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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TEACHERS' EXPERIENCES WITH MAINSTREAMING

BY

ROSEANNE M. HEIDEMANN

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Teachers' Experiences with Mainstreaming submitted by Roseanne M. Heidemann in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education.

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ABSTRACT

The primary focus of this study was to examine the implications of the mainstreaming policy for the regular classroom teacher. The research revolved around two questions: (1) What problems are teachers experiencing? and (2) What are teachers' concerns in implementing the mainstreaming policy?

This study, which is interpretive in nature, was designed to provide insight and understanding into the realities facing regular classroom teachers as they attempt to mainstream handicapped students. It does not seek to draw conclusions or generalizations.

A qualitative approach was used in order to obtain subjective, first hand data. This was achieved by interviewing 23 regular classroom teachers with mainstreaming experience.

The taped interviews were transcribed and the data were analyzed through the process of analytic induction. In order to establish credibility member checks and peer debriefing were carried out.

The findings were reported in two separate chapters, each addressing a major research question. A total of 25 themes were isolated. Teachers' responses, in support of the developed theme, were presented through the use of paraphrasing supported by direct quotations.

Ten thematic categories were isolated in response to the question: What problems are teachers experiencing? The categories are: time; timetabling; the attitude of the handicapped student; support services; administrative support; formal assessments; need for paraprofessionals; workload and classroom preparation; class size; and sharing information.

In response to the question: What are teachers' concerns in implementing mainstreaming policy?, 15 thematic categories were isolated. The themes,

centering around the teacher, the non-handicapped child and the handicapped child are: lack of teacher preparation; feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy; frustration and stress; fairness to the non-handicapped child; meeting the needs of the handicapped child; early intervention; causing physical damage; peer acceptance; student self-esteem; evaluation; time to know the students; open communication; time to share; the future of the handicapped; and financial cutbacks.

Upon reflection, teachers felt a real sense of isolation in the mainstreaming process. A lack of time, combined with a lack of support services and educational preparation led to feelings of guilt and inadequacy among teachers.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

The issue of the integration of handicapped children into regular classrooms was raised in Alberta less than a decade ago. The Carriere case of 1978 led to the decision that local school jurisdictions had the responsibility to provide an educational program for all school-age children. If a suitable education program is not available, the board must arrange for a program in another district and assume responsibility for the costs. In addition, a child cannot be excused from attending school due to a handicap (Keeler & Harrison, 1985, p. 22).

As a result, school boards have had to assume responsibility for meeting the educational needs of handicapped children. Although the court decision did not make provision for children's education to take place in the "least restrictive setting," many boards have opted to place handicapped children in regular classrooms because of the cost of special education programs and out-of-district placements. Thus the classroom teacher is primarily responsible for meeting the educational, emotional and social needs of all children. In short, the integration of handicapped children into the regular classroom is a reality faced by many Alberta teachers.

Integration, viewed by many as the magic formula for success, may be viewed by some teachers with skepticism. Teachers realize that the integration of a handicapped child is not as simple as some specialists might believe. Theoretically, many mainstreaming models do not take into account the realities of the classroom. These realities are reflected in the needs of the handicapped,

the non-handicapped, and the teacher. Expressions of concern for meeting the needs of handicapped children have been voiced by teachers (Salend, 1984).

The implications of the mainstreaming policy for the regular classroom teacher are many. This is particularly true for the rural teacher who is confronted with a unique set of environmental circumstances. Furthermore, given economic trends in educational funding, reductions in support services are imminent, thus further decreasing the possibilities of successfully implementing the mainstreaming policy.

Statement of the Problem

Mainstreaming handicapped children within the regular classroom has become a reality for Alberta teachers. With the responsibility of providing for the education of the handicapped child, the teacher is faced with a new set of demands and expectations.

The central problem of this study was to examine the implications of the mainstreaming policy for the regular classroom teacher in a rural setting. The research was guided by the following questions:

1. What problems are teachers experiencing in implementing the mainstreaming policy?

2. What are teachers' concerns in implementing the mainstreaming policy?

Significance of the Problem

An effort to provide handicapped children with "the least restrictive environment" has resulted in much negativism among teachers. Gickling and Theobald (1975) found that staff distant from students have generally positive attitudes toward integration, while those closest to students have ambivalent or negative attitudes. These attitudes emerge as a major concern in the integration

process. Rauer (1979, p. 24) states that the teacher's attitude will shape the emotional and social climate of the program. Further, Siefert (1981) contends that the teacher is the determining factor in the success of mainstreaming.

Clearly, if teacher attitudes are crucial to the successful implementation of integration, then one must investigate the reasons why these attitudes exist. In a practical sense, then, this study may reveal some insight and understanding into the problems and concerns facing the regular classroom teacher which may be a basis for negative attitudes towards the mainstreaming policy.

It is only through the identification of these problems and concerns that we can begin to make meaningful changes to the implementation of the mainstreaming policy and subsequently to teacher attitude.

It is hoped that this research may increase the sensitivity and understanding of administrators and central office personnel to the complexities facing regular classroom teachers who are attempting to integrate handicapped students. The findings should therefore be of use to these individuals in seeking solutions and resolutions to the mainstreaming policy. Furthermore, this research may offer some direction for financial decision making in the area of mainstreaming.

Definition of Terms

Mainstreaming - refers to the instructional and social integration of handicapped children with normal peers.

Handicapped - a child for whom a significant adaptation must be made to either the regular program or to the classroom setting in order to meet the child's needs.

Rural Jurisdiction - refers to a school jurisdiction in North-Central Alberta outside a major metropolitan area which has its central office located no less than 38 km from the city limits.

Rural Teachers - refers to teachers who are employed by rural jurisdictions.

I delineated the difference between problems and concerns in this way:

A problem is a situation that presents uncertainty or difficulty and affects the teacher directly or indirectly.

A concern is a professional question that arises out of one's practise as a teacher. It has implications beyond the teacher, particularly for the child, the school and schooling.

Assumptions

1. Jurisdictions have different methods of attempting to meet the needs of the teacher and handicapped child.

2. There are different needs and concerns at different levels and with different types of handicapped students, and in varying degrees.

Delimitations

1. This study is delimited to the regular classroom teacher at the elementary level (Grades 1 to 6).

2. It is also delimited to a rural population of teachers in jurisdictions in North-Central Alberta.

Limitations

1. A limitation of the study is the experiences of the teachers being interviewed. Due to the fact that teachers have volunteered to be interviewed,

strong views, either positively or negatively, may be held by these teachers. Thus marginal perceptions of mainstreaming may be eliminated.

2. This study is interpretative in nature and therefore, no generalizations or conclusions are sought; only insight and understanding.

Organization of the Thesis

The study of the implications of the mainstreaming policy is organized into six chapters. Chapter 1 involves the introduction, statement of problem, significance of the study, definition of terms, assumptions, delimitations and limitations, and the organization of the thesis.

Chapter 2 focuses on a review of the related literature and research in the following areas: history, factors influencing teacher attitude, factors affecting integration of the handicapped child, factors affecting levels of administrative and support services, and problems and concerns. This chapter also contains the conceptual framework which focuses on the relationship of the teacher and handicapped child and the factors affecting ultimate success in mainstreaming.

In Chapter 3 I have described the methodology. This includes: the design of the study, data sources, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter 4 describes the problems encountered by teachers in mainstreaming. Organization of the data is presented in 10 themes enhanced through the use of paraphrasing and quotations taken from the interviews.

Chapter 5 contains further analysis of the data. This chapter, which is organized in 15 themes, describes the concerns of the regular classroom teacher involved in mainstreaming handicapped children.

Chapter 6 contains the summary, reflections, and implications for administration, as well as for further study.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This chapter contains a review of the literature and looks at the following topics: historical background, factors affecting integration, factors affecting levels of administrative and support services and lastly, problems and concerns. The review of the literature is followed by the conceptual framework which looks at the interrelationship between teacher, handicapped child and support services, and at the problems and concerns arising from an attempt to implement the mainstreaming policy.

Historical Background

The American Context

At the turn of the century, American society adopted the value that every individual should have the opportunity to achieve his or her greatest ambitions (Abramson, 1980), and in the twentieth century education was seen both as the equalizer of all men and the vehicle with the ability to bring about social change (Greer, 1972, cited by Abramson, 1980).

Adhering to this philosophy, society in the 1920s demanded that "all men" include the handicapped. The public school system was to serve as a "provider of equal opportunities" (Looft, 1973, cited by Abramson, 1980), and as a result, special classes were set up to meet the needs of the handicapped; needs that could not be adequately met in a regular classroom (Wallin, 1924, cited by Semmel, Gottlieb, & Robinson, 1979). Two rationales existed that supported the presence

of special classrooms. First, handicapped children could receive aid and encouragement needed from specialized teachers. Second, the normal child would be free from the restrictions imposed by the handicapped child in the regular classroom (Wallin, 1925, 1955, cited by Semmel et al., 1979).

There existed, however, objection to such segregation as early as 1910 on the grounds that this arrangement would deprive the handicapped child of stimulus contact with brighter children and increase the possibility of a negative self-image, as well as stigmatization. Nonetheless, though the debate continued, demands for special classes increased.

However, in many school systems special classes often became the "dumping grounds" for children that were not wanted or could not be accommodated (Wallin, 1924, cited by Semmel et al., 1979). These classes were often held in the least desirable rooms with few facilities, poorly trained teachers and "watered-down" curriculum (MacMillan, 1977, cited by Semmel et al., 1979). Although demands were made to improve special classes, little response was evident, and there existed no interest in reconsidering the basic rationale for segregated classes. Educators were committed to the proposition that handicapped children would receive "the best and most economical education in segregated environments" (Semmel et al., 1979, p. 226).

The Civil Rights movement of the 1960s began to question the social implications of this professional practice. This sociopolitical force led educators to question the efficacy of homogeneous special class placements for the handicapped. Consequently, there was a demand for educators to re-examine the whole issue. The disproportionate number of minority group students from low socioeconomic status homes added another reason for reexamination. In 1968, Dunn (Semmel et al., 1979) indicted special educators for their failure to develop viable administrative and curricular alternatives to special classes for the mildly

handicapped child. As a result, educators who supported his view called for abandoning all special classes and called for "the development of alternative classroom arrangements" (Semmel et al., 1979, p. 227). Therefore, both sociopolitical forces and the lack of empirical evidence for the effectiveness of special class placements supported the "Least Restrictive Alternative" a doctrine which evolved from conflicts between governmental interests and personal liabilities. The principle of LRA was expanded over the years through a variety of judicial expressions, and emerged from "least restrictive means" to "least burdensome method" and finally "least restrictive alternative" (Semmel et al., 1979) with provision made for due process which questioned the labelling and placement procedures for educable mentally retarded children. This federally mandated law is more commonly known as Public Law 94-142 in the United States.

The Canadian Scene

Like our American neighbors, Canadians have accepted the philosophy that all children and youth, whether physically, mentally or socially disadvantaged, have a right to a free and appropriate education. Three major trends have influenced Canadians to adopt this position (Csapo & Goguen, 1980). First, the CELDIC (1970) Report described a need for full services for children with emotional and learning problems. Second, Public Law 94-142 in the United States, and third, the International Year of the Child (1979) brought about an awareness of the need for policies on the rights on the child.

As a result, since 1980 some provinces, such as Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Newfoundland, Quebec and Ontario, have followed Nova Scotia's lead in implementing legislation mandating integration of the handicapped child (Csapo & Goguen, 1980). Others have only expressed concern and interest.

Unlike the United States, Canada does not have a federal mandate guaranteeing the right of the handicapped child to an appropriate education (Csapo & Goguen, 1980). The federal government deems education to be a provincial responsibility. Therefore, each province must mandate its own laws regarding the provision it makes for the handicapped child. Although the province establishes limits, it becomes the responsibility of local districts to implement it in operational terms.

In Alberta, the issue of integration came to the forefront less than a decade ago. The Carriere case of 1978 led to the decision that local school jurisdictions had the responsibility to provide an educational program for all school-age children. If a suitable education program is not available the board must arrange for a program in another district and assume responsibility for the costs. In addition, a child cannot be excused from attending school due to a handicap (Keeler & Harrison, 1985, p. 22).

As a result, school boards in Alberta have had to assume responsibility for meeting the educational needs of handicapped children. Although the court decisions did not make provision for children's education to take place in the "least restrictive environment" many boards have opted to place handicapped children in regular classrooms because of the cost of special education and out-of-district placements. Thus, the classroom teacher becomes primarily responsible for meeting the educational, emotional and social needs of all children. In short, the integration movement has significant implications for all teachers.

Factors Influencing Teacher Attitude

Integration involves the acceptance and commitment of teachers in regular classrooms. Specialists agree that although integration is binding by law, it is the way the teacher responds to handicapped children that makes the difference in its

effectiveness (Harasymiw & Horne, 1975). Teacher attitudes, complex and multifaceted in nature, emerge as a major component to the success of integration (Siefert, 1981).

The available research concerned with the impact of mainstreaming on teacher attitude has shown both positive (Guerin & Szabocky, 1974; Harasymiw & Horne, 1975) and negative results (Shotel, Iano, & McGettigan, 1972; Vacc & Kirst, 1977). Results of several studies support the fact that staff most distant from students (i.e., central office administration) have generally positive attitudes toward integration, while those closest to students (i.e., teachers) have ambivalent or negative attitudes (Barngrover, 1971; Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Keogh & Levitt, 1976).

This would indicate, therefore, that teacher attitude toward mainstreaming is affected by various institutional variables (Larrivee & Cook, 1979). Mandell (1977) concurred that teacher attitudes were controlled within the administrative structure of most schools.

Findings consistently reveal that regular classroom teachers prefer special class placement for handicapped children rather than integration (Shotel et al., 1972). Sixty percent of teachers in Gickling and Theobald's (1975) study indicated satisfaction with self-contained classrooms, and it was felt that this arrangement was the most effective method of meeting individual needs.

In a 1981 study, conducted by Berryman and Berryman, the teachers and professionals surveyed were in favor of integration in principle. Teachers indicated that they were willing to include students whose disabilities did not inhibit their learning or that of their classmates. They indicated that they were not in favor of integrating disruptive students or those with limited learning abilities.

These views are compatible with the results of a study by Moore and Fine (1978) which revealed that teachers were more supportive of integrating the learning disabled child than the mentally retarded child. The educable mentally retarded students and the emotionally disturbed were found to be the least preferred by teachers and the learning disabled were most preferred according to a study by Shotel et al. (1972).

Stainback, Stainback, and Dedrick (1983) reported that teachers were neutral to mildly accepting toward the integration of the severely handicapped. These findings were verified by Vacc and Kirst (1977) whose study revealed that teachers felt that the presence of emotionally disturbed children would have a negative effect on their programs and that special class placement would be more beneficial for them.

Furthermore, Williams and Algozzine (1977, cited by Horne, 1985), established that teachers were more willing and felt better equipped to teach the physically handicapped student and the learning disabled student. They felt ill-prepared to integrate the emotionally disturbed or educable mentally retarded student and therefore, were less willing.

Much evidence substantiates the position that teachers' attitudes toward mainstreaming tend to be more negative as grade level increased and that the most negative attitude exhibited occurred at the junior high level (Larrivee & Cook, 1979). Gickling and Theobald (1975) found that a greater percentage of elementary teachers supported integration than did secondary teachers. Of the teachers who were willing to integrate handicapped children, in a study conducted by Stephens and Braun (1980), the majority were in primary and middle grades. Few teachers at the junior high level were reported being in favor of integration. A recent Canadian study involving British Columbia teachers, showed that positive attitudes tended to decrease as grade level increased (Winzer, 1987).

Although Larrivee and Cook (1979) established that classroom size, school size and types of school have little impact on teacher attitudes, Bosman and Sloan (1979) found that school size was significantly related to three out of seven stages of concern using the Likert Scale. Teachers from small sized school systems had higher concerns about implementing the mainstreaming policy than did teachers from large-sized school systems. No explanation was offered by the researchers for this occurrence.

A lack of specialized training is a variable often cited by Gickling and Theobald (1975) as a source of anxiety and uncertainty, leading to negative attitudes among teachers. These researchers noted that only 15% of teachers felt that they had the skills to help exceptional children. The authors noted that once teachers were assured of assistance in the form of services and time to spend with the handicapped student, there was an almost unanimous change in attitude. They felt that this was indicative of teachers' awareness of the deficiencies in their abilities and skills in the area of special education. Similar findings were evident in a study by Stephens and Braun (1980).

Research by Mandell and Strain (1978) and Stephens and Braun (1980) revealed that willingness to teach handicapped children increased as the number of special education courses teachers received increased. According to Harasymiw and Horne's (1975) research, these findings were not supported. Their research revealed that the contrary existed. Teachers with less education had more positive attitudes. They attributed these findings to the fact that the teachers with less education were younger, thus, according to some studies, more positive toward integration.

Turnbull and Schultz (1979) postulated that regular teachers needed to acquire skills and knowledge previously not provided in their teacher training. Stephens, Blackhurst, and Magliocca (1982) believed that by learning specific

alternate strategies for teaching and managing students, the teachers would feel better equipped to meet the needs of handicapped children.

These views were substantiated by McGinty and Keogh (1975, cited by Keogh and Levitt, 1976). Strong evidence existed that teachers were aware of the types of things they should know in order to integrate handicapped children in the regular classroom. They unanimously agreed however, that they did not know these things. An investigation by Hewett and Watson (1975, cited by Keogh and Levitt, 1976) provided evidence that teachers were aware that handicapped students required a different approach according to the characteristics they displayed, but they admitted that they did not know how to provide different instruction for them. A need for training in teaching strategies has been repeatedly cited by researchers (Denker, 1983; Mitzel, 1985).

A lack of experience is often cited as the basis for fears and prejudice among regular classroom teachers by researchers. Evidence appears to be abundant. In a study conducted by Stainback et al. (1983) educators with more positive attitudes toward integration tended to have a greater amount of experience and conversely, those with little or no experience tended to be more negative. Harasymiw and Horne (1975) fully confirmed their hypothesis that teachers who have had experience in mainstreaming showed a more favorable attitude toward integration. Hartnett (1979) and Bosman and Sloan (1979) concurred that more favorable attitudes resulted from greater exposure to handicapped children.

Conversely, however, Shotel et al. (1972) found that inexperienced teachers who initially expressed great optimism concerning educable mentally retarded children with regard to academic and social adjustment potential, changed their views once they had had experience in mainstreaming. The researchers concluded that teachers attempted to be cooperative and positive

toward the aims of mainstreaming, but at the end of the year teachers found that academically and socially these children did not integrate well.

Similar findings were revealed in Child's (1981) study cited by Horne (1985). A survey of regular teachers, primary to high school, who had had considerable experience in mainstreaming educable mentally retarded students, indicated generally negative attitudes. Berryman and Berryman (1981) concurred

Few attempts have been made to correlate age and attitude. Stainback et al. (1983) found that young teachers with greater amounts of experience with severely handicapped children tended to be very supportive of mainstreaming policy. These findings are fully supported by Harasymiw and Horne (1975) and by Berryman and Berryman (1981). In contrast, however, more favorable attitudes were demonstrated among older teachers in Winzer's (1987) study. Due to the lack of research, no conclusions may be reached as to the significance of age in relation to mainstreaming.

Confidence in one's ability to teach exceptional children was found to affect the teacher's willingness to integrate handicapped children (Stephens & Braun, 1980). This was reaffirmed by Larrivee and Cook (1979) who postulated that teachers' perceptions of success correlated highly with teacher attitudes. Stephens and Braun's (1980) study displayed a negative correlation between degree of success perceived, and type of school. It indicated a tendency for teachers in a rural setting to perceive themselves as having achieved less success with mainstreaming students than did teachers in other settings.

