



The Sociology of Special Education

by Connie Schlifer

Abstract

This manuscript offers a general examination of special education in Ontario from its inception to the current system, including references to developments outside the province that have impacted its development. A brief summary of the historical milestones of special education is followed by a look at recent special education legislation. Details are presented on how special education functions including, how it is funded and the assessment and placement processes involved. This is followed by an examination of the sociological context of special education in society including its role, its organizational structure, and its impact on the standard classroom and on regular and special education teachers. Finally, an overview model of the current ideal inclusive educational system is presented.

Introduction

The goals of this paper are first to present a wide perspective on the various components of special education and the various issues that exist within it. The second goal is to look at issues that impact teachers directly.

The information comes from recent Canadian and American literature. Since the U.S. tends to lead the way in most educational developments and influence Canadian educational developments, I decided to also include information on the American special education system.

Inasmuch as this paper has somewhat of a Sociological focus, it analyzes the processes, structures, and systems of special education that respond to the diverse challenges of the student populations. Specifically, this paper will examine the wider context of special education including legal and cultural components, institutional features such as teachers' occupational culture and training, and finally, the interpretive dynamics derived from student-teacher interactions / encounters.

The descriptive and analytical information of the various components of special education and its issues will contain only general information. It is beyond the scope of this effort to provide any detailed information.

Historical Milestones

A brief historical framework always provides a better understanding and a rationale of the present circumstances as well as knowledge of how society dealt with, in this case, the disabled in the past.

Winzer in the 1995 edition of *Children with Exceptionalities in Canadian Classrooms* provides a good Canadian Historical overview. I have further condensed it in a chronological order as in the following table.

Table 1
Canadian Historical Overview of Dealing with Disabled People

DATE	EVENTS
1860s	"Residential school – variously referred to as asylums, institutions, colonies, or training schools – were first established in Canada..." "...to serve children in the parlance of the day as deaf and dumb, blind and idiotic or feeble minded."
1880s	"Special classes were first introduced..." "...with the formation of unruly classes for incorrigible and delinquent students, ungraded classes for slow learners and 'steamer classes' for immigrant children."
1900s	"...schooling had become the social norm for most children in Canada" "More seriously handicapped children were still relegated to institutional settings or excluded from education altogether." 1906 "In Canada the first special day classes were started..." "...for children with physical problems – those who were described as crippled, sickly and malnourished."
1910	"Ontario's Special Classes Act permitted boards of education to legalize existing classes."
1920s	"...saw special classes handle a wider range of students – these were classes for deaf children, blind children and gifted children, as well as lip-reading and sight saving classes".
1920-1960	"Institutions, special classes and special schools remained important in the education of students with disabilities" "Segregation was rationalized on the grounds that the public school system could not provide for grossly deviant children and the low incidence of certain disabilities in the population made it difficult to group affected children locally for educational purpose." "Educators also believed that segregated classes could offer handicapped students the most benefits."
1960s	The civil rights movement had "...parents, advocates, legislators, and educational systems begin to reject the notion that exceptional students should be educated separately".
1970s	"Agitation by parents and professional groups led to new legislation and many of the changes that are apparent in special education today."
1976-1984	"...practice of special education came of age and the true movement towards integration got underway."

Note: From **Children with Exceptionalities in Canadian Classrooms**, by M. Winzer, 1995, pp. 62 - 63. Copyright 1995 by Allyn and Bacon Canada, ON.

It took over one century (1860 to 1970) for the intolerable attitude towards the disabled where they were stigmatized and segregated to be transformed into the present inclusive attitude with an attempt to integrate them into the educational system and the community.

Legislation

Dworet and Bennet best summarize Canadian special education as follows: "Special education in Canada – unlike that in the United States – is solely controlled by each of the 10 provinces and three territories. This variance in policy and practice has resulted in both

similarities and differences in the ways students receive special education services across Canada:

- Similarities include the use of individual education plans (IEPs), a collaborative approach to problem-solving, and an emphasis on inclusion.
- Differences focus on special education teacher training requirements, definition of exceptionalities and funding models." (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p.22)

"In each province and territory, it is the Ministry or Department of Education that administers the Education Act for that province or territory. The head of the Ministry or Department is an elected member of the provincial/territorial parliament, appointed by the premier of that province or territory, and is known as the 'Minister of Education'. All provinces have locally elected school boards, which, though having some local educational autonomy, must adhere to the province's education acts, regulations, and the dictates of the Minister of Education." (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p.22)

The Ontario Education Act and other legislation dictate a wide array of obligations to school boards. The Ontario Special Education Guide for Educators outlines the requirements under the act as follows:

- 'Enroll All Pupils Who Have the Right to Attend'
- 'Implement Procedures for Early and Ongoing Identifications'
- 'Provide Special Education Programs and Services'
- 'Provide a Mechanism for Appeal'
- 'Establish a Special Education Advisory Committee.'
- Under the regulations, the Guide outlines the following:
- 'Establish Special Education Plans'
- 'Provide for a Shortened School Day'
- 'Employ Teachers with Appropriate Qualification'
- 'Follow Maximum Enrolments Set Out for Self-Contained Classes'
- 'Establish Identification, Placement and Review Committees'
- 'Provide Individual Education Plans (IEP) for Pupils Identified as Exceptional.'

Federal legislation that impacts on special education is "The right to equal treatment under the law for persons with disabilities in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms..." which "...did not come into force until 1985" (Bowlby et al., 2001, p. 4).

Special Education is also impacted by a wide spectrum of other legislation such as:

- The Child Welfare Act
- Freedom of Information Legislation
- Occupational Health and Safety Act
- The Ontario College of Teachers Act
- The Regulated Health Professions Act
- The Psychology Act
- The Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Act.

In the province of Ontario, "It was not until 1982 that Ontario's Human Rights code, 1981, was proclaimed in force and added 'handicap' as a protected ground." (Bowlby et al., 2001, p.3) Also "It is significant to note that Bill 82, which entrenched in Ontario's Education Act the right of students with disabilities to an education in Ontario's schools, was passed in 1980, prior to both of these enactments." (Bowlby et al., 2001, p. 3) As well "...special education law has important links to the discipline of child welfare law. Although parents generally have the right to make important life decisions on their child's behalf, including

schooling decisions, the courts retain a general supervisory jurisdiction to intervene to ensure that the child's best interests are protected." (Bowlby et al., 2001, p. 15) "...unique challenges arise daily for school staff in attempting to meet the needs of exceptional pupils. Dealing with students whose disabilities give rise to violent behaviour or students who are medically fragile, can raise challenging legal issues which can, on occasion involve balancing the rights of the student in question with the rights of others." (Bowlby et al., 2001, p. 4)

The U.S. has been ahead of Canada in special education developments. "The early and crucial educational law is Title V of the Rehabilitation Act, more commonly called Section 504, passed originally in 1974. Section 504 is a civil rights law that protects children and adults against discrimination. In the schools it ensures that students can participate in educational programs. However, it compels schools only to make reasonable accommodations, not to provide substantial or expensive services." (Winzer, 2002, p.50) "Public Law 94-142, the seminal law, came about in 1975 prompted by the civil rights movement, efficacy studies in special education, parent activism, professional pressure, and reports that four million of a total seven million youngsters with disabilities were being inappropriately or inadequately served" (Winzer, 2002, p.50). Another "...important piece of legislation is the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990 which relates to people in general society. The ADA guarantees equal opportunity and access to all persons with disabilities, in and out of the school system." (Winzer, 2002, p.50)

In Canada education is the responsibility of each province and territory. In the U.S. it is the responsibility of the Federal Government. "As a result, the differences between each province's special education programs and procedures tend to be greater than differences between each U.S. state's special education programs and procedures." (Winzer, 2002, p.50) Issues related to legislation can have extensive repercussions if they relate to reforming the existing legislation or implementing the requirements contained in the legislation.

