

ADMINISTRATORS' INTERPRETATION
OF MANDATED POLICY
RELATED TO INCLUSION

By

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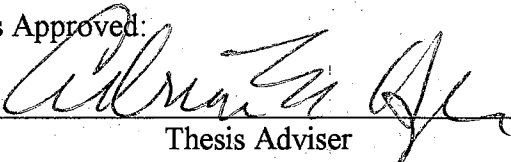
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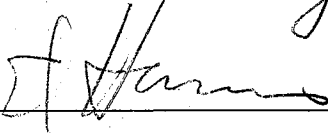
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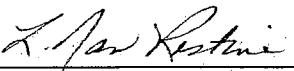
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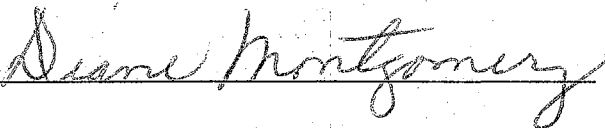


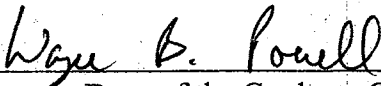
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. Design of the Study.....	1
Statement of the problem.....	2
Purpose.....	3
Conceptual Framework.....	3
Procedures.....	5
Researcher.....	6
Date Needs and Sources.....	6
Data Collection.....	7
Data Analysis.....	7
Significance of the Study.....	8
Reporting.....	9
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	10
History of Inclusion.....	10
Implementation of Special Education Policy.....	14
Inclusive Education Model Attitudes and Beliefs.....	15
Administrators.....	15
Teachers.....	16
Parents.....	18
Students.....	18
Academic Achievement.....	19
Successful Inclusion.....	19
Leadership Factors.....	20
Summary.....	22
III. PRESENTATION OF THE DATA.....	24
Case Study Procedures.....	24
Case Study Sites.....	25
Site Coordinators.....	25
On-Site Interviews.....	27

Observations.....	28
Document Review	28
Reporting	29
South Side Elementary.....	30
Perspectives.....	31
Practices.....	33
Outcomes	41
Summary	43
Jones Junior High	44
Perspectives	44
Practices	47
Outcomes.....	51
Summary	55
Middle Town High School.....	55
Perspectives.....	57
Practices.....	60
Outcomes	62
Summary	65
Cross-Site Summary.....	65
Data.....	68
Perspectives.....	68
Practices.....	71
Outcomes	74
III. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA	76
What do these administrators know about inclusion?.....	77
South Side Elementary.....	77
Jones Junior High	78
Middle Town High School.....	79
Summary	81
In what ways do their schools engage in inclusive practices?	84
South Side Elementary.....	84
Jones Junior High	85
Middle Town High School.....	86
Summary	87
Summary	91
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS, AND COMMENTARY.....	92
Summary	92
Data Needs.....	92
Data Sources	93
Data Collection.....	93
Data Presentation	93

Prespectives.....	94
Practices.....	94
Outcomes.....	95
Analysis.....	95
Findings.....	96
Conclusions.....	96
What is inclusion to do? For whom? By whom?.....	96
How does a district accomplish it? A site accomplish it?.....	97
Summary.....	97
Implications and Recommendations.....	98
Research.....	98
Practice.....	99
Theory.....	99
Commentary.....	100
REFERENCES.....	102
APPENDIXES.....	106
APPENDIX A - IRB FORM.....	107
APPENDIX B - CONSENT FORMS FOR STUDY.....	109
APPENDIX C - LETTERS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS.....	113
APPENDIX D - OBSERVATION - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	115
APPENDIX E - OBSERVATION - SOUTH SIDE ELEMENTARY.....	117
APPENDIX F - OBSERVATION - JONES JUNIOR HIGH.....	127
APPENDIX G - OBSERVATION - MIDDLE TOWN HIGH SCHOOL.....	134

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
Demographic Summary	67
Perspectives of Inclusion by School Site	70
Outcomes by School Site.....	75
What they know about inclusion.....	82
Examination of inclusive practices.....	90

CHAPTER I

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, P.L. 94-142. Public Law 94-142 provides individuals with disabilities (regardless of the severity), ranging in ages from three through 21, the right to a free and appropriate public education. Provisions of the mandate include a written individualized education program (I.E.P.), nondiscriminatory testing, special education and related services, due process and procedural safeguards, within the least restrictive environment (Alexander & Alexander, 1992; Schloss, 1992). In 1990, Public Law 94-142 was updated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (P. L. 101-476) or better known as IDEA out of the need to more fully meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, to ensure appropriate educational services, to include students with disabilities that have not been provided with an education within the public schools, and to address the needs of students whose disabilities had gone unnoticed or not determined (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

These mandates have fueled the movement known as "inclusion." Although Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) state that there was not a universal definition for the term inclusion, inclusion has been interpreted to mean teaching students with disabilities or special educational needs in the regular education environment. The focal point of the inclusion movement was the legal principle of the "least restrictive environment" (LRE).