There is little question that integration of handicapped children is beneficial for all involved. However, practical problems exist. Among them is teacher attitude. Because classroom teachers have been cited by specialists (Robichaud & Enns, 1980; Stephens et al., 1982; Turnbull & Schultz, 1979) as the

people most influential in determining the success of mainstreaming, it is imperative that they possess a supportive, willing attitude.

Factors Affecting Integration of the Handicapped Child

Mainstreaming is not simply the physical presence of the handicapped child in the regular classroom. True integration involves the "whole" child, academically, socially and emotionally (Turnbull & Schultz, 1979). Although the law requires that jurisdictions maintain special education services, it is not required that all handicapped children be placed in regular classrooms. Based on the child's needs the law advocates that the child be placed in the most "normal setting" (Stephens et al., 1982). Stephens et al. (1982) claim that school jurisdictions have misinterpreted the law to mean "must" instead of "preferred" and have abolished many special classes that are still needed by some students. Decker and Decker (1976) state that "if an exceptional child is assigned to a program not appropriate for him, he might as well be excluded from schooling" (p. 354).

Carlberg and Kavale (1980) reviewed 50 primary research studies of special versus regular class placements which seemed to support these views. They (1980) concluded that regular class placement was found more effective than special class placement for students with below average IQs and for educable mentally retarded students, but not as effective for learning disabled and emotionally disturbed children. Carlberg and Kavale (1980) concluded that for some children, special classes may be the most beneficial placement. Siefert (1981) concurred.

Research on the efficacy of regular class placement versus special class placement for handicapped students is controversial and inconclusive. Abramson

(1980) points out that due to the diversity of mainstreaming programs today, evaluation of its effectiveness becomes extremely complex.

However, throughout the last decade, studies of integrated programs have shown both success and failure. Keeping in mind that methodological error exists, the majority of students indicate that there is essentially no difference in academic performance between the handicapped child placed in an integrated setting and one placed in a self-contained classroom (Abramson, 1980). Therefore, placement in an integrated program does not ensure the pupil success.

Those who oppose mainstreaming contend that the organizational structure of the school itself is inadequate in terms of accommodating handicapped students (O'Donnell & Bradfield, 1976). Stainback, Stainback, Courtnage, and Jaben (1985) perceive that the rigid standardization of grade levels not only prevents the teacher from adapting instruct[illegible]t also prevents the child from succeeding because it assumes that all chi[illegible] fit into a graded system. Another impediment to success is the over[illegible]ng task of providing individualized curriculum for each handicapped child, and at the same time providing for the regular students (O'Donnell & Bradfield, 1976). According to Hartnett (1979) elementary teachers showed a great concern for meeting the individual needs of all students.

Stephens et al. (1983) hold that teachers do not have the time to provide handicapped students with the extensive amount of individual attention they require due to the complexity and nature of their problems. They also contend that the chances of success are limited because of time restrictions. The question of fairness to both the handicapped and regular student arises.

Some evidence of the effects of mainstreaming non-handicapped students was provided by Bradfield (1976). Results from this study indicated that those children who had handicapped children in their classroom for the school year

were academically below their peers who did not have handicapped students. Abramson (1980) suggests that perhaps too much time is being spent trying to improve the academic standing of the handicapped student at the expense of the regular student. Kavanagh (1977) clearly states the dilemma of the classroom teacher who is faced, on the one hand, with the academic needs of all the children in the classroom, and on the other, by physical limitations.

> Let us not confuse competence with reality. Faced with the prospect of teaching handicapped children in a regular classroom without adequate materials or support personnel, a teacher has every right to ask how these children can be effectively provided for . . . Teachers have a limited number of hours to work with many children, all of whom have individual needs. No one who has ever spent time in a classroom situation can truthfully say that teachers universally lack "humanistic concerns" or patience to deal with problems. What they do lack is the ability to be in more than one place at a time or to do more than several things at once. The majority of the classroom teachers are not unwilling or unable to work with handicapped children as some experts would suggest. Teachers are concerned human beings seeking to give the best to every child. (1977, p. 320)

The greatest argument used by advocates of mainstreaming is that integration can remove the stigma associated with the handicapped, increasing social adjustment and thus, social acceptance (Abramson, 1980).

Overall, investigations indicate that exceptional children who are placed in integrated classrooms are not readily accepted by their normal peers (Bryan, 1974; Goodman, Gottlieb, & Harrison, 1972). Shotel et al. (1972) postulated that educable mentally retarded students were not well accepted by their peers. A sociometric study on the same group of children confirmed these findings. The belief that placing handicapped children in regular classrooms promoted acceptance failed to be supported in a study conducted by Ellis (1978).

Siefert (1981) contends that general trends towards "lack of acceptance" show that some children with certain handicaps may find better acceptance than others. Bryan (1974) found evidence that learning disabled children in regular classrooms experienced greater peer rejection than non-disabled children.

Furthermore, Elser (1959, cited by Semmel et al., 1979) found that the hearing handicapped pupil in regular classrooms were not as well accepted as their normal hearing peers. Yaffe (1979) speaks of the strains that the emotionally disturbed children can place on normal children, which may account for the fact that slow learners and educable mentally retarded students adjust better socially in mainstreamed classes than do the emotionally disturbed students (Carlberg & e, 1980). As predicted by both regular and special class teachers, handicapped students encounter more difficulty in adjusting behaviorally in the regular class than they do academically (Hanrahan, Goodman, & Rapagna, 1985).

Some recent research indicates that social behavior of handicapped students does improve in integrated classrooms. Gottlieb, Gampel, and Budoff (1975, cited by Keogh & Levitt, 1976) found that integrated educable mentally retarded students displayed a much more positive attitude toward school and more prosocial behavior than did those students in special class. Guerin and Szatlocky (1974) found that retarded students placed in the mainstream behaved as "normally" as their regular classmates.

It would seem that there exists a positive relationship between the amount of time the handicapped students is integrated and the degree of acceptance received. According to Guerin and Szatlocky (1974) students who were fully integrated into the regular classroom were viewed by teachers as full classroom members for which they had "normal" expectations. Students who were only partially integrated were viewed as "visitors" in the classroom.

As for the non-handicapped child, Turnbull and Schultz (1979) state that it is only when the non-handicapped student has been exposed to the handicapped that he can ever learn to respect their differences. Based on recent studies, Vacc and Kirst (1977) have generalized that the more contact a non-handicapped child has with handicapped children, the more positive the attitude toward these

children. It is further generalized that the more positive the attitude of the non-handicapped, the more positive the classroom climate becomes and thus, the more willing the non-handicapped is to help his handicapped classmate adjust and function in a regular class (Salend, 1984). It becomes the teacher's responsibility to convey an attitude of respect and appreciation for the handicapped child that will, in turn, create a climate of acceptance and tolerance in the classroom (Strain & Kerr, 1981).

Factors Affecting Levels of Administrative and Support Services

Support services, viewed by teachers as crucial to the success of mainstreaming, take the form of administrative, specialist and paraprofessional support. Teachers alone do not have all the skills and resources necessary to implement the mainstreaming policy successfully (Turnbull & Schultz, 1979). Robichaud and Enns (1980) state that it is imperative that teachers receive both encouragement and support from the administration. Numerous studies have shown a significant positive correlation between teacher attitude administrative support.

Larrivee and Cook (1979) reported that teachers were generally accepting of special students if they could rely on the necessary support from other personnel. They also found that the degree of success perceived by teachers was significantly positively correlated with the level of administrative support and availability of support services. Mandell (1977) postulated that factors relating to attitude seemed to be controlled within the administrative structure of most schools. Payne and Murray (1974) concur that it is the administrator who sets the affective tone and outlines policies and procedures within the school.

Furthermore, Cruickshank (1974) views the variables over which the administration has control as essential for successful implementation of mainstreaming. Among these are the reduction in student range variables within a class. Both Cruickshank (1974) and Karagianis and Nesbit (1983) believe that reduced class size is indicative of administrative support.

This view is again substantiated by Moore and Fine (1978) who support the notion that school principals exercise substantial control over the availability of services and resources. Teachers in this study viewed the amount of services and resources allocated to the program as an indication of its importance to administrators.

A study by Marrin (1986) indicated high correlations between teacher stress and availability of administrative support and between attitude and availability of administrative support.

A significant number of teachers have indicated that problems exist with the lack of administrative support and support services. A study by Brown (1981) collaborates the following statement expressed by Keogh and Levitt (1976): "Unfortunately, support services for children and teachers in mainstreaming placements have frequently been variable, often limited and sometimes missing entirely" (p. 4).

Hasazi, Rice, and York (1979) contend that the classroom teacher may not have the skills and knowledge required to teach the handicapped student effectively and will, therefore, require the assistance of specialists. Teachers express a need for such support in numerous studies (Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974; Mitzel, 1985; Turnbull & Schultz, 1979).

Mainstreaming is viewed by many as a shared responsibility, and that, as a team, through cooperation and communication, progress can be made (Salend, 1984). An important team member is the special education teacher whose role it

is to provide specific instruction on learning tasks where difficulties have been experienced by students (Stephens et al., 1983). Turnbull and Schultz (1979) perceive the role of the special education teacher as a resource person to the handicapped child and to the classroom teacher, providing suggestions, and helping to adapt the curriculum and instructional techniques to the handicapped child in the regular classroom. Mandell and Strain (1978) found that the availability of a resource teacher was a significant predictor of the regular teacher's attitude toward mainstreaming.

According to Hohn and Brownlee (1981, cited by Hohn, 1985), school principals believed that the major responsibility for the handicapped child's education fell to the special education teacher, yet regular teachers perceived themselves as shouldering most of the responsibility.

A persistent and critical issue for teachers which causes frustration and variation is the need to manage students with behavior problems (Rich, 1980, cited by Schifani, Anderson, & Odle, 1980). Teachers surveyed by Brown (1981) indicated the lack of support for handling severe discipline problems and a need for more careful screening in placing students. Shotel et al. (1972) speculated that teachers involved in an experimental study, previously exhibited positive attitudes became negative due to the lack of support they had received with difficult students. A study by Herron et al. (1970, cited by Schifani et al., 1980) indicated that teachers wanted more than just test scores on psychology tests. Teachers disclosed that concrete suggestions on how to handle the child were needed. These requests are in keeping with Sabatino's (1971) belief that psychologists should not only be prepared to screen children educationally and behaviorally, but that they should also be prepared to offer concrete suggestions to teachers.

An examination of the effects of inservice training on regular teachers by Harasymiw and Horne (1975) revealed that teachers who had had inservice

training developed more positive attitudes and felt that they were better prepared to meet the challenge of mainstreaming. Similar results were obtained in a study by Larrivee (1981). Mori (1979) suggests:

> Teachers are able to and will identify the professional skills they feel they need in order to establish, implement and maintain quality education in settings where handicapped youngsters are integrated. There seems to be one key factor which has emerged from studies regarding the components which makes mainstreaming effective--the need for quality inservice education. (p. 248)

Denker's (1983) study supported the proposition that teachers are aware of their deficiencies and want inservice education in order to better prepare themselves.

Paraprofessionals such as classroom aides or volunteers are viewed as a necessity by teachers if the needs of every child are to be met (D'Angelo, 1981; Karagianis & Nesbit, 1983). Turnbull and Schultz (1979) agree that paraprofessionals can contribute significantly to the quality and quantity of individualized instruction.

Turnbull and Schultz (1979) sum up the responsibilities of school jurisdictions in providing teachers with emotional and educational support:

> The implementation of mainstreaming is a complex educational task which requires a team approach. Many school systems have expected classroom teachers magically to have all the skills and time to accomplish the successful mainstreaming of students representing the full range of educational handicaps--in most cases an impossible expectation for teachers. A second approach to mainstreaming requires shared responsibility on the part of all educators in the school. (p. 66)

Problems and Concerns

Teachers face numerous problems and concerns arising from the between philosophy and practice (Kavanagh, 1977). These problems an concerns evolve from attempting to meet the needs of handicapped student the mainstream.

Many studies have provided evidence of the lack of confidence teachers have in their abilities to successfully integrate handicapped children (Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Mitzel, 1985; Stephens & Braun, 1980). According to Turnbull and Schultz (1979) teachers consistently ask for guidance in individualizing instruction, assessing the student's level of achievement, and ways to manage behavior problems. Other studies have shown that as teachers increase their knowledge and gain specific skills on how to teach handicapped children, they become more supportive of mainstreaming practices (Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Harasymiw & Horne, 1975; Larrivee, 1982). A need for inservice training voiced by teachers further substantiates the lack of confidence they have in their skills (Denker, 1983; Mori, 1979).

Teachers express grave concerns about the availability of support services (Karagianis & Nesbit, 1983). Numerous studies indicate a strong correlation between teacher attitude and the degree of support services rendered by a jurisdiction (Brown, 1981; Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Mitzel, 1985). Kavanagh (1977) stresses that provision must be made for aides and paraprofessionals within the classroom. Smaller class size is also viewed by teachers as imperative if students are to receive the individual help they require (Brown, 1981; Cruickshank, 1974). Support services have long been recognized as an essential component of mainstreaming programs (Guerin & Szatlocky, 1974; Keogh & Levitt, 1976; Turnbull & Schultz, 1979).

Problems encountered by teachers in communicating with the specialist hired to provide services to the handicapped child and to the classroom teachers were observed by Seaton, Lasky, and Seaton (1974). They state; "unfortunately at times the teacher's task may be compounded rather than assisted by the help and guidance of their specialist" (p. 90). This communication gap is also referred to by Salend (1984). He states that the collaborative effort should go beyond the

handicapped students' initial placement into the regular classroom. It is the responsibility of special education personnel to follow up with support and consultative services. Seaton et al. (1974) contend that too often formal evaluations performed by school psychologists simply label the child or describe the problem. Furthermore, they are often filled with terminology unfamiliar to the teacher, with few specific guidelines that can be helpful to the teacher in a classroom situation. Seaton et al.'s (1974) observations are reiterated by Keogh and Levitt (1976) who reported that school psychologists were well qualified to test, but that almost none were experts in classroom management and remedial curriculum planning and even fewer had expertise in facilitating the social aspects of the program.

Further evidence relating to a lack of communication was disclosed by Keogh and Levitt (1976). They reported that out of some 400 teachers surveyed, only a few were aware of the resources and support services within or outside their school. Similarly, Gickling and Theobald (1975) gathered that regular classroom teachers were not informed about practices and programs for the mentally handicapped when 60% of the teachers admitted that they were not familiar with the information on the questionnaire.

Teachers encounter problems in evaluating and assigning grades to handicapped students (Cohen, 1983). A dilemma arises for the teacher when she is confronted with rigid school board policies on the one hand, and fairness to the student on the other (Stainback et al., 1985). Stephens et al. (1982) echo Cohen's (1983) concern by stating that evaluation for the handicapped child should not be based on competition between students, but rather on individual accomplishment.

The element of time is perceived as a major problem for the regular teacher (Turnbull & Schultz, 1979). Gallent (1981) believes that handicapped students who are significantly below grade level require a tremendous amount of

individual instruction. This results in less teaching time for the regular student. The teacher faces another dilemma when a choice in priorities must be made. Kavanagh (1977) questions the fairness of a program that meets the needs of one group of children to the detriment of another.

Mainstreaming has meant additional responsibilities for the regular classroom teacher (Seaton et al., 1974; Turnbull & Schultz, 1979). "Burnout," emotional and physical exhaustion, has become a serious problem among teachers due to the heavy demands of mainstreaming (Freudenberger, 1977; Marslach, 1978; Weiskopf, 1980, all cited by Crisci, 1980). Recent studies have linked the lack of administrative support with the amount of stress experienced by teachers (Hohn, 1985; Marrin, 1986). In addition, Hohn (1985) reported that teachers experienced stress and frustration when their students did not reach academic goals. Morse (1972, cited by Hohn, 1985) suggests that in order to control feelings of anxiety and stress, teachers need to come to terms with the fact that they cannot "cure" nor "overcome" the handicap, and that learning to live in the classroom setting should be the goal set out for the handicapped child. Hohn (1985) contends that, though difficult to implement, stress can be eliminated by reevaluating the teacher's role, the child's potential and a supportive educational system.

Mainstreaming is a reality; a reality which the regular classroom teacher must face. Not only do many benefits lie within this reality for the handicapped child, but also many problems. Among them, teacher attitudes. Because the ultimate success of mainstreaming is attributed to the supportive, open attitude of the regular teacher, it is imperative to have an understanding of how these attitudes are shaped. The following conceptual framework endeavors to look at factors involved in shaping teacher attitude.

Conceptual Framework

The recent adoption of the mainstreaming policy in Canada has been as a result of several cultural and social factors. Canadian society adheres to the philosophical value of equality and justice for all. It is from this belief that mainstreaming policy has evolved. Hence, mainstreaming was initiated to provide handicapped children with equal opportunity to achieve personal fulfillment and success in Alberta jurisdictions. Handicapped policy is elaborated and achieved through organizational, social and economic context of the school (Figure 1).

The two moving factors which have been identified are teacher attitude and teacher training. Central to the success of integrating handicapped children are teacher attitudes. Not only have teacher attitudes been attributed to the handicapped child's academic achievement, but also to the overall classroom climate which dictates peer acceptance and ultimately, the child's self-image (Rauer, 1979; Schifani et al., 1980; Shapiro, 1979).

Turnbull and Schultz (1979) state:

> It has been documented over and over again that teacher's view of the student is a strong force in determining the nature and the interaction between the teacher and student and, in turn, the students' achievement. The teacher constantly communicates important messages to the student about his attitude toward individual differences. It becomes obvious to all students whether the teacher favors the high-achieving students: feels respect, pity, or disgust for students who have special problems; believes that every person has inherent value or is prejudiced against people who are different. Teachers generally are far more transparent than they might believe. Both in verbal and non-verbal ways, a teacher's behavior can substantially affect the manner in which a handicapped student views himself and the manner in which the nonhandicapped peers view the handicapped student. (p. 340)

Attitudes have long been recognized as a stumbling block to successful implementation of mainstreaming. Robichaud and Enns (1980) claim that without positive attitudes of key people, one of whom is the regular teacher, integration is "almost doomed to failure from the start" (p. 205).