Legislation can be challenged through litigation or changed by the political and governing process. Winzer explains best how issues with legislation are resolved as follows: "Legislation refers to laws or bills enacted by lawmakers. Litigation, a process that occurs through the court system, is one of the principal means by which society exerts pressure over, and provides direction to, public schools. Litigious influence has altered public policy and the functioning of the school system in areas as diverse as architectural barriers, residential facilities, custody of children, life management and sterilization, inclusion, assessment and classification, and appropriate educational practices." (Winzer, 2002, p.55) "In Canada, the emphasis on using the power of the courts to settle disputes of an educational nature is less pronounced than in the United States, but nevertheless does occur with some regularity." (Winzer, 2002, p.55) An excellent example is Ontario's Eaton Case. The School Board had deemed that the best placement for the Eaton child was a segregated class since the child was severely disabled, requiring personal care, assistive devices, and was not able to speak. The parents who wished to see their child placed in a regular classroom challenged the school board. Failing at the School Board and District level they took the case to the Ontario Court of Appeals who ruled that the placement could not be made without the parent's consent and therefore ruled that the child had a constitutional right to be accommodated in a regular classroom. The decision was appealed to the Supreme Court of Canada which reached a different conclusion. The Supreme Court of Canada ruled that the child's rights were not being violated and by taking the best interest of the child into consideration ruled that the child's needs would best be served in a segregated classroom.

Another way of bringing about change in the legislation is by means of social change and the political process. This involves the election of government representatives that

reflect the values, aspirations, and priorities of the majority of the population. When that happens, new or revised legislation is introduced and funds must then be allocated in order to ensure its implementation.

Barton is convinced that legislative changes are economically motivated when he states that "Explanations couched in terms of social investment suggest that the State never intervenes for purely humanitarian reasons. It always acts with underlying economic motives. Thus there were two main reasons for including children with disabilities in the universal state system of education from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards. During this period there was a moral panic about the 'burdens of pauperism' and the consequent high levels of taxation that were going to be necessary to meet such burdens, and secondly the demand for labour far outstripped the supply. Thus social investment in special education was both a means of reducing the burdens of pauperism through training children to be independent, and was a means of enabling more and more children to become part of the industrial workforce. These two elements are also important today. Current curricular concerns about the teaching of life skills are underpinned by earlier ideas about reducing the burden of the state." (Barton, 1998, p.18)

Today a major issue with boards of education is the lack of resources in order to be able to meet the requirements of legislation, regulations, policies and standards. I will address these specific issues in more detail subsequently. A study conducted by the Canadian Council on Social Development in 2001 reported that 82% of the respondents reported that the special education budget in their province or territory was inadequate. "And while 80% reported an increase, it is important to note that during the 1990s, many provinces experienced cuts to their education budgets – particularly for special education. It is only over the last few years that special education budgets have begun to rise again, but a number of respondents pointed out that the funding levels of today are still below what they were during the early 1990s." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.4)

A Summary of the Present Inclusionary System

The inclusionary movement of special education began about 40 years ago. It began with the use of the term 'integration', then changed to 'mainstreaming' and presently the term 'inclusion' is used. The difference between the three terms is that "Integration and mainstreaming sought to change individuals to fit the existing system; inclusion seeks to change the system so that exclusion and marginalization are avoided. Under the principle of inclusion children are not forced to adjust to become integrated into the mainstream, because the underlying supposition is the presence of inclusive programs in which the children are placed in the classroom they would ordinarily attend if they did not have the disability. Promoters insist that the most enlightened system alters classroom and school structures to allow all children to gain an education there." (Winzer, 2002, pp.39-40)

Winzer uses a reconciled definition of inclusion as a "...system of equity for students with exceptionalities that expresses a commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent through placement, instruction and support in the most heterogeneous and appropriate educational environment." (Winzer, 2002, p.40)

Although there is agreement in the principle of inclusive education there is lack of agreement as to how to achieve it. The interplay between invested interest, economics, politics, and social change influence the type and degree of change.

The system is based on the principle of equity and civil rights. The principle of equity purports that all students have the right to equal educational opportunities regardless of any difference in attributes in order to gain the skills required to live a full and independent life. The principle of civil rights and social justice supports the provision of a less restrictive and

more integrated realistic environment. Proponents see special classes as discriminatory and unequal.

Service delivery requires the following general processes:

- Identification
- Assessment
- Development of an individualized educational plan
- Placement
- Delivery of special instructions
- Ongoing review and readjustment of educational and transition plan.

In terms of the number of special education students that are presently attending regular schools, in Ontario "...in 2000, almost 80 percent of students with special needs were in regular classes for at least part of the day." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.5) In the U.S. the rate was 93% in 1990.

Some of the major issues affecting the present system revolve around lack of resources such as excessive class size, lack of time for teachers to participate in team meetings and in the coordination of services, and the huge amount of paper work that is required in order to obtain funds to support special education.

The 2002 Elementary Teacher Federation of Ontario publication (2002) noted that in classes of 25 to 30 students, 30% consisted of special education students. One school had 13 special education students in a regular grade two class of 30 students. With this number of special education students assigned to regular teacher, it is no wonder that they would not have time to get involved in consultation and coordination activities. The priority would be to complete the paperwork in order for the school to continue to receive the additional special education funds allocation.

Resources

"For the most part, Canadian provinces and territories fund on a need basis." (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p.26) "Individual boards of Education apply to the Ministry or Department of Education for additional funds that may be required to offer education services to students with special needs" (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p.26). "In most cases, the school or team must develop an IEP (Individual Education Plan) that indicates the level of need and the level of educational services that must be provided to meet the child's needs. In Ontario, the Ministry of Education regularly reviews IEPs to ensure that funding requests accurately reflect student need and that the amount of funds provided is appropriate for the need indicated." (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p.26)

In the survey conducted by the Canadian Council on Social Development in 2001, respondents indicated that "Complexities in provincial funding formulas have made it even more difficult in some provinces to get funding for children who require it. In Ontario, for example, respondents said that stringent guidelines are making it much more difficult for children with special needs to receive assistance. In many cases, lack of funding has resulted in the loss of special education teachers and assistants." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.5) As well "Most respondents expressed deep concerns over the delivery of special education services and the lack of specialists available to deliver those services." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.5)

Not only is it difficult to obtain funding since most funding formulas are based on each child's age and the type and severity of the disability, but the amount granted is insufficient.

As a result, schools have insufficient teachers and other professional staff. This gives rise to large classes and long waiting lists for assessment and placement.

