

A SURVEY OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND TEACHING
PRACTICES AS PERCEIVED BY REGULAR CLASSROOM
TEACHERS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF STUDENTS WITH
MILD LEARNING DISABILITIES

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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RHONDA HODDINOTT



**A SURVEY OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES AND TEACHING PRACTICES AS
PERCEIVED BY REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS FOR THE INTEGRATION OF
STUDENTS WITH MILO LEARNING DISABILITIES**

by

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Abstract

This study was designed to utilize a questionnaire based on current research that explores successful teaching practices that educators feel are vital for integrated classrooms where there are students with learning disabilities. It will also investigate whether these teaching practices are viewed as being important through the use of a questionnaire, by regular, full time teachers in the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. Finally, the researcher will identify if there is a difference between background variables and the attitude of teachers toward strategies and practices used in an integrated classroom. The eight background variables are as follows: gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students.

Teachers generally agreed that effective teaching practices under the category headings: assessment/diagnosis, instructional content, instructional practices, managing student behavior, planning and managing the teaching and learning environment and monitoring evaluation procedures were all key components of a successful integration program, however, statistically significant differences did exist. All background variables were slightly or moderately related to teacher responses on this

questionnaire. Grade level taught and gender were most strongly related to teacher perceptions of specific teaching practices.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

Overview

This chapter will focus on many aspects of the research which is to follow: the introduction will describe the proposed research and put it into context, along with identifying key terms; the statement of the problem will give background to the study and describe the purpose and significance of it; the review of the literature will enlighten the issue under investigation by focusing on a conceptual framework; the design of this study will present a rationale for the research and the methodology along with a description of the data collection and analysis; the last two sections of this chapter will present the questions to be answered as well as the limitations of this study.

Introduction

The impetus for integration in Canada and the United States has come from many sources, including educational research, court decisions, legislation, and civil rights concerns. Winzer (1989) defined mainstreaming of students with learning disabilities into the regular class as both a philosophy and a process, she believes:

It is the physical, intellectual, social, and emotional integration of exceptional students into the regular educational milieu. Mainstreaming demands individual programming, co-operative planning, and a range of educational and support services. (p.20)

Blankenship and Lilly (1981), say that students who are deaf, blind, and physically handicapped, have participated successfully in integration programs. The larger group of candidates are students traditionally categorized as mentally retarded, learning disabled, and behavior disordered. Students with mild learning disabilities will be the focus for this research (often students with behavior problems are included in this category because they possess learning disabilities). These students would be described as "special needs students" in Newfoundland and Labrador schools and would have an individual education program plan developed by educators to help them achieve some level of success within the regular program.

Students with mild learning disabilities have been described as possessing a number of common characteristics. Professionals have usually agreed upon the following characteristics to be inherent in the overall definition. According to Blankenship and Lilly (1981):

1. A discrepancy exists between ability to learn and actual achievement.
2. Other handicapping conditions must be ruled out before a problem can be defined as a learning disability.
3. Most definitions of learning disabilities exclude cultural disadvantage (Gearhart, 1973). The Learning Disabled student does not perform well in the regular class situation and thus, the treatment of learning disabilities has developed as a category of special education services. (p.13-14).

Integration or mainstreaming is a movement which has developed over the past twenty years. According to Blankenship and Lilly (1981), the 1960's proved to be the years when there

were many questions raised as to the effectiveness of placing students with learning disabilities in special segregated classes. The reasoning behind such placement was indeed evident. It was due to traditional and organizational concerns rather than a student's unique individual needs. Today, educators believe that students with mild learning disabilities can be educated in the regular classroom with the appropriate support services provided for regular teachers and integrated students.

There has been much evidence to support the move toward integration. Blankenship and Lilly (1981) explain that all students differ on a continuum of functional ability levels and students with learning disabilities are more like their chronological age-mates than not. They go on to say that traditional special classes, with their separate curricula, tend to widen rather than narrow the differences between special education students and their regular class peers. They believe that special classes introduce students to an artificial atmosphere where class size is smaller and expectations are often reduced, which makes later reintegration into the regular classroom increasingly difficult. This literature points out that special class services segregate students from their peers by placing them in a room with less than desirable reputation among other students in the school. Also, special classes prevent integration with students of average or above average ability. In addition, Blankenship and Lily go on to say that in an integrated program, classroom teachers are encouraged to learn

new techniques and approaches (e.g., reading and writing strategies, test modifications and classroom management techniques).

The Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Education (1993) reports that 12,182 special education students received most of their education in the regular education class in the 1991-92 school year, whereas before, many students with learning disabilities were isolated in segregated classrooms. This dramatic change in the direction of integration occurred within a two year period. Integration is being implemented in most schools, in some manner, irrespective of whether there is agreement or disagreement with the philosophy for such a move. For this reason and because integration seems to be a desirable placement for students with learning disabilities, there is a need to understand how knowledgeable teachers are, so that university programs can build on this expertise or shed further light on integration practices.

Cannon, Idol and West (1992), using an interdisciplinary panel of 105 experts, evenly divided into university-based and field-based participants from 35 states, identified 96 of 125 practices as being essential for effective teaching of mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities. The present study is an extension of Cannon's work, in that this researcher focused on classroom teachers' perceptions of the highest rated teaching practices identified in Cannon's study.

The target group studied in this research is comprised of

full-time regular educators at the primary, elementary, intermediate and high school levels since these individuals must implement effective teaching practices into their programs to accommodate all students, including those with learning disabilities. Gipps, Gross and Goldstein (1987) purport that the philosophy behind integration is that in order to reach the failing learner it is necessary to involve class teachers.

Statement of the problem

The research study presented in this thesis is an attempt to identify specific teaching practices that regular teachers feel are essential for working with students who have mild learning disabilities in the integrated classroom. The basic design involves a comprehensive review of teacher effectiveness literature and special education literature. It also identifies teacher background variables that may affect teachers' perceptions of the effectiveness of teaching practices in an integrated classroom. Future inservice and teacher training programs which focus upon effective teaching practices should consider the ideas that regular teachers deem to be important.

How teachers perceive the effectiveness of teaching strategies and practices is important to the successful implementation of integration. Recent research reported by Canning, Kennedy and Strong (1993), points out that teachers feel unprepared to teach students with disabilities in the regular classroom. If the university and inservice programs can demonstrate to teachers that they are not as ill-prepared as they

think they are, then possibly there will be more support for integration. If not, there will be a need to provide support and knowledge about teaching practices at these levels.

Regular teachers should be knowledgeable about integration practices such as mastery learning (Bloom, 1980), cooperative learning, peer and cross-age tutoring and curriculum adaptations. They must also keep in mind that effective teaching means effective teaching for all students.

Cannon (1990) identified several teaching practices that were important for integrating students with mild learning disabilities into the regular classroom, however, there has been no research to date that has studied how regular teachers in Newfoundland perceive the importance of such teaching practices. According to Cannon (1990), teachers have been known to effect positive change in the lives of students, therefore, it is necessary that we include the ideas of this group of educators in our planning. This is the largest group of individuals who will have to work with students who have mild learning disabilities.

Selected review of the literature

Will (1986), believes that the regular classroom is the most enhancing environment for students and that instructional methods for students with disabilities are more alike than unlike those used with higher achieving students.

As Schloss (1992) notes, many of the effective practices that are used for regular students can also be used for students with disabilities. Some of these practices include: increasing the

amount of time students spend successfully engaged in educational tasks, teaching students to accomplish objectives by following an instructional procedure where they are exposed to teacher demonstration, guided practice, independent practice, and reviewing/reteaching.

Whitworth (1991) explains that our educational system often insists that we "shape" or "mold" children around the needs of the system, rather than molding our instruction around the needs of students. He believes that this is the single biggest obstacle to effective integrated classrooms. According to Upton (1991), children with learning disabilities experience significant difficulties in school. He believes that this may be a result of curriculum problems. Upton goes on to say that teachers are, at times, unable to provide classroom experiences that are meaningful and relevant, given the interests, experiences, and existing skills and knowledge of particular children. A major focus of the integration movement is the need to improve schooling in ways that will enable all students to achieve success. The primary question that will be addressed in this thesis is, "How do we help all children, in particular, students with mild learning disabilities, to learn within the mainstream of a regular classroom?"

Larrivee (1985) identified many factors in her research which support the view that effective integration entails effective teaching for all students. She explains that teachers who were successful in integrating students into their classrooms

had high achievement expectations for integrated students along with personal warmth and responsiveness towards them. These teachers organized and managed their classrooms as efficient learning environments that maximized student involvement with academic tasks and minimized time spent reprimanding students for inappropriate behavior. They selected activities that allowed the students to maintain continuous progress and provided a balanced approach to instruction where there was a great deal of active group teaching. Recitation and discussion lessons were a part of the curriculum in addition to individual seatwork.

Larrivee (1985) goes on to explain that students who have learning disabilities have similar needs to students in regular classrooms who come from low socio-economic backgrounds, or who have low academic ability. Teachers have always had to provide for those individuals in their classrooms and, therefore, are probably more knowledgeable than they think about effective teaching practices.

The professional who is most responsible for integrating students is the regular classroom teacher. Therefore, Larrivee, (1985) notes, this individual should be part of the process of identifying effective teaching practices. Larrivee (1985), feels that in order to have an impact on the teacher population which is responsible for integrated students, the focus must be on teaching behaviors and practices that have been validated in terms of their relationship to successful performance of integrated students.

Design of the study

This study is designed to gather information about teaching practices perceived by regular classroom teachers to be relevant for integrating students with mild learning disabilities. Another aspect of this study is to show differences between background variables and teachers' perceptions of these teaching practices.

The descriptive method of research was chosen as it seems a most effective means for determining variables that bear upon teacher attitudes concerning teaching practices relevant to successful integration. This study uncovered some significant findings concerning regular classroom teachers' opinions about integration. Due to a teacher's unique situation, a difference exists between teacher perceptions about teaching practices and certain background variables. This information may be of interest to policy makers at the provincial and school board level.

It was decided by the researcher that this research would be carried out as a pilot study only. According to Borg and Gall (1989), a pilot study can provide ideas, approaches, and clues not foreseen prior to a larger study, permit a thorough check of the planned statistical and analytical procedures, reduce treatment errors and reduce expenditure of time and money on research that yields very little.

This research is, therefore, limited to the views of teachers in one school board concerning teaching practices relevant to integration. Further research may be carried out at a later time on all schools in Newfoundland and Labrador to provide a broader view of teachers' opinions.

This research is an extension to Cannon's (1990), work in that it uses a different population and goes beyond an attitude survey by using background variables. The title of Cannon's research is, "Educating Students with Mild Handicaps in General Classrooms: Essential Teaching Practices for General and Special Educators". According to Cannon (1990), the focus of the study was to validate essential teaching practices needed by both general and special educators to successfully educate students with mild handicaps in general classrooms.

In this study, the researcher chose regular classroom teachers as the population to be studied, since they are most responsible for teaching students with learning disabilities. Cannon (1990), on the other hand, chose a 105 member expert panel which included administrators, program supervisors, teacher educators and researchers who helped to validate teaching practices.

This research will involve having regular classroom teachers rank the importance of teaching practices from the point of view of a final curriculum implementor. Instead of using Cannon's full attitude survey, the present researcher adopted fifty-four statements from Cannon's questionnaire. These statements were

chosen for this study based on the highest ratings received from Cannon's study. Educators from Cannon's research had 95 to 100 percent consensus on their questionnaire in favour of the particular teaching practices used in the present researcher's questionnaire.

The data collection procedure involved a questionnaire as the research instrument. The primary analysis consists of descriptive tabulations and chi-square tests of independence to evaluate differences between teachers' perceptions of selected aspects of Cannon's six category variables when the teacher population is sub-grouped according to the following eight background variables: gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students.

Questions

Specifically, the research questions addressed by this investigation are as follows:

1. What are the teaching practices that teachers feel are important in order to meet the needs of students who are classified as mild learning disabled in a regular classroom setting?

In an attempt to answer this research question, several statements from a Delphi study developed by Cannon (1990), were adopted in the development of a research questionnaire designed for use with teachers. The questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

2. What is the difference between regular teacher attitudes toward teaching practices for integrating students with mild learning disabilities into regular classrooms as they relate to various background variables, namely: gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students?

As a result of this research question, several questions were developed by the researcher for use with teachers and can be found in Appendix B.

Limitations

In interpreting the data of this study the following limitations were considered:

1. This study is limited to an investigation of the teaching practices and strategies that were identified by a 105 member expert panel (e.g., school administrators, program supervisors, teacher educators and researchers, with half of the members from general education and half from special education) as being important for teaching students who have learning disabilities in the integrated classroom.
2. This study is limited to the results of a Delphi investigation developed by Cannon (1990).
3. This study is limited to eight specific background variables, namely: gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students.
4. Since this is a pilot study, generalizations to other populations should be undertaken with a degree of caution.
5. Clarity of questionnaire items in section one is a limitation of this study. According to Cannon et al.(1992), the researchers modified the questions for clarity on Round 2, however, many statements still remained complex. They felt that to phrase all

statements in simple sentences would take away from the holistic meaning, thus, reducing statements to an accumulation of individual, discrete behaviors.

6. Although questionnaires to teachers were returned without identification, it was unlikely that there would have been a 100% return rate.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

This chapter will focus on the teaching practices and strategies as they relate to integrating students with mild learning disabilities into the regular classroom. The six categories to be discussed as identified by Cannon et al. (1992) are as follows: a) Assessment/Diagnosis; b) Instructional content; c) Instructional practices; d) Managing student behaviour; e) Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment; and, f) Monitoring/Evaluation procedures. These categories were studied specifically in the areas of teacher effectiveness and special education literature to further support the work of Cannon's research. It is important to note that this review is directly related to the 54 statements chosen from Cannon's study for this questionnaire.

Assessment/Diagnosis

According to Bennett (1991), assessment is verbal or written teacher comments concerning the quality of children's work. Diagnosis on the other hand is the teacher's attempt to acquire a clear view of a pupil's understandings or misconceptions through analysis of children's work and questioning. This section will attempt to explain how the

student with learning disabilities can best be understood in relation to assessment and diagnosis. It will focus on the idea that learning for low achievers is different from that of high achievers. In addition, this section will describe the importance of evaluation and cooperative grouping.

Bennett (1991), believes that the quality of learning experiences for low achieving children is not the same as that for average or high achievers. For low achieving individuals there is too little consolidation. Teachers often give students tasks which overestimate their capabilities. If teachers present lessons poorly, it affects low achievers more severely and their work rate is often slower. Inadequate assessment and diagnosis can lead to a student having superficial understanding and less than optimal curriculum progression. Teachers must be aware of the intellectual demands in tasks, together with strategies that will help to diagnose a students strengths and needs. Such strategies should involve focused task observations and clinical interviewing techniques.

Haglund and Stevens (1980), explain that evaluation is the final step toward the teaching and learning process. Evaluation refers to the formal or informal assessment of the academic and personal development that is dependent upon the objectives stipulated within the individualized education program plan. Evaluation may take the form of standardized tests, criterion referenced instruments, informal, written or oral quizzes, or anecdotal records. According to Brophy and Evertson (1976),

evaluation should be used for diagnosis and reteaching purposes rather than simply for assigning grades. They feel that tests have little importance in their own right. Atwell (1987), believes students should be evaluated on a continual basis so that teachers will have an accurate idea of strengths and needs. Such information could help to provide strategies or alternate teaching methods.