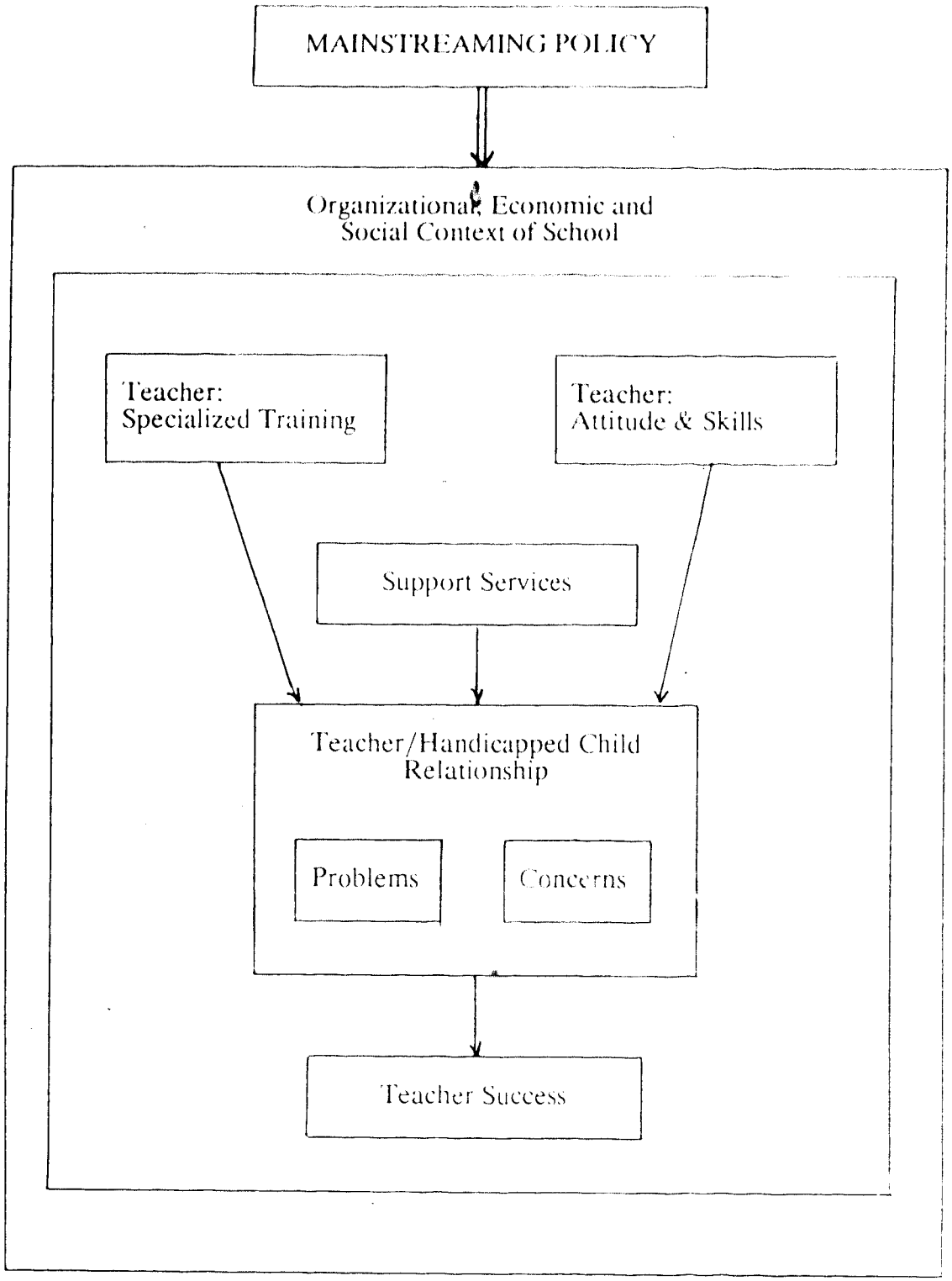
MAINSTREAMING POLICY
Organizational, Economic and Social Context of School
Teacher: Specialized Training
Teacher: Attitude & Skills
Support Services
Teacher/Handicapped Child Relationship
Problems
Concerns
Teacher Success

Figure 1

Research has linked a number of variables to teacher receptivity of the handicapped student. These variables can be classified into two major areas: educational background and institutional factors.

Mandell and Strain (1978) isolated five educational background factors relating to teacher attitude. They are: the years of teaching experience (negative correlation), courses on diagnosing learning and behavior problems, previous special education teaching experience, number of university courses on exceptional children, and participation in inservice programs. Three classroom variables were isolated. These were: team teaching, availability of resource teacher and a class size of less than 27 students enrolled. Factors relating to teacher attitude categorized by Mandell and Strain (1978) correspond to the results of numerous other studies (Gickling & Theobald, 1975; Harasymiw & Horne, 1975; Larrivee & Cook, 1979; Stephens & Braun, 1980).

The regular teacher not only brings her attitudes to the integrated classroom, but also the specialized training she has acquired from her university and inservice training.

Turnbull and Schultz (1979) note that mainstreaming requires skills and knowledge vastly different from the training they have received, and that teachers voice concern for that which they lack. The researchers noted that in their experience regular teachers ask for more information on assessing a student's level of achievement, strategies for individualizing instruction, the use of appropriate instructional materials and ways to manage behavior problems.

Teachers find themselves in a new and expanding role with the minimum of skills. McIntosh (1979) contends that for years handicapped children were viewed as needing special services beyond what could be provided for in the regular classroom. The implication was that the regular teacher did not have the expertise and skill needed to educate these children. Now, the regular classroom

teacher is not only capable, but is given the main responsibility of educating handicapped children.

Paralleling these views, Cruickshank (1983) questions where teachers have acquired their overnight expertise on the complexities of learning disabilities. He points out: "it has not been in the normal course of the general elementary teacher's preparation" (p. 195).

Little (1980) alleges that not all certified teachers are qualified to meet the wide range of individual differences involved in mainstreaming. Hence, he views the acquisition of these skills as part of the basic preparation of all teachers.

Inservice training which has facilitated skill training has promoted confidence among teachers in integrating handicapped children. A study by Harasymiw and Horne (1975) examined the effects of teacher retraining workshops on the attitude of teachers. After one year's exposure to integrated programming and retraining, the experimental teachers expressed significantly more positive attitudes than did the control teachers. They felt that modifications could be more readily made to programs in order to meet the needs of the handicapped child, and that major changes in the regular classroom were not always necessary when integrating students in the regular classroom. Neither did the experimental teachers view integration as harmful to normal students. Furthermore, researchers noted that the teachers involved in retraining felt that they were adequately trained to instruct the exceptional learners.

A third factor identified from the research is the level of support services available (Figure 1). The Report of the Early Childhood Services' Task Force on Teacher Competence (1976) recognizes the need for teachers to have strong support services in place.

> While teachers require the knowledge and skills to identify special needs and to implement appropriate programs they are not themselves specialists

and cannot provide for unusual needs without resources and consultation. (p. 13)

Thus, support services are viewed as an integral part of the mainstreaming process for regular teachers who may not have the necessary skills and knowledge to teach the handicapped students. Specialists may be needed to help design, implement and evaluate instructional procedures (Hasazi et al., 1979).

Furthermore, Bradfield (1976) recognizes the added workload that the handicapped child can create for the regular teacher. He believes that this additional responsibility should be balanced off in the form of additional human and material resources.

McIntosh (1979) warns that if no in-depth supervisory support services are available, a loss of faith in the total mainstreaming concept will ensue.

Research indicates a strong relationship between a willingness to integrate handicapped students and the availability of support services. A study by Moore and Fine (1978) which set out to investigate stereotypic behavioral perceptions of teachers found that the presence or absence of resource personnel significantly influenced teachers' responses.

Results showed that all teachers were in favor of accepting the learning disabled child for half or all day and the majority of educable mentally handicapped and learning disabled teachers were in favor of accepting these children all day, if they had auxiliary help. In contrast, the majority of regular classroom teachers felt that they could only help the learning disabled child for a part of the day without outside help. Teachers of learning disabled students were in less agreement about full time ment of retarded children if resource personnel were not available. Regular classroom teachers emphatically rejected mainstreaming retarded children without aid from resource personnel.

Thus, availability of support services has considerable impact on teacher attitudes toward mainstreaming. In addition, the extent to which problems and concerns arising from the mainstreaming process is addressed is dependent upon the administrative, specialist and paraprofessional support received.

In addition to the factors of attitude, training and support services that have been identified in Figure 1, a fourth factor exists, that of the teacher-student relationship. The regular classroom teacher, possessing attitude and skills, meets the handicapped student in the integrated classroom. Handicapped chiilren, with their strengths and weaknesses, are a strong determinant of the success of the mainstreaming policy.

The "least restrictive environment" implies that handicapped children with individual needs should be placed in the classroom which allows maximum growth in learning and development (Sunderlin, 1979). However, Brockman (1982, cited by Waters, 1979), believes that integration is less effective as the developmental gap widens, thus maximizing growth becomes more difficult.

Proponents of the mainstreaming movement believe that greater opportunities to achieve, both academically and socially, exist in regular classrooms. However, only controversial and inconclusive data exist as to the academic superiority of one placement over another. Consequently, two schools of thought exist. One believes that classrooms containing large numbers of children lessen the individual time and increase the opportunity for failure, detrimental to the child's self-image. The other believes that regular classrooms with an abundance of role models and social interaction will improve academic functioning (Abramson, 1980).

Upon examining 40 years of efficacy research, Strain and Kerr (1981) concluded that three general trends were present. First, that educable mentally retarded children in special classes do not appear to demonstrate significantly

better educational achievement than educable mentally retarded children in regular class placement.

The researchers hypothesize that the academic competition inherent in regular classrooms contributes, in some way, to better academic achievement for the handicapped. Other factors which seem to contribute to this trend are variation in curriculum content and selective placement.

A second general trend in efficacy research denoted that those children who received individualized instruction produced superior academic results. The authors point out that this type of effective individualization was demonstrated in regular classrooms where "tutor-like" services were available.

The third general trend involves the consistency with which educable mentally retarded children in any setting achieve below expected grade level. The authors contend that a number of critical educational issues are derived from this last trend.

One of the major tenets of the mainstreaming movement is that handicapped children are provided with stimulating peer interaction through peer acceptance. This belief has failed to be supported by [redacted] researchers (Bryan, 1974; Ellis, 1978; Siefert, 1981). A vast majority of the sociometric research on educable mentally retarded children indicates that individuals who are more visible to the non-retarded peers are more often rejected than those educable mentally retarded students who are isolated.

Goodman, Gottlieb, and Harrison (1972) surveyed 20 male and 20 female elementary school children. Three groups of children were involved in the study: non-educable mentally retarded children, educable mentally retarded children who had been integrated in regular classrooms, and educable mentally retarded children in self-contained, special education classrooms. The purpose of the study was to investigate the social acceptance of the educable mentally retarded

student. The results which were quite contrary to what was hypothesized, indicated that educable mentally retarded children were chosen less often as friends and rejected more often than non-educable mentally retarded youngsters. Furthermore, integrated educable mentally retarded children were rejected more often than segregated youngsters by males, but not by females.

Data suggested that as the amount of time spent in integrated settings increased, the retarded child's social standing will diminish accordingly.

Studies replicated by Gottlieb and Budoff (1973) and by Gottlieb and Davis (1973) found that integrated educable mentally retarded children held a lower social position and were rejected more frequently than those educable mentally retarded children in a segregated setting. Hence, it was concluded that increased contact between educable mentally retarded children and normal children does not necessarily lead to social acceptance of retarded youngsters.

The authors proposed that the increased rejection of integrated educable mentally retarded children was a result of their being perceived as non retarded, thus it was expected that their behaviors would conform to that of their normal peers. Further investigations revealed that perceived behavior, and not the amount of time spent in the regular classroom was a major predictor of social status. Furthermore, academic competence as perceived by teachers and peers was found to be related to the degree of social acceptance.

Bruininks (1978, cited in Stephens et al., 1982), states that if the disabled student hopes to obtain acceptance from his peers then he must be able to meet the implicit and explicit behavioral expectations of the regular classroom.

Nevertheless, the degree of acceptance can be improved between the two groups, and it becomes vital to develop strategies to prepare and orient the handicapped student for the demands of the regular classroom, both behaviorally and academically (Salend, 1984).

The mainstreaming policy can best be described as an interrelationship between teacher, handicapped child and support services (Figure 1). In an attempt to implement the mainstreaming policy within the social context of the school, the teacher brings to the relationship with the handicapped child, her specialized training, as well as skills and attitudes. As the teacher endeavors to meet the needs of the child, problems and concerns arise. Research indicates that these problems and concerns experienced by teachers are best met through various support services both within and outside the school jurisdiction. It is only by overcoming these problems and concerns that teachers are able to feel successful in the mainstreaming process. Therefore, the degree of success, as perceived by the teacher, is directly related to the availability of support services.

Summary

In this chapter I have discussed numerous issues related to mainstreaming. The literature identified the following topics: historical background, factors influencing teacher attitude, factors affecting integration of the handicapped child, factors affecting levels of administrative and support services, and problems and concerns. Subsequently, I have tied these topics into a conceptual framework which attempts to link together factors which contribute to the success of mainstreaming; the complex interrelationships of teacher, handicapped child and support services. What these relationships mean for the classroom teacher is the focus of this study.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter contains a review of the overall design of the research in general. Data sources are described, processes involved in data collection are explained and analysis of the data is outlined.

Design of the Study

This study, which is interpretive in nature, is designed to provide insight and understanding into the realities facing regular classroom teachers as they attempt to mainstream handicapped students, and does not seek to draw conclusions or generalizations. The focus of this study was the regular classroom teacher who must put theory into practice as she attempts to integrate handicapped children.

A qualitative approach was used in order to obtain subjective, first hand data that would provide insight and understanding into the problems and concerns arising from integration of handicapped children into a regular classroom. Interviews with regular classroom teachers with mainstreaming experience were conducted in order to obtain the necessary data. The interview checklist which was used as a guide was developed from the review of the literature and the conceptual framework.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted with three regular classroom teachers involved in mainstreaming in a rural elementary school. The pilot study enabled me to

check the utility and appropriateness of each question associated with items on the checklist and to further expand on it in a meaningful way.

Data Sources

This interpretive study sought to gain insight and understanding into the problems and concerns of elementary teachers when integrating handicapped children. Because indepth information was crucial to this study, I chose to interview regular classroom teachers who were willing to share their experiences in mainstreaming.

Twenty-three regular classroom teachers were interviewed, 19 of whom were female and 4 were male. All grades between one and six were represented and evenly distributed between primary (Grades 1 to 3) and elementary (Grades 4 to 6). All but two teachers were integrating at least one handicapped child at the time of the interview. The two remaining teachers had obtained their experience within the previous three years. The teachers, whose teaching experience ranged from 3 to 21 years, were presently, or had mainstreamed children with a diversity of handicaps.

The teachers who were interviewed represented 10 rural school jurisdictions and 15 schools. The variety of school jurisdictions and schools from which teachers were chosen ensured that the views conveyed were not reflective of the mainstreaming practices of a single district.

Procedure

In early spring I wrote to the superintendents of 13 Alberta school jurisdictions in order to obtain permission to conduct my study within their jurisdictions. In addition, I requested a contact person who could identify teachers with mainstreaming experience in the schools.

Within a few weeks I received six favourable responses which I immediately followed up. Two more weeks passed. Having received no other responses, I called the superintendents directly and arranged appointments. It had occurred to me that since mainstreaming was quite a contentious issue in rural areas, a personal visit might be in order. Armed with my proposal, I proceeded to do just that! After giving further explanations and assurances of confidentiality, I received permission from four more superintendents.

As I received permission from each superintendent, I proceeded to make contacts which would eventually lead me to teachers. The contact person given to me by the superintendents varied from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. Some superintendents referred me to the director of student personnel, while others referred me directly to the principals.

I contacted the person to whom I was directed, described the nature of my study, and requested assistance in locating teachers. At this point I received some opposition to the term "handicapped child" which I had chosen for the purpose of my research. The term I had chosen, after careful deliberation and consultation with resource room teachers, regular classroom teachers and my advisor, was: "a child for whom a significant adaptation must be made to either the regular program or to the classroom setting in order to meet the child's needs." Numerous principals limited their definition of a handicapped child to one who is physically disabled. Though I attempted to justify my definition, I am unsure to what degree this may have influenced the selection of teachers by the principals. It is worth noting that the teachers interviewed had no difficulty with my definition.

Eventually, I was given the names of 36 possible candidates. I had intended to write to the teachers at the outset, but I found that the whole process of locating teachers had taken longer than I had anticipated. Therefore, I

contacted them by telephone. Of the 36 names that had been submitted, 27 were found to fit the criteria set out and 23 granted permission to be interviewed. I set up appointments to interview teachers at a time and a place convenient to them. I held my first interview during the first week of April. Twenty-two interviews followed within six weeks.

Data Collection

The Interview

Teachers who consented to be interviewed were pleasant and willing participants. With one exception, all interviews were held at the school in a private setting. This seemed most convenient for teachers. The interviews, which lasted between 25 and 60 minutes each, were held at various times during the day. Some teachers preferred being interviewed during their preparation time, others preferred after school, and a few were given release time by their principals.

The interview, which was taped, began quite informally. I briefly outlined the nature of my research and reassured them of the confidentiality and anonymity with which the interview would be treated. We chatted briefly about my interest in mainstreaming and my reasons for choosing it as the topic for my thesis.

As I turned on the tape recorder, I asked each teacher to tell me about his/her experiences in mainstreaming handicapped children. Some teachers were a little uneasy knowing that the conversation was being taped. However, as we progressed, its presence was soon forgotten. Teachers appeared very eager to share their experiences and their feelings with me. For a few individuals, the conversation seemed almost therapeutic.

As the interview progressed I paid particular attention to the kinds of messages teachers were sending, both positive and negative. I watched closely for

signs of anxiety and stress which could be identified through the tone of their voice or through body language.

A checklist was used during the interview to ensure that all major areas were covered. I also made use of paraphrasing in order to clarify my understanding of what the teacher had said. At the end of the interview the tape recorder was turned off and I invited any questions.

Data Analysis

In order to make sense of the transcript data I had collected from 23 interviews, I decided to use content analysis. Because my research was mainly concerned with a specific problem, the analytic induction method seemed to be the most appropriate method of analyzing the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982).

Upon completion of the interviews, I transcribed each fully. After several readings in consultation with the tape, I summarized each transcript. This report was then sent to the teacher to read, asking them to make any necessary additions, deletions or corrections. In this way I conducted a perception check to assure accuracy. I noted any changes that had been made by the teachers on the transcript.

At this point I began by reading and rereading each transcript, trying to extract a clear picture of each teacher and their concerns, and, at the same time, looking for themes that would emerge. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 23) describe how "one generates conceptual categories or their properties from evidence; then the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept." These recurring themes would serve to provide insights into one small, but significant part of the human side of mainstreaming.

As I read each transcript I marked off and named potential categories of themes evolving from the conversations. Slowly, as I read, it became evident that

many of the themes were recurring. Many of these recurring themes had been identified in the literature. Others had not and, therefore, new categories were created. Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 30) point out "a single case can be the basis of a category: a few more can confirm the insight."

Once the data were categorized, coded and a copy made, I used Agar's (1980) suggestion and cut the transcripts into segments of conversation. By doing so, I was able to physically manipulate the data into varying categories as I saw fit. This was extremely helpful to me as I endeavoured to present the "evidence" and to achieve a flow within each category.

Establishing Trustworthiness

In order to establish the credibility of my research the taped transcripts were summarized and returned to each teacher for verification, corrections and elaboration. A further member check with my supervisor provided an examination of the categories which had emerged. Lastly, peer debriefing involving four teachers who were not part of the study confirmed the accuracy and appropriateness of the realities I had presented.

Transferability of the research was addressed in the respondents identified. Though all teachers taught at the elementary level, they represented 10 school jurisdictions and 15 schools in rural areas of Alberta. Furthermore, a wide range of years of experience and education was represented. Most importantly teachers interviewed taught a full range of physically and mentally handicapped children.

Lastly, the steps which I have taken in both the data collection and data analysis have been accurately outlined in this chapter and can be traced back to the original data, thus allowing a confirmability audit.

Ethical Considerations

Permission from superintendents of each school jurisdiction was obtained at the outset of my research. I also received permission from principals to contact the teachers they had identified. Teachers who consented to the interviews were assured that all data would be aggregated in writing up the results and that no jurisdiction, school, or teacher would be named in the results, thus assuring confidentiality and anonymity.

Summary

The instrument and procedure described in this chapter were designed to gather information on the problems and concerns facing teachers who are attempting to mainstream handicapped children. Twenty-three regular classroom teachers were interviewed to obtain indepth information that would provide insight into this issue. A detailed description of the procedure followed to locate teachers with mainstreaming experience is provided, and details of the indepth interviews which were conducted are cited. Lastly, an overview of the analytic induction method used in analyzing the data is presented.

Chapter 4

PROBLEMS TEACHERS IDENTIFIED

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the perspective of regular classroom teachers who must deal with the realities of integrating handicapped children into their regular classrooms. It is hoped that the shared experiences may promote greater understanding, insight and discovery of implications for further study and policies relating to school administration.

Themes have surfaced from the analysis of the data taken from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with regular classroom teachers. More specifically, the teachers' perspectives are presented through themes that have emerged in an attempt to answer the following questions.

1. What problems are teachers experiencing in implementing the mainstreaming policy?

2. What are teachers' concerns in implementing the mainstreaming policy?

Teachers' responses, in support of the developed themes, are presented through the use of paraphrasing, supported by direct quotations. Quotations are single spaced and edited to exclude irrelevant pauses, and insignificant comments and words. Pseudonyms have been used to assure anonymity. However, of foremost importance, I have edited with full awareness of the intent of the quotations.

Description of Teachers

Twenty-three regular classroom teachers with mainstreaming experience were interviewed. These teachers, 19 female and 4 males, taught at the elementary level (Grades 1 through 6) representing 10 rural school jurisdictions and 15 schools.

All areas of teacher training were represented. Three had received training in ECS, 15 in elementary, 4 in secondary and 1 in special education.

Of the 23 teachers interviewed, 19 held a B.Ed. degree, while 2 held graduate diplomas and 2 had one year of teacher training.

Length of teaching experience ranged from 3 to 21 years. The groups were evenly divided in terms of years of experience: those with less than 10 years' experience, those with 11-15 years' experience and those with over 15 years experience (Table 1). The distribution for each category is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Length of Teaching Experience
(n = 23)

Length	Number of Teachers	Percentage (%)
Under 10 years	7	30.4
11 - 15 years	8	34.7
Over 15 years	8	34.7

All but two teachers were involved in integrating handicapped students at the time of the interview. Hence, teachers related current experiences, though in many instances, the teachers reflected on past experiences as well. The two

teachers not currently involved in mainstreaming shared their past experiences which had occurred within the previous three years.

The experiences related by the teachers were drawn from a wide array of the mainstreaming situations likely to involve the classroom teacher. Though some teachers were unaware of the child's specific "label," all teachers were aware of the child's specific difficulty. These experiences included the integration of moderate and severely learning disabled children, both trainable mentally handicapped (TMH) and educable mentally handicapped (EMH) students, sensory impaired children (hearing impaired and visually impaired), physically disabled children functioning at grade level and children who were of extremely limited mental ability. Also mentioned were mainstreaming situations involving three emotionally disturbed children and one Down's Syndrome child.

Problems Experienced in Implementing Mainstreaming

In response to the question: What problems are teachers experiencing in implementing the mainstreaming policy?, I have isolated 10 thematic categories. In order of their presentation in this chapter, the categories are: time; timetabling; the attitude of the handicapped student; support services; administrative support; formal assessments; need for paraprofessionals; workload and classroom preparation; class size; and sharing information.

Time

A monumental problem repeatedly cited by teachers was that of "time." It was a reality faced by teachers integrating handicapped children in the regular classroom.

> Well, my main concern is the time it takes you with the amount of students we're being expected to deal with, and the amount of time it takes to deal with a child who you're mainstreaming, and give them what's fair for them, and that's an awful lot more than what they're entitled to as a percentage

> of a 40 minute period. There's simply not enough time and there's not enough support available to free you for that time so that you still have time for the other students. That's where I'm really running into trouble.

Without exception, teachers agreed that the mentally handicapped child or the child who was sensory impaired required a great deal of "extra time." That "extra time" took the form of one on one or small group teaching, extra preparation, and meetings and consultations with relevant personnel.

Through experience, teachers found that these handicapped students needed reteaching at a slower pace, more repetition and exposure to concepts, and more guidance and direction in completing assignments. In addition, handicapped students were often very dependent on assistance and had few independent work habits. A Grade 5 teacher integrating three severely handicapped children stated:

> They are so different. They are all on different levels and I make up pretty well individual plans and they have to be helped on everything. Absolutely everything!

Another teacher at the Grade 2 level who was integrating an educable mentally handicapped (EMH) child spoke of the difficulty he had had in keeping the child occupied on any meaningful assignment during the time that he taught his regular class. The child, who was "no where near" his peers academically, could not work independently because he needed someone to read directions and to instruct him on each step. Because the teacher had a large class with numerous low average students who were also experiencing difficulty, the teacher found that he could not find the time to spend with him, and as a result, felt that the child was not receiving the instruction he needed to progress.

A similar problem was faced by a Grade 3 teacher who felt that there was a real problem in continually interrupting a lesson to help the handicapped child on the task she was doing. However, the teacher explained as no aide had been allocated, if the child did not receive any help from her, the child would just sit,

but by the same token, the continual interruptions were very distracting both for herself and her students.

Other teachers confided that they had difficulty, and in some cases, could not, meet the needs of the handicapped child or children they were integrating because of the time demanded from the regular classroom.

One teacher pointed out that there were 26 other students in her classroom and of those 26, 5 or 6 children were low ability students, though not considered handicapped, who needed her help as well. Therefore, as the regular classroom teacher she could not concentrate all her efforts on the handicapped children in her room--"It was impossible and simply not fair!"

One teacher put it this way:

> But having 18 kids that are capable of getting through the curriculum and seven that aren't and then with the TMH kids coming in, you just don't have time for those TMH kids, really it's basically what happens.

Another stated:

> If he didn't do the special things that I had for him, then he'd be quite content to sit. That's usually what he did, you know, that type of thing, because when you've got a whole classroom full of the rest, and especially at the Grade 1 level, you don't have that much time for any of them for an extended period of time without someone coming up and interrupting . . .

Also:

> I hate to say it, but it's true, I don't give him near the attention that he needs. I don't spend as much time as he needs.

A Grade 3 teacher voiced her frustrations in knowing that the two handicapped children she was integrating could do better academically if she used an alternate teaching strategy, but because of a lack of time she found she was unable to carry these out. The teacher explained that she had been successful in using dramatizations in getting some concepts across to these children. However, this teaching strategy was very time consuming both in planning and presenting,

and she had to face the realities of the curriculum. It was impossible to pursue this strategy on a continual basis.

Similar problems were voiced by a primary teacher who contended that the handicapped child needed a lot more "hands on" experiences in order to learn concepts. The teacher found it very difficult, if not impossible at times, to monitor the child so that the "hands on" approach was more than just "play" and that learning was taking place. Again, reference was made to the time that was needed by her regular class which was well into the twenties.

One teacher spoke of the frustration she felt in not having time to help everyone:

> I feel frustrated because it's hard for them to learn and you have to learn and you have to repeat and expose and go over and over, and they do need one to one assistance. In the meantime, you've planned work for other groups and if they're stuck you almost say "Well hold your problems til tomorrow, I'm not scheduled to work with that group." It's really hard.

Teachers spoke of the dilemma of choosing where to spend one's time--with the handicapped children or with the regular class.

> . . . because I spend so much time with Rob, Mark and Marian and all the other ones that . . . I don't know how he's doing, or how she's doing. After that I'll probably spend five or six days really concentrating my effort on the ones that do get neglected because they're coping. And then the other ones start falling behind again so, it's just--it's cyclical really.

As a result, teachers doubt their choices.

> I find myself spending more time with those seven than with all the rest of them together and I feel like I'm cheating the rest of them and yet, I know that if I don't spend that amount with these kids they're not going to accomplish a whole lot, because they can do things that we can do, they can learn the concepts, if you're with them.

Another teacher explained her feelings this way:

> I have 25--I have 15 that can get through the curriculum, although they are out of the low average or below average students. So I'm trying to get those ones through, and then I have these other eight and I don't have the time to spend with them. I guess it's more of a guilt, I feel guilty because I can't spend the time with them that they need.

Pressures of school boards and parents were referred to by one primary teacher who explained that each parent wanted the teacher to spend her time with "my child because he has difficulty or because she is very clever, or whatever--." There simply wasn't the time to accommodate the whole continuum and as a result, one taught to the middle, often neglecting both the handicapped and the gifted on the extreme ends of that continuum.

Many teachers questioned who had priority over the teacher's time and what was "fair" to the regular students.

An additional time related problem besetting teachers was the ever-consuming task of meeting with resource room teachers, aides, counsellors and other relevant people associated with the child.

According to one teacher, the beginning of the year was hectic because IEPs (Individualized Educational Programs) had to be set up in coordination with the resource room teacher. This meant finding the time to sit down together and "discuss and discuss and discuss" the child's problems and solutions to those problems. She stated that communication about the child continued mostly on an informal basis at lunch hour and during recess because there was never any time set aside for formal meetings. She added that though meetings and the required record keeping were time consuming, it was an effective method of allowing both teachers to work cooperatively toward the same goal.

"Time" in relation to others was also a very real problem for one teacher who was integrating a blind child, along with four other less severely handicapped children. Many hours were spent in consultation with both the child's aide and her braille instructor. These meetings were held at lunch hour, after school or during her preparation periods taking up much of the time she would normally use for preparing for her regular students. It was her responsibility to see that the child received the total curriculum in braille within a two year period, and

therefore, she had to decide what concepts were important and needed translating. This meant more "time" was needed for thinking and planning.

To add further demands on her time she also met with other relevant personnel involved with her other IEP students as well as with parents in order to gain as much knowledge as she could about each child. She felt that communication was vital but:

> You try your hardest, but you just have to spread yourself that much more thin when you have say five to six different programs that are special to deal with. Not only the students, but all the extra people that become involved in the program.

Timetabling

Timetabling problems were encountered by many teachers who integrated handicapped children attending either resource room or special education rooms and, in some cases, children who received specialized instruction for their disability.

Teachers found that timetables had to be built around the resource room or special education timetables in order to accommodate the handicapped children with maximum effectiveness. However, one teacher pointed out that timetable accommodations are not always made in the best interests of other students. In her case, the prime teaching time (morning) had to be filled with art, health, science, social and music in order to accommodate three special education students who were blocked into the special education in the afternoon. Language arts and math, which in her opinion warranted the students' full attention, were scheduled in the afternoon. This particular teacher was quite discontented about such an arrangement.

Scheduling resource room time for handicapped children presented further problems for teachers and students. Several teachers concurred that students often missed parts of a lesson because they were scheduled for resource room

help. As a result, parts of concepts and at times complete concepts were missed by students posing a real difficulty for the teacher, because it was almost impossible to find the time to reteach the parts of the lesson that were missed. Consequently, students experiencing this problem became confused and lagged even further behind.

Similar difficulties were related by a primary teacher who found that when her "special" student returned to the regular classroom he felt quite "left out" as he was to continue doing work from the resource room until the period was finished. She found that he had a "devil of a time" working independently because the class was doing something different and he wanted to do what the rest were doing.

Another teacher found that her student was often "disruptive" when he returned to the regular class in the middle of a lesson. The student who was not functioning at the same level as the regular student, could not function independently even on a task assigned by the resource room teacher. The teacher found that he became disruptive because she could not be there to help him.

Another problematic area was expressed by a primary teacher who liked to have a "natural" break in a lesson and explained that she hated to break the momentum of a good lesson. At times, when the students were enthusiastic and interested in a language arts lesson, she wanted to continue into a double period and do a double period of social studies the next day. The teacher confessed that although this worked well for the regular students, it was not at all profitable for her handicapped students. She explained that by having a double period these children were lost since they normally did not attend language arts class. Special planning would have been necessary to include these children, but, of course, she did not know in advance that she would continue. Problems multiplied the next day, when she attempted to do a double period of social studies because they were

attending resource room at that time, and thus, served to confuse them even further.

The Attitude of the Handicapped Student

One of the "biggest battles" one upper elementary teacher had to face involved student attitude. She maintained, as did many others, that labelling students was at the root of the problem and that once handicapped students were labelled they resigned themselves to a life of "special treatment, demanding and expecting little of themselves."

As a result of the individualized treatment received from either an aide, resource room or the special education teacher, teachers noted that the attitude of these children was "I can't," and "I don't have to do the assignments given in regular class." It had been her experience that these children were very reluctant to attempt an assignment and that they gave up before even starting.

One primary teacher noted that her handicapped children had become extremely dependent on the resource room teacher. They expected and wanted one to one teaching when they returned to the regular classroom and would continually sit and wait for the teacher for instruction and encouragement. From the teacher's point of view, they were not "risk takers" and had very unrealistic expectations of the regular classroom teacher.

Furthermore, it was feared by one teacher that students sometimes used their disabilities as a crutch or as an excuse to do nothing. Difficulties arose for the teacher in knowing just how much the child used his disabilities as an excuse and how much the child could achieve if "pushed."

Based on her experience with handicapped children, one teacher believed that the expectations on the child decreased when isolation occurred. As a result, because handicapped children were never asked for demands they could not meet,

they felt safe in such an atmosphere. She believed that this lack of expectation for the handicapped child and the continuous individual help did not foster independence and contributed to the child's lack of confidence.

In fact, two teachers who were interviewed reported having the resource room teacher in the classroom working with the handicapped children. This was found to be very effective because the children were given assistance, but shared the "extra help" with other slow students. Thus, the students had to work for short periods of time on their own, before receiving positive reinforcement. Thus, it was felt that the children were developing independent work habits.

This was also the reasoning behind the actions of one teacher who was integrating a profoundly deaf child. She explained that the child's aide helped all the students in the class once the deaf child understood the lesson. Not only would this help the deaf child become more independent, but it would help her realize that she was not the only one who needed help, thus maintaining her self-esteem.

Many teachers reported using aides in this way.

Support Services

There was unanimous agreement among teachers that support services were absolutely necessary if mainstreaming was to be successful in meeting the needs of the handicapped child.

> I think it's very important that there are services set up and support systems, so that the needs of the child are really being met.

> The child ends up being called a failure when, in fact, it is not the child, but the teacher and the whole system who didn't give him what he needed.

Many teachers indicated that they had experienced a serious and very real lack of support. As a result, central office personnel were perceived by many teachers as unconcerned and out of touch with the realities of the classroom. The

following was fairly typical of many responses regarding the support within several jurisdictions.

> I would say that there is very little support. I think you will find the majority of teachers in a confidential setting would probably admit that.
>
> There's simply not enough time and there's not enough support available to free you so that you still have time for the other students.

The perception of one teacher was that administrators tended to pass their problems on down the line. She felt that administrators, particularly in central office, were not aware of the tremendous task facing teachers when integrating handicapped students. They had isolated themselves and were not in touch with teachers' needs.

> I think it's just passed on; "We hired an SLD teacher and the problems are solved," that kind of thing. You know, I don't think they're seeing beyond that--it's a band-aid solution almost.

Most teachers who were integrating severely physically disabled children, and sensory impaired children, were generally more positive towards the support services they had received in terms of paraprofessionals and outside specialists. Nevertheless, they expressed a need for emotional support from administrators, lower class loads and additional time in which to meet with specialists.

Indications were that support services, especially for teachers integrating severely learning disabled, educably mentally handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped or emotionally disturbed children were sparse.

The extent of support received by one teacher appeared to her to be shallow. "They listen, but it isn't happening to them!" And to another the support was not only superficial but fruitless.

> There's not much support at all. It's very difficult to get a child tested at the beginning of the year. It's evident that there's no way this child should be in this program. The child ends up staying in the program regardless. There's sympathy, but that's where it ends you know, "Gee, that's too bad."

Feelings of despair and frustration emerge from this teacher:

> It's very frustrating. I think basically you're very alone here. I hate to say that but it's true. You're on your own.

Another teacher angered by the system rebuked administrators for the insensitive manner in which mainstreaming was thrust onto teachers.

> They're plunking the kids in my room and saying "cope" and that seems to be a big word "COPE." To me I shouldn't have to just cope, and neither should the child.

Similar feelings were expressed by a teacher integrating two emotionally disturbed children.

> All they've come down with is suggestions for how the teacher can cope, instead of removing the kids and getting them in a pro[illegible]

Two teachers denoted their frustration at the empty [illegible]s given them by their jurisdiction. Though from different jurisdictions, teachers recalled being assured of full support services when mainstreaming was proposed some years earlier. However, few, if any, had materialized.

Guidance and help in the programming, ideas, behavior management and remediation were sought by teachers. Teachers continually spoke of their lack of knowledge and know-how and of their desire for assistance.

> It seems like when you have to set up everything on your own, you sort of wonder, well, where should I start? What should I do? Where does this kid fit in?

> Now they're saying, "This is the way he is, tada..tada. But; OK, now give me some ideas. Put them down--what I should be doing because of this behavior problem . . . Refer me to books."

> Being a regular classroom teacher, I'm not sure how to exactly handle special education students. I think that's my lack of experience, you might say. What I did, I didn't know whether I was doing it properly or not. I would have liked some advice, I'm sure it would have helped me.

Due to the enormous added workload that the handicapped students imposed on the regular teacher, smaller classes and more preparation time was viewed as an essential dimension of support services.

Speech therapy, though available, was in greater demand than was being provided according to some teachers.

> We have been disappointed in the amount of speech therapy time the speech therapist has for our school.

Such was also the case with elementary counseling time. Due to the lack of elementary counsellors available to elementary students, only severe cases were granted access, and then often, only for occasional visits. Many teachers were of the opinion that if elementary schools provided more counselling at an earlier age, and when problems first began to manifest themselves, fewer problems would be encountered in high school.

It became evident in our discussions that many were unaware or unsure of the resources available within and outside their jurisdiction. One teacher, integrating a sensory impaired child, expressed a need for a more structured body that would enable quicker access to services.

> I'm sure that there are other groups that can offer help, but they're really not made known to us . . . if we had a directory of places to go for help, it would certainly be good.

This statement certainly seemed to be justified in view of her response to the question of who had been responsible for acquiring the aid of CAPE (currently the Belvedere Assessment Center). "I really don't know. I just kind of stumbled on it."

Administrative Support

Numerous teachers who were interviewed perceived a lack of emotional support and concern among school administrators for the problems they were encountering in mainstreaming. The impression perceived by one respondent was "When you close the door, you're on your own."

Many spoke of the lack of communication or interaction between themselves and the administration. One teacher explained that once the

handicapped child had been placed in his room, no further interaction with the administration had taken place.

An upper elementary teacher spoke of the lack of support received when she encountered serious problems with an emotionally disturbed child she was integrating. After a couple of attempts at counselling the child and the parent, the principal did not pursue any other avenues in helping the teacher and the child remained in class continuing his disruptive behavior. The teacher, in fact, had to cope as best she could on her own, as the principal simply withdrew from the situation. The teacher recalled, "I never felt so alone and so frustrated."

One teacher believed that it was part of the administrator's job to listen to teachers' problems and to share in their concerns.

> I still think that as long as the principal is understanding and has an open ear to me, that's half the problem. If I could just sit down and talk to somebody about my problems."

In her opinion, frequent visits to the classroom on an informal basis conveyed the administrator's concern and interest for his/her teachers. By just speaking to teachers and asking how things are going gives them added encouragement.

Other teachers were of the opinion that administrators had little awareness of the problems and demands faced by teachers in a classroom, particularly in a mainstreaming situation.

> I don't think that there's enough awareness of what's going on in the classrooms . . . I don't think they really realize how different or how awkward it is.

According to one teacher, the administrator's job went far beyond the administrative duties generally associated with the position.

> Part of an administrator's job is to take care of teacher welfare and teacher welfare includes more than making sure that we get our cheque on the right day. You know, your mental state, and how you are working in the classroom, whether or not you are satisfied.

Another area which lacked the encouragement and support of the administration was that of interschool and interclassroom visits for teachers in handling the problems of integration. According to teachers, other teachers were a great source of knowledge and expertise, but due to a lack of encouragement from the administration this support system was non-existent.

Further evidence of the lack of support was in the lack of inservicing that teachers received when teaching a handicapped child. Few teachers had attended any inservices which would better enable them to teach the handicapped. Of those who had attended some type of inservice, the majority of cases had been self-initiated and actively pursued by the teacher.

Formal Assessments

As the interviews progressed, it became clear that teachers perceived a real lack of guidance and help in their attempts at integrating handicapped children. Teachers looked to the school psychologist for remediation techniques in overcoming the child's difficulties, and ideas on how to adapt a program to their needs--without much success.

Overall, teachers possessed very negative views about the role of the school psychologist and formal assessments. These negative attitudes were attributed to several factors. One of great consternation to teachers was that psychology tests were returned reaffirming the teacher's suspicions that the child had a problem, but with no indications on how to help the child overcome these difficulties.

> You know that the child had difficulty so you referred him, he was tested and the tests came back saying, "Yes, the child has difficulty." You still have no idea what it was that you should be doing.