"People for Education found that

- 12 percent of schools report no access to a board psychologist,
- 26 percent report no access to a board social worker, and
- 10 percent report no access to a board speech and language pathologist." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.19)

"As education and special education compete with other social service systems for resources, such competition may result in reduced resources for education..." (Waldron et al., 1992, p.18) As well in times of financial restraint, "...education has looked upon special education as an area which can be reduced to save costs..." (Waldron et al., 1992, p.18). This practice of financial restraint further extends to the purchase of technological equipment for special education. It is usually the last department to receive purchases of new computers and most of the time it receives "hand downs" from other departments.

Early Identification and Intervention

Usually the classroom teacher begins the process of identification. The teacher takes the case of the suspected student to an In School Team for discussion. The In School Team might suggest teaching strategies to the teacher. If the new teaching strategies are ineffective, the student is referred to the Identification, Placement and Review Committee for formal identification as exceptional, in need of special education programs, and services and placement. The committee is usually made up of a collaborative group which includes the parents, administrative staff and other professional staff such as a special education teacher, social worker, psychologist, etc. With the identification and placement process, there is usually an appeal process for parents who may be in disagreement with the decisions reached.

Children who require special education services must first be formally assessed and although the exact labels may vary from one jurisdiction to another, the general categories of disability are as follows:

- Physical
- Behavioral
- Learning disabled
- Speech and language
- Giftedness
- Autism spectrum disorder
- Developmental delays
- Vision and hearing impairments.

In those boards where there is a variety of possible placements, the board team/committee makes placement decisions.

The inclusive model allows for identification of exceptional children with the involvement of parents, school personnel, and representatives from various other relevant agencies such as the health departments, medical personnel, day care centers and can occur from birth to school age. Once identified, the case is assigned to professional staff who oversee and coordinate the delivery of pertinent services.

"It is critical that early and ongoing identification and intervention strategies for

students at risk be a priority at all grades not just the primary grades. This is especially important as students make the transition to secondary school. Students who have difficulty achieving curriculum expectations are at risk of not completing their diploma requirements and dropping out of school." (Toronto District School Board, 2003, p.III-1)

Identification issues are associated with a lack of regular teacher training in identification skills and sometimes a student will go unidentified for years, especially in cases where there are mild disabilities or where the symptoms may be masked by language and cultural barriers.

How well are school systems able to identify children with special needs? "When asked if their education system was able to identify all children who would benefit from special education services, the outcome was split: 50% said Yes, but 41% said their system could not identify all children with special needs." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.2) Many children with a learning disability are not identified until they are reading well below their grade level which could be grade 3 or 4. By then a lot of irreparable damage may have occurred in the child's development. He/she has fallen behind academically and may be experiencing poor motivation and self esteem.

"The transition from preschool to public school is often difficult because less support is available. Identified children often leave the daycare setting that included several education assistants and enter kindergarten where no education assistant support exists. They move from a staffing ratio of 8-to-1 in daycare for kindergarten-aged children. In the school setting meanwhile, the staffing ratio rises to 24-to-1. Many other services, such as speech therapy, that children receive early on are not provided once they enter the school system." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.12)

The goal of early intervention is prevention and identifying a disability early in the child's development will make it easier for remediation to be effective. It is obvious that the reason so many children go unidentified and untreated is due to a lack of resources.

Assessment

The assessment generally involves a multidisciplinary team and requires confirmation of the disability by professional and medical staff such as a pediatrician, psychologist, social worker, psychiatrist or medical practitioner.

"When a student is referred for assistance, one or more of the following assessments may be used in order to identify special needs:

Educational Assessments

- Focus on academic skills particularly in language arts and mathematics
- Examine the nature of academic strengths, difficulties and learning style
- Usually carried out by Special Education Resource Teacher (SERTs) who have qualifications in special education

Psychological Assessments

- Seek to determine intellectual functioning, specific strengths and weaknesses in intellectual/cognitive abilities, and learning and problem solving approaches
- May examine social and emotional development and adaptive functioning
- Conducted by psychologists and psychological associates registered in Ontario

Speech and Language Assessments

- Assess speech and language development to determine specific areas of strength and difficulty
- Carried out by qualified speech and language pathologists

Social Work Assessment

- Focus on social and developmental history and current functioning level
- Carried out by professional social workers

Assessments may include the following:

- Gathering relevant information about the student from the parent/guardian/student, and school personnel
- Gathering information from community professionals
- Observing the student in the school or classroom setting
- Talking to the student about school interests, and other subjects
- Conducting formal standardized tests and or informal tests." (Ottawa-Carleton District School Board, 1999-2000, pp.16-17)

The assessment process is usually linked to programming and the individualized program/educational plan.

Issues in assessment revolve around the length of time that it takes to get an assessment done for children who are suspected of having a disability and the lag time for getting the services they may need. People for Education, a group of parents working to preserve fully publicly funded education in Ontario conducted a survey in 2002 and "...found there are an estimated 39,700 children on waiting lists for special education services in elementary schools..." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.19). "Over half are waiting for assessment, while some parents are paying up to \$1,700 for private assessments" (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.19). Looking over the 2003-2004 Special Education Report of the Algoma District School Board located in the Province of Ontario, I noticed that the waiting period for a psychological assessment is approximately one year.

Individual Educational Plan

"In general, the process for individualized program development follows steps similar to those outlined by the Ministry of Education for the Northwest Territories, as follows:

- The collection of demographic data
- Statement of educational concerns
- Educational assessment data
- Description of the present program
- Recommendations
- Review procedures." (Dworet & Bennet, 2002, p. 25)

School teams must then develop an Individual Education Plan which is created in consultation with the parents, the other professionals who will be involved with the students and is based on the assessment and evaluation of the student.

Generally an Individualized Educational Plan includes the following:

- The collection of demographic data.
- A review of the present levels of performance
- Establishing the learning outcomes for the school year
- Establishing what adaptations will be required for educational materials and instructional and assessment methods
- Listing/identifying all support services to be provided
- The location of the instructions to be provided
- The names of the staff who will be delivering the services
- A review process and a timeline indicating when it will take place.

In view of the lack of resources available, issues in relation to the individualized education plans revolve around difficulty in implementing them. Without appropriate supports, larger classes and the larger number of special education students in regular classrooms can result in reduced individual attention by the teacher, lack of expected progress by the students, and frustration on the part of the parents. "Teachers are often expected, though, to find their own time to meet with specialists, plan with education assistants, and communicate with parents." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p. 15)

Issues here also relate to the separate progress reports and shorter intervals that boards of education require of schools to submit for special education students. Teachers contend that the regular reports that are prepared for all students should suffice in order to reduce the amount of paperwork that is presently required of teachers. This would free up teacher time that could be spent with the students in the classroom.

Placement

The placement decision is made on an individual basis by a team of designated professionals to deal with the identification, assessment, placement and review of special needs students. The inclusionary principle is used in placing students in general education classrooms to the extent that it is possible to meet their needs. Some range of options for placing them in a regular school are as follows:

- A regular class with indirect support provided to the teacher
- A regular class with resource assistance provided by a special education teacher
- A regular class with withdrawal assistance for part of the day
- A special education class with partial integration into a regular class
- A special education class full time.