As Haglund and Stevens (1980), point out, whatever form evaluation may take in the integrated classroom, it is to be emphasized that equitable, reasonable, individualized approaches must be created and implemented. Assessment must be based upon what has been learned, rather than what hasn't been. If "what has been taught has not been caught," reteaching using different approaches is necessary. Macfaddan (1993), explains that there must be a high degree of trust in a classroom where there are no negative sanctions for failure, but rather an environment that promotes self-directed learners.

Evaluation of the exceptional student in the integrated classroom should be based on individual differences. If students with learning disabilities can achieve the same objectives as their peers, but through a different form of evaluation (e.g., oral testing) then they should be evaluated in this manner.

It is sometimes felt that unless teachers evaluate students in a classroom in the same manner and use the same sources for data, an element of unfairness enters into the evaluation. Such a view penalizes students with special needs who require modifications in the evaluation process if their educational growth is going

to be assessed accurately. Each student is unique. Each student has strengths, abilities, and areas of relative weakness. Recognition of these strengths and weaknesses, as well as knowledge of individual learning styles, should be the basis for modification of both instruction and evaluation. (Newfoundland Department of Education 1990, p.22)

Haglund and Stevens (1980), believe that as a result of increased individualized instruction, the necessity for lower teacher/student ratios may emerge and smaller class sizes will become a reality.

Vygotsky (1962), argued that a child's potential for learning is revealed and often realized in interactions with more knowledgeable others. Bennett (1991) has shown in his work that implementing forms of cooperative grouping improves pupil involvement and outcomes.

Bennett (1991), concludes that effective schooling should involve a shift in our mindset from a "fixed" system for implementing the common curriculum to a flexible system that will allow all students to acquire the common curriculum. It is important to keep in the forefront of our mind that some students require more time and extraordinary amounts of instructional support to achieve such goals.

Instructional content

The teacher must be capable of modifying curriculum in order for students in the integrated classroom to feel a sense of accomplishment. The importance of having curriculum materials that match up with students' instructional levels and learning styles has been emphasized by Liberman (1982). McLoughlin and

Kershman (1979), believe that the teacher's ingenuity in adapting materials and designing alternative forms of activities for children can enhance children's growth and development (p.54). This section will therefore focus on two valuable curriculum adaptations: multi-level instruction and lesson plan adaptations.

Porter and Richler (1991), believe students should be exposed to multi-level instruction where planning assumes individualization, flexibility and inclusion of all students regardless of their personal level of skills. This may include a variety of teacher techniques: considering student learning styles when planning presentation methods; involving all students in the lesson through questioning aimed at different levels of thinking; allowing that some students will need adjusted expectations; giving students a choice in what method they will use to demonstrate their understanding of the concept being taught; accepting that these different methods are of equal value; and, evaluating students based on their individual differences. This kind of instruction allows the teacher to plan for all students within one lesson, thereby decreasing the necessity for separate programs while allowing the teacher to weave individual goals into the classroom content and instructional strategies.

Wood and Miederhoff (1988) explain that lesson adaptation is necessary for the integrated student. They feel that it is important that teachers understand that students employ a variety of perceptual styles to learn. The integrated student, however,

often has one or more deficient perceptual modalities, which often contributes to learning problems. Teachers can, for example, adapt the content format through task analysis; type instead of handwrite all worksheets; and/or, reduce the number of items per worksheet to be completed.

It seems evident that if teachers are to include all children with learning disabilities into their classrooms, they have to make modifications to their instructional content so that it is possible to meet the needs of all individuals. Teaching for mastery learning makes it possible for all students to achieve levels of success within a program. Teachers have to employ methods in their educational methodology and practices that will make learning for all students an eventuality, that is, if we are to meet the goals of our educational institutions and the goals of society.

Instructional practices

It is imperative that regular classroom teachers have knowledge about instructional practices if they are to help students who have learning disabilities. McIntosh (1985), explains that specific learning strategies for integrated students are key to success at the intervention level. This section will focus on mastery learning, different types and qualities of instruction, learning which is made easy, amount of time needed to learn concepts, adaptive instructional approaches, group study procedures, tutorial help and co-operative teaching.

Thousand and Villa (1991), describe an instructional

approach which is a strong focus in the effective teaching literature. This approach is referred to as mastery learning or outcomes-based instructional models (Block and Anderson, 1975; Brookover et al., 1982; Guskey, 1985; Victor, 1988). Common to all of these models are the following teacher behaviors:

- a) frequent, brief diagnostic assessment of each student;
- b) individualization of learning objectives with clear pre-set mastery criteria;
- c) frequent specific feedback provided to students regarding their performance; and,
- d) supplementation or adjustment of teaching, learning methods or practice time for those students who do not yet meet their mastery criteria.

According to Bloom (1981), individual students may need very different types and qualities of instruction to achieve mastery of learning. He believes that integrated students may need many concrete illustrations and explanations, much approval and reinforcement, and several repetitions of an explanation. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1992), explain that modifying the rate and presentation of the curriculum is very important for students who have difficulty attending. If information is presented at too fast a rate, or at too abstract a level of conceptualization, students attention may decrease simply because they may "get lost" in the content. Direct questioning of information to be remembered is a good way to improve recall. Also, frequently highlighting target information can give students more opportunity to process information and incorporate it into their knowledge base. Teachers can also enhance effective encoding of

knowledge by relating it to students prior knowledge as much as possible.

Bloom (1981), points out that there is little reason to make learning so difficult that only a small proportion of students can persevere to mastery. The demands for perseverance may be sharply reduced if students are provided with instructional resources most appropriate for them. Frequent feedback accompanied by specific help in instruction as needed can reduce the time (and perseverance) required. Improvement in the quality of instruction (or explanations and illustrations) may reduce the amount of perseverance necessary for a given task. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1992) go on to say that explicit teaching of cognitive strategies necessary for efficient academic tasks have been shown to be very helpful. Teachers should carefully consider the purpose of their instruction. If, for example, knowledge of content is most important, the method by which content is acquired should be of secondary importance. That is, while some students could be encouraged to engage in "discovery" activities, other students, less capable of discovering school-relevant content on their own, could be provided with more direct approaches to acquire content knowledge.

Carroll (1963), believes that the time a student spends learning new material is very important to actually understanding it. His basic assumption is that aptitude determines the rate of learning and that most, if not all students can achieve mastery if they devote the amount of time needed to the learning.

According to Bloom (1981), this implies that students be afforded the time they need to master understanding. The amount of time a student needs is likely to be affected by the student's aptitudes, his or her verbal ability, the quality of instruction, and the help received outside of the classroom. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1992), report that time to learn content can be achieved by having the teacher aide, or a peer monitor additional content coverage. This can be done perhaps when other class members are engaged in an independent "enrichment" activity. Another option could be to arrange for special education teachers to review content outside of integrated class time. Teachers could also provide parents with sufficient information so that their son or daughter can practise with the content at home. All of these opportunities for learning will depend upon school and teacher organization as well as flexibility.

Wang (1991), explains that programs using the adaptive instruction approach are designed so that students learn in different ways and at different rates. Another goal of this program is to ensure that effective instruction involves the recognition and accommodation of the unique learning needs of individual students, while enhancing each student's ability to achieve intended outcomes. Although adaptive instruction calls for individualized planning, teachers not only work with students on a one-to-one basis, but also incorporate small group instruction and other group tasks when they are deemed particularly suited for achieving certain student outcomes.

Thousand and Villa (1991), report that group learning models are adaption approaches which have been widely researched (Gottlieb, 1987). They explain that cooperative learning models share five common elements, such as: a) face-to-face interaction among the heterogeneous group of students; b) positive interdependence structured through common goals or products, joint rewards, division of labour and roles, division of materials or information; c) teaching of small group interpersonal skills; d) regular assessment and goal setting regarding the appropriate use of small group and interpersonal skills; and, e) individual accountability for achieving individualized academic and social objectives.

Johnson and Johnson (1987c) have described several proven strategies that have helped students with learning disabilities become active participants in small group situations. One strategy involves assigning the challenged student a specific role which promotes participation and minimizes anxiety about cooperating with more capable others. Examples of appropriate roles are checking that all members can explain the group's answer, summarizing the group's answer and praising members for their contributions. Another strategy could involve pre-training students with learning disabilities in academic or collaborative skills, so they have unique expertise to bring to the group. In addition to this, regular classroom teachers could adapt lesson requirements for individual students with learning disabilities. Different success criteria may be used for each group member. In

this case the amount of work expected of each member may be adjusted, or group members may study and coach one another on different words, problems, reading and so forth. If the group is tested, the entire group may earn points based upon the degree to which each member exceeds individual success criteria.

Bloom (1981), advocates that teachers should use group study procedures only when students who have learning disabilities need them. Learning should be turned into a cooperative process where all members of the group can benefit. It is important to note that much depends on the composition of a group and the opportunities it gives each student to expose his or her difficulties without demeaning one person and elevating another. If the group dynamics are right, the more able students will have opportunities to strengthen their own learning in the process of helping another student. This can be done by explaining an idea or concept through alternative ways. Bloom (1981), suggests that tutorial help would be another strategy that could help students understand instruction. He cautions that this should not be done without careful consideration, since a one-to-one relationship between the teacher and the learner represents the most costly type of help. He goes on to say that such a strategy should only be used when alternative procedures are not effective. The tutor ideally should be someone other than the teacher, since he or she should bring a fresh way of viewing the idea or the process to the learner. This person must be skilful in identifying learning problems and help in ways that the student will not be

continually dependant. Clearly, students should know that there are alternatives for them when they do not understand a particular concept or idea within the regular class program.

Bowie and Robertston (1986), explain that co-operative teaching can be an effective way to help facilitate the integration movement. The special needs teacher and the regular teacher can become aware of a student's needs through observation and participation in lessons. Both teachers can then decide on the modifications that would best meet the needs of the student with learning disabilities.

Friend and Cook (1992), believe that co-teaching can be an effective way to enhance children's learning in the integrated classroom. One teacher may teach the whole class, while the other circulates to help. At other times, both teachers teach the whole group, one modelling a skill, while the other describes it. Another alternative arrangement for teaching and helping could involve having one teacher work with a small remedial group, while the other teacher teaches enrichment activities to a more advanced group.

Friend and Cook (1992), go on to point out that there are many advantages to co-operative teaching. First of all, students can avoid the stigma associated with going to a different classroom. Their learning becomes less fragmented because the special education teacher is more able to relate remediation to the regular subject. Also, students comment on the fact that

there is always a teacher to help them. In addition, behavior problems always decrease in co-taught classrooms. Finally, students are exposed to different options for learning.

Each individual student is unique in his or her own right and teachers must recognize that when they take a student a little further in their learning; they have to appeal to all members in classrooms who have varying abilities, different interests, and particular strengths. Whether we decide that different kinds and rates of instruction are needed, tutorial or peer grouping would be preferred, we must draw upon our own expertise and consult with other professionals to meet the needs of all students within our classrooms.

Managing student behavior

Good student behavior can come as a result of having a well managed classroom. This section will therefore highlight several aspects of the well-managed classroom such as, seating plans, schedules, teacher-student relationships, peer modelling, class rules, social reinforcement, academic success, lesson presentation, consequences for severe affective behaviors or motivational problems and behavior consultation.

There are many class management techniques that Smith and Misra (1992) suggest for creating a positive environment. First of all, they feel that teachers should take the time to create a well arranged and carefully thought-out seating plan. They believe that more able students should be assigned to seats arranged in a scattered pattern where they can serve as models or

provide assistance for less able peers. If students of varying ability are scattered, then teachers will be more likely to distribute attention, questions, and reinforcement to students in a larger area in the classroom.

Smith and Misra (1992), go on to say that teachers should have dependable daily schedules. A classroom schedule allows everyone to predict what is going to happen during the day. Teachers should therefore avoid revising schedules as this can cause confusion. If revisions are necessary, they should be announced and posted as soon as possible, preferably at the beginning of the school day.

Teachers can cultivate relationships that help students feel more comfortable in an academic setting. Smith and Misra (1992), believe that this can be done by speaking to students in concrete terms, using vocabulary and syntax appropriate to the students comprehension level.

The majority of students have good behavior and therefore should serve as effective role models for their less well-behaved peers. Again, Smith and Misra (1992), believe that peers can model a number of appropriate behaviors such as, demonstrating a specific skill for a student who does not possess it, prompting an appropriate behavior the student has, but does not use, or inhibit an inappropriate behavior. Peer modelling is an effective antecedent control technique and usually instills appropriate behavior in all students if teachers use high-status peers who feel competent to perform skills and are mature enough

to accept reinforcement by the teacher at the appropriate times.

Affleck, Lowenbraun and Archer (1980), suggest that establishing classroom rules is a powerful procedure for changing student behavior. They believe to be effective, rules within the classroom should: be very few in number; state the behavior that is desired rather than stating all the behaviors the teacher do not wish children to exhibit; be simple and clearly stated; and be guidelines that the teacher, can directly enforce.

They go on to say that social reinforcement is yet another tool to use in the classroom that can prevent unacceptable behavior. When a student acts appropriately the teacher should praise the child verbally and refer specifically to the desired behavior. Smith and Misra (1992), explain that other social reinforcement may include smiling at a student, standing next to and patting a student on the back, saying "good work", or telling a student you like the way he or she is working quietly.

Brophy (1981), points out that social reinforcement should be guided by four principals. First, it should be delivered contingently on target behavior and reward. Secondly, it must emphasize student effort in the achievement of success rather than attributing performance to luck or chance. Thirdly, it must clearly specify student accomplishment. Finally, reinforcement should have variety and spontaneity in order to be credible.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1992), believe that a student's behavior has been seen to improve dramatically as he or she becomes academically successful. Smith and Misra (1992), suggest

that the selection of appropriate instructional materials minimizes discipline problems. The teacher must ensure that materials are age-appropriate and functionally relevant if a student's interest and on-task behavior are to be maintained.

Brophy and Evertson (1976), explained in their research that successful teachers were those whose students worked consistently at their seatwork. Each student knew what his or her assignment was and if help was needed, the student could get it from the teacher or from some designated person. He or she was accountable for completing assignments appropriately because the student knew that they would be checked. All of this was accomplished within a system of regulations that on the one hand made it possible for students who needed help to get it, but at the same time made it possible for the teacher to concentrate on reading groups without being continually interrupted by students who wanted to ask questions about seatwork.

Scruggs and Mastropieri (1992), caution that when students succeed at a task, the degree of success should be attributed to the degree of effort, perseverance, and appropriate strategy use by students. Students then learn that they are in control of their effort, which is responsible for school success.

Smith and Misra (1992) report that fewer problems occur when lessons are presented in a clear and organized fashion. Success in lesson implementation results from a combination of factors. It begins with advance planning, is put into practice through clear communication of expectations, and is maintained through

consistent follow-up. This results in fewer interruptions, less confusion about what to do next, and less need for backtracking.

Teachers can respond more directly to more serious undesirable behavior, according to Affleck, Lowenbraun and Archer (1980), by putting students in time-out, removing privileges, having students stay after school, having follow-through consequences at home, or developing individual behavior programs. In any case, when severe affective or motivational problems arise, teachers should consult with the school psychologist or other support personnel in order to determine the most appropriate course of action.

According to Elliot and Sheridan (1992), behavioral consultation appears to have the most defined structure for facilitating problem-solving. Behavioral consultation refers to a series of stages that direct and focus the problem-solving inquiries between a consultant and consultee. The activities of the consultants are multifaceted in that there are opportunities for interviews, observational assessments, treatment of a target behavior, and evaluation of the treatment.

