions of U to I to T.
2. Direction of means from elementary to secondary.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

Relatively lower means were found for university student groups (AUE and AUS) than for groups of practising educators. Both university groups differed significantly from a number of practising teacher groups (AUE and AIS; AIE and ATS; AUS and AIE; AUS and ATS).

Progression through means did not follow the inclusive to traditional pattern found in other analyses.

Patterns of Interest

1. Indication of general reservations for all Atlantic groups.
2. Means increase from U to I to T.

3. Means increase from elementary to secondary.

D. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

Western respondents were distinguished from respondents in other regions in that they had the tightest group means among the three regions, with all in excess of 4.00. The pattern of progression in means from university student groups, to inclusive system groups, to traditional system groups seen earlier was repeated.

Significant differences were found between the university student groups and some practising educator groups. These primarily involved the CUE group, but one difference of interest involved the Western Inclusive Elementary teacher group (WIE) compared to the Western Traditional Secondary teacher group (WTS).

Patterns of Interest

1. General indication of reservation for all Western groups.
2. All means above 4.00, Disagree Somewhat.
3. Means increase from U to I to T.

E. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

Responses here were akin to those found in the preceding two analyses.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS COMBINED)

Generally speaking, patterns of response for traditional system teachers, inclusive system teachers, and university students previously seen held throughout this analysis, though not quite with the same degree of consistency of response. A similar statement would describe the relationship between elementary and secondary levels.

The central finding of interest here was that the grouping of "support

personnel" held relatively less reservation on effect of inclusion on the regular classroom teacher than did actual classroom teachers. This difference attained significance on occasion (.01). Inclusive system support personnel differed from inclusive system secondary teachers and both elementary and secondary traditional system teachers. Traditional system support personnel were significantly different from traditional system secondary teachers.

In addition, university students, at both the elementary and the secondary levels, differed significantly from regular classroom teachers in almost every instance.

Patterns of Interest

1. Support personnel (administrators and specialist teachers) exhibited less reservation than did regular classroom teachers.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

Means for all university student groups continued to be lower than for other groups. However, means for inclusive system educators and traditional system educators did not form the inclusive to traditional pattern found in earlier analyses.

The progression in level of means from the support personnel group to the regular classroom teacher group did reappear. No significant differences were found, other than one for each of the elementary and secondary university student groups against traditional system secondary regular classroom teachers.

H. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

Responses within the Western region indicated the same division in means between the support personnel group and the regular classroom teacher group. This division attained significance for the inclusive system support personnel group against the Inclusive Secondary teachers (WIS), the Traditional Elementary teachers (WTE), and the Traditional Secondary teachers (WTS). Some support personnel groups means were lower than university student

means.

Patterns of Interest

1. Support personnel exhibited less reservation than did regular classroom teachers.

I. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

Responses indicated similar differences between support personnel and regular classroom teachers as observed through increase in means from one set of group to the other. The only significant differences found involved the University Elementary level group (CUE) and three regular teacher groups.

J. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

A second analysis to probe the support personnel group more specifically was undertaken. In this analysis support personnel were divided into administrators and specialist teachers. As in the earlier analysis, both groups held lower means than did all regular classroom teacher groups. There was no particular order for the means of the two groups.

However, the majority of inclusive system representatives held lower means than did those from traditional systems. One significant difference, other than a number involving university students and regular classroom teachers was found. This difference involved inclusive system specialist teachers and traditional system secondary teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. Inclusive system administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did their traditional system opposites.

K. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did regular classroom teachers. In addition, traditional system administrator and specialist teacher means were lower than those of their inclusive system opposites. This is the reverse of the pattern for the same groups at the national level.

Patterns of Interest

1. Traditional system administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did their inclusive system opposites.

L. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

No significant differences were found in this analysis dividing support personnel into administrator and specialist teacher groups. However, the majority of respondents in these two groups held lower means than did those in the regular teacher group. In addition, inclusive system respondents tended to hold the lowest means among all groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did regular classroom teachers.
2. Inclusive system respondents tended to hold lowest means.

K. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Finally, in this analysis with support personnel divided into two groups, the patterns seen in the immediately preceding analysis were repeated.

Patterns of Interest

1. Administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did regular classroom teachers.
2. Inclusive system respondents tended to hold lowest means.

REGULAR TEACHER AND RESOURCE TEACHER

A major position within inclusive education is that the regular classroom teacher and the resource teacher can form a collaborative team working closely together in support of all students in the classroom, but particularly those with challenging needs. The individual items investigating this issue test whether educators believe that a close working relationship can be forged, that the two sides respect each other's contributions, and that they share a sufficient knowledge base to move educational programs forward.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Means for all groups fell between 2.48 and 2.73 indicating close consonance on the average and a positive view of the possibility of a close collaborative relationship developing. No significant differences among groups were found.

Found, however, was a progression from lower to higher means from the university student groups, to elementary level educators, and then to secondary level educators.

Patterns of Interest

1. Positive view of relationship.
2. Means increased from U to E to S.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Regional group means ranged from 2.39 to 2.91 indicating a positive view of the possibility of forming close regular classroom teacher and resource teacher working relationships. No significant differences among groups emerged.

No clear pattern of positioning of educators in terms of traditional or inclusive systems being more or less positive was found, other than that more traditional system educator groups fell toward the higher half of the listing of

means. In the same manner, a greater number of secondary level educators fell in the upper half.

Patterns of Interest

1. Positive view of relationship.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN ATLANTIC REGION FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS

No significant differences were found for inclusive system and traditional system groups in the Atlantic region. Secondary level educators in both types of systems fell at the higher mean levels, but means indicated that all educators, whether in traditional systems, inclusive systems, or university teacher education programs, felt positively regarding the possibility of regular classroom teachers and resource teachers forming close working relationships.

Patterns of Interest

1. Positive view of relationship.
2. Elementary level means lower than secondary.

D. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN WESTERN REGION FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Means for all Western region respondent groups under this topic were tightly clustered (2.40 to 2.66). Elementary level educators had means lower than those of their secondary level colleagues, though all, again, were positively oriented.

No significant differences were found.

Patterns of Interest

1. Positive view of relationship.
2. Elementary level means lower than secondary.

E. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN CENTRAL REGION FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Once again all group means were to the positive side of the six point scale. Secondary educators in both traditional and inclusive systems fell to the

higher end and significant differences were found for both the inclusive elementary and the university elementary groups against the inclusive secondary group.

Patterns of Interest

1. Positive view of relationship.
2. Elementary level means lower than secondary.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS COMBINED)

Support personnel were more optimistic with regard to the possibility of close regular classroom teacher and resource teacher working relationships being formed than were university teacher education students or practising regular classroom teachers. However, all tended to be more positive in responses than negative to any degree. Means for support personnel were 2.13 to 2.31 (2.00 = Agree Generally), whereas regular classroom teacher means ranged from 2.83 to 3.10 (3.00 = Agree Somewhat). University student means fell in the middle.

This finding of differences among groups was supported by the finding of significant differences between support and regular classroom teacher groups. The single exception to this pattern was the inclusive secondary support personnel group which was significantly different only to the traditional system secondary group. Lesser numbers of significant differences were found for the university student groups against the regular teacher groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Administrator and specialist teacher groups held lower means than did regular teacher groups.
2. Inclusive system administrators and specialist groups held lower means than did their traditional system opposites.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL GROUPS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

All administrator and specialist teacher groups were more positive, as seen through means, than all regular classroom teacher groups. University student groups fell in between. The range of means in this analysis (1.91 to 2.87) included the two lowest (most positive) means among the three regions.

No significant differences were found for support personnel groups and regular teacher groups in the Atlantic region.

Patterns of Interest

1.Administrators and specialist teacher groups held lower means than did regular classroom.

H. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL GROUPS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

Almost all support personnel group means were lower than regular classroom teacher means, though the range of means was modest (2.04 to 2.75). A single significant difference was found (IE support personnel to TS).

Patterns of Interest

1. Administrator and specialist teacher groups held lower means than did regular classroom.
2. Means increased from elementary to secondary.

I. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL GROUPS AND REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER GROUPS

Almost all Central region support personnel groups responded more favourably to the idea that close working relationships could be formed between regular classroom teachers and support personnel. Within this general statement, no significant differences were found.

Patterns of Interest

1. Administrator and specialist teacher groups held lower means than did regular classroom.

TEACHER CONFIDENCE IN ADMINISTRATOR SUPPORT

Items relating to administrators examine whether educators view the principal as a leader in ensuring that teachers are well supported for inclusive education, and that effective systems to support inclusion are in place. Indication of the principal's understanding of the classroom situation is also sought.

A. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Results from the 1492 survey respondents indicate that educators generally are positioned in the middle of the road with regard to confidence in administrator support. Means range from 3.08 to 3.74 indicating that educators agree somewhat almost to disagree that they have confidence in their administrators in this area.

The lowest means were held by inclusive and traditional system elementary teachers. University student groups held the highest means, with secondary; level educators in between. The reserve shown by university students is interesting in that these are the participants with the least direct experience with administrators.

Inclusive system educator responses were significantly different from those of secondary educators and university students. Traditional elementary and secondary educators differed significantly from university students enrolled in secondary school teacher preparation programs.

Patterns of Interest

1. General direction of means was elementary to secondary.
2. Range of means was from Agree Somewhat to Disagree Somewhat.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR ALL PARTICIPANT GROUPS

All regional traditional system, inclusive system, and university student groups obtained means between 3.00 and 4.00, except for Western inclusive system educators whose mean was 2.86. This echos the overall findings of the previous analysis and the general finding of modest teacher confidence in administrator support. Though regional groups did not cluster together uniformly as means ascended, it was apparent that the general progression from lower to higher was Western to Atlantic to Central..

Within this general progression a second one from elementary to secondary level educators can be discerned for Western and Atlantic regions. Central responses were more conservative than all western and Atlantic inclusive and traditional system responses, but also progressed from elementary to secondary. University students tended to exhibit the greatest reserve relative to administrator support.

WIE responses differed significantly from the majority of Central region groupings and almost all university student groupings. WTE also differed significantly from CIS.

Patterns of Interest

1. Range of means was from Agree Somewhat to Disagree Somewhat.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN ATLANTIC REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

Few significant differences among inclusive and traditional system groups were found. Those found all involved university students (UE & US) who differed from IE, TE, and TS educator groups.

All means fell between 3.17 and 3.82 indicating relatively conservative appreciation for administrator support. Responding groups fell into an elementary, secondary, university student pattern of progress through means.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from elementary to secondary in general.
2. Range of means was from Agree Somewhat to Disagree Somewhat.

D. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN WESTERN REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

IE differed significantly from all secondary and university student groupings. In addition, TE differed from US. IE, with a mean of 2.86, was the single group in this series of three regional analyses to obtain a mean below 3.00.

A pattern of progression through means from elementary to secondary to university student participants was noted.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from elementary to secondary generally.
2. Means clustered about Agree Somewhat.

E. REGIONAL - CENTRAL- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN CENTRAL REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY GROUPS

No significant differences were found for this analysis. Means for this region (3.40 to 3.86) suggest its groups are generally the most conservative of all groups in appreciation of administrator support for teachers including students with challenging needs.

A progress of means from elementary to secondary was found. Unlike the two previous regional analyses where U obtained the most conservative means within each region, U fell in the middle rankings with the secondary educator groups highest.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from elementary to secondary.
2. Range of means was Agree Somewhat to Disagree Somewhat.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS COMBINED)

When divided into groupings of regular classroom teachers and support personnel on a national level of response, means range from 2.65 to 3.73. The

lower means were held by support personnel with three of four of these groups being at 2.70 or less. Regular classroom teachers from both types of systems and university students were more muted in the confidence they evinced for support personnel support. University students again were the most conservative.

Support personnel from IEO, TSO, and ISO differed significantly from all groups except TEO and IET. This is the most widespread finding of significant differences among groups seen so far.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel and regular classroom teachers.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL - ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR TEACHER GROUPS

No significant differences were found.

Support personnel held lower means than did other groupings with a support personnel, regular classroom teacher, university student progression. Three of four support personnel groups held means of 2.74 or less.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel and regular classroom teachers.

H. REGIONAL LEVEL - WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR TEACHER GROUPS

The pattern of means previously noted from support personnel to regular classroom teacher to university student held for this analysis.

IEO differed significantly from all regular teacher and university student groups except ITE. Both ISO and TSO differed significantly from university students.

Means in this analysis ranged from 2.30 to 3.66 with all support personnel groups being 2.79 or less.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel and regular classroom teachers.

I. REGIONAL LEVEL - CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR TEACHER GROUPS

No significant differences were found in this analysis.

In general, but not invariably, support personnel groups obtained lower means than did other groups. The previously established pattern of support personnel, regular teacher, university student was not found. Though three of the four support personnel groups held the lowest means (2.47 to 3.00), there was considerable variation in placement of all other groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrators and specialist teachers and regular classroom teachers.

J. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

When support personnel were divided into administrators and specialist teachers, differences between these two groups became apparent. Means for administrators were lower than those for specialist teachers, which were generally lower than for regular classroom teachers and university students. Administrator means grouped at Agree Generally. Specialist teacher means ranged from Agree Generally to Agree Somewhat with regular teacher and university students moving closer to Agree Somewhat and on closer to Disagree Somewhat respectively.

Significant differences were found between secondary level administrators and inclusive system elementary teachers and most regular teacher and university student groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrator groups and all other groups.

K. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

No significant differences were found when administrators and specialist

teachers were separated out of the support personnel group.

However, as with the companion national analysis, administrators were grouped with the lowest means around Agree Generally, specialist teachers from Agree Generally to Agree Somewhat, and most regular teacher and university student groups from Agree Somewhat to Disagree Somewhat.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrators and specialist teachers and regular classroom teacher and university student groups generally.

REGULAR TEACHER WORKLOAD

Regular teacher workload attempts to examine whether educators believe dramatic steps are required to reduce teacher workload in inclusive settings, whether teachers were faced with additional work with inclusion, and whether teachers believed included students would blend smoothly into classroom dynamics.

A. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The area of teacher workload drew the most reserved responses to any area of inclusion (except for teacher preparation for inclusion which will be discussed later). All means exceeded 4.00 (4.01 to 4.61).

A progression through means from university students to inclusive system educators to traditional system educators was found. University student group responses were significantly different from all groups of practising teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. All groups indicated significant reservation regarding regular teacher workload.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR ALL REGIONAL GROUPINGS

No significant differences among groups of practising educators was found across regions on the basis of systems being traditionally or inclusively structured. CUE students differed from the majority of practising educator groups, save both Atlantic inclusive system groups ATE and WIE. AUS students differed from most Central and Western regular teacher groups.

University student groups clustered at the lower end of the means in this analysis while other respondent groups fell above them in no particular order, other than that the four Central region groups obtained the highest means.

C. REGIONAL -ATLANTIC- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN ATLANTIC REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROUPS

Atlantic region IE, IS, and UE means showed a university student to elementary to secondary progression. University student groups differed significantly from educator groups, particularly in the case of university students studying at the elementary school level.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from U to I to T.

D. REGIONAL -WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN WESTERN REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROUPS

Western region groups did not exhibit smooth progression from university to inclusive to traditional groups seen fully or partially in other analyses. The university student groups did have the lowest means. Otherwise, group placement evidenced no particular pattern for traditional - inclusive or elementary - secondary relationships.

A limited number of significant differences involving the university elementary group and various other groups were found.

E. REGIONAL -CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN CENTRAL REGION FOR TRADITIONAL, INCLUSIVE, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENT GROUPS

A progression from university students to secondary to elementary levels was found, but no smooth progression through means was found for the traditional - inclusive system relationship.

Both university student group responses differed significantly from all traditional and inclusive system group responses.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from elementary to secondary.

F. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS COMBINED)

All means fell between 4.00 and 4.66 for this analysis. As noted previously, means at this level are interpreted to indicate reservation relative to the issue under consideration. Once again a clear separation appeared between support personnel and regular teachers with support personnel having the lower means. Tucked into the support personnel means were those of the university student groups.

Both university student groups were significantly different from all regular classroom teacher groups. In addition IEO responses were different from regular teacher responses. TSO groups differed significantly from traditional system regular teacher responses.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel and regular classroom teachers.

G. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUPPORT PERSONNEL AND REGULAR TEACHER GROUPS

These analyses are discussed together as all results were similar.

The familiar division between support personnel groups and regular classroom teacher groups continued here. University student group means fell

between support personnel and regular teacher means.

A number of significant differences were found with most between the university student and the regular classroom teacher groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division of support personnel from regular classroom teachers.

H. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

When analysis was undertaken on the basis of regular classroom teacher, administrator, and specialist teacher groupings, the latter two groups were found to hold means lower than did the former group. Means ranged from Disagree Somewhat towards Disagree Generally.

University student groups differed significantly from all regular classroom teacher groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrator and specialist teacher groups and regular classroom teacher groups.

I. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

The three regional analyses obtained results similar to that found in the national analysis with these groupings.

Few significant differences were found, with the only ones of meaning being between the Central elementary student group and all regular classroom teacher groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrator and specialist teacher groups and regular classroom teachers

TEACHER SELF-CONFIDENCE IN INCLUSION

This issue was examined through teacher confidence across a range of categories of need student might experience, in teaching skills, in collaboration, and in inclusion being a positive experience for children.

A. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Traditional system educator, inclusive system educator, and university student responses suggested that all groups felt confident to somewhat confident in their ability to work with included students. Means fell between 2.47 and 2.94. Groups with means toward the upper levels of this range may be seen as tenuous in their confidence. The familiar progression pattern of university students to elementary to secondary educators was found.

The only significant differences were between UE and the IS and TS groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. All means less than 3.00.
2. Means increased from U to E to S.

B. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

No significant differences were found in comparisons across groups in the three regions. Though not unbroken, a progression from university students to elementary to secondary levels was noted.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from U to E to S.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGIONS FOR TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

No significant differences were found among groups in any of the three regional analyses.

Some reinforcement of the pattern of progression from university student to elementary level educators to secondary level educators was found. Patterns for the three regions were not uniform.

D. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS COMBINED)

Means indicated that all groups, particularly the support personnel ones, felt confident that regular classroom teachers had the skills and knowledge to include students with challenging needs. Support personnel means ranged from 2.13 to 2.31, the most positive group responses in any national level analysis. Regular classroom teachers, while confident, were less so than were support personnel.

This finding was emphasized by the fact that all support personnel differed significantly from at least one regular teacher group. Traditional secondary and inclusive elementary support personnel differed from all classroom teacher groups, traditional elementary support personnel from three of four classroom teacher groups, and inclusive secondary support personnel from the traditional secondary teacher group. The university student group also displayed differences from some, but not all, regular classroom teacher groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel and regular classroom teachers.
2. Support personnel clustered about Generally Agree. Regular classroom teachers clustered around Agree Somewhat.

E. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL GROUPS

Consistency was found in the separation of support personnel groups from regular classroom teacher groups from lowest to highest means. University students were placed between the support personnel and regular teacher groups.

Few significant differences were found in these three analyses.

Patterns of Interest

1. Patterns found were similar to those found for the preceding national level analysis.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Once again, administrators and specialist teachers held lower means than did their regular classroom teacher colleagues.

A number of significant differences were found. The majority of these were between elementary level specialist teachers and secondary regular classroom teachers or traditional system elementary regular classroom teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. The pattern of division between regular classroom teachers and the administrator and specialist teacher groups was reiterated.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Findings of division between the two support groups, administrators and specialist teachers, and the regular classroom teacher groups was reiterated here. The former two groups tended to cluster about Agree Generally and the classroom teachers in the region of Agree Somewhat.

ADEQUACY OF TEACHER PREPARATION FOR INCLUSION

This discussion deals with whether educators consider the regular classroom teacher professionally prepared to work with included students with challenging needs. Both preservice and inservice were examined.

A. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Responses indicated that study participants were quite concerned regarding the adequacy of teacher preparation for inclusive settings. No mean in this area was less than 4.41. Overall, means indicated that respondents were more concerned regarding the issue of teacher preparation than any other.

One significant difference between inclusive system elementary level educators and traditional system secondary level educators was found. Teachers were closely similar in their concern for teacher preparation.

Patterns of Interest

1. This area was of the greatest concern among the ten areas of this overall analysis. All means were between Disagree Somewhat and Disagree Generally.

B. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

No significant differences were found for this analysis.

No definite pattern of progression through means was noted, though there was a tendency for traditional system groups to fall at the higher levels.

C. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN EACH OF THREE REGIONS FOR THE THREE RESPONDENT GROUPS

One significant difference was found in these three analyses. When considered as separate entities, rather than as part of a larger national sample,

educators in each region were equally concerned with the adequacy of teacher preparation for inclusive settings.

Though unvarying patterns of progress through means were not found, each of the three analyses indicated that secondary level educators had relatively higher levels of concern than did their elementary level colleagues.

D. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL (ADMINISTRATORS AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS)

This analysis revealed the familiar division between support personnel and classroom teachers, with university students falling approximately in the middle. However, that few significant differences were found served to support uniformity of concern noted in other analyses.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between administrator and specialist teacher groups and regular classroom teachers.

E. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN EACH REGION FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS AND SUPPORT PERSONNEL

No significant differences were found for any of these analyses.

Each analysis repeated the familiar progress through means pattern of separation between support personnel and regular classroom teachers on issues related to inclusion. Patterns for the Atlantic and Western groups were consistent, while the Central pattern was disrupted by the traditional system support personnel group having the highest mean.

Patterns of Interest

1. All three regions exhibited the familiar pattern of division between regular classroom teachers and other support personnel.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Patterns found above for other analyses were found.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Patterns found above for other analyses were found. All groups indicated appreciable levels of concern for teacher preparation with respondents in the Western region having the highest beginning and ending means.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITY FOR INCLUSION

The responsibility of the regular classroom teacher for taking a lead role in planning for students with challenging needs, implementing the plan, and working collaboratively with support personnel were assessed under this area.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Educator groups Agreed Generally to Agreed Somewhat (2.67 to 3.21 on the response scale) that regular classroom teachers could accept responsibility for the inclusion of students with challenging needs. Secondary teachers were relatively reserved on this issue, compared to their elementary level colleagues, though still positive overall.

A significant difference was found between the traditional system secondary group and the inclusive system secondary group. Other significant differences were found between both secondary groups and both elementary groups, as well as the university student groups.

These significant differences outline the pattern of elementary level groups obtaining the lowest means, followed by the university student groups and the secondary level groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Relatively positive responses ranging from mid Agree Generally to Agree Somewhat.
2. Means increased from elementary to secondary.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR THE THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Two tentative patterns of response to the issue of regular classroom teacher responsibility emerged in this analysis. One suggested that the order of progression among regions was Western to Central to Atlantic. The second was from elementary to secondary with university students varying in relationship to the other groups.

A number of significant differences between elementary and secondary level educators were found. The Western elementary inclusive system group differed from five of the six secondary groups, including both the WIS and WTS groups. Western elementary level traditional system (WTE) educators differed from three, including the WTS group. The atlantic traditional system (ATE) elementary and the central inclusive (CIE) system elementary group differed from CTS. A small number of significant differences between university students and CTS completed the picture.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from Western to Central to Atlantic..
2. Means increased from elementary to secondary.

C. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE IN EACH OF THE THREE REGIONS AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Within each region few significant differences existed. In all three analyses elementary group means were lower than secondary group means.

For the atlantic region significant differences were found between both traditional and inclusive system elementary groups and tradional system secondary level educators.

In the Western region significant differences were found for both

elementary groups against both secondary groups, and for elementary level university students against both secondary groups.

The western findings were repeated for central region, with the additional of the university student secondary group to those significantly different to the traditional system secondary groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. A general, though not unbroken, pattern of increase in means from elementary to secondary.

D. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The pattern of clear difference between support personnel and regular classroom teachers was not repeated in this analysis. Among the significant differences found elementary traditional and inclusive system support personnel and elementary regular classroom teacher groups differed from traditional and inclusive system classroom teacher groups. Inclusive system support personnel differed from traditional system secondary classroom teachers as well.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased from elementary to secondary.

E. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE BETWEEN REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Clear and consistent patterns of difference between support personnel and classroom teachers were not found in these three analyses. Here and there responses fell into the suggestion of a pattern of difference.

No significant differences were noted in the Atlantic analysis.

For the Western region significant differences were found between the elementary support personnel groups and secondary level classroom teachers. Significant differences were noted between the two traditional system elementary groups and the traditional system secondary group as well.

Differences were found between Central region elementary classroom

teachers and university students against central traditional system classroom teachers.

F. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM EDUCATORS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Means in this analysis began at a lower level than did those in other national level analyses with elementary administrators followed by elementary specialist teachers. Regular classroom teacher groups were scattered somewhat, though secondary groups held the highest means around Agree Somewhat.

A limited number of significant differences involving inclusive and traditional system administrators and elementary classroom teachers compared to secondary regular classroom teachers were found.

H. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND SPECIALIST TEACHERS

Findings similar to those in the preceding national analysis were found. The consistent pattern of division between administrators and specialist teachers and regular classroom teachers seen in earlier analyses was not found in these analyses, though there was some suggestion of such a pattern

EFFECT ON INCLUDED STUDENTS

Advocates of inclusive education argue that included students work more strongly when educated with chronological age peers in regular classrooms. Research indicates that social and academic achievement may be equal to that made under traditionally structured special education service delivery systems, or that it might, indeed, be greater, particularly for social development. Items under this issue investigate attitudes of Canadian educators with regard to academic and social progress, self-concept, acceptance by peers, and the future for students with challenging needs.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Respondents generally held positive views (Agree Generally to Agree Somewhat) on the effect of inclusion on students with challenging needs. Means ranged from 2.52 to 3.10. A pattern of response from university students to inclusive system educators to traditional system educators emerged. Within this larger pattern elementary level respondents had lower means than did their secondary colleagues.

Significant differences were found between university students at the elementary level and traditional system educators as well as inclusive system secondary teachers. Both university students and inclusive system elementary educators differed significantly from secondary teachers in traditional systems.

Patterns of Interest

1. Responses were relatively positive and clustered around the Agree Somewhat level.
2. Means increased from U to E to S.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR THE THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Few significant differences were found among regions. Those found all involved AUE and both traditional and inclusive system secondary teachers.

A general indication that inclusion was seen as having beneficial effect was apparent with university students being more positive than inclusive system educators, who, in turn, were more positive than were traditional system educators. A definite pattern of elementary level teachers being more positive than secondary level teachers was found. These patterns of difference in response were not of sufficient size to achieve significance.

Patterns of Interest

1. A relatively consistent progression through means of U to E to S was present.
2. Some indication of a U to I to T increase in means was noted.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN EACH REGION FOR THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

No consistent patterns of response were found other than that secondary level educators were not as positive in their view of the effect of inclusion as were elementary level educators or university teacher education students.

Both Atlantic university student groups differed significantly from secondary educators and inclusive system elementary educators.

Significant differences between university elementary level students and secondary level educators were noted.

In the Central region analysis inclusive system elementary level educators differed significantly from traditional system secondary level educators, and university students differed from inclusive system secondary teachers (UE) and from traditional system elementary teachers (US).

Patterns of Interest

1. Some indication, though not nearly an unbroken one, was noted for increase in means from U to E to S.

D. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

As with other issues around inclusion a pattern of the group composed of administrators and specialist teachers providing more positive responses than were regular classroom teachers emerged. university students fell in between these two groups.

A number of significant differences were found. Inclusive system elementary level support personnel differed significantly from all groups of classroom teachers as did university elementary level students. The university student secondary group also differed from the traditional system secondary group.

A second analysis divided the support personnel group into administrator and specialist teacher groups to probe whether each, or one, of these groups was the source of significant difference.

Both elementary level support groups were found to differ significantly

from traditional system secondary classroom teachers, while the inclusive system administrators also differed from the inclusive system secondary teacher group. Further significant differences were found between both of the secondary teacher groups and traditional system elementary classroom teachers and university elementary level students. Finally, both inclusive system elementary classroom teachers and university secondary level students differed from traditional system secondary teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. A division between support personnel, whether defined as a group or as administrators and specialist teachers, and regular classroom teachers was evident.
2. A pattern of lower elementary than secondary means was seen within the support personnel and the regular classroom teacher groups.

E. REGIONAL LEVEL -ATLANTIC- ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN ATLANTIC REGION REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The pattern of difference between support personnel and regular classroom teachers, with university students in the middle, was replicated within the Atlantic region. A limited number of significant differences were found with one involving inclusive system elementary support personnel and traditional system secondary classroom teachers.

In an analysis dividing support personnel into administrator and specialist teacher groups, both inclusive and traditional system specialist teachers tended to be more positive than both administrators and classroom teachers. In one instance this difference reached significance (inclusive system elementary specialist teachers and traditional system secondary classroom teachers).

Patterns of Interest

Patterns similar to those for the national analysis between regular classroom teachers and support personnel, however defined, were seen.

F. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN WESTERN REGION REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The general pattern of support personnel, university students, classroom teachers was repeated within The western region. Traditional system elementary and secondary, plus the inclusive system secondary, groups held the highest means among respondents from all three regions.

Significant differences were found between inclusive system elementary support personnel and both groups of secondary classroom teachers, and between university elementary students and both groups of secondary classroom teachers plus traditional system elementary classroom teachers.

No significant differences were found when respondents were divided into administrators, specialist teachers, classroom teachers, and university students. No patterns of response were found, other than that there appeared to be a tendency for inclusive system respondents to hold lower means than those in traditional systems, and for elementary educators to hold lower means than those in secondary schools.

Patterns of Interest

Patterns similar to those in the two preceding analyses were evident.

G. REGIONAL LEVEL -CENTRAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE WITHIN CENTRAL REGION REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Once again the pattern of support personnel holding slightly more positive views of the effect of inclusion on students with challenging needs was evident as was a general pattern of lower means among inclusive system respondents in both the elementary and secondary educator groups.

Significant differences between groups was not a feature of this analysis.

No significant differences were found when respondents were grouped as administrators, specialist teachers, classroom teachers, and university students. No particular pattern of response for the administrator group as compared to the specialist teacher group was noted.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between support personnel, however defined, and regular classroom teachers was evident.

EFFECT ON REGULAR STUDENTS

Arguments of benefit for regular students in inclusive systems are put forward by proponents of inclusion. Though few studies exist in this area, emergent research suggests that such arguments may be valid. Questionnaire items examine whether teachers believe regular students accept peers with challenging needs, whether inclusion draws a disproportionate share of school resources, and whether regular students benefit from inclusion or whether their learning is reduced.

A. NATIONAL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Respondents among all groups suggested that regular students benefitted from inclusive experiences. Means ranged from 2.35 (Agree Generally) to 3.35 (Agree Somewhat). Progress of means from lowest to highest was university students, inclusive system respondents, tradtional system respondents.

University students differed significantly from all practicing educators except for inclusive system elementary educators. In addition, the latter group differed significantly from the traditional system secondary educator group.

Patterns of Interest

1. Responses were relatively positive, ranging from the middle of the Agree Generally area to the middle of the Agree Somewhat area.
2. Means increased from U to I to T was noted.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR THE THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Significant differences in this analysis involved university elementary students primarily, though the secondary students were involved as well.

Though varying by both region and traditional/inclusive status, the majority of the comparison groups were at the secondary level.

Patterns of Interest

1. A general, but not consistent, increase in means from U to I to T was noted.

C. REGIONAL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE WITHIN THE THREE REGIONS FOR THE THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Pattern of response for the three groups agreed in terms of proceeding from university students, to inclusive system respondents, to traditional system respondents. This pattern was not invariant, but was almost so. A second pattern was from elementary to secondary level.

University elementary level students in all three regions were routinely significantly different to almost all educator groups. This finding was echoed, though not as strongly, by university secondary level students. In the instance of the Western analysis, inclusive system elementary educators differed from secondary level educators.

Patterns of Interest

1. A general increase in means from U to E to S was apparent.

D. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Means (all from 2.36 to 2.86) indicated that university students and support personnel agreed that inclusive experience was beneficial to regular students. Classroom teachers were somewhat in agreement, but with means from 3.09 to 3.46.

University students differed significantly from all practicing educator groups, as did the inclusive system elementary support personnel group. The traditional system secondary support personnel group also differed from the traditional system secondary teacher group.

When the support personnel group was split into administrators and

specialist teachers, the same university and practicing classroom teacher groups were significantly different. In addition, inclusive system elementary specialist teachers differed from traditional system elementary and secondary classroom teachers and from inclusive system secondary classroom teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means indicated an overall positive view of effect of inclusion on regular students.
2. A division between support personnel, whether defined as a group or as administrators and specialist teachers, and regular classroom teachers was evident.

E. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE WITHIN EACH REGION FOR REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

Analyses for the three regions between support personnel and regular classroom teachers were quite similar. In almost every instance, support personnel groups and university student groups found inclusive experiences more valuable for regular students than did regular classroom teachers. Elementary level support personnel responses suggested this more so than did responses of secondary support personnel and regular classroom teachers. This was true for both traditional and inclusive system respondents.

These differences rarely attained significance, involving only Western and Central inclusive system support personnel in comparison with secondary groups when they did so. The university elementary student group, and occasionally the secondary student group, differed from regular classroom teacher groups with greater frequency.

When respondent groups were structured as regular classroom teachers, administrators, specialist teachers, and university students, the university elementary group was found to differ significantly from secondary traditional and inclusive system classroom teachers with good consistency.

No pattern of either the administrator group or the specialist teacher group obtaining consistently lower means than their opposite support personnel group was found. For both the Western and Central groups traditional and

inclusive regular classroom teacher groups tended to have, though not invariably, higher means than other educator groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Division between regular classroom teachers and support personnel, however defined, was noted

EDUCATIONAL SOUNDNESS OF CONCEPT OF INCLUSION

A controversy within education is whether inclusion is an acceptable and workable educational reform, or whether it is an unacceptable and unnecessary reform. This area is probed through items which require educators to consider whether students of divergent ability should be educated together, or whether separation on the basis of differing ability should be the norm.

A. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG TRADITIONAL SYSTEM EDUCATORS, INCLUSIVE SYSTEM EDUCATORS, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

On the national level the 1492 respondents in this study supported the concept of inclusion at the Agree Generally to Agree Somewhat levels with means clustered either side of 3.00. The familiar pattern of university student and elementary educator groups obtaining lower means than secondary educators repeated in this analysis.

University students were significantly different from secondary educator groups and the traditional system secondary group. Both the inclusive and traditional elementary groups differed from the traditional secondary group. In addition, inclusive system elementary and inclusive secondary groups differed.

Patterns of Interest

1. Educator responses fell on the positive side of the response scale and clustered around the 3.00, Agree Somewhat level.
2. Means increased from U to E to S was evident.

B. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE AMONG REGIONS FOR THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

This investigation for differences among regional groups did not reveal any particular patterns of response other than that secondary groups tended to be less strong in finding inclusion beneficial than did other groups.

Significant differences were found to fall into the familiar pattern of university students being more positive than secondary educators, most especially those in traditional systems. The only significant difference between practicing educator groups involved AIE and Western and Central secondary traditional groups.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means increased generally from U to E to S.

C. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGIONS FOR THREE PARTICIPANT GROUPS

Analyses within each of the three regions yielded the familiar information that university students perceived inclusive education more positively than did inclusive or traditional system educators, and that elementary level respondents were more positively inclined than were their secondary colleagues.

Significant differences involved university student groups, primarily at the elementary level again, and secondary level educator groups, primarily those from traditional systems. Those significant differences found between traditional and inclusive systems centred on the inclusive system elementary group and the traditional system secondary group.

Patterns of Interest

1. A rough pattern of U to E to S increase in means was noted.

D. NATIONAL LEVEL - ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR REGULAR EDUCATORS, SUPPORT PERSONNEL, AND UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

This analysis, too, presented the pattern of support personnel being more positive in reaction to inclusion than their regular classroom colleagues, and of

elementary level educators being so relative to their secondary level colleagues.

Significant differences were found for inclusive system elementary and university elementary groups against all regular classroom teacher groups. Additionally, inclusive and traditional system secondary and traditional elementary support personnel differed from traditional secondary classroom teachers. Finally, inclusive elementary classroom teachers differed from traditional system secondary classroom teachers.

Patterns of Interest

1. Means for administrators/specialist teachers were consistently lower than those for regular classroom teachers.
2. Elementary means were lower than were secondary means within the two larger groupings of regular classroom teachers and administrators/specialist teachers.

E. REGIONAL LEVEL -WESTERN/CENTRAL/ATLANTIC - ANALYSES OF VARIANCE WITHIN REGIONS FOR REGULAR EDUCATORS, ADMINISTRATORS, SPECIALIST TEACHERS, AND UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

The support personnel group of administrators and special teachers in all three regions exhibited more appreciation for the soundness of the inclusive education concept than did their regular classroom colleagues. This was almost an unbroken pattern for every group.

A limited number of significant differences were found, the great majority of which involved university elementary level students and traditional system secondary classroom teachers. The inclusive system elementary group also was found to differ from secondary educators as well.

Analysis at the level of administrator, specialist teacher, classroom teacher, and university student groupings did not yield additional information.

Patterns of Interest

1. Divisions between regular classroom teachers and administrators specialist teachers were evident in each analysis.
2. Patterns of elementary means being lower than were secondary means were noted in each analysis.

APPENDIX D

DISCUSSION OF SPONTANEOUS WRITTEN COMMENTS

Spontaneous comments of respondents recorded on the final page of the Educator Opinion Questionnaire (EOQ) provide a glimpse of immediate reactions to the educational practice of including students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The immediacy of comments, and the anonymous nature of the comments, creates the possibility that these comments come from educators who have strong positions on the points they raise. This may be seen as positive in that they may touch on fundamental attitudes, but also limited in that they may not reflect considered thought. In total 183 traditional system and 166 inclusive system educators provided spontaneous comments on surveys.

All comments were read through to obtain a general sense of quality of response and issues brought forth. A second reading was conducted during which specific points being made by respondents were initially identified and marked. A third reading led to each comment being given an initial coding. Items with similar codings then became initial categories for interpretation. Comments on individual subjects were then collated by respondent group (Inclusive Elementary, IE; Inclusive Secondary, IS; Traditional Elementary, TE; and Traditional Secondary, TS). All categories were then reviewed and those dealing with closely related subjects collapsed into larger categories.

The traditionally structured system (TE & TS) was chosen to form the basic discussion as that system has the longer history and represents the more common model of educational response to children with challenging needs in the education system. Comments from inclusive systems (IE & IS) respondents were then analysed in comparison to the traditional.

Thirteen categories were generated in this manner. These categories were grouped into three themes.

- **Professional Stance**
  1. Teacher attitude/willingness.
  2. Teacher preparation.
  3. Teamwork and collaboration.
- **Teacher Concerns**
  4. Effect on teachers.
  5. Individual approach.
  6. Category and severity of challenge.
  7. Behaviour.

8. Reduction of funding.
9. Support for regular classroom teacher.
10. Specific supports: Pupil-teacher ratio and Educational Assistants.
11. Time.
12. Safety.

- **Effect of Inclusion on Students**

13. Benefits and disadvantages.

By and large these themes fit into the professional/personal and working conditions/relationships attitude areas which guide discussion in the main body of this report. Teacher concerns relate to working conditions/relationships, while the themes of professional stance and effect of inclusion on students fall under professional/personal attitude. Findings are quite similar to those presented in the main body of the report.

In terms of the present discussion no differentiations were made between categories for elementary and secondary in most instances as no apparent differences in the quality and quantity of response under most categories were found between them. Where apparent elementary - secondary differences existed in responses, note was taken. For similar reasons no differentiation on the basis of region (Western, Central, Atlantic) was developed. Selected supporting and clarifying quotes are provided for all categories. Individual quotes are identified as coming from an elementary or secondary level educator.

Quotations used and assigned to categories were considered to apply to that category more appropriately than to any other category. As will be seen, many quotations deal with more than one subject and parts of the quotation may apply to more than one category.

This analysis, then, provides a general view of the spontaneous reactions of educators, differentiated by whether they worked in systems defined as traditional or inclusive, across Canada to the educational practice of inclusion..

PROFESSIONAL STANCE ON INCLUSION

TEACHER ATTITUDE/WILLINGNESS

Traditional System Respondents

Two subthemes emerged from responses around teacher attitudes and willingness regarding inclusive practice among educators in traditionally structured systems. These were the need for positive attitude/willingness and whether inclusion of students with challenging needs in the regular classroom was a rights issue.

Positive attitude/willingness

Though this study focuses on teacher attitudes to inclusion of students with challenging needs, few spontaneous responses on surveys dealt with attitude directly. Those that did may be seen as indicative of a subset of educators seeing a relationship between attitude and acceptability or rejection of inclusion.

A limited number of respondents from traditionally structured systems made a point of stating that teachers must hold a positive attitude or be willing to work with students with challenging needs.

> *TE: Classroom teachers know far more than they think they know. Therefore, they learn quickly with support, if their attitudes are positive to an integrated situation.*

> *TE: Teaching children with special needs is a vocational call beyond the call to teach .... Not all of us have the objectivity and emotional "separateness" to accomplish this task.*

> ***TS:** The philosophical and educational concepts of inclusion have to be an integral part of the teaching "mind-set". Otherwise we will merely be creating segregated groups within the larger group.*

Threaded through the limited number of responses of this type were: a)recognition that accepting inclusion of students with challenging needs was a

matter of attitude, with the implication that teachers had the necessary skills or could obtain them; b) that teachers had a choice of whether or not to work inclusively; and c) that teaching inclusively did not really fall under the conventional understanding of what teaching means.

Inclusion as a rights issue

Though rights of students with challenging needs was not dealt with directly in any questionnaire item, a number of respondents commented on this concept. No secondary level participants discussed this aspect.

Responses tended to suggest the degree of support educators held for inclusion. This ranged from viewing inclusion purely as a students' rights issue to rejection of the right of any student with challenging needs to education in a regular classroom.

Some educators viewed the right of students with challenging needs to an education in regular classrooms as unquestioned. This right superseded other concerns for some, though others attached conditions of support.

> ***TE:*** *Each and every student, whether challenged or not, has the right to learn and the right to placement within the regular classroom.*

> ***TE:*** *All students have a right to a regular classroom as long as: there is support (personnel and materials), daily time to plan and conference, the student's needs do not compromise the safety or morale of the rest of the class.*

Conversely, a number of respondents argued that students with challenging needs have no right to inclusion or that there are limits.

> ***TE:*** *To be fair and equitable to every one, divisions are necessary. The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.*

> ***TE:*** *Even with all my years of experience I would not feel equipped to deal with seriously challenged students. In fact, when schools have too many such students the education of the other students suffers.*

Relatively few respondents from traditional systems commented directly on inclusion in terms of rights. Those who did were restricted to the elementary panel. Those supporting the rights view argued from an equity and "people first" position. A similarly small group argued that students with challenging needs had no right to inclusion. Such respondents reinforced their position by invoking the notion of fairness to the larger group of regular students.

Inclusive System Respondents

Responses from elementary and secondary educators in inclusively structured systems exhibited a similar variation in views with regard to teacher attitude/willingness, the position that inclusive education violated acceptable bounds of teaching, and children's rights.

Comments on attitude/willingness, however, tended to state more directly that teachers were willing to include, particularly if supported.

> ***IE:*** *Teacher attitudes will set the environment of the classroom. Teachers need support for integration, but this shouldn't make up our minds on the issue.*

> ***IS:*** *Overall, I feel that integration is good. Students who were traditionally in regular schools (i.e. Down's Syndrome) should definitely be allowed in the regular classroom.*

Though some responses made the rights argument directly, the majority of such responses were indirect.

> ***IE:*** *I am not opposed to the idea of integration for special needs students. I think it is probably the ideal place for many of the students.*

Some inclusive system respondents directly rejected the idea that inclusion was within acceptably defined bounds of teaching.

> ***IS:*** *I am one person in a class. Not a nurse, doctor, or physiologist.*

IE: *Teachers are becoming social workers and are ill prepared and untrained for what is expected of them.*

No inclusive system respondent directly rejected the position that students with challenging needs had the right to education in the regular classroom, though some responses on the boundaries of teaching may be interpreted as doing so.

Proportionately more educators from inclusive systems participated under this category of discussion than did those from traditional systems. More respondents from inclusive systems (approximately 1 in 13) suggested that teachers had the skills and willingness to support inclusion, than did their traditional system colleagues (approximately 1 in 20). Relatively fewer indicated that they rejected inclusion as an appropriate educational strategy.

An interesting difference in the number of responses between traditional and inclusive systems was the number of secondary educators who entered into discussion. Whereas almost none of the traditional secondary educators commented on attitude or on the rights position, more secondary than elementary responses were found among the inclusive group.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Traditional System Respondents

A common theme among all groups responding to this survey was the need for "training", both at the preservice and the inservice level. Educators recognized that inclusion called for an understanding of the learning needs of students with challenging needs and methods to respond to those needs.

TE: *I wish ... that more emphasis would have been placed on learning more such skills in university courses.*

TS: *The fact is that plenty of inservicing prior to and throughout the implementation phase, as well as periodically afterward, will be needed to carry this off successfully.*

As might be anticipated of practising teachers, focus was on inservice preparation. That is the avenue through which most practising professionals

obtain any preparation they believe required for immediate demands. Both elementary and secondary level educators agreed on the necessity of inservice preparation. A minor theme was that preparation for including students with challenging needs was also a preservice issue.

> ***TS:*** *I do not feel trained or qualified to deal with these children under the best of conditions.*

> ***TE:*** *My teacher training did not include courses on how to teach special needs students.*

A limited number of secondary respondents stated that teacher preparation would be ineffective and a waste of time.

> ***TS:*** *I don't see how any training or planning for and by the regular classroom teacher is in any way the most effective approach.*

One secondary respondent underlined the importance of teacher preparation and associated factors by stating:

> ***TS:*** *Class sizes, schedules and the lack of necessary training and equipment will be the downfall of integration.*

The above responses were selected for their particular focus on the issue of teacher preparation for inclusive education. The perception of teachers that they are not prepared adequately through preservice or inservice for inclusion comes through clearly. Beneath this surface statement of need may be perceived the intimation that teachers might find inclusion manageable with appropriate teacher preparation. Twice as many secondary as elementary educators commented on teacher preparation.

Inclusive System Respondents

Educators in inclusive systems echoed those in traditional systems, though even more called for appropriate professional preparation. Seventeen percent of respondents mentioned teacher preparation directly compared to 12

percent of their traditional system colleagues. The majority referred to inservice.

IE: *I believe teachers must be given more inservicing and support personnel.*

IS: *Provide inservice programs for curriculum, classroom management, discipline, socialization process.*

Those who referred to preservice stressed the insufficiency of preparation for regular classroom teachers working with students with challenging needs.

IS: *Special needs kids need specialized, trained, expert staff to assess and work with them and not generalists who finished a half course in Ed Psych or Child Development. It is absurd and unfair to both teachers and children with challenging needs to inflict us on each other with no preparation except the hectoring of strangers on PA days peddling the latest fad in Sociology of Education.*

Inclusive system teachers also noted implications of insufficient preparation and of feeling unqualified:

IE: *Having integrated challenging needs students in the regular classroom is very difficult. The difficulty lies in the qualifications and expertise of the teacher.*

IS: *I feel my knowledge of the range of issues surrounding questions of integration of students with exeptionalities is so limited I could hardly answer most of these questions without a great deal of speculation of what is involved and teacher stress appeared.*

A number of respondents coupled the need for more preparation with the need for other supports.

IE: *What is necessary is that teachers have support in the form of*

education, time, and assistants.

A like number commented on existing preparation for working in regular classrooms with students with special needs.

> ***TS:*** *There has been zero to nil preparation on this topic at the Faculty of Education.*

Educators in inclusive systems mention need for teacher preparation with considerable frequency. The emphasis of practising elementary and secondary educators, not surprisingly, is on inservice. Without sufficient preparation teachers see negative implications for themselves in terms of inclusion. Among inclusive system educators more than twice as many elementary as secondary teachers mentioned teacher preparation, reversing the pattern for traditional system respondents.

Teachers in both types of systems made no bones of the fact that teacher preparation, whether at the inservice or the preservice level, was insufficient to enable regular classroom teachers to take responsibility for inclusion of students with challenging needs comfortably. Over 17 percent of inclusive system respondents and 12 percent of traditional system respondents mentioned inadequate preparation. No other topic developed from spontaneous comments involved more respondents.

TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

Traditional System Respondents

Various responses emphasized that integration and collaboration strategies were called for to make inclusion work. For the traditional system group of educators, responses making this point came almost exclusively from the elementary panel.

> ***TE:*** *From experience, I have found the following, a team approach to planning for the challenging needs student is workable, inspiring, effective.*

Individual responses pointed to specific characteristics of teaming and

collaboration. Such responses provided points around which teams could be conceptualized and which could guide those charged with designing integration systems and those providing teacher preparation.

> ***TE:*** *The team of teacher, administrator, and resource specialist is not complete without the parents.*

Others called for recognition that teams are a necessary strategy in support of inclusion.

> ***TE:*** *Classroom teachers should not be expected to manage challenging needs students on their own. They must be supported by the appropriate support personnel - resource teachers, psychologists, program specialists, etc..*

One respondent made the interesting comment that:

> ***TE:*** *Some teachers don't accept the help/support of resources when dealing with challenging students. Therefore, it is hard for administrators to support teachers when the class starts to fall apart.*

The majority of responses from traditional system respondents on this issue, though there were relatively few overall, were quite direct in making the point that teamwork and collaboration were essential. Evidence that teaming and collaboration worked was forthcoming from some respondents. Others outlined the range of possible team members, including parents. A warning was given, however, that not all teachers are accustomed to functioning in collaborative, team manner and some may resist.

Inclusive System Respondents

As was the case with traditional system educators, relatively few inclusive system respondents focused on teamwork and collaboration. Those who did mention this area iterated points made by their traditional system colleagues. Once again, the majority of responses were from the elementary

panel.

IE: *If integration of students with disabilities is to be successful, the regular classroom teacher <u>cannot</u> work alone. Yes, support staff is highly recommended.*

IS: *What is essential, I think, is a collaborative team approach.*

IE: *More time for planning/collaboration of people involved with challenging needs students is necessary.*

IE: *Many high needs students can be adequately supported in our school system if a <u>team</u> approach is taken when developing their PEP. If this does not include parents, doctors, specialists, and <u>all</u> teachers involved with the child, consistency will not play the necessary role in development.*

The responses quoted here on teamwork and collaboration were selected from among those most directly mentioning this educational strategy. There were other, less direct, comments in the overall response pool.

Teamwork and collaboration are regarded as appropriate strategies for inclusive education among educators in general. Some members from both groups of respondents is this study obviously are aware of this need, and of who appropriate team members are.

The limited number of responses on this topic overall, however, is interesting given the emphasis advocates of inclusion and many others, place on the need for increased attention to collaboration as more and more children with challenging needs attend regular classrooms.

EFFECT ON THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER

<u>Traditional System Respondents</u>

Teachers express concern regarding the effect including students with special needs will have on them. Some see inclusion as an extra burden:

TE: *"Without undue strain" HA. There's great strain now - each*

additional expectation adds strain!

TS: *Unless particular conditions can be met for the classroom teacher - the workload would be so over-whelming (e.g. time or preparation and meetings, supports and assistance).*

This type of response, coming primarily from elementary teachers, suggests a concern that teachers will be asked to do more than they consider appropriate, that change of educational practice simply will mean increased work without adequate preparation and support. Subsequent discussions on other major topics drawn from spontaneous responses will pick up on what teachers mean by adequate support in more detail.

Inclusive System Respondents

Few teachers in inclusive systems (approximately 7 %) mentioned effect of inclusion on the teacher directly. When they did, however, themes similar to those of their traditional system colleagues emerged.

Inclusion was viewed by some as a burden:

IE: *Most heterogenous classrooms are very diverse. Adding LD, ESL, and behaviour problems creates undue pressure on classroom teachers, resources, and other students, particularly when support was minimal.*

Support was viewed as central to ability to work inclusively, and was viewed as being eroded.

IE: *Class sizes continue to grow, resources continue to diminish, while the demands on the classroom teacher continue to increase.*

The major theme for both elementary and secondary inclusive system educators, however, was that too great a demand was placed on regular classroom teachers.

IE: *I also feel that in some situations (depending on the needs) unfair*

demands are placed on the regular classroom teacher especially when there is a group of so called "normal" students to care for.

IS: *The regular classroom teacher is over-extended now and many are on stress leave. To take full responsibility for a special needs student would drive many more over the edge.*

Approximately one in eight traditional and one in twelve inclusive system educators directly discussed effect of inclusive education on the teacher. All comments were negative in the sense that inclusion, often coupled to other stresses on the system, was considered to require too much of the teacher.

INDIVIDUALIZATION

Traditional System Respondents

Respondents from traditionally structured systems across the three regions of this study found the cross categorical design of the EOQ problematic. Many argued the view that real life variation among exceptionalities was too great for response in cross categorical manner. Specific needs of the individual was the focus, with little appreciation for looking across categories at common needs.

TE: *Your term "challenging needs students", though politically correct jargon, is an absolutely meaningless term. You can't lump all handicapped people in one group and expect anyone to understand what you are getting at.*

TS: *In many cases, the answers would depend on the level of needs of the child, or specific challenges they have.*

In support of what appeared to be a categorical view of students with exceptionalities, a number of respondents supported viewing each student as an individual.

TE: *Kids and their situations need to be looked at individually to truly provide the most effective program.*

TS: *The answers to the questions are greatly influenced by the type of disability the students have.*

The view within special education for some time has been that more value resides in regarding most student needs as common across exceptional conditions in the same manner as regular students are seen to share common needs. While a limited number of needs might be unique to a particular condition, placement and programming needs are best taken on an individual needs model. This is the model underlying most contemporary teacher preparation programs and, indeed, inclusive education in the view of many proponents.

Conflicting with this view is the practice of many governments to focus on a categorical taxonomy in legislation, of teacher preparation programs to offer categorically based instruction to future teachers, and of professional associations to be categorically based. Legislation, teacher preparation, and professional affiliation, when it comes to students whose learning is challenged, often supports a categorical model. As noted above, this is in direct conflict with traditional regular teacher preparation models which regard a relatively standard set of curricula, teaching approaches, and evaluation systems as the basis for teaching most students.

The traditional response of the educational system has been to establish two systems of education; one to accommodate those whose needs and strengths are seen to be acceptably homogenous; one to accommodate those whose needs are seen to be heterogenous. The responses of approximately fifteen percent of traditional system educators suggest that practising teachers hold firmly to this dual system model, particularly careful delineation of individual needs through assessment, and viewing students through categorical designations of disability.

Inclusive System Respondents

A lesser percentage of inclusive system educators (10 %) compared to traditional system educators (15 %) offered comments which appeared to take a particularly strong view of each student as an individual. A cross categorical model was seen as inappropriate in the instance of students labelled as having challenging needs.

IS: *Special needs is so broad a definition as to render many of your questions useless in my opinion. It depends on the student, the disability, the support, etc.*

A categorical approach was proposed as more suitable:

IE: *I believe that inclusion depends on students accepted into the program on an individual basis - if a student is a serious behaviour problem, I think it can cause more problems.*

The position taken by this subset of respondents from both educator groups may be seen as retaining appreciation for the traditional special education model in which some students are included, but others are excluded for reasons of category or severity of disability. Though the service delivery model is changing for the students, and is already changed for many, the attitudinal set of what appears to be a sizeable group of educators, with regard to how these students are to be understood, resists change.

CATEGORY AND SEVERITY OF CHALLENGE

This discussion picks up on the preference of a sizeable percentage of respondents in both traditionally structured and inclusively structured systems to deal with either the category under which a particular student's challenge fell, or the severity of that challenge.

Traditional System Respondents

Category of Challenge

A definite group of respondents took care to differentiate among students by their levels of challenge, and, thus, by the teaching challenge to the teacher. Often this differentiation was couched in terms of the category assigned to a student. Related to the appreciation of categories of challenge appeared to be the belief that certain entire categories presented more significant barriers than did others.

TE: *For example, LD and behaviour disorders eat up a lot more time than hearing or physical disorders.*

TS: *I believe integration can be very effective for students with learning disabilities, visual and physical exceptionalities. Behaviour disabilities and mental retardation affect the learning of others too much to be successful in an integrated environment.*

Severity of Challenge

Severity of the learning challenge of the included student was a focal concern for some respondents. They viewed severity as a strong determiner of the possibility of inclusion.

TE: *The degree to which the challenging needs student is disabled/impaired has a great deal of impact on whether their needs can be met realistically without disadvantaging the regular classroom teacher.*

TS: *It all depends on the severity of disabilities or handicaps .... I believe integration can be beneficial to everyone involved if the challenging needs student is not too severe.*

The responses indicating concern based on categories and severity of challenge suggest that students with challenging needs are seen as being discretely different in terms of classroom management by roughly 12 percent of traditional system respondents. Once again the concept that the most beneficial way to understand students is through a commonality of needs approach appears "devalued". Other responses emphasize that the severity of a challenge determines the feasibility of inclusion. This is an interesting point as it suggests recognition among some educators that the challenge for educators may be more in degree than in type of challenge.

Inclusive System Respondents

Members of both inclusively structured systems and traditionally structured systems offered responses which differentiated students with challenging needs either by category of exceptionality or by severity of challenge. Proportionately more of the inclusive system group employed this type of partitioning, though the difference was not great (14 % to 12%).

Inclusive system respondents tended to refer to category of disability if they were from the elementary panel. Traditional system respondents preferred to refer to severity.

Typical responses for the inclusive system group under the categorical classification are:

IE: *I think students with visual, learning, hearing, physical needs can be more easily accommodated than those with behavioural needs.*

IS: *There are three physically disabled students in the school I am at presently and they seem to have been very well accepted and included in friendship circles and groups.*

Under the severity classification typical responses are:

IE: *Very little progress will be made in the regular classroom, if the child has severe learning problems and he/she will not be prepared for many of life's demands.*

IS: *Severe cases need a separate facility.*

Once again the two groups responded in similar fashion in relatively similar numbers. Findings here regarding preference for a focus on categorization and severity of challenge support the traditional special education model, and its underlying medical model.

BEHAVIOUR

Traditional System Respondents

Considerably more teachers perceived inappropriate behaviour as having more effect on the classroom learning environment than any other challenge. Responses concentrated on the views that behaviour constituted the most significant challenge to inclusion, and that outbursts in the classroom were of particular concern.

A variety of responses supported the view that a child with behavioural concerns presented the greatest degree of concern to successful inclusion.

TE: *The most challenging are those with severe behaviour concerns.*

TS: *I think that students with "behavioural" problems are the most difficult to integrate into the regular classroom as they can totally disrupt the learning of other students. A detailed plan needs to be in place regarding how to deal with each individual to maximize the integration for everyone.*

The negative effect of behavioural outbursts on the classroom program characterized a number of responses.

TE: *Educationally challenged students who exhibit loud, hyper, and/or aggressive behaviour are highly disruptive to classroom learning and climate.*

TS: *Severe behaviour problems upset the emotional tone of the classroom - students who may become violent create tension both in the teacher and the other students.*

Quite small, and approximately equally sized, subsets of traditional system elementary and secondary educators mentioned behaviour directly. However, a larger grouping mentioned behaviour in comments incorporated under other categories. Taking all spontaneous traditional system responses into consideration, behaviour emerges as a major concern.

Inclusive System Responses

Inclusive system educators, too, were concerned regarding students with behavioural challenges and their effect on the learning environment. As noted previously, though behaviour was mentioned in many comments as an aspect of concern, it was the central feature of relatively few traditional system responses (approximately 8 %). More inclusive system educators mentioned it as a distinct concern (approximately 12 %). Among the inclusive system respondents, more elementary (15 %) than secondary (5 %) level teachers mentioned behaviour directly.

Typical inclusive system respondent concerns regarding behaviour as the

most significant challenge to inclusion in general were:

IE: Students who are behaviour problems or who have emotional needs beyond the average are in a different category as far as the classroom teacher is concerned.

IE: The group of challenging needs students that I do have trouble with the idea of integration around is some of the behavioural disordered who are totally unsuited for a regular classroom.

Concerns relative to outbursts in the classroom typified responses of other teachers.

IE: Disruptive students are the most stressful to deal with.

IS: The emotionally disturbed and disruptive student should not be integrated.

REDUCTION OF FUNDING

Traditional System Respondents

A significant number of respondents expressed concern about the effect of government reduction of funding to the education system. Inclusion of students with challenging needs was seen as one area where the impact of funding cuts would be severe. Fears were expressed that the inclusion program would be employed as a cost cutting measure.

TE: My fear is that inclusion exists as a measure to cut costs in education.

TS: Budget/saving money must not drive the inclusivity engine. "We are short of money, therefore inclusivity is good."

Others believed that cost cutting would have deleterious effect on students with challenging needs, or on regular students, and challenge the success of inclusion as an educational strategy.

TE: By cutting the support staff for classroom teachers, the quality of education will go down for all students.

TS: I read (and expect) that the bottom line ($) will preclude this (teacher preparation) and that we will have it (inclusion) thrown at us in a half-assed fashion that will benefit no one in any satisfactory sense .... Muddling through is not enough.

Concern was expressed as well for the effect of cost cutting measures on the teacher who would be including students.

TE: Unfortunately, due to budget restraints the support is being reduced and classroom sizes are increasing. This puts extra strain on the teacher.

TS: Resource and support personnel are being cut at all levels, leaving the classroom teacher to cope.

A number of respondents interpreted a move to inclusion as being an undeclared strategy of the government or system to save money. Such interpretations were contributed only by secondary level educators in the traditional system group.

TS: We are suspicious about the board's or government's hidden agenda and do not want to be part of any cost saving scheme.

Still other respondents were concerned that allocating funds to regular classroom education of students with challenging needs was inappropriate and misconceived. Again, it was the secondary teacher group which provided this analysis.

TS: Those who are making the decisions about inclusion fall into two categories. 1. Unrealistic and ignorant about the "real classrooms." 2. Governed by money problems and ignoring the environment in today's classroom.

Responses indicated wide spread belief that reduction of funding by governments to school systems has led and will lead to a false sense of commitment and inclusion for financial rather than educational reasons. At times this belief is so strongly held that some hypothesize an underlying plot of governments or systems. No evidence was found in responses of recognition that the societal move toward integration, which began in the 1960's and before, was a long term strategy, and was now beginning to be felt more in education.

Inclusive System Respondents

Relatively fewer inclusive system educators (approximately 9 percent) commented directly on funding than did traditional system educators (approximately 13 %). The majority of commentators were elementary level educators.

Approximately equal proportions of both groups remarked that inclusion was simply a cost saving measure. This was the most common perception. Sample comments from the inclusive system group are:

> ***IE:*** *They are placed in the regular classroom to save money and I don't feel anyone really cares what happens to them after that.*

> ***IS:*** *What I am opposed to is the "political decisions" to integrate these students as a financial decision to save money.... I feel this is a decision made by our provincial government to save money and make cutbacks.*

A small number in the inclusive system group agreed with the traditional system group that inclusion was an undeclared budgetary strategy.

> ***IE:*** *The Department of Education is trying to convince themselves that this is a sound policy, when really $ and cents is what counts.*

> ***IS:*** *The reality of integrating students with challenging needs is not, as the politicians would have us believe, in the best interests of the children. It is purely financial.*

As with some respondents from the traditional system group, a number of inclusive system educators see inclusion as misconceived.