A student can also be placed in a specialized school for the blind, deaf, or for severe disabilities, or in a residential facility that provides an environment and health care appropriate to the student's condition.

Issues with placements also revolve around resources. Many students do not have access to the full range of opportunities and services they require.

Reviews

Reviews are conducted also by the designated team that is also responsible for identification, assessments and placements. They are conducted on the basis of the criteria and timeframe set out in the student's individual education plan. Adjustments are then made as necessary based on the student's performance.

Curriculum and Instruction

"The challenge for educators is to facilitate a learning environment that teaches students fundamental learning-how-to-learn skills and encourages thinking, social and communication skills, so that students can tackle new content in ways that better their current and/or future lives." (Pugach & Warger, 1996, pp.228-229) The curriculum must therefore be structured such that it can accommodate the following:

- a wide range of learning competencies from high achievers to moderate disabilities
- different applications
- various methods of delivery.

"... some common developments across them [curriculum and instruction] are readily apparent:

- Covering less material, but covering it in much greater depth
- Focusing on the meaning of what is learned rather than the facts and figures
- Teaching as the facilitation of student learning
- Linking ideas across subject matter
- Constructing rather than receiving knowledge; beginning where the students are and building on their prior knowledge
- Creating an authentic activity orientation for learning where students work as part of a classroom community
- Embedding the acquisition of basic skills into meaningful activities
- Engaging students in cooperative work and problem solving
- Closely aligning curriculum instruction, and assessment" (Pugach & Warger, 1996, pp.228-229)

"The new curriculum trends actually provide us with a legitimate and politically acceptable means for putting an end to the institutionalized sanctioning of failure that has permeated classroom for decades-not only for children with disabilities but for the large number of children generally labeled as 'at risk'." (Pugach & Warger, 1996, pp.228-229)
 "The new curriculum thrusts provide us with a basis for renewing our faith in the right of every individual to fulfill her potential, demonstrate his unique talents, and chart her own course for learning into the future." (Pugach & Warger, 1996, pp.228-229)

Some of the teaching strategies than can assist students with disabilities in a regular classroom are outlined by Johnson and Bauer (1992) in Meeting the Needs of Special Students, and can be summarized as follows:

- Creating audio tapes of classes which allows students to review the tape independently
- Pacing the progress of the material covered in order to allow students to reflect and respond
- Creating prompts of a visual or auditory nature to get the students attention
- Breaking big tasks into smaller steps helps to complete tasks
- Corrective feedback is a method of reinforcing concepts and providing guidance
- Reducing concepts introduced at one time is important and ensures that one idea is understood before moving to another one
- Practice sessions will also provide hands on opportunities for those who need time to grasp understanding or refine skills
- Tutoring is another way of providing extra help to those who need it
- Cooperative learning is a way to mix students of various abilities; for example assigning them a group project.

The extent to which special children's needs are met was addressed by a Canadian survey conducted in 2001 and the results indicate that "Children who live in urban centers

are much more likely to receive a better level of service than are children who reside in rural centers. A full 87% of respondents reported that the needs of children are not met consistently in urban and rural centres." (Gibson Kierstead & Hanvey, 2001, p.2)

The Sociological Context of Special Education

The role of the school and special education in society

Ysseldyke et al. summarize best the place of schools in society when they state that "...to study education and the ideals that motivate and contribute to its sense of mission and purpose is to study society and culture." (1992, p.34) Educational ideals reflect the ideals of its society and in America they are democracy, nationalism and individualism. I would venture to say that the Canadian ideals are democracy, multiculturalism and individualism. The role of schools as a social institution is "...instilling in children society's beliefs and knowledge base." (Ysseldyke et al., 1992, p.36)

The role of the school is changing as the role of the family is shifting. As both parents are now working or with the increasing prevalence of the single parent family, schools are under pressure to provide extended child care and "...to maintain traditions of home, family, wife and mother." (Waldron et al., 1992, p. 32)

The participatory nature of a democratic society requires an educated community in order for it to work more effectively. The school role is to instill the values and beliefs of the community as well as to provide the students with skills and training so that they can as adults assume a profession that will allow them to become financially independent and contribute to the economical, governing, and social well being of the community.

The role of special education is similar to that of regular education except that special education is geared to those individuals who have disabilities and require a modified curriculum and instruction. It aims to train the disabled to acquire skills in order to become employable and independent to the maximum extent possible. Its present aim is to educate the maximum number of students possible in regular schools since this is more economical and provides them with a realistic mock-up of the community. It also aims to keep as many individuals as possible out of institutions since this is also a very expensive option.

The success for which schools have prepared individuals for independent living can begin to be measured at the secondary level. Taylor (1991) alludes to results of studies conducted of high school graduates with learning disabilities as bleak and outlines the following deficiencies:

- Experiencing high level of difficulties with independent living skills
- Having consistently high rates of unemployment
- Having to rely on the support of family and friends in obtaining a job
- Viewing themselves as shy, impulsive, lacking in self-confidence and conversational skill, and needing to overcome dependency.

Taylor (1991) further alludes to the approximately 30% of special needs students who pursue postsecondary education also having problems with written composition, reading, and arithmetic. It is obvious that the secondary educational system has an obligation to ensure that special needs students be better prepared for an independent adult life.

Demographic profile of special education students

The U.S. National Centre for Policy Analysis reports that "...the government estimates

learning disabled children are 15 per cent of the student population" (NCPA – Daily Policy Digest, Dec. 20, 2001, p.2) and that "The cost of educating a disabled student ranges from \$10,000 to \$25,000 per year – compared to \$5,000 per student in regular education." (NCPA – Daily Policy Digest, Dec. 20, 2001, p.2) The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario in its 2002 **Fulfilling the Promise** report stated that "...over 10 percent of elementary students in Canada are enrolled in special education programs." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.4) According to the 2001 Provincial Auditor's report, Public schools in Ontario had enrolled "...267,304 students with special needs" (Provincial Auditor's Report, 2001, p.24). The "...incidence rate (proportion of total enrolment) is 12.5%". (Provincial Auditor's Report, 2001, p.24)

"Boys traditionally have been more likely than girls to be identified as needing special education programs and services." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.4)

From which socio-economic group do the majority of special needs children come? The Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario claims that they come from the lowest socio-economic group, although the rate is declining. The highest actual number of children come from the middle-income group since this group has the largest population.

Which race and culture do the majority of special education needs children represent? Statistics in the U.S. show that they are disproportionately African-American. There is also evidence that they are more likely to be identified as having special needs when they are a minority rather than a majority and particularly so when there are few black teachers. According to researchers, white teachers are often untrained to recognize cultural traits. The result is that they evaluate lack of progress or differences in learning among minorities as deficiencies.