> I find that what I'm told, I'm already familiar with. I already knew that there was something wrong. There's nothing that comes out of it to resolve the problem.

Another teacher commented that psychology tests are returned filled with psychological jargon that is meaningless to the average teachers.

> It doesn't do a regular classroom teacher any good to have a test come back saying, "This child has visual discrimination problems," or "This child has auditory memory problems" because to the classroom teacher, that's jargon that doesn't mean a whole lot. "What is it that I'm supposed to do about it?" and "Can I really deal with auditory memory problems?" "Is there a way of overcoming it, or do you develop some kind of a crutch to get around it?"

Recommendations that accompanied psychological tests were most often vague, superficial and out of touch. Teachers conveyed their desire for concrete ideas that would be manageable in a classroom with 25 or 30 other students.

> The difficulty though, with a lot of the testing that was done--the things that are suggested, require a lot of time to do, and when you have 25 or 26 other students in the classroom, you just don't have the time to do them!
>
> So basically what you're told is, "Yeah that child's having difficulty and maybe if he used a pencil grip!" . . . and that's it, he stays and he still gets worse.

It was concluded by one teacher that the school psychologist was not in touch with her needs.

> For example, I, at one time, had a child who could not read and who was also a severe behavior problem. The school psychologist's answer to me was to bring me a 1920 text book and say, "He likes frogs, do things on frogs with him." Well when you have 25 other children, you have very little time to plan one unit on frogs and teach it to this individual child.

One primary teacher perceived that teachers and psychologists were not thinking along the same lines which was one reason why they seemed so "out of touch." It had been her experience that psychologists focused on the psychological aspects of the child, whereas her focus was on "How am I going to make it through the day with this child in my classroom?" She concluded that the classroom, an integral part of the child's "life world" seemed of little consequence to the psychologist.

This was generally the feeling of another teacher who had requested that the school psychologist observe a handicapped child within the context of her

classroom. She felt that observing the child would have been helpful in assessing the child and in offering suggestions for help. However, she reported that no visits were forthcoming and only a formal assessment was conducted. She concluded that there was no real interest in helping the child or the teacher.

Another area of contention for teachers was the lack of follow-up on students and recommendations. Once students have been placed in a classroom, tested, and recommendations made, there was no more contact with the school psychologists. "You're on your own."

A point of aggravation for one teacher was the lack of consideration given to the opinions of the regular classroom teacher by psychologists. She felt that many decisions made about a child were based on one test and it angered her that the teacher, who knew the child and his problems, was never consulted in making any decisions. Thus, the teacher felt that her expertise was seemingly valueless to psychologists.

Teachers believed that it was the psychologist's responsibility to set up programs for the resource room teacher and to give the classroom teachers as much help and guidance as possible in dealing with the child's problem.

> . . . but of all the corrective techniques that must be available that a psychologist would know or at least be able to direct you to a book and say "Here, read in here." You know, I find that lacking. And I also find that part difficult to deal with. I shouldn't have to go back, you know, and search 10,000 books when somebody's being paid to do that job!

One teacher confided "I have since given up," because of the fruitlessness of her efforts in the past and manages on her own as best she can.

Others confided that they have long since ceased to expect help from school psychologists and that they only requested testing when it was necessary. That is, as a requirement for admission to the resource room.

Paraprofessionals

One of the most valuable support services alluded to by teachers was that of paraprofessional support. Teachers felt that aides were absolutely necessary in integrating handicapped children. According to teachers, the aide was able to spend time with the child in a small group or one to one, reteaching lessons and basically helping the child along, giving them the attention they needed.

> Our kids are lucky that Ida [aide] is here because they get a lot of help. If I was here by myself, they wouldn't get the special treatment because I just wouldn't have time. Like they are a lot of work!

Without the extra help the problem would increase and become cyclical. Teachers believed that there was a real need for teachers to have an aide who could work compatibly with the handicapped child. This would allow the child to receive more assistance increasing the chances for success. The teacher of a profoundly deaf child stated:

> Margot couldn't have made the progress she did without her [aide] and I would have found it more frustrating.

> We were fortunate to have an aide that was able to work with them on a one to one level, and the progress was good. You know, having the aide really helped because for the children to survive on their own without any assistance of an aide, it is very difficult.

In general, teachers who did not have access to teachers' aides expressed a desire for at least partial assistance and described it as "the extra pair of hands."

Though teachers whole heartedly supported the concept of an aide in classrooms, many noted that they should be specially trained people capable of working with handicapped children. It was noted by several teachers that unless the aide is knowledgeable in working with handicapped students it may be an added burden for the teacher.

Workload and Classroom Preparation

Workload and classroom preparation was a problem cited by a large number of teachers in the study.

> Well, it's a lot of work. It's an awful lot of work and it's really hard to forget about some of these special people at the end of the day. It's a lot of homework, a lot of other hours out of school, a lot of extra interviews, a lot of preparation.

One teacher spoke of the immense amount of preparation that her individualized program entailed.

> There's a lot of preparation. I do it at home at night, I come to school at seven o'clock in the morning and do a lot of my preparations, then during my preps, although I hear now they're going to cut out our preps, lunch hours, recesses, after school, weekends, Sundays, at home at night, I take a lot of work home. It's sort of constant. It's twenty-four hour preparation, I would say.

This teacher spoke of the preparation for her students in terms of time as well and how she manages to cope with these demands.

> You rob time. You know, I probably rob time from some of the kids. I work lunch hours, I save things from year to year. I make sure I keep all my copies. If I do one thing one year then I can go onto another thing . . . It doesn't all happen in one year.

Another primary teacher spoke of the difficulty she had encountered in preparing lessons for her students

> It's really hard because you have to change all your lessons so that they're designed for their level and sure we're used to having two or three reading groups. We've also got the material, you've got workbooks, or you've got readers . . . but these needs are so specialized.

Some had their workloads eased by an aide and all were extremely grateful

> I don't know if I could do it without Miranda [aide]. They are a lot of work, really, a lot of work!

Class Size

Workload and preparation were often associated with classroom size. Teachers experienced more preparation and a greater workload as the size of the class increased.

> We have a big class load, a fairly big class load, 26, and I have 7 kids who are classified as LD 1, and that gets to be, in a regular classroom, sometimes hard to . . . balance with the other kids.

A tone of discouragement is evident in one teacher's voice who had a class of 27 primary students.

> I suppose it would be humanly possible to cope with all these handicaps if I didn't have the amount I do have, if I had 20 kids or 15 kids.

Another teacher referred to a lower class load as an area of support that would help her to better meet the needs of the child.

> . . . and lower class loads. I mean if you didn't have so many kids--to me that makes it twice as hard, if you have more kids that you feel you can cope with.

A class load of 32 students prevented one teacher from spending the time he felt was necessary with a blind student.

> I don't have enough time to really get to him as much as I should . . . I just don't have the time to do that . . . and obviously, I think if he were in a lower class ratio, he would be better off, but obviously the situation that he is in--there are other advantages than academic ones.

A large class load impedes the implementation of ideas for this teacher.

> I would like to have taken the time and sat down and designed a program but there's just no possible way I can do that. I don't know how many ideas I've got. Often I think, "I should try this" but then realize that it's impossible. The class is just too big.

Sharing Information

Problems arose for teachers as a result of a lack of communication between the resource room teacher and the regular classroom teacher. Though some centered around the development of IEPs (Individualized Educational Programs), others centered around inconsistencies between programs and expectations demanded of students.

One teacher felt that the lack of communication between herself and the resource room teacher left her unsure of the goals for her students.

> I had very little understanding of where they were coming from and where they were going in the program

Similar views were voiced by another teacher.

> There's not enough communication between the regular classroom and the resource room so that you know exactly where they are and what their goals and their objectives are.

Another teacher felt it was the regular teacher's responsibility to develop the IEPs (Individualized Education Programs) with the resource room teacher to the extent that both teachers contribute knowledge about the child resulting in an effective program.

> I think it's the classroom teacher's responsibility to sit down with the resource room teacher and discuss and discuss, and discuss until they can come to some kind of concrete plan that the resource room teacher can do in half an hour a day.

This teacher, who had spent several years as a resource room teacher before becoming a regular classroom teacher, continued:

> A lot of times, kids are brought into your classroom, they're sort of "dumped." The kid can't read--do something! You have no idea what he's having difficulty with.
>
> That was one of the major problems when I was in resource room. I would get these kids thrown at me who couldn't read. Well we all knew they couldn't read . . . but what was their problem? By the time I fumbled around and tried 14 different things, half the year would be over before I might hit on something that would work.

One primary teacher pointed out that because there was a lack of consistency between the regular classroom program and the resource room program, students often felt "left out" upon returning to the regular class. This teacher felt it would be far more beneficial to the students if the teachers could coordinate their activities so that children worked on the same topic at a level and pace suited to their needs.

"Pull-out" programs were viewed as an ineffective means of helping students by several teachers because of the subsequent lack of involvement by regular classroom teachers.

> You handle them in your pull-out program and then they come to me. I won't have to worry about them anymore, and that's what happens because somebody is doing the program--it's not really your program. I find that there's not much planning back and forth . . .

This teacher advocated a program where resource room teachers worked with the children within the regular classroom. This, in her view, would allow the students to share with their classmates, giving them a greater sense of belonging. Furthermore, teachers could share the observations they had made of the child within that environment.

> . . . changes that they notice in the child when they come back to the regular classroom are sometimes quite amazing because they had no idea that the child was perhaps a behavior problem or was totally "out to lunch" and wasn't paying attention.

A teacher whose program consisted of having the resource room teacher come into the classroom viewed this approach as a great source of personal support due to the continual encouragement she received from the resource room teacher.

> She's good because she gives me a pat on the back some days and says "Really, they ARE improving!"

Another communication problem noted by one teacher was the difference in academic and behavioral expectations placed on the children by the regular classroom teacher and the resource room teacher. She maintained that due to the differing expectations in her situation the children had difficulty in adjusting both their behavior and their attitude once back in the regular classroom.

> In Pat's [resource room teacher] program, he's very relaxed, and I'm not so relaxed in my room. There's a real discrepancy. He doesn't mind if the kids crawl on top of the desks, but when they come back to my room, I do mind. It's hard for them to go from one to another.

Similarly, another teacher stated:

> They're so used to one to one, they don't have a realistic expectation of what the normal classroom teacher does.

Time was viewed as a major factor contributing problems relating to sharing of information on students.

> There is very little time for the teachers to share what's going on with those children.

Summary

This chapter has focused on the first question: "What problems are teachers experiencing in implementing the mainstreaming policy? The 10 thematic categories which emerged from the interviews were discussed and supported through the use of paraphrasing and quotations elicited from teachers.

The themes which I have isolated are: time; timetabling; the attitude of the handicapped student; support services; administrative support; formal assessments; need for paraprofessionals' workload and classroom preparation; class size and sharing information. It should be noted that the themes emerged simultaneously and therefore, no hierarchical order exists.

Chapter 5

TEACHERS' CONCERNS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the themes which have emerged from the question: What are teachers' concerns in implementing the mainstreaming policy? Fifteen themes were isolated. The themes, centering around the teacher, the non-handicapped child and the handicapped child are: lack of teacher preparation; feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy; frustration and stress; fairness to the non-handicapped child; meeting the needs of the handicapped child; early intervention; causing physical damage; peer acceptance; student self-esteem; evaluation; time to know the students; open communication; time to share; the future of the handicapped; and financial cutbacks. The themes are supported through the use of paraphrasing and quotations.

Concerns Expressed in Implementing Mainstreaming

Lack of Teacher Preparation

A major concern arising among teachers was their own lack of preparation in teaching handicapped children. Most teachers did not view their teacher training as particularly helpful and were non-committal or negative when asked to comment on their own educational preparation in helping them to meet the needs of the handicapped student. These teachers were quick to advise that, in contrast, their teaching experience had been, without question, of most value in helping them to integrate handicapped students.

> With each year of experience, I find that you learn to meet all the needs of special students, or students that are less capable than some of the others, so you have to adapt and adjust your ways.

> I don't know, I think I had those courses, but in a sense they were somewhat vague and I guess I could say about the same for all my teacher training. You learn to be a teacher when you get here, through the grind of it. I personally have found this out.

Others cited colleagues as a valuable source of information and assistance.

> It's been experience and talking to people. . . . I think, just colleagues, administration, anyone who would talk to me about it.

> I would say too, when I started here, I was given a "buddy teacher," another teacher in Grade 3, . . . so I would say she's been my best resource of all.

> I would say no, not my formal training. I would say I've picked up more from other teachers or from workshops than from my formal training.

The value of this type of assistance was evident in speaking with teachers on the topic of "inservicing." One teacher spoke of her very positive experience in visiting another classroom where a hearing impaired child was being mainstreamed.

> Prior to having Emile in my room, I attended a school in Edson. The principal and myself and Emile's aide and her mom went on a one day observation trip to Edson. We spoke with the speech therapist there who had set up a program for a little boy out there, using an aide and what not. And so that was really good because it allowed us to see how the aide there was working and it was really very good.

Several other teachers spoke of their desires to visit other classrooms and to speak to other teachers who were successfully mainstreaming their students. It was thought that they could benefit from the experience and consequently, the concrete ideas that had been successfully implemented by others.

> We could learn from each other. How do I do it and how do you do it? I think it would be really valuable with those kind of kids, just sitting and talking. How do you deal with it? What do you do?

A classroom visitation was viewed by one teacher as a worthwhile experience.

> Mr. Smith [principal] is trying to find another student who is similar to Leslie. I have permission to go for a day if he can find somebody like this in the province and observe what's being done for them.

Teachers indicated their desire for concrete ideas. One primary teacher was emphatic on this point when asked if she thought further course work would be beneficial to her situation.

> If the courses are concrete rather than theoretical. If they've got good ideas, O.K., fine, but if it's a bunch of theory, NO! That I DON'T want!

Another referred to her disappointment at a fall conference.

> I attended a conference in Calgary this past November, dealing with learning disabilities and that sort of thing, but it was more general rather than specifically geared to "how do I know" and "what do I do?" It was more a social thing in terms of just because you have a disability doesn't mean you're disabled.

When asked what she would have liked the focus to have been, she responded: "How do I tell and what do I do? Something concrete!"

Further evidence of one teacher's desire for more concrete help was in the praise she bestowed on CAPE (currently known as the Belvedere Assessment Center) who had come to the classroom to work with her and her hearing impaired child.

> Well, we had people from CAPE come in to assess the teaching situation and to suggest ways that we could change the way we were working with her, and another teacher also worked with her for part of the day. She would observe the student in our classroom and then she would make suggestions as to what we could do to help her.

When asked, "Was that helpful?", the teacher replied:

> It sure was! It was very helpful. It's amazing how many things you don't realize until you have people that are trained in that type of thing. The one thing that I should have been aware of but didn't realize was the amount of difference light behind the person speaking means to the person who is trying to pick up on what you're saying . . .

The teacher continued enthusiastically describing at length the help she had received.

Another teacher thought the assistance she had received had been very enlightening.

> Last year when the kids were in Grade 2, CAPE brought out various kinds of glasses for all the kids in the classroom and for the teachers. We wore

> them, and we could see what Jamie could see and we had to walk, and do a whole bunch of different things. We actually experienced more or less what Jamie could see. It was quite an experience and that helped a lot!

Of the four teachers who felt that their formal training had been a definite help in the integration of students, two had had specialized training in individualized programming. One had received this training in Early Childhood Services and another in Special Education. Both teachers believed that because they had had this training they were better able to meet the needs of each individual child with less stress.

The remaining two teachers felt that their formal training had contributed generally to their understanding of how children learn and function.

Feelings of Self-Doubt and Inadequacy in Meeting the Needs of the Handicapped Child

Evidence that teachers were genuinely concerned in meeting the needs of the handicapped child is in abundance. However, many concerns were voiced in feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy by teachers.

For one teacher the question of how to successfully integrate children, a question of primary importance, was yet unanswered to her satisfaction.

> I guess when we integrate them, we're bringing them into "oneness." How do you do that successfully?

And for another the same concern arises:

> We've been told that you have to fit these kids in, but we haven't been told or shown how to fit them in.

A lack of knowledge or expertise was often cited as an area of concern in meeting the needs of the child.

> And maybe you don't understand why they don't get this, or that. You're approaching it totally wrong and you're wondering, "Well how come they didn't get this?" And you really don't know what you could have done differently to help them learn it.

> Being a regular classroom teacher, I'm not sure how to exactly handle special ed students.

One teacher pointed out that she had limited knowledge in alternate teaching strategies for the severely learning disabled child and that she found it impossible to help the child if she did not understand the problem and how to remedy it.

This concern was continually revealed by teachers who requested help and guidance from central office personnel, namely, the school psychologist. These teachers spoke of their frustration at the lack of sensitivity and concrete help given by school psychologists and other central office personnel.

Meeting the needs of students for some teachers has become part of their conscious and subconscious.

> I think that you worry about it all the time. You sit up at night and think, "Now, what can I do for this kid or these three kids who I know are not going to be able to handle such and such?"

Another teacher explains that teaching for her does not stop at 3:30.

> I spend nights dreaming about these kids, thinking about how I can make it better.

Teachers often face a dilemma between "doing more" and the realities of time and of the regular class.

> And also wondering I guess, if you're doing as much for those kids as you should be or as you could be . . . and because I think that you're always worried whether or not you're doing enough and "have they made enough progress?" and "shouldn't you have been able to bring them up to such-and-such a level?"

> I find it very frustrating, you know. There'll be a lot of times where I'm thinking "I should be doing more for these people!", "I should be doing more for these students" . . . and . . . the time, in a lot of cases, won't permit that I do more for the students.

As a result, teachers express feelings of loss of self-esteem and self-confidence;

> We have an ideal that we feel we must meet and if you feel that you can't meet a student's needs, you feel that you're not worthy as a teacher.

> You know it in your heart, it's not the best. You know that you're not serving these kids and it's difficult to even deal with that.

> I think my biggest doubt is I don't feel that I did Peggy justice.

> For Becky as far as I'm concerned, I did absolutely no good, I might as not even have been there

and feelings of inadequacy as a teacher.

> . . . and you spend a lot of time wondering whether you're doing the rigl thing for them. Was what happened today handled the way it should h been handled? And I guess not frustrating but being very aware of you own inadequacies.

For some, doubts arise on the effectiveness of the mainstreaming polic and whether it is possible to meet the needs of the handicapped child within a regular classroom.

> . . . where you're developing everybody to their fullest potential . . . I do think it's physically possible, not for lack of interest. It's for lack of personal energy, and resources, time and everything else.

One dedicated teacher, a veteran in integrating handicapped students, though aware of the benefits for students in one sense, seriously questions the efficacy of the whole movement.

> There is a real benefit to the child staying in their own home, but until teachers can be given time to deal with these students and extra trainin how to deal with them, I question whether they actually receive an adequate education as hard as the teacher might try.

Frustration and Stress

Frustration and stress were encountered by numerous teachers as they attempted to integrate handicapped students within their regular classrooms. I became evident, as teachers shared their experiences, that attempts at meeting needs of all children, handicapped and non-handicapped, emerged as a promin source of stress.

One dedicated teacher spoke of the physical and mental strain she had experienced as she continually moved from one child to another or one group t another, attending meeting after meeting, preparing and planning, using every spare minute in her day in order to keep up to the demands of all her students.

> You're on your feet constantly just meeting their needs. As a teacher you must be aware that I have students that are in regular programs that are all the way from IQ 85 up to . . . I've got one that's grading over 145 . . . and you're meeting all these challenges as well.

As a result, the teacher confided that she was "completely wiped out" at the end of the day.

Pressure exerted by a lack of time were another source of frustration and stress for many teachers. Because the handicapped students required a great deal of one to one assistance and additional preparation time, teachers felt continually stressed at providing them the time they needed to succeed.

> There isn't time. You see, actually, in a lot of cases, extra exercises that you make up on your own time don't do any good because it doesn't matter how good the exercise--that isn't what you're lacking, you're lacking one to one basis.

Provided for the non-handicapped, whose needs were of equal importance, because a source of guilt and anxiety for some teachers who found it extremely difficult in maintaining a balance between the two. Thus, the issue of "time" gave rise to questions of "fairness" to the non-handicapped and to priority over teacher time. They felt torn between their loyalties to their regular students and to the handicapped student who desperately needed them.

> I feel sorry for those students in some ways. I think they deserve more time . . . and it really frustrates me to think that we're going to maybe move into a situation where you survive and that's all.

Another teacher spoke of the emotional drain which she had experienced in attempting to teach a concept beyond the grasp of the handicapped child. Frustrations arise for both student and teacher as success is slow and academic gains are minimal.

> They are very demanding of your time. It's emotionally draining sometimes because it's frustrating for them and for you, if you can't see success quickly.

Several teachers spoke of the frustrations of not knowing how to help the children who were experiencing extreme difficulty. These teachers, though aware

of these problems, confided that they did not possess the knowledge necessary to remediate the problems facing these children.

> It's really frustrating, you know, you'd like to feel that you're helping them better than you are . . .

A lack of direction and help revealed further frustration for teachers. One teacher felt the "trial and error" method she used in remediating problems was extremely inefficient. She contended that in most cases much valuable time was wasted. However, because she had not received any assistance, she had no alternative but to use the method, as frustrating as it was.

Teachers expressed a need for concrete ideas and specific remediation techniques, yet received little more than IQ scores and confirmation that a problem existed. This was extremely frustrating to teachers who were hoping for workable ideas within the context of the classroom.

> So tell me something I don't know. I know he can't listen, whatever the reason for that, I mean, it might be nice to sit down with his parents and say, "Look, this child has auditory sequencing problems" or whatever, <u>but</u> it doesn't help me to COPE!.

One young teacher, making an extreme effort to meet the needs of all her students, related her anxieties and the effect on her personal life.

> It's a lot of frustration, a lot of stress. I'd say I go through a lot of stress. Especially, I come home from school and I can't stop talking about my kids. It's frustrating for the people at home in my life that have other jobs and want to go out. But no, I can't, I have to go to school and mark, or I have to sit at home and make up things for the kids!

Increasing teacher anxiety were feelings of isolation from colleagues and administrators. Perceptions of uncaring administrators served to fuel these anxieties.

> I felt pretty much alone, and there were times when I felt fairly frustrated.

> I don't think that we have a lot of appreciation and understanding for how difficult our job is already. There doesn't seem to be the support groups, the help groups and no one's ever coming along and saying "You've got so, and so in your room and I see you've made a special effort." No one's ever really noticing what you do in the classroom.

Intense stress was expressed by teachers mainstreaming emotionally disturbed children. Huge amounts of energy were consumed both in dealing with the deviant behavior and in returning the classroom back to normal.

> It's really hard. Sometimes I'm so angry that I reach a point of frustration myself and so I leave and come down and I say "give me ten minutes Bob [principal] . . . I can't cope at this point.

> I felt frustrated and exhausted by the end of June. I don't know if I could have done much more with that student.

One primary teacher understood the reasons for outbursts of behavior from her cerebral palsy student. Nevertheless, she found his behavior a source of stress.

> But these kids have many days like this and sometimes it's for a long period of time . . . It's just . . . there are days when I wonder what in the world I'm doing here. I hate to say it but that's the truth.

Pressure to cover the curriculum served as an additional source of stress for several teachers. Teachers felt [illegible] obligated to cover the bulk of the curriculum with the regular students. The handicapped students were moved along at the same pace as regular students, often grasping little of concepts presented.

> If I didn't have to cover this curriculum in a year, I could have a lot more time to spend with the kids that need to slow down a bit, and we don't have that time.

Alternate teaching strategies were not used as often as desired, according to one teacher, due to the heavy curriculum demands coupled with the pressures of time.

Lack of parental support and interest was cited by numerous teachers as a source of frustration. Many of these teachers referred to their feelings of helplessness over home situations which affected the child within the school environment. Teachers cited examples of appointments which had not been kept with school psychologists and other outside agencies willing to extend help.

Similarly, teachers found it frustrating when parents could not be reached to discuss their child's behavior or their progress in class.

One teacher spoke of the extreme frustration she felt in dealing with the parents of one handicapped child whose hygiene had been allowed to deteriorate to the point where no one would associate with the child. Due to the parents' hostile attitude towards school and subsequent threats of removing the child for "home study," the teacher weighed the alternatives and chose to remain silent.

Ultimately, teachers utilized several coping skills. Some simply refused to be overcome and pushed on!

> Yes, it's frustrating, but I can't really spend too much time being frustrated.
>
> At no time has there been any concessions. It's "cope" and you know, [illegible], I'm a person who can cope quite easily and once I make up my m[illegible] that this is the way it runs--then that's the way it runs.

One obviously dedicated teacher unselfishly minimized her own concerns.

> I don't mind taking on that stress because he really needs someone and if I'm the person he's chosen to need, then I'll take that extra stress. But it IS a stress!

Some have allowed their frustrations to turn to discouragement.

> So I've just resigned myself to the fact that I'll do what I can.
>
> And there are times, I'll be honest, when you put her to busy work, what else is there to do?

Others coped by "watering-down" or modifying the regular curriculum for their students. Although this was not always totally satisfactory, it was found to lessen preparation and lessons could be taught as a class, thus easing some "time" related stress factors.

> I was getting frustrated by the second or third month and I felt with seven more months to go, I can't keep up with this type of pressure! So that's when I started to modify everything.

Similarly, two primary teachers used the concept of "articulation" in conjunction with modifications to the curriculum. This approach was found

extremely helpful in terms of allowing all children to work at their own level without putting a great deal of stress on their time.

> I'm supposed to be doing the Mr. Mugs series so I'll do maybe one story and then I'll do eight days of articulation. Then I'll do another story briefly and I find that really helps. It gets them talking, it gets them thinking and it gets them producing at their level which is fine because that's where they are.

Lastly, a coping strategy employed by teachers was to transfer responsibility for the handicapped child. A big percentage of teachers of severely handicapped students assisted by an aide viewed the aide as assuming the major responsibility. Similarly, for those students attending special education classes on a half day basis, responsibility was viewed as that of the special education teacher. Slightly more than half of teachers integrating these two categories of children saw themselves as a resource person for the child to go in the afternoon.

> To say that she or any of them were an exceptional drain, I would say no because they had a program that was set up and I was merely doing what I could with whatever time I had. I'm just supplementing.

One teacher expressed her need for formal assessment in terms of acquiring resource room help for her students.

> It takes the burden off of me. The child's program is then looked after by the resource room teacher.

It was noted that the more responsibility teachers assumed for the child the more frustration was expressed by teachers either verbally or through their tone of voice.

Fairness to the Non-Handicapped Student

The question of fairness to the non-handicapped student emerged as a major concern among teachers. This concern arose in relation to the problem of time.

The amount of teacher time required by the handicapped child, both directly and indirectly, led teachers to believe that the non-handicapped child was receiving a disproportionate amount of that time.

One teacher who was torn between her loyalty to her regular students (for whom she felt ultimately responsible) and two severely learning disabled children had observed that the handicapped students in her room received on an average two to three personal exchanges with herself within 15 minutes while the non-handicapped students receive that amount during the whole day! She questioned the fairness of the whole situation and admitted that she found herself feeling resentful of the amount of time she had to spend with the handicapped students when progress was so minimal.

Such were the feelings of another teacher. He confided that he could not justify spending vast amounts of time with one of the two handicapped children due to their lack of progress. He believed that this was not fair to the regular students in his room who could make more valuable use of his help and in the end, it was these students for whom he was also responsible.

One primary teacher who found it difficult balancing the amount of time she gave the regular student and several handicapped students in her classroom confided that she often felt as though she were "cheating" the regular students of their time with her. She had difficulty in coming to terms with her feelings because, on the one hand, she knew that unless she gave these children a lot of extra help that they would not accomplish very much, but, on the other hand, the average and high ability students were left to work on their own continually and she was aware that they needed her too.

This was reflective of the feelings of many teachers who felt that the more capable students were not being encouraged or challenged because of the immense emphasis placed on helping the handicapped students. Not only did

teachers view a lack of teacher-time in meeting the needs of the gifted, but also in financial support from the provincial government.

> I think that we spend thousands of dollars on those children, not unjustly, but I think unfairly, to the deficit of the gifted child or the child who has more to offer society.

Another upper elementary teacher, with five individualized programs in her classroom of 31 students, spoke of her hectic pace and its ultimate reflection upon her students.

> It's a lot of homework, a lot of hours out of school, a lot of extra interviews, a lot of preparation. I feel a lot of the time it's at the expense of the regular student because when I should be preparing work for the regular student, or when I should be taking a break so that I'm fresh to come back to class, I'm often spending my noon hours interviewing a parent of one of these students, or a social worker or talking to the aide.

The theme of fairness arose again in regard to the integration of emotionally disturbed students. According to one upper elementary teacher, the continual interruptions caused by one boy's deviant behavior "robbed" the students of teaching time. He felt strongly that this stressful situation was completely unfair to himself, and more importantly, to his other students.

Another teacher with a similar experience added that the continued disciplining of the emotionally disturbed boy in her class and of the regular students who contributed to his unpredictable behavior, took up a good deal of class time and her energy which was not fair to her students. She noted that the students were under stress because they were afraid of him which was not only unhealthy but completely unfair. "Students," she contended, "should not have to be subjected to fear and stress in classrooms."

The theme of fairness to the non-handicapped child arose for one teacher who explained that because so much of her time was taken up by her "special" students she often forgot about some of her other students who were coping

successfully with the regular program. As a result, the teacher found that she did not know these students as well.

> . . . there are kids that do get forgotten, and it's really difficult, especially during parent-teacher interview time when you find yourself looking blankly at the parent, thinking "What can I say about this student because I really don't know him." And it's usually the ones that are doing academically above average, but not extremely well, and are very quiet. Those are the ones I miss every time.

Yet another concern with regards to fairness came from a teacher whose class included two cerebral palsy children who, though mentally alert, were extremely limited physically. In her opinion, though the boys were a joy in many ways, the remainder of the class who had been together since Grade 1 were restricted because of them. Activities were continually chosen and altered to accommodate the two boys to make them feel part of the group. Because one was legally blind and the other in a wheelchair, both with limited use of their hand movements, she found the restrictions quite substantial.

Meeting the Needs of the Handicapped Child: Relevance of the Regular Classroom Setting and the Curriculum

There existed among teachers a concern for meeting the needs of the handicapped student in a regular classroom, and, in particular, for the relevance of the curriculum within that classroom for these students. Though teachers exhibited a great deal of sympathy for the child lacking an alternative placement, they still questioned the appropriateness of the regular classroom for severely handicapped students.

This was a very real concern from one primary teacher who had had extensive involvement in mainstreaming severely handicapped youngsters (physically and mentally). She questioned the benefits for the students who sat through social studies, science, health and even art when there was no meaning whatsoever for these children.

It seemed incomprehensible to her that a child who had no awareness of her surroundings should be integrated for any part of the day. The most that was hoped for in integrating this particular child was the stimulation received from other children. However, the teacher had not observed any changes in the child's awareness and questioned even this reason.

The teacher felt that this particular child's needs were drastically different from that of a normal child and that neither could the regular classroom meet this child's needs, nor was it designed to do so.

"Getting the handicapped child through the curriculum" was another area of concern for some teachers. One teacher contended that the intense curriculum demands placed excessive pressure both on the students and on herself. The teacher felt compelled to provide her students with the skills that they needed to cope with the next grade. However, she knew that for some this would be impossible especially when so much of the class time had to be spent on the required curriculum.

> If I didn't have to cover what I had to cover in a year, I could have a lot more time to spend with the kids that need to slow down a bit, and we don't have that time.

Another teacher stated:

> . . . because he was so slow, and I always worried about his progress. "Is he going to get everything in this year?" I think that my major concern was, you know, "Was he going to finish?" "Was he going to catch up to the rest of the class?" What he was handing in, he wasn't understanding, so all of those types of things added to my frustrations.

Yet another added frustration for one teacher was the content of the curriculum. She explained that because the majority of the curriculum calls for good reading skills, good comprehension and writing skills it was difficult for handicapped students to succeed following the prescribed curriculum. She felt continually challenged in finding ways that would enable her students to feel successful in spite of the curriculum.

For children who were significantly below grade level, teachers seriously questioned the relevance of the curriculum in core subject areas. Teachers reported that due to the level of difficulty, these students understood and could do little in social and science, the two most frequent core subjects in which handicapped students were integrated. The concepts were very frequently far above the students' comprehension and reading level.

It was noted by one teacher that some handicapped students attending such classes were simply going through the motions and that, in her opinion, little, if anything, was being learned that would be of value to them later on. The teacher debated whether their time would be better spent in le ing concrete and useful life skills such as counting money or reading labels on medicine bo the directions of a recipe.

Several teachers in upper elementary expressed the view that for mentally handicapped students, life skills would be much more appropriate and useful to the child than sitting through social and science class with minimal understanding. Acquiring life skills that would help the student function in society was thought to be more meaningful and worthwhile.

Early Intervention

Teachers expressed concern for more early intervention in assessing and helping children with problems. They contended that not enough attention was given to primary students who indicated a need for special help and/or perhaps counselling. Teachers of emotionally d urbed children felt this was particularly true for these students. Minimal counselling was extended to elementary students, yet it was the area of gre concern for teachers. In their view, counselling students at high school level was begun much too late and that many problems could be dealt with much more effectively at an earlier age. Generally,

teachers believed that counselling at an earlier age would alleviate many of the problems in high school.

Causing Physical Damage

The physical damage that could be caused unknowingly to the handicapped child was of serious concern to one primary teacher. She recalled allowing the child who was suffering from cerebral palsy to sit on the floor during storytime with his legs in a "V" position behind him. She recalled not really thinking anything of it as it was a sitting position frequently used by "normal" children. It was not until some time later that, quite by accident, she was told that this way of sitting, even for short periods of time, was very harmful to the boy. She had had no idea of the harm it could have caused this particular child and felt very badly. She stated that she found this "quite scary."

Similar concerns were voiced by other teachers who were integrating children who suffered from serious chronic physical conditions. In the case of one child who had a serious heart condition along with being Down's Syndrome she stated:

> When a youngster can't walk the length of the hall without turning blue, you have to be very careful what you do with him.

Another teacher recalled thinking seriously about volunteering to accept a seriously handicapped child into her class because of epileptic seizures. Concern existed, not because of the condition itself, but how to handle it should it occur.

It became evident that teachers were conscious of the handicapped child's physical condition and/or limitations, yet expressed fear in unintentionally harming the child due to their lack of knowledge. Some teachers felt that they did not need this extra stress.

Peer Acceptance

On the whole, teachers reported a great deal of acceptance for the handicapped child. As a result of exposure to children who were blind, deaf, physically handicapped, trainable mentally handicapped or severely learning disabled, regular students become more aware of their needs and become very protective of them. Yet teachers were keenly aware of the potential for ostracism.

> Teachers were concerned that the handicapped child be accepted.
>
> Yet there's a certain amount of ostracism in this process. I find for a classroom teacher like myself, that's one of the biggest things that I have to work towards--it's making sure that that child feels comfortable in our own class.

It was noted that teachers relied on several subtle tactics, and classroom philosophies to promote "oneness" and to assure that the child was accepted by the other students. They promoted acceptance by:

Reasoning	My line with the kids is "we are all very talented, only our talents are different and when we are in school, our only talents put to the test are academic." I'm very open about telling them that this is the way it is. And I don't necessarily agree with that because we're not recognized for the things that we do well.
Teaching	You teach respect . . . and you take away from the academic . . . careers aren't nearly important as respect for the individual.
Demanding	In the first couple of weeks everybody tries laughing and, you know, they ridicule them and I lay down the law about that. It makes it comfortable for them to try, to at least try to do what we're doing.
Discussing	I treat everybody the same and so does the rest of the class. At the beginning of the year it becomes quite clear who's got it and who doesn't have it, so to speak. And so we do a lot of talking about when somebody's having problems, what could they do. We do a lot of talking out and having kids help other kids and by October or November everybody's blended very well.
Grouping	As much as possible we try to help instruction within the classroom, so we avoid taking the student out all the time. Instead we'd have an aide come in and they worked on the program with her as opposed to taking

a child out. We were trying to keep them in as much as possible in the regular classroom so she would feel part of the group, not a special person who's constantly being taken out.

Manipulating

And if they were choosing, if you had a choosing situation, they would tend to choose him toward the end of the grouping. If it were something, there was going to be a lot of group work, I would usually place him in charge of a group or something to alleviate the problem.

Several teachers agreed that the physical appearance of a child along with his/her social skills play a very prominent role in the child's acceptance.

> What we're zeroing in on for Mildred as much as braille is to make her appearance and habits and her social skills as socially acceptable as possible because she's going to join a new class next year and right now, she really doesn't have a friend in the world.

A similar case was reported by a teacher integrating a sight impaired child. She maintained that he was not accepted by his peers, because some of his mannerisms, such as eating, were disturbing to other children. He also had a very unkempt appearance. The teacher believed that those were the things that ostracized him and not his handicaps per se. She noted that with the counselor's guidance the boy became much more aware of his mannerisms and his appearance and the interaction with other students increased.

Another area of nonacceptance reported by teachers was the emotionally disturbed child. Teachers involved in mainstreaming such children had observed that these children were not "well liked" and were often feared because of violent outbursts. While older students disapproved outwardly and verbally of the behavior, younger students often imitated it, thus causing further problems for the teachers.

Student Self-Esteem

Teachers exhibited a great deal of sensitivity toward their handicapped students and how they viewed themselves. There was the realization that success

and self-esteem were dependent upon one another. Teachers questioned the degree of success children can possibly experience in the integrated classroom.

> I think that to say we can put these children into a normal classroom and give them a program or cut the expectations for them, and to say that they can truly feel successful about it, I sometimes question that . . . because they see what's happening around them.

She continued:

> Even they understand what it is to succeed, and to be successful and to do well. They understand that. I think they also understand within themselves that they can't do that.

One teacher who felt that the system failed to provide for these children due to rigid grading policies stated:

> They wouldn't have to fail anybody. Nobody would be failing. And, yeah, then they'd have a higher self-confidence level. They'd feel good about themselves. And they don't! They know they've failed. They're smart enough to know that they're not coping with what we're giving them, and that's wrong.

One teacher recalled that the handicapped students in his classroom did not feel good about themselves in an academic sense. Although they were never teased or put down by their peers, they knew that they could not achieve academically as did their classmates. He noted that one student in particular was very unhappy at the beginning of the year when, due to lack of space, he was unable to attend special class. The teacher felt that the student was bothered greatly by the fact that he was significantly below his classmates. He did not want the other students to think of him as "slow," nor did he want that view of himself. He believed that it was important to all three children but to this child in particular that it "appear" as though they were functioning. The teacher noticed a decrease in the boy's self-confidence as he seldom looked up when spoken to. It was not until the boy was admitted back to the special education class for language arts and mathematics, half way through the year, that the teacher

noticed a definite change in the boy's attitude. There was no doubt, the boy was much happier.

A fifth grade teacher stated that she had had a student who objected strongly to being integrated, even on a part time basis. The student, who was shy and intimidated by the other students, would not show up for class. She speculated that though he told the special education teacher that her class was too boring, he felt very badly that he could not do the work. Although in time he settled in quite well, she admitted that he still had serious problems handling any type of tests. The student would "conveniently" be absent on test days. She did not make an issue of the matter, however, and made no attempt to evaluate him since she had been told that the purpose of his integration was purely social.