As Burrello and Wright (1993) suggest, there must be a variety of components at work which will make the inclusion of behaviorally challenged students possible. These components include collaboration among teachers and administrators, cooperative learning, joint ownership for student integration, effective teaching practices and development of teacher skills in adapting and modifying the curriculum to meet students' needs.

As Affleck, Lowenbraun and Archer (1980) point out, teachers' primary management efforts should focus on prevention rather than treatment of behavioral problems. Telling children what behaviors are desired, demonstrating or modelling the behaviors, and providing feedback and reinforcement for appropriate behaviors are particularly important.

Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment

Brophy and Evertson (1976), define "classroom management" as the planning and the organization of activities in an orderly fashion, where students are actively engaged in lessons and seatwork activities with a minimum of disruptions and discipline problems. This section will therefore describe how regular teachers can: help students to stay on task; prevent or control discipline problems; run smooth classrooms and, become effective motivators. In addition, this section will explain the importance of pre- and post-service, teacher characteristics, students' previous achievement, and the role of the special needs teacher in the future.

Brophy and Evertson found that student engagement in lessons and activities was indeed key to successful classroom management. The successful teachers ran smooth, well-paced lessons with few interruptions, and their students worked consistently at their seatwork. The curriculum was interesting, varied, appropriate and individualized for each particular student.

Discipline was never a problem in well-managed classrooms. Most of the teachers worked in small groups, so that it was

easier to monitor events going on elsewhere. Because teachers were aware of what was going on at all times in the room, potential problems were spotted and "nipped in the bud" before they ever became serious.

These teachers always handled problems calmly and effectively. It seemed clear that teachers who had fewer discipline problems had more time available for teaching and were more successful at getting concepts across to students.

Again, the successful classroom managers had classrooms that seemed to run smoothly, almost "automatically". This was a result of the teacher's organization and careful planning of where and how to use classroom monitors. These monitors were responsible for certain daily business that could cause frustrating delays and waste time if not handled efficiently. The organized teachers also had fewer classroom rules which were explained well at the beginning of the year. These rules were fairly general, having to do with: attention; respect for the teacher and fellow classmates; walking in an orderly fashion; and, remaining quiet. Also, these rules were fairly flexible so that the teacher could interpret them strictly or loosely, depending upon the immediate situation.

Porter and Richler (1991) feel that smoothly running classrooms have teachers who are motivators. These educators have regular discussions with their students on the benefits of sharing ideas, problem-solving techniques and responsibility. They point out that providing motivation includes designing a

wide range of activities and multi-level lessons which students find interesting and challenging.

Porter and Richler (1991), go on to say that the physical layout of the classroom should reflect a well-organized setting where materials are organized and visible, instructions for activities are posted, specific places for completed assignments are established, as are procedures for leaving the classroom, arriving late and using free time. At all times students know exactly what they are supposed to be doing, while the teacher is responsible for designing, initiating, and monitoring all activities.

According to Ainscow (1991), there should be pre- and post-service where teachers are re-educated about inclusive teaching, rather than managing individual problems as they occur in the integrated classroom.

Ainscow goes on to say that effective integrated schools were found to have teachers that were supportive, inviting and not afraid to assert their views about management and decision making with the staff. Also, they provided a structured learning situation where freedom and personal responsibility were encouraged. Through the use of flexible whole-class and individual contacts, communication was maximized for each student. Furthermore, by limiting their focus within a session, teachers' attention was less fragmented, and the opportunities for presenting challenging work to pupils were increased.

Ainscow (1991), goes on to say that the challenge for all teachers and schools is to develop further teaching strategies which recognize the different previous attainments of pupils. All needs should be met by having students move from one level to the next through a curriculum that has a built-in progression.

Ainscow (1991), continues to explain that the role of the special educator in our schools of the future will be to assist in finding the best differentiated curriculum for all, rather than a few. He points out that they will need to employ their expertise in advising on teaching and learning rather than strictly on "special needs". Also, they will need to decide on planning for differentiation, on resource production to ensure that there is material available in each class to support the learning of all pupils irrespective of their previous attainments. Furthermore, they will be responsible for collaborating about classroom strategies, individual and group work, assessment and accurately matching the curriculum offered to each pupil's ability level.

Mortimore (1993), sums up the effective classroom as one in which expectations are pitched high and are sustained over time. He believes that classroom management is systematic and fair and stresses rewards rather than punishment. Also, he points out that the effective classroom involves a balanced curriculum which is well prepared, where students are able to receive detailed and positive feedback along with support and supplementary help if the need arises. He goes on to say that these factors are simply

a means toward the end of effective learning and none, by themselves, are likely to guarantee successful outcomes.

Monitoring/Evaluation procedures

It is very important that teachers monitor and evaluate their classroom instruction and student management programs if they are to experience the optimum level of effectiveness. This section will focus on the significance of different types and qualities of instruction, precise and systematic teaching, adjustment to classroom management, evaluation procedures, preparation of the instructional sequence and knowledge of instructional procedures.

Bloom, Madaus and Hastings (1981), purport that individual students may need very different types and qualities of instruction to achieve mastery. As was mentioned earlier in this chapter, some students may need concepts explained several times through teacher demonstration and practical "hands-on" experience, while others may need only to have a concept explained verbally. In any case, the curriculum should be flexible enough to provide whatever help is required in order for a student with learning disabilities to achieve mastery.

Affleck, Lowenbraun and Archer (1980), believe that precise and systematic teaching depends on a teacher who is constantly aware of a student's ability, so that decisions can be made to efficiently use instructional time. It is important that too much time is not spent reteaching or too little time is spent teaching.

Brophy and Evertson (1976), conclude that classroom management should be adjusted to take into account changes in children as they occur. Different children, and even the same children at different levels of development, require different treatment for optimal results, for example, a student during the middle of the term may need less individual help than he or she needed at the beginning.

Madaus (1981), explains that in order for evaluation procedures to be fair and valid, they have to be geared to the actual educational experience of the students. It is also important that teachers ask themselves if the evaluation procedures are a direct result of the objectives of the instruction. The evaluation procedures must reflect the objectives in the most direct way possible if they are to influence and reinforce the instructional process designed to achieve these objectives.

Evaluation should not be limited to recall and recognition of facts. Bloom (1981), argues the need for assessing all types of skills, abilities, attitudes, and feelings. He points out that only by designing evaluation procedures that permit students to exhibit these multiple skills will there be any assurance that students attempt to acquire them.

Teachers should make sure that pupils are prepared for a particular instructional sequence. Madaus (1981), goes on to say that evaluation procedures can assure that the pupil is properly placed by using such things as pretests, interviews, and

behavioral checklists. Evaluation procedures can contribute to the improvement of teaching and learning at several points in the instructional process. Bloom (1981), points out that evaluation should not be solely for grading and marking, but used as a feedback mechanism which helps teachers and learners identify and correct weaknesses, while there is still an opportunity to redirect efforts.

Teachers must be progressive individuals who are competent enough to seek knowledge about widely achieved instructional programs and implement them as best they can. According to Pratt (1989), researchers in elementary and secondary education have provided evidence to suggest that learner performance in several subject areas can be significantly increased if the teacher follows certain procedures. The most significant body of knowledge to support this view comes from mastery learning (Bloom, 1984) and direct instruction (Rosenshine and Stevens, 1986).

Teachers must be constantly evaluating what they know and what they need to know about current teaching practices, so that they can create the most enhancing environment for all students. As Fullan (1993) suggests, teachers should be knowledgeable about, committed to, and skilled in developing and applying knowledge of curriculum, instruction, principles of learning, and evaluation needed to implement and monitor effective and evolving programs for all learners.

Conclusion

As educators, teachers must learn to "bridge the gap" between special education and regular education. They must draw upon the teaching practices and strategies that will meet the needs of all students, where collaboration and problem-solving are part of the curriculum. Ainscow (1991), purports that a school that is based upon a cooperative structure is likely to make good use of the expertise of all personnel, provide sources of stimulation and enrichment that will foster their professional development, and encourage positive attitudes to the introduction of new ways of working.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

Overview

Fullan (1993) believes that each teacher should be knowledgeable about, committed to, and skilled in working with all students in an equitable, effective, and caring manner by respecting the special needs of each learner.

This chapter focuses on the design of study, the description of the sample, the nature and construction of the instrument, the validity and reliability of the questionnaire along with the collection and analysis of the data.

Design of study

This study: (1) utilizes a questionnaire based on current research that explores successful teaching practices that educators feel are vital for integrated classrooms with students who have learning disabilities; (2) investigates whether these teaching practices are viewed as being important through the use of a questionnaire, by regular, full-time teachers in the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board; and, (3) identifies if there is a difference between background variables and the attitude of teachers toward teaching strategies and practices used in an integrated classroom. The eight background variables used for this questionnaire are as follows: gender, present teaching assignment, number of years teaching experience, present

teaching level, number of university level, special education courses, inservice training, number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom and class size for regular teachers with integrated students.

Description of population

The population of this study includes all full-time regular classroom teachers who teach in the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board. This school board represents one of the smaller populations in Newfoundland and Labrador schools with 3,356.5 students for the school year 1992-93. These statistics can be found in Education Statistics, for Newfoundland and Labrador.

The target population studied involved identifying the total number of regular classroom teachers at the primary, elementary, intermediate and high school levels in nine schools. For the purpose of this study any teacher who did not teach regular subjects, such as guidance counsellors, administrators, program co-ordinators, librarians, and special education teachers, were not included in this population.

The number of regular classroom teachers were identified when the researcher met with the principal of each school. The names of teachers were not recorded in order to maintain anonymity, however, each school received numerically coded questionnaires so that the researcher would know how many questionnaires had not been received. If a large number of

questionnaires were not returned, the researcher called the principal to ask him or her to put a message out to teachers over the P.A. system.

Rather than employing a sample of teachers from this area, it was decided to use all teachers from this board, due to the small number of regular classroom teachers. As a result, one hundred forty-nine full-time, regular classroom teachers were identified during the winter of 1994; nine teachers from one primary school, seventy-one teachers from four elementary schools, thirty-two teachers from two intermediate level schools and thirty-seven teachers from one high school.

Nature and construction of the instrument

The first section of the questionnaire was adopted from the Cannon et. al. (1992) study. Of the 54 statements that were adopted from Cannon's study for this questionnaire, educators had a level of consensus between 95 and 100 percent in favour of particular teaching practices. The wording of the original statements from Cannon's study to this study was not altered, nor was it for the six category headings. The categories are as follows: (a) assessment/diagnosis, (b) instructional content, (c) instructional practices, (d) managing student behavior, (e) planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, and (f) monitoring/evaluation procedures.

The questionnaire used a Likert-type scale (i.e. 1=unimportant; 2=somewhat important; 3=important; 4=very important). Teachers had to indicate the extent to which they

felt that each teaching practice was important for integrating students with mild learning disabilities into the regular classroom.

The second section of the questionnaire was developed by the researcher and includes demographic information about teacher background variables.

The primary analysis consists of descriptive tabulations and the use of chi-square tests of independence to determine the significance of the difference between the six categories and each of the following eight background variables: gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students.

Validity and reliability

The existence of the Cannon (1990) instruments, with the reliability and validity confirmed, eliminated the need to design and test a format which would provide further verification of statements. In Cannon's study, these statements were developed as a result of an extensive literature review across the discipline of educational psychology, teacher education, reading education, general education, and special education. The Delphi investigation also involved both academicians and practitioners from general and special education and related fields.

Collection of the data

A six page questionnaire, cover letter and directions were developed, which requested regular classroom teachers to rate on a Likert-type scale the extent to which they felt a particular teaching practice was important for regular classroom teachers to use in an integrated classroom. The second part of the questionnaire entailed having regular classroom teachers provide demographic information which indicated knowledge about their unique background experiences.

An interview was requested by the researcher with the assistant superintendent to explain the purpose of this research. A copy of the questionnaire was provided along with a letter requesting permission to carry out this research. All sample letters can be found in Appendix C.

In order to facilitate the delivery and return of the questionnaires, the researcher hand delivered them to the school principals and the internal mail service of the school board was used for their return. The number of regular classroom teachers were identified when the principal met with the researcher for distribution of the questionnaires. In addition, the researcher explained the purpose of the research and that the principal must place a copy of each questionnaire in teachers' mailboxes by March 22. A letter to the principal was provided to further validate the focus of the research. Also, reminder cards were contained within this package. The principal was responsible for placing them in individual teacher mailboxes on Monday, April 11,

immediately after Easter break. To ensure that principals had distributed these cards, a telephone call was made to each principal on Tuesday, April 12. The regular classroom teachers had approximately one month to complete the questionnaire and returned them to their principal by April 18. Finally, the principal returned the questionnaires to the school board office by April 20, where they were held for collection by the researcher.

When the questionnaire was sent to each teacher, a cover letter was also enclosed which explained the purpose of the study and requested participation from the regular teachers to provide information about teaching practices.

During a one month period, questionnaires were administered to one hundred forty-nine teachers. Thirty-five percent of this population returned these questionnaires after the one month period was up.

Because the researcher may carry out more extensive research across the island at a later time, it was decided that a questionnaire format would be the best way of obtaining information on such a widely dispersed population. Also, a questionnaire would provide a broad range of information on teaching practices.

Analysis of the data

A descriptive analysis of teacher background variables was made using frequency tables which included percentages of responses. The background variables were as follows: gender;

present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses; inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students.

An item-by-item analysis of the teaching practice statements was also conducted to obtain frequencies and percentages of responses.

A discussion of the importance of each statement, as ranked by teachers was prepared under the six category headings:

a) assessment/diagnosis; b) instructional content;
c) instructional practices; d) managing student behavior;
e) planning and managing the teaching and learning environment;
and, f) monitoring/evaluation procedures. Tables accompany the discussions.

Chi-square tests of independence were conducted to evaluate any differences between teachers' perceptions of teaching practices found under the six categories:

a) assessment/diagnosis; b) instructional content;
c) instructional practices; d) managing student behavior;
e) planning and managing the teaching and learning environment;
and, f) monitoring/evaluation procedures, when the teacher population was sub-grouped according to gender; present teaching assignment; number of years teaching experience; present teaching level; number of university level, special education courses;

inservice training; number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; and, class size for regular teachers with integrated students. To evaluate differences between the subgroups of teachers, a significance level was set at .05. Where significant differences were found between the subgroups, an appropriate teacher correlational statistic was computed to determine the magnitude of the relationship between subgroup membership and item-response. Findings were presented using tables and written descriptions. For example, the chi-square statistic was computed to compare responses, sub-grouped by gender, on the item concerning assessment/diagnosis. The SPSS program was used to compute chi-square which evaluated whether there were significant differences between the teachers, sub-grouped by gender, in what they perceived to be the importance of assessment/diagnosis.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This chapter includes a description of the population surveyed with tables 1/8 indicating specific statistical information. The second section of this chapter shows tables 9/14 which represent ratings of teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. The final section of this chapter uses tables 15/39 to show comparisons between background variables and teachers' responses to teaching practices. Findings are presented using the research questions as a format for discussion. All items in the questionnaire are presented.

Description of the population surveyed

The population consisted of 149 full time, regular classroom teachers, 9 teachers from one primary school, 71 teachers from four elementary schools, 32 teachers from two intermediate level schools and 37 teachers from one high school. For the purpose of this study any teacher (e.g., guidance counsellors, administrators, program co-ordinators, librarians, music, physical education and special education teachers) who did not teach regular subjects were excluded from the population. Rather than employing a sampling procedure, the entire population of regular classroom teachers were asked to participate in this study.

Of the 149 teachers in the population, 35 percent returned the completed questionnaire.

The following section presents tables 1/8 with a description of the population surveyed.