The four largest groups regarding categories of disability as listed by Waldron et al. (1992) for the year 1990 for the U.S. are:

Learning disabled	48%
Speech impaired	23%
Mentally retarded	14%
Emotionally Disturbed	9%

Also according to the statistics presented by Waldron et al. (1992) in 1990, 93% of disabled students were placed in regular schools and 7% were placed outside the regular schools. Those that were placed in the regular schools were placed in the following settings:

Regular class	30%
Resource room	38%
Separate class	25%

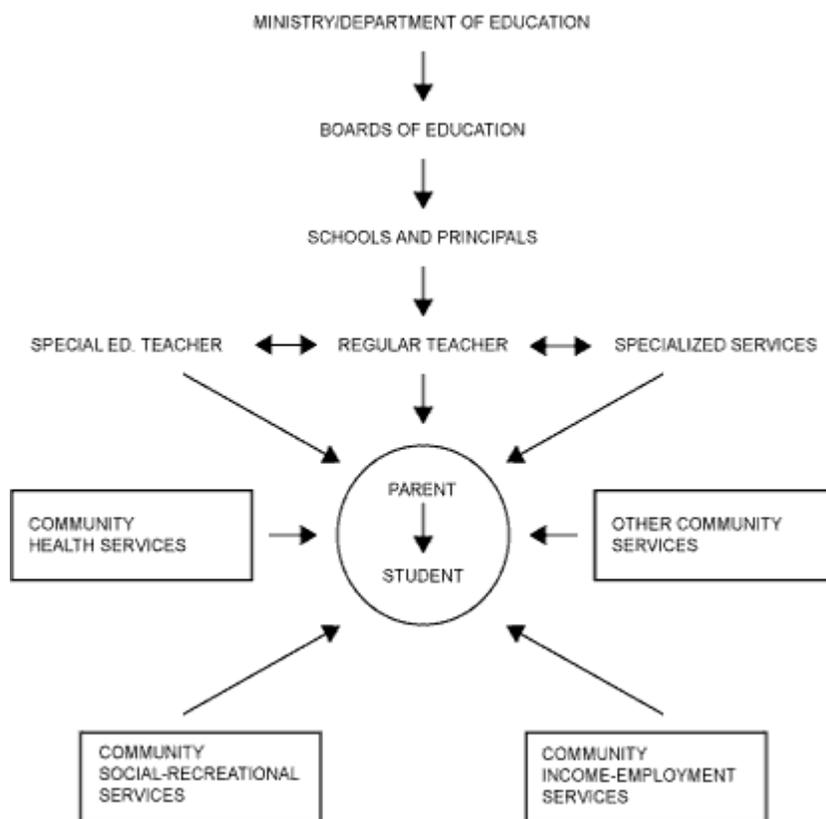
In summary, the student who ends up in a special education class has a higher likelihood of being male, living in poverty, and belonging to an ethnic or racial minority group.

Organizational structure

Based on my reading, I have developed a general organizational model of special education. The model is detailed below and shows that decision-making flows top down, beginning with the Department of Education down to the student. Since decisions at the top of the organizational chart are politically and economically motivated, gaps should be expected between the top and the bottom. The student is shown in the circle with the parent since the educational services and the community services that they receive are geared to

their needs.

Figure 1. General Organizational Model of Special Education



Howe and Miramontes (1992) in *The Ethics of Special Education*, have coined the term 'bureau-therapeutic' to describe the structural nature of special education since it often operates on the model of medicine. This is motivated by the fact that legislation lists qualifying handicapped conditions as criteria for allocation of funds for special education services. "They are 'therapeutic' because they (particularly learning disabilities, mental retardation, and emotional disturbances) require a 'diagnosis' (typically arrived at through psychological testing) and an associated 'therapy'..." (Howe & Miramontes, 1992, p. 47).

Roles and responsibilities

The only reference that I found in relation to roles and responsibilities was from the Province of Ontario. The following condensed and generalized descriptions would be applicable to any educational jurisdiction that provides an inclusionary model of special education.

The Ministry or Department of Education is responsible for the legislation that governs education and for the funds to finance it. The legislative information is communicated through regulations, policies and standards. It also determines the categories and definitions of exceptionalities. Although higher courts have the ultimate responsibility of adjudicating over appeals, it also has the responsibility of handling litigation between the school boards and students/parents.

The District School Board establishes school board policies and practices that comply with the legislation, regulations and policies of the Ministry/Department of Education. It also monitors schools for compliance and manages exceptional students by establishing

professional teams to manage the identification, assessment, placement and review of exceptional students.

The School Principal is responsible for service delivery that complies with the legislation, policies, procedures and standards set out by the Department of Education and the District School Board.

The General Classroom Teacher is responsible for providing the general classroom program as set out in the student's educational plan. He/she also works with the special education teacher to acquire and maintain knowledge about special education practices and communicates the student's progress to the parents and works with other professionals to review or develop the student's educational plan.

The Special Education Teacher monitors and assesses the student's progress and modifies the program as necessary in a regular classroom. He/she teaches special education classes and arranges for and coordinates any support services that the student requires.

The Parent or Guardian participates in the development of the student's educational plan and in the Identification, Placement and Review activities. He/she works with the school staff to facilitate the education of the student and supports the student at home.

The Student participates in relevant parent-teacher conferences and meetings concerning the identification, assessment, placement and review of his/her performance. He/she also works to achieve the goals set out in his/her educational plan.

Roles and responsibilities would tend to be clearer at the top of the organizational structure. There are some issues presently with general education teachers particularly, in that they lack understanding of what their role and responsibilities are. As well, many parents lack the knowledge of how they can work with the teacher and the educational system and experience frustration in accessing and collaborating with a complex system.

The effects of disabilities on families

Most people believe that families are adversely affected by the presence of children with disabilities. "However, three decades of research have produced flawed and contradictory data,..." (Moore et al., 2002, p. 60). "In fact, data have established that families of children with disabilities are really very similar to families with typically developing children." (Moore et al., 2002, p. 60)

"The effects children with handicaps have on their families have also changed significantly with the times. In the not too distant past, medical personnel and laypersons advised parents to avoid raising their children with disabilities and to seek assistance in the form of institutional placement. The parent who chose to keep their children at home were subject to stigma (as children with disabilities were labeled, so, too, were their parents). Those who put their children in institutions often had to meet the burden of major costs and had to look the other way when their sons and daughters received shoddy care. Significant changes in social values since the early 1970s have led to a situation in which institutionalization is the exception, not the rule. Families are expected to assume responsibility for their children with disabilities and to assume responsibilities associated with raising those children. As a result, families with children who are disabled have become very visible." (Ysseldyke et al., 1992, pp.331-332)

"Parents of children who are handicapped do go through a predictable set of stages in

reacting to the news that their children have disabilities. The stages are the same as those people go through when they learn they have a serious (terminal) illness: denial, bargaining, anger, depression, acceptance and stigma." (Ysseldyke et al., 1992, pp.332)

"All families are unique, with or without a child with a disability. All families experience stress and even crisis in the course of their life times. More importantly, all families have strengths. All have the ability to learn, and grow, and accommodate to change when the need presents itself. The old adage of 'what doesn't kill you will make you stronger' may be true. Adaptation to change and challenges brought on by a child with a disability can bring a (and has brought) renewed strength, energy and competence to individual family members and to family units as a whole." (Moore et al., 2002, p. 60)

Home school relationship

The home school relationship is based on collaboration and cooperation which is a way to address the difficulties students experience in school. It does not always work well, nonetheless "...collaboration between teachers and parents of students with disabilities is greater than that between teachers and students who are not disabled." (Ysseldyke et al., 1992, p. 334)

Two types of barriers to home school cooperation were identified by Leitch and Tangri in 1988. "Teachers and parents lack common knowledge about how they can use each other more effectively" (Leitch & Tangri, 1988, p. 71). "Mutual understanding and planning are lacking" (Leitch & Tangri, 1988, p. 74). "It isn't misperceptions of each other that are the root of home-school problems, it is the lack of specific planning, or, at a more basic level, the lack of knowledge about how each can use the other person more effectively that is the major barrier" (Leitch & Tangri, 1988, p. 74).