Proponents of the inclusion movement used the phrase "least restrictive environment"

(LRE) to advocate for one educational system. The LRE was the legal principle within IDEA that refers to the classroom or teaching environment in which an individual with a disability would receive his/her education (Schloss; 1992). IDEA recommends that public schools provide a continuum of special education services in an environment ranging from the most restrictive to the least restrictive. Looking at a continuum, the most restrictive environment was considered to be a residential setting while the least restrictive environment was considered to be the regular education classroom (Berger, 1995; Yell, 1995).

To date, all students with disabilities that qualify for special education services based on nondiscriminatory testing, received a written individualized education program (I.E.P.) to address their educational needs through specific goals and objectives. The IEP also stipulated modifications and/or adaptations a student with a disability may need to be successful in the regular classroom. Successful implementation of mandated policy required that the needs of each student as well as the LRE must be considered individually by a team consisting of the student (when appropriate), the student's parents, educators, an administrator, and other specialists as deemed necessary. Therefore, the needs of each student with a disability are interpreted by the school and the IEP team on a case by case basis (Berger, 1995; Yell, 1995).

Statement of the Problem

The success of any federally mandated education policy, like "inclusion" as prescribed in IDEA, is based upon local implementation. This implementation requires local agency interpretation, operationalization and application of policy goals (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992). In the case of "inclusion," local educational agencies and state departments of education become intimately involved in implementation. However, the processes employed and the degrees of implementation vary across contexts (Powell, 1996).

Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) explain this anomaly in terms of differential site-level policy interpretation and implementation. They recognize that the policy implementation strategies employed by administrators locally reflect negotiated interpretations of national mandates as well as the knowledge bases of the individuals involved in policy interpretation and implementation.

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which building level administrators come to understand and build a knowledge base explaining the mandated policy "inclusion," in terms of its purpose, its meaning to people in the school, and strategies used to facilitate its implementation.

This study

1. described knowledge bases of building level administrators within the public schools about inclusion;
2. analyzed these perspectives using the policy interpretation and implementation conceptual frame of Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992); and,
3. assessed the usefulness of Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) for understanding inclusion implementation.

Conceptual Framework

Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) examined the processes used to implement the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales. They found that

Who becomes involved in the policy process and how they become involved is a product of a combination of administratively based procedures, historical precedence and political maneuvering, implicating the State, the state bureaucracy and continual political struggles over access to the policy process; it is not simply a matter of implementers following a

fixed text and “putting the Act into practice.” One key task for policy analysis is to grasp the significance of the policy as a text, or series of texts, for the different contexts in which they are used. (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992, p. 10)

"Policy writers cannot control the meanings of their texts. Parts of texts will be rejected, selected out, ignored, deliberately misunderstood, responses may be frivolous etc. Furthermore, yet again, interpretation is a matter of struggle. Different interpretations will be in context as they relate to different interests" (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992, p. 22). Individuals involved in making decisions regarding the education of students with disabilities have preconceived notions about inclusion. These preconceived notions about inclusion have developed through personal beliefs, printed materials they have read, situations that each has heard, and what each has experienced in the past. “Practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of policy. Policies will be interpreted differently as the histories, experiences, values, purposes and interests which make up any arena differ” (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992, p. 22). Accordingly, the building level administrator as the educational leader of the school implements a change based on a personal interpretation of the text.

"The presence of ambiguity, contradictions and general incoherence... become evident when schools attempt to translate national policies into practice" (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992, p. 35). Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) state that there was an element of exclusion of certain voices in the processes of implementation of policy. Those excluded were practitioners. At the local level there was generally an external response to an initiative. Responses occurred in three ways. Those ways were changing everything, modifying the initiative to meet the needs of the school, or incorporating it into the existing practices. “Schools may shift position over time and different

departments may respond differently and financial and staffing constraints may inhibit response; it nonetheless serves to underline the ways in which detailed curricular planning and implementation may be driven by different interpretations of change” (p. 9).