Table 1

Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	36	69.2
Male	14	26.9
Missing Cases	2	3.8
Total	52	100.0

As can be seen from table one, over 69.2 percent of the population that returned the survey were female, while only 26.9 percent were male.

Table 2

Present Teaching Assignment

Teaching Level	Frequency	Percent
Primary	20	38.5
Elementary	11	21.2
Intermediate	12	23.1
High School	8	15.4
Missing Cases	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

Table two represents the present grade level of teaching for teachers who completed the questionnaire. The highest number of teachers responding were from the primary level of teaching while the lowest number responding were from high school.

Table 3

Number of Years Teaching Experience

Years	Frequency	Percent
1-2	1	1.9
3-5	7	13.5
6-9	5	9.6
10+	38	73.1
Missing Cases	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

Table three reports the number of years teaching experience for each teacher. It can be seen that over half, 73.1 percent of teachers had ten or more years of teaching. This illustrates that a large percentage of teachers who completed the questionnaire were quite experienced.

Table 4

Present Teaching Level

Teaching Level	Frequency	Percent
1-3	0	0
4-5	20	38.5
6-7	32	61.5
Missing Cases	0	0
Total	52	100.0

Table four describes the number of teachers in the population by their present teaching level. This table reports that 38.5 percent of teachers responding to the questionnaire had a grade four to five teaching level. The highest number of teachers responding, 61.5 percent, had a teaching level of six to seven. This indicates that teachers completing this survey were highly qualified individuals.

Table 5

Number of University Level Special Education Courses

Number of courses	Frequency	Percent
0	21	40.4
1-2	10	19.2
3-5	13	25.0
6-9	3	5.8
10+	4	7.7
Missing cases	1	1.9
Total	52	100.0

Table five indicates that over half of the respondents had courses in special education with the majority of these individuals having three to five courses in this area. It should be noted that a high number of teachers, 40.4 percent, did not have any courses in special education.

Table 6

Number of Students with Mild Learning Disabilities Presently Integrated into the Teacher's Regular Classroom

Number of Integrated Students	Frequency	Percent
0	8	15.4
1-2	8	15.4
3-5	22	42.3
6-9	7	13.5
10+	7	13.5
Missing cases Total	52	100.0

Table six reports that the number of students integrated into a regular classroom for teachers who responded to this survey were three to five students.

Table 7

Class Size For Regular Teachers With Integrated Students

Class Size	Frequency	Percent
11-15	6	11.5
16-20	9	17.3
21-25	9	17.3
26-30	13	25.0
31+	5	9.6
Missing cases	10	19.2
Total	52	100.0

Table seven indicates that the class size for regular teachers with integrated students is between twenty-six to thirty students, however, class size seems to be quite spread out for teachers completing this survey. Haglund and Stevens (1980) believe that, as a result of increased individualized instruction, the necessity for lower teacher student ratios may emerge and small class sizes will become a reality.

Table 8

Inservice Training

Response	Frequency	Percent
Yes	14	26.9
No	36	69.2
Missing Cases	2	3.8
Total	52	100.0

The majority of teachers, 69.2%, did not receive any inservice training prior to having students with mild learning disabilities integrated into their classrooms. Teachers' perceptions of teaching strategies and practices

This section of the chapter uses tables 9/14 to present comparisons between background variables and teachers' responses to teaching practices. The research question is used as a format for discussion.

Question 1. What are the strategies and teaching practices that teachers feel are important in order to meet the needs of students who are classified as mild learning disabled in a regular classroom setting?

The questionnaire attempted to rank the importance of teachers' perceptions under six category headings:

a) assessment/diagnosis; b) instructional content;
c) instructional practices; d) managing student behavior;
e) planning and managing the teaching and learning environment;
and, f) monitoring/evaluation procedures. Tables 9/14 accompany the discussions.

Assessment/Diagnosis

Of the 52 teachers responding to this category on the questionnaire, all teachers ranked the statements very high with the exception of one. As can be seen in table 9, the statement that was rated the lowest was assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and

(d) maintenance, with a 25% rating in the highest ranked category of most importance. Only 73% of the teacher population thought this practice was important in the first and second categories of importance, while over 90% of the teacher population thought the other practices under this category heading were important. This was not consistent with Cannons' findings which had a higher level of consensus for this teaching practice. Cannon (1990) found support for this practice from research synthesis conducted by Baer, Wolf, & Risley, 1968 and Lovitt, 1975a, 1975b. Also she found support from application of theory and research to practice in Heron & Harris, 1987 and Wolery, Bailey & Sugai, 1988.

Teachers felt that maintaining knowledge of and contact with, and making use of, both regular and special education staff expertise and resources for class-wide and/or specific student problems or instructional goals was the most important practice for regular classroom teachers to follow when assessing and diagnosing students who have mild learning disabilities in the regular class. It received a rating of 76.9%. To support this teaching practice further, Ainscow (1991) points out that the role of special educators in the effective school should be to assist other colleagues with assessment and the appropriate matching of the curriculum to each pupil's previous attainment. The second highest ranked statement was conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses. This statement received a rating of 69.2%. The third highest statement to be ranked was assessing students' stages of

learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within content areas, with a 50% rating.

Table 9

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Assessment/Diagnosis

Assessment/ Diagnosis	Rating				N=
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Important %	Unimportant %	
Maintain knowledge of and contact with, and make use of, both regular and special education staff expertise and resources for class-wide and/or specific student problems or instructional goals.	76.9	21.2	1.9	-	52
Conduct classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses.	69.2	26.9	3.8	-	52
Assess students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas.	50.0	42.3	7.7	-	51
Analyze student error patterns as guides to revising instruction.	46.2	48.1	3.8	-	52

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Assessment/Diagnosis

Determine instructional needs of students through use of curriculum-based assessments that contain content of curricula taught in general classrooms.	42.3	48.1	7.7	1.9	52
Assess individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance.	25.0	48.1	21.2	3.8	52

Instructional content

Table 10 shows that teachers thought that most all teaching practices were important in the highest two categories of importance when making use of instructional content, but at varying degrees. Teachers believed that generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals was very important and received a 63.5% rating, which was the highest rating overall for this category of importance. Translating objectives into active learning experiences that present students with opportunities to (a) use what they already know about the subject matter (e.g., their prior knowledge) and (b) make meaningful and valid connections between the new subject and their existing structure (e.g. their schemata) ranked second in the perceived highest level of importance with a 59.6% rating.

Selecting or modifying learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum ranked third in importance with a 53.8% rating. Similar ratings were found in three other statements. Modifying curricular materials to meet individual student needs received a 51.9% rating. Developing adaptive teaching approaches to provide equal opportunity to reach common educational goals despite individual differences in aptitude received a 50% rating, while teaching learning strategies that (a) correspond to the major demands of the curriculum and (b) facilitate independence and responsibility also received a 50% rating. The statements that received the lowest ratings of importance were, designing instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content. They received a 30.8% rating and the lowest rated statement, teaching comprehension monitoring (e.g., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes) received 28.8% rating.

In summary, over 90% of the teacher population thought that the first four practices were important in the first and second category of importance, while over 85% of the teachers thought the fifth and sixth practices were important, 75% felt that the seventh practice was important and 81% felt the last practice was important.

Table 10

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Content

Instructional Content	Rating				N=
	Very	Somewhat	Important	Unimportant	
	Important	Important			
%	%	%	%		
Generate teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals.	63.5	30.8	5.8	-	52
Translate objectives into active learning experiences that present students with opportunities to (a) use what they already know about the subject matter (e.g., their prior knowledge) and (b) make meaningful and valid connections between the new subject and their existing structure (e.g., their schemata).	59.6	32.7	3.8	-	52
Select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum.	53.8	38.5	7.7	-	52
Modify curricular materials to meet individual student needs.	51.9	42.3	5.8	-	52
Teach learning strategies that (a) correspond to	50.0	38.5	9.6	1.9	52

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Content

the major demands of the curriculum and (b) facilitate independence and responsibility.					
Develop adaptive teaching approaches to provide equal opportunity to reach common educational goals despite individual differences in aptitude.	50.0	36.5	9.6	-	52
Design instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content.	30.8	44.2	19.2	1.9	50
Teach comprehension monitoring (e.g., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes).	28.8	51.9	13.5	3.8	51

Instructional practices

Again, by looking at table 11, one can observe that the teachers in this survey felt that all the instructional practices for integrating students with mild learning disabilities were important. Teachers thought it was most important to encourage student accountability for careful, complete work by consistently checking and following up with additional assignments when

necessary. This statement received a 73.1% rating, which was the highest rating overall in the "very important" category. Maximizing student success by having students move in small steps through new objectives, practising new learning to mastery level, integrating new learning to mastery level, integrating new learnings with old, and generalizing learning to applied situations, and the statement, assisting students in developing independent study behaviors needed for learning course content, preparing assignments, and taking tests, both ranked second in importance with a 61.5% rating. The statements least frequently ranked by regular classroom teachers in the "very important" category were, balancing teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability, with a 26.9% rating and emphasizing academic instruction as a major part of teachers' teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics, with a 21.2% rating.

In summary, of the teaching population who responded to this questionnaire, 90% or higher rated eight practices first and second in importance, 80% and higher rated five practices first and second, over 75% rated three practices first and second, while only one practice was rated below 70% in the first and second category of importance.

Table 11

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Practices

Instructional Practices	Rating				N=
	Very	Somewhat	Important	Unimportant	
	Important	Important			
%	%	%	%		
Encourage student accountability for careful, complete work by consistently checking and following up with additional assignments when necessary.	73.1	23.1	1.9	-	52
Assist students in developing independent study behaviors needed for learning course content, preparing assignments, and taking tests.	61.5	34.6	3.8	-	52
Maximize student success by having students move in small steps through new objectives, practice new learning to mastery level, integrate new learning to mastery level, integrate new learnings with old, and generalize learning to applied situations.	61.5	30.8	7.7	-	52
Provide opportunity for students of all	57.7	28.8	11.5	1.9	52

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Practices

ages and abilities to respond to thought-provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving.

Develop critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction.	55.8	28.8	13.5	-	51
Promote student success by matching instructional materials to skill levels, providing materials that are somewhat new and challenging but relatively easy for students to assimilate to existing knowledge.	53.8	38.5	7.7	-	52
Structure presentation of instruction to improve student information processing (e.g., focus on clear, organized presentation of essential and meaningful information, with ample repetition and review).	53.8	36.5	9.6	-	52
Focus teacher talk on academic rather than procedural or	51.9	28.8	15.4	-	50

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Practices

managerial matters; ask questions and give feedback rather than lecture extensively.					
Minimize student errors by choosing tasks students can handle without frustration, explaining tasks clearly before seatwork begins, and monitoring performance to provide immediate help and corrective feedback when needed.	50.0	44.2	3.8	-	51
Utilize small groups for direct instruction and teaching to increase learning for students of varying ability.	50.0	34.6	13.5	-	51
Encourage student response by asking only one question at a time, phrasing questions clearly and at appropriate levels of difficulty so that most answers are correct, and allowing ample wait-time for a response before calling on another student.	46.2	46.2	5.8	-	51
Focus on active teaching, direct instruction, and supervised practice to maximize student achievement.	46.2	42.3	11.5	-	52
Teach for positive transfer (both specific transfer of basic skills to more	46.2	32.7	15.4	-	49

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Instructional Practices

advanced subjects and general transfer of principles, attitudes,

and problem solving for life in a complex society).

Develop instructional strategies for presentation of subject matter through sequencing and synthesizing the content to be taught.	40.4	51.9	5.8	1.9	52
Provide content to students through student -teacher interactions (e.g., through brief presentations followed by recitation or application opportunities) rather than relying on curricular materials to convey information.	30.8	46.2	21.2	-	51
Balance teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability.	26.9	42.3	28.8	1.9	52
Emphasize academic instruction as a major part of their teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics.	21.2	57.7	19.2	-	52

Managing student behavior

As can be seen in table 12, teaching practices that were considered to be very important for managing student behavior received fairly high ratings overall, with the exception of one statement. Managing student behaviors using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives, received the lowest ranking in the "very important" category, with a 7.7% rating. Cannon (1990), had a much higher level of consensus for this teaching practice. Cannon found support for this practice through descriptive scientific research in Brophy & Evertson, 1974. There was also support in research synthesis found in Corno & Snow, 1986, Doyle 1986, Soar & Soar, 1979. Further support came from application of theory and research to practice in Gilliam, 1987. One fifth of the teacher population felt that this practice was unimportant altogether which indicates a higher percentage of rejection than can be found for any other practice under the six category headings. Teachers felt that responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently was very important and ranked it highest in the category with an 80.8% rating. In addition to Cannon's high level of support for this teaching practice, Brophy and Evertson (1986) found a similar finding in their research. They identified that because teachers were aware of what was going on at all times in the classroom, potential problems were spotted and "nipped in the bud" before they ever became serious. It should be noted that this statement was rated higher than any

should be noted that this statement was rated higher than any other under the six category headings. The second highest ranked statement in this category was to minimize negative interactions with students (e.g., avoid personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or blaming the wrong student for misbehavior). This statement received a 69.2% rating.

Overall, 90% or higher of the teaching population rated the first, second and fifth practice as most important in the first and second categories of importance. The third and fourth practices were rated important in the first and second categories by slightly more than 85% of the teacher population. In contrast to this, only 44% of teachers thought the last practice was important in the first and second categories.

Table 12

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Managing Student Behavior

Managing Student Behavior	Rating				N=
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Important %	Unimportant %	
Respond to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently.	80.8	15.4	3.8	-	52
Minimize negative interactions with students (e.g., avoid personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or	69.2	23.1	7.7	-	52

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Managing Student Behavior

blaming the wrong student for misbehavior).					
Develop group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective	55.8	30.8	9.6	-	50
Increase access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom activity.	51.9	34.6	11.5	1.9	52
Design and implement classroom management programs.	40.4	50.0	7.7	-	51
Manage student behaviors, using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives.	7.7	36.5	30.8	17.3	48

Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment

Table 13 reveals that teachers consistently felt that the statements for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment were very important and somewhat important with minor variations in ratings. Organizing classroom and instruction to optimize time spent on active learning received the highest rating of 65.4% in the "very important" category. Providing practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning

activities (e.g., seatwork and homework), received the second highest rating of 55.8% in the "very important" category. In comparison to this, the practice, counteracting negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and, by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate, was considered to be very important by 51.9% of the teacher population and ranked third in importance for that category. Appraising the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches (e.g., discovery learning requires higher level thinking skills; direct instruction and controlled readability reduces the processing challenges for students) was considered very important for only 26.9% of the teacher population and ranked last in this particular category.

In short, 90% or higher of the teacher population felt that five of these teaching practices were important in the first and second category of importance, while 84% of the teachers or slightly higher felt that the other practices should be ranked first and second.

Table 13

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment	Rating				N=
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Important %	Unimportant %	
Organize classroom and instruction to optimize time spent on active learning.	65.4	30.8	3.8	-	52
Provide practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning activities (e.g., seatwork, homework).	55.8	38.5	3.8	1.9	52
Counteract negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate.	51.9	38.5	5.8	1.9	51
Facilitate learning by mediating and controlling learning	51.9	32.7	7.7	3.8	50

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own.