Effective communication is also stressed between teachers and parents in order to make the education process work. "Students do not receive special education services without first going through a due process hearing. Usually due process hearings are congenial events. Sometimes, however, they are antagonistic, pitting parents against school personnel. When such is the case, it is not an easy matter to resume communication following a hearing" (Ysseldyke et al., 1992, p.334).

Community support

The special education student and his/her family will likely need the use of community services during the period that he/she is in school. The family may need to access day care, recreational, spiritual, health, social, psychological and other services. Once the student graduates, he may need to access additional services such as housing, employment, income support, etc. A host of community services exist that will help him/her to maintain community independence. Transition planning will acquaint the student with the relevant ones so that he/she can access them when the need arises.

The Special Education Teacher

Demographic profile

"Special educators make up about 10% of all teachers in the public sector. In general they tend to be younger than general educators" (Crutchfield, 1997, p.2). "Teaching has been and continued to be a female profession. Almost 90% of special education teachers at the elementary level are female, compared with 87% of the general education teachers. There are interesting differences at the secondary level: 77% of secondary special

education teachers are female, while only 53% of general education teachers are female" (Crutchfield, 1997, p.2).

"The ethnic composition of special education and general education teachers is quite similar. Approximately eighty-six percent of the teachers, in both groups, are white." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.2)

Nature of work of special education teachers

This is well summarized by collegegrad.com as follows: "Special education teachers work with children and youths who have a variety of disabilities. A small number of special education teachers work with students with mental retardation or autism, primarily teaching them life skills and basic literacy. However, the majority of special education teachers work with children with mild to moderate disabilities, using the general education curriculum or modifying it, to meet the child's individual needs. Most special education teachers instruct students at the elementary, middle and secondary school level although some teachers work with infants and toddlers" (collegegrad.com Career Information, April 2004, pp.1-2).

"Special education teachers work in a variety of settings. Some have their own classrooms and teach only special education students; others work as special education resource teachers and offer individualized help to students in general education classrooms; still others teach together with general education teachers in classes composed of both general and special education students. Some teachers work with special education students for several hours a day in a resource room, separate from their general education classroom. Considerably fewer special education teachers work in residential facilities or tutor students in homebound or hospital environments" (collegegrad.com Career Information, April 2004, pp.1-2).

"Special education teachers design and teach appropriate curricula, assign work geared toward each student's ability, and grade papers and homework assignments. They are involved in the students' behavioural and academic development, helping the students develop emotionally, feel comfortable in social situations, and be aware of socially acceptable behaviour. Preparing special education students for daily life after graduation also is an important aspect of the job. Teachers provide students with career counseling or help them learn routine skills, such as balancing a checkbook" (collegegrad.com Career Information, April 2004, pp.1-2).

"...special education teachers help to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each special education student. The IEP sets personalized goals for each student and is tailored to the student's individual learning style and ability. The program includes a transition plan outlining specific steps to prepare special education students for middle school or high school or in the case of older students a job or postsecondary study. Teachers review the IEP with the student's parents, school administrators and often, the parents to inform them of their child's progress and suggest techniques to promote learning at home" (collegegrad.com Career Information, April 2004, pp.1-2).

Training

Training varies in Canada and the U.S., however generally a bachelor's degree is required in both countries. In Canada, teachers receive their regular teaching license before receiving any special education certification. This is often true in the U.S. as indicated by Crutchfield in her comment that "Sometimes, usually because a school district cannot find certified applicants, teachers are employed or assigned to teach in a field where they are not fully certified. Ten percent of our special education teachers, compared with 6% of

general education teachers are not fully certified for their main teaching assignment." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.2)

Culture of special education teachers

Special education teachers have a close and caring relationship with their students and the students' families. Because of the smaller teacher-pupil ratio and because the students' educational needs are higher than those of the regular students, special education teachers develop a closer relationship with the students and the family. With younger students/children they may have dual roles, that of teacher and caregiver assisting them with personal care.

They like the variety that their work entails. They have the opportunity to work in a variety of different settings, with various age groups and with children with different kinds of disabilities. They enjoy the challenges that are inherent in teaching students with disabilities and who, as a result, do not follow the traditional path of learning. They also have a desire to have a positive impact on the lives of the children they work with, and they know that their input makes a difference in the current and future lives of their students.

Most special education teachers have determination, patience, creativity, energy and a passion for their work. "They give children with special needs much hope and love and most important, belief in themselves" (Crutchfield, 1997, p.18).

Relationship with the students

The special education teacher generally has a more personal, intense and caring relationship with the student compared to the general education teacher. This is predicated on the fact that many of the teachers are working with students who may have a physical disability or are very young children who may require personal care, some of which may necessitate physical contact. Further, the student may have behavioural or mental challenges and the teacher may need to teach the student social, behavioural and life skills. The smaller student-teacher ratio allows the teacher to have a more intense interaction as well. All of these factors make the role more than just that of a teacher. The role, expands to also include elements of a parent/guardian and caregiver.

Issues affecting special education teachers

The following table outlines the issues which impact directly on special education teachers as well as some of the possible solutions.

Table 2
Issues Affecting Special Education Teachers

FACT	ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
There is an increasing demand for special education teachers in both Canada and the United States.	"The number of students requiring special education services has grown steadily in recent years, a trend that is expected to continue." (collegegrade.com Career Information, April 2004, p.5)	Condensed or intensive training courses can be developed and offered by universities in order to increase the existing teacher pool.
	"Legislation encouraging early intervention and special education for infants, toddlers, and preschoolers	Provisional licenses can be issued to individuals who teach under the

	has created a need for early childhood special education teachers." (collegegrade.com Career Information, April 2004, p.5)	supervision of a licensed teacher for a designated period while enrolled in a part-time special education training program.
	"In addition, medical advances have resulted in more children surviving serious accidents or illnesses, but with impairments that require special accommodations." (collegegrade.com Career Information, April 2004, p.5)	More resources can be procured by way of teaching assistants and technical supports to assist qualified staff who are carrying a larger burden.
	"Finally, more parents are expected to seek special services for those of their children who have difficulty meeting the new, higher standards required of students." (collegegrade.com Career Information, April 2004, p.5)	
	This shortage of special education teachers adds a larger burden on the existing system as the incumbent teachers are being forced to teach larger classes and assume a heavier workload.	
"Special education teachers are most likely to leave teaching during the first five years. Those who make it through those first challenging years are more likely to continue to teach for many more." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.13)	"Special education is a demanding profession with many challenges. This can be especially true for first or second-year teachers." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.13)	Schools should implement a mentor program whereby a first year teacher is assigned to a more experienced teacher to help the new teacher make an easier adjustment to the profession.
	In addition to the induction problems of a regular teacher, "Special education teachers also have to put into practice collaboration skills they may or may not have learned as part of their college education; they must face IEP (Individual Education Plan) requirements, and, perhaps for the first time, they must supervise paraprofessionals." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.14)	
"Job stress leads some special educators both novice and experienced, to switch to general education or to leave teaching altogether." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.13)	"Excessive paperwork was ranked as one of the highest concerns among teachers in our focus groups across the province because it takes so much of their time away from direct work with students." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, p.19)	"Access to special education funding should be simplified and allow flexibility to meet the wide range of students' needs." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, pp.20-21)
"About 11% of special education teachers	The Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation reported in their	"In most cases, an IEP (Individual Education Plan)