Public education has become bound by legal mandates. Policy regarding individuals with disabilities has been externally imposed on the local education agency by federal and state governments. Upon receipt of the mandates, the local education agencies have the responsibility of interpreting and implementing those mandates through the development of local education policy. In most cases, then, policy has been based on the assumption that information will filter down to those responsible for its implementation. “The language of ‘implementation’ strongly implies that there is, within policy, an unequivocal governmental position that will filter down through the quasi-state bodies and into the schools” (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992, p. 10). At the same time, it is assumed that differential levels of esoteric knowledge possessed by leaders and needed for implementation will impact the implementation of policy mandates as well (Maguire & Ball, 1994).

Procedures

The use of traditional research techniques has provided researchers with statistical information regarding settings, how many or what kind. However, the information obtained does not take into account the need for seeking information about human behavior. The design of this study utilizes the naturalistic inquiry techniques of observation, recording, analysis, and reflection to examine building level administrators' interpretations of mandated policy associated with the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment.

Researcher

I held the position of a special education teacher in Mid-Del Public School District for seven years. Prior to that time, I had experience in three other school districts. The first experience was in an urban school district in Oklahoma teaching K-4 students with moderate to severe disabilities. The second experience was in a relatively small district in New Mexico teaching in a Resource Room to students with varying disabilities. The third experience was in an urban district in New York teaching high school aged students with multiple disabilities.

As a special education teacher trained in the policies and procedures mandated from the federal and state guidelines as well as those developed by the local district with which I am employed, I must fulfill my responsibilities by considering the educational needs of the individual student and ensure that those needs are being met within the most appropriate educational setting. Due to my experiences within the field of special education, I might view situations observed within each of the three public schools or my interviews with the building level administrators differently than someone else investigating the same case study. Any biases that I might bring into this study will be addressed through techniques used to establish trustworthiness.

"Trustworthiness is established in a naturalistic inquiry by the use of techniques that provide truth value through credibility, applicability through transferability, consistency through dependability, and neutrality through confirmability" (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993, p. 132).

Data Needs and Sources

To more fully understand the role the building level administrator plays in the interpretation of policy and the implementation of special education students into the regular education environment, the perceptions and actions of building level administrators were needed. I visited building level administrators from the elementary, middle, and secondary levels within a single

suburban public school district. Visitations within each of these buildings included observations and interviews with each of the building level administrators. The focus of the observations and interviews was evidence of the interpretation and implementation of mandated policy. District documents will also be reviewed.

Data Collection

The methodological procedures used to conduct this study are that of case study (Yin, 1989). Using the explanatory case study, with Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) as the analytical lens, I explained the phenomenon of administrators' interpretation of mandated policies regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education environment. The procedures used included interviews with each building level administrator; participant observations in staffings held on special education students and in classrooms; and the review of special education documents such as students' I.E.P.s, current comprehensive evaluation results, class rolls and other pertinent district records. These procedures ensure the triangulation of data sources (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Individuals willing to serve as participants were provided with information regarding the research procedures used in this study. Copies of the consent forms for study and letters to study participants can be found in Appendix A and B, respectively. A copy of the interview questions can be found in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

Data collected from each of the three research sites was compared to Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) conceptual framework. The reported findings provide an explanation of the relationship of building level administrators' interpretations of mandated policy and implemented practices.

Significance of the Study

A study of this nature was designed to meet the three criteria of research: to build upon existing knowledge, to impact practice, and to clarify or add to existing theory (Erlandson et al., 1993).

Research

A review of the literature reveals a variety of studies regarding the education of special education students in the regular education environment. However, the literature reveals that studies regarding administrators' roles in this process have been neglected. This study will use qualitative methods to research issues related to the instructional practices used to educate all students as well as the roles and responsibilities of building level administrators.

Practice

This study describes the current practices and perspectives of selected building level administrators in one school district. This information should be beneficial in the planning and programming of preparation courses of educational administrations as well as preparation and implementation practices within the field of educational administration.

Theory

Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) assert the fallacy of fixed texts and the importance of individual realities in policy interpretation and implementation. The findings of this study should add to, confirm or refute these assertions.

Summary

The intent of this study was to examine the interpretation of federal mandates by building level administrators at the elementary, middle, and secondary level regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment, the impact of those interpretations on

successful inclusion programs, as well as the usefulness of Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) as a lens for viewing and understanding the administration of the change on inclusion. An explanatory case study was the method of choice.