Use cooperative learning experiences to facilitate motivational outcomes(e.g., persistence, peer support, self-esteem, positive self-attributes), as well as academic achievement for lower as well as higher achievers.	50.0	42.3	7.7	-	52
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Create integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them.	50.0	34.6	15.4	-	52
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Foster learning in small, mixed-ability groups by structuring lessons so that students have joint responsibility for shared goals as well as individual accountability for mastery of those goals.	46.2	36.5	15.4	1.9	52
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Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.).	48.1	44.2	5.8	1.9	52
Arrange student entry, exit, and seating; materials and equipment upkeep and storage; and other aspects of physical space and movement in accordance with instructional objectives and teaching methods.	44.2	42.3	13.5	-	52
Attend to age-related needs of students to gain their cooperation in establishing classroom order (e.g., the need for self-management increases with age).	44.2	44.2	11.5	-	52
Appraise the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches (e.g., discovery learning requires higher level thinking skills; direct instruction and controlled readability	26.9	57.7	9.6	1.9	50

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

reduces the processing challenges for students).

Monitoring/evaluation procedures

As can be seen in table 14, teachers again rated most of the statements under monitoring/evaluation procedures fairly evenly throughout the two categories: "very important" and "somewhat important". Teachers felt that employing direct, frequent measurement of student progress toward completion of instructional objectives, using the data on pupil performance and progress to plan, was most important and gave it a 50% rating. Developing objective, reliable, responsive measures for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student management programs was rated second in importance in the "very important" category with a rating of 48.1%. Of this teacher population, 42.2% felt that planning and evaluating instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions, was very important. The lowest rated statement was translating relevant educational research findings into effective classroom based practice, which received a 30.8% rating in the very important category.

Three of the six practices in this category received a 90% or slightly higher rating in the first and second category, while

the other three practices received an 80% or slightly higher rating.

Table 14

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Monitoring/Evaluation Procedures

Monitoring Evaluation Procedures	Rating				N=
	Very Important %	Somewhat Important %	Important %	Unimportant %	
Employ direct, frequent measurement of student progress toward completion of instructional objectives, using the data on pupil performance and progress to plan future instruction.	50.0	46.2	1.9	-	51
Develop objective, reliable, responsive measures for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student management programs.	48.1	44.2	3.8	1.9	52
Assess the effectiveness of widely implemented, carefully studied instructional programs and modify to achieve the greatest amount of learning in own classroom.	46.2	38.5	13.5	-	51
Plan and evaluate instructional interventions for students who	42.3	50.0	7.7	-	52

Teachers' Ratings of the Category: Monitoring/Evaluation Procedures

experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions.

Engage in self-evaluation of personal knowledge, beliefs, and expectations that shape classroom practice and influence student achievement.	40.4	46.2	9.6	-	52
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Translate relevant educational research findings into effective classroom-based practice.	30.8	50.0	17.3	1.9	52
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In conclusion, this study showed that all the teachers surveyed, felt that these practices were important with only minor variations in ratings. Nearly one-half, 26 of the 54 teaching practices received a 90% rating or higher in the first two categories: "very important" and "somewhat important". Thirty percent of the teaching practices received an 80-89% rating in the two most important categories, while nearly 10% of the statements received a 70-79% rating. Only 4% of the strategies and practices, two statements, received ratings below 70%.

Under managing student behavior, four-fifths of the teacher

population felt that responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently, was most important and received high ratings for this category and the highest across all six category headings. Only one-tenth of the teacher population thought that managing student behaviors, using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives, was "very important". The rating for this category was the lowest found across all six category headings. Also, nearly twenty percent of the teacher population thought that this teaching practice was "unimportant" altogether.

The instructional practice that nearly three-quarters of teachers felt was most important to use in an integrated classroom was, encouraging student accountability for careful, complete work by consistently checking and following up with additional assignments when necessary. The instructional practices that were perceived by the teacher population to be the least important in the "very important" category were: balancing teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability; and, emphasizing academic instruction as a major part of teachers' teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics.

In the category assessment/diagnosis, slightly more than three-quarters of the teachers, rated maintaining knowledge of and contact with, and making use of, both regular and special education staff expertise and resources for class-wide and/or

specific student problems or instructional goals, as being most important. Assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance, was considered to be least important in the "very important" category with only one quarter of the teaching population agreeing with this.

Again, under the category heading monitoring/evaluation procedures, teachers rated teaching practices fairly evenly in importance. One-half of the population felt that employing direct, frequent measurement of student progress toward completion of instructional objectives, using the data on pupil performance and progress to plan, was most important, while nearly three-tenths of the teacher population rated, translating relevant educational research findings into effective classroom-based practice, as least important in the most important category.

Ratings for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment were fairly even in importance throughout this category. The highest rating in the "very important" category was given by nearly seven-tenths of teachers, who perceived, organizing classroom and instruction to optimize time spent on active learning, as most important. In contrast to this, appraising the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches, was thought to be least important.

Under instructional content, generating teaching objectives

from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, was considered most important by three-fifths of the teacher population. Other teaching practices in this category were perceived fairly evenly in importance except for, teaching comprehension monitoring (e.g., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes), which was thought to be "very important" by only slightly more than one-quarter of the teaching population. Designing instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content, ranked low in the "very important" category with only three-tenths of the teacher population in acceptance.

Teacher differences

In this section of the chapter tables 15/39 represent comparisons between background variables and teachers' responses to teaching practices. Again the researcher uses the research question as a format for discussion.

Question 2. What is the relationship between regular teacher attitudes toward teaching strategies and practices for integrating students with mild learning disabilities into regular classrooms and certain background variables, namely: gender, present teaching assignment, number of years teaching experience,

present teaching level, number of university level, special education courses, inservice training, number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom and class size for regular teachers with integrated students?

Teacher responses from the questionnaire were analyzed, using a chi-square test of independence, with a significance level set at .05, to determine if teachers' responses were related to the eight background variables as mentioned above. If a relationship was detected, an appropriate measure of correlation was calculated to determine the magnitude of the relationship.

Tau (τ) was used as the correlation coefficient for data which was in rank form, such as, number of special education courses and ratings of the importance of assessment/diagnosis. The correlation ratio eta (η) was used when the variables to be calculated were in the form of data which was unordered, such as gender, and ordered, such as the importance of assessment/diagnosis. The correlation coefficients ranging from .02 to .24 showed a "slight" relationship, while .25 to .49 showed a "moderate" relationship.

Gender

Shown in table 15 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for assessment/diagnosis as related to gender. For all the variables where gender was related to teachers' responses, the

relationships were moderate for the first two practices and slight for the third.

In the assessment/diagnostic category, the statement, conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, was rated first in importance by 83% of females and only 43% of males. In the first and second category of importance 97% of the female population rated this practice first or second, while 93% of the male population did so. This shows a high acceptance of this teaching practice overall.

Assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine students skill levels within specific content areas, was rated first in importance by 64% of females and only 21% of males. This practice was rated first and second in importance by 95% of females and 75% of males.

Assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance, was seen by only 25% of females and 30% of males as being most important. This practice was ranked first or second in importance by 83% of females and 54% of males. It is important to note that 15% of males thought that this practice was unimportant altogether.

Table 15
Significant Relationships Between Gender and Assessment/Diagnosis

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Eta (η)
Conduct classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses.	2	.02	.369
Assess students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas.	2	.03	.361
Assess individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance.	3	.03	.217

Shown in table 16 is a significant difference within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for instructional content as related to gender. For the variable where gender was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

Female teachers ranked the statement: select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum; as most important with a 67% rating while males gave it a 29% rating in this category of importance. In the first and second category of importance, 95% of females and 93% of males ranked this practice important.

Table 16

Significant Relationships Between Gender and Instructional Content

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Eta (η)
Select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum.	2	.05	.293

Shown in table 17 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for instructional practices as related to gender. For the variable where gender was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

Under the category instructional practices, developing critical thinking skills either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was rated most important by 71% of females and only 29% of males. Regarding the importance overall, 94% of females rated this practice first or second in importance, while only 65% of males rated it so.

Table 17

Significant Relationships Between Gender and Instructional Practices

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Eta (η)
Develop critical thinking skills either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction.	2	.02	.451

Shown in table 18 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for managing student behavior as related to gender. For the variable where gender was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate for the first practice and slight for the second.

Under the category heading managing student behavior, designing and implementing classroom management programs, was ranked first in importance by 50% of females and 23% of males. In addition, this practice was judged to be important by 97% of females and only 77% of males in the first and second category of highest importance.

Responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently, was seen by 89% of females and 57% of males as being most important. In the second category of importance, 6% of females thought this practice was important,

while 43% of males thought it was important. Overall, males rated this teaching practice higher in the first two categories of importance with a 100% rating in comparison to females who had a 95% rating.

Table 18

Significant Relationships Between Gender and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Eta (η)
Design and implement classroom management programs.	2	.04	.334
Respond to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently.	2	.00	.230

Shown in table 19 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment as related to gender. For the variable where gender was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was slight.

Under the category planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, using cooperative learning experiences to facilitate motivational outcomes (e.g., persistence, peer support, self-esteem, positive self attributes), as well as academic achievement for lower as well as higher achievers, was ranked similarly in importance by both males and females. Of the

female population, 56% and 43% of males ranked this practice as most important. In the first and second categories of importance 98% of females and 95% of males rated this practice as important.

Table 19

Significant Relationships Between Gender and Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Eta (η)
Use cooperative learning experiences to facilitate motivational outcomes (e.g., persistence, peer support, self-esteem, positive self attributes), as well as academic achievement for lower as well as higher achievers.	2	.02	.133

In summarizing teachers' perceptions of teaching practices as related to gender, this study revealed that female teachers were more fully accepting of these practices than were males. The most significant differences were found in the "very important" category.

Under the category heading assessment/diagnosis, conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, was rated first in importance by 83% of females and only 43% of males. Assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine students skill levels within specific content areas,

was rated first in importance by 64% of females and only 21% of males. Assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance, was seen by only 25% of females as being most important. Even though 30% of males thought it was most important, 15% thought that this practice was unimportant altogether.

Under instructional content, female teachers ranked the statement: select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum; as most important with a 67% rating while males gave it a 29% rating in this category of importance.

Under the category instructional practices, developing critical thinking skills either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was rated most important by 71% of females and only 29% of males.

Under the category heading managing student behavior, responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently, was seen by 89% of females and 57% of males as being most important. Designing and implementing classroom management programs, was ranked first in importance by 50% of females and 23% of males.

Overall, both males and females thought that these teaching practices were important and rated them so in the first three categories of importance.

Present teaching assignment

Shown in table 20 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for assessment/diagnosis as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were moderate. In the following discussion, present teaching assignment has been grouped as follows: (a) primary; (b) elementary; (c) intermediate; and (d) high school;.

In the category assessment/diagnosis, primary teachers ranked, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas, as most important, with a rating of 75%. This was the highest rating for this teaching practice among all grade levels taught by regular teachers. Elementary teachers rated this statement at 36%, intermediate level teachers rated it at 42%, while high school teachers rated it at only 13% in the category of most importance. Regarding the importance overall, 100% of primary and intermediate level teachers thought this teaching practice was important and rated it so in the first two categories of importance. Also, 100% of elementary and high school teachers

thought this practice was important, and rated it so in the first three categories of importance.

Conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, was ranked most important by 95% of primary teachers compared to only 63% of elementary teachers, 41% of intermediate level teachers and 50% of high school teachers. In addition, this statement received a 100% rating in the first two categories of highest importance by primary, elementary and intermediate level teachers, in contrast to high school teachers who rated this statement 100% important in the first three categories of importance with equal emphasis placed on the second and third category of importance at 25%.

Table 20

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment and Assessment/Diagnosis

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (r)
Assess students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas.	6	.02	-.377
Conduct classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses.	6	.00	-.376

Shown in table 21 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for instructional content as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

Under the category instructional content, 85% of teachers ranked, generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, as most important, while 64% of elementary, 58% of intermediate and only 13% of high school teachers ranked it most important. It is important to note that primary and elementary teachers rated this practice 100% important in the first two categories of importance, while intermediate and high school teachers rated it 100% important in the first three categories of importance.

Table 21

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment and Instructional Content

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Generate teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals.	6	.01	-.400

Shown in table 22 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for instructional practices as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

Under the category instructional practices, developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was ranked highest in importance by primary teachers. It received a 70% rating in the highest category of importance. In comparison, elementary teachers ranked this practice second in importance, with a 60% rating, intermediate level teachers ranked it third in importance with a 42% rating and high school teachers ranked this practice lowest in importance with a 38% rating in the most important category.

Table 22

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment and Instructional Practices

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Develop critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction.	6	.01	-.269

Shown in table 23 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for managing student behavior as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was slight.

In the category managing student behavior, minimizing negative interactions with students (e.g., avoiding personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or blaming the wrong student for misbehavior), was perceived as most important by 80% of primary teachers and 75% of intermediate level teachers. In comparison to this, only 50% of elementary and high school teachers thought this practice was most important.

Table 23

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Minimize negative interactions with students (e.g., avoid personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or blaming the wrong student for misbehavior).	6	.02	-.163

Shown in table 24 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for managing the teaching and learning environment as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were moderate.

In the category, managing the teaching and learning environment, creating integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them, was rated most important by 65% of primary, 46% of elementary, 33% of intermediate and 38% of high school teachers. High school teachers ranked this practice lowest in importance overall, with a rating of 25% in the third category of importance.

The statement, designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.), was perceived as most important by 73% of elementary and 65% of primary teachers. This teaching practice was rated most important by only 25% of high school and 17% of intermediate level teachers. In addition to this, 13% of high school teachers ranked this practice unimportant altogether.

Table 24

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment
and Planning and Managing The Teaching and Learning Environment.

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Create integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them.	6	.05	-.375
Design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.)	9	.05	-.306

Shown in table 25 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for monitoring/evaluation as related to present teaching assignment. For the variable where present teaching assignment was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were moderate.

Under the category monitoring evaluation procedures, 90% or more of the primary, elementary and intermediate level teachers, compared to 76% of high school teachers, judged planning and evaluating instructional interventions for students who

experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions, as important in the first two categories of importance.

Also, 88% of high school teachers believed it was important, in the first two categories of importance, for teachers to, develop objective, reliable, responsive measures for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student management programs, compared to 100% of the other three groups. In contrast to this, 13% of high school teachers thought this practice was unimportant altogether.

Table 25

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Assignment and Monitoring/Evaluation Procedures

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Plan and evaluate instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions.	6	.03	-.334
Develop objective, reliable, responsive measures for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student management programs.	9	.01	-.298

In short, the high school teachers were most likely to rank all the teaching practices under the six category headings as related to teaching level in the category of most importance, lower than the other groups, with the exception of two practices under the category heading, managing the teaching and learning environment. These practices were as follows: create integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them; and, design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing and academic motivation).

Also, in contrast to the other groups, 13% of high school teachers did not think it was important under the category, instructional content, to generate teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, or under the category heading monitoring evaluation/procedures, to plan and evaluate instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instructor, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions.

The primary teachers, on the other hand, ranked all the teaching practices as most important in all six categories with the exception of one practice: design learning activities that

actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing and academic motivation); under the category heading, managing the teaching and learning environment. In this case, a larger percentage of elementary teachers thought this practice was important.

Number of years teaching experience

Shown in table 26 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for managing student behavior as related to number of years teaching experience. For the variable where number of years teaching experience was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was slight.

As can be seen from the category managing student behavior, developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective, was rated highest in importance by 80% of the teachers who had 6-9 years of teaching experience and by 61% of the teachers who had 10 or more years of teaching experience. This practice was rated highly overall, with teachers having 3-9 years of teaching experience, rating this practice at 100% in the first and second category, while teachers who had 10 years or more teaching experience rated it at 89% in the first and second category. Only one teacher fell into the category of 1-2 years teaching experience and this individual rated this practice in the third category of importance, "somewhat important".

Table 26

Significant Relationships Between Number of Years Teaching Experience and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Develop group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective.	6	.05	.061

Shown in table 27 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment as related to number of years teaching experience. For the variable where number of years teaching experience was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate for the first practice and slight for the second and third practices.

Under the category, planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, was believed to be very important by 68% of the teachers who had 10 years or more teaching experience. Similarly, 50% of the (6-9) group thought it was important. In the first and second categories of importance, 100% of the (6-9) group rated this practice important. In comparison, 90% of the (10+) group and 86% of the (3-5) group thought this practice was important. In contrast,

14% of the (3-5) group and 3% of the (10+) group thought this practice was unimportant altogether.

Counteracting negative performance of low-achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and, by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate, was perceived as being most important by the group of teachers who had (10+) years of experience. Similarly, 43% of teachers who had 3-5 years of experience thought this practice was "very important" as did 40% of the group who had 6-9 years of experience. Overall, the teachers who had 6-9 years of teaching experience rated this practice at 100% in the first and second categories of importance, while the teachers who had (10+) years of experience rated it at 95% and the group who had 3-5 years of teaching experience rated it at 86%. Again, it is important to note that 3% of the teachers in the (10+) group rated this practice unimportant.

Also, 53% of teachers who had 10 or more years of experience thought that, developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective, was very important. This rating was similar to the group of teachers (43%) who had 3-5 years of experience as well as the group (40%) who had 6-9 years of experience. Again, teachers who had 3-9 years of teaching experience rated this practice first or second in the highest two

categories of importance. Teachers who had 10 or more years teaching experience rated this practice at 93% in the first and second categories of importance. It is important to note that 3% of this population (10+) group thought this practice was unimportant altogether.

Table 27

Significant Relationships Between Number of Years Teaching Experience and Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p \leq .05)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (r)
Facilitate learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own.	9	.001	.263
Counteract negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and, by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate.	9	.03	.123
Design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.).	9	.03	.076

In conclusion, significant differences between teachers' responses and number of years teaching experience were found only in two categories: planning and managing the teaching and learning environment; and, managing student behavior.

Under planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, was believed to be most important by the (10+) group with a 68% rating in the "very important" category. One-half of the teachers from the (6-9) group judged this practice to be most important, while no teachers in the (3-5) group thought this to be the case.

Counteracting negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and, by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability when appropriate, was perceived to be most important by the (10+) group. Again, slightly more than one half of the teachers in this group thought this practice was "very important", while just less than one-half of the teachers from the (3-5) and (6-9) group felt the same.

Designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing and academic motivation), was rated similarly across all teaching levels. However, just over one-half of the teachers from the (10+) group

judged this practice to be "very important", while just less than one-half of the teachers from the (3-5) and (6-9) group felt the same.

Under managing student behavior, developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective, was seen by 80% of teachers who had 6-9 years of teaching experience as being very important. This was the highest rating overall. In comparison to this, slightly more than one half of the teachers from the (10+) group and less than one half of the teachers from the (3-5) group thought this practice was "very important".

When looking at all six categories, one will find that teachers from the (10+) group judged these practices to be most important, while the teachers from the (3-5) and (1-2) group judged them to be least important.

Present Teaching Level

Shown in table 28 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for instructional practices as related to present teaching level. For the variable where present teaching level was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were moderate for the first practice and less than slight for the second practice.

Under the category instructional practices, providing opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought provoking divergent questions that require critical

thinking and problem solving, was perceived by 75% of teachers in the (4-5) group as "very important". In comparison to this, only 47% in the (6-7) group saw this practice as "very important". Again, teachers who had a teaching level of 4 or 5 had the highest rating of importance in the first and second category (95%), in comparison to teachers who had a certificate level of 6 or 7 (81%).

Developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was seen by 58% of teachers who had a 4th and 5th teaching level as being "very important". Similarly, teachers who had a 6th or 7th teaching level had a 56% rating in the category of most importance. Teachers who had a teaching level of 4 or 5 had a 100% rating of this teaching practice in the first and second category of most importance. In comparison, teachers who had a teaching level of 6 or 7 had a 78% rating in the first and second categories.

Table 28

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Level and Instructional Practices

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Provide opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving.	3	.05	-.277
Develop critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction.	2	.05	-.004

Shown in table 29 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for managing student behavior as related to present teaching level. For the variable where present teaching level was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was slight.

As can be seen under managing student behavior, designing and implementing classroom management programs, was believed to be "very important" by 48% of the teachers in the (6-7) group while 30% of the teachers in the (4-5) group felt this way. Overall, teachers in the (4-5) group rated these practices

highest in the first and second categories of importance with a 100% rating, while teachers in the (6-7) group rated this practice at 87%.

Table 29

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Level and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Design and implement classroom management programs.	2	.05	.089

Shown in table 30 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment as related to present teaching level. For the variable where present teaching level was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

Under the category, planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, 66% of teachers who had a teaching level of 6 or 7 rated, facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, as "very important". In contrast to this, only 33% of teachers who had a 4 or 5 teaching level rated this practice most important. Teachers in the (6-7) group rated

this practice at 91% in the first and second category, while teachers in the (4-5) group rated it at 83%.

Table 30

Significant Relationships Between Present Teaching Level and Planning and Managing The Teaching and Learning Environment

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Facilitate learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own.	3	.04	.302

In conclusion, under the category heading, planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, teachers who had a teaching level of 6 or 7 clearly rated, facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, more important than teachers who had a 4 or 5 teaching level.

Under the category heading instructional practices, teachers who had a teaching level of 4 or 5 rated: providing opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving; and, developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction; as most important. In contrast

to this teachers with a teaching level of 6 or 7 rated these practices lower. Under the category heading, managing student behavior, designing and implementing classroom management programs was seen by the (6-7) group as more important than the (4-5) group in the category of most importance.

Overall, teachers who had a 4-5 teaching level rated two practices more important than the (6-7) group, while the (6-7) group rated two other practices more important than the (4-5) group.

Number of University Level, Special Education Courses

Shown in table 31 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for instructional content as related to number of university level, special education courses. For the variable where special education courses was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was less than slight.

As can be seen from this table, teachers who had 3-5 special education courses ranked, selecting or modifying learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum, as most important with a rating of 69%. Teachers had similar ratings throughout this category. In the first two categories of importance, teachers who had 1-9 special education courses rated this practice first or second in importance with ratings of 100% across the two categories. The group who had no courses rated the practice first or second in importance, but only had a rating of 90% across the two categories. In contrast to this, teachers

who had 10 or more special education courses only had a rating of 50% in the first category of importance and a rating of 50% in the third category.

Table 31

Significant Relationships Between Number of University Level, Special Education Courses and Instructional Content

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum.	8	.04	.009

Number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom

Shown in table 32 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment as related to number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom. For the variable where highest number of integrated students was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were slight.

As can be seen from this table, 71% of teachers who had 6-9 students ranked, arranging student entry, exit, and seating; materials and equipment upkeep and storage; and, other aspects of physical space and movement in accordance with instructional objectives and teaching methods, as most important. The next highest rating was at 46%, for teachers who had 3-5 special needs

students. In contrast to this, only 29% of teachers who had 10 students or more ranked this practice as most important. The ratings for the first two categories of importance increased with the number of students teachers had. For example, 50% of teachers who had 0 students, 75% who had 1-2 students, and 100% of teachers who had 6-9 and 10+ students ranked this practice first or second in importance.

Designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.), was seen by 68% of teachers who had 3-5 special needs students as most important. Similarly, 63% of teachers who had 1-2 students thought this practice was most important. In contrast to this, only 14% of teachers from the (6-9) and (10+) group believed that this practice was most important. Contrary to this, teachers rated this practice highly in the first and second categories. The teachers in the (0) group rated it the lowest at 63%, while the (10+) group rated it the second lowest at 85.7%. The other groups gave this practice a 100% rating across the two categories. It is important to note that 13% of the teachers in the (0) group thought this practice was unimportant altogether.

Table 32

Significant Relationships Between Number of Students with Mild Learning Disabilities Presently Integrated into the Teacher's Regular Classroom and Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p _{.05})	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Arrange student entry, exit, and seating; materials and equipment upkeep and storage; and other aspects of physical space and movement in accordance with instructional objectives and teaching methods.	8	.03	.200
Design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.).	12	.02	.118

Shown in table 33 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for monitoring/evaluation procedures as related to number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom. For the variable where number of integrated students was related to teachers' responses, the relationships were slight.

When monitoring evaluation procedures, assessing the effectiveness of widely implemented, carefully studied instructional programs and modifying to achieve the greatest amount of learning in own classroom, was seen by 68% of the (3-5)

group as most important which received the highest rating overall. In comparison to this, the (1-2) group gave this practice a 63% rating, which was the second highest rating in the "very important" category. The (0), (6-9) and (10+) groups rated this practice most important in the second category of importance.

Teachers who had 1-2 students felt that, planning and evaluating instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions, was "very important" and rated it higher than any other teachers in this category, with a rating of 63%. Similarly, teachers who had 3-5 students rated this practice at 59% which was the second highest rating in the category "very important". Teachers who had (0), (6-9) and (10+) students with mild learning disabilities in their classrooms rated this practice highest in the second category of importance.

Table 33

Significant Relationships Between Number of Students with Mild Learning Disabilities Presently Integrated into the Teacher's Regular Classroom and Monitoring/Evaluation Procedures

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Assess the effectiveness of 8 widely implemented, carefully studied instructional programs and modify to achieve the greatest amount of learning in own classroom.		.01	-.035
Plan and evaluate instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions.	8	.05	-.030

In summary, teachers in the (1-2) and (3-5) group rated these practices highest in importance in the first category, while teachers in the (0) and (10+) group rated these practices least important.

Class size for regular teachers' with integrated students

Shown in table 34 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for assessment/diagnosis as related to class size for regular teachers with integrated students. For the variable, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, it was related to teachers' responses and the relationship was slight.

Under the category, assessment/diagnosis, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas, was believed to be "very important" by 83% of teachers who had 11-15 students in their class where there were also students who had mild learning disabilities. This was the highest rating overall. In contrast to this, teachers who had more than 30 students in their class perceived this practice to be least important with a rating of 20% in the "very important" category. Teachers in the (16-20), (21-25) and (23-30) groups rated this practice first in the first or second category of importance.

Table 34

Significant Relationships Between Class Size for Regular Teachers with Integrated Students and Assessment/Diagnosis

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Assess students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas.	8	.04	-.209

Shown in table 35 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for instructional

content as related to class size for regular teachers with integrated students. The variable, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, was related to teachers' responses and showed a slight relationship.

Under instructional content, modifying curricular materials to meet individual student needs, was perceived by the (11-15) group as most important with a rating of 83%. Again, the (30+) group saw this practice as least important. Teachers in the (16-20), (21-25) and (23-30) groups rated this practice first or second in the highest category of importance.

Table 35

Significant Relationships Between Class Size for Regular Teachers with Integrated Students and Instructional Content

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Modify curricular materials to meet individual student needs.	8	.01	-.214

Shown in table 36 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for instructional practices as related to class size for regular teachers with integrated students. The variable, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, was related to teachers' responses. The relationship for the first teaching practice was moderate and the second slight.

Under instructional practices, promoting student success by matching instructional materials to skill levels, providing materials that are somewhat new and challenging but relatively easy for students to assimilate to existing knowledge, was perceived by 83% of the teacher population who had 11-15 students in their class as most important in the category, "very important". In contrast to this, teachers who had (30+) students gave this practice the lowest rating (20%) in the category, "very important". Teachers in the (16-20), (21-25) and (23-30) groups rated this practice first in the two highest categories of importance.

Focusing on active teaching, direct instruction, and supervised practice to maximize student achievement, was seen by 83% of the teacher population who had 11-15 students in their class as most important in the category, "very important". In contrast to this, teachers who had (30+) students gave this practice the lowest rating (20%) in the category, "very important". Teachers in the (16-20), (21-25), (23-30) and (31+) groups rated this practice first in the two highest categories of importance.

Table 36

Significant Relationships Between Class Size for Regular Teachers with Integrated Students and Instructional Practices

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Promote student success by matching instructional materials to skill levels, providing materials that are somewhat new and challenging but relatively easy for students to assimilate to existing knowledge.	8	.00	-.265
Focus on active teaching, direct instruction, and supervised practice to maximize student achievement.	8	.02	-.245

Shown in table 37 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for managing student behaviors as related to class size for regular teachers with integrated students. The variable, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, was related to teachers' responses and the relationship was moderate.

Under managing student behaviors, developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective, was believed by 100% of the teaching population who had 11-15 students to be most important in the category, "very important". Similar high ratings were found in the first category of

importance for 89% of teachers who had 21-25 students and 78% of teachers who had 16-20 students. The lowest rating for this category was 15% for teachers who had 26-30 students in their class. The second lowest rating was at 60% for teachers who had 31 or more students in their class. Highest ratings were found in the first or second category of importance for all teachers.

Table 37

Significant Relationships Between Class Size for Regular Teachers with Integrated Students and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Develop group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective.	8	.00	-.383

Shown in table 38 are significant differences within teachers' responses to teaching practices for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment as related to class size for regular teachers with integrated students. The variable, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, was related to teachers' responses and the relationship was moderate for the first teaching practice and slight for the second.

When planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, attending to age-related needs of students to gain their cooperation in establishing classroom order (e.g., the need for self-management increases with age), was judged to be most important by teachers who had (16-20) students in their class with a rating of 78% in the "very important" category. All other teachers rated this practice first or second in importance except for the (31+) group. These teachers rated this practice to be important in the first three categories of importance.

Also, 83% of teachers who had 11-15 students thought that providing practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning activities (e.g., seatwork, homework), was most important in the category "very important" and received the highest rating overall. Slightly more than one-half of the other teachers with different class sizes rated this practice very important. The (16-20), (21-25) and (26-30) group all rated this practice first or second in importance. The (31+) group rated this practice lowest in importance overall.

Table 38

Significant Relationships Between Class Size for Regular Teachers with Integrated Students and Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability ($p \leq .05$)	Correlation Coefficient Tau (τ)
Attend to age-related needs of students to gain their cooperation in establishing classroom order (e.g., the need for self-management increases with age.)	8	.02	-.287
Provide practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning activities (e.g., seatwork, homework).	8	.02	-.146

While looking at class size under all six categories, it appears evident that teachers who had 11-15 students in their class were more accepting of these teaching practices than any other group. In contrast to this, teachers who had 31 students or more in their class were least accepting of these practices than any other group. Teachers who had 16-20, 21-25 and 26-30 students rated these practices highest in the first or second category with high ratings overall.

Shown in table 39 are significant differences within teachers' responses to one teaching practice for managing student

behavior as related to inservice. For the variable where inservice was related to teachers' responses, the relationship was moderate.

When managing student behavior, 79% of the teachers who said they had inservice prior to integrating students with mild learning disabilities thought that, increasing access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom activity, was very important. Only 39% of teachers who had no inservice training thought this practice was very important. In the first and second category of importance, 93% of teachers who had inservice training thought this practice was important in comparison to 83% of the non-inserviced teachers.