<p>leave special education each year, compared with 6% of general education teachers. However, of the 11% of special education teachers who leave annually, 5% transfer to general education and 6% leave the teaching profession altogether." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.13)</p>	<p>Feb., 2003 Update publication that "...the average amount of time being spent by our PSSP (Professional Student Services Personnel) members on completing red tape was in excess of 10 to 15 hours a week." (p.1) "</p>	<p>does not need to be reviewed in each reporting period – that is the role of the assessment for the report card itself. Less frequent reviews of IEPs would allow special education teachers to meet the needs of their students rather than bureaucratic paperwork requirements." (Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, 2002, pp.20-21)</p>
<p>There exists "lack of support by administrators and isolation from other school faculty." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.14)</p>	<p>"Often there may be only one or two special education teachers in a school building, and, too frequently, the special education teacher's office or classroom (if there is one at all) is in an outlying or isolated part of the building. This makes it difficult for the special education teacher to interact with general education teachers and to become an involved participating member of the school environment." (Crutchfield, 1997, p. 14) Also general educators may resent special educators because the latter have smaller classes; as well, the general classroom teacher may not realize the extent of the additional administrative, teaching and care that is regularly demanded of the special needs educator.</p>	<p>Principals should take responsibility and ensure that regular teachers understand the work of the special education teachers as well as to ensure that the special education teachers are involved in school activities.</p>
<p>Overwhelming student needs.</p>	<p>"Many children with disabilities have social and emotional needs that go beyond their educational difficulties. Teaching these children can be highly demanding, both physically and mentally." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.14)</p>	<p>Some boards of education have developed support activities. "For example Maine has developed the Maine Support Network, which provides fall and spring support meetings, a winter retreat, and summer teachers' academics to give special education teachers throughout the state opportunities for collegial support, forums for problem solving, excellent training opportunities and the opportunity to tap into state and regional resources." (Crutchfield, 1997, p.14)</p>

Disillusionment with the multiple roles and responsibilities of the profession.	In general education, the school system dictates the curriculum, but in special education, the individual student's needs dictate the curriculum. For example dressing, eating, toileting and performing simple tasks could be a typical part of the curriculum for many students with severe disabilities.	Ensure that training programs prepare new teachers adequately.
The ethnic diversity of both Canada and the U.S. is growing and changing	<p>The majority of the teacher population is white and English-speaking.</p> <p>This presents a challenge to boards of education, special and regular education teachers in providing instructions that are linguistically and culturally sensitive to the needs of these new populations.</p> <p>If a language barrier exists, this may prevent the participation of the parent in the school activities and from being able to communicate directly with the teachers.</p>	<p>Attempts to recruit teachers that represent the ethnic composition of the students.</p> <p>Provide training to incumbent teachers in order to sensitize them to the cultural and linguistic barriers that their students experience.</p>
Special education teacher shortage is more pronounced than general teacher shortage.	"The attraction of individuals into special education which requires greater lengths of training for no greater starting salaries inhibits the decision to enter special education preparation." (Waldron et al., 1992, p.23)	School boards will need to address this issue of salaries or recruit individuals who have great tenacity and a passion for their work.

Relationship between special education teachers and general education teachers

The inclusionary method of delivering education to both regular students and students with special needs, means that the special education teacher must deliver a curriculum that meets the needs of both types of students. The special education teacher's role, having the skills and knowledge of teaching disabled, is to assist the regular teacher to make the modifications to the curriculum and teaching strategies in order to accommodate the special students who have been placed in the regular classroom. The relationship thus becomes one of mutual cooperation and the process is one of collaborative consultation and planning.

In those situations where the teaching responsibility is also shared, the relationship becomes one of collaborative consultation, planning and teaching and it can take place either in the same classroom or in a separate classroom.

Issues affecting general education teachers

Since regular school teachers are expected to teach special education students as part of the major movement toward inclusion of students with special needs into the mainstream educational system, I will also analyze those issues that affect this profession.

Table 3
Issues Affecting General Education Teachers

FACT	ISSUES	SOLUTIONS
Regular classroom teachers have a poor attitude and lack understanding of their role, responsibility, and accountability in a joint system of education.	<p>Poor teacher attitude and lack of confidence in the integrated system presents barriers in its successful implementation.</p> <p>"When PL 94-142 was passed, the general educator became, in a way, an unsuspecting (and in some cases unwilling) participant in special education. For the most part, general education teachers were neither given appropriate training nor the type of information that would help them in their new role. Even knowing what their exact role should be was unclear." (Taylor et al., 1995, p.16)</p> <p>Regular "... teachers lack of perspective regarding their role in integration is indicative of inadequate and inappropriate pre service and in service preparation for integration." (Valeo & Bundch, 1998, p.17)</p>	<p>Educational leaders must ensure that in service training provides information on the integrated system and the roles and responsibilities of relevant positions in an integrated system.</p> <p>"It is also important that programs of initial teacher preparation equip beginning teachers with assessment and intervention skills appropriate for working with students who have special educational needs and the ability to supervise paraprofessionals." (British Columbia Teachers' Federation, June 2002, p.3)</p>
There exists a lack of training and skills to teach students with special needs.	Lack of skills to deal with integrated classes results in teachers who lack the confidence to teach in those classes and cause resistance to any suggestion to changes in the curriculum and instruction modes.	Boards of Education must provide in service training or support to teachers in obtaining the training they need by providing courses that are more accessible, such as long distance courses and courses that are available after working hours. Such courses could also be made more attractive to teachers by making a tuition rebate program.
General education teachers may have conflicting principles.	"The values of inclusion may come into conflict with other values teachers hold dear, such as an achievement and merit, ..." (Winzer, 2002, p. 44)	In service training or formal training can address this issue of conflicting principles.
"Dissonance remains between policy aspirations and teachers' abilities." (Winzer, 2002, p.44)	"Dissonance remains between policy aspirations and teachers' abilities." (Winzer, 2002, p.44) With the existence of issues related to heavy workload, large class size, and inadequate teacher training, there is lack of support for the assumption of	Leadership will need to work on addressing the current issues as well as determining what goals are achievable with the resources that it has available.

added responsibility in teaching students with special needs.