Reporting

Chapter 2 presents an in-depth review of the inclusion movement from a historical perspective and what that might mean for today's public schools. Chapter 3 presents the data. Chapter 4 contains an analysis of the data. Chapter 5 includes a summary of the study, findings conclusions, discussion, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The field of special education has been undergoing a transformation since its inception. It has gone from a model where individuals with a disability were excluded from public education all together, to a segregated placement within the regular education environment, to a placement within the regular education environment for all or a portion of the school day. The movement towards a more inclusive model was a direct result of litigation and federal mandates. This transformation has led educators to closely examine current practices and strategies. This chapter provides a review of literature on (1) the history of inclusion, (2) implementation of special education policy, (3) inclusive education model: attitudes and beliefs, (4) academic achievement of all students, (4) successful inclusion, and (5) leadership factors that promote an inclusive education.

History of Inclusion

Federal and state mandates associated with individuals with disabilities have been gaining more and more attention from the general public and from the field of education. Through the years, litigation has been used by individuals and groups for the purpose of seeking changes in the educational services for children with disabilities.

During the 1940s through the 1960s, a few states contributed funds to local educational agencies for the purpose of providing programs for children with disabilities (SEDL, 1995; Heward & Orlansky, 1988). However, the funds and programs were not comprehensive and

failed to address the special needs of these children. In most states, parents of children with disabilities were responsible for providing their own educational services for their children. Over time and out of frustration and the need to seek additional educational assistance for their children, these parents began to turn to the courts to look at the issues of equal protection and equal access (Villa & Thousand, 1995; Heward & Orlansky, 1988).

Equal protection, a clause included as part of the 14th Amendment to the Constitution, provided that no state shall deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the law; nor deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Equal access was an issue in that many states had laws that allowed public schools to exclude children with disabilities from the educational programs offered. The local educational agency was under no legal obligation to provide children with disabilities the same access to an education as that of their nondisabled peers (Heward & Orlansky, 1988). In one state, the courts ruled that schools could bar students from attending when a student's behaviors resulted from "imbecility." In another case, a 13 year old boy with a severe physical disability but functioning within normal intellectual abilities was excluded from his local educational agency because his disability had a negative effect upon the teachers and students (Alexander & Alexander, 1992; Heward & Orlansky, 1988).

These issues of equal protection and equal access have their roots in the Civil Rights Movement. These same issues were challenged in the case of *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (1954). At that time, educational systems practiced the segregation of students based on race. This case set the foundation for the right of all children, regardless of race or disability, to

receive an equal opportunity to an education (Villa & Thousand, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1990; Heward & Orlansky, 1988).

Focusing on the Brown decision and the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the Constitution, a group of parents and advocates sought legal council for their children with disabilities. The court case of the Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Children v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (1972) established the right to a free public education and parental notice of any changes in their children's educational programming. Related legislation that continued this focus on the civil rights of individuals is P.L. 93-112 or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Section 504 states that individuals cannot be excluded based on a disability from programs that receive federal funds. Also, individuals whose disability interferes with or hinders a major life function could be eligible for certain educational or related services or accommodations to meet those needs (First & Curcio, 1993).

Finally, one of the most significant impacts upon education has been the federal legislation of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, P.L. 94-142. Public Law 94-142 provides individuals with disabilities (regardless of the severity) ranging in ages from three through 21 the right to a free and appropriate public education. Provisions of the mandate include a written individualized education program, nondiscriminatory testing, special education and related services, due process and procedural safeguards, and least restrictive environment (First & Curcio, 1993; Alexander & Alexander, 1992; Schloss, 1992).

The written individualized education program (I.E.P.) is a written document devised based on the decisions made by the team members (an administrator, teachers, parents, and the student when appropriate) at a team meeting. The I.E.P. includes a written commitment of necessary resources; a management tool; a compliance document ensuring FAPE (free

appropriated public education) agreed to by the parents and the LEA (local education agency); a method of evaluating the extent of the child's progress towards meeting the projected outcomes; and a transition plan, including, when appropriate, each public agency's responsibilities or linkages, before the student leaves the school setting. (Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 65)

Nondiscriminatory testing or evaluation is the system used in determining whether or not a child has a specific disability as well as the nature and extent of the special education and related services needed by the child. "The term means procedures used selectively with an individual child and does not include basic tests administered to or procedures used with all children in a school, grade, or class" (Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 39).

