

TEACHING LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN THE  
GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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Teaching Learning Disabled Students in the  
General Education Classroom

by

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## Abstract

This paper folio addresses the need for general education teachers to acquire knowledge necessary to teach students with learning disabilities in general education classrooms.

The first paper, A History of Special Services, Learning Disabilities, and Inclusion, traces the development of special education in Canada and Newfoundland, discusses the concept of learning disabilities in the context of special education, and addresses recent initiatives to merge special and regular education.

The second paper, Attitudes Toward Inclusion, defines the construct of attitude and addresses the influence of participants' attitudes on the inclusion of learning disabled students in the general education classroom.

The third paper, Increasing Academic Achievement of Learning Disabled Students in the General Education Classroom, examines methods of increasing learning disabled students' ability to achieve academically in the general education classroom.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT . . . . .	i
PAPER 1: A HISTORY OF SPECIAL SERVICES, LEARNING DISABILITIES AND INCLUSION.	
Special Education . . . . .	7
Learning Disabilities . . . . .	14
Origin of the Term Learning Disabilities . . . . .	16
Inclusion . . . . .	20
References . . . . .	29
Appendix . . . . .	35
PAPER 2: THE INFLUENCE OF PARTICIPANTS' ATTITUDES ON INCLUSION.	
Attitude . . . . .	2
Teacher Variables . . . . .	6
Student Variables . . . . .	14
Parent Variables . . . . .	17
References . . . . .	23
PAPER 3: INCREASING ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF LEARNING DISABLED STUDENTS IN THE GENERAL EDUCATION CLASSROOM.	
Motivation . . . . .	3
Students with Learning Disabilities . . . . .	4
Developmental Sequence . . . . .	5
Self-Concept . . . . .	7

Teachers' Influences . . . . .	9
Teacher Characteristics . . . . .	12
Goal Setting . . . . .	14
Classroom Structures . . . . .	16
References . . . . .	20

**Paper One**  
**A History of Special Services, Learning Disabilities and**  
**Inclusion.**

Recent educational initiatives have proposed the inclusion of students with learning disabilities (LD) in the general education classroom (Will, 1986; McKinney & Hocutt, 1988; Schumm & Vaughn, 1995). Marston (1996) states that this topic has elicited a broad range of emotions and opinions ranging from "...those in favor of full inclusion (Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, 1991) to those who propose that such practices may not provide appropriate services for students with disabilities (Council for Learning Disabilities, 1993)" (p. 121). Although students with learning disabilities are only one of the groups presently availing of special education services, they make up over 50% of special needs students who would be affected by the implementation of inclusion (Clarke, 1997). The primary goals of this paper are to address the evolution of educational services to students with learning disabilities and to critique the concept of inclusion. To do so, it is necessary to discuss the issue of "labelling" students, explore the origin of the term learning disabilities and consider the treatment of learning disabled students in the context of previous and current special education policies in Canada and Newfoundland. By doing so, the author hopes to provide a rationale for the future role of special needs service delivery for learning disabled students.

The government of Newfoundland does not include in its Special Education Policy and Regulations a category of students referred to as learning disabled. The Province uses

the general term, Special Needs, to encompass all those students who require special services. This term is used for the administrative purpose of providing educational personnel. The students who are subsumed under this classification are divided into two groups: those who receive categorical services and those who receive non - categorical services.

A categorical delineation provides a low student - to - teacher ratio to Challenging Needs students who can avail of these services under the labels of Criterion C and D. Criteria C includes those students with intellectual, emotional, and behavioral disabilities, whereas Criteria D includes those students with physical disability (Appendix A). The special needs students who do not meet the criteria outlined for Challenging Needs receive noncategorical services and are placed in classrooms with a higher student - to - teacher ratio. Good & Brophy (1995) define noncategorical services such as those used by the government of Newfoundland as "instructional programs that include a range of students with mild disabilities and deny that classifying labels (e.g., learning disabled, mentally retarded) are important to instruction" (p.585). Students with learning disabilities are included in noncategorical services.

Each special needs student is provided with a specific program designed specifically for that student by a program planning team. (Appendix B). This plan includes a summary of student strengths and needs, annual long term goals, short

term objectives, responsibility areas, and review dates (Special Education Policy Manual, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1992, Policy #3.A.5.(A), p. vii).

Special needs students in Newfoundland are thus provided with categorical or noncategorical services and have an individualized education plan developed for them, but they are not given labels which might associate them with a specific disability. Policy #3.A.5.(1), Special Education Policy Manual of Newfoundland (1992) states:

Labels should not be applied to any student, regardless of his or her exceptionality. Labels of exceptionality should only be used as administratively necessary for the allocation of staff and funds by the Department of Education.

The Department of Special Services of the Newfoundland Government believes that defining and categorizing students requiring special education is not necessary and can be harmful to the student. The Department does not provide a rationale for making such a decision, but Little and Webber (1991) provide two possible reasons as to why such a decision might be made: Preclusive Identity and Self-fulfilling Prophecy.

Preclusive identity is the idea that once exceptional students are identified as being disabled or impaired in one

way or another, teachers will perceive them as disabled or impaired rather than simply being students who happen to have exceptionalities. Self-fulfilling prophecy suggests that individuals who have disabilities unwillingly evoke certain negative expectations in those who teach them. Therefore, when they make errors or deviate from accepted norms even slightly, their behavior will not be accepted as normal, but will be seen as typical behavior of people with disabilities. Teachers who work with these students will expect them to behave in a certain way and interpret their behavior by way of these expectations.

There is support for the hypothesis that labels might influence teachers to behave differently toward pupils depending on their expectations of them (e.g., Hallahan & Kauffman, 1994), and that labels may have a biasing or stigmatizing effect (Meichenbaum, Bowers, and Ross, 1969; Foster and Keech, 1977). Some even claim that labelling a child as disabled damages his or her self-concept and motivation to learn and results in the public viewing the labelled persons negatively. Hallahan & Kauffman (1994) suggest that even though labels alert others to differences of persons with disabilities, it does not mean that they will view the labels negatively. They state that "Labels can help explain behavior that is out of the ordinary and lead to a better understanding and sensitivity toward the disabled person" and " ... may also help explain to the persons with

disabilities, themselves, their own behavior" (p. 502).

Some also acknowledge the possible negative consequences of using labels in describing populations but suggest that there should be labelling procedures that are more functional for assessment, evaluation, funding, and placement procedures than many that are in use. Wood and Valdez-Menchaca (1996) suggest: "The notion that labeling results in negative biases may be incomplete; labeling can provide a more informative context in which to evaluate the relative strengths and weaknesses of a child with disabilities" (p. 587).

If a teacher is aware that a student has a diagnosed disability, there is a better chance that the teacher will feel more positive toward that student and accept the behaviors and requirements that result from the disability, than if the teacher was not aware that the student had a disability (Bender, 1986). If the teacher feels more positive toward the student, and the student perceives that he is liked by his teacher, the student will tend to perform better (Bunch, 1992).

Fifty - one percent of all students served in special education in the United States are "labelled", or diagnosed, as learning disabled, and most of these students are included in general education classrooms (Clark, 1997). Most of these special needs students had formerly been served in segregated classrooms under the auspices of special education, but are now being served in the regular education classrooms. General

education teachers need to be aware of the labels on these students because of the information they provide about individual differences (e.g., differences in behavior, learning styles, social skills, etc.). Labels may provide information that can contribute to creating successful academic, social and emotional interventions for the students.

### Special Education

The first major study of special education in Canada was undertaken by the Canadian Council for Exceptional Children in 1965. This organization surveyed the provincial legislation, curriculum policies, training programs, and special services of all Canadian provinces and ascertained that "the approach to the direction of Special Education has been piecemeal" (Brown and Gillespie, 1979, p. 3). In 1970, the Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (CELDIC) released the report, One Million Children, and defined the exceptional child.

The exceptional child has been defined as that child who deviates from the average or normal child in mental, physical, or social characteristics to such an extent that he\she requires a modification of school practices, or special education services, in order to develop to his\her maximum capacity (Cited in Brown & Gillespie, 1979, p.3).

The general motivation of this report was to provide:  
" ...a coordination of all levels of community health care, judicial and educational systems, and society as a whole in the assumption of responsibility for the fulfilment of all children." (Brown & Gillespie, 1979, p.40).

The CELDIC report also stated that segregation of children into special classes was neither necessary nor desirable. It suggested that exceptional children should be retained as much as possible within the regular school curriculum and activities, and that if they were placed in a segregated classroom, they should be able to return to the regular classroom whenever required.

Gershman (1975), in an evaluation of special education programs in Ontario, noted, "Since the early 1900's when the first special classes were established in Canada, self-contained special classroom environments have been the most popular means for educating exceptional children" (p.1). Gershman also noted that there was an "increasing discontent" as to the efficacy of those programs, and that many boards were developing alternative forms of service delivery which were characterized by the "retention of the child in the regular classroom with supplemental support provided by itinerant teachers, withdrawal classes, resource rooms, learning centers, or reading clinics. These systems are generally known as integration, normalization, or mainstreaming classes" (p. 1).

In 1973, the Atlantic Provinces Report of the Special Education Committee to the Ministers of Education: Part One was published. This report suggested that "wherever possible and practicable, handicapped persons be educated in regular school programs provided their needs can be met" (Brown & Gillespie, 1979, p.4). This committee distinguished between two main categories of handicapped persons: Category One - the severely handicapped: those with low incidence of moderate or severe physical and/or mental disabilities and long range needs; and, Category two - educationally handicapped: those with mild or moderate disabilities, mostly affecting their rate of progress in the school system (Brown & Gillespie, 1979).

In Newfoundland, the precursor to special services programming policy was The Report of the Royal Commission on Education and Youth, Vol.2 (Warren, 1968). This report led to provincial legislation and regulations regarding special education in the Schools Act (1969). Prior to this report there were services for the "mentally handicapped" and the deaf that were provided by churches, but the only schools for exceptional students at the time were a school for the blind in Halifax, NS, a school for deaf children in St. John's, NF, and a rehabilitation center in St. John's, NF.

Before developing its own suggestions, the Commission accepted input from those groups concerned with education in the province. A brief from the Anglican Church to the task

force in 1966 suggested that the first step to a solution to the problem of slow learners "is the formation of special classes expressly for the educationally subnormal" and that the "actual selection of pupils admitted to special classes should be the responsibility of a psychiatric service clinic" (p. 13). The authors of the brief also suggested that

A special curriculum should be adapted to suit those students' needs, that the students be taught how to become a good citizen, that special techniques of instruction be created to suit the needs of the students, that a low student to teacher ratio be created, and that guidance counsellors, school psychologists, and special education teachers be hired to assess and advise about these students (Anglican School Board Brief, p. 14).

The Royal Commission recommended that the Department of Education be organized along functional lines rather than denominational lines and that there should be four main departmental divisions developed: instruction, administration, further education, and special services (Wilson, 1968). The commission also recommended that "a advisory committee on special education be appointed and that Memorial University, through its Faculty of Education, extend its program to train teachers for this work" (p. 22). The commission reported that special education services were proposed for "the mentally

handicapped, the blind and partially blind, deaf and partially deaf, physically handicapped, emotionally disturbed, socially deprived, those with speech defects, multiple handicaps, and for specially gifted children (Wilson, 1968, p. 22).

The Schools Act of Newfoundland was subsequently amended in 1975 to allow for the provision of teachers and special classes for students who could not benefit from normal classroom instruction. In December of 1979 further provincial legislation was passed mandating school boards to provide special education services in all categories of exceptionality up to the age of 21. Seven years later in 1986, the Newfoundland Special Education Policy was developed in an attempt to reorganize services for exceptional students. It emphasized appropriate education for all children in the most "enhancing environment" (Special Education Policy Manual, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1986, p. xi). Special emphasis was now placed on a team of professionals developing individualized program plans (IPP's) for special needs children. Minor revisions were made to this policy in 1992 with the emphasis in special education being placed on educating the child in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

In December of 1993, Senior High Pathways: Students With Exceptionalities, was published by the Department of Education of the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador. Although this report deals exclusively with high schools, some of its

recommendations can be extrapolated for use with special education students in general. This document contributed to the current philosophy of viewing a student holistically. It states:

This document deals with the importance of a whole child focus when planning for individual students...Students' intellectual, emotional, physical, moral, spiritual and social development must be considered when supporting curriculum, modifying curriculum, and developing courses or curriculum. (p. 3)

This report delineates the five available options, or pathways, for high school graduation in Newfoundland. It also clearly delineates the continuum of services based on the Cascade Model (Reynolds, 1962; Deno, 1970; Reynolds & Birch, 1977) that had been implemented with the 1986 Special Education policy. The Cascade Model of special education is a simple but logical graphic describing an inverse relationship between the severity of disability and the intensity of the needed services (Appendix C).

It should also be noted that another factor influencing the development of Special Education policy in Newfoundland and Labrador is of British origin. There has been an indirect impact from the special education teachers who graduated from Memorial University of Newfoundland and who served special education placements at a campus in Harlow, England.

Since Spring semester 1976, a number of students in the Special Education Diploma program at Memorial University of Newfoundland have availed of the opportunity to follow studies in Britain (Nesbit, 1977). This is relevant to the practice of special education teachers in Newfoundland because the special education students are "confronted with a wide variety of new programs and teaching materials of British origin" (Nesbit, 1977, iii). These influences no doubt affect the teaching strategies, attitudes, and behaviors of the teachers when they enter the work force.

Britain's first Special Education Act (1944) was an early influence on programs and teaching materials in Britain. It stated that education must be provided for handicapped people and specified "the categories qualifying for special education: blind, partially sighted, deaf, hard of hearing, epileptics, those with speech disorders, and the educationally subnormal" (Nesbit, 1983, p. 8).

In 1978, what has become known as the Warnock Report (DES, 1978), has had a primary impact on the development and delivery of special education services to learning disabled students. Implicit in that report was the policy to facilitate the process of access within the varied classroom environments for students with special needs (Morris and Parker, 1997). This philosophy is similar to that currently held in Newfoundland.

## Learning Disabilities

Over 50% of the students presently receiving special education services have learning disabilities. "Few educational services have grown as rapidly, have served as many children, and have generated as much controversy as learning disabilities" (Keogh, 1987). "Accompanying the growth in this field has been difficulties in arriving at a general consensus regarding definition, etiology, diagnostic procedures and measures, treatments, and prognosis (McIntyre, Keeton, Agard, 1980, p. 56).

Although there is no consensus for a general definition of learning disabilities, most accept that which was put forward by the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) in the United States (1988). This group which includes experts from clinical, educational, and political fields states that learning disability:

Is a general term that refers to a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual, presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction, and may occur across the life span.

Problems in self-regulatory behaviors, social perception, and social interaction may exist with

learning disabilities but do not by themselves constitute a learning disability.

Although learning disabilities may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (for example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, serious emotional disturbance) or with extrinsic influences (such as cultural differences, insufficient or inappropriate instruction), they are not the result of those conditions or influences (cited in Vaughn & Bos, 1993, p. 26).

It should be noted that this definition typically refers to students with specific learning disabilities and doesn't include students with the disabling conditions of mental retardation, emotional disorders or sensory impairment. The above stated definition also requires a determination that the child has "average" intelligence. This author by no means implies that learning disabilities is a generic all - inclusive term. Many articles noted in the research fail to differentiate among types of disability and categorize most of the learnig disabled students as being special education students. It is for this reason that such an exhaustive review of special education has been provided.

It is important to have a category of students labeled as learning disabled. Keough (1987) has suggested that there are three main purposes for the LD classification:

- i) as a focus for advocacy and for ensuring attention to

the problem;

- ii) as a category or mechanism for providing services;
- iii) as a condition or set of conditions that require scientific study.

#### Origin of the Term Learning Disabilities

The term Learning Disabilities originated at a meeting in Chicago, Illinois on April 6, 1963. Samuel Kirk coined the phrase and it was adopted by a group of parents who organized themselves as the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACLD) (Smith et al, 1995). This group later changed its name to the Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA). No doubt, there were individuals who had exhibited the heterogeneous nature of disorders that were now called learning disabilities, but now there was a generic name that could be used for categorization and classification.

Hammill (1993) states that there are five organizations in the United States that deal exclusively with learning disabilities: Learning Disabilities Association of America (LDA), Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD), Council for Exceptional Children - Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD), The Orton Dyslexia Society, Inc (ODS), and the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD). All of these organizations are strong advocates for services and programs for students who have learning disabilities.

Weiner & Seigal (1992) cite two primary historical factors in the recognition of, and development of, services for LD in Canada: (1) A group of staff at the Montreal Children's Hospital in the late 1950's, led by Edward Levinson, a psychiatrist, were puzzled by children who appeared to have only mild behavioral difficulties, seemed to have average intelligence but had significant problems with school functioning. This group set up a learning center at the hospital - with a later affiliation with McGill University - to work with these children; (2) Doreen Kronick, Harry Wineberg & Robert Shannon, all had children who had been diagnosed with "brain damage" and the children exhibited similar profiles. These three parents formed the Association for Children with Learning Disabilities (ACL D). By 1967, there were chapters of the ACL D in all ten provinces, and in 1971 the umbrella organization of all the Canadian chapters was incorporated in Ottawa to establish itself as an advocacy group on the federal level (Weiner & Seigal, 1992). In 1981, this group changed its name from ACL D to the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada to indicate that it was also now concerned with adults with learning disabilities.

Unlike the United States, Canada does not have a federal Department of Education. Upon confederation, each Canadian province and territory was assigned responsibility for its own education policies by the British North America Act. In 1980, the Amendment to the Educational Act of Ontario (Bill 82) was

passed. Prior to this Act, "Ontario's boards of education offered special education only if they chose to. Bill 82 now made it mandatory" (Weber, 1993, p. 10). In turn, this Bill influenced subsequent provincial and territorial legislation across Canada (Crealock, 1996; Weber, 1993).

The Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1982) of the Canadian Constitution, although not a Bill dealing with education per se, supercedes the legislation of the provinces and territories. There are two sections of the charter that affect the rights of the exceptional student: sections 15 (subsections 1 and 2) and section 7 (Crealock, 1996).

Subsection 1 states that:

Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability

Subsection 2 states that:

Subsection 1 does not preclude any law, program, or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race,

colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical (cited in Crealock, 1996, p. 14).

Crealock (1996) interprets Subsection 1 to mean that everyone is equal before the law and that Subsection 2 "allows affirmative action to help certain disadvantaged groups by giving them unequal treatment" (p. 14).

Section 7 states that: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person and the right not to be deprived thereof except in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice" (cited in Crealock, 1996, p. 15). This section has been used in court to indicate that a child's right to education is included as a liberty (Crealock, 1996), and as such no student should be deprived of a right to be educated.

In discussing legislation at the provincial and territorial level, Crealock (1996) states that: "The essential change over the past decade found in each province is the move from a resource model to a mainstreaming model" (p. 15). Weiner & Seigal (1992) state that one of the goals of the LD Association of Canada is to "ensure that the needs of students with learning disabilities are met while the school system proceeds in the direction of integrating most exceptional children" (p. 348).

### Inclusion

The need for a separate system of special education had been questioned (e.g., Deno, 1970) and the efficacy of such a system was challenged (e.g., Dunne, 1968), but the major impetus for inclusion in the United States probably occurred in 1975. P.L. 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, guaranteed all handicapped children the right to a free and public education. This law did not provide specific directions for implementation so its meaning has been determined by court decisions, state laws, and local practices (Good & Brophy, 1995). These authors also stated that:

The law placed six major requirements on state programs as a condition of obtaining federal support:

- 1) Students with disabling conditions must be educated, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the least restrictive environment.
- 2) Nondiscriminatory, culture-free testing in the native language of the student is necessary before placement into special programs.
- 3) Prior consultation with parents must take place before special placement.
- 4) An individualized educational program (IEP) must be prepared for each disabled student.
- 5) Public school programs must serve non-public school

students if they are disabled and need services that the federal government funds.

6) Staff development programs must be conducted in every school district (Good & Brophy, 1995, p. 582).

This act was revised in 1990 (Education of the Handicapped Children Act Amendments of 1990) and was renamed The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Some relevant provisions of IDEA are cited by Kolstad, Wilkenson & Briggs (1997):

To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities - are educated with children who are not disabled; and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be attained satisfactorily (p. 420).

This "least restrictive environment" provision of IDEA is what many proponents of inclusion use to support their argument for inclusive education settings.

The terms inclusion, integration, inclusive schooling, and mainstreaming are not mentioned in P.L. 94-142 or IDEA.

There does not appear to be a consensus for a definition, but many authors provide operational definitions that have similar components.

Mainstreaming was the first term to be used to describe the primary implication the law had for K-12 schools (Wilcox and Wigle, 1997). An early definition of this term was provided by Maynard Reynolds (as cited in Birch, 1974). Reynold's declared mainstreaming to be "based on the principle of educating most children in the same classrooms and providing special education on the basis of learning needs rather than categories of handicaps" (p.iii).

Birch (1974) believed that mainstreaming involved more than students spending part of their school day in general education classes. He thought that students were to be assigned to the general education teacher, and go to the resource room only for essential instruction. He also maintained that mainstreaming was not applicable to all exceptional students.

Inclusion differs from mainstreaming (Stainback & Stainback, 1988). These authors state that in the inclusive program the children with disabilities are the shared responsibility of the classroom teacher and other support professionals; in mainstreaming programs the children are seen as the primary responsibility of the resource teacher.

Smith, Polloway, Petten and Dowdy (1995) define inclusion as the physical, sociological, and instructional inclusion of

students with special needs into general education classrooms for the majority of the school day.

Banerji and Dailey (1995) further clarify the concept of inclusion and provide a rationale for its implementation. They state that:

The concept of inclusive educational programming is based on the premise that children of exceptional abilities and backgrounds benefit both academically and socially in a learning environment where they are served alongside normally achieving students, as opposed to being segregated from them (p. 511).

A survey of five school sites in different areas across the United States - school sites that had mainstreaming policies - found that each school had a different definition of mainstreaming (Baker and Zigmond, 1995). However, each school "a view of inclusion as a 'place' - a seat in an age appropriate general education classroom to have access to and, to participate fully in, the general education instructional program" (p. 176).

The National Association of State Boards of Education, (NASBE) (1992), in the United States (as cited in Lanier & Lanier, 1996) states that in a full inclusive model, students with disabilities, no matter how severe, are taught in the regular classroom of their home school with their age and

grade peers, for the full day, with support services provided within that classroom. They suggest that the goals of the inclusion policy include: a) improving the socialization of special students, b) providing special students access to mainstream educational resources, and c) accomplishing these enhanced educational opportunities at a reasonable cost. These authors state that inclusion differs from mainstreaming in that the latter term usually refers to integrating children with disabilities and non-handicapped children for only a portion of the day, which may be during non-academic times.

Barth (1997) proposes that there is an "erroneous use of integration and inclusion as synonymous terms" (p. 36). She argues that inclusion is the merging of special education and regular education into a unified system whereas integration refers to the participation of exceptional students in the regular classroom.

A recent survey of teachers in an urban American school district found that participants in an inclusive program had different definitions and understanding of the terms handicapped and mainstreaming, but were still able to develop a mainstream program for a handicapped child (Butler & Boscardin, 1997). These researchers found that the teachers used attributes and not a label to describe the children. Teachers determined that it is not necessarily the identification of the child as disabled but accurate depictions of the child's behaviors and academic performance

that are important for helping these children.

Winzer (1996) incorporated many of the above mentioned points about discrepancies in definitions or terms used to describe placing handicapped students in the regular education classroom, and provided a definition of the process:

The terms inclusion, inclusive schooling, and inclusive education are relatively new in special education. In many cases inclusion has simply become a synonym for mainstreaming, not something different or new. But inclusion is supposed to be a new way of looking at schools, at student populations, at settings and at delivery systems. Inclusion is not just more of the same. Inclusion implies subtle but real differences, for mainstreaming, the least restrictive environment, and integration.

Inclusion is more than a special education trend; it is an expression of a broader concern safeguarding the rights of all students. It means that individuals are not restricted because of some unalterable traits. An inclusive school, then, is one that is structured to serve a wide range of students; the environment is flexible and organized to meet the unique needs of all students. In an inclusive school, everyone belongs, is accepted, supports and is supported while having individual education needs met (p. 169).

There are some who believe that that inclusion may not be the panacea that many think it is (Gerber, 1995).

Reacting to Baker and Zigmond (1995), Gerber stated that:

The effect of implementing inclusion in each of these schools was to diminish and subordinate the role of the special education teacher, reduce the potential effectiveness of special education as a program of specialized instructional effort, and remove the academic press for achievement by students with learning disabilities (p. 181).

Gerber also stated "that the flood of rhetoric and reform supporting inclusion may have already reached its high water mark ... because of severe material scarcities and technological limitations inherent in the organization of mass, compulsory schooling" (p. 189).

Martin (1995) also raises concerns about the validity of inclusion. He suggests that the value of such programs are determined more by feelings than by objective outcome measures. Murphy (1995), a non-special educator, commented on the Zigmond and Baker study by stating that inclusion is noneducational in nature, it displaces the uniqueness of special education, and it has bankrupt conceptions of accountability.

Vaughn and Schumm (1995) address this issue by promoting

responsible inclusion which they define as being "... student centered and that bases educational placement and service provision on each student's needs" (p.265). They proposed that a continuum of services be provided so that the learning disabled (LD) student be able to access necessary services as required rather than be placed in an inclusive environment if the student's needs are not being met.

Although there is debate about the advantages and disadvantages of full inclusion and alternative options with both sides providing empirical support for their stances (Weber, 1993), some Canadian school boards have implemented policies similar to those suggested by Vaughn and Schumm (1995) that may be beneficial to most students with learning disabilities. The Ontario legislature has suggested that "integration be considered the norm for special education practice in the province, but at the same time, that boards continue to offer a full range of educational placements in recognition of the fact that an integrated setting will not be appropriate for every student" (Weber, 1993, pp. 11-12).

In Newfoundland at this time, special education service delivery is similar to that suggested by Vaughn & Schumm (1995) and the Ontario Department of Education (1991). In a review of special education policy and practice, Canning (1996) found that this policy "enjoys widespread support from all segments of the education community" (p.17). This author also believes that the current provincial policy is the best

available at this time. It embraces the ideal of educating the child in the least restrictive environment, preferably in the general education classroom as a full-time student, but also provides flexibility by allowing for alternate settings and supports for the students if required.

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## Appendix A

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA C or D

As per The Schools Act, Teacher Staffing Regulation 10.1, a student is deemed eligible if documentation demonstrates that she/he meets either eligibility Criteria C or D.

CHALLENGING NEEDS - CRITERIA C  
(Severe Mental Handicap)

A student is deemed eligible for services if four of the five statements apply:

1. Developmental sequences are not evidenced at the pace expected within universal norms in four or more of the following areas:
  - . Self-help
  - . Communication to/from
  - . Gross and/or fine motor
  - . Social/emotional; adaptive
  - . Cognition (ability to attend, concentrate, predict/understand cause-effect relationships, problem-solve, generalize)
2. New school routines require individualized supervision.
3. He/she learns at a much slower rate requiring an alternate curriculum.
4. Knowledge of and ability to utilize learning-how-to-learn skills is minimal (questioning, confirming, predicting, clarifying, summarizing).
5. There is a severe impairment of verbal and non-verbal interaction characterized/dominated by repetitive and stereotyped actions and routines.

DOCUMENTATION RE - EACH OF THE DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENTS MUST BE PROVIDED. THE STUDENT'S AGE, HOME COMMUNITY, A LIST OF HIS/HER STRENGTHS AND NEEDS, AND HIS/HER IPP OR PROJECTED GOALS SHOULD BE INCLUDED. DELINEATE WHO WILL ACTUALLY DELIVER EACH ASPECT OF THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM, AND THE DESIGNATED TEACHING ENVIRONMENT.

IF THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM WILL BE DELIVERED IN OTHER THAN HIS/HER HOME COMMUNITY PLEASE EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE AND OUTLINE ANY INCREASED DEMANDS FOR TRANSPORTATION.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - D

As per The Schools Act, Teacher Staffing Regulation 10.1, a student is deemed eligible if documentation demonstrates that she/he meets either eligibility Criteria C or D.

CHALLENGING NEEDS - CRITERIA D  
(Severe Physical Disability)

A student is deemed eligible for services if all statements apply (NOTE: a sensory deficit cannot be the primary impairment):

1. Developmental sequences in 4 of the 5 areas of:
  - . Self-help
  - . Communication (verbal/written)
  - . Gross Motor
  - . Fine Motor
  - . Cognition
  - (a) are not and/or will not be evidenced at the pace expected within universal norms, due to a diagnosed physical disability.

OR

  - (b) regression in levels of development attained is evidenced and documentation from a physician confirms that regression in the above areas will continue.
2. The physical disability mandates that specialized personalized equipment is necessary in order to access appropriate educational experiences e.g. wheelchair, brace, positioning devices.
3. The physical disability and/or the accompanying perceptual processing difficulties mandate that the curriculum must be modified/retought or augmented.
4. Augmentative communication systems must be taught, monitored and modified. (NOTE: These systems may include tape recorder, personalized computers, bliss symbolics).

DOCUMENTATION RE - EACH OF THE DESCRIPTIVE STATEMENTS MUST BE PROVIDED. THE STUDENT'S AGE, HOME COMMUNITY, A LIST OF HIS/HER STRENGTHS AND NEEDS, AND HIS/HER IPP OR PROJECTED GOALS SHOULD BE INCLUDED. DELINEATE WHO WILL ACTUALLY DELIVER EACH ASPECT OF THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM, AND THE DESIGNATED TEACHING ENVIRONMENT.

IF THE STUDENT'S PROGRAM WILL BE DELIVERED IN OTHER THAN HIS/HER HOME COMMUNITY PLEASE EXPLAIN THE RATIONALE AND OUTLINE ANY INCREASED DEMANDS FOR TRANSPORTATION.

**2.D.1 POLICY**

Each school district is responsible for establishing the processes of identification, assessment, and program planning.

**2.D.1 GUIDELINES**

*The processes of identification, assessment, and program planning must be clearly defined, so that the needs of students with exceptionalities can be effectively met.*

*The school board is responsible for the implementation of this process; therefore, each procedural step should be documented in the school district's special education policy manual. School districts are encouraged to refer to the appropriate sections of the Department of Education's Special Education Policy Manual to ensure that a consistent and unified approach is taken to the delivery of special education services across the Province. (See Policy 2.D.2 and sections on screening, assessment, and program planning).*

## 2.D.2(1)

**2.D.2 POLICY**

Each school district must establish, at the school level, program planning teams responsible for programming and monitoring.

**2.D.2 GUIDELINES**

*The major responsibility for ensuring that appropriate programs are provided for students with exceptionalities in each school lies with the principal. The planning and implementation of programs should be accomplished through a team process. The core team(s) should comprise the school principal or vice-principal, teachers involved and parents/guardians. Selection of additional members will depend on the special needs of the student and on the personnel resources of the school district and the community.*

*For example, additional members may include*

- *special education coordinator*
- *school counsellor*
- *educational psychologists*
- *speech-language pathologists*
- *itinerant teachers*
- *representatives of other agencies*

Appendix B

## Sample Procedure

### 1. *Screening and Identification:*

This initial stage may be initiated by a variety of agents. Some children may come to school with a myriad of assessments and program information from other agencies or from another school. Some students may have been in school for a number of years and experience difficulty at a later stage. For other students, their special needs may be identified by the classroom/subject teacher who regularly observes students in the learning situation. The planning process can be initiated at any time based on student need.

If a student has been identified as needing an individual program plan before entry to school, the team may wish to start the process at step 3: "Referral to Program Planning Team" to avoid delay.

Parents are involved at the beginning of the process. Classroom teachers, parents, outside agency personnel and resource teachers are all possible initiators at this stage. The principal should be aware of any communication concerning students at this stage.

### 2. *Exploration of Instructional Strategies*

After a student has been identified as requiring additional planning to meet his/her needs, the classroom/subject teacher uses available material and human resources to explore a variety of strategies in the learning process. In any school of more than one teacher there is a wealth of experience to draw upon. In exploring alternate methods of working with students, teachers may also wish to consult program coordinators, educational psychologists or other available personnel. The key at this stage is to be as creative as possible in determining a wide variety of strategies to meet student needs while ensuring accurate record keeping in terms of the outcome of utilizing these approaches. Determining why a method doesn't produce the desired outcome can yield as much information as one that does. Cooperation and collaboration among professionals and parents is essential at this stage.

The identification, assessment and program planning process may not go beyond this stage for many students as their needs may be met through ongoing evaluation and monitoring in the classroom.

### 3. *Referral to Program Planning Team*

If the classroom/subject teacher requires further support to meet the needs of a student, he/she may wish to refer to the program planning team. As outlined in Stage I, some students may begin the process at this stage upon entering school if the principal, parent and teachers feel this is warranted.

2.D.2(4)

The format of the referral depends on school and district procedures. In some cases the initiator of the referral may be required to have certain types of information available for the principal in order to make an informed decision whether or not to select team members and set a date for the program planning team meeting. Information required may include anecdotal information, observation records, informal assessment, interviews with the student and involved agencies, school records or any other information available that may be of help in program planning. Care should be taken not to use outdated or irrelevant assessment data.

4. *Program Planning Team Meeting*

The program planning team must ensure that the problem or difficulty facing the student and/or teachers and parents is clarified before proceeding with planning. The reason for referral does not always match the team's clarification of the problem and careful problem solving at this stage can prevent unnecessary or inappropriate steps being taken.

Team members should be those who have responsibility for the student's learning. The team should always include the principal or vice-principal, teachers involved and parents/guardians. These members form the core of the team. The selection of additional members depends on the needs of student and on the personnel resources of the school district and community. (A sample list of responsibilities is contained in Appendix 2.C.4). In cases where there are many teachers involved, as in high school, reports can be gathered from teachers for presentation at the team meeting. However, key personnel should be present. In some cases this may include the student, especially at a high school level when career/transitional decisions are being discussed. Parents, as full members of the program planning team should feel comfortable in presenting their views of the student's strengths and needs.

The team meeting provides an opportunity for members to come together to clarify, given all available information, the students strengths and needs and to decide on future actions to be taken in terms of program planning. The meeting should not be a forum for teachers, administrators, and other agency personnel to present a completed program to the parents. If this is done, the parents become outsiders to the process and do not have the opportunity to affect decision making in any meaningful way. Together, the members should discuss the information each has observed and collected. Concerns should be expressed openly and information presented, without judgemental rebuttal. However, in cases where differences of opinion occur, the principal or vice-principal as chairperson would act as mediator in the process.

The team decides whether or not to proceed with development of an individualized program plan. The meeting may highlight the need for a change in instructional strategies while maintaining the objectives of a prescribed course. When this occurs, a statement in the student's cumulative file indicating alterations made should be

## 2.D.2(5)

sufficient. However, when the objectives of provincially approved curriculum must be changed to meet the needs of the student, an I.P.P. becomes necessary. At this point, the chairperson designates responsibility areas to the team members to develop the individualized program plan according to the priorities, goals and approaches set at the meeting, or to collect further information if necessary.

#### 5. *Program Plan Developed*

The program planning team uses information gathered to write the program plan. Those that have responsibility for implementation of parts of the plan should be involved in developing the objectives, deciding on strategies and evaluation procedures. The individual program plan should include the following components (see 3.C.1):

- . a summary of student strengths and needs
- . annual long term goals
- . short term objectives
- . responsibility area
- . review dates.

#### 6. *Implementation of Program Plan*

Team members are assigned responsibility areas and monitor student progress. The teacher responsible for teaching the student must also evaluate the student's progress in that curriculum area.

#### 7. *Review of Program Plan*

The program planning team is responsible for reviewing the student's progress in the plan and meeting to discuss changes when necessary. The program plan should be reviewed at least twice annually (see 3.C.3).

### Section 3 - Overview

#### The Program Planning Process

*The following three groups of policies highlight the importance of establishing an information base for the effective planning and implementation of programs for students with exceptionalities. Emphasis is placed on a systematic process:*

- 1. parental involvement at each stage of the process,*
- 2. early identification and exploration of instructional strategies carried out by classroom teachers,*
- 3. collection of information and/or referral for assessment by appropriate professionals.*
- 4. program planning team meeting,*
- 5. preparation of an individual program plan,*
- 6. implementation of the individual program plan and its regular review.*

*Screening and identification constitute the first step in the process; they are initiated by the classroom teacher in conjunction with the parents/guardians. It is only after a teacher's systematic observation of the student and extensive exploration of instructional strategies that a referral may be necessary for detailed assessment and subsequent program planning. The individual program plan designed by the team determines the most enhancing environment(s) for the program's implementation.*

*Any identification, assessment and program planning process should be flexible enough to accommodate entrance or exit at any point as long as the steps in the process have been undertaken by appropriate and qualified professionals. (e.g. If a student with challenging needs enters a school in kindergarten with documentation from physicians, an occupational therapist and a day care setting, the school may wish to make an immediate referral to the program planning team to ensure appropriate support services are in place as soon as possible).*

**3.C.1 POLICY**

An individual program plan, based on an assessment of the student's strengths and needs, will be designed and implemented for every student requiring objectives that are different from those stated in the prescribed or approved curriculum.

**3.C.1 GUIDELINES**

*Each school district will establish procedures and guidelines for the development and implementation of individual program plans. The Division of Student Support Services will act as a support service in this process by designing appropriate inservice and resource packages for assessment, diagnosis, individual programming, and evaluation. (See Appendix 3.C.1 for sample individual program plan formats.)*

*Teaching practice necessarily includes the use of a variety of teaching strategies to enable students to meet course objectives. The manipulation of variables such as time, classroom organization and evaluation techniques will be necessary to enable students to meet these objectives. Provided the course objectives are not substantially altered these procedures do not generally require an individual program plan although specific changes should be documented in the student's cumulative file (e.g. oral evaluation in place of written evaluation). When the manipulation of instructional variables is not sufficient to address student needs in the context of the prescribed curriculum, the program planning team is responsible for the development of an individual program plan. For students whose special needs include non-academic areas, the individual program plan should detail the supports and services needed to enable the student to reach his/her educational goals.*

**3.C.1 PROCEDURES**

The components of the individual program plan for each student should include the following:

**1. A summary of student strengths and needs**

The summary should include information on the student's physical, behavioral, social, and academic strengths and needs. A brief summary of the types of assessments used in determining strengths and needs should be included in the individual program plan while more complete result/reports should be kept in the student's confidential file.

3.C.1(2)

2. Annual long-term goals

Annual long-term goals are statements of expected achievement over a one-year period. These statements are estimates of future performance based on past achievement, present performance, and priority areas of desired development. Priority areas should be established in consultation with parents through the program planning team process to ensure a coordinated effort between the home and school.

3. Short-term objectives

Short term objectives are statements outlining specific steps which lead to the attainment of the long term goal. Objectives are arranged sequentially, according to the developmental process involved and the logical progression toward identified goals. The stated objectives are the basis for the evaluation of the student's growth toward attainment of the long term goals.

4. Recommendations for specific support services

These services may be divided into three categories:

(a) educational strategies

(e.g., specific instructional techniques, organizational techniques, evaluation procedures)

(b) special materials/equipment

(e.g., telebinoculars, computers, specially designed furniture)

(c) human resources

(e.g., speech-language pathologists, physiotherapists, student assistants, mentors)

5. Responsibility areas

Specific responsibilities for teaching, modifying/extending and evaluating objectives must be assigned to individuals with the appropriate professional competence. However, the overall responsibility for the evaluation of the plan rests with the team as a whole. The team is responsible for ensuring that the plan outlines a comprehensive and cohesive approach to meeting student needs.

6. Review Dates

The program planning team is responsible for setting dates for the review of the overall plan. However, individual team members are responsible for the ongoing evaluation of their designated responsibility areas. The overall plan should be reviewed at least twice in each school year. Dates for the review of the program plan should be set at each program planning team meeting.

## 3.C.3(1)

**3.C.3 POLICY**

The individual program plan will be reviewed and evaluated in an ongoing manner as necessary, and in a formal manner at least twice annually.

**3.C.3 GUIDELINES**

*As one set of objectives and goals are met, they are replaced by others which fit the sequence and developmental structure of the program plan in response to student needs. When objectives are not met, strategies and expectations must be reviewed and appropriate alterations made. The formal reviews of the program plan should be undertaken by the whole team.*

**3.C.3 PROCEDURES**

See Policy 3.C.1 Procedure No. 8

**3.C.2 POLICY**

The individual program planning team is responsible for ensuring that all environments in which the program is implemented are appropriate and that support services are provided when necessary.

**3.C.2 GUIDELINES**

*The individual program planning team monitors the student's progress in all settings to ensure that each is the most enhancing environment in which the student can meet his/her program objectives. Through the special education or other designated teacher, the team consults the grade level/subject area teachers to ensure that service delivery decisions enhance the development of all students involved. Collaborative efforts are essential to program implementation and evaluation.*

**3.C.2 PROCEDURES**

See Procedures for Policy 3.C.1.

## Appendix C

**2.A.4 POLICY**

Each school district is encouraged to provide a wide range of services to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities within its jurisdiction.

**2.A.4 GUIDELINES**

*The Department of Education makes every effort to provide the financial and personnel support to school districts necessary for the provision of the best possible programs.*

*Figure 1, p.2.A.4(2) is an adaption of the Reynolds and Birch (1977) Cascade Model. This model proposes that classes be made educationally diverse, with emphasis on providing specialized instruction in all classroom settings. Most students should begin their formal education in grade level classroom settings with support services. As strengths and needs become more clearly defined, other options from the cascade of services may need to be explored and accessed.*

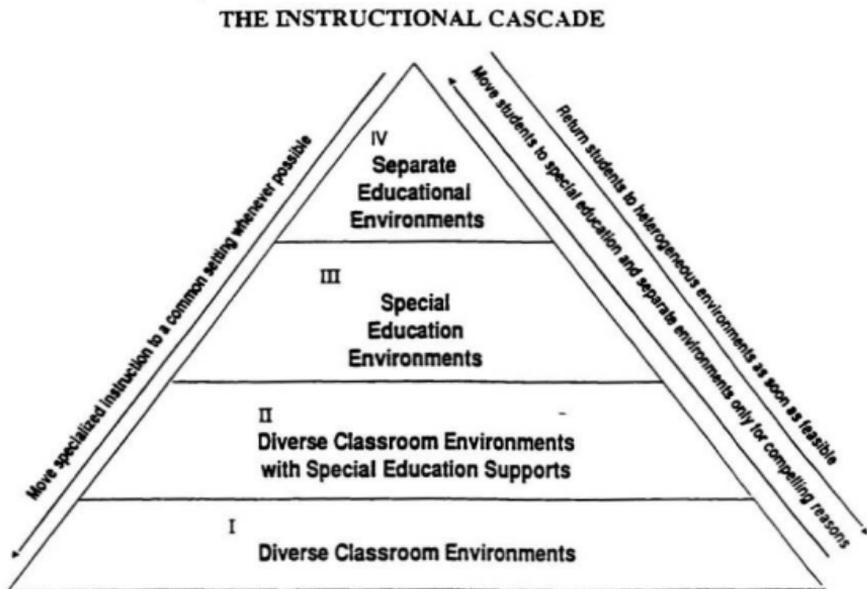


Fig. 1. Diagram of the Instructional Cascade.

(The following are definitions of the educational environments indicated in Fig. 1 by the Roman Numerals I-IV.)

**I. Diverse Classroom Environments:**

The student attends classes with his/her peers. The diversity of instructional and organizational techniques, resource material and evaluation procedures provided in the classroom ensures that each student's needs are met and that each student has access to the prescribed curriculum. Where necessary, the prescribed curriculum is modified for students with specific needs, through individual program planning, as part of the diverse programming offered in the classroom.

## II. Diverse Classroom Environments with Special Education Supports:

The student attends classes with his/her peers to the greatest extent possible and is provided with special education supports to the degree necessary to meet the student's needs. Special education support can be provided in-class either through direct intervention or teaching by a special education/resource teacher or indirectly through consultation and/or monitoring. Where necessary to meet a very specific need, to attain a particular objective or for a short period of more intensive instruction, the student may receive instruction outside the classroom, in a resource room or any other environment designated by his/her program (I.P.P.). The resource room is seen as a support to the student and as a means to enable him/her to avail of the experiences provided his/her peers to greatest extent possible. Wherever instruction is provided in environments outside of the classroom, the student's program (I.P.P.) should specify precisely the goals, objectives and methods which will be facilitated in that environment. Any teacher should have access to support services as a support to programming for individual students. The special education/resource teacher and any support service personnel involved must work closely to plan and implement the specific program.

## III. Special Education Environments:

As designated by the program (I.P.P.) the student may for a variety of reasons, receive the majority of his/her programming in a special education environment. Some students may benefit from being based in such an environment, whereby specific techniques, equipment or health related procedures may be more easily incorporated into the program. All students may avail of any aspects of the same programs, resources and experiences as their peers at any time if they will enhance the individual's program. Student progress should be monitored on an ongoing basis. The program, required supports and environment(s), should be responsive to the students' changing strengths and needs. Differentiated programs should include experiences designed to maximize the student's future opportunity to participate in the prescribed curriculum.

#### **IV. Separate Educational Environments:**

The student may receive services in alternate environments eg. hospitals, residential facilities or correctional facilities. The specific needs of such a student should be reflected in his/her program. Placement in environments which involve separation from the community, school and/or home, should only be made for compelling reasons and with the assurance that this is the most enhancing environment for the individual.

#### **Summary**

Programs designed to provide educational opportunities for students with exceptionalities must not be static; the measure must always be the progress of each individual student. Any decisions regarding educational environments must only be made as a result of a student's program and must reflect the specific goals and objectives of that program. Schools should use the resources provided to them to ensure that a continuum of supports is available to meet the varying levels of student needs and that individual students have access to the most enhancing environments for their particular circumstances.

Paper Two

The Influence of Participants' Attitudes on Inclusion.

At the present time, there is an increased demand for students with disabilities to be served in the general education classroom (Will, 1986; Carlisle & Chang, 1996). This process of including disabled students in regular classrooms has been well - studied and documented: there are advocates (e.g., Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1992), and there are those who express caution about the phenomenon (e.g., Kaufman, Gerber, and Semmel, 1988). No matter the agreement or disagreement with inclusive philosophy, the process is becoming increasingly popular in the United States (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1996) and Canada (Winzer, 1996). Because inclusion is being implemented in the school system, its success or failure may be determined by the attitudes of those persons most involved in the academic process: the disabled students, their non-disabled peers, teachers, and parents.

The process of inclusion has been defined in the preceding paper, but for the purposes of this review the terms mainstreaming, integration, inclusive integration, and inclusion will be used synonymously because of the varying use of the terms to describe the same basic principle in the literature.

#### Attitude

To understand the importance of attitude on the success

or failure of inclusion, it is first necessary to operationally define the term. Allport (1935) was one of the first researchers to provide a generally accepted definition of the construct of attitude. He stated: "An attitude is a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting a directive or dynamic influence upon the individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related" (cited in Fishbein, 1967, p. 8).

This definition was expanded by Katz (1960) when he distinguished between an attitude and an opinion. He described an attitude as:

The predisposition of the individual to evaluate some symbol or object or aspect of his world in a favorable or unfavorable manner. Opinion is the verbal expression of an attitude, but attitudes can also be expressed in non-verbal behavior. Attitudes include both the affective and the cognitive elements which describe the object of the attitude, its characteristics, and its relations to other objects. All attitudes thus include beliefs, but not all beliefs are attitudes (p. 168).

An assimilation of components from these definitions and others posits that an attitude is:

A relatively enduring system of evaluative affective

reactions based upon and reflecting the evaluative concepts or beliefs which have been learned about the characteristics of a social object or class of objects (Shaw & Wright, 1967, p. 3).

Breckler (1984) provided support for a tripartite model of attitude structure. He stated that attitude has affective, behavioral, and cognitive factors; that all three components are distinguishable, and that it is important to distinguish among them. He said it is ambiguous to say you are measuring attitude without specifying which component is being measured.

It has often been stated that if an individual has a positive attitude toward an object, it will evoke a positive reaction and acceptance; if an individual has a negative attitude toward an object it will create a negative reaction which will lead to avoidance and rejection of that object.

If attitudes are a function of beliefs about an object they must be derived from information that may be accurate or inaccurate. They can only be changed with new information challenging the beliefs. People need to be exposed to information that produces changes in a sufficient number of beliefs to produce a change in attitude (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980). Therefore, it is not that a person's attitude toward an object will cause a person to react to that object but rather, there might be a behavioral category where each of the behaviors comprising the category is scored in terms of its

favorableness or unfavorableness with respect to the target in question (Fishbein & Ajzen, 1980). The greater the number of favorable behaviors a person performs and the fewer unfavorable behaviors he performs, the higher his score would be on the behavioral index. This index should be related to a measure of attitude toward the target.

From this, we can assume that an individual's attitude toward inclusion can be determined by the number of variables associated with the process that he or she determines to be favorable or unfavorable. If an individual is more favorable than unfavorable toward criteria associated with inclusion, then that person has a positive attitude toward it. If the individual is more unfavorable toward criteria associated with inclusion then that person has a negative attitude toward it. The goal, then, is to identify: (i) those characteristics that are perceived as contributing to, or creating, a more positive attitude toward inclusion; and, (ii) those characteristics that might foster a negative attitude toward inclusion. To facilitate inclusion, the intent is to potentiate the positive characteristics associated with the process and lessen the characteristics that denigrate the process.

The literature indicates that there are variables that influence the attitudes of those involved in inclusion. Variables such as special education training, views of students' classroom behavior, previous experience with disabled children, and perceived ability of the students to

achieve academically influence teachers' attitudes. A major characteristic that influences a disabled student's attitude toward inclusion is their perception of how they are perceived by their teachers and peers in the classroom.

#### Teacher Variables

Teachers' overall attitude toward inclusion is relatively neutral. Jobe, Rust, & Brissie (1996), in a randomly selected national sample of 162 regular classroom teachers in the United States, found that the attitude of teachers was neutral regarding the inclusion of children with handicaps in class. They found that inclusion inservice training and special education teaching experience had the most significant relationships with teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. Both correlated positively, but modestly, with teacher attitudes toward inclusion.

Even though there is a general sense of being neutral, general education teachers' willingness attitudes are related to their views of students' classroom behavior. Students whom general education teachers rated as having more problem behaviors are considered less appropriate candidates for reintegration (Shin, Baker, Haberdank & Good, 1995).

Shinn et al (1995) also discovered that teachers' attitudes were not entirely fixed and could be affected by data. By providing understandable, relevant data to general

education teachers, they could change general education teachers' attitudes toward reintegrating students. They found that providing the teachers with information about the reading skills of the special education students in their classrooms relative to their classmates' reading skills significantly impacted their reintegration willingness attitudes. If a student could read with a proficiency greater than or equal to at least one other student in their classroom, the teacher was significantly more willing to reintegrate. If the student read outside the range of their low readers the teachers became significantly less willing to reintegrate.

Schumm & Vaughn (1992) examined general education teachers' perceptions and feelings about planning for mainstreamed students and found that teachers are willing to include special needs students in their class as long as the students do not exhibit emotional or behavioral problems. Schumm & Vaughn also found that teachers are willing to make adaptations while the student is taking tests or working on assignments, but are less likely to spend much time planning or making adaptations to the curriculum or test or constructing new objectives based on student performance. This finding indicates that even though disabled students may be integrated into the classroom, they might not be receiving appropriate instruction, curriculum or support.

Most teachers believe their inclusionary practices are meeting the social and emotional needs of the students with

special needs, but some teachers feel that their inclusionary practices do not meet the academic needs of the regular students and the students with special needs (Boyer and Bandy, 1997). These authors suggest that to support an inclusionary environment teachers must have a fundamental knowledge and understanding of students with special needs, perceive that they are being effective, and have appropriate support systems.

Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) provided a research synthesis of teacher attitudes toward inclusion for the period 1958-1995. They reviewed twenty-eight investigations and summarized responses and consistency of responses across time, geographical location, and item type.

The authors found that 65% of respondents indicated support of the construct of inclusion, but there were different levels of support for including students with different conditions of disability. Seventy two percent of the teachers supported mainstreaming for learning disabled (LD) students, but only 29% of the teachers supported mainstreaming for students with emotional disturbance, and only 22% supported mainstreaming for students with educable mental retardation. The authors posit that "systematic variability in support for mainstreaming appears to be due mostly to the degree of intensity of mainstreaming, and the severity of students with disabilities who are mainstreamed" (p. 62).

Overall, 53.4% of the teachers expressed a willingness to teach students with disabilities. Teacher willingness covaried with the severity of the disability and the amount of additional teacher responsibility required. 54.4% of the teachers agreed that students with/without disabilities benefitted from inclusion, but only a minority agreed that the general education classroom was the best environment for students with special needs. 30.3% of teachers agreed that students with disabilities could be harmful to the classroom. 27.7% of the teachers agreed that they had sufficient time to undertake mainstreaming/inclusion, and 29.2% of respondents agreed that general education teachers had sufficient expertise or training for mainstreaming.

Teachers did not agree that sufficient resources were available to support mainstreaming efforts. However, more teachers agreed that they had adequate material support than personnel support.

Most of the research reviewed by Scruggs & Mastropieri (1996) was based on questionnaire methodology. There are those who believe that previous research suggesting that teachers possessed a negative attitude toward mainstreaming may be limited because of their exclusive reliance on questionnaire methodology which encourages a simplified view of mainstreaming (Gelzheiser & Myers, 1996). In some cases the choice of responses to a question might only have been agree or disagree with the statement about mainstreaming.

Gelzheiser & Meyers (1996) also propose that critics of inclusion have failed to examine the effect that participation in an inclusion program might have on a teacher's view of inclusion. The authors used interview methodology, and rather than focus on either supporters or nonsupporters of inclusion, they focused on how teachers qualify their views toward inclusion. Results of their study indicate a striking contrast to results of other studies. They found that most teachers who had experience with inclusion viewed it as appropriate for most students and thought that inclusion provided advantages to the teacher and the class.

Further support for the influence of "experience" on attitude toward placement was provided by Hunt & Goertz (1997). The attitudes and perceptions of general education teachers whose class included a student with significant disabilities were examined in a survey of 20 American teachers. The authors found that 17 teachers described experiences that were more positive than their initial negative reactions to the inclusion of a child with significant disabilities in their class. The experiences included increased ownership and involvement with the student, a willingness to interact with the student, an increase in their knowledge of ways to teach the student, and a change in their attitudes toward the placement of a student with significant disabilities in their classroom.

Chomiccki & Kysela (1993), in a review of attitude toward

mainstreaming literature, listed several variables that may affect teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming. They suggest that type and severity of the disabling condition, teacher perceptions of success, "costs" to teachers and students, impact of special education training, and familiarity with disability all affect teacher attitudes. Citing a survey by Alberta Education (1992), Chomicki & Kysela (1993) state that "respondents perceived integration to be less effective for those with severe mental handicaps and most effective for students with hearing impairments. ... integration was seen as an effective strategy for students with learning disabilities, visual impairments and mild mental handicaps. Integration was perceived by respondents as being less effective for students exhibiting behavioral problems, multiple disabilities and moderate mental handicaps" (p. 65).

Citing Larrivee & Cook (1979), Chomicki & Kysela (1993) stated that teacher attitude toward mainstreaming was most highly correlated with teacher perceptions of degree of success which were in turn most influenced by administrative support, reduced class size and additional support services such as paraprofessionals, and consultations regarding modifications and behavior management.

"Costs" to teachers, disabled students and regular education students are a concern to teachers. There is a feeling of inadequacy in working with exceptional students and there are fears that "... such students will cause

disruptions, will require more teacher time than is realistic to expect, and will result in a watering down of curriculum material" (Chomicki & Kysela, 1997, p. 68).

Chomicki & Kysela (1997) also lend support to the idea that exposure to, and interaction with, individuals with disabling conditions appear to influence the formation of positive attitudes towards these individuals. Again citing the Alberta Report (1992) Chomicki & Kysela suggest that "... practicing teachers involved in inclusive education practice indicated that they had experienced a significant positive attitude change as a result of having students with varying abilities in their classrooms" (p. 69).

The attitudes and beliefs of teachers and administrators with varying degrees of experience attempting to educate all students, regardless of the nature or type of disability, in age-appropriate general education classrooms in local neighbourhood inclusive schools were addressed by Villa, Thousand, Meyers & Nevin (1996). The authors hypothesized that the effects of experience with inclusion may explain why findings from past surveys of educators with little or no experience in including students with disabilities preferred their current pull-out special education models. The researchers found that, overall, general and special education teachers and administrators responded positively and believed that educating students with disabilities in the general education classrooms results in positive changes in educators'

attitudes and job responsibilities. Elementary schools were more positive than middle schools and high schools. This likely reflected the increased complexity of managing inclusive school and community experiences as students enter middle and high school settings - settings where students have multiple classes and instructors and where scheduling time for adults to collaborate is a greater challenge. A year later, Villa et al (1997) hypothesized that their results indicate that previous respondents to surveys who indicated low levels of support for inclusive practices may have done so because of a lack of positive experience with inclusive practices and the natural resistance encountered when school personnel are asked to assume new functions and roles. They state that their data demonstrate that this initial attitude can and does change with actual experience integrating students with various disabilities. They say, "Teachers' negative or neutral attitudes at the beginning of an innovation such as heterogeneous or inclusive education may change over time as a function of experience and the expertise that develops through the process of implementation" (p. 30), and that, "An initially reluctant attitude is a hurdle to be surmounted, but not necessarily a permanent barrier to implementation" (p. 41). This supports the data provided by Larivee & Cook (1979). General education teachers identified administrative support, time to collaborate, and experience with students with severe and profound disabilities as factors

associated with their attitude regarding the education of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Monahan, Marino, & Miller, (1997) provided converging evidence for the idea that disabled students do not impact negatively on their non-disabled peers in an inclusive classroom. In a survey of 364 teachers in South Carolina 62% of respondents stated that the inclusion of students with special needs did not negatively affect the performance of regular education students, 68% felt that students with special needs improve their social skills when placed in a regular education classroom, 62% of respondents felt that students with special needs benefit from inclusion in the regular education classroom; however, 71% of respondents did feel that students with special needs require more attention and assistance than the regular education teacher can provide. 55% percent of the respondents indicated that peers are accepting of students with special needs in the classroom.

#### Student Variables

A second important group involved in the process of inclusion are the students. Like most of the research dealing with teachers' attitudes, studies involving this group provide mixed results. Guterman (1995) investigated the effects of special education placement from the perspectives of nine high school students receiving learning disabilities services in

separate classrooms. The students believed that their mainstream peers thought they were less capable than general education students because their peers had a lack of accurate information about learning disabilities. The students believed that this lack of information was a result of a lack of opportunities for classroom interaction among general and special education students, use of categorical labels, and confusion of the many "types" of special education programs offered. The students viewed being learning disabled negatively, but stated that placement in the program had little impact on their self - image. A majority viewed their curricula as low - level, irrelevant, and repetitive, but stated that their placements had been wise. They stated that they would not have preferred receiving help within the general education classroom from a special educator acting in a supportive role. These students held a negative view of inclusion and most indicated "retaining the services in small separate classrooms but removing any labels and making the special education curriculum meaningful and relevant" (p. 120).

Students in elementary school placed in special education, remedial and integrated settings have been interviewed about their educational placement preferences (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989). The children receiving a pull-out program chose to continue to receive that kind of service delivery more often than groups who had not been receiving

that type of delivery, and students who were being taught by a specialist teacher in the regular classroom tended to choose a pull-out program as well. Students whose program was delivered by their regular school teacher in consultation with a special education teacher were evenly split in their preference to choose a pull-out or in class resource program, but preferred to be given instruction by their regular teacher than receive help from a specialist teacher.

Weiner & Manuel (1994) replicated the Jenkins & Heinen (1989) study to obtain the attitudes of learning handicapped students and their teachers toward integration. They found two thirds of the students preferred a pull-out program where they would receive special education assistance outside of the regular classroom over a model where the special education teacher would assist them in the regular classroom. Placement choice was not related to current placement. The authors found that students preferring in - class placements tended to have teachers who agreed with the statement that most students with learning handicaps should be instructed in the regular class for the entire school day, and students preferring a pull-out delivery were more likely to have teachers who disagreed with the statement. Weiner offered that "this finding suggests that there is a relationship between teacher attitude and student placement choice, which presumably is mediated by teacher behavior" (p. 114).

The effects of disabled students on classroom members

were studied by Sharpe, York, and Knight (1994). The authors found that classroom environments and students are more resilient than might be expected in terms of their responses to increased levels of diversity in general education classrooms. In a study comparing two groups of students, the researchers found that there was no decline in academic or behavioral performance in inclusive environments. They found that there were no significant differences in performance between students in classes containing students with significant disabilities and a second class not in an inclusive environment.

#### Parent Variables

Parent advocacy has been a strong force in the development of inclusive educational options for students with disabilities. Shinn, Haberdank, & Baker (1993) state that

Although parental involvement in inclusion decisions may not be a legal requirement, having them involved in educational decision making has strong conceptual appeal and empirical support. Also, teachers cite parental disapproval as an obstacle to inclusion. If parents are involved and approve of the inclusion process, then teachers can feel confident that they are working collaboratively (p. 248).

Shinn et al (1993) found that parents of disabled children appeared to be more enthusiastic about children with disabilities receiving more of their education in the general education classroom. However, they only seemed to feel this way when talking in the general case; they appeared markedly less willing to reintegrate their own children regardless of their academic skill levels.

Leyser & Gottlieb (1996) state that "The issue of parental views and involvement in the process of inclusion transcends those of students with disabilities. The attitudes of parents of nondisabled peers, the numerically dominant group in all general education classes, must also be considered" (p. 74). Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research in this area. Leyser & Gottlieb investigated the views of parents of nondisabled children regarding various aspects of mainstreaming, and examined the stability and change of the views over a ten year interval from 1981 to 1991. Results of their study indicated that the overall disposition was neutral; parents in both samples did not possess unfavorable attitudes toward the idea of mainstreaming children with mild disabilities. The parents neither strongly endorsed nor rejected mainstreaming outright; there was a hierarchical acceptance pattern of students with exceptionalities. Closer examination showed that parents were most supportive of the mainstreaming of students with physical disabilities followed by students with sensory disabilities.

Parents' attitude toward students with learning disabilities was ambivalent, and their attitude toward students with mental retardation and behavior disorders was negative. There was strong opposition to these last two groups. However, there was less opposition from parents in the more recent study than in the former.

Giangreco, Edelman, Cloninger, & Dennis, (1993) investigated the perceptions of parents of typical children who were members of a class that included a student with severe disabilities and found that most parents perceived that: their child felt comfortable interacting with a disabled classmate; the interactions had a positive impact on their child's social emotional growth; the child felt positively about having a classmate with significant disabilities; the inclusion of a classmate with disabilities did not interfere with their child's receiving a good education; and, having a classmate with significant disabilities had been a positive experience for their child.

Khamis (1993) suggests that "Parents now participate more actively than at any other time, in determining and defining both the content and setting of their child's school education" (p. 26). He found several factors related to the attitudes parents develop toward the special placement of their handicapped children. These factors included: a) child characteristics such as degree of the handicap (which had less of an effect in this study than in previous studies); b)

parental characteristics such as their formal education experience and knowledge of special education services; and, c) program characteristics such as types of special services provided, teachers' qualities or competencies, social outcomes for students as a result of the placement process and curriculum offerings/content. Khamis also found that parents with higher education, who are aware of their legal rights, were not satisfied with the special education programming because their children did not achieve the desired and expected learning outcomes.

In summary, Khamis (1996) states that "Research on school reform has shown that participants' views of reforms determine the extent of implementation and that understanding this viewpoint is a critical first step in the reform process" (p. 83). If inclusion is to be the result of educational reform, it is necessary for the participants to have a positive attitude toward the process. Teachers seem to possess a positive attitude (i.e., support inclusion) given that they: a) receive inservice training or complete special education courses; b) are provided with support services such as special education teachers and teacher aides; c) are not asked to integrate students with behavioral or emotional disorders; d) are not required to provide excessive adaptations; e) perceive that they are being effective; and, f) possess previous experience with inclusion. Teachers are most willing to accept students with mild handicaps.

Research involving students' attitudes indicates that the majority of disabled students are accepted in the general education classroom by their peers, even though there is a hierarchical order with the behavioral and emotionally disordered less desirable than those who are i) physically handicapped, ii) have sensory handicaps, iii) are learning disabled.

Parents of disabled students and parents of nondisabled students seem to share similar attitudes. Both groups appear to hold moderate views of inclusion. They believe that most disabled students should be included in the general education classroom, but that there should be some place where students can be segregated if the need exists. Similar to teachers and students, they indicate that there is a hierarchical order of acceptance of disabled students with the behaviorally and emotionally disordered being less accepted than the other groups.

That many parents express ambivalence toward the inclusion of LD students in the classroom may be of concern because over 50% of the students who receive special education services are learning disabled. This concern might lend credence to the proposal of authors such as Hallahan & Kauffman (1997) and organizations such as the Learning Disabilities Association (1996) who suggest that the inclusion of learning disabled students in the general education classroom might be detrimental to their academic achievement.

However, this author believes that the positive attitudes of teachers and nondisabled student peers toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom indicates that there is a greater chance of these students achieving academically by being placed in those environments than by being placed in segregated environments.

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**Paper Three**

**Increasing Academic Achievement of Learning Disabled  
Students in the General Education Classroom.**

Students with learning disabilities (LD) experience more failure than normally achieving students. The repeated failure experiences in the academic setting place them at risk for lowered self - esteem (Meyer, 1983). The failure also provides those students with less certainty about the future and more doubts about their ability than their nondisabled counterparts (Jacobsen, Lowery, & Doucette, 1986).

Teachers often state that students with learning disabilities do not succeed academically because they are not "motivated" to do so. The LD students are presumed often to lack motivation, hold low self-perceptions of ability, and have a long history of failure at school. These are grounds for expecting maladaptive responses to failure or the threat of failure (Galloway, Rogers, & Armstrong, 1995).

Assisting students with learning disabilities to overcome failure or expected failure in academic settings includes assessing the roles of variables that might influence success or failure in the academic setting and manipulating those variables so that they have a positive effect on the development of academic performance. It is hypothesized that attributional style, goal setting, self-concept, teacher influence and characteristics, and classroom structures are variables that influence the academic success or failure of LD students. Each of these factors are malleable and can be orchestrated to facilitate academic achievement.

## Motivation

Motivation is "a hypothetical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, and persistence of goal - directed behavior" (Good & Brophy, 1995, p. 343). Recent theoretical conceptualizations of achievement motivation stress the importance of goals. Goals direct behavior and they have been considered in a wide variety of ways (Urda, 1997). Goals have been defined in terms of performance objectives, or "what" the student is trying to accomplish (Bandura, 1986), and in terms of the perceived purposes of achievement, or "why" the student is trying to achieve academically (Dweck & Leggett, 1988).

Elliot & Sheldon (1997) propose that there are two distinct motivational orientations dealing with the "why" that have been conceptualized: the desire to approach success (e.g., need for achievement) and the desire to avoid failure (e.g., fear of failure). Though they have been given different labels by different researchers (e.g., mastery vs. performance, Dweck & Leggett, 1988; task-focused vs. relative ability, Ryan, Hicks, & Midgely, 1997), a clear distinction between the two types of goals has been provided. Ryan et al (1997) stated:

Task - focused goals are concerned with gaining understanding, insight, or skill; learning is seen as an

end in itself. In contrast, relative ability goals are concerned with the desire to be judged able; ability is demonstrated by outperforming others or by achieving success with little effort (pp. 153-154).

Task - focused goals are associated with adaptive motivational patterns such as exerting effort, seeking challenging tasks, persisting in the face of difficulty, and attributing success to effort. Relative ability goals are characterized by the evaluation of success in comparison with the performance of others. Individuals with relative ability goal orientation are deemed at risk to display maladaptive behaviors such as an unwillingness to exert effort when task demands are high and a tendency to avoid challenge (Solmon, 1996).

#### Students with Learning Disabilities

Students with learning disabilities (LD) are more likely to exhibit the maladaptive attribution pattern for their school experiences than are non LD students (Ayres, Cooley, & Dunn, 1990). They attribute lack of effort or lack of ability as the causes of failure more than normally achieving students (Jacobsen, Lowery, & Doucette, 1986). They take more responsibility for failure than normally achieving students and they have more failure for which to be responsible. They

also credit their successes to luck and task ease and in doing so might limit the positive feelings associated with their successes.

Evidence suggests that there is a developmental period for obtaining achievement goals (Nichols, 1988), and that the goals are not as stable as previously thought (Elliot & Dweck, 1988; Seifert, 1996). If a student with a learning disability were prevented from obtaining a maladaptive achievement pattern or provided with appropriate strategies to change his academic goal orientation from a relative ability orientation to a task - focused orientation, than that person might achieve better academically and have improved self- esteem.

#### Developmental Sequence

In a study involving children's reading ability, Nichols (1979) found that children's self-ratings of reading achievement were much higher than the actual ability that was expressed but became more realistic as the children got older. Their perceptions of their ability became relatively stable by the time the children reached the age of 13. Newman (1984) expanded the age range of his subjects to include adolescents aged 16 years and studied math as opposed to reading. Newman found that between grades two and five students' perceived their math achievement as being causally related to self-ratings of ability whereas between the grades of five and ten

the strength of this causal relationship weakened and there was a greater relationship between academic relationship and effort. In essence, he noticed a decrease in intrinsic orientation and an increase in extrinsic orientation from grade three through nine until stabilization.

Further evidence supporting developmental changes in achievement motivation and thus greater susceptibility to performance detriment phenomena was found by In-Sub and Hattie (1984). In looking at the relationships between home environment, social status, family structure and family psychological characteristics, the researchers found that children's achievement motivation changed during grades three to seven and that their perceived competence and intrinsic orientation typically decrease during the teen years. Further to this, In Sub and Hattie suggested that early adolescence is a period of heightened sensitivity regarding peer acceptance and conformity and it is perhaps also a time of heightened fear of embarrassment from an admission of inadequacy in class. For students with learning disabilities who have met with failure many times, this period may be the one in which they are most susceptible to detriments in academic achievement. There is a good chance that these factors contribute to a performance orientation of academic achievement as they are dependent upon external, uncontrollable events.

## Self - Concept

A person's self-evaluation is referred to as self-esteem (Robison - Awana, Kehle, Jenson, 1986). Although a distinction is often made in the literature between self-concept and self-esteem: "Self-concept being the descriptive and non-judgemental aspects of self-evaluation and self-esteem being the evaluative, or degree of satisfaction with the self which may be more subject to variation from situational and value inferences" (Robison - Awana et al, 1986, p.179), some suggest that the two may not be separable (e.g., Marsh, 1986).

No matter the distinction between self - esteem and self-concept, it has been a consistent finding in research that LD students generally possess low self-esteem (Cummings, Vallance, & Brazil, 1992; Stanley, Dai, & Nolen, 1997), and the negative emotions associated with academic failure may have an even more debilitating effect on their self -esteem.

Historically, researchers considered global measures of self-concept, but recent research (e.g., Marsh, 1990) suggests that the construct is more multi-dimensional. Montgomery (1994) defines self-concept as a multi-dimensional and hierarchical behavioral construct. She stated that within the academic domain of self-concept, individuals have separate self-concepts for each academic area such as reading, math, and science which combine to create a more global concept of their academic abilities. Montgomery studied observer ratings

and self-reports of 135 grade six, seven, and eight students and found that children with LD reported lower academic self-concepts than do high achieving, and nondisabled children, but that the groups did not differ significantly in their social, family, affect, or physical self-concepts. It can be extrapolated from this data that students thus do not generalize from their academic self-concepts to other domains.

Marsh (1990) stated that "... a positive self-concept is frequently posited as a mediating variable that facilitates the attainment of other desirable outcomes such as academic achievement" (p. 646). He found that academic self-concept can clearly be differentiated from general self-concept and that academic self-concept is more highly correlated with academic achievement and other academic behaviors than is general self-concept. In an attempt to find a causal relationship, or ordering of the two, Marsh found that relations between academic self-concept and academic achievement are likely to be reciprocal, that is, a poor academic self-concept may lead to poor academic achievement or poor academic achievement may lead to poor academic self-concept.

Montgomery (1994) found that teachers under-rated the self-concepts of children with learning disabilities. They appeared to magnify the differences among student groups and clearly differentiated among LD, nondisabled, and high achieving children more than the children and the children's

parents did.

### Teachers' Influences

Among the most potent situational factors, or classroom cues that contribute to a student's attribution for success or failure is the classroom teacher (Graham, 1990). Teachers' interactions with students can affect the students' perceptions of personal control over success or failure (Clarke, 1997), and subsequently affect those students' emotions which in turn might influence those students' goal orientation (Seifert, 1996) .

There is conflicting empirical evidence regarding the suggestion that teacher influence on a student's self - concept in a particular academic domain affects that student's global self-concept. Bear, Clever, & Proctor (1991) found that children with LD in inclusive classrooms have significantly poorer self-perceptions of scholastic competence and more negative feelings of overall self-worth than non-handicapped children in the same classes. In a similar study one year later, Clever, Bear, & Juvonen (1992) were unable to find differences among achievement groups in feelings of self-worth, despite finding clear differences in perceptions of scholastic competence and behavioral conduct. The authors stated that LD students are quite aware of the critical

importance of these two areas and that even though they lack competence in these two areas, they find ways to maintain healthy feelings of self-worth.

Feedback from teachers is another aspect of school experience which affects global and academic self-esteem (Hoge, Smit, & Hanson, 1990). More specifically, it has been found that feedback provided by teachers should be explicit about the reasons for the students' learning outcomes and the feedback should increase the students' metacognitive knowledge (Butler & Orion, 1990; Butler, 1994).

Pintrich & Blumenfeld (1985) found that teachers' feedback about work was a better predictor for children's ability and effort self-perceptions than were other types of interactions with the teacher or with peers. Children who were praised more for their work thought they were smarter and worked harder than did those children who had lower levels of work praise.

The idea that teachers are an important aspect of school experience that influences students' performance is not new. Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968) found that teacher expectancies could influence the performance of students. These researchers compared students for whom the teachers had been told to expect large gains in intellectual development with students for whom the teachers had not been given any such expectation. There was a resulting difference of four IQ points between the two groups.

It has been shown that learning disability influences teachers' responses to a student's test failure, and thus teachers may unknowingly harm a learning disabled child's self-esteem and detract from that person's sense of personal competence via attributional messages they send to the student (Clarke, 1997).

By letting the student know that they perceive a learning disability as an internal, stable, significant, uncontrollable cause of failure, teachers may contribute to that LD student developing maladaptive academic achievement goals.

Clarke (1997), in an attempt to understand the underlying beliefs teachers hold about learning disability, explored the attributions that teachers make for their students' failure. She drew a sample of 97 Kindergarten through grade 6 general education teachers from five schools in Los Angeles, California and provided hypothetical vignettes to each teacher. She asked the teachers to (a) provide evaluative feedback, (b) rate their anger, (c) rate their pity, and (d) rate their expectations following each hypothetical boy's failure. Clarke's results indicated that teachers make causal attributions and subsequently respond to children with learning disabilities on the basis of, at least in part, the belief that (a) these students will fail more, (b) they are deserving of more pity and less anger, and (c) they should be provided more reward and less punishment than their non-disabled peers for an equivalent outcome, perhaps to maintain

or encourage motivation to perform. Clark states that according to attribution theory, "these phenomena send the message to LD children that they are less competent than their non-disabled peers and should expect to accomplish less as a result" (p. 77).

Students have a high sensitivity to their teachers' differential behavior in the teaching-learning and affective domains (Babad, 1990). For teachers' expectancies to influence student's self-concept and performance, students must perceive differential, expectancy - related teacher behavior. Babad (1990) compared students' perceptions of their teachers' differential behavior with the perceptions of the teachers themselves, and found that both groups agreed that the low achiever received more learning support and less pressure than the high achiever, but that the students reported that the high achiever receives more emotional support. Teachers reported giving more emotional support to the low achiever. The discrepancy between the students' and teachers' perceptions indicates that teachers should be providing more emotional support to the low achieving students than they have been giving.

#### Teacher Characteristics

Teacher characteristics can also contribute to fostering a task-focused orientation in students, especially in children

of low academic ability, or those with learning disabilities.

A teacher must exhibit characteristics associated with effective teaching. Wilmington (1992) in a study which elicited responses from administrators, noted several oral communication skills necessary for successful teaching. These include listening factors, language factors, message factors and emotional factors. For example, a good teacher has to be able to listen to others without frequently interrupting, give directions clearly, get the point of the message across, and deal with students in a fair and objective manner. Perry and Tunna (1988) considered expressiveness to be an effective teaching behavior because they believed this characteristic fosters an internal attribution locus in students. In a study comparing Type A and Type B college students (Type A students being more goal oriented, ambitious, aggressive, and time urgent than Type B students) on effective instruction, and perceived control, the authors hypothesized that: "expressiveness activates selective attention mechanisms and the physical movement, voice modulation, eye contact and humor combined with warmth creates a nurturant climate that lowers negative emotional arousal (e.g., anxiety, frustration, fear)" (p.103). Perry et al (1988) also found that expressive instructors fostered an internal attribution locus in students in a learning environment.

The idea that teacher characteristics can contribute to fostering a mastery orientation in students was further

supported by Georgea Sparkes (1988). She distinguished between improving teachers and non-improving teachers by observing that improving teachers were more willing to experiment in the classroom, had high expectations for themselves and their students, and were philosophically receptive to new ideas. For any classroom structure to succeed in fostering mastery orientations in students it is imperative the teacher be a good communicator, be expressive, and be receptive to new ideas.

#### Goal Setting

Academic expectation can be distinguished from goal-setting.

Goal-setting is the level of achievement that students establish themselves to accomplish; whereas, academic expectation is defined as the level of achievement that students must reach in order to satisfy the standard established by the teacher. Unlike academic expectations, goal-setting is a target to aim for rather than a standard that must be reached (Madden, 1997, p. 411).

Schunk (1984) states that goal setting for the learner involves the establishment of an objective to serve as the aim

of one's actions. He states that goal properties are (1) specificity, (2) difficulty level, and (3) proximity. Specificity means stating precisely what the learner wants to accomplish, such as spelling 8 out of 10 words correctly rather than doing as good as you can or having no goals at all; difficulty level for specifically stated goals should be moderate - too easy a goal is no challenge; too difficult a goal causes discouragement and results in giving up; proximity aims at helping the learner reach the goal quickly.

It has been asserted that students who feel that they have the self-efficacy (competence or power) to attain a goal show greater effort and persistence than those who lack self-efficacy, and that this sense of self-efficacy is greater in individuals who have set their own goals than for those who have expectations set by others (Cauley, Linder, & McMillian, 1989). Punnet (1986) suggests that goals provide a form of motivation to perform well on given tasks and that successful completion of goals validates self-efficacy because it symbolizes progress. Punnett cautions however, that the perceived ability of the learner to achieve the goal is necessary for successful goal-setting and thus individual goals are more effective than one goal for all students (Punnett, 1986).

Goals are responses to emotional reactions which arise within the classroom context. The emotions give rise to goals and mediate the influence of classroom factors on goal

pursuits. To succeed, students must feel capable, independent, and good about themselves. The teacher behaviors must foster these feelings of competence, worth and autonomy.

Boggiano (1991) cautioned about the indiscriminant use of teachers offering rewards to students. She stated that this behavior might undermine task - focused orientation, and may even potentiate the negative effects of an external locus of control. Although controlling cues such as praise or approval are quite often used as reinforcement or reward for appropriate behavior in a classroom, Boggiano stated that these cues are more salient to those students who are relative ability oriented and depend heavily on support from variables outside their control. Boggiano also found that: children with relative ability orientations suffer detrimental effects from negative evaluative feedback; possess maladaptive achievement patterns; and that teachers, as significant others, can signify control over students and thus may have a bearing on determining whether or not some children display learned helplessness deficits in an achievement setting.

#### Classroom structures

Classroom structures can induce susceptibility to helplessness by fostering a relative ability orientation in children (Ames, 1992). Ames noted that task design and learning activities, evaluation and recognition, and authority

should be presented in a way which fosters optimum learning, i.e., induce a task - focused orientation in students. She identified the structures and proposed relevant instructional strategies that should support a task - focused goal orientation (Figure 1).

<p><b>Task</b></p>	<p>Focus on the meaningful aspects of learning activities.</p> <p>Design tasks for novelty, variety, diversity, and student interest.</p> <p>Design tasks that offer reasonable challenges to students.</p> <p>Help students establish short - term, self-referenced goals.</p> <p>Support development and use of effective learning strategies.</p>
<p><b>Authority</b></p>	<p>Focus on helping students participate in the decision making.</p> <p>Provide "real" choices where decisions are based on effort, not ability evaluations.</p> <p>Give opportunities to develop responsibility and independence.</p> <p>Support development and use of self - management and monitoring skills.</p>
<p><b>Evaluation/ Recognition</b></p>	<p>Focus on individual improvement, progress, and mastery.</p> <p>Make evaluation private, not public.</p> <p>Recognize students' effort.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>Encourage view of mistakes as part of learning.</p>

Figure 1. Classroom structures and instructional strategies supporting a mastery goal. SOURCE: From "Contemporary Educational Psychology" by Good & Brophy, 1995).

Good & Brophy (1995) state that the motivation patterns that result from these strategies include: "focus on effort and learning, high intrinsic interest in activity, attributions to effort, attributions to effort - based strategies, use of effective learning and other self - regulatory strategies, active engagement, positive affect on high effort tasks, feelings of belongingness, and "failure - tolerance" (p. 368).

It is possible that children must have a stable and realistic perception of their academic ability before any of the above noted variables might influence them. Even so, this author believes that strategies that might contribute to a task - focused orientation should be implemented as early as possible in primary or elementary school while most children exhibit an excessively high self-concept of academic ability.

That teachers treat learning disabled students similar to how they treat their non-disabled peers who possess relative ability orientations, suggests that teachers may be unknowingly contributing to those students developing or maintaining a relative ability orientation. By implementing the suggested classroom structures and exhibiting characteristics associated with effective teaching, teachers can help these students develop the more adaptive behaviors associated with mastery learning.

Many of the factors noted in this discussion apply to all students, not only to students with learning disabilities. It

may not be that effective teaching obviates the need for special education, but it is clear that good teaching practices and appropriate teacher personality characteristics contribute to an environment in which all students can better achieve academically.

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