A third teacher, in describing one of her many Individualized Education Program students, stated that one child who had extreme difficulty in processing his language did not want to attend the resource room. She commented that the child "worked his heart out to try and keep up," and as a result, she attempted to accommodate him within the regular classroom. He did not want to be viewed as one of the "low children" needing help. She felt that these children were stigmatized, a fact he was obviously aware of.

It seemed imperative for one teacher, new to the integration process, to keep her three severely handicapped students with the class in all activities. She was very conscious of isolating them and making them feel different by having them do work which was different than the rest of the class. Yet, she felt torn because they were not handling that well either.

Another teacher with a similar experience stated:

> There are times, yes, when it was more conducive for them to go work in the library, but as much as possible I try to keep everything consistent so they feel part of the group and so that the rest of the class sees them as part of the group, not as an individual with special needs. It's important to maintain their self-esteem.

Teachers recognized behavior problems attributed to the child's inability to succeed. They sympathized with the child's frustration and consequent lack of self-confidence. This lack of confidence was viewed as contributing very often to the child's nonacceptance by his peers.

Evaluation

A concern which plagued some teachers was that of evaluating the handicapped child. The question again seemed to be one of "fairness," this time for the handicapped child.

Teachers, whose board policy it was to give percentage or letter grades for all students regardless of ability, were especially sensitive and fearful of the effect that a low percentage would have on the self-esteem of the handicapped child.

> I have a real concern of how to make out a report card for these children. I would just like to write "IEP and progressing satisfactorily." We're required to put a letter grade down for them and I don't like that because I feel that if you've worked your heart out and you've made progress but you get "EE" which means "way below average" you know, that's pretty disheartening.

Furthermore, teachers felt it was unfair to evaluate the handicapped child with the same criteria as the other students when, due to resource room help, they continually missed parts of a class and thus relevant concepts.

> I don't feel it's fair. I feel very guilty about giving them 54% in L.A. when they've been out of my room half the time.

Furthermore, teachers found themselves in a dilemma evaluating handicapped students using the class averages of that particular grade because in many cases the students were working either at a completely different level or on a "watered-down" version of the same curriculum.

Consequently, teachers expressed a concern for clear communication to the parents of the child's level within the class. It becomes essential that the

parents understand that though the child is working at his/her level of ability he/she is not working at the level of the regular class.

The concern over evaluation also extended to achievement tests. Several teachers voiced strong objections to the fact that the handicapped students were compelled to take the provincial achievement tests. In their view, this was unfair to both the teacher and to the child. One reason stated by teachers was that it was senseless to test a child who was significantly below grade level, that is, not functioning at that grade level. One teacher was of the opinion that these tests put a great deal of unnecessary stress on youngsters adding to their already high frustration level. It addition, it was considered ridiculous and unfair to use the child's mark in obtaining the class average. A class average using these results certainly was inaccurate in her estimation.

Another concern in regards to evaluation was in connection with Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) tests. One teacher felt that if they were to be administered to handicapped children such as the severely learning disabled or educably mentally handicapped students, then it should be administered by the resource room teacher. There was doubt of the accuracy of such tests unless special instructions were given and there was constant monitoring to make sure the child was filling in the answer sheet correctly. As well, shorter testing periods were perceived as necessary for these children. According to this teacher unless these needs were met, the test would neither be valid nor fair to the child.

Time to Know Students

Although not a significant concern in terms of numerical value, "time to get to know students" was significant in terms of humanism toward handicapped students. One teacher, integrating three special education students, expressed a sincere desire to get to know the children better. He expressed concern that

because they only attended his class on a part time basis, he had not had the opportunity to get to know these students as individuals. Because he felt that the social contact with peers and teachers was the primary function of integration, he believed that it was essential that he know his students on a more personal level.

> I would love to just sit down and talk to them because I don't see them as often as the other students.

One primary teacher felt that a "lack of bonding" occurred when students attended the regular class on a part time basis.

> I think . . . when kids are pulled out that you don't interact with them like you do the other students. You don't bond with them.

She felt this "lack of bonding" occurred between the regular students and the handicapped students in her classroom as well.

Open Communication

Numerous teachers who were interviewed voiced concerns related to communication between the classroom teacher and other relevant people involved in the integration of the handicapped child.

Of the total number who expressed concerns, more than half noted the importance of open communication between the resource room teacher and themselves. Teachers noted that when open communication existed between the two, a good deal of time and effort could be saved. Teachers could communicate to the resource room teacher problems she had observed in class, and, by the same token, the resource room teacher could share information about the child that may be helpful to the teacher.

Though all regular classroom teachers were aware of Individualized Education Program (IEPs), few teachers actually took part in planning them. Some felt concerned that they were not involved in developing IEPs as an integral part of the child's program which, in their view, gave rise to numerous problems.

Concern was expressed by teachers for clear communication to parents. This was particularly true in relation to evaluation. Teachers felt it essential for parents to clearly understand the level at which the child is working in each subject area. Parents should be given an indication of how report card marks were arrived at and where the child stands in relation to the rest of the class.

> . . . because they are in a regular class, I think, not for teachers, but for parents, they expect that they are regular students, and they are where everybody else is, when in fact they are not. They are working at their own level, but their level is not the same as other children. And that lack of understanding, and often it is very easy for a parent to believe the best, might be a problem. I have not had any problems but I'm very cautious, not cautious, but I make very sure that the parents are in several times during the year and we have good communication and that alleviates some of the problems.

Time to Share

A concern for teachers linking "open communication" with "time" was the realization that many of their colleagues had many ideas and knowledge that could be shared. Several referred to it as a "wealth of information" that was never used because there was no time made available for teachers to discuss and share ideas. It was noted that lunch hours and recesses were most often spent on supervision or in classrooms preparing and marking. Thus teachers worked quite literally "in isolation." Furthermore, professional development days were structured for teachers and staff meetings were taken up by business leaving teachers with neither the time nor energy to begin meaningful discussions.

Several teachers commented on interclass and inter-school visits which, they felt, had a great deal of potential in helping teachers cope with handicapped students.

> Sometimes, it would be a mental break, sometimes we could learn from each other. How I do it and how you do it. I think it would be really valuable and with those kind of kids, just sitting and talking--how do you deal with it? What do you do?

Once again, there was no time allotted to teachers to reflect or to exchange ideas.

The Future of the Handicapped Child

Another area of concern for teachers involved the future of these students ranging from the immediate to the more distant.

A Grade 2 teacher displayed genuine concern for the future of her students in terms of being accepted and understood by the next year's teacher: "My biggest concern is--what's going to happen to them next year?" She stated that she understood the child's problems and made allowances for that. She hoped that other teachers would understand and accept this child. There was a keen awareness that the expectations for this child would change and she could only hope that these expectations would be realistic and that he would be capable of meeting them.

Yet another teacher, integrating three mentally handicapped students, expressed concern for her students' maturity level and in their preparedness to go on to the secondary school housing the Grade 7 class.

> What's going to happen and where do these kids go? What happens to them? . . . My only concern is the difference in maturity. To get them ready to the point where they can handle a high school situation.

The future placements of severely physically handicapped students were of grave concern to two teachers. These teachers who had come to realize that the students would eventually need alternative facilities, felt deeply concerned that such a placement would separate them from their families.

Financial Cutbacks

Teachers expressed concerns regarding the effects that financial cutbacks would have on mainstreaming programs.

It was speculated by one teacher that there would be less resource room time available for severely learning disabled students in the following year because of the loss of a half-time position. Funding cuts would simply mean that teachers would have to provide even more programming for the students within the regular class.

> And then next year, it's going to be even more so because the [illegible] cut so we'll probably lose some half-time positions so it means that [illegible] those kids will not get a chance to go out anywhere.

Another teacher concurred.

> I know it's going to come more and more with all the budget cutbacks. We're going to be closing those rooms and there's no way the regular everyday teacher is going to be able to cope with all the pressure. You know--raise the class sizes, plunk the kids in--you can't cope!

Another speculated on the retraction of the few services currently available in her jurisdiction.

> From what I understand, they are even going to take away the professional development days now. They're thinking about it so that they can make up the deficit in their budget.

It was contended that inservices were costly and with cutbacks in the offing, there would be fewer.

Many who expressed concerns regarding cutbacks did so with an air of resignation and acceptance.

Another concern voiced by a teacher was that she feared an increase in students experiencing academic problems in the future because of the lack of attention that all children were receiving. She felt that the disproportionate amount of time spent meeting the needs of the handicapped without additional help and services would be detrimental to all.

Underlying Theme

The categorical themes emerged in terms of the problems and concerns faced by the teachers. Within their responses, however, is one major underlying

theme. While problems encountered by teachers revolved around the question of "time," the more important, underlying theme was that of "fairness or justice." Teachers assumed responsibility for the child's success, yet felt this would not occur unless a greater proportion of time was allocated to these students. However, being the decision-maker on the allocation of time was very difficult for teachers. Feelings of guilt emerged as competition for teacher time arose from the regular students. Furthermore, the slow progress of the handicapped students left teachers ambivalent about the choices they had made and led them to questions of "fairness" for regular students. Feelings of isolation, of having no one to turn to at district and school level heightened the discouragement they felt.

This theme of decision-maker was also reflected in their concerns. Attempts to arbitrate the issue of "time" raised feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy in their ability and knowledge in providing success for the handicapped child and drew concern from teachers for their own self-worth and for their professional standing.

Teachers exhibited deep concern for their handicapped students both academically and socially. Teachers not only felt responsible for the academic success of their handicapped students, but for their social acceptance as well. Though they harbored serious doubts about the possibility of the academic success of these students, they were committed to achieving social acceptance for the child in their classroom.

Summary

In this chapter I have focused on the question: What are teachers' concerns in implementing the mainstreaming policy? Fifteen themes centering around the teacher, the non-handicapped child and the handicapped child were

isolated. Evidence for the emerging themes was presented through the use of paraphrasing and quotations taken from my conversations with teachers.

Chapter 6

SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Clearly, integration of handicapped children into regular classrooms is taking place at a relatively rapid pace. Increasingly, regular classroom teachers in rural schools find themselves in a mainstreaming situation due to a lack of alternative placement in the community. Teachers are now finding themselves in a new role with few skills (McIntosh, 1979). Understandably, the implementation of the mainstreaming policy has massive implications for the regular classroom teacher.

The purpose of this study was to examine the implications of the mainstreaming policy. More specifically, it was a search for understanding and insight into problems and concerns of regular classroom teachers as they attempt to integrate handicapped children into the regular classroom.

To this end, the interpretive inquiry, whose purpose is to seek and understand, seemed most appropriate. Hence, 23 regular classroom teachers with mainstreaming experience were interviewed in order to obtain subjective, in-depth information. The findings of this study, which have been analyzed through the process of analytic induction, gain credence by comparison with the findings of the related literature in Chapter 2.

Summary of the Findings

Two questions became the focus of this research. The first centered around the problems teachers encountered in integrating handicapped children and the second centered around their concerns. Through a process of analytic

induction, thematic categories were derived from data collected. Problems encountered by teachers have been isolated into 10 thematic categories, while teachers' concerns, presented in Chapter 5, have been isolated into 15 thematic categories.

Problems

Time

There was unanimous agreement among teachers that "time" presented a major problem in integrating handicapped children. Although time was identified in the literature as a major problem, it did not give it nearly as much precedence as did the teachers in this study.

Time was quoted by teachers as being one of the major contributors to the stress and frustration they had experienced in mainstreaming because of the specialized needs handicapped students required. Teachers agreed that in their regular classrooms they were able to provide only a fraction of the individual attention the students needed to progress and that it was extremely difficult to find a balance that was equitable for both the handicapped and non-handicapped students. As a result, teachers reported experiencing extreme stress and fatigue as they endeavored to find "enough time" for all the students.

Teachers agreed that extra time was required in order to plan individual lessons and materials for students and to communicate with relevant personnel such as aides, resource room teachers, consultants, and parents in order to monitor the child's needs and progress.

In addition, teachers acknowledged that there existed a lack of time to share ideas and knowledge with their colleagues which they maintained would be an extremely valuable resource.

Timetabling

Although not cited in the literature, timetabling problems were an area of contention for teachers. Teachers alluded to the fact that changes in scheduling, made to accommodate the handicapped child, were not always beneficial for the regular students, once again giving rise to the question of "fairness." Problems arose when handicapped students were "pulled out" of the classroom for individualized instruction or were integrated on a half-time basis. Teachers found that handicapped students were often confused and disoriented upon returning to class, frequently resulting in withdrawal or in misbehavior. In addition, teachers found that these students missed parts of concepts which not only served to confuse them further but was a source of frustration for teachers during evaluation.

Attitude of the Handicapped Child

A third theme which emerged upon analysis of the data was the attitude of the handicapped child. They believed dependency was fostered as a result of the constant attention given to them by aides, resource room teachers and the regular teacher. Contrary to the beliefs of the proponents of the mainstreaming movement as identified in the literature, teachers maintained that handicapped students developed fewer expectations for themselves and were not willing to attempt assignments on their own. Teachers believed that this only served to lower the students' self-esteem.

Support Services

As was supported by the literature, teachers viewed support services as crucial to the success of mainstreaming, but many confided that support services within their jurisdictions were immensely inadequate. A tremendous source of frustration and stress, teachers viewed central office personnel in charge of

support services out of touch with the needs of the classroom teacher and of the handicapped students. Moreover, teachers expressed a desire for guidance and help in programming ideas, behavior management and remediations. They spoke openly about their own lack of knowledge in special education and of their desire for assistance. Teachers perceived a real lack of caring and concern, and, as a result, felt very alone in their endeavours in the mainstreaming process.

Administrative Support

Administrators, particularly school principals, were viewed as an important factor influencing the mainstreaming process. Teachers in this study looked to the principal for support and encouragement. However, numerous teachers felt a lack of emotional support and concern from the school principal stemming from a lack of communication and interaction with teachers.

Formal Assessments

An overwhelming number of teachers voiced strong criticism of the school psychologist to whom they looked for concrete, usable techniques that would assist them in overcoming their students' difficulties. As was alluded to in the literature, the teachers gave strong indications that they wanted the school psychologist to set up programs for handicapped children. However, teachers felt that they received nothing more than a list of test scores and a statement of the problem they already knew existed written in psychological jargon. They contended that when recommendations were forthcoming, they were superficial, unmanageable in a regular classroom, and out of touch with existing realities. Moreover, follow up was non-existent.

Consequently, many teachers gave no credence to the school psychologist and admitted requesting their assistance only when test scores were a basis for admittance to a special program.

Need for Paraprofessionals

Paraprofessionals were viewed by teachers as essential in assisting them to integrate handicapped students. Teachers agreed that an aide could give the handicapped child the one to one assistance that they needed. Those teachers whose handicapped child had an aide admitted not being able to supply the child with the time they required and that the aide was able to do this. Most felt that the "extra pair of hands" lessened their stress considerably.

Workload and Classroom Preparation

Teachers agreed that mainstreaming handicapped students was a tremendous workload on the teacher. Teachers found themselves preparing several individualized programs in addition to preparing for their regular students. This translated into hours of preparation time. Teachers confided that they were physically and mentally exhausted at the end of the day.

Class Size

Closely associated with workload and classroom preparation is class size. Teachers agreed that as class size increased less time was available to spend with the handicapped students. Furthermore, larger classes meant increased workload thus decreasing the amount of preparation time one could spend on individualized programs for the handicapped.

Sharing Information

Teachers concurred that sharing information regarding the handicapped child with relevant personnel was essential to the child's progress. Sharing goals, monitoring the child's progress, and reassessing the child's needs were items worthy of sharing. Problems arising from a lack of communication cited by

teachers included uncertainty about the goals set out for the child, uncertainty of where responsibilities lie, inconsistent academic and behavioral expectations, and a lack of cooperative planning. Teachers recognized that working in isolation from one another was not beneficial for the children and voiced a desire to have more open communication.

Concerns

Lack of Teacher Preparation

There existed among teachers a grave concern for their own lack of teacher preparation in meeting the needs of the handicapped. Teachers felt that their own formal training was not adequate in dealing with children with special needs. Expressions of inadequacy were followed by expressions of a desire for assistance. Teachers cited their own teaching experience, interschool visits and colleagues as being the most helpful in integrating handicapped students. Few teachers had had any inservice training, but expressed a desire to do so if the sessions were concrete rather than theoretical. It was evident that the perceived lack of training caused teachers considerable anxiety.

Feelings of Self-Doubt and Inadequacy

There existed abundant evidence that teachers were burdened with feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy. Many held serious doubts about their own abilities and knowledge to provide for the needs of these students. Furthermore, teachers felt an intense pressure to meet the needs of these students, yet could not because of the immense amount of time these students needed on a daily basis. Consequently, teachers were ridden with feelings of guilt as they expressed a desire to do more for their students, thus enabling students to "succeed."

Frustration and Stress

Teachers involved in mainstreaming handicapped students found it a great source of physical and mental stress. Teachers admitted being stretched to their limits in assuring that the needs of all their students were met. The constant battle for more time to spend with the student, to meet with relevant personnel and to prepare individual lessons was viewed as a primary cause of the frustration and stress that they felt.

The question of "fairness to the regular students" was also a source of stress as they constantly wrestled with their loyalties and with the decision of "time" allocation to students.

A source of frustration to teachers was their perceived lack of knowledge and expertise in the field of special education. Compounding their frustrations was the lack of direction and assistance, lack of support services, and for many, lack of administrative support. The perceived lack of concern and understanding for their situation, resulting in feelings of isolation and abandonment, caused teachers to develop their own coping mechanisms.

Fairness to the Non-handicapped Student

Underlying the problem of "time" was the question of "fairness to the non-handicapped students." Teachers stated that a disproportionate amount of their time and energy was devoted to their handicapped students. In contrast, they felt that the gifted and below average students were not receiving their share of the teacher's time and energy. This was a decision for which they were responsible. The slow progress exhibited by the handicapped child and the lack of visible support for the choices made led teachers to perceive the allocation of time as "unjust."

Meeting the Needs of the Handicapped Student

Teachers displayed concern over the relevance of the curriculum for many of their handicapped students. They felt that, very often, the concepts taught were beyond their capabilities. According to some, teaching life skills to these students would have been more profitable.

Early Intervention

Teachers felt that children with suspected handicaps should be assessed as early as possible and that early intervention should ensue. Teachers concurred that in many cases early intervention would be very beneficial. Furthermore, teachers felt strongly that if counselling were made more accessible to elementary students fewer problems would exist in high school.

Causing Physical Damage

There was some concern among teachers of physically handicapped children of unknowingly harming their students. Teachers stated that the difficulty was in not knowing the child's limits and the true physical state. Others reported being fearful of an emergency that might arise.

Peer Acceptance

Teachers reported a great deal of acceptance for the handicapped child by their peers. However, they were aware of the potential for ostracism, thus assuming the responsibility to promote acceptance within their classroom through a variety of methods.

It was also noted by teachers that in cases of non-acceptance of the handicapped by their peers, behavior and lack of cleanliness were largely to blame. They concluded that these two factors contributed far more to the non-acceptance of the child than did the handicap itself.

Student Self-Esteem

Teachers revealed great concern for the self-esteem of the handicapped child. Because they believed that it was extremely important for the handicapped child to feel a degree of success in their classroom and that it was their responsibility, teachers took many steps to ensure that this occurred.

Evaluation

Evaluating handicapped students was a real concern among teachers who were mainstreaming. Once again the issue of "fairness" arose--this time for the handicapped child. Teachers felt it was unfair to the handicapped students to evaluate them with the same criteria as the regular class. They reasoned that evaluation for these students should be based on the level at which they were working. However, teachers did point out that parents would have to be fully informed of the level at which the child was being evaluated in order to avoid any future misunderstandings.

Also mentioned was the insanity of testing handicapped students on government achievement tests. Teachers maintained that when students were not working at that level it was completely inappropriate to expect them to write a test at that level. It was felt that this placed tremendous undue pressure on the handicapped child and on the teachers.

Moreover, teachers noted that the Canadian Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) test should only be given to handicapped students on an individual basis in order to ensure a greater degree or accuracy.