Inservice training

Table 39

Significant Relationships Between Inservice Training and Managing Student Behavior

Variable	Degrees of Freedom (df)	Probability (p \leq .05)	Correlation Coefficient tau (τ)
Increase access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom activity.	3	.01	.247

In summary, this study revealed that there were several background variables, (gender, present teaching assignment, present teaching level, class size for regular teachers with

integrated students, number of years teaching experience and inservice training) related to teachers' perceptions of teaching practices.

Present teaching assignment was the background variable which showed the strongest relationship to teachers' responses to teaching practices. In the category of instructional content, lower grade teachers were more likely to believe that, generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, was most important.

Another strong relationship was found between present teaching assignment and assessment/diagnosis. Assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, generalization) to determine students skill levels within specific content areas, and the teaching practice, conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, was perceived to be less important by teachers who taught higher grade levels.

Other moderate relationships were found between present teaching assignment and teachers' opinions of planning and managing the teaching and learning environment. Teachers who taught the lower grades thought that, creating integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interaction between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them, was most

important. Designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing and academic motivation), was perceived to be most important by elementary teachers and then primary, high school and intermediate level teachers.

In the category, monitoring evaluation procedures, a moderate relationship was found between present teaching assignment and estimates of the value of planning and evaluating instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as students interactions. A moderate relationship was also found between present teaching assignment and estimates of the importance of the teaching practice, designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.). Teachers who taught at the lower grades believed that these practices were more important than did the higher grade level teachers.

A moderate relationship was also found between present teaching assignment and teachers' responses to one teaching practice under the category, instructional practices. Developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b)

emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was also judged by lower grade teachers to be most important.

Gender was another background variable which showed the second strongest relationship toward teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. A strong relationship was found between gender and teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. Females were far more likely than males to agree with the teaching practice, developing critical thinking skills either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, to be most important.

Under the category heading, assessment/diagnosis, another moderate relationship was found with regard to teachers' estimates of the importance of conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, and the teaching practice, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas. Females once again, thought these practices were more important than did males.

Under instructional content, a moderate relationship existed between gender and teachers' opinions. Again, males were less likely to think that the teaching practice, selecting or modifying learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum, was important.

Present teaching level was most strongly related to teachers' perceptions of planning and managing the teaching and learning environment and instructional practices. Facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, was thought to be most important by teachers who had the highest teaching level (6-7). Teachers who had a lower teaching level (4-5) thought that the teaching practice, providing opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving, was most important.

Number of years teaching experience was most strongly related to teachers' opinions about planning and managing the teaching and learning environment. Teachers who had more teaching experience thought that, facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, was very important.

Finally, inservice training was most strongly related to managing student behavior. Increasing access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom activity, was thought to be most important by teachers who had some inservice training.

Conclusions

In conclusion this study indicated that teachers' perceptions of teaching practices are generally in keeping with that of other educators, however, there were some differences. The lowest rated practice was, managing student behaviors using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives, under the category heading managing student behavior. Other practices that received low ratings were emphasizing academic instruction as a major part of a teacher's teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics, and balancing teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability. These practices were found under the category heading instructional practices.

Still, teachers thought that, assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance, was not as important as other practices mentioned under the category, assessment/diagnosis. Under monitoring/evaluation procedures, translating relevant educational research findings into effective classroom-based practice, was seen to be least important. When analyzing teachers' perceptions for planning and managing the teaching and learning environment, appraising the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches, was identified

as being least important.

Under instructional content, teaching comprehension monitoring (i.e., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes), and designing instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content, received lower ratings than any other practices in this category.

Teachers' responses to teaching practices were found to be significantly related to several background variables: present teaching assignment; gender; class size for regular teachers with integrated students; present teaching level; number of years teaching experience; and, inservice training. Present teaching level and gender were the variables found to be most strongly related to teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. Under present teaching assignment and in the category of instructional content, lower grade teachers were more likely to believe that, generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, was most important. Another strong relationship was found between present grade level taught and assessment/diagnosis. Assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, generalization) to determine students' skill levels within specific content areas, and the teaching practice,

conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, were perceived to be less important by teachers who taught higher grade levels.

Gender was another background variable which showed the second strongest relationship toward teachers' perceptions of instructional practices. The strongest relationship across all teacher background variables, was found between gender and teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. Females were far more likely than were males to believe that the teaching practice, developing critical thinking skills either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of on-going instruction, was most important. Under the category heading, assessment/diagnosis, another moderate relationship was found with regard to teachers' estimates of the importance of conducting classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses, and the teaching practice, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas. Females once again, thought these practices were more important than did males.

Class size, for regular teachers, with integrated students was most strongly related to teachers' estimates of the importance of managing student behavior. The larger the class size the less important teachers felt it was to, develop group behavior

management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persisted and other management procedures had been ineffective.

Overall, it is important to note that all background variables were slightly or moderately related to teachers' responses to several teaching practices on this questionnaire.

CHAPTER 5**SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study identified how teachers in the Conception Bay South Integrated School Board perceived the importance of certain teaching practices as related to the integration of students who have mild learning disabilities. This research is a pilot study only, and these results leave limited scope for generalization to other populations. This chapter will highlight the research findings and make recommendations and suggestions for further research.

A number of points need to be made with regard to this study concerning teachers' perceptions of teaching practices. First of all, it was identified that generally, teachers had a high level of support for teaching practices, however, statistically significant differences did exist. All background variables were slightly or moderately related to teachers' responses to several teaching practices on this questionnaire. Also the background variables, present teaching assignment and gender were most strongly related to teachers' responses to teaching practices. Finally, other moderate relationships were found between teachers' responses to certain teaching practices and other background variables (e.g., number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom; present teaching level; number of years teaching experience; and, inservice training).

Assessment/Diagnosis

Of the 52 teachers responding to this category, all teachers ranked the statements very high with the exception of one, which was, assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and, (d) maintenance. It could be that teachers have little knowledge of how to carry out this teaching practice or that they may not perceive certain parts of this practice to be valuable. In any case, inservice training programs should describe fully how to implement this practice and explain the benefits of its use. Teachers felt that maintaining knowledge of and contact with, and making use of, both regular and special education staff expertise and resources for class-wide and/or specific student problems or instructional goals was the most important practice for regular classroom teachers to follow when assessing and diagnosing students who have mild learning disabilities in the regular class. Teachers also felt that conducting observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses was quite a valuable practice.

When analyzing teacher background variables, a moderate relationship existed between present teaching assignment and assessment/diagnosis. Lower grade level teachers felt that, assessing students stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, generalization) to determine students' skill levels within specific content areas, and conducting classroom

observations of student learning, behavior patterns and responses, was most important. This could be a result of the fact that higher grade level teachers think that students should take more responsibility for their learning as they get older, when in actual fact, students who have mild learning disabilities find this hard to do at times. Another moderate relationship was found between gender and teachers' estimates of the importance of conducting classroom observations of student learning, behavior patterns and responses, and the teaching practice, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization to determine their skill levels within specific content areas). Females thought these practices were more important than did males.

A slight relationship existed between gender and teachers' opinions about assessing individual learning problems according to the following stages of behavioral analysis: (a) baseline, (b) instruction, (c) decision making, and (d) maintenance. This practice was seen by females to be more important than for males in the second category of importance. It is important to note that 15% of males thought that this practice was unimportant altogether.

Another slight relationship was found between number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom and teachers' perceptions of, assessing students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization to determine their skill

levels within specific content areas). This practice was believed to be most important by teachers who had 11 to 15 students in their classes.

Instructional content

Under "instructional content", generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, was considered most important by three-fifths of the teacher population. Other teaching practices in this category were perceived fairly evenly in importance except for, teaching comprehension monitoring (e.g., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes), which was thought to be "very important" by only slightly more than one-quarter of the teaching population. Designing instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content, ranked low in the "very important" category with only three-tenths of the teacher population in acceptance.

Such low ratings could reflect that teachers need more knowledge about comprehension monitoring or that teachers are unwilling to spend extra time and energy getting to know students' strengths and needs.

A second moderate relationship was found between one practice under instructional content and teacher responses. Primary and elementary teachers were generally more likely to believe that, generating teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals, was most important. It could be that primary teachers have more experience with integration and therefore more knowledge and confidence about lesson modification.

A slight relationship also existed between number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom and teachers' estimates of the importance of, modifying curricular materials to meet individual student needs. Teachers who had 11 to 15 students in their class perceived this practice to be the most important.

Another relationship was reported between special education courses and, selecting or modifying learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum. This practice was ranked higher by teachers who had 3-5 special education courses, although similar ratings were found throughout this category.

Instructional practices

The "instructional practice" that nearly three-quarters of teachers felt was most important to use in an integrated classroom was encouraging student accountability for careful, complete work by consistently checking and following up with additional assignments when necessary. The instructional

practices that were perceived by the teacher population to be the least important in the "very important" category were: balancing teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability; and, emphasizing academic instruction as a major part of teachers' teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics.

A moderate relationship was found between present teaching assignment and teachers' responses to one teaching practice under this category. Developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction, was judged by lower grade teachers to be most important. There is naturally less direct teaching as students get older, however, teachers in the upper grades need to be made aware of the advantages of direct teaching for all students, including students who have mild learning disabilities.

Present teaching level was also moderately related to teachers' perceptions of instructional practices. Teachers who had a 4th or 5th certificate level thought that the teaching practice, providing opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving, was more important than other groups.

A slight relationship also existed between class size for regular teachers with integrated students and teachers'

perceptions of focusing on active teaching, direct instruction, and supervised practice to maximize student achievement. This practice was believed to be most important by teachers who had 11 to 15 students in their class.

Another relationship was found between present teaching level and teachers' perceptions of, developing critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction. This practice was seen by teachers who had a 4th and 5th teaching level as most important.

Managing student behavior

Under "managing student behavior", four-fifths of the teacher population felt that responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently, was most important and received the highest rating overall for this survey. Only one-tenth of the teacher population thought that managing student behaviors, using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives, was "very important". The rating for this category was the lowest found in the survey. Also, nearly twenty percent of the teacher population thought that this teaching practice was "unimportant" altogether.

Inservice training was moderately related to managing student behavior. Increasing access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom

activity, was thought to be most important by teachers who had some inservice training.

Class size for regular teachers with integrated students was also moderately related to teachers' estimates of the importance of managing student behavior. The larger the class size the less important teachers felt it was to develop group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persisted and other management procedures had been ineffective. Teachers with larger classes have more responsibility than others. If they could see immediate benefits from group management procedures then they might be more favourable toward them. In any case, inservice and university based programs should describe and demonstrate the easiest ways to carry out behavior management strategies.

A slight relationship was found between gender and teachers' ratings of responding to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently. This practice was judged to be more important by females than by males in the highest category of importance.

Another slight relationship was found between present teaching assignment and teachers' estimates of the importance of, minimizing negative interactions with students (e.g., avoiding personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or blaming the wrong student for misbehavior). Primary teachers thought this practice was more important than did intermediate, elementary or high school teachers.

Also, a slight relationship was found between number of years teaching experience and teachers' opinions of developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective. This practice was rated highest in importance by teachers who had 6-9 years of teaching experience, then by teachers who had 10 or more years of teaching experience. This practice was rated highly overall by teachers having 3-9 years of teaching experience.

Finally, a slight relationship existed between present teaching level and, designing and implementing classroom management programs. Teachers who had six or seven years of teaching experience rated this practice highest in the highest category of importance.

Planning and managing the teaching and learning environment

Ratings for "planning and managing the teaching and learning environment" were quite consistently rated with regard to importance throughout this category. The highest rating in the "very important" category was received by nearly seven-tenths of teachers, who thought that, organizing classroom and instruction to optimize time spent on active learning, was most important. In contrast to this, appraising the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches, was thought to be least important.

Moderate relationships were found between present teaching assignment and teachers' opinions of planning and managing the

teaching and learning environment. Teachers who taught the lower grades believed that, creating integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them, was most important. Lower grade teachers often place more importance on emotional, mental, and social growth within their programs than do higher grade level teachers, who appear more academically oriented. Educators at the university level should try to bridge the gap between primary education and other levels of education in order to make learning for all students more humanistic. Designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (i.e., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.), was perceived to be most important by elementary teachers and then by primary, high school and intermediate level teachers.

Present teaching level and number of years teaching experience were moderately related to teachers' perceptions of planning and managing the teaching and learning environment. Facilitating learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own, was thought to be most important by teachers who had more teaching experience and a 6th or 7th teaching certificate level.

A slight relationship was found between gender and teachers'

estimates of the importance of using cooperative learning experiences to facilitate motivational outcomes (e.g., persistence, peer support, self-esteem, positive self attributes), as well as academic achievement for lower as well as higher achievers. Females ranked this practice higher than did males.

Other slight relationships were found between number of years teaching experience and counteracting negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate; and, by developing group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective. Both practices were perceived by teachers who had ten years of experience or more to be most important.

A slight relationship was found between the class size for regular teachers with integrated students and teachers' opinions about, arranging student entry, exit, and seating; materials and equipment upkeep and storage; and, other aspects of physical space and movement in accordance with instructional objectives and teaching methods. This practice was judged to be most important by teachers who had 6 to 9 students in their class. Also, teachers who had 3 to 5 students felt that, designing learning activities that actively engage students having a wide

range of aptitudes (e.g., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.), was most important.

Finally, another slight relationship was found between class size for regular teachers with integrated students and teachers' opinions about providing practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning activities (e.g., seatwork, homework). Teachers who had 11 to 15 students believed this practice to be more important than any other group of teachers. Slightly more than one-half of the other teachers with different class sizes rated this practice very important. The group with 31+ students rated this practice lowest in importance overall.

Monitoring/Evaluation procedures

Under the category heading "monitoring/evaluation procedures", teachers rated teaching practices fairly evenly in importance. One-half of the population felt that employing direct, frequent measurement of student progress toward completion of instructional objectives, using the data on pupil performance and progress to plan, was most important, while nearly three-tenths of the teacher population rated, translating relevant educational research findings into effective classroom-based practice, as least important in the most important category.

A slight relationship existed between class size for regular teachers with integrated students and teachers' perceptions of,

assessing the effectiveness of widely implemented, carefully studied instructional programs and modifying to achieve the greatest amount of learning in own classroom. This practice was seen by teachers who had 3-5 students as most important. Teachers who had 1-2 students felt that, planning and evaluating instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions, was most important.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are submitted as a result of the research findings concerning the integration of students who have mild learning disabilities:

1. There should be a policy on integration at the school, board and provincial levels.
2. University programs should make courses available to teachers concerning effective teaching practices for integrating students with mild learning disabilities.
3. At least two university level courses about effective teaching should be made a prerequisite for all teachers to the adequate completion of any education degree.
4. The prime responsibility of a special education coordinator should be to make sure that schools are carrying out integration in an effective manner.
5. Coordinators should make evaluations and provide help particularly to the intermediate and high school level teachers.

The focus should also be placed on individuals who are male at all grade levels.

6. School boards should provide teacher education programs that would allow teachers to acquire the skills necessary to successfully integrate students who have mild learning disabilities.

7. Since primary and elementary teachers show more support for integration practices, policy makers should study what this group of educators are doing in relation to successful integration. As a result of such research, certain practices, duties and structures should be part of the special education policy for all grade levels.

8. Principals should reduce the class size for teachers who have students with mild learning disabilities in their home-room class.

9. Educators at the university and school levels should explain and demonstrate multi-faceted teaching practices as clearly and efficiently as possible.

10. A replication of this study for the province of Newfoundland and Labrador would add strength to the conclusions and recommendations.

11. Further research into the relationship between certain background variables (grade level taught and gender) and teachers' perceptions need to be conducted to determine the extent of the differences in teacher attitudes for this board.