Special education is a "specially designed instruction, at no cost to the parents, to meet unique needs of a child with a disability" (Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 3). Related Services as defined under the federal regulations are

those developmental, corrective, and supportive services which are *required* to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education. The need for, frequency and duration of related services shall not be determined by the category of disability or by the availability of services. (Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 87)

Due process and procedural safeguards are a set of legal steps or procedures established and implemented according to the mandated rules and principles set forth by the State Department of Education and the IDEA. Due process and procedural safeguards were established to ensure and protect the legal rights of an individual.

As a formal step to resolution of disagreements concerning a proposal or refusal to initiate or change the identification, evaluation, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child, a due process hearing may be requested. A hearing may be initiated by either a parent or the LEA (e.g., parent refuses consent for initial evaluation) regarding these issues. (Policies and Procedures for Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 110)

Least restrict environment (LRE) is a requirement designed to ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities receive instruction with children who do not have disabilities... The selected placement should be appropriate in terms of the child's needs rather than what can be conveniently provided by the LEA. (Policies and Procedures in Special Education in Oklahoma, 1993, p. 89)

Implementation of Special Education Policy

In complying with the provisions set forth in P.L. 94-142, many public schools systems established specialized education programs for students with disabilities to ensure that their educational needs were being met. Many of these programs became so specialized that they began to separate students with disabilities from regular education services (Villa & Thousand, 1995).

In 1986, Madeline Will of the U. S. Department of Education issued a report entitled "Educating Students with Learning Problems: A Shared Responsibility". This report investigated the current practices of special education services, especially those related to educating students with disabilities in the regular education environment. With concern over the separate or special education services that students with disabilities were receiving, the Regular Education Initiative was proposed to help unite special education and regular education, the two separate educational systems.

In 1990, Public Law 94-142 was updated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, P.L. 101-476). Congress updated the law out of the need to more fully meet the educational needs of students with disabilities, to ensure appropriate educational services, to include students with disabilities that have not been provided with an education within the public schools, and to address the needs of students whose disability had gone unnoticed or undetermined (Alexander & Alexander, 1992).

Educational policies and reforms such as these are continually evolving in order to improve the education of students with disabilities. Educational policies and reform movements are based on past history and current practices as well as reflect recent societal views (Kaufman, Kameenui, Birrman, & Danielson, 1990). When looking at the beliefs and attitudes regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment, it is important to not only consider the attitudes and beliefs of the building level administrator but also other school personnel involved in the implementation of inclusion.

Inclusive Education Model: Attitudes and Beliefs

Implementation of policy and reform is supported by specific actions. Specific actions are taken based on an individual belief system that has developed through the reading of materials, communication regarding specific situations, and past experiences (Bowe & Ball with Gold, 1992).

Administrators

The Garver-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) study concluded that principals and special educational administrators exhibited more positive attitudes toward inclusion while believing that inclusion would not have negative effects on academic achievement. However, the study also indicated that teachers felt administrative support was more of a gesture of "socially appropriate"

manners than of actual support. Also, the Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, and Mellblom (1992) study showed that most school personnel had positive feelings about the support given them as well as an overall agreement and satisfaction with the support that administrators gave to classroom teachers in support of inclusive education.

Researchers have also found that the inclusion of students with disabilities in regular education environments will not be successful without an active and positive role from the administrator (Villa, 1996; Van Dyke, 1995). The attitudes and beliefs of administrators regarding inclusive education for students with disabilities is crucial. The attitudes and beliefs of school personnel often reflect that of the building level administrator (Morgan & Demchak, 1996; Fullan, 1991). "The building administrator can help guarantee success, but can also, perhaps unwittingly, be a hindrance to the process. If the building administrator is involved and informed from the beginning, the change to inclusive educational programs has a much higher chance of success" (Morgan & Demchak, 1996, p. 240).

Teachers

The research reviewed in this section includes attitudes and beliefs of both regular and special education teachers. The research did not differentiate responses in terms of attitudes and beliefs by regular education teachers and those of special education teachers.