Time to Know the Students

A concern which arose from a small group of teachers was demonstrative of the sensitivity of teachers toward their handicapped students. These teachers were concerned that they did not know their handicapped students as well as their

regular students. Because they had been integrated on a part time basis, teachers felt that they had not had the time to create a bond between themselves and the child.. They felt that if socialization was a large part of the integration process, it was important that teachers and students get to know one another well.

Open Communication

Opening lines of communication was thought to be extremely important when integrating handicapped children. Teachers expressed concern that more information should be shared between the resource room teacher and themselves. They expressed a willingness to share information on the child's difficulties, programming, progress and cooperative planning with the resource room teacher. It was agreed that there would be benefits for all involved.

Teachers concurred that communication to parents must be frequent and honest. It was, in their opinion, an absolute necessity for parents to be fully informed of the level at which their child was working within that particular grade level.

Time to Share

The lack of time to share information, ideas and knowledge was a constant concern for teachers. Information on the child's program or progress was shared by teachers on a very informal basis--noon hours, recesses--whenever a minute could be had. Because no time was allotted for sharing, teachers felt that communication was minimal or non-existent, and as a result, most worked in isolation with very little, if any, interaction with colleagues.

Future of the Handicapped Child

A small number of teachers expressed concern over the child's future, either immediate or long term. For some, concern existed over next year's

teacher. For others, concern was over adjustment to junior high placement. Yet, for others, the concerns centered around eventual separation of handicapped students from their families as they enter various institutions. Teachers appeared very sensitive to this issue.

Financial Cutbacks

Financial cutbacks were a concern to numerous teachers as they perceived an increase of handicapped students in the public school system. They appeared discouraged to know that the support services which they so desperately needed would not be a reality. Teachers voiced serious concerns that the quality of the education for both the handicapped and non-handicapped would decrease, and that there would be an increase in learning problems as less time and fewer services were made available.

Reflections

In listening to teachers speak of their experiences in mainstreaming, I found that teachers involved in integrating handicapped children were caring individuals, genuinely concerned for the well being of all their students.

Not only were teachers noticeably interested in the topic I was pursuing, but I detected an added enthusiasm, a spark of hope, at the knowledge that they were the foci of my study. Teachers reacted with great delight and a twinge of disbelief that someone wanted to hear what they had to say on this controversial topic.

As the interview began, teachers appeared quite relaxed, but guarded, unsure of where I was coming from. As I continued to probe into their experiences, teachers began to share their inner feelings, their achievements and frustrations in integrating handicapped children.

Time--lack of time--was reiterated throughout the interviews. Plagued by this problem, teachers confessed that they had serious misgivings about the academic success of the handicapped child. Moreover, many teachers expressed serious doubts about the viability of the whole mainstreaming process. Without exception, teachers agreed that the handicapped child needed more instructional time on a one to one basis than they were able to provide in a regular classroom, particularly without the assistance of a paraprofessional.

Consequently, teachers spoke very openly about the tremendous stress they experienced in trying to find the time to give individual assistance. The harsh reality unaccounted for by theory was the diversity of needs that demanded to be met in a regular classroom of 25 to 30 students. The frustration that teachers experienced was evident in the tone of their voices. Furthermore, due to time constraints teachers found themselves making serious decisions on the allocation of their time to students in class. Due to a lack of feedback, teachers became guilt ridden questionning the choices they had made. As a result, the issue of "fairness to the regular student" arose repeatedly. It became evident that an underlying theme which emerged from "time" was that of "fairness or justice."

The already heavy workload borne by teachers was compounded by the addition of the handicapped students. Discouragement was evident as they spoke of the additional planning and preparing that was involved. It became evident that mainstreaming these children was "all consuming" as teachers related accounts of "nights spent thinking about the students." It became clear that the teachers expected much from themselves and the hectic pace during the course of a day left them physically and mentally exhausted.

As teachers spoke repeatedly of their need for assistance and direction, feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy in their own teacher preparation emerged. As a result, concerns revolved around their own self-worth and professional

standing. Teachers were unified in their contention that they knew what the child's problem was, but they didn't know how to overcome it. Teachers felt a lack of expertise and knowledge in the field of special education and, as a result, there was an outcry for help in programming and in providing concrete, useable ideas. However, in countless cases cries for help went unheeded causing further frustration and anxiety among teachers.

Tremendous feelings of isolation arose. Teachers saw themselves as being alone with little or no support from those in administration when faced with problems or decisions. Teachers perceived the inadequacy of support services, which translated into a lack of specialists, consultants, aides, release time, smaller classes, and fewer handicapped children, as a lack of concern and caring for both teacher and handicapped child. Furthermore, they reproached the administration at all levels for the lack of sensitivity to the difficulties they faced in mainstreaming. Teachers seeking encouragement and direction felt abandoned and on their own in their attempts at mainstreaming handicapped students.

Teachers spoke with considerable frustration and anger about their experiences in mainstreaming, directing criticism at administration and school psychologists, but never at the handicapped child. They recognized these children as worthwhile individuals caught in a set of circumstances. Teachers understood and accepted the need for these children to be in their classrooms--that was the reality. The essence of teacher dedication and devotion was captured in this quote:

> I don't know what the rewards are for me. They are few and far between. But for them there are many and that's what I'm here for--if its rewarding for them, then they have to be there.

Another teacher summarized her feelings in this way:

> I think it's good. I think it's right, but until teachers are given extra time, extra training and support services, I question whether they actually receive an adequate education--as hard as the teacher might try!

Implications

Two general implications arise out of the findings of this study. First, it has significant implications in terms of practise for administrators, both at the school and central office level. Second, implications arise in terms of further study.

Implications for Administrators

Administrators in central office must become more sensitive to the needs of the teacher and of the handicapped child. As pointed out by Turnbull and Schultz (1979), mainstreaming is not simply the physical presence of the handicapped child in a regular classroom. True integration involves the whole child, academically, socially and emotionally. Therefore, if true integration is to take place school boards and superintendents must:

1. provide extensive support services in the way of specialists, consultants, and paraprofessionals;

2. provide teachers with programs and concrete ideas for the handicapped child that are manageable in a regular classroom;

3. provide inservice training before and during the time that teachers are involved in mainstreaming that is practical and applicable to their situation;

4. lower the pupil-teacher ratios in order to augment more preparation time, conferencing time, and smaller classes;

5. provide substitute days to allow for interschool visits;

6. provide all teachers with a list of services within and outside the jurisdiction that may be accessed;

7. reevaluate student placements;

8. provide more counsellor time in elementary schools.

9. allow handicapped children to be evaluated at the level at which they are working;

10. cease the practice of compulsory achievement tests for handicapped students not working at that level;

11. administer CTBS tests on an individual basis.

School principals must be supportive and encouraging of teachers who have been selected to mainstream handicapped children. A caring and concerned attitude can be demonstrated in numerous ways.

1. make frequent but informal visits;

2. invite teachers to discuss their problems and concerns;

3. investigate possible support services and be assertive in acquiring them;

4. investigate possible inservicing within or outside the jurisdiction and encourage the teacher to attend;

5. encourage interschool visits;

6. arrange release time for teachers to meet relevant personnel on a regular basis.

7. extend concessions to the teacher in the way of less supervision time, more preparation time, and smaller classes;

8. arrange time for teachers to meet with colleagues.

Implications for Further Study

The understanding developed through this interpretive study involving regular classroom teachers in the mainstreaming process has implications for further study.

1. The study could examine administrative perceptions of mainstreaming, particularly the stresses and frustrations which they experience.

2. Describe an actual experience through one's own participant observation, perhaps documenting interactions between the handicapped child and teacher in pull-out and non-pull-out programs.

3. Examine the perceptions of mainstreaming from the school psychologist's viewpoint.

4. The study could be replicated at other levels in order to determine specific findings at the junior high or senior high school levels.

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APPENDIX A

CHECKLIST OF INTERVIEW AND SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Social/Cultural Context

___ size of school jurisdiction _____

___ location of school _____

___ size of total school _____

___ size of elementary _____

___ size of class _____

___ grade level _____

Mainstreaming Policy

Handicapped Child

__ type of handicap
__ recommend program
__ adaptations made
__ ability to work independently
__ peer interaction and reaction
__ preparation of child
__ contributions to classroom
__ value of present setting
__ adaptation

Program

__ developed by whom
__ degree of usefulness
__ time needed to prepare
__ time needed to administer
__ coming in from outside

Support Services

Administration:
__ prep time
__ reduced class size
__ special concessions
__ report back

Outside:
__ School for the Deaf
__ Glenrose
__ Belvedere Assessment Center
__ Speech Therapy
__ Social Services

Teacher Skills and Attitudes

__ formal training
__ teaching experience
__ experience with handicapped kids
__ inservice available
__ areas of expertise needed
__ problems encountered
__ benefits and rewards

Concerns

__ progress of handicapped child
__ specifically academically
__ specifically socially
__ progress of non-handicapped child
__ correct placement
__ responsibility
__ evaluation
__ is it fair to handicapped and non-handicapped
__ forgetting about handicapped/non-handicapped
__ getting through programs
__ return for class after resource room

Support Services

Within:
__ formal assessment
__ consultant
__ speech therapy
__ community/liaison
__ resource room
__ paraprofessionals
__ volunteers
__ psychologists

Sample Interview Questions

Teacher Skills and Attitudes

How well has your teacher training prepared you to meet the needs of this child?

In what areas would it be helpful to have more knowledge or training?

What type of inservice was provided for you prior to receiving this child into your classroom?

What experience have you had in integrating handicapped children?

Describe the ways in which your previous experiences have been helpful to you?

To what extent do you seek out the experiences of other teachers?

To what extent do you find the experience of other teachers helpful?

In what ways has the mainstreaming process been valuable to you?

In what ways has the mainstreaming process been of value to the handicapped child? . . . to the non-handicapped child?

In what ways have you found it to be a stressful experience?

Describe your feelings toward mainstreaming handicapped children?

The Handicapped Child

Describe briefly the nature of the child's handicap.

Describe the program in which the child is involved.

In what way is it different than the regular program?

To what extent is the child able to pursue this program on his/her own?

Who is responsible for setting up the child's program?

To what extent are specialists involved with the child's program?

Estimate the amount of time needed to prepare this program.

What percentage of the time is this child in your classroom?

Where is the remainder of the time spent?

What steps were taken to prepare the handicapped child before integrating her/him into the regular classroom?

How was the decision made to put this child in your classroom?

In what ways does this child contribute to the classroom?

In what ways do the other children interact with this child?

Describe the reactions of the other children to the handicapped child's social behavior, academic achievements and or physical disability.

How valuable, in your opinion, is the present setting for the child?

Support Services

Describe the specialist support available to you and the child which comes directly from central office.

Describe the specialist support available to you and the child which comes outside central office but referred by them.

Describe the specialist support available to you from within your own school.

In what ways is the administration of your school supportive of you in the integration of this child?

What amount of paraprofessional aid is allowed to this child or to you?

What support service is most valuable to you in coping with this child on a daily basis?

What additional resources would you find helpful?

Concerns

Describe the areas in which the child has made progress.

In what areas do you not see progress?

Describe how you evaluate this child's progress.

APPENDIX B

CORRESPONDENCE TO SUPERINTENDENTS AND TEACHERS

Box 14
Vimy, Alberta
T0G 2J0

1987-03-04

Mr. R. Brown
Superintendent of Schools
County of Bearspaw
Small Town, Alberta
B0A 3L0

Dear Mr. Brown:

As the mainstreaming process gains momentum as a viable alternative to special classes for handicapped children, teachers' perceptions of this process become increasingly important to evaluate. The study I am presently pursuing for my Master's Degree in Educational Administration is designed to examine the implications of the mainstreaming policy for the regular classroom teacher. In particular, it explores the problems and concerns of regular classroom teachers, and attempts to identify those support services which best help teachers cope with the mainstreaming process at the classroom level.

The mainstreaming policy takes on even greater significance for rural teachers who are faced with a unique set of environmental circumstances. Hence, I have selected rural teachers as the main data source. The primary data collection tool for the study will be in-depth interviews of regular classroom teachers at the elementary level, who presently are mainstreaming a handicapped child, or who have mainstreamed in the past two years.

With this in mind, I am requesting your assistance in conducting my survey by granting me permission to interview teachers in your jurisdiction. To select the teachers involved, it will be necessary for me to meet with the director of student services in order to secure the names of four to five teachers with mainstreaming experience. I will then contact these nominated teachers to request an interview.

Confidentiality and anonymity is assured as no school jurisdiction, school or teacher will be named in the results. In addition, all data will be aggregated in the final analysis.

Thank-you for the time you have given this matter. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Roseanne Heidemann

Box 14
Vimy, Alberta
T0G 2J0

Mrs. M. Black
Box 12, R.R. 13
Small Town, Alberta
T0E 3L0

Dear Mrs. Black:

Thank-you very much for sharing your experiences and views on mainstreaming with me. I truly appreciate the time you took from your busy schedule for the interview. Interviewing teachers such as yourself was not only interesting and enjoyable, but added much needed insight on the subject of mainstreaming that will be useful in my thesis.

Enclosed you will find a summary of our interview. I attempted to summarize your views as objectively and as accurately as possible. However, to assure complete accuracy, as I may have misunderstood in some instances, please read the summary, and delete, add, explain, or correct me in any way you see fit. Please feel free to strike out anything which you feel may identify you. Do not hesitate to add any points you may have forgotten and would like included on the last page.

You will notice an identification number on the top right hand corner of the summary. This is only to help me follow-up on those summaries that have not been returned. Once your summary has been returned I will remove the number to further assure anonymity.

Please return the summary at your earliest convenience. Enclosed is a self-addressed stamped envelope. I can be reached at 961-4158 if you have any concerns.

Thank-you once again.

Sincerely

Roseanne Heidemann

APPENDIX C

SAMPLE SUMMARY SHEET

Summary

Teacher Attitude

This regular classroom teacher appears to be very open and accepting of the handicapped children in her room. She exhibited a great deal of empathy and understanding for these children and for their problems. Gathering from what she told the interviewer she used a great deal of flexibility within her own regular program in order to meet the needs of the children who were experiencing difficulty. She was also very cautious in using "labels" for these children.

She attributed her attitude toward handicapped children to the fact that she had had previous experience teaching resource room.

In addition she felt that the regular students had taught her something about patience and that their attitude had had an influence on her.

Peer Interaction

It was the teacher's opinion that the handicapped children in her room were well accepted by their peers and were socially well adjusted.

She felt that with some children the student were quite protective of them, and offered them a good deal of encouragement. However, by the same token they did not make allowances for these children, nor did they receive any special treatment.

She felt that by having handicapped children in her room the other children recognized the fact that everyone has limitations, as well as talents, and that these varied from person to person.

Preparation of Students

The teacher explained to her students (after the handicapped children had left the room) why the expectations were different for these students. She felt that the children understood and that there was never any sign of animosity between the students due to the differences in expectations.

Teacher Preparation

This teacher is trained in elementary with a social studies major.

She felt that the experience that she had gained in the resource room had been the most helpful to her in coping with these children.

Question: Have you had any inservice training in special ed or in any other pertinent area?
Is so, were they helpful?

A. *1 special ed course at U of A, which covered the range of special needs.*

B. *5 yrs. of conference attendance (annually)--EACLD-sponsored (Learning Disabilities).*

Program

The handicapped students in this classroom followed the regular program as much as possible. The teacher adapted it in as many ways as possible in order to limit the frustrations of these children. The adaptations she made to the program were of her own initiative taken from her experiences and "trial and error." No help was received.

Support Services

This teacher has had some extra paraprofessional help in her classroom (3 periods per week). She also has made use of volunteer help to do both instructional and non-instructional work.

She contends that administrators cannot come up with solutions to these problems because much of it is a matter of financial resources. If the school budget is redistributed to allow for an extra teacher or the like, other areas would be affected. She felt that they had no real power over the situation.

The resource room teacher is viewed as the area of most productivity and support. The teacher felt very strongly that added resource room personnel could allow the teacher to return to the classroom with the child, aiding him to transfer the skills learned into the classroom. This would also allow the resource room teacher to observe the child in the classroom setting. Thus, greater understanding of the child would result and perhaps for the teacher as well.

Aides were not viewed by the teacher as being particularly helpful unless they were trained in working with children with difficulties. Without this skill, the result is more work for the teacher without much success.

Formal Assessments (see also problem)

The teacher strongly believes that a serious problem exists in the area of formal assessment. She contends that a child is referred for testing by a teacher because she is aware that the child has a problem and consequently, wants to know how to remedy it.

However, she felt that this help is not forthcoming. Assessments are returned to teachers filled with technical jargon that mean nothing to teachers. Most assessments are nothing more than a confirmation of the problems previously stated by the teacher. Furthermore, assessments lack realistic and concrete ideas that could be used by the teacher either in the classroom or resource room. She strongly felt that attempting to find an answer to the child's problem through trial and error was very inefficient and was a complete waste of the child's time. The teacher felt that it is the "tester's" job to set up a program for the resource room

teacher, and to give the classroom teacher as much help and guidance as possible in dealing with the child's problems.

The teacher gave two reasons why, in her view, this serious problem exists. She felt that teachers and psychologists had different foci. The psychologists looked at the child from a psychological point of view, while the teacher viewed the child from an educational. The teacher must "teach" and cope with the child, and at the same time, must deal with the realities of the classroom. This does not seem to be of concern or interest to the psychologist.

Secondly, she felt that a psychologist working out of central office was often burdened with additional administrative duties and that these required a great deal of time away from the original job that he was hired to do. Thus, he could not do justice to the position and serve children and teachers adequately.

Problems and Concerns

The teacher stated that due to the large class size she found some difficulty in balancing the time she gave the students with problems, and the rest of her class. She sometimes felt as though she was "cheating" the rest of the class of their time with her, and consequently revealed that she had difficulty in resolving her feelings. On the one hand, she realized that the children with problems needed her time or they would not accomplish very much. On the other hand, she felt that those of average and high ability were often "shafted" because they were left mostly to work on their own. The interviewer sensed considerable anxiety in the teacher's voice.

She also commented on the immense pressures placed upon teachers by school boards and parents to deal successfully with <u>all</u> ability levels in their classrooms. Because there is not enough time in a day to deal satisfactorily with all these levels, teachers either end up overemphasizing one group at the exclusion of another, or they teach to the middle group and hope that this can accommodate most children in one way or another.

One of the teacher's greatest concerns was "what's going to happen to them next year?". She hoped that other teachers would understand the child's problem and make allowances. She was aware that the expectations for them would change as they went on in school and hoped they could meet them.

Question: Is this correct? I am not sure of this. Please restate if it is incorrect.

Correct.

Another major concern was one she felt most teachers asked themselves. "Am I doing as much for these kids as we should be or could be?" She worries about how to help these children. "What more can be done?"

The teacher stated that the academic demands placed on these children were emotionally draining and frustrating both for herself and for the student. The teacher found that working with such a wide range of abilities, the pace at which she worked and the continual individual attention needed by the students was very

stressful. To add to the frustration, the progress of these students is slow and success does not come quickly.

Evaluation

The teacher found it difficult, particularly on the first report card, to give the child the mark they had actually earned in a given subject. She felt that it was difficult for her to give a child who was "trying" a failing mark, yet because it was school policy she was compelled to do so. She was relieved, however, that she was able to explain the mark and add an encouraging word to the child and parents in the comment section. It was her belief that a "good word" helped ease the child's frustration and gave them something to look forward to.

The teacher expressed the importance of good communication between the resource room teacher and the regular classroom teacher. She noted that because the regular classroom teacher spent most of the time with these children it was important she communicate clearly to the resource room teacher the child's problem areas. The I.E.P. allows for this to happen to a greater degree where both teachers plan the child's goals cooperatively. Constant discussion of the child's progress etc. are necessary, but once again, create another time pressure for the teachers who must meet continuously.