12. Further research needs to be conducted concerning the

attitudes of teachers toward managing student behavior.

In summary, teachers generally agree that effective teaching practices are important for the integration of students who have mild learning disabilities. They believe that assessment/diagnosis, instructional content, instructional practices, managing student behavior, planning and managing the teaching and learning environment and monitoring evaluation procedures are all key components of a successful integration program. Present teaching assignment and gender are most strongly related to teacher perceptions of many teaching practices. Present teaching assignment, gender, number of years teaching experience, present teaching level, class size for regular teachers with integrated students, and inservice training are background variables that are moderately related to teacher responses. Gender, present teaching assignment, number of years teaching experience, present teaching level, number of university level, special education courses, number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into the teacher's regular classroom and class size for regular teacher's with integrated students are background variables that are slightly related to teacher perceptions of several teaching practices.

If educators are to meet the needs of all students, then they have to be prepared to take responsibility for all students. This means that there has to be collaboration and problem-solving among educators where expertise concerning teaching practices is

readily available. It stands to reason that our educational structures have to be designed so that cooperation among professionals is a part of the ongoing curriculum. Teachers need to feel comfortable and confident about integration, and only through support at the provincial, board and school levels will this become an eventuality. The challenge of a progressive school in the 1990's is to create a learning environment that will meet the needs of all students, where the least restrictive setting is the regular classroom.

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APPENDIX A
Teacher Questionnaire

Directions

Please complete the following questionnaire by following all directions as indicated.

►Please return this questionnaire to the principal by April 18, 1994, since results have to be analyzed and interpreted.

►All responses to this questionnaire will remain confidential; no person or school will be identified in any report of the results of this survey. This page has a code number which will help me to identify whether most questionnaires have been received. If you wish your response to be totally anonymous, simply remove the number on the corner of this sheet.

☺Thank you for your cooperation in sharing your most valuable and professional opinions.

Section 1: Teacher Opinions

DIRECTIONS

The following is a list of possible teaching practices that could be used in an integrated classroom with students who have learning disabilities. The rating scale, described below, is inclusive for each of the components. In the rating scale description, the words; teaching practice refers to one teaching behavior or more that a teacher uses on a regular basis. Rate each of the items of the questionnaire according to the following scale:

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| 1-UNIMPORTANT | This teaching practice is <u>unimportant</u> in an integrated classroom. |
| 2-SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT | This teaching practice is important to an extent, but is the <u>exception</u> rather than the rule. |
| 3-IMPORTANT | This teaching practice should be incorporated into an integrated classroom, but without it the integrated classroom can still be successful. |
| 4-VERY IMPORTANT | This teaching practice is <u>extremely important</u> , to the extent that it should be an integral part of the integrated classroom environment. |

Remember that you should select your responses in terms of what you think should occur in an integrated classroom, rather than what actually happens. Please read each item and circle the appropriate numeral to indicate the extent to which you feel each teaching practice is important or unimportant for regular teachers to use in an integrated classroom with special needs students.

Assessment/Diagnosis

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

	<u>unimportant</u>	<u>somewhat important</u>	<u>important</u>	<u>very important</u>
1. Determine instructional needs of students through use of curriculum-based assessments that contain content of curricula taught in general classrooms.	1	2	3	4
2. Conduct classroom observations of student learning and behavior patterns and responses.	1	2	3	4
3. Assess students' stages of learning (e.g., acquisition, proficiency, maintenance, generalization) to determine their skill levels within specific content areas.	1	2	3	4
4. Assess individual learning problems according to the following stages of				

behavioral analysis:

(a) baseline,				
(b) instruction,				
(c) decision making,				
and (d) maintenance.	1	2	3	4

5. Analyze student error patterns as guides to revising instruction.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

6. Maintain knowledge of and contact with, and make use of, both regular and special education staff expertise and resources for class-wide and/or specific student problems or instructional goals.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

Instructional Content

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

	<u>unimportant</u>	<u>somewhat important</u>	<u>important</u>	<u>very important</u>
7. Generate teaching objectives from common educational goals for all students, with variations to accommodate individual student goals.	1	2	3	4

8. Select or modify learning objectives to guide progression through the curriculum.	1	2	3	4
--	---	---	---	---

9. Develop adaptive teaching approaches to provide equal opportunity to reach common educational				
--	--	--	--	--

goals despite individual differences in aptitude.	1	2	3	4
10. Modify curricular materials to meet individual student needs.	1	2	3	4
11. Translate objectives into active learning experiences that present students with opportunities to (a) use what they already know about the subject matter (e.g., their prior knowledge) and (b) make meaningful and valid connections between the new subject and their existing structure (e.g. their schemata).	1	2	3	4
2. Teach comprehension monitoring (e.g., metacognitive strategies that enable students to gain control over their own cognitive processes).	1	2	3	4
13. Design instruction to incorporate both what the teacher already knows (e.g., existing of subject matter and how to teach) and what the student already knows (e.g., existing of facts, experiences, and strategies for learning) related to the instructional content.	1	2	3	4
14. Teach learning strategies that (a) correspond to the major demands of the curriculum				

and (b) facilitate independence and responsibility.

1 2 3 4

Instructional Practices

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

	<u>unimportant</u>	<u>somewhat important</u>	<u>important</u>	<u>very important</u>
15. Focus on active teaching, direct instruction, and supervised practice to maximize student achievement.	1	2	3	4
16. Provide content to students through student-teacher interactions (e.g., through brief presentations followed by recitation or application opportunities) rather than relying on curricular materials to convey information.	1	2	3	4
17. Focus teacher talk on academic rather than procedural or managerial matters; ask questions and give feedback rather than lecture extensively.	1	2	3	4
18. Maximize student success by having students move in small steps through new objectives, practice new learning to mastery level, integrate new learning to mastery level, integrate new learnings				

with old, and generalize learning to applied situations.

1 2 3 4

19. Minimize student errors by choosing tasks students can handle without frustration, explaining tasks clearly before seatwork begins, and monitoring performance to provide immediate help and corrective feedback when needed.

1 2 3 4

20. Promote student success by matching instructional materials to skill levels, providing materials that are somewhat new and challenging but relatively easy for students to assimilate to existing knowledge.

1 2 3 4

21. Utilize small groups for direct instruction of teaching to increase learning for students of varying ability.

1 2 3 4

22. Structure presentation of instruction to improve student information processing (e.g., focus on clear, organized presentation of essential and meaningful information, with ample repetition and review).

1 2 3 4

23. Balance teacher control with varying degrees of student freedom according to the complexities of the learning objectives and student ability.	1	2	3	4
24. Develop critical thinking skills, either by (a) direct teaching of teacher-developed units and/or commercial programs, or (b) emphasis on thinking as a regular component of ongoing instruction.	1	2	3	4
25. Teach for positive transfer (both specific transfer of basic skills to more advanced subjects and general transfer of principles, attitudes, and problem solving for life in a complex society).	1	2	3	4
26. Assist students in developing independent study behaviors needed for learning course content, preparing assignments, and taking tests.	1	2	3	4
27. Encourage student accountability for careful, complete work by consistently checking and following up with additional assignments when necessary.	1	2	3	4

28. Emphasize academic instruction as a major part of their teaching role by expecting students to master the curriculum and remain productively engaged in academics.

1 2 3 4

29. Provide opportunity for students of all ages and abilities to respond to thought-provoking divergent questions that require critical thinking and problem solving.

1 2 3 4

30. Encourage student response by asking only one question at a time, phrasing questions clearly and at appropriate levels of difficulty so that most answers are correct, and allowing ample wait-time for a response before calling on another student.

1 2 3 4

31. Develop instructional strategies for presentation of subject matter through sequencing and synthesizing the content to be taught.

1 2 3 4

Managing Student Behavior

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

unimportant somewhat important very
important important important

32. Manage student behaviors, using the least amount of structure necessary to achieve objectives.

1 2 3 4

33. Increase access to learning by explicitly stating procedures for participating in each type of classroom activity.	1	2	3	4
34. Respond to infractions of rules immediately, firmly, predictably, and consistently.	1	2	3	4
35. Develop group behavior management systems when disruptive, inappropriate behaviors persist and other management procedures have been ineffective.	1	2	3	4
36. Design and implement classroom management programs.	1	2	3	4
37. Minimize negative interactions with students (e.g., avoid personal criticism, public reprimands, waiting too long to intervene, or blaming the wrong student for misbehavior).	1	2	3	4

Planning and Managing the Teaching and Learning Environment

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

	<u>unimportant</u>	<u>somewhat important</u>	<u>important</u>	<u>very important</u>
38. Organize classroom and instruction to optimize time spent on active learning.	1	2	3	4

39. Provide practice and application opportunities that are effective and appropriate in amount through varied independent learning activities (e.g., seatwork, homework). 1 2 3 4
40. Arrange student entry, exit, and seating; materials and equipment upkeep and storage; and other aspects of physical space and movement in accordance with instructional objectives and teaching methods. 1 2 3 4
41. Attend to age-related needs of students to gain their cooperation in establishing classroom order (e.g., the need for self-management increases with age). 1 2 3 4
42. Design learning activities that actively engage students having a wide range of aptitudes (e.g., differences in intellectual abilities, prior information processing, academic motivation, etc.). 1 2 3 4
43. Counteract negative performance of low achieving students by programming for continuous progress and consistent success; by training students to set appropriate, realistic goals; and by teaching students to attribute their failures to lack of effort rather than lack of ability, when appropriate. 1 2 3 4

44. Appraise the cognitive demands placed on students when planning instructional approaches (e.g., discovery learning requires higher level thinking skills; direct instruction and controlled readability reduces the processing challenges for students). 1 2 3 4
45. Foster learning in small, mixed-ability groups by structuring lessons so that students have joint responsibility for shared goals as well as individual accountability for mastery of those goals. 1 2 3 4
46. Use cooperative learning experiences to facilitate motivational outcomes (e.g., persistence, peer support, self-esteem, positive self-attributes), as well as academic achievement for lower as well as higher achievers. 1 2 3 4
47. Create integrated learning environments by use of cooperative learning experiences to structure positive interactions between students with and without handicaps within instructional situations and during free time, as well as to increase friendships among them. 1 2 3 4
48. Facilitate learning by mediating and controlling learning activities and classroom behavior that students have yet to control on their own. 1 2 3 4

Monitoring/Evaluation Procedures

Regular educators collaborating to maintain students with handicaps in regular classrooms will...

	<u>unimportant</u>	<u>somewhat important</u>	<u>important</u>	<u>very important</u>
49. Develop objective, reliable, responsive measures for evaluating the effectiveness of classroom instruction and student management programs.	1	2	3	4
50. Employ direct, frequent measurement of student progress toward completion of instructional objectives, using the data on pupil performance and progress to plan future instruction.	1	2	3	4
51. Plan and evaluate instructional interventions for students who experience academic difficulties by assessing the learner, the instruction, and the learning environment, as well as their interactions.	1	2	3	4
52. Assess the effectiveness of widely implemented, carefully studied instructional programs and modify to achieve the greatest amount of learning in own classroom.	1	2	3	4
53. Engage in self-evaluation of personal knowledge beliefs, and				

expectations that shape classroom practice and influence student achievement.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

54. Translate relevant educational research findings into effective classroom-based practice.	1	2	3	4
---	---	---	---	---

Section 11: Background Variables**DIRECTIONS**

Please supply the following information in items 1-15 by circling the word/s or number/s that correspond/s to your answer/s.

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|--------------|------------|-------------|-----|--|
| 1. Gender: | Female | Male | | | | |
| 2. Present teaching assignment: | primary | intermediate | elementary | high school | | |
| 3. Number of years teaching experience: | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-9 | 10+ | | |
| 4. Present teaching level: | 1-3 | 4-5 | 6-7 | | | |
| 5. Number of Special Education courses received at a University level: | 0 | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-9 | 10+ | |
| 6. Number of students with mild learning disabilities presently integrated into your regular classroom: | 0 | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-9 | 10+ | |
| 7. Class size with integrated students: | 11-15 | 16-20 | 21-25 | 26-30 | 31+ | |
| 8. Inservice Training: | yes | no | | | | |

APPENDIX B
Pilot Study Letters

98 Springdale Street
St. John's, Newfoundland
A1C 5B6
Tel #: 753-6344
Fax #: 753-7042

Dear Colleague:

As a teacher, every free moment is precious! I've attached this Twinings Tea bag in hope that I may spark your interest to take some time over Easter to sit back, relax and enjoy a good cup of tea, while you fill out this questionnaire.

Integration has become an educational reality and it is important to share information about the strategies and practices you feel are necessary in order to help make this inclusion beneficial for all students, in particular, students with mild learning disabilities. Also, if educators are to provide teacher inservice or courses at the university level, it is essential to know what strategies and teaching practices regular teachers feel are valuable.

The content and distribution of this questionnaire has been approved by the Assistant Superintendent, Mr. Ross Reccord. Please be informed that all your responses will remain confidential.

If you could complete this questionnaire by April 18, 1994 it would be greatly appreciated. As it is imperative to complete this research by this summer, a reminder will be sent to you shortly after the questionnaire has been distributed.

Thanking you in advance for your generous cooperation, I remain,

Sincerely yours,

Rhonda Hoddinott

98 Springdale St.
St. John's, NF
A1C 5B6
Tel #: 753-6344
Fax #: 753-7042

Mr. Ross Peccord
Conception Bay South Integrated School Board
P.O. Box 220, Manuels, Conception Bay
AOA 2Y0

Dear Mr. Reccord,

As I have received permission to carry out my research with your board, I would like for you to hold questionnaires for me at the school board office. Principals will be forwarding them to you no later than Wednesday, April 20, 1994, through the school mail service.

The focus of my research is to identify how regular classroom teachers perceive the importance of using effective teaching practices in an integrated classroom. More specifically, since teachers are the final curriculum implementors, I am interested in studying how teachers rate these teaching practices when including students with mild learning disabilities. Also, through this research I may discover certain background variables which may show a relationship between teachers' attitudes and their unique situation. This information could be quite valuable for teacher inservice or teacher training programs at the university level.

Enclosed, I have a copy of the questionnaire for your perusal. If you have any questions or problems concerning the above information please do not hesitate to call or fax a message.

Thank-you for your time and consideration concerning this matter.

Sincerely yours,

Rhonda Hoddinott

98 Springdale St.
St. John's, NF
A1C 5B6
Tel #: 753-6344
Fax #: 753-7042

Mr. Richard Harvey
Queen Elizabeth Regional High
Foxtrap, Newfoundland
A0A 2J0

Dear Mr. Harvey,

Presently I am working on a masters in Curriculum and Instruction and would like for you to place these questionnaires in all regular classroom teacher mailboxes.

The focus of my research is to identify how regular classroom teachers perceive the importance of using effective teaching practices in an integrated classroom. Also, I am interested in finding out certain background variables which may contribute to or make integration difficult for teachers. This information could be quite valuable for teacher inservice or teacher training programs at the university level.

Teachers will be asked to return the questionnaires to your mailbox over a one month period. On Monday, April 11th, please place the reminder cards in each regular teacher's mailbox. I will telephone you on Tuesday of that week to make sure that you haven't forgotten to do the above as mentioned.

Permission, has already been granted by your school board to carry out this research. Please contact Mr. Ross Reccord or me, the researcher, if you have any questions.

I would like for you to return the questionnaires to the school board office through the school mail service no later than Wednesday, April 20, 1994. The assistant superintendent will be responsible for holding the questionnaires for the researcher..

Thank-you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Rhonda Hoddinott