IE: *Until integration is a system wide effort, fully supported by the provincial and federal governments, it will not work.*

The relative numbers of those commenting on reduction of funding was different for the two groups, with the greater frequency of mention being found among educators in traditional systems. The foci of comments, however, were quite similar.

SUPPORT FOR THE REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHER

Traditional System Respondents

A goodly number of respondents (11 %) commented on the need for support for the classroom teacher when students with challenging needs are integrated. Types of support mentioned varied, but included both concrete support and personnel support. A theme of various comments was that without adequate support, inclusion would not be practicable.

A general lack of support, or concern that such would be the case, characterized a number of responses.

TE: *I can develop plans - we all can! But, will I have the time and resources to carry them through their planning stage to their implementation stage?*

Other responses indicated that the regular classroom teacher needed to look toward colleagues for support, if inclusion was to be realized.

TE: *It all depends on individual administrators, resource personnel.*

TS: *Teachers do not have adequate support. Support = resource personnel, technological, materials, training and inservice programs.*

Specific problems and types of support viewed as appropriate and

necessary were listed in a variety of comments.

> ***TE:*** *Large class sizes, lack of time, and lack of resources (human and material) are the greatest obstacles to successful inclusion. The integrated children themselves are wonderful.*

> ***TS:*** *Integration must have clearly defined criteria, adequate resource support, and adequately trained teachers if it is going to be of benefit to all students.*

Despite the needs enumerated, a number of responses evidenced appreciation of inclusion, if support were available.

> ***TE:*** *Having a special needs (Down's syndrome) child in my class has shown me the benefits of integration with modifications and support.*

> ***TS:*** *The concept is good and I think a positive one, but depending on the "handicap", the teacher needs all the support he/she gets.*

Responses commenting on support needs pointed to resource personnel as necessary to support teachers. In addition, issues such as teacher preparation, time for collaboration and planning, and concrete resources were noted. A quite strong theme of the necessity of support for the classroom teacher ran through many responses.

Inclusive System Responses

Four themes, lack of support, need for support personnel, types of support needed, and positive views qualified by the need for support, characterized responses from inclusive system respondents (15 %). These parallelled themes found for traditional system respondents. Unlike responses from the traditional system group where both elementary and secondary educators contributed a variety of comments, inclusive system responses came overwhelmingly from the elementary panel.

Lack of Support

IE: The children have been placed in the regular classroom without any training or support. Once the children are placed, the attitude is that "You handle it."

Need for Support Personnel

IE: This will work only with support staff and teachers and time to develop many individual programs and team teaching.

Types of Support Needed

IE: Teachers can deal with special needs and just need support, reassurance and recognition.

IE: There should be a resource centre with materials available for these special needs students as well as literature on how to deal with them.

Positive Views Qualified by Need for Support

IE: Give me the appropriate and necessary support, and I will welcome any "special needs" child into our classroom. If not, its not fair to the child or to me.

IS: I believe in integration, but it is only feasible with good and effective support staff. Otherwise it cannot and will not work.

Support for inclusion was a leading concern among those who offered spontaneous commentary on survey forms. In addition to the comments selected for this focused discussion on support in general, other evidences of concern regarding support may be seen in the next discussion on specific supports, and in the variety of comments on support coupled with other discussion categories.

SPECIFIC SUPPORTS

Traditional System Respondents

Two specific types of supports featured in a variety of responses. These were mentioned by large numbers of respondents in both systems and took on a higher profile than any other support mentioned.

Pupil - Teacher Ratio

A sizeable number of teachers in traditionally structured systems (9 %) suggested that success for inclusion revolved around the pupil - teacher ratio (PTR). They felt that the introduction of students with challenging needs created a PTR which would endanger the education of all students, included and regular, and would create an unmanageable situation for the teacher. Conversely, a lowered PTR would result in a manageable situation.

> ***TE:*** *The response to these questions greatly depends on the time given to teachers and the number of students in the class. If time and regular class size is to remain the same, special needs students will not survive nor will regular students meet potentials.*

> ***TS:*** *When special needs students are integrated, the total class number should be greatly reduced. It is a fact that in secondary classrooms this is not so at all. Also the number of special needs in a regular classroom should be capped.*

Responses pointed to a strong belief that an appropriate management strategy for inclusion was to reduce the number of other students when enrolling a student with challenging needs. In instances where this was not done, respondents forecast that both regular and integrated students would suffer.

Conversely, respondents did not reject the presence of students with challenging needs out of hand.

Educational Assistants

Educational Assistants (EA's) are considered necessary by a limited number of teachers. Traditional system responses (4 %) suggested that many

included students could do well and many teachers would find inclusion manageable if an EA were available.

> ***TE:*** *Many students can thrive in a regular classroom with an aide and a modified program.*

> ***TS:*** *The special needs students in the classroom require their own EA or to share an EA with other special needs students in that class.*

A number of traditional system respondents supported their call for EA's with examples of successful inclusion from their own experience. While stating that assistance from an EA was essential, there was suggestion that a fulltime EA was not required for every student.

The comments under PTR and EA suggest strongly that such supports are viewed as necessary in many situations. While not stated directly, there appears to be an implicit assumption that if such supports were provided, inclusion would not be an insurmountable challenge.

Inclusive System Respondents

PTR and EA's drew comments from inclusive system educators as they did from their traditional system colleagues.

Proportionately the same numbers of inclusive as traditional system teachers mentioned their views that a lower PTR was necessary for inclusion to be possible. Whereas roughly equal numbers of elementary and secondary teachers in traditionally structured systems mentioned PTR, in inclusive systems the majority of responses on this issue were made by elementary staff.

> ***IE:*** *I think we should be realistic, the classes are getting bigger, the students have more problems and we have less help.*

> ***IE:*** *Class size must be reduced.*

Educational Assistants

More than twice as many inclusive system teachers (10 %) as traditional system teachers emphasized that EA's were required to support inclusion. The

majority of those bringing this view forward were from the elementary panel. For the traditional system, elementary and secondary responses were relatively equal.

> ***IE:*** *IEP's can be developed - but in order to implement them effectively, the classroom teacher needs EA assistance.*

> ***IS:*** *A teacher's aide makes a world of difference in "hands on" subjects like clothing and foods.*

Both traditional and inclusive system educators called for a lower PTR (approximately 8 to 9 % each) as a method of meeting the demands of including students. Fewer traditional system respondents argued for EA's (5 %), than did inclusive system educators (10 %). Responses came from both elementary and secondary teachers. More secondary than elementary traditional system teachers mentioned need for a lower PTR, while considerably more elementary educators in inclusive systems argued for EA's.

Responses regarding these two supports may be interpreted to suggest that, were these supports, or other strategies having the same effect, put in place, inclusion of students with challenging needs would be practicable.

TIME

Traditional System Respondents

Time to work with all students in the classroom was a factor for one in ten teachers. A common perception was that including students with challenging needs introduced a time management problem to the classroom.

For some the time problem varied depending on the nature of the needs of individual students.

> ***TE:*** *I've had kids that have done exceptionally well and yet did not take time away from the regular student. On the other hand, I've had kids that used so much of my time, that it was the average kids that had to pay the price of less attention.*

Others emphasized time spent in planning and modifying program and/or

lack of time allotted.

> ***TS:*** *The planning and development of the program in English at the senior levels based on performance and achievement require expertise and hours of research.*

Still others stated that spending time on the needs of an included student was not worth the perceived cost to other students.

> ***TE:*** *I, personally, as an educator and a parent question how much of a regular teacher's time and resources are taken up with a few high needs individuals at the expense of the remaining students.*

The need to distribute teacher time across both students with challenging needs and regular students suggested to some teachers that all would be affected negatively.

> ***TE:*** *How are we, as teachers of all children, expected to provide equal - or any - time to our whole class of students when we're constantly helping, redirecting, monitoring, following thru, and reteaching those with challenging needs?*

Time needed to function within a team, to meet and consult with others, and to plan was a concern of a number of respondents.

> ***TE:*** *From experience I have found the following: a team approach for planning for the challenging needs student is workable, inspiring and effective; that there is a serious shortage of time to plan, and follow though, and monitor.*

> ***TS:*** *Adequate teacher preparation time must be provided for collaborative planning with resource personnel.*

Traditional system respondents regarded the amount of time they had available as a resource to be shared equally among students. Were they to allot

their time based on perceived need of individual students, their conclusion was that need would overwhelm time available. In addition, there was clear recognition that inclusion called for a team format in which educators met together during the school day to plan and prepare. Teachers appeared to hold in mind included students with high degrees of challenge, including behavioural concerns.

No comments were tendered on the possible need to structure the school day in new ways to meet the demand for planning time and preparation, as is suggested by many advocates of inclusive education.

The belief that the teacher's responsibility was to bring all students to an approximately common level of learning and behaviour was implied, and that to do so would require providing inordinate amounts of attention to a few.

Inclusive System Respondents

Time was a concern among educators in inclusively structured systems as well. The types of concerns voiced were similar to those of colleagues in traditionally structured systems.

Individual student needs

IE: Students with other types of disabilities are more manageable providing that teachers are given time to prepare special programs for individual students and time to assist these students during class time.

Time to plan.

IE: We should have a smaller PTR and a larger amount of planning time for these teachers.

Perceived cost to other students.

IS: My main concern with integration is that the students receive adequate attention and time. Otherwise their integration results in them becoming lost in the shuffle. Often with the demands that my

other students give me, I have little or no time to assist those with special needs.

Distribution of time across students.

IS: *All students need to be taught the basic skills, they all need my time but 20 minutes with a challenged student only gives me 1 1/2 minutes per "regular student".*

The need to function as a team.

IE: *Time must also be recognized as an important factor - time for resource teachers and classroom teachers plus EA's to meet and discuss the student and plan a consistent approach to the learning environment of the child.*

The central finding under the topic of time was similarity of response across traditional and inclusive system educators. Approximately equal numbers of teachers from both groups referred directly to time as an issue (9 % and 10 % respectively). More elementary than secondary level educators mentioned time. All respondents saw need for more time to carry out the tasks of inclusion.

SAFETY

Traditional System Respondents

A quite limited number of respondents brought up the issue of safety in the classroom when students with challenging needs were included. The majority, but not all, of the responses were from secondary school educators.

TE: *All students have a right to a regular classroom as long as ... the students' needs do not compromise the safety or morale of the rest of the class.*

TS: *Severe behaviour problems upset the emotional tone of the classroom - students who may become violent create tension both*

in the teacher and the other students. Students whose behaviour jeopardises other students' safety or learning should not be tolerated in the regular classroom.