The Ideal Inclusive Educational System

Special Education – The challenge of the Future, by Waldron et al. (1992) contains a model, (reproduced below) that depicts how special education can ideally interface with regular education. "Educating students with mild and moderate learning, behavioral, and physical disorders will be the responsibility of regular education which will infuse special education pedagogy into the mainstream of teaching. The special education departments in school systems will be responsible for meeting the educational and related services needs of an increasing number of severely handicapped students" (Waldron et al., 1992, p.126). Educators "...will learn to accept the more realistic goals of program where the attainment of educational objective will have secondary importance to physical survival, safety, maintenance, and the improvement of the quality of life" (Waldron et al., 1992, p.126). "... the severely disabled will receive comprehensive related services and instruction in programs that have been developed and operate in close collaboration or partnership with community agencies, universities, medical centers and hospitals" (Waldron et al., 1992, pp.128).

Figure 2.



"... educational leaders will draw on special education assessment, evaluation, planning and instructional methods to improve the quality of the schooling experience for all students" (Waldron et al., 1992, p.125-126). "The magnitude of the development needs of children in the 'mainstream' will require that educators utilize the pedagogy, technology, materials and behaviour management systems of the special education culture" (Waldron et al., 1992, p.125-126).

References

Algoma District School Board (2003-2004). Special Education Report.

Barton, L. (1998). *The Politics of Special Educational Needs*. Philadelphia: Falmer Press.

British Columbia Teachers' Federation (June 2002). BCTF Research Report: B.C. teachers' views of special education issues.

Bowlby, B. J., Peters, C., and Mackinnon, M. (2001). *An Educator's Guide to Special Education Law*. Aurora Professional Press.

Bryson, S. E., (2004) *Autistic Spectrum Disorders: Causal Mechanisms and Recent Findings on Attention and Emotion*. *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 19 No.1, pp.14-22.

collegegrad.com Career Information (April 2004). Teachers - Special Education.

Crutchfield, M. (1997). *Who's Teaching our Children with Disabilities?*. *News Digest.*, Vol. 27, Aug.

Deno, E. (1970). *Special Education as Development Capital*. *Exceptional Children*, Vol. 37, pp. 229-237.

Dworet, D., and Bennet, S. (2002). *A View from the North Special – Education in Canada*, Council for Exceptional Children, Vol. 34, No.4, pp. 22-27.

Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (2002). *Fulfilling the Promise – Ensuring Success for Students with Special Needs*, Published by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario.

Gibson Kierstead, A. and Hanvey, L. (2001). *Special Education in Canada*, Perception, Vol. 25, No.2.

Grossman, H. (1995). *Special Education in a Diverse Society*. Needham Height, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Hill, F. et al. (2003). *Subjective Perceptions of Stress and Coping by Mothers of Children with an Intellectual Disability: A Needs Assessment*, *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 18, No. 1.

Howe, K., and Miramontes, O. (1992). *The Ethics of Special Education*. New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Johnson, L., and Bauer, A. (1992). *Meeting the Needs of Special Students*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.

Katz, J., and Mirenda, P. (2002). *Including Students with Developmental Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: Educational Benefits*. *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 17, No. 2.

Katz, J., and Mirenda, P. (2002), *Including Students with Developmental Disabilities in General Education Classrooms: Social Benefits*, *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 17, No. 2.

Killoran, I. (2002). *A Road Less Travelled, Creating a Community where Each Belongs*. *International Focus Issue*, Vol. 78, No.6, pp. 371-377.

Leitch, M., and Tangri, S. (1988). *Barriers to Home-School Collaboration*. *Educational Horizons*, pp. 70-74.

Moore, M.L. et al. (2002). *Siblings of Children with Disabilities: A Review and Analysis*. *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 17, No. 1.

- NCPA – Daily Policy Digest (2001). National Center for Policy Analysis, Education Issues, Special Education Costly, Ineffective. Thursday, December 20, 2001.
- Ontario Ministry of Education (2001). Special Education: A Guide for Educators.
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (2003). Update, Vol. 30, Feb. 18, 2003.
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (1999- 2000). Special Education review.
- Perka, S. and McLaughlin, T.F. (2002). Autism: Characteristics, Causes and Some Educational Interventions. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 17, No. 2.
- Perry, D.F. et al. (2002). Challenges in Infant Mental Health: Meeting the Training Needs of Parents and Professionals in Early Intervention. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 17, No. 2.
- 2001 Provincial (Ontario) Auditor's report. Special Education Grants to School Boards.
- Pugach, M. and Warger, C. (1996). *Curriculum Trends, Special Education, and Reform*. Columbia University, NY: Teachers College Press.
- Reiber, C. and McLaughlin, T.F. (2004). Classroom Interventions: Methods to Improve Academic Performance and Classroom Behaviour for Students with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 19, No. 1.
- Roaf, C., & Bines, H. (1989). *Needs, Rights & Opportunities: Developing Approaches to Special Education*. Bristol, A: The Falmer Press.
- Rogow, S. (2002). Silent Victims: Emotional Abuse and Neglect of Children with Disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 17, No. 1.
- Shelton, C. and Pollingue, A.B. (2000). *The Exceptional Teacher's Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Stainback, S. and W. (1996). *Inclusion, A Guide for Educators*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Co.
- Taylor, C. (June 2002). B.C. Teachers' Views of Special Education Issues. Data from the Spring 2001 BCTF Worklife of Teachers Survey Series, 2: Special Education, British Columbia Teachers' Federation, Section III 2002-WLC-01.
- Taylor, R. L, et al, (1995). *Exceptional Children; Integrating Research and Teaching*. San Diego, CA: Singular Publishing Group.
- Toronto Catholic District School Board (June 2003). Ministry Special Education Plan.
- Toronto District School Board (2003). Special Education Plan.
- Valeo, A. and Bundch, G. (1998). Teachers, Attitudes, Inclusion, and the Curriculum, *B.C. Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 21, No. 3, pp. 6-19.
- Vaughn, S. et al. (1997). *Teaching Mainstreamed, Diverse and At-risk Students in the General Education Classroom*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.
- Waldron, K.A., et al. (1992). *Special Education, the Challenge for the Future*. Lewiston, NY:

The Edwin Millen Press.

Weikl, B. and Hadadian, A. (2003). Emergent Literacy Practices Among Parents of Preschool Children with and without Disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education*, Vol. 18, No. 1.

Winzer, M. (1995). *Children with Exceptionalities*. Scarborough, ON: Allyn & Bacon Canada.

Winzer, M. (2002). *Children with Exceptionalities in the Canadian Classroom*. Toronto, ON: Pearson Educational Canada.

Winzer, M.A. (2002). Portfolio Use in Undergraduate Special Education Introductory Offerings. *International Journal of Special Education*, Volume 17, No. 1.

Ysseldyke, J. E., et al. (1992). *Critical Issues in Special Education*. USA: Houghton Mifflin Co.

Connie Schlifer holds a Social Services Certificate from Ryerson University and an Honours Bachelor Degree in sociology from York University. She can be reached at mandcs@sympatico.ca

Figure 2. Exceptional children and their environment. Copyright 1970 by the Council for Exceptional Children is reprinted with permission from Special Education as development capital by Deno.E. *Exceptional Children*, 37, 1970

◀ [Contents](#)

• The views expressed by the authors are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of The College Quarterly or of Seneca College.

Copyright © 2005 - The College Quarterly, Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology