WHEN PATHWAYS CROSS:
SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER COLLABORATION
UNDER PATHWAYS TO PROGRAMMING
AND GRADUATION

KIMBERLY MAICH

0-612-73612-1

Canada

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research falls into the special education context of inclusion and a new provincial policy model for special education entitled *Pathways to Programming and Graduation*. It examined the reported day-to-day collaboration between seven special education teachers, the participants, and classroom teachers, in one school district of Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada. Each participant completed an interview and a reflective journal. This study found that participants usually pulled students out of the classroom for special education services, and typically collaborated by talking together, rather than by more direct means, such as teaching together. Three major themes emphasized by the special education teachers emerged in this research. First, the participants often felt isolated, primarily from the typical classroom environment, but also from a lack of professional collegiality. Second, the participants experienced both constraints on their time to collaborate, as well as elaborating on how they spend their collaboration time. Third, they noted issues of power, related to role boundaries with the classroom teachers, directives from supervisory bodies, and special education teacher knowledge. The special education teachers tended to view ideal collaboration as including planned collaboration time during the instructional day, professional inservicing related to collaboration, and training that focuses on interpersonal skills.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background

Since the 1950s and 1960s, special educators have adopted alternate interpretations of the notion of *integration*; alternate views of what is meant by educating students with special needs in the general classroom setting. In the 1970s, the expression *mainstreaming* was predominant: "the provision of free, appropriate education in the most suitable setting for all youngsters with exceptionalities" (Winzer, 1999, p.38). Currently, *inclusion* is the favoured word, a term with a meaning broader than previous understandings of integration, in that it relates to meeting the needs of all students, with or without disabilities, in the general education setting.

In 1975, the United States passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), requiring that all students be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) possible which meet their educational and social needs (Mercer, 1997; Winzer, 1999). This act focussed on improving the educational opportunities for students with exceptionalities, and stressed that students with special needs should be educated together with nondisabled peers (Monahan, Marino & Miller, 1996). The 1997 revision "changed from one that merely provided disabled children to access to an education to one that improves results for all children in our education system" (United States Department of Education, 1999a, p.1). The practice of the LRE encourages the educational placement of

students with exceptionalities into the general classroom setting, with learning focussed on the general curriculum (United States Department of Education, 1999b).

The mainstreaming of exceptional students in the regular classroom became an issue in the Canadian school system in the 1980s when special education practices became a focus of debate (Winzer, 1999). During the 1980s, Canada brought the Regular Education Initiative (REI) into reality. This initiative focussed on the intermingling of regular and special education to provide a diverse education system for all learners. The goal was the integration of students with particular needs into the general classroom and their retention in the educational system. Under the REI, classroom teachers were expected to adopt a consulting role, one in which classroom teachers would take a greater responsibility for the teaching of all students, including those deemed students with special needs (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1991; Winzer, 1999). By 1991, the prevalence of students in segregated educational environments was at its lowest (Winzer, 1999). Throughout the 1990s and currently, the rationale, efficacy, and implications of including students with special needs into general education classes are being explored, as are attitudes towards and interpretations of integration (Mercer, 1997).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, special education policy 15 states, "It is directed that each school board ensure students are assigned to and have their programs delivered in the same learning environment as their age peers, except where there are compelling reasons for alternate assignments" (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999, p.5.19). During this move towards inclusion as a focus model for special education in

schools, the roles of the special education teacher and the classroom teacher have been changing in order to deliver effective and appropriate teaching services to students with exceptionalities. Not only are classroom teachers and special education teachers taking on new roles with the implementation of inclusive classrooms and schools, but these roles impact one another. Classroom teachers, special education teachers and educational researchers are considering how to successfully negotiate this transformation and integration of roles into effective special education practice. One way that special education teachers and classroom teachers have been attempting to resolve these changes and to work successfully together is through the process of collaboration.

Problem

The Department of Education in Newfoundland and Labrador has begun to implement various plans of support for students with special needs in the classroom setting. *Pathways to Programming and Graduation (Pathways)* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1998) and the *Individual Support Services Plan* (ISSP) (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1997) emphasize a collaborative intra and interagency team approach within and beyond the school setting. This focus is also supported by the *Special Education Policy Manual* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1987), and its planned successor, the *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft Version)* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999). Two essential members of support services teams at the school level are the special education teacher and the

classroom teacher of a child with special needs.

Within the team approach, the special education teacher may be designated to have a number of roles ranging from consultation to direct involvement (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1987), which may in turn overlap, in part, with the role of the classroom teacher. The ISSP document states that the special education teacher, "collaborates with the classroom / subject teacher," "facilitates ... collaborative efforts," "provides consultation" and "shares data" in specified areas (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997, p.87). It also suggests that the special education teacher could act as a consulting and collaborating teacher, cooperating with the classroom teacher, exploring and providing supports, ideas, and programs, working in the regular classroom with a student or, for example, obtaining technological supports for use in the regular classroom. As well, the special education teacher could work with the classroom teacher to modify course outcomes and the special education teacher could prepare, provide or teach some modified or alternate course work. The special education teacher can also assess, monitor, evaluate, record and report on progress of students with special needs.

Similarly, the *Student Support Services Policy Manual* (Vinland/Strait of Belle Isle School Board, 1995, p.16) states that "The Special Education (Special Needs Resource / Challenging Needs) Teacher serves as the primary resource within the school, working in conjunction with other teachers, to meet the needs of exceptional students." This teacher "monitors student progress through observation, assessment and consultation

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with other teachers" (p.17) and "coordinates team decisions and recommendations into a cohesive program plan" (p.21)

The assumptions underlying the principles of special education have a collaborative focus, as reflected in the *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft)* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999). The latter *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft)* refers to:

1. the willingness of all personnel to be responsible for all students;

2. the sharing of a vision for the success of all students;

3. the full acceptance of diversity within the student population;

4. priorities for change are systematic, school wide and aimed at preventing difficulties from arising or escalating;

5. maximum access to educational opportunities for all students

6. possibilities exist for working effectively with diversity from both service and program perspectives

7. a philosophical base about programming which facilitates a common understanding of what is involved in support services planning.   (p.3.1)

Finally, the following policies direct teachers towards collaboration:

> Policy 11: It is directed that each school board ensure students
> with exceptionalities are provided access, where required, to
> services which are available through coordination and
> collaboration among participating individuals, agencies, and
> departments (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999,
> p.5.2)

> Policy 16.1: The classroom/subject area teacher is part of the
> continuum of supports and shares responsibility for students with
> exceptionalities (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999,
> p.5.20)

Policy documents, manuals and models that emphasize team collaboration to meet the needs of exceptional children provide guidelines for the roles of various team members. For the special education teacher collaborating with the classroom teacher, general expectations are given in such documents regarding how their respective roles may work. Aside from the team meeting processes outlined in the ISSP model, however, current provincial information provides no practical suggestions, models, or supports for effective day-to-day collaboration of the special education teacher with the classroom teacher.

Purpose and Questions

The purpose of this research was to investigate how special education teachers and classroom teachers are currently working together on a day-to-day basis. From the point of view of the special education resource teacher, this study explored the extent to which and how the team work model suggested in the *Pathways* and *ISSP* documents is being implemented through daily collaboration. In addition, this study looked at the aspirations of special education teachers regarding what they consider to be ideal day-to-day collaboration between special education teachers and classroom. The guiding research questions were:

- How do special education teachers describe their day-to-day collaboration with the classroom teachers of students being supported by special education teachers?

- What do special education teachers see as an ideal model for day-to-day collaboration with special education teachers?

This research was carried out as a qualitative study of special education teacher collaboration in one region of Newfoundland and Labrador. The main technique for data collection was interviewing, along with the completion of a teacher collaboration journal. Data collected was analyzed thematically, and is presented with relevant research and provincial policies integrated. Following is Chapter 2, a Literature Review, Chapter 3,

Methodology, Chapter 4, Results, and Chapter 5, Conclusions.

Significance

For special education teachers struggling with the implementation of new provincial guidelines, the availability of a situationally specific, well-developed collaborative approach to special education would be beneficial. The description of such an approach is useful in developing uniform consistency in the collaboration process associated with special education services in schools working within the *Pathways* model.

This study holds significance for both special education teachers and classroom teachers working with special education teachers. It provides a description of the current collaborative practices in typical cooperating teacher pairs, thus providing further detailed information about the role of the special education teacher. This role is outlined in both the "Who Does What?" segments of each *Pathways* explanation (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998), and in the "Potential Support Services Planning Team Members" segment of the *ISSP* publication (Appendix A; p.69, Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997).

This study also expands the step by step ISSP process outlined in "The The Individual Support Services Plan: The Process" (Fig.1; p.7), providing a further role definition for the special education teacher in the step of this process entitled "Implementation of [ISSP] Plan." It provides an ideal model for day-to-day collaboration, from the point of

view of the special education teacher participants, as well as ideas about supports that special education teachers feel are necessary for this ideal teacher collaboration.

This research is also timely in that as well as implementing a new provincial special education model, the education community is currently faced with a high rate of teacher retirement. The combination of these factors means this is an opportune time to implement new policies, procedures and attitudes towards special education services. As *Supporting Learning: Report of the Ministerial Panel on Educational Delivery in the Classroom (Supporting Learning)* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000) indicates, "There is the opportunity and potential now to reshape the teaching force in ways that will help meet the challenges presented by changing school configurations and program demands" (p.14).

Glossary

Collaboration: *Collaborative consultation* is a problem solving relationship defined as, "an interactive and ongoing process where individuals with different expertise, knowledge, or experience voluntarily work together to create solutions to mutually agreed upon problems" (Robinson, 1991, p.441-442). For the purposes of this research, the process of collaborative consultation is intended to apply to the collaboration of special education teachers and classroom teachers. The processes described by Robinson can be applied to a range of service delivery models in special education. Kauffman & Trent (1991) view collaboration and

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consultation as service delivery models as well. Although the former definition was presented to special education teachers in this study, they interpreted it more straightforwardly, usually as teachers simply working together. The related terms often considered synonymous to collaboration by the general population such as, for example, teamwork and cooperation, are not distinguished between in the responses of special education teachers.

Students with Special Needs: For the purposes of this research, students with *special needs* are identified by their inclusion in the case load of a special education teacher. This research assumes that students working with special education teachers are placed on the caseloads of special education teachers due to a recognized need. It is beyond the scope of this study to explore whether the assessment and diagnostic history of the special education students of the teacher participants in this study were all in cases correctly designated as special needs students. Students receiving special education services, though, are currently expected to have undergone a comprehensive assessment intended to diagnose and document exceptionalities within set categories. The term *students with special needs* will be used synonymously with terms such as *students with exceptionalities* or *special education students.*

Special Education Teacher: "Special education teachers are used to provide programming (support) for students with exceptionalities" (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999, p.5.29) The term *special education teacher*, for

the purposes of this study, refers to the group of special services teachers entitled non-categorical special education teachers. The provincial government regulations divides special education teachers into the former as well as *challenging needs teachers* who are allocated for students who fit a certain criteria of exceptionality: moderate global severe cognitive delay, severe physical disability, severe emotional/behavioural disorder, severe learning disability, or severe health/neurological/related disorder. Non-categorical, multi-categorical, resource, regular special education, or instructional resource teachers, are sometimes interprovincially described as learning assistance services or teachers; British Columbia defines this specialty as, "school-based, non-categorical resource services designed to support classroom teachers and their students who have mild to moderate difficulties in learning and adjustment" (British Columbia Department of Education, 1997). Special education teachers and its related terms, such as special educators, are used interchangeably in this research. The training of special education teachers does vary greatly; many in such positions do not have the full required training completed.

ISSP: The *Individual Support Services Plan* (ISSP) is a written document that is described as, "collaborative" "interagency" "child focused" with "supports and services" (Pyne, 2000, p.1), providing a focus for all community services for children with special needs, and reflecting a general trend toward interagency case management for those with disabilities. Components such as team membership,

individual strengths and needs, goals and objectives, and service needs comprise the program planning described in an ISSP (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997). "The overall purpose of the ISSP process is to ensure continuity of services at all developmental stages in a child's/youth's life" (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1997, p.1)

Pathways: The term *Pathways* refers to the provincial model for special education practice entitled *Pathways to Programming and Graduation* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998). This provincial document provides special education policy for the planning of individualized programs for students with special needs in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. It provides "a structure for the educational component of the ISSP that may be simple or complex depending on the student's need" (Pyne, 2000, p.1). *Pathways* is summarized by these terms and definitions:

- Pathway 1: provincially approved programs
- Pathway 2: provincially approved programs with supports; accommodations and adaptations
- Pathway 3: modifications to prescribed programs
- Pathway 4: alternate programs
- Pathway 5: alternate curriculum

  (adapted from Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999, p.6.40)

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CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Provincial, national and international studies have been carried out examining the collaborative approach and needs of special education teachers and regular classroom teachers working together in inclusive classroom settings. The authors cited in this chapter have engaged in quantitative and qualitative empirical research, comparative studies, and theoretical analysis (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), culminating in models of collaboration, providing descriptions of special education practice, and revealing teacher perceptions of collaboration.

Models

Mercer (1997) reports alternate models for effective cooperation from various researchers: collaborative consultation, teacher assistance teams, peer coaching, peer collaboration, and cooperative or team teaching. He also cites findings from a 1989 Council for Exceptional Children survey that discovered members see the need for more collaboration, coordination and better relationships between special education and general education personnel. Various researchers have, as Mercer has done, suggested different types of models to carry out collaboration between classroom teachers and classroom teachers in order to support inclusive classrooms. Many researchers base their model of collaboration around the term collaborative consultation, but are unique in the details of

how collaboration is implemented. Models of collaboration also include other concepts of collaboration, such as the following examples of co-teaching, consultation, communication, interactive teaming, enrichment remediation, and inclusion plus.

One example of a model of collaborative consultation is provided by Robinson (1991) in "Collaborative Consultation". In this article, she provides a summary of one understanding of the process of collaborative consultation, where team members work together on a basis of equality to meet the needs of students with special needs. This definition of collaborative consultation is differentiated from the terms of either just collaboration or consultation alone by its characterization of, "mutual trust and respect and open communication" (p.446). Its necessary components include relationships that are continuous and interactive, members that have both diversity and role parity, a voluntary willingness to work together, and a focus on mutually chosen problems.

> The assumptions that underlie collaboration - parity among
> participants, belief that *all* educators can learn better ways to
> teach *all* students, and educators should be actively involved in
> creating, as well as delivering, instructional innovations - must be
> kept in mind as one defines the interaction among individuals and
> the structures within which collaborative relationships operate.
>
> (Robinson, 1991, p.447)

The teachers that are part of collaborative teaching groups may take part in collaboration through indirect service provision by assisting with problem-solving, or they may provide

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direct service through cooperative teaching or by providing instructional innovations for the classroom environment. According to Robinson, the skills needed for collaboration include a knowledge about the process of collaboration itself. To support this, she includes reference to a lengthy taxonomy of necessary skills developed by West & Cannon (1988), categorized by Robinson as knowledge about the collaboration process and effective instruction as well as knowledge about change and program development in schools. She outlines three types of barriers to collaboration: personal barriers based on the characteristics of individual teachers; structural barriers related to school provisions; and external barriers related to provision of funds, regulations and support.

In their article "Issues for Service Delivery for Students with Learning Disabilities," Kauffman & Trent (1991) discuss service delivery issues related to school structures, the environment of special education service delivery, personnel, programs, and the various options for service delivery. Within these areas related to special education services for students with learning disabilities, Kauffman & Trent also carry out a review of consultation and collaboration as an essential type of special education service delivery. They describe the collaborating teachers as either a pair with equal role parity, or with one member acting in the expert consultant role. Kauffman and Trent focus on reviewing the work of other researchers in the area of collaboration, outlining a range of difficulties with the implementation of effective collaboration. They stress that a difference exists between the theoretical models for these types of service delivery, and the logistical realities of actually implementing them within schools.

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A focus on the process of collaborative consultation is provided by Carr & Peavy (1986), Canadian researchers who also detail the dual role of the special education resource teacher as both instructor and consultant. The authors suggest a collaborative consultation model made up of a seven-step approach to carry out indirect service delivery when working with teachers and other involved professionals. They describe the consultation process as occurring on a continuum from establishing a relationship, problem identification and clarification, and goal setting, which according to the authors, is an unique feature of this model, to the development of ideas and strategies, a plan and action plan focussed on the identified problem. The seventh step involves tactics to empower the collaborative aspect of the consultation relationship.

Another understanding of collaborative consultation is presented by West & Idol (1990) who see it as both a way to deliver services, as well as a process based on discussion. In "Collaborative Consultation in the Education of Mildly Handicapped and At-Risk Students," these researchers present the process of what they term the *scientific art* of collaborative consultation, as well as service delivery to special education. They believe that this is distinct from simple cooperation and that it creates the mutual empowerment of involved teachers. A defining characteristic of collaboration is shared responsibility and shared authority, rather than just teachers working together. Collaborative consultation can be both a discussion-based process and as well a way to deliver special education services, according to West & Idol. They outline the purposes of collaborative consultation as both prevention and remediation of both learning and

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behaviour problems, as well as the coordination of individualized programs. The stages in carrying out this process include goal/entry, problem identification, intervention recommendation, implementation recommendations, evaluation and redesign. For the success of collaborative support services, West & Idol outline the importance of staff development, different vehicles for approaches to collaboration, and the provisions for scheduling and time allowances.

Special educator Vargo (1998) suggests another approach to collaborative consultation focussed on the importance of communication between the special education teacher and classroom teacher. In her model, collaborative consultation is based on the use of open-ended questions in conversation. Special educators, according to Vargo, should initiate and maintain open communication with classroom teachers following the specific time frames and conversation guides provided. Vargo suggests using a communication journal, taking notes, and providing feedback.

"The ultimate goal is for general educators to feel comfortable and open to involving the special educator with more active instructional planning for a given student, which may lead to team planning for the entire class" (Vargo, 1998, p.55). As well, she suggests that practices apart from positive communication skills can have a positive impact. Special education teachers should use specific, immediate, positive feedback, both oral and written; they should again provide immediate positive post-observation feedback, sharing written observations; they should extend each time block to at least 45 minutes; and finally, special educators should consider resistance from classroom

teachers during inclusion, reacting with respect and caring to this challenge.

Some researchers believe that collaboration can be carried out through different understandings apart from what others have described as collaborative consultation. Co-teaching as a type of collaborative special education service delivery is one example of a different model. Ripley (1997) found that models of collaboration between special education teachers and regular classroom teachers have changed with inclusion. Her research, outlined in, "Collaboration between General and Special Education Teachers" refers to a model of collaborative service delivery where the special education and classroom teachers act as co-teachers in the regular classroom environment. Although the typical role of the special education teacher in collaboration focuses on assessments, adaptations, provision of teaching ideas and information about learning processes of students, she reports an increase in collaborative and cooperative teamwork and details the most substantial change as the need, "to share the goals, decisions, classroom instruction, responsibility for students, assessment of student learning, problem solving, and classroom management in the same classroom" (p.3). Ripley calls for higher level cooperation, further preservice and inservice teacher education, and "time, support, resources, monitoring, and, above all, persistence" (p.3) to successfully implement collaboration. She feels that ensuring an equal partnership, involvement in all aspects of teaching, joint planning between collaborating teachers, and feelings of ownership over changes in the classroom brought about through these inclusion practices are also important for collaborative teaching. For this co-teacher collaborative planning to be

successful, time is an essential factor; overlapping planning time for collaborating teachers is the suggested model. As well, in Ripley's report, cooperation on all levels of educational administration from the individual school to the district offices, staff inservicing and motivation are included as factors in its implementation. She recommends that all preservice teachers should study methods for successful inclusion.

Ripley also reviewed general findings for the use of collaborative teaching methods between regular and special education teachers. She states that, according to Walther-Thomas, Bryant & Land (1996), collaboration has been shown to have benefits for all students working in a collaborative classroom. Special needs students, specifically, have been shown to have better self-images, motivation, social skills, peer interactions, and an increased understanding of personal strengths. Professionally, teachers have better support and growth, and tend to exchange their skills, making better use of a wider range of teaching competencies. Collaborating teachers are seen to be more motivated and to have parental support.

The history of collaboration and consultation is reviewed by research group Coben, Chase Thomas, Sattler & Voelker Morsink (1997), who outline these two models, pointing out that, "the phrase collaborative consultation emerged in the mid 1980s as a special education service delivery option for students with mild disabilities" and that, "Collaborative consultation has been the preferred model of many special educators, general educators, and administrators in recent years" (p.429). Both the strengths and limitations of the collaboration, consultation, teaming, and collaborative consultating

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approaches to teachers working together are summarized. The authors then suggest an *interactive teaming* model as an alternative, trans-disciplinary approach to teachers working together. The guiding principles for interactive teaming are noted as participation and leadership, goal development, communication, decision making and conflict resolution. This teaming of services is intended to be cohesive, mutual, interactive, and made up of groups of equal partners working together for a common goal. Coben, Chase Thomas, Sattler & Voelker Morsink summarize by concluding that the use of models of collaboration for integration is essential, a core skill for educators of children with special needs, and should be included as a comprehensive feature of both preservice and inservice teacher training.

The *enrichment remediation* team-teaching model is another alternate approach to teacher collaboration. Angle (1996) suggests "an integrated approach, with general and special education teachers working together to encourage each student" (p.9). This approach to collaboration is one model of collaboration that is intended to integrate remediation and build on students' interests and motivate learning. Both the general education teacher and the special education teacher in this model assess, plan, instruct and work with small groups, as a teaching team.

Angle describes the five-step process to enrichment remediation using the example of teaching language skills as part of a social studies curriculum. First, the teacher team assesses language skills together. During step two, teachers gather information about specific strengths and weaknesses for future student grouping, and

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present a range of topics to students within a chosen curriculum area. In step three, specific topic choices are made, objectives are cooperatively established and supporting materials are gathered. Step four integrates needed skills teaching such as word recognition, comprehension, and skill generalization within the chosen topic of study. Lastly, step five is a plan for presentation and ceremony to celebrate their learning and accomplishments. The idea is that "...*all students win* by being challenged by collaborating teachers who believe that they are responsible for all children in the general education classroom" (p.10).

A flexible alternative to collaboration is described through programming based on consultation, using what authors Phillips & McCullough (1990) term the "collaborative ethic" in, "Consultation-Based Programming: Instituting the Collaborative Ethic in Schools." They believe that consultation can be put in place as the basis for special education services. In order to implement the collaborative ethic in a school environment as a basis for consultation, schools need to reach a group consensus about the role of collaboration, and follow the process to put this ethic in place. The collaborative ethic is defined by five precepts: shared responsibility, shared accountability, confidence in mutual benefits, conviction of the worth of the process and its positive correlates. In choosing a format, schools need to consider administrative supports, inclusive participation, shared ownership, its feasability, and the implementation of corresponding staff development.

Lastly, one team of authors suggests a model for the future of special education

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and the inclusive classroom. This model of *inclusion plus* recommends retaining the division between special education and regular education. a contrast to most models of collaboration that seem to be merging the roles of special education teachers and classroom teachers to some extent. With their critique of current inclusive education Zigmond & Baker (1995) in "Concluding Comments: Current and Future Practices in Inclusive Schooling," respond with a model for the future. They strongly suggest a model for special education services in the context of inclusion, but one that is a "vision of inclusive schooling that preserves 'good special education practice' in a pull-out setting with support services that help students and their teachers manage the general education classroom" (p.247). The first part of their model focuses on continuing to provide more resources for special education, which, according to Zigmond & Baker, will show an increased need over time. Second, they suggest that when reform is coming from a general education perspective, which the authors say the inclusion movement is, a commitment to the extra services needed for special education must remain intact. Third, they hold that special education must be proactive, focusing on individual needs in an, "*intense, urgent, relentless and goal directed*" (p.249) manner, with a focus on validated teaching methodologies to meet these needs. Fourth, they recommend that the specialized training of special education teachers should continue alongside general teacher training for inclusion. Zigmond and Baker emphasize the necessary distinction between inclusive education for all, and special education to meet the special needs of special education students within inclusive education.

Practices

"Collaboration is the cornerstone of inclusion according to Bradley, King-Sears and Tessier-Switlick (1997). As special educators and regular educators begin working more closely to develop and implement positive learning experiences for the special needs child in the regular classroom, many of their goals can be reached through collaboration. To achieve these goals there must be shared responsibility, mutual planning, and joint problem-solving" (Carey, 1997, p.54). The practice of special education is often varied between teachers, within a school, and within a school district, province or other boundaries where continuity might be expected. Such differences in practice are studied and described by researchers who are focussing on recording the current practice of special education.

The following example of special education for one special education teacher exemplifies the diversity of practice, as it occurs on a larger scale. A personal case study with the researcher reflecting on varied experience working with classroom teachers and inclusive classrooms was carried out by Howells (2000), a special educator. In this reflective study, she describes the different collaborative relationships that were created in her school, the different roles she played in the regular classroom, and culminates with a list of lessons learned that provide other teachers with recommendations for carrying out collaboration. She experienced both negative and positive relationships when she attempted to introduce a school simultaneously to both having a special education

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resource teacher for the first time, and to collaboration as part of this service. With some teachers, she was expected to withdraw students for services, with another to teach the entire class and to provide services for groups of students and individuals. For another teacher, she provided behavioural plans, as well as providing demonstrations, reports and consultations, among her other duties as a special education teacher. She had difficulty obtaining and maintaining the support of her administrator for carrying out special education, and experienced varying levels of resistance to change from classroom teachers, from verbalized rejection of inclusion, to reluctance to accommodate for special needs, to a less obvious general lack of involvement with general classroom activities. She experienced successes when teachers were willing to talk, to include her in the classroom environment, to ask for help and to accept and implement some recommendations. From these experiences, Howell believes that special education teachers that are trying out collaboration should be wary of making any assumptions about the skills and willingness of teachers to implement collaboration in any school. She also suggests that special educators should stay focussed on the tasks that are part of a special educator's role and remain realistic. Teachers should also ensure that they are patient in establishing relationships and new roles. Finally, she summarizes that "collaboration is a learning process for all involved. Some collaboration is better than none. It may not be perfect, but accept it as a start" (Howell, 2000, p.160).

In Newfoundland and Labrador, Younghusband (1999), summarizes and interprets a range of findings regarding inclusion in classrooms, and relates these to the details of

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the local *Pathways* special education practice. Through "Where are we Going on *Pathways?*" Younghusband responds to this situation by confirming that "the role of special education teacher and that of the regular classroom teacher have become confused to most teachers" (p.4), specifying the confused roles of team teaching by such pairs. She believes that *Pathways* has not provided information about implementation, and that support systems have not been set up effectively. The inclusion, according to Younghusband, of students with exceptionalities in the classroom requires cooperation between all categories of school staff, including the classroom and special educators. "Our goal is to provide a classroom environment in which all children can learn together, be supportive of one another and yet remain aware of individual differences" (Younghusband, 1999, p.5). Teachers need to work together, providing advice, support, assistance, ideas, and materials for each other.

Stainback and Stainback (1996) cited in Younghusband (1999), suggest that planning is the first step towards successful inclusion. She notes that no teachers, apart from special education specialists, are expected to take part in special education preservice training, and claims that training must be provided to the classroom teachers to effectively meet the needs of exceptional children in the classroom. Younghusband cites Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996), for example, who found that teachers need to be supported when including exceptional children in the classroom environment, and concluded that a number of these needs overlap with the role of the special education teachers. They also suggest that classroom teachers in an inclusive model need planning

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time specifically for exceptional students, training, curriculum materials, reduced class size, more personnel to help accomplish objectives, and "regular contact with special education teachers" (p.4).

In another study of the special education system in Newfoundland and Labrador, Philpott (2001) reviews the history and current practices of inclusive education, as well as central issues such as legislation, criticism, and future directions that various educational researchers have suggested. In "Inclusive Education: Reviewing the Criticism to Find Direction," Philpott relates this information to the current practice and government documentation relating to inclusion in provincial classrooms. He concludes that, although inclusion is only one type of proposed service delivery model along a continuum, the overall stance in Newfoundland and Labrador is that, "While this population of students [special education students] is the responsibility of all educators and the goal is to support them on the regular curriculum through the Pathways model, inclusion is an ideal that both parents and teachers aspire to." (p.9)

In the wider context of Canada, the British Columbia Department of Education (1997) conducted an extensive survey through interviews and school meetings to review the provincial learning assistance services, which culminated in the "Review of Learning Assistance Services Report." In its examination of approaches to service provision, this inquiry found a variation between districts, schools, and grade levels, as well as differences related to school sizes, teacher preferences and / or teacher skills. Even with these variations, some common themes were found. These themes emerged as "a move

to more collaborative models," (British Columbia Department of Education, 1997, p.14) and an organization of special education services designed to link each classroom teacher with a single support teacher.

Most learning assistance (LA) teacher participants reported that they usually spend between zero to 15 percent of their time, or zero to 10 hours a week, on consultation with other teachers, and all teachers fell into the six to 10 hour a week category for time spent on school based team meetings. They tended to work outside the classroom to deliver services. Teachers responded that some learning assistance strategies that worked for students were "coordination, collaboration and consultation through the School-Based team" and the "Co-teaching model" (British Columbia Department of Education, 1997, p.68). Some favourable changes resulting from the use of a learning assistance model were expressed as positive support for, and enhanced use of collaborative planning, service delivery and decision making, as well as a greater openness and a feeling of ownership with this approach. There was, "more communication between classroom teachers and Learning Assistance teachers with collaborative planning and consultation" (p.70). The school visits carried out indicated a positive regard for the use of consultation. In addition, sample responses from teacher meetings showed that, "Having opportunities for collaboration between LA teacher and classroom teachers instead of being fully 'blocked in'" (p.72) is a positive step. From the district interviews that were also carried out, the researchers concluded that collaboration in special education services results in the best possible services for both teachers and

their students. This study also indicated that challenges to the learning assistance type of service provision exist. Teachers must be encouraged and supported to continue collaboration processes in service delivery. Some common concerns noted were the time constraints on consultations, meetings and cooperative planning , fears of teacher overload and the need to balance collaboration with direct service delivery.

A European qualitative study of a diverse group of experienced special education adherents from ten countries outlines the roles of professionals as well, noting the "fundamental principles for cooperation between special and mainstream education" (European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, 1996, p.1), as part of a multi-faceted focus. This study examined the prevalent understandings of the important elements in service provision and the cooperation of these groups, and showed a number of essential foci for effective interactions including a child centred, social process oriented perspective in a positive, cooperative environment along with careful documentation. Terms such as interdependent and multi-supportive are used. The document suggests that cooperation is essential and that it serves to address individual teacher needs and abilities. To effectively make use of cooperation, a carefully outlined framework is necessary, along with flexibility in that structure and approach. Extensively outlined examples of effective special education models of inclusion in various countries studied are also provided.

One quantitative study based in California explored collaboration practices in resource-based special education programs, focussing on the collaboration between

resource and classroom teachers in grades six through eight. This study, "The Success of Collaboration Resource Programs for Students with Disabilities in Grades 6 Through 8," focussed on resource teachers as participants, examining their school-based practices of collaboration. The authors of this study concluded that: "As more students with exceptionalities remain in the general classroom, special education teachers across the country, and particularly resource specialists, are expected to collaborate and consult with general educators to assist them in serving students with mild disabilities" (Karge, McClure & Patton, 1995, p.79). This group of researchers found that models of service delivery involving collaboration and / or consultation are practical, realistic possibilities for alternative programs in resource-based education, and that teachers show an interest in such processes.

A concern noted in this study was time. Although teachers feel they have enough time for individual conferencing about a student or a certain procedure, they often felt they had inadequate time to implement a collaboration program. The researchers concluded that the teachers in this study likely do not have adequate planning time. Collaboration was expected at the level of school administration, but was not supported by the provision of related teacher planning time. Collaboration efforts were shown to be carried out more spontaneously or informally, often initiated unilaterally by the resource teacher. The collaborative resource model described by respondents was most commonly direct instruction, with curriculum / teaching modifications and pull-out as the next most chosen model. Co-teaching, on the other hand, remained in the bottom half of the choices

provided.

Respondents felt that the most important issue in effective collaboration was a positive teacher attitude, while the least relevant issue was the degree of disability. "This may be preliminary evidence indicating that full inclusion can be successful if a teacher is willing to modify and accommodate a students with disabilities in the general classroom" (Karge et al., 1995, p.83). Participants thus felt that the factor of greatest hindrance to collaboration was teacher attitude and a lack of time availability, and the least hindering factors were the degree of disability severity as well as a lack of family support. The majority of resource teachers responded that a combination of both pull-out and consultation and / or collaboration is their preference in a collaboration model. They mostly agreed that, in general, teachers do understand their personal responsibility towards programming for students with learning disabilities, that site administrators provide support, and that collaboration can result in successful full inclusion. They mostly disagreed that adequate training exists, or that enough time is available for collaboration.

Karge et al. (1995) concluded that progress is being made towards collaboration in their focus population – resource teachers in a middle / junior high setting. They hold that most of the teachers in their study are using collaboration in some form, although some expressed a need for assistance in beginning collaborative practices. As well, they concluded that collaboration is reported as successful for involved students, although some students were perceived as losing some essential instruction time. Karge et al.

(1995) suggest that administrative support should be accompanied by resource and training support, and that collaborative models should be defined, retaining flexibility, with appropriate workload modifications made as required.

Consultation, Collaboration and Teamwork for Students with Special Needs (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993) is a comprehensive, research-supported manual of theory and practical suggestions about teachers working together to carry out special education practices within schools and school systems. This volume covers topics ranging from the history of school consultation, to professional development, to the future of consultation, collaboration and teamwork.

It focuses first on defining and differentiating terms associated with school consultation, its benefits, obstacles and processes with the school system, then outlines the initiation and continuation of school consultation, as well the roles, responsibilities and skills and competencies for its effective practice. This manual provides some history and research about school consultation with a focus on outlining the elements that make up a range of different structures to carry out consultation in schools. As well, the manual focuses on diversity, examining the diverse characteristics and the effects of the differences between adults involved in collaboration and the types of needs of different groups of students.

Consultation, Collaboration and Teamwork for Students with Special Needs (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993) also presents some practical strategies related to problem solving, by presenting a range of step-by-step processes to solve problems,

providing the reader with sample verbal prompts, suggestions if processes do not meet with success, and dialogue-based instruments to support problem-solving. Effective communication is also stressed through the presentation of a range of skills and constraints to its effectiveness. Strategies to avoid stress and its related effects, ways to efficiently manage meetings and student records, the role of support services, and ethical considerations are also presented, along with the components of a plan to evaluate collaborative practices, how to develop such a plan, and ways to evaluate the context, process and content of consultation.

Collaboration is then related to the characteristics of effective schools, programs, teachers, and behaviour management techniques, in addition to strategies for developing inclusive classrooms, including teacher-directed, peer-assisted, student-directed, and behaviour management approaches, along with supportive classroom modifications. Models for developing parent partnerships and barriers to such relationships, and methods, models and techniques for further teacher training are also provided. Finally, consultation, collaboration and teamwork links societal change and changing schools, suggesting models for the future of collaboration, and predicting subsequent challenges.

Beyond these outlined practices, proposed ways to support collaborative special education practice also exist. The "Mainstream Practicum Project" (Ludlow et al., 1996) is such an example. It suggests a curriculum to train teachers with the goal of a dual certification in both classroom teaching and special education as a response to the added demands of inclusion. This model proposes that teachers would be better trained to work

in an inclusive classroom environment if they were trained to work in an inclusive class as well as specializing in an area of special education. Ludlow et al. (1996) report that, "To date, only a few experimental teacher education programs have undertaken the challenge of jointly preparing regular and special educators to work collaboratively in integrated schools" (p.252).

Similarly, The "Praxis Partnership Program," an initiative of Northern Arizona University, combines theory and practice as one way of facilitating inclusion through teacher training (Carey, 1997). In this program, which was created as a field-based program through the cooperation of a university and a school district, students discuss and observe strategies and put these strategies into practice during integrated daily special education classroom teaching experiences. The focus of this model is on six strategies: cooperative learning, collaborative teaming, partner learning, peer tutoring, student empowerment and creative problem solving (Williams and Fox, 1996, cited in Carey, 1997).

To train professionals already teaching, many suggestions for teacher inservicing exist. Glatthorn (1990), for example, suggests using cooperative professional development as a school-wide initative, or as a supplement to a collaborative model of special education consultation. He sees all models of special education consultation, even the collaborative consultation model, as still relying on the special education teacher in an expert role when working with the classroom teacher. In addition, collaborative consultation is limited to a focus on problem-solving. Cooperative professional

development is intended to transcend these problems by creating teams of special education and classroom teachers to work together on a basis of member equality. This model for professional development can be carried out in four ways: through professional dialogues, curriculum development, peer supervision or peer coaching, although, Glatthorn emphasizes that a flexible approach is more effective. Involved participants can discuss issues of interest, share experiences, focus on curriculum, share observations and hold peer conferences, or provide collegial feedback. Although a range of prerequisite supporting conditions are necessary for its implementation, its goal is "professional growth of both the special education teacher and the classroom teacher" (p.31) Glatthorn's hope is that when professional skills are improved, student achievement will grow.

Collaboration can be enhanced by the use of strategies in schools. A review of techniques to enhance collaboration through the use of specific communication strategies is outlined by Hollingsworth in, "We Need to Talk: Communication Strategies for Effective Communication" (2001). Hollingsworth summarizes the professional literature, noting that collaborating teachers need to discuss classroom adjustments, technology, roles, model instruction, student behaviour, standardized testing and consistency for individual programming, while also sharing successful collaboration initiatives. She also outlines different ways to communicate in order to develop what she terms a communication network. Teachers can share information through implementing an individual school-based needs assessment process to discern areas of need, by carrying

our some type of professional development, and by creating newsletters and developing groups for studying or dialogue.

Perceptions

Ontario-based researcher and educator Stanovich (1996) discusses teacher collaboration in a diverse student population, providing recommendations for general educators. Stanovich states that, "The relationship between the general education teacher and the special education teacher is the most crucial one in terms of effective collaboration for delivery of service to exceptional students who are mainstreamed or integrated in general education classrooms" (1996, p.40). She sees collaboration as an effective way of carrying out a partnership during all phases of individual education plan processes, for devising classroom changes and meeting the needs of students with behavioral challenges.

Research has also focussed on accumulating data related to the perceptions about collaboration and its related issues, from the point of view of teachers involved in carrying out collaboration in their classrooms. These studies have been carried out by surveying groups of teachers for their personal attitudes, as well as more inductive reflective studies of collaborative teams. Locally, one Newfoundland and Labrador-based study was carried out by Bedi (1996), who completed a quantitative study of the collaboration between special education and regular teachers, entitled, *Collaboration*

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between Regular and Special Education Teachers for Educating Students with Mild Disabilities. In this doctoral dissertation, Bedi utilized the statistical analysis of questionnaires focussing on inclusion, and looked at the perceptions, practices and obstacles to collaborative consultation, including the perceived effects of its implementation on classroom teachers. He found that special education teachers generally had favourable attitudes towards the practice of collaboration, but that those without special education degrees were less supportive of collaboration. Those that had a positive opinion towards collaboration also had the expectation of a greater work load, and both the groups of less experienced teachers and female regular educators felt their work load would be affected modestly by collaborative practices.

Bedi found that teachers' attitudes towards collaboration affected the likelihood that collaboration would be implemented. School size also affected collaboration practices: teachers in smaller schools had more of an influence on the practice of collaboration, and opinions surrounding collaboration. In turn, they had fewer obstacles to collaboration. The responses showed that, overall, the group of special education teachers were rated as having the greatest level of responsibility for students with special needs.

Some obstacles to collaboration were found in this study. Regular educators, for example, encountered more obstacles to collaboration than special educators, such as teacher workload, a lack of time and professional preparation, as well as a lack of support for collaboration and poor provision of necessary materials. More collaboration,

according to Bedi, did lead to a reduction of obstacles to collaboration. The implications of these findings is that an appropriate time allocation for consultation practices should be put in place, and interdisciplinary professional development focussing on skills and training that would in turn lead to better collaboration should be developed .

A second Newfoundland and Labrador-based study, "Teacher Stress in One School District of Newfoundland and Labrador: A Pilot Study," carried out by Younghusband (2000), gathered and analyzed quantitative data relating to occupational stress, including information related to teacher roles. Younghusband used a Likert scale with five steps from "rarely" or "never true" up to the highest rating, "most of the time," in order to measure subscales relating to stress. The results of her pilot study showed that teachers experience a great deal of stress, with the greatest area of stress relating to the subscale entitled "Role Overload." Younghusband cited Osipow's inventory definition as "Role Overload measures the degree to which the demands of the job exceed the resources (personal and institutional)" (p.3). Younghusband also provided data and analysis related to the subsequent categories of "Role Insufficiency," "Role Ambiguity," "Role Boundary," "Responsibility" and "Physical Environment" as they related to the 100 participating teachers.

In a study concentrating on inclusion, Minke, Bear, Deemer & Griffin (1996) surveyed and questioned teachers in an area with a long history of inclusive practice about their attitudes and perceptions surrounding inclusive classrooms. The groups participating in the research included three different types of teaching assignments:

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classroom teachers, classroom teachers carrying out both inclusion and team teaching with a special educator, and the special education members of the latter teams. Relevant to collaboration, they concluded that a lack of access to what the authors term as protected resources – resources that cannot be used to service other children – impacts negatively on teacher perceptions of the adjustment of students without exceptionalities, and their perceived own role overload in an inclusive environment. Teachers that volunteered to take part in the team teaching approach to inclusion showed a greater satisfaction with their teaching assignments than those who were not volunteers. Teachers indicated an understanding of the skills needed to carry out this type of team teaching for inclusion and the challenging nature of such teaching roles, pointing out a need for changes in class size, preparation time, space and funding.

Similarly, American researcher Gold (1995), in "Successful and Unsuccessful Collaborative Practices among Rural Special and Regular Educators" examined teacher perceptions about collaboration by surveying both special education and regular education teachers in rural communities who were reportedly active in collaboration. Using a quantitative approach through Likert scale questionnaires, she found that teachers measured to be less successful collaborators correctly perceive themselves as having less support for role reciprocity in the two groupings of teachers. Gold concluded that, "professional credibility issues, differing conceptual frameworks, and certain collaborative practices may diminish collaborative outcomes" (p.1). As well, she found that the role of the principal and practices in collaboration related specifically to

individual school norms, decision making and autonomy may also affect collaboration. Her suggestions for improvement are to augment school support for more and better collaboration among surveyed teacher groups. Some further recommendations emerging from this study include the suggestion that time for collaboration be ensured, and that this time depend on the level of individual student need. Gold feels that collaboration should be formally encouraged through planned meetings set by administration and that student successes partially attributable to collaboration should be shared. In addition, teacher training coursework for regular educators, classroom teachers and school administrators should include collaborative methods.

The research team of Voltz, Elliott & Cobb (1994) carried out a national American quantitative survey of both classroom and special education resource teachers. In this study, "Collaborative Teacher Roles: Special and General Educators," teachers were asked to rate a range of items related to teacher roles which were analyzed and reported in tabular form. According to this collected data, the authors reached a number of conclusions about classroom and special education teacher collaborative roles. The special education resource teachers who were surveyed noted the constraints of scheduling, time and training as barriers to collaboration. Voltz et al. reported that team teaching was the only role not cited as a 'often or always' ideal by classroom teachers. Overall, teachers teaching in each other's classrooms tended to be rated as a less ideal practice. The highest rating of any role for either teacher was the role of the special education teacher instructing in the special education classroom. The authors found that

special education teachers rated themselves as carrying out collaborative roles more often than classroom teachers perceived this to be the case. They found more support for collaboration through verbal exchanges than collaboration by teaching together, or teaching in the same classroom. Teachers surveyed were satisfied with the nature of the collaborative roles, if not the quantity. However, a gap did exist between actual and ideal practice that could be mitigated by, for example, providing specific time for collaboration. This greater time allotment for collaboration would help to build relationships between collaborating teachers, as well as later encouraging team teaching after the growth of trust and support.

Another survey of teacher attitudes, "Rural Teachers' Attitudes toward Inclusion," (Monahan, Marino & Miller, 1996) found that barriers to inclusion included a preference for pull-out services for special education teaching by classroom teachers, a lack of resources, and the necessity, again, of collaboration between special and regular educators. Monahan et al. discovered that teachers felt that they would be able to figure out their relative positions of authority in a team teaching situation, and that team teaching should be modelled as part of inclusion practise. One recommendation suggested in this study is further teacher education to support inclusion.

Educational researcher Din (1996) surveyed special education teachers taking part in direct and indirect special education services to gather information related to the role and practice of special education. In this study, "How Special Education Services are Delivered in Kentucky Regular Public Schools in the Context of the Educational Reform

Movement," students were placed in different forms of service delivery through full and partial inclusion. He found that the practice of inclusion was becoming more common over time. Overall, he discovered that teachers need more supports and materials and that they have difficulties with role definition, workload and communicating changing types of special education service delivery. He also indicated the need for the inclusion-related training of regular classroom teachers.

Other researchers chose to focus on a smaller number of participants, and gathered qualitative, reflective data on teachers involved in collaborative relationships in schools. One study focussed on the process of developing a new teaching relationship by asking a teacher team to reflect on their changing relationship.

Researchers Salend, Johansen, Mumper, Chase, Pike and Dorney (1997) conducted a year-long reflective case study of a cooperative teaching team in New York State, defining cooperative teaching as the collaboration between general educators and other professionals working together in a general education environment. This general educator and special education teacher pair working together in a kindergarten class to serve the needs of a class with a combination of special needs and nondisabled children detailed the process of integrating their teaching through a journal and interviews. Reflections from the school principal were also gathered through personal interviewing. The two teachers who participated in this process found it rewarding, enjoyable and stimulating, although they did initially struggle with issues related to their relationship boundaries and teaching differences. A number of themes emerged from teacher

reflections. These themes included teachers beginning to share and blend their skills and strengths respecting each other's differences; growing through confronting their professional differences; finding renewed joy in teaching and beginning to risk-take in the collaborative environment. In addition, the teachers developed a feeling of community using the language of partnership after initial concerns with control, authority roles, styles, professional territory, differences and feelings of not belonging. This sense of community then seemed to have a positive effect on students: "In addition to improved socialization skills, the teachers also reported positive changes in the students' acquisition of developmental and preacademic skills" (Salend et al., 1997, p.8) . These successes were noted to be related to the high level of administrative support provided for this collaborative effort, as well as to the use of a teaching journal as a reflective tool. The researchers suggest that school personnel need to be sensitive to the struggles in collaboration efforts, and that a venue for communication should be provided for teachers engaged in such processes. Administrators need to provide support for cooperative teaching through a variety of venues. Lastly, those training teachers should provide both preservice and inservice training on a range of issues related to classroom and special educators teaching together.

In "Whose Job Is It Anyway? Educational Roles in Inclusion," Wood (1998) used a qualitative case study to examine a group of three collaborative teams in a school district in which inclusion was still fairly innovative. The teams included the parent and child as well as teachers, but the researcher focussed on data gathered from the general

and special education team members. She discovered that special education and general education teachers do experience role overlap and differences in role expectations and perceptions, and that these incongruities tended to negatively affect teacher self-concept, without negatively affecting student learning, and Wood (1998) concluded that role conflict may have a negative effect on inclusion programs. She looked at the specific feelings of teachers related to inclusion, and perceptions of both the obstacles and supports for collaboration.

Teacher participants all agreed on the roles of the special education teacher: to teach individualized programs; to be an instructional model; generate behavioural programming; and to supervise other involved paraprofessionals. Special education teachers also carried out necessary paperwork duties, including preparing individualized educational plans, seeing this duty as their appropriate obligation and as a necessity, given the impracticality of the generalist teacher carrying out this function. Overall, "special education teachers provided services essential to the survival and maintenance of the inclusion programs" (Wood, 1998, p.188). The teachers in this study viewed the stimulation of socialization and appropriate classroom behaviour as the most imperative classroom teacher role in the teaching of children with special needs; "the general education teachers were appreciated for the fact that they were willing to open their doors to children with disabilities, but they were not expected to fulfill any major academic duties" (p. 189). As time passed in this study, classroom teachers took more responsibility for academic duties regarding these same children, shifting role boundaries

towards a more inclusive stance. Within the classroom, the presence of special education teachers was valued, yet also described, at times, as disruptive, imposing, uncomfortable, unwelcome, inconsistent, unclear, fragmented, and a wasted effort. Struggles, at times, with ownership and territorial, defensive, protective, competitive feelings were noted with special education teacher disrespected, devalued and perceived as intrusive.

Wood lists the implications of this study for teaching practice: changes in preservice and inservice teacher training should be carried out to develop shared ideas about inclusion; consideration about and accommodations to the difficulties in role change; a well articulated plan; and making use of those with personal knowledge of the players, as facilitators. In addition, she notes the importance of flexibility in roles and growth in cooperation over time. Wood suggests that her research indicates how teachers feel about their roles in inclusion, and concludes that the potential for collaboration, requires a recognition that "successful and competent inclusion takes patience, perseverance, and time" (1998, p.195).

Dwyer & Patterson (2000) in, "Listening to Elementary Teachers: A First Step to Better Inclusive Practice," qualitatively analyzed interview data from four Saskatchewan-based teacher participants working with elementary-aged AD/HD students, including a regular classroom teacher as well as special education teachers. They conclude, "The literature suggests many 'shoulds' but very few 'hows' in the discussion of consultation between Regular and Special Education teachers and the roles of each party. With the wide-spread adoption of inclusive and integrative practice, the time has definitely arrived

to negotiate classrooms as shared space involving students, educators, and parents"
(p.55).

This research focussed on the teachers' experiences with working with students
with a diagnosis of AD/HD. An *interactive model of change* was developed based on
conversations these authors carried out with teachers. Three smaller themes emerged:
changing portraits of students; changing approaches to teacher; and changing classrooms.
One overall theme emerged as an overlying thread: success is the hook. These
researchers then provide practical ways to achieve success in teaching, through
persistence, sharing realistic expectations, focussing on the paradoxical nature of students
with "labels of being 'bad'... also demonstrating another side" (Dwyer & Patterson, 2000,
p.45), and preventing isolation through working together in collaboration with other
teachers. In discussing these collaborative partnerships, the researchers stress the role of
communication between all members of the educational team, including the parents, the
student, and any involved teachers.

Overall, the literature related to collaboration indicates that a diversity of models,
practices, and perceptions exist regarding collaborative approaches to inclusion. Many
theoretical models exist as examples that detail how special education teachers and
classroom teachers should work together. Although these models all seem to suggest that
teachers should collaborate, researchers have proposed various concepts of how
collaboration should be implemented, differing even between similarly named models
that focus on similar overall objectives. Collaborative practices, examples of the

practical implementation of collaborative theory also vary between regions and schools. The research in this area ranges from specifically Newfoundland and Labrador studies to other provincial, national and international studies, reflecting on the implementation of collaborative models, and suggesting ways to further enhance its use. Related research that is centred on the perceptions of collaboration demonstrates that the use of collaboration to support inclusion is very much still in the developmental stage. The research also indicates that schools and teachers that are in the process of figuring out how collaboration works best in a particular environment are usually also in the process of figuring out their collaborative roles and relationships.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Qualitative research refers to a range of research designs related to ethnography,
"or writing about people" (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.1) that focuses on "talking and
walking and listening" (Whitt, 1991, p.406). Among varying research designs, some
common characteristics defining the elusive nature of qualitative research do exist.
Commonly, it is understood to be searching for understanding, it comes from an insider, a
holistic and a natural perspective, it uses humans as instruments, it focuses on inductive
analysis, and it is attentive to the role of values in inquiry (reviewed in Whitt, 1991).
According to Marshall (cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999), qualitative research is
chosen for its multiple strengths. For example, it is an effective method to examine
complexities and processes, and to focus on innovations and unknowns. As well,
qualitative research can integrate opposing understandings and examine informal and real
processes and goals in organizations. It is suitable for research in which variables cannot
be predetermined, or when research is simply inappropriate for an experimental research
approach. In summary, "The qualitative researcher seeks to understand the ways in which
participants in the setting make meaning of – and so understand – their experiences"
(Whitt, 1991, p.407) in order to fulfill the ultimate purpose: understanding (Merriman
cited in Whitt, 1991).

This research was a qualitative study using a thematic approach. Seidman (1991)

refers to such a thematic approach as a more conventional way of conducting research, and describes the process of making thematic connections as a way of "organiz[ing] excerpts from the transcripts into categories. The researcher then searches for connecting threads and patterns among the excerpts within those categories and for connections between the various categories that might be called themes" (Seidman, 1991, p.107). In the interpretation of gathered material, Seidman emphasizes that researchers must go beyond a mere basic description of gathered data, to analysis and interpretation.

The primary method for collecting data in this study for later thematic analysis was interviewing. Seidman would support this method, identifying the strengths of in-depth interviewing as developing a complex understanding through the points of view of the participants, and learning about their interactions with others, and the organization of the world around them. During interviews, researchers listen to what the interviewee is saying and they pay attention to the meanings underlying what is spoken. Seidman summarizes briefly that, "listening is the most important skill in interviewing" (Seidman, 1991, p.63) and "interviewing is both a research methodology and a personal relationship" (Seidman, 1991). From similar points of view, Kahn & Cannell see it as "conversation with a purpose" (cited in Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.108) and Glesne views interviewing as, "the process of getting words to fly" (1999, p.67). LeCompte & Preissle (1993), as well, view interviewing as an interactive method of data collection, a systematic conversation, claiming that, for example, "Self-reports are useful for assessing how individuals make judgements about people and events" (p.162). Marshall &

Rossman (1999) also compare an interview to a conversation in which "the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold" (p.108). They believe that interviews are useful for obtaining large quantities of information in a short time, for gathering information on a range of topics and for assisting researchers in discovering how participants regard their daily lives (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). In short, "The opportunity to learn about what you cannot see and to explore alternative explanations of what you do see is the special strength of interviewing in qualitative inquiry" (Glesne, 1999, p.69).

This research was carried out as a thematic qualitative study, with interviewing as the primary source of data collection. Seven special education teachers were interviewed, primarily to share their descriptions and reflections on their day-to-day collaboration with classroom teachers. A secondary focus of this research was to discover what these special education envisioned as ideal collaboration practices. Secondary data was collected through the use of a collaboration journal completed by the special education participants. This research was carried out according to the schedule depicted in Table 1.

Table 1

Research schedule

Date	Step
July 2001	Consent to conduct this research was obtained from the Ethics Committee at Memorial University of Newfoundland.
September 2001	Consent to conduct this research was obtained from the district Director of Education.
November 2000 - January 2001	Contact was made with school principals and special education teachers.
November 2000 - January 2001	Telephone interviews were conducted with special education teachers and collaboration journals were mailed to special education teachers.
November 2000 - March 2001	Interview transcribing was completed.
March 2001 - June 2001	Data analysis was completed.
June 2001 - November 2001	Final writing was completed.

The following sections describe the specifics of the methods and data analysis strategies used in carrying out this research, including information about the population, research questions, sampling, researcher role, site access, informed consent and data collection. The data analysis section describes the role of theory, the process of transcription, organization and interpretation used in this research, its validity and

limitations.

Methods

The research population in this study was established by creating a funnel of choices as a means of carefully specifying a research population (Miles & Huberman, 1995). From a population of special education teachers, this funnelling technique led to a specific, bounded subset of this general population, considering efficiency, time, resources, energy, goals, limits, and practicalities in research (Marshall & Rossman, 1996) The resulting selection units were differentiated into what LeCompte and Preissle (1993) term a bounded population, by examining both the conceptual and logistical considerations of natural and artificial boundaries. In the case of this research, the natural boundary consisted of the landform borders, and the artificial boundary was the geographical school board division. As well, special education role descriptions, grade levels, teacher training and this researcher's role as an informed outsider were considered. The final bounded population included primary/elementary (K-6) special education teachers in one region of Newfoundland and Labrador. In accordance with the bounded population, guiding research questions were defined as:

- How do primary/elementary (K-6)special educators in one region of
  Newfoundland and Labrador describe their day-to-day collaboration with the
  classroom teachers of students being supported by special education teachers?

- What do (K-6) special educators in one region of Newfoundland and Labrador see as an ideal model for day-to-day collaboration?

Criterion-based sampling was then used to select a sample from within the bounded population. Criterion-based sampling is characterized by Miles and Huberman (1994) as, "all cases that meet some criterion," (p.28) and is viewed as, "useful for quality assurance" (p.28). LeCompte & Preissle (1993) further explain that criterion-based sampling is purposive and ethnographic. Through preset attributions, it gives the researcher both a starting place and the tools to make the best choice of data sources.

Criterion-based sampling both specifies the participants and leads to new information as research progresses; thus, it was chosen as the basis for finding a research sample for this study. A sample of full-time, typical case special education teachers (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) was first considered as an ideal use of criterion-based sampling, but as the process of selection is "dynamic, phasic and sequential rather than static" (Zeldich cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.65), this original ideal required change. When the provincial publication of *Education Statistics* was examined (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999) it was clear that an acceptable number of participants would not emerge; therefore a comprehensive sample of all consenting special educators within the bounded population was used in this research.

To obtain a comprehensive sample for this research, a confidential "List of Special Education Personnel" was provided by the participating school district. Teachers

on this list that were designated as special education, or special education combined with a classroom teaching unit were highlighted for a comprehensive selection of names to create an initial list of 12 possible teacher participants, working at 13 schools. Contacting school principals yielded a list of nine possible participants. The reasons provided for lack of consent when administrators first checked with special education teachers included workload, health reasons, and a lack of comfort with participating in this research. From the responses, it seems that most principals contacted the special education teachers in their schools before they responded to requests for consent. Even previous to this step, one potential participant had indicated that she did not wish to participate for personal reasons. At this point, eight potential participants remained.

The weather in the geographical region was quickly becoming undesirable for prolonged car trips that personal interviews would necessitate. For reasons of weather and safety considerations, as well as travel costs, audiotaped phone interviews were then considered as an alternative to in-person interviews. After further consideration of the likelihood that teachers would be more willing to respond to the ease of a phone interview, along with the previous reasons cited, phone interviews using a microcassette and telephone recorder were then determined to be the most effective venue for information-gathering. Only one potential special education teacher participant declined for workload reasons. In all other cases, teachers agreed to take part in this research, and phone interview dates and times were arranged during this phone call. A total sample of seven special education teachers agreed to take part in this study.

According to Marshall & Rossman (1999), site access should be carried out through permission and with sponsorship from the administrators of the site. In this study, such site access and entry was a three-step process. Formal permission was acquired from the district office, school administrators and from individual teacher participants. Letters of informed consent are attached in Appendices A, B and C, respectively.

First, after obtaining supervisor approval and approval from the Ethics Committee at Memorial University, the director of the school district was contacted and provided with a copy of the approved thesis proposal. A personal interview was granted by the director, who provided informed written consent. The director then provided a memo to district principals informing district schools of this upcoming research, and giving assurance of its voluntary nature.

Second, principals from each school were contacted by phone to gain written consent to approach the special education teachers identified. In the case where a teacher worked at more than one school, both principals were contacted. Principals were first contacted by phone and provided with a brief explanation of the research, teacher involvement and confidentiality. In all cases, permission was received to send out principal consent forms, and the consent forms were forwarded. Consent forms were returned if principals were in agreement with this research.

Third, individual special education teachers were contacted by phone at their schools during non-instructional time. During these initial phone calls, the role of a

participant in this study was outlined, indicating a phone interview, a five-day journal, and the possibility of follow-up, along with an assurance of confidentiality. If teachers agreed to participate, a mutually agreeable interview time was set.

Ethical concerns were also considered. This researcher is an insider to special education, though not an insider to any individual research site. Thus, the complexities of a dual role of researcher and special education teacher existed, in which the possibility of going native, "a state of mind in which, through a very close and empathic identification with the subjects of the research" (Pollard, 1993, p.129), as well as the emotions and the tensions in finding an appropriately balanced relationship (Tite, 1996), needed to be considered. Although threats to validity may emerge in such dual relationships, a strong foundation of trust can also be built (Morse, 1994, p.221), and asymmetry and potential power differentials can be minimized. In addition, site access for this study was facilitated by the perspective of this researcher as an informed outsider. According to Rossman and Marshall (1999) and Glesne (1999) ease of entry, familiarity and comfort with the language of participants, rapport, and application with the language of the participants are enhanced by an insider relationship. Although the research was not carried out at the researcher's school site, some of these characteristics apply to the informed outsider.

Audiotaped phone interviews, the primary source of data collection, were carried out at mutually acceptable times, and were recorded on microcassettes using a phone recording device. At the commencement of each phone interview, an abbreviated

version of the consent form was read, with pauses for understanding ensured during its reading. Teachers provided an audiotaped oral consent at the end of this reading, and were later provided with a full consent form by mail for their personal records. This researcher carried out interviews in a locked, private room, using personal contact numbers specified by each participant to ensure that the conditions of fieldwork was centred around the needs and convenience of the participants involved (Marshall & Rossman, 1999).

Representative of qualitative ethnography "in the conversation style of everyday interactions," (Schatzman & Strauss; Denzin, cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.179) interviews were carried out with an attempt to nurture understanding, encouragement and empathy, as well as a researcher revealedness (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). Trust was built by explicit disclosure, commencing interviews with background questioning; later, interviews evolved into more intimate and collaborative "mutual shaping" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, cited in Morse, 1994, p.50). The natural direction of participant conversation was considered seriously during each interview (Morse, 1995). The confidentiality of this gathered information was ensured by providing only general demographic and personal characteristics as needed, with no individual personal or school or district identification in interview transcripts or journals. Participants could also have been provided with transcript and audiotape copies, if requested, as well as any information that may have been a personal concern (Seidman, 1991). Only this researcher has access to confidential information that matches individuals with their

research contributions; these were kept in a locked area. This identifying information, along with audiotapes and transcripts, will be destroyed one year following the conclusion of this research.

The format of the interviews was semistructured, using an interview schedule (Glesne, 1999), consisting of preset, primarily open-ended questions and a general interview guide format (Patton cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) (Appendix D). The guiding interview script (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993) questions were developed considering Patton's typology of questions, covering experience and behaviour, opinion and value, feeling, knowledge, sensory, and background question types (cited in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993, p.171). Prior to the initial interview, a mock audiotaped interview was carried out with a special education teacher in the district who did not fit the criteria for inclusion in this study.

The first section of the interview script consisted of closed-ended demographic questions. The next section covered primary open-ended questions related to inclusion, and *Pathways,* and focussed on collaboration practices. Definitions of inclusion, *Pathways* and collaboration were read for participants to consider, as necessary. Special education teachers were encouraged to tell their stories and to go beyond this flexible questioning frame. During interviews, efforts were made to balance rapport, friendliness and self-disclosure, and nurture sensitivity (Seidman, 1991). The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 58 minutes, with an average interview time of 41 minutes.

All audiotaped interviews were transcribed in the format suggested by Hutchinson

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(1999), who stipulates that the recording of field notes should be accomplished by labelling data with dates, places and times of observations, including page numbers, and typed in a double-spaced format with numbered lines and a wide margin space. LeCompte & Preissle's (1993) advice to intersperse descriptive observational data with evaluative analytic commentary was used, as well as Hutchinson's (1998) suggestion to bracket these latter contributions. Field notes were then typed in this format using a word processor for ease in data analysis (Burnard, 1994).

According to LeCompte & Preissle (1999), most researchers focussing on qualitative inquiry make use of more than a single method of data collection. They also assert that document-based data collection and its analysis is unobtrusive and provides informative, rich information. Teacher collaboration journals were thus used in this study as a complementary source of data for triangulation. The research team of Salend, Johansen, Mumper, Chase, Pike & Dorney (1997) made similar use of an open ended teacher reflection journal in their research to record the changing views of a team of teachers engaging in the process of carrying out cooperative teaching. In this study, participants were asked to complete a triple-entry journal focussing on their interactions, reflections, and possibilities for collaboration with classroom teachers. A sample journal page is shown in Appendix E. Based on the typical unit of teaching, a five-day week, special education teacher participants were requested to complete a journal for this time period. Teacher journals were mailed to the addresses indicated by each participant, and marked as confidential. A personal note, a copy of the consent form for individual

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information, and an addressed, stamped return envelope were included in each mailing. All journals were completed and returned for analysis.

<center>*Data Analysis*</center>

"Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure, and interpretation to the mass of collected data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p.150). Through data analysis, qualitative researchers build grounded theory in the quest for the true meanings of participants. This research focusses on the inductive construction of grounded theory based on the voices of the participating special education teachers. In addition, though, a formal or informal theory that informs and frames information is necessary. This use of existing theory is essential to the development and presentation of new research and emergent theory: "Research designs are improved radically - in applicability and generalizability, in credibility and validity, and in precision and reliability - by explicit attention to the influence of theory through the design and implementation process" (LeCompte and Preissle, 1993, p.137). Qualitative researchers understand theory as being both grounded in discovered data and generated from this data; as both an inductive and generative (Tite, 1996) way to explain how things can be interconnected and linked, and why things happen (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993). As well as generating theory, then, this research also builds upon existing theory defining collaborative consultation. In summary, "They [the products of ethnography] are incomprehensible without the integrating and interpretive functions of the theory that informs them" (LeCompte &

<center>66</center>

Preissle, 1993, p.142).

Inductive data analysis should discover and describe subjective realities as a type of emergent discovery which focuses on generating meaning from within gathered data. To accomplish this analysis, the, data was collected, coded and then analyzed continuously, simultaneously, and consecutively, in a circular fashion that ensured flexibility. In keeping with Hutchinson's model (1988), field notes were coded, patterns were examined, comparisons were made, categories were discovered, and constructs were defined. Gathered data from both interview transcripts and journal documents in this study were analyzed by the constant comparative method, "the fundamental method of data analysis in grounded theory generation" (Hutchinson, 1988, p.135). From such a constant comparison, a basic social process or core variable should emerge, allowing the sorting and organization of data as developing grounded theory. Grounded theory goes, "beyond existent theories and preconceived conceptual frameworks in search of new understandings of social processes in natural settings" (Stern et al. (1982) cited in Hutchinson, 1988, p.123).

The initial steps of data management in this research followed the process of marking text suggested by Seidman (1991). Following the complete transcribing of each interview, each transcription was winnowed, and coded following Burnard's (1994) suggestions for limiting the quantity of categories. The transcripts then were reduced, a process suggested by Seidman (1991) as the most appropriate technique to coding. Eight codes were ultimately used: background, characteristics, outside class, in class, team

dynamics, resources, peripheral issues, and wishes.

Part of reducing and labelling each piece of significant data included a notation at the beginning of each section of information, indicating its inclusion in a given category. Burnard's (1994) suggestions to make use of a word processor in sorting were carried out. Each category was indicated by the first letter of its code name, and each was sorted alphabetically using the word processor sort option, and information chunks were then placed into one or more appropriate word processor folders. Each category file was then cleaned and edited using labelling and spacing to organize information. Again, as suggested by Burnard (1995), an exhaustive "further check of validity.... to see whether or not the units of meaning really do fit in particular categories" (p.115) was completed by reading the resulting contents of each folder. During this editing, further reduction of the text took place. Non-directive emphatic statements from the interviewer were eliminated, as well as repetitive dross (described in Burnard (1994) as employed by Field & Morse (1985)) from the dialogue, ensuring the preservation of meaning and bracketed indicators of background noise, laughter, tone and emphasis. At this time, some units were changed to different files, eliminated from categories, or further reduced to more specific parts of meaning relevant to each category. Throughout this process, connecting themes were considered and initial notes on first themes were made.

In addition to the descriptive, "less literal...more geared towards catching the flavour" (Burnard, 1994, p.114) categories identified above, the literal or concrete category of background information was formed into a profile of background information

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of all participants. The purpose of this profile was not to share data, as suggested by Seidman (1991), but rather to gather a compact visual representation of job descriptions, education, training and general attitudes towards major research issues as reference tool. In this background profiling, interview information was divided and notated into a chart covering position, certification, degree, gender, experience, inservicing, training, caseload information and work cycle, as well as brief comments on inclusion, *Pathways* and collaboration. Three participants were later contacted by phone to fill in missing background information that was not collected during the initial interviews.

Data analysis was focused on the suggestion found within Seidman's (1991) passage, "Making and Analzying Thematic Connections." In this excerpt, Seidman suggests working with data by organizing segments of information into categories, looking for relationships that might develop into themes. He says, "The process of noting what is interesting, labeling it, and putting it into appropriate files is called 'classifying' or, in some sources, 'coding' data" (Seidman, 1991, p.107). As well, characteristics from LeCompte & Preissle's explanation of typological analysis, where the researcher sorts all data by, "dividing everything observed into groups or categories on the basis of some canon for disaggregating the whole phenomenon under study" (p.257) were utilized.

LeCompte and Preissle assert, "The next step is to begin the time-consuming and laborious process of pulling apart field notes, matching, comparing, and contrasting, which constitutes the heart of analysis" (1993, p.237). Through this process, and through

careful consideration of all sorted data, categories and data segments were integrated into the themes of isolation, time and power. During the development of each theme, each folder was carefully re-read, and cut and pasted electronically into theme files; essential words and phrases relevant to each theme were electronically highlighted

Glesne (1999) suggests that creating taxonomies for analysis can "help researchers to see what they know and don't know about a particular cognitive domain" (1999, p.143) The taxonomies for each theme were sorted, categorized, and organized, according to Glesne's assertion that, "Each category is, in turn, probed for sub-categories and sub-subcategories until the interviewee's categorization scheme is fully mapped." (p.143) In turn, thematic files were re-sorted, re-categorized and re-organized, electronically and by hand, to supply an organization form for text presentation. Glesne recommends that, "Simple frequency counts can help to identify patterns," and, "the numbers assist in shaping a more specific hypothesis about attitudes" (p.144). For the themes of isolation and time, frequency counts were designed following the taxonomic diagrams already constructed, for the purpose of defining common teacher practices. A schematic model of the typical collaboration practices indicated by the special education teacher participants in this study was developed based on the frequency counts of the characteristics of collaboration, and by examining the relative use of both direct and indirect collaboration. The wishes folder was used to design a parallel model for what teachers indicated envisioning for the ideal collaborative practices.

Confirmability was established in this research by accounting for subjective biases

by the inclusion of possible negative instances from interview information, journals, and related literature. Objective, evaluative comments were made obvious in field notes with the use of square brackets in text. Data was well-organized, as well as being triangulated through the supplementary analysis of the collaboration journals completed by participating special education teachers.

Marshall and Rossman state that researchers are obligated to provide some type of reciprocity that is both ethical and within the bounds of the researcher role. As Stroeher (1994) states in her research, studying students will help the research to come to a better understanding of students and, in turn, create reciprocity on a personal level by the development of a better educator. Reciprocity in this study will be accomplished by making research results available to participating schools, the relevant board office, and the library at Memorial University, where preservice teachers, educators and academic faculty will have easy access to the conclusions of this study.

This research claims to be a credible account of only the views of the selected population and sample, and from the perspective of special education teachers, not others involved in the educational process. It is not expected to be generalizable to all special education, but the research may be replicated in similar settings based on these clearly stated boundaries. Information that is discovered may be useful in other educational settings, but the boundaries, sampling and constructs specifically limited are clearly defined. Its dependability is limited by possibilities of difficulty with later replication. Similar results may be difficult to duplicate without an informed insider's point of view.

As well as the limitations of research described above, within just a few years, the typical teacher is likely to be a drastically changed entity. The Ministry of Education (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000) reports that the vast majority of teachers in the province are between the ages of 45-49, and that "more than half of the existing teaching force can be expected to retire over the next decade" (p.12). As the average teacher of today retires from a teaching career, a different cohort of teachers with different backgrounds and experiences will emerge. In addition, the current situation of teachers struggling with inclusion and collaboration through current provincial changing standards will not always be the case. Presumably, over time, teachers will become more comfortable with these new guidelines and will have discovered personal ways, or will have been supplied with policies and procedures to manage these new processes.

CHAPTER 4

Results

All the special education teachers interviewed for this study supported the practice of including special education students in the regular classroom environment for the majority of the school day. Overall, they referred to inclusion positively, while at the same time supporting the need for additional teaching by pulling students out to a special education classroom. Thus, special education teachers in this study were comfortable with inclusion, and showed support for its practice.

Collaboration between classroom teachers and special education teachers is one way to support the inclusion of students with special needs. In this study, collaboration is a technique that all special education teachers described using in some form. Such special education teacher collaboration can be described in terms of service delivery options, and can be associated with themes of isolation, time and power, as well as future wishes for ideal collaboration.

Service Delivery

A Problem-Solving Process and a Special Education Service Delivery Option

Collaborative consultation may occur simply as a problem-solving and decision-making process that can occur in a variety of different

contexts ... collaborative consultation may also occur as a special

education service delivery option consisting of the provision of

consultative support by a special educator to a classroom teacher.

(West & Idol, 1990, p.25)

Researchers in the field of special education have commonly identified two major

approaches to the delivery of special education services. One approach to providing

services is through indirect service delivery, where special education teachers do not

actually instruct students; instead, they meet with the classroom teachers of students with

special needs to support their preparation for instructing students with special needs.

This consultation-based style may focus on, for example, solving problems and making

decisions together (West & Idol, 1990). Alternatively, or in combination with such

indirect special education services, special education teachers may also have the

responsibility for directly teaching students with exceptionalities.

Both of these two types of service delivery can involve collaboration between the

special education teachers and the classroom teachers of students with exceptionalities.

As West & Idol (1990) have indicated, collaboration may occur as a process based on

indirect service delivery, or in other words, teachers talking together; additionally, it may

be carried out as direct teaching support from the special education teacher.

In this study, special education teachers reported taking part in collaboration

through both direct and indirect service delivery options. Collaborating to provide

services indirectly by talking together was a practice common to all teachers participating in this study, while teaching together was a less commonly used option.

Talking Together

All the special education teachers interviewed for this study reported collaborating by talking with classroom teachers. Their rationale for talking together most frequently was to maintain consistency between classroom teachers and special education teachers. As well, they often talked together to communicate about students and their programs. Most often, conversations took place in the staff room and in the classroom, both during instructional time and after school. Typically, special education teachers described their conversations as spontaneous and informal.

This summary of how teachers spend their time when collaborating by talking together is depicted in Figure 1. In this model, the core of the collaboration is teachers talking together, and a secondary practice is teaching together. The arrows surrounding central teacher collaboration practices represent the themes of isolation, time and power issues affecting the collaboration practices of the special education teachers in this study. Further detailed information about how teachers collaborate by talking together is later expanded in the time theme of this study.

Figure 1. Actual special education teacher collaboration

Isolation — Teaching Together — Time

Talking Together
What? Students & Programs
Where? Staff Room & Classroom
When? During & After School
Why? Consistency
How? Spontaneously & Informally

Power
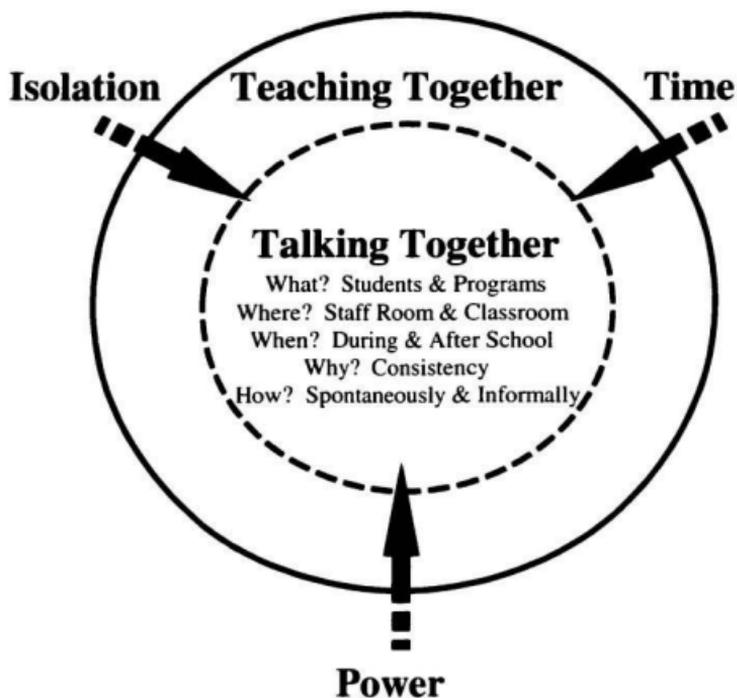
Teaching Together

Collaboration can be used to provide direct service delivery to students requiring special education services. While collaborating through direct service delivery, special education teachers and classroom teachers teach together in the same physical environment. Although some special education teachers in this study did report working directly together with classroom teachers, teaching together was not as commonplace as special education teachers choosing to withdraw students to a special education classroom for some instruction during the school day. As well, the practice of teaching together with the classroom teacher was a even less common way to collaborate than talking together.

Even though teaching together was not the main type of collaborative practice in this study, the participants did point out some examples showing successful collaboration with the classroom teacher, special education teacher, and students working together in the regular classroom environment. Less collaborative examples of teaching together are described in the isolation section of this study.

Only two special education teachers spoke about past experiences with team teaching where they co-taught whole classes along with the classroom teacher. Perhaps both the classroom teachers and the special educators in this study feel like the participant teachers in another study where, "several teachers describe their partnerships as a 'marriage' .... It seems likely that teachers appreciate the challenges inherent in developing these partnerships, which may account for the reluctance among teachers to

endorse team-teaching models" (Minke et al. 1996, p.181). The lack of teaching

cooperatively as a common type of special education service delivery should not come as

a surprise when we reflect on the work of Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck (1993), who affirm

that not a great deal of motivation exists for teachers to teach together.

Most of the special education teachers in this study who reported teaching in the

regular classroom environment found some type of alternative way to work there. Rather

than actually instructing the whole class along with the regular classroom teacher, they

tended to focus on the special education students. When the classroom teachers and the

special education teachers did teach in the same classroom environment, the first priority

of the special education teachers in this study was those students with a special education

designation. Zigmond & Baker (1995) would strongly agree with the continued focus of

the special education teacher being the students with special needs.

In addition to such a focus on students with exceptionalities, the participants also

worked with other students in the class by doing what they described as monitoring,

helping, assisting, explaining or guiding. For example, one teacher clearly stated her

position in the regular classroom environment:

> I try my best not to focus on the one student ... so they're not singled
>
> out as much. (Participant 2)

A few teachers indicated that they would first teach a group of students or a single

student who required extra assistance, and then later in the class, they often moved on to

help the other students in the class.

> Another special educator stated her position on working in the regular classroom:
>
>> ... if I'm working with my students, and they're on their way, they're
>>
>> doing fine, I can go over and work with somebody else. I think that
>>
>> does them good as well. They don't only see me as *their* teacher. I'm
>>
>> everybody's teacher ....When I have met their needs, then I can go and
>>
>> help others if I need to. (Participant 5)

The same participant wrote that, when two teachers are in the same classroom, there is a consequent benefit to collaboration itself:

> Since most work is done in the classroom, I get time to work with
>
> other students even though the classroom teacher and I didn't talk
>
> today. (Participant 5; Journal)

> However, the special education teacher and classroom teachers in this study, then, are not often carrying out true cooperative teaching; rather, they are teaching together, with 'together' referring to the physical environment, not instructional cooperation. Robinson (1991) defines cooperative teaching as joint teaching with joint responsibility and accountability for all students which does not include any type of remedial or basic instruction within the class. West & Idol (1990) would likely remind professionals that these examples of teaching together are not considered authentic examples of collaborative consultation, although some methods, such as team teaching, can eventually lead to true collaborative consultation.

For the special education teachers in this study who chose to teach in the regular classroom environment at times, instructing students beyond those on the special education caseload had been initiated by often by other students in the class themselves. One special education participant suggested that maybe special education teachers themselves need to take the initiative and responsibility to make themselves part of the classroom by offering some type of programming to the whole class. When she reflected about working in the regular classroom, she recalled that the teacher, "was happy to have assistance both for special needs student and others when necessary" (Participant 5; Journal).

A few participants worked in the class by supporting students that needed assistance to meet provincial objectives, through the use of typical or remedial-based programs. As well, they sometimes taught individual objectives to a special education student, but ensured that this program was taught within the corresponding subject area. For example, a student with special needs could be working on a modified math program with other students in the class who were also learning the regular math curriculum. One participant wrote about her experience, reflecting that:

> We decided to take this approach several weeks ago, so that the
> student would feel he was involved in the regular curriculum.
> (Participant 1; Journal)

Minke et al. (1996) found that teachers of inclusive classrooms with inadequate resources were more likely to have perceived the non-disabled students in such

environments as suffering from negative social and emotional consequences, but according to the special education teachers in this study, the inclusion of students in the regular classroom can be beneficial to students.

Modelling can be one benefit of inclusion, when students in the regular classroom are immersed in socialization, learning from the examples of their teachers and peers. Not unexpectedly, most of the special education teachers in this study saw modelling as one of the positive effects of student inclusion in the regular classroom. One teacher cautioned, though, that other students in the class seemed to be more aware of the assistance that a student is given when that support is given in the classroom environment:

> I'm there and they can see what I'm doing with him. They're kind of like, "How come he gets this and I don't get this?" .... If he's out with me, they don't know what he's doing. They can't see. They don't know what he's doing when he's out with me. (Participant 6)

Special education students can also benefit from academic modelling, both according to participants in this study, and other researchers. In other words, students might learn new skills from simply being in the same environment where another student might model behaviours that are desired. In a related study, a principal reflecting on the benefits of collaborating teachers in an inclusive classroom noted the positive effects of student modelling, exposure to classroom activities and academic challenge (Salend et. al, 1997).

Beyond modelling, special education teachers in this study have noticed students directly helping one another.

> They'll go over and say, well, you help me do this because I helped
> you [laughter] when you were doing your paragraph. (Participant 5)

One participant stated,

> ... they can get ideas from other students, other students might be able
> to better explain their ideas to the students, and the special education
> students might be better able to relate to the other students in the
> class. So, it's sort of a shared learning experience for the students.
> (Participant 7)

Likewise, collaborating teachers in the Salend et al. (1997) study reflected that the close placement of all students with and without special education needs was also beneficial for the behaviour and attitude of at least one student without disabilities.

One special education teacher in this study brought up the potential for teachers modelling real-life cooperation for their students. In her view, when teachers work together in class, all students are able to learn from this authentic example of cooperation in practice. Salend et al. agree, noting that collaborating teachers, "used the students' sense of community to benefit both students with disabilities and students without disabilities" (1997, p.8). On the other hand, though, Philpott (2001) points out that some researchers have concluded that, "the approach [inclusion] was not resulting in the increased acceptance among peers or heightened self-concept of students with

exceptionalities that proponents had originally anticipated" (p.7). Not all the special education teachers in the study, either, are in agreement about the benefits of such teaching practices. One participant wondered,

> ... you can keep him in the classroom, but is it really inclusion if they're not doing the same thing? .... They're included socially because he's around, but he's not interacting with anybody else if he's doing something different with me. (Participant 6)

Zigmond & Baker (1995) would agree that we need to be careful to continue to focus on the individual needs of special education students. While speculating on the current practices of inclusive education and special education, these authors remind us that, "considering 'all' is not the same as considering 'each and every one,' and a reformed general education probably will not be sufficient to meet the needs of some students. The price for coming to the general education reform table must not be the abandonment of our special education commitment to providing *extra* to those in special need. *It must not mean an elimination of the continuum of services*" (p.248).

Although schools are in a certain sense very social places, and classrooms are multidimensional centers of activity, an individual teacher may feel stranded on a crowded island that is devoid of adult interaction and stimulation (Dettmer, Thurston &Dyck, 1993, p.4)

Many cautions about teacher isolation exist. For example, one reflection on the changing state of the classroom is, "Many teachers are accustomed to planning and teaching behind closed doors. Fullan (1993) suggests that professional isolation is detrimental in that it limits teachers' exposure to new ideas and solutions to problems" (Hollingsworth, 2001, p.6). According to most researchers in the field of collaboration in the special education context, teachers need to be both aware and wary of personal and professional isolation in the school environment. Perhaps in the past, teachers have been satisfied to carry out their duties distinctly and separately from other professionals, and isolated even within a crowd. Special education and classroom teachers now learning to cope with inclusion cannot realistically continue to expect nor desire working in secluded classrooms. They should, theoretically, given the inclusion policies, be prepared to reject the notions and practices that lead to isolation, and embrace collegiality.

The special education teachers in this study commonly referred to two types of

situations that tended to create isolation in special education practice. First, they often experienced physical isolation which occurred when students were withdrawn into a special education classroom. Such physical isolation also occured, to a lesser extent, even when special education teachers did work together in the same classroom environment with regular classroom teachers. A second issue was a lack of professional collegiality indicated by an a lack of opportunity for special education teachers to talk with similar professionals beyond their local schools, and by the lack of direct feedback from classroom teachers.

Teaching Together

An analysis of the general practices of special education teachers in this study shows that rather than teaching collaboratively with the classroom teacher in order to provide direct services to students, special education teachers more often indicated they relied on pulling students out for special education teaching.

Zigmond & Baker (1995) believe that a flexible environment is acceptable for special education service. They state, "Place is not the critical element in defining special education: theoretically, relentless, intensive, alternative educational opportunities could be made available in any venue of a school" (p.246). He believes the general classroom environment can sometimes be too restrictive for special education teaching, and warns educators against seeing the locale of special education service delivery as the most important element. Hallahan & Kauffman (1991) similarly assert that, "research does not

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support the conclusion that special education has been ineffective because it has involved special education teachers offering instruction outside the regular classroom, nor does research support the inference that changing the location in which special education is delivered or reducing instruction by special education teachers will result in more effective instruction" (p.469) Hallahan and Kauffman (1991) conclude that, "Students should be able to move from one service delivery model to another as necessary to meet their individual needs" (p.477).

One provincial researcher also considered issues related to services delivery. Philpott (2001) interprets that provincial support exists for a flexible special education design: "While no recommendation spoke specifically to a philosophy of inclusion, the panel [from *Supporting Learning* (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2000)] appeared to respect the provinces' continuum of placement model, based upon the best interests of the child" (p.10). He points out that this support is also shown in the *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft)* (1999), which advocates a continuum of special education services without recommending inclusion as a service delivery priority. "Subsequently, a continuum of placements based upon the best, and evolving, interest of the student is outlined as both policy and practice" (Philpott, 2001, p.2). Provincially; though, inclusion is an ideal philosophic goal of parents and teachers. He asserts that, "While inclusion continues to receive wide support, the rigid philosophical belief that one setting fits all children has proven its strongest liability" (p.6).

In this study, although withdrawing students tends to isolate special education

teachers and, thus, perhaps also their students, most of the participants did not indicate a need to discontinue this practice. One rationale was that, although special education teachers might spend much of their instructional day using withdrawal to teach special education students, this daily practice is shared between the many students on their caseload for special education services. Consequently, each student personally experiences this pull-out for only a small part of the school day, with the majority of their time being spent in the inclusive classroom environment.

The special education teachers interviewed for this study provided further rationale to personally support their use of student withdrawal. At times, they withdrew students according to their understanding of individual needs. Alternatively, they pulled students out for instruction on the basis of a team decision, or an administrative direction, in order to continue a previously applied model of special education service delivery. Sometimes, they withdrew students for instruction due to the personal request of students. One special education teacher simply made note of the impossibility of working in the regular classes with all of their students.

The most common reason given by special education teachers in this study for withdrawing students to teach outside of the regular classroom was related to programming needs. As one special educator stated, "you just have to pull them out because they're doing such different things" (Participant 1). Many participants agreed that withdrawal is necessary for atypical programming, such as the teaching of alternate courses that consist of objectives either removed from, or very different from, the grade-

level provincial curriculum that the majority of the students are working towards in class.
For example:

> Once you get beyond [Pathway] 2 [accommodations and adaptations],
>
> into 3 [modified courses] and 4 [alternate courses], it becomes more
>
> and more difficult [pause] because of the different ... dynamics of it.
>
> (Participant 3)

On the other hand, special education teachers also mentioned that withdrawal is used for
programming that is considered supplementary, for example, when students receive extra
assistance in a given academic problem areas.

Student behaviour was another reason given to make use of pull-out
programming. Special education teachers in this study noted that severe behaviour
problems, for example, violence and tantrums, were appropriate reasons to withdraw
students. Less serious behaviour problems in class, such as simply being distracted by the
classroom group, having difficulty focussing attention or not being able to concentrate
were also given as pull-out rationale.

The participants also indicated that noise within the classroom may contribute to
situations where teachers feel a need to withdraw students. Multi-grade classrooms, in
particular, already have separate programs running concurrently. In these situations, the
special education student and teacher are sometimes a further source of noise distraction.
One participant reflected:

> Students get more out of one on one, more personalized contact with

a teacher, rather than in [pause] where you might have two or three

different things going on. (Participant 2)

Large class numbers, student grouping, and even devices for the hearing impaired can

also create an environment that makes it difficult to communicate on an individual basis,

according to some special education teachers interviewed.

Most of the participants mentioned comfort as a reason for student withdrawal.

This need for comfort was not centred on the students nor the special education teachers,

but rather the collaborating classroom teachers. The participants felt that the classroom

teachers should be willing partners for teaching together to succeed, although they often

seemed not yet prepared for full collaboration in the form of teaching together, for

example. One opinion given was:

Some people I don't think you can do anything to make them

comfortable with it. And I don't think we can force it. But I do think

people are a lot more open to it now. So maybe we just gotta keep

working on those things, that we're doing. I don't know if there's

anything in particular [laughter] that anyone can do. (Participant 5)

Another special education teacher reflected in her journal:

I think some teachers fear having another teacher in the class with

them. I suppose they find it a bit intimidating. I understand to a

degree, but sometimes I do feel that team teaching is beneficial to

everyone. (Participant 2)

This comfort issue is a part of what Robinson (1991) terms as a personal barrier to collaboration. Personal barriers can include a lack of willingness to change, a lack of skills, knowledge, and comfort with collaborative procedures. A further indication of a personal barrier can be that, "some teachers do not feel ownership of the education for students with disabilities. They believe that the difficulties these students exhibit should be addressed outside of their classroom by someone else" (Huefner cited in Robinson, 1991, p.444). "Collaboration requires that individuals willingly agree to work with one another and believe that working together will be mutually beneficial" (p.446).

According to the special education teachers in this study, personality can have an impact on whether a teacher is willing to teach collaboratively. In their view, some classroom teachers have simply been unwilling to attempt teaching together with special education teachers, and are very direct about this reluctance. Interestingly, Voltz et al. (1994) found that team teaching was the only role that classroom teachers did not feel that special education teachers should take part in 'often or always.' The classroom teachers rated any roles that required the actual physical presence of either category of teacher in the classroom of their collaborating teacher as lower than other possible teaching roles. These authors noted that the strongest rating for any role was teaching in the special education room by the special education teacher: "many teachers participating in the study desired to collaborate on an information-exchange level, or problem-solving level, but were apparently more reluctant to actually occupy the same classroom at the same time, or to jointly embark upon the teaching process" (p.531).

From the perspective of special education teachers in this study, classroom teachers seem to be concerned about a loss of independence. For example, one participant indicated that she believes some classroom teachers feel this way:

> I'll do what I want in my class; you take the student outside of class and you do what you want with that student to help them with their subject area. (Participant 7)

Personality, style, experience with collaborative teaching, and the relative age of classroom teachers were also given as possible reasons for a lack of comfort. The participants indicated that they do not know how to deal with obstacles that arise when in-class collaboration is rejected. They expressed worry about making such a situation worse, forcing other teachers, making other teachers more uncomfortable, and making a negative name for themselves in the school. As an exception, one participant experienced with teachers working together in the classroom noted a positive consequence of using more of such collaboration, "I don't think they [the classroom teachers] want me to draw the kids out anymore." (Participant 5)

Some special education teachers in this study pulled students out according to their instructional needs. These teachers indicate that they work together with students on tasks from class that need extra support. Students might bring this work to the special education teacher's classroom. For example:

> My job mostly is to make sure what he's doing, that he completes what he's supposed to have done. (Participant 3)

This same teacher indicates that although this class work takes first priority, he always prepares lessons focussing on the individual needs of that student. Prepared lessons may focus on a further explanation of what is being taught in class, or further time to complete class work and tests. One special education participant teacher directly stated that:

> I do think they need some time [pause] in a self-contained [special education] classroom where they can *get* the instruction they need.
>
> The direct instruction. (Participant 6)

According to the rationale of this special education teacher, students benefit from the direct, personalized skill instruction that concentrates on the needs of a particular student for some of the instructional day.

Citing Putnam, Spiegal & Bruininks (1995), Philpott (2001) summarizes that inclusion will "survive as a core principle and preferred goal in the continuum of programming options," but that "What is debatable is whether or not it is indeed in the best interests of all students, especially those with emotional/behavioural problems and severe developmental delays." (P.10). Likewise, a few participants in this study relied on a rationale related to the exceptionality of a student. For example, teachers may utilize inclusion depending on the "type and severity of the problems that the student is having" (Participant 1). Special educators sometimes felt that students with more serious academic difficulties would need a different quality or style of teaching than that which is available in the regular classroom. If students have severe difficulties, a significant exceptionality, or are considerably behind in their skill level, the special education

teachers interviewed felt the students benefit from limited pull-out for more individualized instruction:

> ... they need so much repetition, and you know the activity they need is hands-on. He's always painting and stuff you just can't do that with all the grade [specified level] there, you just can't! (Participant 6)

Even if using withdrawal as a service delivery method is accepted for a portion of a student's instructional day, and even if it is considered to be acceptable although isolating, one special education teacher was still cautious about how much students should be segregated.

> I always found that when you take children out of the regular classroom setting, they're out of *everything* in the school. I find that they're not always included even in the extra-curricular things, when they're taken out of the regular classroom setting for the academics. (Participant 5)

Another participant summarized her feelings of isolation in a journal passage:

> Why is it that students often have to tell me what they are working on in class? Maybe I'm not an approachable person, but I always thought I was. Is it because teachers don't have a lot time to collaborate with others or they don't want to make the time? Sometimes I feel as though I'm intruding where I shouldn't be. It's

a weird feeling to have. Special education can be isolating at times.

(Participant 2; Journal)

If special education teachers choose to teach using the withdrawal of students to a special education classroom, the teachers and students are isolated from the regular classroom environment for that period of time. If special education teachers choose to work in the regular classroom environment, but focus on working with a select few students, they can be isolated even within the regular classroom. Even for classroom teachers, the experience of teaching students with special needs may be isolating. Dwyer & Patterson (2000), for example, recommend avoiding the isolation of either special education students, parents or teachers working with AD/HD students. They see communication as an essential factor negating potential isolation: "Teachers with different philosophies need to work together, to collaborate, to better meet the needs of students" (p.50).

One team of authors facetiously reflects on the changing situation of the classroom teacher. "After the attendance forms, lunch counts, and other required procedures are completed, they close their doors and teach. They are expected to handle all kinds of school situations with minimal assistance. After all, didn't the teacher of eight grades in a one-room schoolhouse get along without special help?" (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993, p.4). Most of the special education teachers in this study also expressed some concerns about the classroom teachers being expected to cope with an inclusive environment without direct teaching support. Attitudes similar to the following

one were a cause of concern for some special education teachers interviewed:

> ... usually the special education teacher is just the special education
> teacher and that's that. And he or she is just for slow students and
> that's her domain, and the regular teacher has her domain or his
> domain, and a lot of people assume that it's two separate things.
>
> (Participant 2)

Special educators were concerned about the demands being placed on their classroom teacher colleagues in terms of attention demands, student struggles, workload and even sacrifice in carrying out *Pathways* in an inclusive classroom. One teacher summarized:

> But for the most part, I think they [special education students] should
> be in the classroom .... With a special education teacher or some sort
> of extra help though [vehement tone]. I don't think the [classroom]
> teacher should have [pause] the whole thing placed on them.
>
> (Participant 4)

Even if classroom teachers are provided with periodic support through special educators supporting special education students in the classroom environment, isolation can still occur. Most special education teachers in this study reported that when they did choose to work in class, which was typically secondary to withdrawing students for teaching, they focussed on the students with special needs. Often, by providing mostly individual attention to a student on their caseload, while the classroom teachers were focussed on the majority of the students in the classes. For example:

> My role of course is to meet the needs of the students that I have
>
> ISSPs for, or my students, I call them. (Participant 5)

Special education teachers in this study indicated that their primary goal is to support those children in the classroom. A special education teacher might sit with the special education student or students, or move with them to a table elsewhere in the room. West & Idol (1990) label this type of approach as parallel teaching, where each teacher has his or her own lessons and are cooperatively teaching. In this approach the teachers,"agree to teach together" (p.26) in the same physical environment.

A few special education teachers in this study indicated that they have never taught with the classroom teacher, and some indicated that they have had limited contact with any other students in the class beyond those in their special education caseloads. Only one teacher interviewed indicated that she has worked in the class focussing on a group of students, including students on her caseload along with students with need of extra support. A journal entry example confirms this type of special education teacher role:

> Keep going into regular classroom twice per cycle to assist student in
>
> L.A. class. Helps student succeed in meeting prescribed objectives.
>
> Regular classroom teacher cannot provide one-on-one support while
>
> teaching all of the class. He can provide Pathway 2 accommodations
>
> to [the] student through i.e. reading tests, extra time, recording test
>
> answers. (Participant 6; Journal)

Another journal entry read:

> My being in the classroom allows the teacher to concentrate on the
> other 'average' and 'above average' students who I feel are neglected
> because we're trying too hard to help the weaker ones. (Participant
> 1: Journal)

One participant explained her position on her role as a special education teacher this way:

> You just [emphasis] can't go in and be a part of that room and just sit
> over in the corner, just to be there, a physical thing. You have to be
> part of it. (Participant 5)

Talking Together

Phillips & McMullough summarize the isolation of special education teachers in this way: "Obvious among them [barriers to consultation] is the historical separation between special and regular services, no doubt exacerbated by the general isolation of most teachers. Attitudinal barriers apparently emanate in part from a lack of mutual understanding of the distinct demands of the other's role. These isolating factors create important credibility problems when educators attempt to advise or consult each other" (1990, p.294). These findings are also consistent with those of Younghusband (2000), who notes that the majority of teachers in her survey received feedback from an administrative level only 'rarely or never' or 'occasionally.'

In this study, special education teachers sometimes experience feelings of

isolation that extend even beyond physical isolation from the regular classroom environment. A lack of direct feedback about the success of their collaborative practices with classroom teachers is one element related to such feelings of isolation. Although almost all participants reflected on their interactions with classroom teachers mostly positively, at the same time, they indicated that they received minimal direct feedback from the classroom teachers with whom they collaborate. They did not remark on any explicitly negative feedback from any collaborating teachers; neither did they highlight any explicitly positive feedback related to their working relationships:

> They haven't said, "This collaboration bit is great," because I don't
> think you're going to hear teachers say that .... maybe we don't praise
> each other enough. (Participant 5)

Instead, all special education teachers mentioned some type of feedback implicit in their relationship with the classroom teachers which they usually interpreted as positive. For example, if the classroom teachers appeared to be approachable, this seemed to indicate a positive relationship even if it was not explicitly stated. Another indicator was the willingness of the classroom teacher to provide ideas and constructive criticism to the special education teacher. Special education teachers in this study also felt that being asked to assist the classroom teacher was a indicator of a good relationship. Even just talking together with classroom teachers, receiving comments about the positive progress of special education students from the classroom teacher, being able to share ideas with other staff members, and sharing a common understanding of

collaboration with the staff as a whole, were all positive indicators shared by the participants. One example of such implicit feedback was:

> The two of us have a good rapport so the conversation was light hearted even though we discussed some important things for this student. I showed her the work he'd been doing and she said she has similar materials in her classroom that he could continue with. Perfect! (Participant 3; Journal)

Another special education teacher noted:

> I generally find this teacher to be very easy to talk to about students, etc. She makes things a little easier for me in that sense. We work well together, I feel. Maybe others need to be more like her? Remember our telephone conversation and you mentioned an 'ideal world'? Wouldn't it be nice!! (Participant 4; Journal)

Yet another special education teacher wrote:

> These interactions are very open and honest, for example if she [the classroom teacher] suggests a [spelling] word I feel is too difficult, I will say so, and vice versa.
>
> This meeting went quite well and I felt [it] was quite productive. Again, this teacher, as well, is very respectful of my opinions. It certainly was not a one sided meeting by any means. Both of us

discussed our concerns and what we felt were the best instructional

methods to use with the students I am working with in her classroom.

(Participant 1; Journal)

A limited amount of implicit feedback that special education teachers interpreted as negative included insufficient communication between collaborating teachers, and classroom teachers not following *Pathways* expectations.

One way that feelings of isolation may be minimized or eliminated is through "developing mutually supportive networks" (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993, p.191). Within the school and beyond the school, special education teachers interviewed sometimes did try to seek out a sharing of common experiences among like teachers. One special education teacher described being less than successful in talking with other special education teachers because of geographical isolation. Another expressed surprise at the differences in academic training in *Pathways*, compared to its implementation. A third teacher noted that although she does communicate with other special educators, they do not discuss any specifics of teacher collaboration. A fourth has developed friendships with other teachers, which has helped to confirm that her special education collaboration practices are similar to others. Finally, attendance at a conference was affirming for one special education teacher, providing some evidence of similar techniques. He reflected, "it was also nice for someone else to tell you what you're doing is right" (Participant 3).

One research team summarizes that teachers can benefit by observing and working with other successful collaborative teaching relationships. Beyond direct

feedback, indirect feedback, and links to other professionals, they believe that the development of a collaborative, inclusive classroom itself, "helped prevent isolation that teachers may experience when they work alone in their classrooms" (Salend et al., 1997, p.8).

Just as the factor of cost should not be addressed first in designing a new product or procedure, neither should time constraints be allowed to impede planning for consultation and collaboration. The problem must be reckoned with, of course. But if allowed to take precedence over other considerations, time can dictate thought patterns and restrict the free flow of ideas. "We haven't the time," is as debilitating for a school staff as "We haven't the money," is for a family or business. This is not to minimize the time-related difficulties of curtailed staff or mushrooming caseloads, any more than to discount the money-related pain of poverty and need. However, the resolution of the dilemma lies in the visions and plans for use of that time. (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993, p.52)

Teachers tend to be in agreement with the reality that the teaching profession consumes many more hours than just those times when teachers are instructing students. It seems, as teachers open doors to new innovations, they also open their professions to greater demands on their time. Collaboration is one of these necessary innovations. It does take time: time that is already allotted to carry out the typical daily demands in the role of a teacher.

Many researchers have studied and confirmed issues related to teacher workload and collaboration. One recent Canadian study based in Nova Scotia (1999), for example, found that a majority of teachers minimized their sleep as a way to save time. As well, they reported feeling rushed daily. This is not surprising, considering the typical 50 hour week that teachers described (cited in Younghusband, 2000). Looking more specifically at resource teachers, the team of Voltz et al. (1994) found that their group of participants reported both a lack of time and scheduling constraints as major restrictions on carrying out what they feel should be their ideal role in collaboration. In addition, one summary of collaboration research reiterates that time and issues related to time management are two leading constraints on effective school-based collaboration (Kauffman & Trent, 1991).

The special education teachers in this study also confirm that time, or a lack of time, has impacted on their potential for collaboration. The issues of time pinpointed by the participants focussed, first, on the identification of time constraints. In addition, they also identified how they spend collaboration time that is available, which in turn provides insights into how special education teachers prioritize their conversations with classroom teachers.

Constraints

The special education participants in this study identified what they feel are constraints to collaboration with classroom teachers. The main constraints that were pinpointed include an all-round busyness in the special education teacher role and time

demands for student assessments and paperwork. As well, a few participants voiced issues related to staffing concerns and teaching experience.

One participant in this study reflected a common view among special education teachers:

> As for the collaboration itself, it would be nice to sit down for a while and discuss further what to do about this particular student. But the question I keep asking myself constantly is: "Where do I get the time to do all the things that need to be done?" (Participant 1; Journal)

A second view about time demands and the current state of special education services was expressed as:

> I believe it [*Pathways*] is a good system, but the problem is when you're not provided with the resources to carry it out as successfully as it can be carried out. And I always find that very frustrating. Like for example they talk about how important it is to collaborate with classroom teachers .... but if you don't give me the time to do that, how do you expect me to do that? (Participant 1)

Time concerns have also been expressed through teachers surveyed provincially. Younghusband (2000), for example, found that almost all teachers in her survey felt their responsibilities in their teacher positions to be increasing. In addition, a majority felt they were not being provided with the resources to meet this increased responsibility, while they also saw the area of role overload as their greatest occupational stressor. In the area

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of role ambiguity, her survey discovered that teachers "feel the amount of work expected of them is unreasonable while at the same time feeling a high level of responsibility and worry about meeting these job responsibilities" (p.6). Other research has shown that teachers taking part in inclusion without the appropriate resources were very likely to then view inclusion as, "'too much to ask' of them" (Minke et al., 1996, p.179).

In this study, one participant introduced concern not only about her own workload, but also about the workload of the classroom teacher. She mentioned a worry about further agitating the already busy lives of their colleagues, summarizing her opinion as, "they're busy and I'm busy." When asked why she thinks her quantity of collaboration isn't sufficient, answered, "I'd like to think it's because they're really busy and it's hard to get to do everything" (Participant 4). A second special education teacher wrote:

> I don't know if special education teachers meet on a daily basis but
> it is very difficult to do when teachers are involved in so many things.
> (Participant 2; Journal)

Robinson (1991) would agree. She would categorize such concerns described by the participants in this study as structural barriers to collaboration, and point out that all teachers are very involved with direct student instruction. These demands, then, leave little time for teachers to either meet or plan together.

Another special education teacher summarized her workload as:

> I think they're just giving you more and more and more and more.

(Participant 5)

One participant angrily declared that, even disregarding time for the demands of collaboration with classroom teachers, she is already spending evenings and weekends preparing for teaching. The tasks that are part of the special education teacher workload beyond teaching, including preparation, testing and course development, prompted another teacher to react that, "I'm never short of work; never ever short of work [laughter]" (Participant 6). These obstacles are similar to those found in another provincial study of special education and classroom teacher collaboration. Bedi (1996) found that significant obstacles to teachers collaboration centred on time, training, support, materials, and work load.

One participant in this study brought up the further issue of staffing in small schools as a concern. She said:

> You might only have one student in a grade, but you still have to
> prepare for that student. (Participant 7)

Another special education teacher wondered if the complex demands of multigrade classrooms are another contributor to busyness. She wrote in her journal:

> ... it is often difficult to find time and opportunity to collaborate with
> [the] teacher. [I] Find that last minute is often the usual thing as of
> late with this situation. (Participant 2)

Yet another participant expressed a view that perhaps the lack of experience among new teachers is also a constraint. New teachers, according to this special

education teacher, may not have the amount of materials collected and prepared that more experienced teachers do. Again, this has an impact on workload, further minimizing any potential time that may have been made available for collaboration.

In addition to the overall busyness in the special education teacher role, the time needed for completing assessments is also significant to the workload of special education teachers, according to the participants in this study. Under the mandate of school-based comprehensive testing, special education teachers are now expected to complete testing, write reports, and make recommendations from their conclusions (Program Specialist Memo, 22 November 2000). One participant responded to these types of time demands for assessments with:

> Now where am I going to get time to do this .... are they going to
>
> create time for me in the day? [laughter] (Participant 2)

Special education teachers in this study expressed concerns that these time-consuming assessments can easily take up time that is intended to be used for preparation. Consequently, they end up being taken home for completion after school hours. Even further complicating issues related to the time that participants can commit to completing assessment tasks are the realities that, first, tests are not readily available, and also, that referral professionals are often not readily available for assessments to be carried out beyond the school level. Reflecting on these issues, one special educator suggested in her journal:

> Want a possibility? ? All schools have all their own assessment tools.

So when a child is experiencing difficulties, I don't have to wait

weeks to have them tested! *Big dreams*, uh? (Participant 1; Journal)

On a more positive note, one special education teacher did mention an

appreciation for the assistance she has been provided with from the guidance office in

taking part of the workload for testing. Even more optimistically, the existence of a

seemly uncommon initiative that actually allows for assessment time to be regularly

scheduled into the instructional day of a special educator was praised by one participant.

Beyond the periodic formal assessment of students, paperwork seems to abound,

as well, in the preparation of yearly individualized programming for students with special

needs. Participants remarked that they end up often being responsible for writing ISSPs,

being the ISSP manager, completing referrals for students that are not yet on the special

education caseload, as well as for the development of alternate courses. After somehow

fitting these tasks into a the role of a special education teacher, along with preparation,

instruction and assessments, one teacher wondered if:

> ... all the effort you put into doing an ISSP is worth it, because it sort
> of seems to be more formality than it does actually benefiting
> anything? .... What I'm saying for this child, it's only for somebody
> else to take over my position next year, and totally disagree with what
> I say. (Participant 3)

As the special education teachers in this study pointed out, one study of Nova

Scotia teachers also specified that escalated expectations for paperwork completion and

the, "developing, implementing, reviewing and evaluating Individual Student Support Plans," as high stressors on teachers (cited in Younghusband, 2000, p.1).

Most participants agreed that scheduling in order to combine students, usually a necessity to service all students in a special education caseload, can create instructional dilemmas for the teachers involved. First of all, only two special education teachers in this study were assigned as full-time special eductors. The part-time nature of the typical participant inherently leads to difficulties with scheduling appropriate instructional periods to meet the needs of various classroom teachers. Certainly, attempting to discover ways to best meet the demands of multiple schedules simultaneously seems an overwhelming task apart from the constraints of the limited availability of the special education teacher during the instructional day.

They argued that, if you combine students, you end up with a group of students that may be widely divergent in needs and programming; the same complex situation that already exists in the context of the inclusive classroom. They are concerned that they are being directed to make their schedules more compact in order to service more students when they are already unable to solve the complexities of scheduling for both teaching in regular classes, and providing direct instruction for all their students.

Special education teachers in this study were also wary of scheduling groups of students with behavioural difficulties together, or ones that are very divergent in age or grade level. One special education teacher responded:

> ... there's no such thing as them being in there and they're all on the

one level, because they're *not* .... it's not like they're all on the one

level and you can go in and concentrate the one period on the one

thing, because you can't. They're all doing their own thing.

(Participant 6)

Participants in such situations found themselves unable to focus on a unified lesson

amidst such diversity. Instead, they ended up dividing their attention, rotating their time

between students and subjects within that group.

One special education teacher pointed out that, if she grouped students, she ended

up being able to provide only services in the special education classroom, rather than

having the option of teaching in the regular classroom environment along with classroom

teachers. Obviously, it is impossible to schedule a group of students from different grade

levels, or even different classes, for instruction at the same, and also choose to teach

collaboratively.

Finally, a participant conceded that, although she was fortunately able to group

her students with special needs by grade level, she specified that this has been possible

because of a limited caseload. At the same time, she agreed that grouping itself may be

incompatible with how she envisions inclusion:

...if you have a large number of students, you can't be using inclusion

in [one grade] and if you have groups of [two different grades]

together .... So if you have grouping, then you *can't* use inclusion

like we want to, or like I'd want to. (Participant 5)

Talking Together

Although it is obvious that teachers have only a limited amount of time for collaboration, they do find ways to communicate. When special education teachers and classroom teachers do talk together, they may share a common focus, need or even style of communication. By looking at such patterns of typical collaboration, the characteristics of collaboration can be identified. These characteristics, in turn, indicate what participants feel are their priorities in talking together. The typical characteristics of special education teachers in this study can be categorized by looking at the "what," "where," "when," "why" and "how."

One special education teacher reflected on an example of talking together with a classroom teacher:

> I felt that the meeting went well and I also feel positive that student
> B will benefit from the collaboration from teacher B and myself. By
> both of us teaching as a team I think the student will respond more
> positively. I can also learn a lot from teacher B .... By the both of us
> working together as a team we can better isolate student B's learning
> difficulties and focus on this difficulty and help the student succeed.
> (Participant 7; Journal)

All of the special education teachers in this study provided some type of rationale to illustrate how they typically spend time talking with classroom teachers about students

with special needs.

What.

Every participant spent some collaboration time focussing on both the students involved, and the programs that supported these students with special needs. When they talked about their students, the special education teachers in this study reported that one more specific focus was talking specifically about arising issues to be resolved. They looked for and shared advice; as well, they shared and gathered knowledge about the characteristics of the students in their care. They also spent time conferring about assessments. A special educator provided one example of a student-focussed collaboration:

> How was "Joe" today? I did this with Joe today; what do you think about it? Or the classroom teacher may come up to me and say, Do you find that Joe is not being attentive lately? Or, and, Why do you think that is? And, for example, we have a student here that lately we find is [pause] sort of losing his motivation to do work .... We often discuss, Well, why do you think that is? And so we talked about maybe it's because he's realizing that he's doing things lower than his peers, and he may be getting tormented by his peers, and so then we sit down and we try to discuss some ways, Well, maybe we can get him more *involved* in the regular curriculum. So, just things like that

every day. (Participant 1)

When they discussed issues that needed to be settled, classroom teachers and special education teachers in this study often engaged in problem-solving processes, asking one another for help in resolving a situation. One special educator wrote:

> We discuss the students in her class quite a bit and generally try to
> work together on solving problems that arise with these students.
> (Participant 4; Journal)

During such discussions, the participants indicated that the classroom teacher tended to ask questions directed towards the special education teacher. In doing this, they seemed to be hoping to receive feedback about how to approach decision-making.   Classroom teachers may approach them about a student needing to be assessed, or to seek out information about *Pathways*. Some examples of inquiries that came from classroom teachers were recalled as:

> ...what do you suggest, or what do you think of, or how would you,
> or would you do this? (Participant 2)

> What do I do with this child? Do I give him the test over? What do
> I do? (Participant 6)

> Do I read it to him? .... Is it fair if I read it to him? (Participant 6)

These special educators reported sharing problem situations and brainstorming different

possibilities for resolving issues through talking with classroom teachers. Together,

teachers shared ideas, deliberated solutions, and made choices.

During and beyond problem-solving situations, teachers also offered suggestions,

directives, and provided assistance and advice to each other.

> ... you can work through some of the things, if you sit down and
> you can talk about it. (Participant 6)

Only one special education teacher mentioned that she does check back with classroom

teachers to see if mutual decisions are actually being carried out in the classroom

environment.

The characteristics of individual students were often discussed. Teachers engaged

in general chat about a student, considered their areas of trouble, behaviour, strengths and

needs, or just met for a more general update on how that student might be coping in

different environments.

As well as focusing on the students with special needs themselves, special

education teachers in this study often had an equal focus on individual programming,

when they talked together with classroom teachers. Again, teachers discussed issues and

provided ideas, assistance and directives to each other. This shared information about

programming was sometimes intended for immediate use; for example:

> So I just consult with the teacher then, just outside her door about
> what they were doing .... I'll find out really quickly what he's done in
> that class, and we'll come to my classroom and then I'll just sit with

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him and we'll work on what he's supposed to be completed.
(Participant 3)

At other times, they included longer-term issues such as upcoming assignments, curriculum outcomes, or programs decisions; for example:

... now I don't do this every week, but I like to keep up to date with what students are doing in the regular classroom, or where they might be having trouble, or what they're doing right now, or what assignments they're working on, so that at least I can have an idea of what I can work on next, or what I can work on now. (Participant 2)

Typical classroom testing emerged as an area of concern during collaboration with many classroom teachers, according to the participants. A few special educators indicated that teachers talking together questioned and discussed the methods and contents of tests, and well as supports during testing.

Finally, the use of shared materials was sometimes addressed when teachers collaborated together, according to the participants. In order to support student programming, classroom teachers sometimes provided materials for special education teachers. Conversely, they also requested that particular materials be prepared to meet a particular need:

Look, I have this, this and this. If you think it might be useful with the student, go right ahead and use it. (Participant 2)

Where.

The special education teachers in this study indicated that they met and conversed with classroom teachers equally often in two contexts: the staffroom and the classrooms of the collaborating teachers. Although teachers tended to talk in twosomes, they reported that such conversations in the staffroom sometimes extended to a discussion involving other staff members, as well.

In the regular classroom, participants reported spontaneously dropping in to collaborate; on the other hand, if the teachers were teaching together, they also talked together during actual instructional time. Although these two locales were favoured, one teacher did point out the potential for classroom disruption if collaboration happens during the instructional day.

A few teachers also indicated collaborating in the school halls, for example, just outside a classroom door. An equal number also described collaboration outside of the school environment completely, if they happened to be travelling to work with a classroom teacher, or in their own homes.

In some cases, these more informal types of talking together in common areas may raise some ethical concerns. For example, other students may overhear confidential discussions, or teachers not involved in the programming for a particular student may become aware of similarly confidential information.

When.

Preparation periods might seem to be a logical time for collaborating teachers to talk together. In reality, though, the special education teachers in this study indicated that they are provided with either no or very few preparation periods. The maximum number of preparation periods was given by one teacher who has four periods every seven days. In consequence of this lack of non-instructional time, no participants disclosed using their preparation time, if they were provided with any, to collaborate with classroom teachers.

The participants indicated that even if preparation periods were provided, they would still be needed for preparation, as of course they are intended. Even if they did choose to use them for collaboration, they are difficult to coordinate simultaneously with the preparation periods of collaborating teachers. As one special educator summarized, "when you get a prep period, most everyone, [laughter] somebody else, is working" (Participant 3). Robinson (1991) believes that collaboration will not succeed if teachers are expected to collaborate outside of school time or during prep periods. She asserts that, "For collaborative programs to succeed, schools must be structured differently" (p.445).

An equal number of special education teachers in this study did indeed indicate that they typically talk together after school as often as they collaborate during the school day, because, as one teacher noted, "there's really no time during the day to do it." (Participant 4). A few teachers also reported collaborating during recess, lunch hour, before school and outside of school time on the weekends.

Participants indicated that they also vary on how often they collaborate, which

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seemed dependent on the needs of the involved students and teachers, as well as the nature of their relationship as part of a collaborating team. Some participants collaborated continuously, but others talked with only a particular classroom teacher. Some others collaborated more or less with a given teacher, depending if a student's programming objectives were identified as a shared responsibility. Some teachers were satisfied with how often they collaborate, and others reported dissatisfaction.

These inconsistencies in collaboration practice between teachers may be related to the fact that not one special education teacher in this study has been provided with any time for collaboration purposes. Without any formal provision for collaboration time, talking together with classroom teachers may perhaps be seen as yet another optional addition to an already overburdened role. One experienced research team asserted that, "Without exception, every school- or district-level team with whom we have worked has indicated a need to establish legitimate time to consult" (West & Idol, 1990, p.29).

Why.

Students with special needs often end up working with different teachers and community professionals, depending on their service needs. Within schools, they often end up not only working with more than one teacher, but also in more than one classroom. As a consequence of this range of environments, all of the special education teachers in this study routinely used conversation to bring about consistency between the different school settings. As an example of this focus, one participant strongly stated:

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I think it's actually *impossible* to do justice to a child's education

without understanding how that child is performing and behaving

in all other aspects of his education as well. And to do that you

need to be constantly in collaboration with the regular classroom

teacher.

... everyone that is involved in that student's life should know

what the others are doing, in terms of that child's education. And

I think that makes it much smoother, and the children receives

more benefits from their education when you do that.

(Participant 1)

Special education teachers also found it helpful to collaborate in order to develop

a mutual understanding about each student, to consider and use common instructional

practices and to link programming among environments. Participants also reported using

collaboration to create further acceptance of students and their needs by the classroom

teacher.

One participant summarized his belief about the benefits of consistency:

... what one teacher's doing certainly leads into what another should

be doing, and it's also... more beneficial for the kid, because you're

not confusing the kid with two ideologies; you're coming in on the

same sheet for that kid. (Participant 3)

However, another was of the opinion that the different ideas students may come in contact with when working with more than one teacher are also a benefit to students.

The second most compelling reason that special education teachers in this study provided for collaboration was for the purpose of gathering information related to students and their programs. A few special education teachers also found that collaboration saved time, and eased their workload in other areas. They reported an appreciation for the habit of sharing of ideas, preparation and materials. For example:

> I just think it would help out a lot more if you work together and you
>
> figure out something *together* instead of just sitting down and one
>
> person's doing all the work. (Participant 4)

The only potentially negative reason to collaborate that was provided by a participant was centred on potential directives. He was concerned about the possibility of teachers being compelled to collaborate:

> It might look like collaboration on the outside, but when it comes
>
> down to it, it's actually anything but .... I guess it's still collaboration;
>
> you just agreed ... to disagree or something? (Participant 3)

How.

The 'one-legged consultation,' is one term that has been coined referring to collaboration practices that occur spontaneously. The parties involved in such conversations may chat in the halls, for instance, with one leg casually hiked up .

Alternatively, such unplanned chats may also be labelled as 'vertical consultations,' primarily because those involved are standing together in an environment outside the school (Dettmer, Thurston, Dyck, 1993).

A unanimous agreement existed among special education teachers in this study who described the quality of their collaboration. They reflected on neither regularly nor formally scheduling collaboration times to talk together. Some examples of the nature of a typical form a collaboration took were:

> I *happen* to run into (Participant 2),
>
> It just comes out of the blue or whatever? Somebody could say something and then somebody will say something else. Before you know it, you're in a deep conversation about a certain child (Participant 2),
>
> ... just stop and comment (Participant 6).

One participant wrote that, although she does try to collaborate with one classroom teacher every week at a set time, she felt dissatisfied with the time in the week when the conversations take place, as well as with the amount of time that is spent together. More typically, they characterized their talks together with words that pointed to spontaneity and informality. They used language similar to the following examples to characterize the nature of how they talk together:

> ... pop into a teacher's classroom (Participant 1),
>
> ... have an informal chat (Participant 1),

... you might mention, say, "Joe"... (Participant 1),

... I think there's a good time to have a little chat (Participant 2),

... mini-meeting or a little discussion (Participant 2),

... mention back and forth to each other (Participant 6).

Overall, the special education teachers most frequently referred to talking together with classroom teachers to converse about students and their programs. They talked together in the staffroom and the classroom; they collaborated during instructional time and after school; they spoke together to create a consistency between environments; and finally, they described their conversations as spontaneous and informal.

The literature suggests many 'shoulds' but very few 'hows' in the

discussion of consultation between Regular and Special Education

teachers and the roles of each party. With the widespread adoption

of inclusive and integrative practice, the time has definitely arrive to

negotiate classrooms as shared space involving students, educators,

and parents (Dwyer & Patterson, 2000, p.55).

Power issues exist in many relationships, and certainly do exist within school

environments, between students, teachers and administrators. More specifically, such

power struggles also exist between collaborating classroom teachers and special

education teachers. These can affect their working relationships. Power issues can be

identified by looking at special educator teacher roles in collaboration, directives from the

hierarchy of those supervising teachers, and special education teacher knowledge.

Roles

Many researchers suggest that successful collaboration is dependent on how the

defined roles of both the special education teacher and the classroom teacher are able to

function together. For example, "The relationship between the special education teacher

and the classroom teacher is a complex one fraught with several types of serious conflict," is one opinion of collaborative relationships (Glatthorn, 1990, p.29). Another acknowledges that such relationships as the most crucial ones, if collaboration is to succeed in inclusive classrooms (Stanovich, 1996).

A special education teacher in this study wrote her agreement:

> Teachers working *together* is much more effective than teachers
> dictating to one another. I feel it's very important to establish a good
> rapport with each teacher and to make one another feel comfortable
> in expressing their beliefs and their concerns. (Participant 1: Journal)

One study shows that teachers often, "felt unsure of where they fit in the local educational system, are not clear who is 'captaining the ship,' and feel considerable conflict between what they are expected to do and what they think is right or proper" (Younghusband, 2000, p.6). More specifically, a second study by the same author indicated the existence of role confusion between special education and classroom teacher pairs (Younghusband, 1999). Some parallel inhibiting factors to collaboration include resistance, personality, role parity, overpowering expectations and insufficient support from classroom teachers. In addition, Huefner (1988, cited in Kauffman & Trent, 1991) indicated that one of many restraints on collaboration is a model that puts teachers in the roles of aides or tutors. In this study, one special education teacher cited a bold example of such role disparity. Already a qualified teacher but completing a specialization, she found that she was perceived by a classroom teacher this way:

... she referred to me as his [the student's] *tutor* .... I was really upset

because I was thinking, they're thinking of me as a tutor, and .... here

I am, a trained teacher. (Participant 2)

Another example of a role boundary issues came from the same special educator:

Well, he saw the regular classroom teacher as his teacher. I wasn't

his teacher when I was in the regular classroom. And he would

actually say to me, "Go away. I don't want you here. You are not my

teacher." He would actually say that." (Participant 2)

Robinson (1991), reflecting on a similar issue, recommended that collaboration cannot be

effective unless educators can experience role parity, believing that all teachers are

intended for all students. "The goal of collaborative consultation is to better meet the

needs of diverse students, both handicapped and nonhandicapped, in as integrated an

educational setting as possible" (p.442). Another participant provided a further example

of unsure roles:

It's just that we have teachers that are very experienced, and

sometimes I wonder if [pause] what I have to say is as important or

whatever [laugh]? So I sort of keep my mouth shut a lot more than

perhaps I should. (Participant 6)

Until such roles boundaries are made clear, special education teachers will

continue to be placed in an awkward position. For example, the cooperating teachers in

one reflective study compare such boundary awkwardness to moving into someone else's

home, space or territory: "I feel somewhat out of place in another teacher's classroom. I keep thinking 'ours' but not feeling it yet" (Salend et al., 1997, p.5). Researcher Glatthorn (1990) also cites that a dissonance in perceptions of competence of each other in different teaching roles may create conflict and a negative impact on students with special needs. The students, "feel like neutral noncombatants caught between two warring factions" (p.30).

Conversely, special education teachers working in their own special education classrooms seem to have a greater independence. If they carry out withdrawal of students to the special education classroom, the special education teacher is then a solitary teacher, if only temporarily. If there is only a single teacher, then, any need for deferral to another teacher's style, instruction, experience or needs is basically eliminated. One special educator felt:

> I think that both of us would be more comfortable working on our own that way.

> They're mostly out and they're *my* students on *my* course, so I really don't have to collaborate as much with them [the classroom teachers].
> (Participant 3)

It is consequently not surprising that special education teachers would desire some time to be "the" teacher for "their" students. On a positive note, this participant provided an example of a positive relationship that has developed between himself and one

classroom teacher. The classroom teacher indicated that, "I don't even mind telling you what I think you should be doing [laughter]." This type of casual conversation, though, could potentially create a negative relationship, if teachers are wary about the distinctions of their collaborative roles.

Another examples of role confusion was put forth by a participant who said that she was not comfortable being expected to monitor other classroom teachers. She reflected:

> And of course there's nothing I, as a special education teacher, I don't think there's anything else I can do. Even if you're collaborating; even if you go to them, and say, "Well, did you try this, did you try that, did you try this?" And they might say, "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes." How am I to know that they tried it? I'm not in the classroom .... I'm not in there; I don't know what they did during that time. But I mean, I do tell them? and I do say, "Well I think she needs this, or he needs this." In the end, I'm only a teacher, and I'm only, one of their colleagues, and, there's only so much you can do! [laughter]. (Participant 6)

She finds it difficult to deal with being a new teacher in a system that does not always follow the prescribed procedures, explaining:

> And of course, I can't go through to every single teacher to see, are there any children on this, what are you doing here, what are you

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doing? .... You just can't do that. I mean, it's their responsibility.

(Participant 6)

The special education teacher, then, may be in a position of knowledge, but without the authority to carry through its implementation, making role definitions awkward.

As well as working out role boundaries with collaborating classroom teachers, special education teachers may also need to build new relationships with other staff members. In this study, the more novice teachers, new either to the teacher profession or a particular school, reflected that it takes time to work out staff relationships. One participant gave an example:

> The homeroom teacher may not mind you coming in and suggesting
> things, and there's someone else who doesn't want you to tell them
> how to do their job. And you don't want to do that anyway .... I'm
> new in my position at this school ... it took me a while to figure out
> who I could say what to. (Participant 3)

Beyond the classroom, problems can also arise. One special education teacher described a situation where he was making decisions without the comprehensive knowledge of a student's day-to-day behaviour that a classroom teacher might have. In consequence, he then felt:

> So I finally learned, that, from now on, when the students ask me, I'll
> say, "Well, I'll get back to you." (Participant 3)

Collaborative teaching pairs interviewed by Salend et al. (1997) identified

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concerns about classroom management roles when they began their collaborative relationships. In this study, issues related to classroom management similarly emphasize the existence of role boundary problems. While some participants reported feeling comfortable supporting the academic work of students with special needs within the regular classroom environment, they did not seem comfortable making classroom management decisions on the basis of equality with the classroom teacher.

The special education teachers in this study who spoke about classroom management agreed that they usually defer these everyday decisions to the classroom teacher. For example, "generally my comment is, go ask your teacher [pause] first," (Participant 4) and, "I'd rather you ask Mr. this one or Mrs. that one those questions" (Participant 5). Perhaps, though, classroom management issues may not be an indication of an inherently negative role boundary. Another research team believes that behaviour management is one part of group instruction on which the general education teacher should indeed focus: "Regardless of how well prepared a general educator is, the focus of general education practice is on *the group*" (Zigmond & Baker, 1995, p.249).

> The special education teacher is often more concerned with one student and how learning might be individualized; the classroom teacher worries about the entire class and how overall achievement might be advanced. The special education teacher focuses on academic skills and content. Neither of these frames is inherently better than the other; however, they yield different pictures of the

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classroom. (Glatthorn, 1990, p.30)

Salend et al. (1997) suggest that examining the language of teachers can be indicative of relationships and Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck (1993) note the benefit of examining word meanings. Therefore, an examination of the language and meaning of the words special education teachers used in this study is appropriate.

Overall, participants rarely used the word "teach" to describe their active role as special educators. Although most participants also used the word "we" to describe actions, such as "we did," or "we think," and did note the existence of team-based decision-making in some instances, these terms are used far less often than those which seemed to refer to a secondary role in the classroom environment. Almost every participant, for example, used a variation of the word "help" to describe their collaborative role. Words with a similar connotation, such as "monitor," "assist," "provide direction," "explain," and "working with" were also very common.

Even the use of the term "your teacher," again suggests a disparate role for the special education teacher working in the classroom. As one teacher from Salend et al. reflected, "I wonder if the children view one of us in more authority. I think parents do" (1997, p.6). During interviews for this study, special educators sometimes relied on similar terms to describe the classroom teacher, such as, "the teacher," "regular teacher," or the "regular classroom." One teacher reflected in her journal:

> I really have no contribution here about what is being done. Both
> students that I work with are remedial students, completing the

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regular curriculum, to which I am providing support. So that teacher
basically just tells me what she wants me to do, which is just fine
with me, because it is much less stressful than coming up with things
to do on your own. (Participant 1; Journal)

A few participants mentioned parental roles as a contributing factor to role
boundary issues, especially when framed in a team model. One participant understood
her team role as an advisor, without the authority of making final decisions, while another
mentions the difficulty of even meeting with parents. A third indicates that, again, it is
difficult to know what is being implemented at home; but, on the other hand:

... parents are lot more informed and they know what their kids need,
or they think they do, and they try their best to be what their kids
need. (Participant 5)

Philpott (2001) found that researchers have noted the increasing involvement of parents
as knowledgeable, powerful advocates for special education rights, and that such
involvement is encouraged by school professionals. Similarly, Dwyer & Patterson (2000)
assert that the both parents and students should be dominant members of the team that
works to meet the individual needs of students with special needs.

Perhaps, as we are empowering teams to make decisions, we are simultaneously
disempowering the special education teacher to be an authority in a specialized area of
teaching. Yet West & Idol (1990) would argue that true collaboration creates mutual
empowerment:

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As various collaborating groups work together they create something very powerful, called mutual empowerment. Rather than one expert causing another expert to feel threatened, disinterested, uninvolved, defeated, defensive, and so forth, this process allows people to own problems together and to pool their various sources of expertise to better solve the presenting problem. In this context, mutual empowerment is a major goal of educational collaboration. (p.24).

Even amidst these difficulties inherent in defining and carrying out the roles of collaboration, Howells (2000) does exhort special educators to be patient with their colleagues. In her personal experience, "Never, in the history of the school, had another educator entered their domain. Never had they shared responsibility with anyone else" (p.160). Even more optimistic, is that belief that, "A collaborative consultation approach is a natural system for nurturing harmonious staff interactions" (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993, p.21).

Directives

As is typically inherent in professions directly under government authority, every teacher also operates under the hierarchical authorities of the provincial government, the school board, and their local school administration. Each of these authority levels provide supervision to teachers, an authority which often appears in the form of directives mandating teachers to carry out their profession in a particular manner. Such directives

can either support or hinder collaboration.

When sharing her ideas about the issues of collaboration, one special education teacher in this study maintained:

> I think most of the problems are at a higher level than the school level.
>
> I find it hard sometimes when people say you should do this, this and this with kids, but I always feel very strongly that what you should do depends on the individual student and the individual situation, and what works for one student, what may work for twenty students, may not work for the twenty-first student. (Participant 1)

In Newfoundland and Labrador, provincial government policies provide special education teachers with special education models, roles, and procedures. These directives can, at times, constrain the judgment of individual teachers, according to special education teachers in this study. For example, one participant stated, "...they don't trust my judgement." (Participant 2) She reflected that, rather allowing flexibility to meet the individual needs of students, the provincial government is constricting teachers by increasing their responsibilities and by strongly recommending specific programs. To complicate matters, the basis of for students even qualifying for special education services is limited as well as the quantity of such contact with special educators.

At the school board level, directives can also affect special education teacher

collaboration, according to participants. One participant indicated that she was informed by the school board that her schedule would have to change, in order to support more group scheduling: "We were basically told by the school board that next year is going to have to change, change completely" (Participant 2). A second participant reported concerns about the school board's authority to change job assignments, perhaps forcing teachers to work in positions for which they didn't apply, and in which they are not comfortable. He expanded on his views this way:

> So, there are barriers [to collaboration], the professional people,
> there's some with the students themselves, and there's also
> barriers I guess as well sometimes, with [pause, reluctance] like
> rules, I've learned what to call them, that are handed down from
> the top, telling you that you must do that and you must have that
> this done, and then you have to impose it no matter what. And
> that steps on people's toes as well. (Participant 3)

A third participant indicated that she has an issue with board-level directives sometimes being different from the attitudes of teachers who are actually in the field. She mused:

> Then you have those other people that are not higher than you, their
> qualifications are different than what yours are, and they're the ones
> that tested him, and they're telling you, well, what you can do for him
> .... It gets really confusing then. [laughter] Right, cause you can't do
> this and you can't do that, but still, you have to give him what he

needs, but then you still want him to pass. Oh it's really [laughter], it gets really confusing. Some of the teachers sometimes get kind of frustrated with it, right, but you have to try to work with it. (Participant 6)

Directives from the administrative levels of local schools can also impact collaboration. According to researchers, inadequate support from administration is one type of external barrier that can occur when collaboration is attempted (Robinson, 1991; Huefner cited in Hallahan & Kauffman, 1991). Other researchers declare that collaboration should not be forced upon teachers: "Teachers who are accustomed to being in charge and making virtually all the day-to-day decisions cannot be ordered to go out and consult and collaborate with each other to any meaningful degree" (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993, p.5).

According to the special education teachers in this study, school-based directives mostly centred on issues related to the local practices of special education. For example, one special educator in this study was told that, "This is how we do it in the school. These students are being pulled out and they're going to your classroom" (Participant 3). He pointed out that forcing teachers to teach together could also have negative or positive effects:

... it could be a positive thing, because you kind of grow on each other, and you get used to me being there or whatever, right? But if you're really, *really*, uncomfortable with it, I think it could make it

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worse. (Participant 3)

With a similar view, Phillips & McCullough (1990) assert that administrative authorities at both the school and district levels do impact collaboration. At the district level, administrators can assist with an appropriate philosophy suitable for collaboration, promote collaboration programs, and be involved with program delivery and training for the implementation of a collaboration program (Zins et al. cited in Phillips & McCullough, 1990).

Knowledge

A commonly quoted adage links together knowledge and power. With the current national and provincial shortage of teachers, school boards may be faced with hiring candidates with less than the expected or desired knowledge in the area of special education. One participant noted that, in her case, the school administration was pleased, but surprised, to have a fully trained special education teacher on staff. Perhaps this surprise, more than anything, reflects the current state of special education qualifications in the area of this study.

The special education teachers in this study reported a range of knowledge and training in special education. Some related being fully trained, qualified, experienced special education teachers with the second highest level of teaching certification; others disclosed themselves as inexperienced teachers with no formal special education qualifications. Indeed, the majority of participants were not fully qualified special

education teachers.

All of the special education teachers in this study did indicate that they have completed at least one elective course related to special education, though, and all have at least a level five certification out of a possible seven levels. Almost half of the special education teachers in this study are in their first year of teaching special education. The majority have four or less years of teaching in this specialty area; almost all have seven or fewer years of teaching experience in any area. A few participants were in the process of working towards special education qualifications; others have no plans to do so. This is not unexpected, provincially: Younghusband (1999) confirms that no teachers, apart from those being trained in special education, are required to complete any special education preservice training. Thus, if general educators are filling specialist positions, special education training can be assumed to be inadequate in such cases.

All special education teachers interviewed, though, have been provided with at least a two-day *Pathways* in-service, or have been taught *Pathways* through academic training. Learning about *Pathways* has provided special education teachers with knowledge about this provincial model for special education services. For example, one participant indicated that, "especially myself that currently right now doesn't have a special education degree or diploma, I do usually find those types of workshops helpful." From another perspective, a special education teacher university-trained in *Pathways*, was quite vehement about some difficulties in our system:

> I can't imagine coming out, into the system, as a special education

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teacher, not have your degree, not knowing *Pathways*, and how
overwhelming that would be.

I just can't imagine doing it, not without knowledge of *Pathways*. I
can't, I don't know how you'd do it. (Participant 6)

No participants have taken part in a preservice or inservice course or seminar
exclusively focussed on collaboration, yet, they all reported practising some form of
collaboration. Such a lack of training is considered to be a an inhibitor of role
implementation (Voltz et al., 1994), and fits in with what teachers are saying about work
overload in a study by Younghusband (2000). Younghusband (2000) found that a
majority of teachers feel that they are often, usually, or most of the time expected to
perform tasks without appropriate training.

Considering these issues related to a common lack of adequate knowledge the
special education teachers in this study have shared, it cannot be surprising if they have
difficulty fulfilling many areas of the special education teacher role, including and beyond
collaboration. Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to the dilemma of attracting
teaching staff, and simultaneously demanding adequate specialized training.

Wishes

We do it because together, through collaboration, we can solve problems that alone, we cannot solve. Through collaboration, we can improve situations that alone, we cannot improve. Through collaboration, we can better meet the challenges that lie before us in meeting the needs of all learners. As educators, we have willingly taken on the task of making an impact on the present and the future. We often pride ourselves on the fact that we can make a difference in the lives of individual students, as well as society as a whole. Through collaboration, we can provide support for ourselves, and set an example for our students. We demonstrate, by example, that each of us is unique but important, and together we are much greater than the sum of us all. (Howells, 2000, p.160)

Inconsistencies often exist between actual teaching practices and what are considered to be ideal teaching practices. Collaboration, as well, may be carried out differently in reality, than ideally. In one study of teacher roles, Voltz et al. (1994) discovered that discrepancies exist not only between the roles that teachers reported

carrying out. compared to the roles these same teachers felt should ideally be carried out, but also between their actual collaboration and what they perceived as ideal collaboration. Accordingly, the special education teachers in this study would like to see changes made to their current collaboration practices, in order to work towards satisfying their perceived ideals. In the future, they would like to see the implementation of planned collaboration time, collaboration inservicing, and interpersonal skills training, as shown in Figure 2, a model of their ideal special education practices for collaboration.

Figure 2. Ideal special education teacher collaboration

Figure 2. Ideal special education teacher collaboration
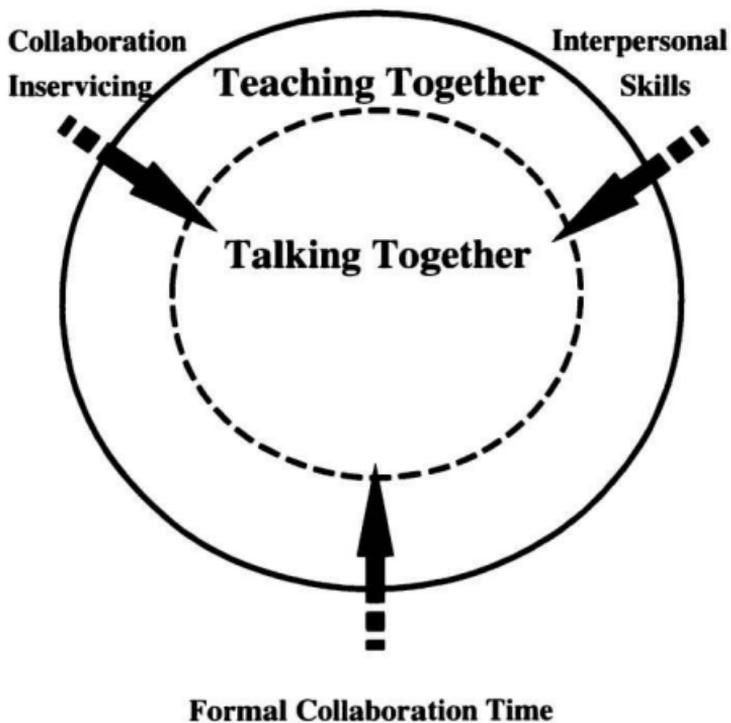
The participants in this study agreed that, as one area of change, they would like some planned, pre-set time set aside to talk with teachers, preferably during the instructional day. One participant's attitude toward planned collaboration was:

> It would be beneficial to set a particular time aside once a week
> to discuss student progress with teachers. Even once a week or
> every couple of weeks would be great. (Participant 2; Journal)

Later on, though, she reflected:

> Or is that too much I wonder? I know some special education
> teachers schedule meetings on a regular basis. Is that asking too
> much? (Participant 2; Journal)

Zigmond & Baker (1995) would disagree that it might be asking too much. *"Special education should be planned,"* (p. 249) they declare, as part of their vision for the inclusive classroom. If teachers are going to work together collaboratively, they must plan together as well: time together is a necessity. Phillips & McCullough would also agree with a more formalized approach to collaboration; according to their reflections on research: "Consultation which develops informally, without structure and predictability, generally proves ineffective and shortsighted" (1990, p.294). Similarly, Robinson (1991) recommends that, "To use only precious and limited planning time for collaboration, or time before and after the school day, is not acceptable. Collaboration under these conditions would be too burdensome to be truly successful over the long-term" (p.445).

Locally, one study recommended both the allocation of time for collaboration and

professional development for collaboration (Bedi, 1996). Although a few participants in this study did feel that either their experiences or their pre-service training have provided them with an adequate knowledge of collaboration, the majority of special education teachers similarly indicated that they would benefit from collaboration training, preferably through some type of professional in-service. Robinson (1991) shares a similar view to the participants: "For teachers to be effective in collaborative endeavours, they need knowledge and skills in the process of collaboration and knowledge and skills in effective teaching practices" (p.448).

The participants indicated that collaboration training focussing on working with parents, collaboration techniques, *Pathways*, or the special education teacher role would also be welcomed. A few indicated that more informal gatherings where teachers could meet and discuss collaboration with others in similar situations, or some type of pre-service training for all teachers in the area of collaboration, would be agreeable alternatives.

Robinson (1991) cites West & Cannon's (1998) comprehensive list of skills that are necessary for consultation. Similar to what the needs of special education teachers in this study see as areas for further skill-building, their taxonomy includes a range of interpersonal skills, sorted into categories such as interactive communication and collaborative problem-solving. Another team of authors recommends that consulting teachers need to relate well, communicate well, encourage relationships, and be tolerant, adaptable and flexible (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993). Likewise, the participants in

this study expressed a desire to take part in further training focussing on the interpersonal skills that are necessary to implement effective collaboration. Some examples of skills they gave as areas of concern were conflict management, dealing with resistance, using assertiveness, communicating respect, and having confidence in decisions. They would also like help learning how to clearly communicate their availability for special education assistance to teachers and students, and, in addition they would like assistance in knowing how to request support from other teachers.

If schools and school systems plan to practice effective inclusion, the demands of its implementation in turn necessitate teacher collaboration; teacher collaboration, in turn, necessitates the provisions of time and training that special educators clearly require. If a commitment to inclusion is desired, a like commitment to supporting collaboration needs to be put in place.

Conclusions

Summary

Service Delivery

This study of the special education teacher collaboration in one district of Newfoundland and Labrador found that the special education teacher participants supported inclusion and articulated its many benefits. The students with special needs that they teach remained in their inclusive regular classroom environments for the majority of the school day.

To support inclusion, the special education teachers took part in two types of collaboration. Talking together with classroom teachers is one way that special education teachers collaborated with classroom teachers to provide indirect special education services. Less commonly, collaboration was carried out through direct service delivery, when special education teachers taught together with classroom teachers. Although the participants found benefits to this type of collaboration, they nevertheless typically preferred a different type of direct service delivery. Instead of teaching together with classroom teachers, they tended to withdraw students from the regular classroom environment, typically for reasons related to individualized programs.

Themes

This study found that three major themes impacted on the day-to-day collaboration of special education teachers with classroom teachers: isolation, time and power.

Isolation.

Special education teachers in this study were often affected by two types of isolation. They were often physically isolated from the typical, inclusive classroom environment while withdrawing students to teach them outside of the regular class. Even when special education teachers chose to work with students in the regular classroom environment, this teaching together with the classroom teachers was more a joint physical presence in the classroom than an actual cooperative effort. Special education teachers were often isolated, again, as they typically focussed on just the students in their caseload rather than teaching to the whole class.

Special education teachers also experienced isolation due to a lack of opportunity to interact with other similar professionals. They also experienced a lack of direct feedback from the classroom teachers with whom they share the responsibility for students with special needs. These feelings of isolation, though, did not seem to impact negatively on how teachers viewed their conversations when they talked with classroom teachers to collaborate about special education students. Overall, teachers described their experiences of talking together with classroom teachers favourably, citing many incidents of positive, implicit feedback from classroom teachers.

Time.

The two categories of time constraints on collaboration indicated by the special education teachers in this study were workload and scheduling. According to the participants, their workload is primarily influenced by an overall busyness in their teaching role, as well as demands on time for assessments and paperwork. Second, scheduling difficulties focussed on issues related to the practice of grouping students when providing special education services.

The characteristics of typical special education teacher collaboration in this study were indicative of how special education teachers and classroom teachers chose to spend the limited time that is available to them as collaborating teachers. The type of collaboration that was engaged in was usually talking together, rather than physically teaching in the same classroom. During these conversations, special education teachers reported that they usually focussed on discussion related to the students themselves, and their programs. Most often, they met to collaborate in the staffroom, or in the regular classroom, during instructional time or after school, most often spontaneously or informally, and customarily for the purpose of creating a consistency for special education students among different environments, and

Power.

In this study, issues that affected collaboration were related to power in three

areas. First, special education teachers collaborating with classroom teachers reflected on difficulties resolving issues related to professional role boundaries. Next, they reported problems arising from directives demanded by the different levels in the hierarchy of educational supervisors. Finally, issues related to knowledge have highlighted concerns about the lack of special education qualifications and training focussed on collaboration.

Wishes

The special education teachers in this study expressed three wishes for what they feel could be ideal collaboration with classroom teachers in the future. First, they would like formalized, planned time provided for talking with classroom teachers within the instructional day. Second, they would like further training in collaboration, preferably through inservicing. Third, teachers would like instruction focussed on interpersonal skills.

Implications

The typical practices and ideal wishes outlined by special educators in this study have implications for the future development of provincial, school board, and local school policy related to special education practice. First, provincial policy needs to emphasize collaboration as part of the role of the special education teachers and classroom teachers who are teaching students with special needs; for example, as part of the role designations in the *Pathways* document, and as an expansion of the step-by-step process of

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implementing an ISSP plan. Through modification to the *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft)*, *Pathways* and *ISSP* documents, provincial policy needs to outline the importance of this day-to-day collaboration. Rather than implying and generally stating the role of day-to-day collaboration, it needs to more explicitly recommend effective approaches to collaboration.

In the *Special Education Policy Manual (Draft)* (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1999), for example, this research has implications for policy modifications in two areas. In Part IV, "Definitions," it would be appropriate to add a definition of collaboration, including an emphasis on its necessity for successful student support services. As policy 34 states that special education personnel should be consulted when inservicing is being planned, so then should Part V, "Student Support Services Policies," Policy 11 that emphasizes interagency collaboration, be expanded to include a mandate such as, "Regular, planned collaboration between special education teachers and classroom teachers should be encouraged and supported through the provision of appropriate inservicing and flexibility of scheduling to promote its school-wide use."

The results of this study also imply that the 'Who does what?' roles of the special education teacher in the *Pathways* document needs be expanded. More specifically, instead of statements within which collaboration is subsumed, such as, "Monitors the child/youth's progress through observation and consultation with the classroom teacher" (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1998, p.32), a more proactive indicator of collaboration should be used, for example, "Regularly collaborates with the classroom

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teacher."

As *Pathways* is the educational component of the ISSP, the ISSP document could also be modified to place a greater emphasis on collaboration. In the document, a flowchart for the "Support Services Planning Process" (Government of Newfoundland & Labrador, 1997, p.7) outlines steps from the identification of special needs to the review of plans. The sixth step of the chart entitled, "Implementation of Support Services Plan" is where the importance of collaboration can be emphasized for the school setting. Rather than proceeding from the implementation of a plan to its monitoring, as this chart suggests, an additional step focussing on collaboration could be added.

As well, the role of collaboration needs to be emphasized in "Section Two: Support Services Planning in the School Setting" (p.17). Here, the necessity, nature and roles of the collaborating special education and classroom teachers could be outlined as a further aspect of "Implementing the ISSP in the School Setting." In "Appendix A: Potential ISSP Team Members" (p.69) the ISSP policy should expand and refine the role of day-to-day collaboration for the special education teacher and the classroom teacher. Lastly, like the Appendix B is focussed on "The Problem Solving Process" (p.9), this policy document should include an appendix entitled "Focussed on Collaboration," which would outline the steps and supports for successful collaboration between teachers and members of other community agencies.

If the role description of the special education teacher is formally expanded to include regular day-to-day collaboration with classroom teachers, provincial policy must,

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as well, provide school boards and local schools with the authority to implement supportive, practical changes for collaboration within district and school policies and practices.

To implement such changes, school boards first need to continue to search for highly qualified professionals to carry out the duties of special education teachers. Where this is not possible, taking remote locales and the growing teacher shortage into account, school boards should consider supporting some means by which those hired as unqualified special education teachers can take part in completing their training. This might include, for example, encouragement or direction, time, financial support or even financial incentives. In addition, they need to consider cooperating with post-secondary institutions to make such continued education available to all teachers, even those in remote areas.

School boards need to expect and encourage individual schools to make changes to support the collaboration of special education teachers and classroom teachers, including changes to the instructional day, and scheduling of instructional time. One area of such support could be the designation of specific collaboration time, or alternatively, allowing individuals schools the flexibility to create collaboration time.

Through special services personnel, school boards could consider designing inservice workshops to share the interpersonal skills essential for special education and classroom teacher collaboration, or creating some venue for special education professionals to gather and share experiences and information. More practically, school

boards should consider using technology that is already available to create a private space for special educators, such as an email group or an internet discussion forum. As a start, for example, they could elicit contributions for district newsletters to help special education teachers share their experiences. Other potential forms of staff development that school boards could consider are outlined by Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (cited in Brown & Sheppard, 1997): mentoring programs, skill development centers, teacher institutes, collegial support groups, networks, teachers leadership, teacher, as writer, individually planned staff development, and partnerships. According to the needs identified by the special education teachers in this study, the following formats are also possibilities. First, programs of skills development, described as "several workshops over a period of months, and classroom coaching between workshops to assist teachers to transfer new skills to their daily teaching" (Brown & Sheppard, 1997, p.9) could be implemented. A second choice, to reduce the isolation of special education teachers could be similar to the networks, where, "teachers from different schools share information, concerns and accomplishments and engage in common learning through computer links, newsletters, fax machines, and occasional seminars and conferences" (p.10) would be a flexible model for rural regions. A similar choice would be the development of teacher centers, where, "teachers can meet at a central location to engage in professional dialogue, develop skills, plan innovations, and gather or create instructional materials" (p.9). One of many types of professional growth to consider is the model of staff development, "a process of long-term commitment to professional

growth across a broad range of school goals" involving all school personnel (Dettmer, Thurston & Dyck, 1993), and focusing, in this case, on collaboration.

Locally, individual schools and their administrators can consider using flexibility in their scheduling to build in planned, formal time for collaboration between special education teachers and classroom teachers who have shared responsibility for teaching students with special needs. To encourage this initiation, individual schools and school staff need to commit to the need for collaboration time, and to making use of time that is provided for collaboration. Schools should encourage teachers to realize that this time provided is a support for something they are already doing, rather than as an added expectation. West & Idol (1990) created a practical list of eleven strategies to make such time a reality. These suggestions include grouping students, providing support staff, volunteers, student teachers or substitute time, the assigning of time by the school principal, or the reorganization of the school day.

"Administrative structures which limit teacher flexibility, and inhibit collaboration and team planning can be major obstacles to the development of newer models of professional development that are consistent with the continuous learning cycle of a learning organization" (Brown & Sheppard, 1997, p.13). According to this statement, schools should consider tying such initiatives in with school improvement or personal professional growth plans.

As all classroom teachers currently entering the school system will be working in inclusive classrooms, and will inevitably be working with students with exceptionalities,

in turn, they will be working with, and hopefully, collaborating with special education teachers. Faculties of education should consequently consider including specific skills in special education and classroom teacher collaboration in the preservice training for all teachers. Having a strong base of interpersonal skills, a knowledge of effective collaboration practices, and a commitment to collaboration would be an excellent start to encouraging collaboration.

For teachers already in the school system, faculties of education could consider creating, for example, a summer institute where, "teachers participate in intensive learning experiences on single, complex topics over a period of consecutive weeks or days" (Glickman et al. cited in Brown & Sheppard, 1997, p.10) or a distance education module outlining collaboration skills. As teachers do not indicate the need for a full credit academic course focussing on collaboration, perhaps such a focus could be integrated into already existing coursework. Faculties of education could consider cooperating with school districts to coordinate service delivery to a wider range of school personnel.

Special education teachers who take a personal initiative and are motivated to inquire about their collaboration could team up with a collaboration classroom teacher for further study on collaboration, fulfilling individually-guided or individually planned models of staff development (Brown & Sheppard, 1997). Athabasca University, for example, offers a senior-level distance education course entitled, "Consultation and Collaboration for Students with Special Needs." This course covers topics within

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collaboration: its elements, theory, competencies, school structure, evaluation, support,

role identification, benefits, process, obstacles, problem-solving, communication skills,

techniques, strategies, evaluation of collaboration, and parents as partners. The university

summarizes the focus of the course as follows: "The main emphasis of the course is on

understanding collaborative consultation as a process that enables people with diverse

expertise to work together to generate solutions for educating students with special

education needs in regular public school classrooms" (Athabasca University, 1999, p.1).

Suggestions for Further Research

Further research in this area should include a broader number of special education

teachers throughout the province, preferably from a sampling of full time special

education teachers. It would be helpful to gather information from special education

teachers with a wider range of experience, not only to discover how collaboration has

changed with special education policies and the advent of *Pathways,* but also to compare

how novice and experienced teachers collaborate differently. A study with a greater

geographical range may elicit more information about how different districts are

implementing collaboration, and how they are providing time and training for

collaboration. Research extending nationally could investigate if and how other

provinces and faculties of education are providing time and training for collaboration.

More specifics on the type of interpersonal communication skills that teachers need

across the province should also be defined. From the point of view of classroom

teachers, it is important to find out their collaboration needs, wishes and practices, and how classroom teachers feel they can best be supported in an inclusive classroom environment.

In the future, it would be interesting to see how the collaboration of special education teachers and classroom teachers changes, as teachers become more proficient, expert and comfortable with *Pathways* and working in an inclusive environment.

Big Dreams: Collaboration

A Poetic Transcription

In an ideal world:

It's always nice to get some ideas about how to get along better, how to deal with
teachers working together, every day: equals.
Understanding, cooperative, flexible
open, comfortable, rapport,
trying.
You don't have to do it all on your own: a team.

Training, more training:
ideas, techniques, strategies,
help, advice, information, direction.
To work with, go along with, learn from
other people's ideas.
Respect.

Time is not something
we tend to have a lot of:
more time, setting up a time, a certain amount of time, a little more time, opportunity --
fit that into the schedule.
To talk, to talk with, talk with these teachers, discuss further.

We can sit down, sit down for a while, meet, discuss, get together
more talking, more sitting down.
[I just seem to be going back to that.]

I don't think we'll ever get it, but.
It would be really ideal if that were the case, but.
That would be great! Wouldn't it be nice!! Perfect!

Seek it out and it will benefit you
to
help them
succeed.[1]

---

[1]

    Glesne (1999) asks researchers to pay attention to their last words: they can be academic,
look forward to what should come next, or end with the words of the participants. In this case,
an integration of looking ahead, along with the words of the special education teacher
participants, has been carried out by ending this study with how the participants themselves are
looking towards the future of collaboration.

    According to Glesne, poetic transcription is one type of alternate or experimental form of
representing research, which are "poem-like pieces from the words of the interviewees," (Glesne
cited in Glesne 1999, p.183) that attempts to "get at the essence of what's said, the emotions
expressed, and the rhythm of speaking" (Glesne, 1999, p.183). The creation of poetic
transcription works this way:

> The process involves word reduction while illuminating the wholeness and
> interconnectedness of thoughts. Through shaping the presentation of the
> words of an interviewee, the researcher creates a third voice that is neither
> the interviewee's nor the researcher's but is a combination of both. This
> third voice disintegrates any appearance of separation between observer
> and observed. (Glesne, 1999, p.183)

    This particular poetic transcription was taken from the complied data of all special
education teacher participants. The "wishes" folder, created to compile the hopes for the future
of collaboration; as well, these words and phrases were integrated with the "reflections" and
"possibilities" columns of collaboration journals. The structure of this poetic narrative was
created to imitate the collective three-part wishes for ideal collaboration, as projected by the
special education teachers in this study.

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Letter of Consent to the Director of Education

Dear <Name of Director of Education>,

My name is Kimberly Maich. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, currently researching a thesis entitled [thesis title]. This thesis will be examining how Special Education Teachers in District [] are working together with Classroom Teachers to help fulfill the cooperative ideals of the *Pathways* document. The purpose of this letter is to request your permission to contact carefully selected Principals and Special Education Teachers to begin conducting research in District [].

Teachers' participation will consist of an audiotaped personal interview at the convenience of individual teachers at a mutually decided location, which should take approximately one hour to complete. Teachers will also be asked to complete a five day journal, outlining instances of cooperation with Classroom Teachers, along with reflections on these instances. Collaborating Special Education Teachers participants be asked not to identify Classroom Teachers by name or school location. If a Classroom Teacher is easily identifiable, that teacher's consent to participate will also be formally requested. Some followup by phone may be necessary to confirm information. Participants may also be requested to provide some feedback to this research close to its

completion.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. At no time will individual teachers or schools be identified or identifiable. The names of participants will not be used in my final report. I am interested in what teachers in District [] are doing as a group, not in any individual teacher's performance. In addition, recordings made will be kept in a locked file and will be destroyed upon completion of this study. Participation is this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and you may decline to answer any interview questions or to discontinue your journal entries at any time.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Rosonna Tite, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education. Any questions or concerns can be directed to me at (709) 454-2541 or by email to jkmaich@nf.sympatico.ca. If you need to speak to a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Clar Doyle, Associate Dean (Acting), Graduate Programs and Research.

Please return this consent form to me as soon as possible, so that I may begin requesting permission for participation from individual principals and teachers. Please keep a copy for your records.

Yours Sincerely,

Kimberly Maich

I _____ hereby give my permission for selected schools in District []
to participate in a study on how Special Education Teachers are working together with
Classroom Teachers under *Pathways*, being undertaken by Kimberly Maich. I understand
that this participation is totally voluntary and that I may withdraw this permission at any
time, and that all information is strictly confidential and no individual teacher will be
identified.

Letter of Consent to Principals

Dear <Name of Principal>,

My name is Kimberly Maich. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at

Memorial University, currently researching a thesis entitled [thesis title]. This thesis

will be examining how Special Education Teachers such as those in your school are

working together with Classroom Teachers to help fulfill the cooperative ideals of the

Pathways document. The purpose of this letter is to request consent from selected

Special Education teachers to participate in this research.

Teachers' participation will consist of an audiotaped personal interview at your

convenience and a mutually decided location, which should take approximately one hour

to complete. They will also be asked to complete a five day journal, outlining instances

of cooperation with Classroom Teachers, along with reflections on these instances.

Collaborating Special Education Teachers participants, will be asked not to identify

Classroom Teachers by name or school location. If a Classroom Teacher is easily

identifiable, that teacher's consent to participate will also be formally requested. Some

followup by phone may be necessary to confirm information. Teachers may also be

requested to provide some feedback to this research close to its completion.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. At no time will individual teachers or schools be identified or identifiable. The names of participants will not be used in my final report. I am interested in what teachers in District [] are doing as a group, not in any individual teacher's performance. In addition, recordings made will be kept in a locked file and will be destroyed upon completion of this study. Participation is this study is voluntary. Teachers may withdraw their consent to participate at any time and you may decline to answer any interview questions or to discontinue journal entries at any time.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Rosonna Tite, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education. Any questions or concerns can be directed to me at (709) 454-2541 or by email to jkmaich@nf.sympatico.ca. If you need to speak to a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Clar Doyle, Associate Dean (Acting), Graduate Programs and Research.

Please return this consent form to me by _____, so that I may begin requesting consent from individual teachers. Please keep a copy for your records, as well.

Yours Sincerely,

Kimberly Maich

I _____ hereby give my permission for selected teachers of

_____ (school name) to participate in a study on how Special Education

Teachers are working together with Classroom Teachers under *Pathways*, being

undertaken by Kimberly Maich. I understand that this participation is totally voluntary

and that I may withdraw this permission at any time, and that all information is strictly

confidential and no individual teacher will be identified.

Letter of Consent to Special Education Teachers

Dear <Name of Special Education Teacher>,

My name is Kimberly Maich. I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at Memorial University, currently researching a thesis entitled [thesis title]. This thesis will be examining how Special Education Teachers like yourself are working together with Classroom Teachers to help fulfill the cooperative ideals of the *Pathways* document. The purpose of this letter is to request your consent to be a participant in this research.

Your participation will consist of an audiotaped personal interview at your convenience and a mutually decided location, which should take approximately one hour to complete. You will also be asked to complete a five day journal, outlining instances of cooperation with Classroom Teachers, along with your reflections on these instances. As collaborating Special Education Teachers participants, you will be asked not to identify Classroom Teachers by name or school location. If a Classroom Teacher is easily identifiable, that teacher's consent to participate will also be formally requested. Some followup by phone may be necessary to confirm information. As a participant, you may also be requested to provide some feedback to this research close to its completion.

All information gathered in this study is strictly confidential. At no time will individual teachers or schools be identified or identifiable. The names of participants will not be used in my final report. I am interested in what teachers in District [] are doing as a group, not in any individual teacher's performance. In addition, recordings made will be kept in a locked file and will be destroyed upon completion of this study. Participation is this study is voluntary. You may withdraw your consent to participate at any time and you may decline to answer any interview questions or to discontinue your journal entries at any time.

This research is being supervised by Dr. Rosonna Tite, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education. Any questions or concerns can be directed to me at (709) 454-2541 or by email to jkmaich@nf.sympatico.ca. If you need to speak to a resource person not associated with this study, please contact Dr. Clar Doyle, Associate Dean (Acting), Graduate Programs and Research.

Please return this consent form to me by _____, keeping a copy for your records.

Yours Sincerely,

Kimberly Maich

I _____ hereby give my permission to participate in a study on how

Special Education Teachers are working together with Classroom Teachers under

Pathways, being undertaken by Kimberly Maich. I understand that this participation is

totally voluntary and that I may withdraw this permission at any time, and that all

information is strictly confidential and no individual teacher will be identified.

APPENDIX D

Interview Script

Point Form Oral Consent

Background

1. Could you please tell me your job title or titles?

2. How many years of teaching experience do you have?

3. How many years experience have you had teaching special education?

4. What is your teaching certification?

5. What kind of academic training do you have in special education, if any?

6. What kind of other training, such as inservicing, have you received in special education, if any?

Inclusion

Inclusion can be defined as the including of children with exceptionalities into the regular classroom situation for the majority of the school day, rather than students being placed in self-contained classrooms for special education purposes. During inclusion, the regular classroom teacher takes more responsibility for the teaching of special education students, and works together with special education teachers to deliver programming for all students (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1991).

1. Would you say that you practice inclusion?

   If YES, why do you practice inclusion?

   What strategies do you use to carry out inclusion?

   If NO, why do you not practice inclusion?

   What are some of your barriers to practicing inclusion?

2. How would you describe you attitude towards the inclusion of students with

   exceptionalities?

Pathways

Pathways to Programming and Graduation is our current provincial model for special

education practice. *Pathways* provides us with special education policy for the planning

of individual programs to meet the needs of students with exceptionalities, in

Newfoundland and Labrador. It provides the structure for the part of the ISSP (Individual

Support Services Plan) that is related to education. Students might make use of Pathway

1 (provincial curriculum), Pathway 2 (provincial curriculum with supports /

accommodations), Pathway 3 (modified courses), Pathway 4 (alternate courses), or

Pathway 5 (alternate curriculum) (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 1998).

1. Have you been inserviced on *Pathways*?

2. Would you say that *Pathways* is in use in your school?

   Is *Pathways* fully in use, a little in use, or not used at all?

3. What are your feelings towards the use of *Pathways*?

Collaboration

One definition of collaboration defines collaborative consultation as "an interactive and ongoing process where individuals with different expertise, knowledge, or experience voluntarily work together to create solutions to mutually agreed upon problems" (Robinson, 1991, p.441-422). In this case, I am looking at special education teachers and classroom teachers as these equal partners working or talking directly together to meet the needs of special education students. In this interview, I am interesting in exploring direct, day-to-day collaboration; not the use of similar programming, or formalized expected ISSP meetings, but the physical face-to-face working together of special education and classroom teachers.

1. Please describe any training you have had in the use of collaboration. If yes, please describe.

2. How do you feel about collaboration with classroom teachers?

3. Most special education teachers, both before *Pathways* and now, have usually practiced some sort of collaboration. Do you feel that that is true for you, as well?

4. Please tell me about your experience with using collaboration.

5. Have you changed or added to any of your strategies since the *Pathways* document was put into use? If so, please describe these changes.

6.   Are you satisfied with how you collaborate? If not, what would you like to change in the future?

Probes

   Roles.

1.   How might you describe your role in relation to the role of the classroom teacher?

2.   Do you think your role has changed, with *Pathways* in place?

3.   How has your role changed?

   Obstacles.

4.   Some teachers feel there are obstacles that stop successful collaboration with classroom teachers. What do you think?

5.   Can you describe any obstacles to your collaboration with classroom teachers?

6.   What kinds of things could schools put in place that would encourage collaboration?

   Effects.

7.   Can you think of any benefits to practicing collaboration?

8.   Can you think of any disadvantages to practicing collaboration?

9.   How do you think collaboration affects students with exceptionalities? All students in a classroom? The involved teachers?

10.   What kind of feedback do you get from teachers you work with, about collaboration?

Comparisons.

11. Do you think that your use of collaboration is common or uncommon compared to other special education teachers? Why?

12. Does your collaboration differ between different classroom teacher? How does it differ? Why do you think there are differences?

The Future.

13. Do you feel that further training in collaboration would be useful to you? If NO, why not? If YES, what would you be hoping to gain from further training?

14. Is there any training you would recommend for preservice teachers?

15. What do you feel would be the ideal types of collaboration for the future?

Do you have any further comments to add?

APPENDIX E

Collaboration Journal Sample Page

Day 1

Interactions	Reflections	Possibilities