TS: *Having a special needs person in a technical classroom would pose a safety hazard to that individual as well as all the other students in the class. Where would the liability fall? Would the teacher be responsible?*

As can be seen, a number of comments regarding safety are situation specific, as in physical education and technical studies. Others are vague and appear to suggest a general unease that the safety of other students or teachers may be compromised in some fashion through inclusion.

Inclusive System Respondents

One inclusive system respondent mentioned safety as an issue.

IS: *Technical teachers can strongly and positively influence these students .... and teach them to work safely around their everyday equipment. i.e. lawnmowers, drills, tools, etc.*

It is of interest that safety as a concern is mentioned less in systems which have policies and experience in including all students. The single response in this area from an inclusive system teacher was different in quality from that of those of other respondents in that it indicated that safety was not a concern, that students could be taught to work safely.

BENEFITS AND DISADVANTAGES FOR STUDENTS

Throughout spontaneous written comments, few educators argued wholly for or against inclusion. Many noted benefits of inclusion. Others noted disadvantages. The latter group was much smaller.

Traditional System Respondents

Many traditional system respondents mentioned benefits or disadvantages, or both, of including students with exceptionalities in regular classrooms. Few in the traditional system perceived nothing but benefit. Even fewer saw nothing but disadvantage. Others qualified their responses. Among responses was support for both the inclusive model and the segregated model of educating students with challenging needs.

Benefits

Approximately ten percent of traditional system respondents noted benefits for included students, regular students, or both. Equal numbers of elementary and secondary level educators saw benefits.

> ***TE:*** *I have certainly discovered that challenged students can make gains in a regular classroom - more than I would have thought possible when I taught special ed. Being back in a regular classroom ... has made me aware of the advantages regular programs can have for special ed. [students], particularly in the social area.*

> ***TE:*** *I have seen the benefits to both the special needs student and the "regular" student from integration. The "regular" student learns compassion and the acceptance of individual differences.*

> ***TS:*** *I believe it has a positive influence on other students in the class.*

Such responses indicate that benefits of integration exist for both included and regular students. Social benefits for included students are referred to in particular, though mention is made of academic benefits as well. Regular students benefit, according to responses, from becoming more comfortable with differences, in developing an understanding that all are not the same, and the learning of compassion. An interesting element was the suggestion that inclusion was of benefit to the teacher.

Disadvantages

Somewhat fewer responses (approximately 9 %) recorded straightforward negative experiences or expectations of inclusion. Responses tended to be relatively muted in this area. A number of educators supported segregated placements as being more appropriate.

TE: I have serious concerns about "special needs" children in the regular classroom .... My second concern is that in many situations I have been unable to see any academic or social improvement or gain through regular classroom placement, and, in fact, my personal experience is that as young children with special needs mature and enter into Jr. grades, conflict situations erupt routinely causing stress for everyone in the classroom.

TE: It would seem that children with special educational needs would benefit more from being in classrooms rich in materials and resources suited to their particular needs and under the direction of a teacher specially trained to meet those needs.

TS: What are we going to do to help the profoundly normal! Integrated classrooms help no one!! I am becoming radicalized to believe streaming or homogeneity has its place in accomplishing the greatest good for the greatest numbers, or as the kids might says "Inclusive education sucks". It serves no-one's needs adequately.

TS: I believe we must decide as educators that we can't be all things to all people. In a secondary setting a student who is incapable of performing at a functional level will not benefit by being placed in a regular classroom if the expectations are too academic.

Responses noting definite disadvantages of inclusion covered both elementary and secondary levels. Those from the elementary level stressed management difficulties. Issues such as lack of time, lack of perceived academic progress, fairness to other students, and benefits of special settings

characterized responses in general.

Secondary responses tended to be more direct in rejecting inclusion as a positive educational strategy. Basic arguments centred on the need to focus on regular students, the need to concentrate on academic objectives, and the perceived greater strength of special settings in achieving non-academic objectives. Quality of responses suggested definite differences between elementary and secondary level responses in arguments for rejecting inclusion.

Support with Qualification

By far the greater number of responses (15 percent) indicated benefits of inclusion, but with qualifications. Many responses presented benefits as obtainable only in a situation which met specific conditions.

> ***TE:*** *Inclusion works well if the teacher has the interest and expertise. Most classroom teachers do not have the necessary skills and interest to best meet the needs of these students.*

> ***TE:*** *I'm in agreement with integration of special needs students as long as inservice is provided and support is received from administration and support staff.*

> ***TS:*** *I agree with getting children into their classrooms with others but it is difficult when some of the children have intensive medical needs, are head injured and have a loss of memory short term, and can't control their anger.*

> ***TS:*** *In many cases special needs students can be integrated effectively into music classes, but I detest special needs students that deprive the regular students in my class of their education. Integration is possible for many handicaps, but not all, and schools should not be forced to accept students just because they live in their area.*

The elementary and secondary responses have a "Yes, if only we could ..." quality. Integration is seen as a positive educational strategy, but one which will not work for all students with challenging needs or all teachers for a variety

of reasons: lack of necessary skills among teachers with concomitant need for specific teacher preparation; concern that teachers and administrators will vary in their support of integration; the need to exclude students with certain types of challenge; and perceived disservice to regular students.

More respondents commented in ways that accepted, or rejected, or gave qualified support to inclusion than to any other general topic developed in this analysis (25 %). Few saw inclusion as a rights argument. More appeared to view inclusion as an educational opportunity which would benefit some children with challenging needs, primarily in the social arena. There was a strong sense that educators could be involved in inclusive education at their option. A variety of management, teacher readiness, quality of academic education, and most effective venue for education concerns emerged from comments.

Inclusive System Respondents

Responses among inclusive system educators were closely similar to those of their traditional system colleagues.

Approximately one in eight found inclusion beneficial with little or no qualification.

> ***IE:*** *I believe it is very valuable for them and regular students to be integrated for the understanding and knowledge from both parties are greatly enhanced.*

> ***IE:*** *Children need to be accepted for who they are and not made into what we want them to be. The students in my classroom who are special needs are delightful! The other students do not even notice their differences. What great preparation for tolerant, understanding adults.*

> ***IS:*** *I feel that integrating special needs students is extremely important. To segregate them (in my mind) is like creating a neo-Nazi society, whose "raison d'etre" was/is that only those of whom are totally acceptable are "fit" to attend.*

IS: *Furthermore, these students appear to be happy, well adjusted children.*

An approximately equal number rejected inclusion as an acceptable educational strategy.

IE: *Generally I feel that the best setting for the special needs children is in small group settings and I feel that they do not benefit enough from the regular classroom to jeopardize the learning of the regular students as sometimes happens.*

IE: *I feel that a combination of integration of students with challenging needs in the regular classroom as well as a percentage outside the classroom is the ideal situation.*

IS: *If we concentrate our time, energy, and resources on the few in a regular classroom setting, the majority suffer, and the standard or benchmark of achievement continually declines.*

IS: *Some handicapped students should be taught in separate classes in a regular school mixing with other students when not in class.*

A sizeable group of inclusive system respondents supported inclusion as beneficial to students, but with qualifications much like those made by their traditional system colleagues (15 %).

IE: *Inclusion can be successful with support personnel such as LST [Learning Support Teacher] and teacher assistants.*

IE: *This is a good idea and a great way to include everyone but resources and people must be there to help the regular class teacher.*

IS: *Yes, I'd like to see integration. In itself, I'm happy with the idea - but mere integration is insufficient and cheats the students with*

challenging needs.

IS: *Integration is a most positive step as long as the in class teacher is given the support they need. Integration, however, is used as a method to cut costs or school board overhead.*

Far more traditional and inclusive system educators found benefits in inclusion than found it unrewarding as an educational strategy.

These benefits concentrate most powerfully in the social area, but extend to the academic realm as well. Both elementary and secondary level educators perceive benefits, with more of the traditional system respondents at the secondary level doing so, and more inclusive system members at the elementary level. More respondents finding benefit in inclusion qualified their comments than were unreservedly positive.

One in ten educators in both traditional and inclusive groups found little value in inclusion. This analysis extended across both elementary and secondary teachers. Reservations included the perception that no worthwhile academic or social gain was made, that education should proceed on a greatest gains for the greatest number basis, and that segregation would benefit students with challenging needs more so than would inclusion.

OVERALL REVIEW OF SPONTANEOUS WRITTEN COMMENTS

Spontaneous commentary on the final page of the EOQ forms was analysed to derive categories of discussion. Thirteen categories were found among comments from 349 survey respondents (183 Traditional and 166 Inclusive system). The categories were grouped under the superordinate categories of Professional Stance, Educator Concerns, and Effect of Inclusion. Discussion of relative importance of categories for traditional system respondents and for inclusive system respondents follows.

PROFESSIONAL STANCE

Three areas of discussion were classified under Professional Stance. Of these three, both traditional and inclusive system respondents clearly

indicated that professional preparation for inclusion was a leading concern.

Within this general finding, inclusive system respondents emphasized need for teacher preparation at a higher level than did their traditional system colleagues. The degree of importance attached to professional preparation, at either the preservice or the inservice level, may be estimated from the fact that more than 12 percent of traditional system educators and 17 percent of inclusive system educators spontaneously brought the topic up on survey forms.

Other issues touching on Professional Stance were teacher attitude and willingness to work inclusively and the need for professional teamwork and collaboration in inclusive settings. These attracted responses from relatively few in either system.

EDUCATOR CONCERNS

Eight areas of concern relative to inclusive education emerged from spontaneous commentary. Seven of the eight areas drew comments from at least 10 percent of total educators when both types of educational systems were combined.

The issues for respondents in declining order were:

- Lower PTR and educational assistants.....16 %
- Regarding individual areas of exceptionality as resulting in needs unique to individual students and not generalizable.....13 %
- Category and severity of challenge.....13 %
- General availability of support..... 13 %
- Effect of inclusion on regular class teachers.....11 %
- Reduction in funding for exceptionality.....11 %
- Student with behavioural challenge.....10 %
- Availability of sufficient time.....9 %

Traditional and inclusive system respondents differ to some degree on the above items, being higher or lower in percentages referring to the above issues. Traditional system respondents evidenced higher levels of concern than did their inclusive systems colleagues for maintenance of a view of needs unique to individuals (by 5 %), effect of inclusion on the teacher (by 4 %), and reduction of funding (by 4 %).

Inclusive system respondents held higher degrees of concern for need for lower PTR and educational assistants (by 5 %), other supports in general (by 4 %), and student behaviour (4 %).

Similar levels of concern between traditional and inclusive system educators were found for category and severity of challenge to student (12 % and 14 % respectively) and for time (9 % and 10 % respectively).

Though no one area drew the attention of more than one in six educators, it is obvious that specific concerns can be defined and warrant examination. Action directed to these concerns should increase general acceptance of inclusive practice.

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