Researchers have found that most school personnel favor the inclusion movement (Arick & Krug, 1993; Bergren, 1997; Criswell, Anderson, Slate, & Jones, 1993; Garver-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989; Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992; Villa, 1996). However, even with the strong positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education environment by both regular and special education teachers, Bergren (1997) found that junior high and high school level teachers held stronger beliefs, both positive and negative. The

Criswell, Anderson, Slate, and Jones (1993) found that special education teachers viewed inclusion more positively than did regular education or vocational education teachers. In addition, they also found that there were more positive attitudes expressed by both regular and special education teachers at the lower elementary (K-2) level than by other grade levels. Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, and Mellblom (1992) stated that the majority of district personnel favored inclusion yet almost half of the district personnel did not agree with including all students with disabilities. This study also showed that elementary level personnel held more open attitudes toward inclusion than did personnel at the secondary level. Garver-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) found that regular education classroom teachers held the least positive attitudes toward inclusion, following closely to those attitudes were special education classroom teachers.

In addition, the research indicates that individuals with teaching experiences or course work in special education had included more students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment (Arick & Krug, 1993; Criswell, Anderson, Slate, & Jones, 1993). The Bergren study (1997) indicated that teachers who had experience in co-teaching believed that students with disabilities included in the regular education environment would benefit and achieve favorably. Teachers with fewer years of teaching experience viewed the experience of co-teaching as a way to improve their teaching skills while at the same time believed that the planning required was more difficult than planning alone.

Finally, the research studies showed that school personnel had concerns regarding the academic achievement of all students (Garver-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989; Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992). In the Bergren study (1997), the teachers felt that both the regular education students and the special education students socially benefited from an inclusive educational environment yet had reservations when it came to meeting the special educational and

instructional needs of the students with disabilities. The Olson study (1997) concluded that both elementary and secondary teachers adjusted their expectations for integrated students. According to Baines, Baines, and Masterson (1994), few regular education teachers had received training in teaching and working with students with disabilities. The regular education teachers felt that too much of their time was spent in complying with the requirements regarding the education of the students with disabilities and that it left little time to devote to the regular education students.

Parents

Parents of regular education students are concerned that their students are deprived of the time and attention needed to receive a quality education because of the demands students with disabilities make of the teachers in the regular classroom environment. Other than this concern, parents as a whole appear to perceive the change to inclusion as being positive for the regular education students as well as the students with disabilities (Giangreco, 1992). Additionally, Lowenbraun, Madge, and Affleck (1990) found that parents of both regular education students and special education students educated in an inclusive classroom had positive levels of satisfaction with the initial placement and that those attitudes either remained constant or improved after a six month placement.

Students

It appears that regular education students readily accept students with disabilities. Inclusive classrooms resulted in a decrease in attitudes and fears about individual differences and an increase in self-esteem and commitment to personal principles (Lombardi, 1994; Staub, 1996). Additionally, most of the students with disabilities reportedly feel uncomfortable in answering questions, seeking help, and/or drawing any kind of attention to themselves in the regular

classroom environment; yet, would like to remain in the regular education environment (MacIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Shay, Haager, and Lee, 1993).

Academic Achievement

Academic achievement or performance of regular education students is a concern when including students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment for some regular and special education personnel (Garver-Pinhas & Schmelkin, 1989; Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992). These regular and special education teachers felt that inclusion created tensions within the building, it was detrimental to some students, and it created additional work for already overloaded teachers (Pearman, Huang, Barnhart, & Mellblom, 1992). However, the following studies would indicate that those concerns are unfounded.

Research studies completed by Willrodt and Claybrook (1995) and Sharpe, York, and Knight (1994) focus on the achievement levels of students placed in a traditional classroom setting with special education services outside of the regular education environment as well as students placed in an inclusive classroom where students with disabilities received their special education instruction within the regular education environment. The researchers compared the achievement levels of each group and found that there were no differences between the two groups of students. In other words, the attitude that school personnel adopt regarding the assessment and implementation of inclusive education is determined by what they believe and feel rather than measurable outcomes from research studies.

Successful Inclusion

If in certain situations there are no significant differences found in the academic achievement and performance of all students, how is successful inclusion accomplished? Schattman and Benay (1992) state that there are three "common characteristics" associated with an "inclusionary

model." The first characteristic is the "relationship between inclusion and the broader issues of school reform" (p. 23). The second characteristic is the use of a "team approach for problem-solving, planning and program implementation, breaking professional isolation by linking teachers, parents, and administrators" (p. 23). The third characteristic is the transformation of traditional roles of the IEP team members.

McLeskey and Waldron (1996) list three stages used to "develop a good inclusive program"(p. 155). The stages include "teacher belief and values" regarding inclusion, planning, and the "actual implementation and maintenance of program" (p. 155). In the Scruggs and Mastropieri (1994) study, they found the following variables associated with successful inclusion: administrative support, support from special education personnel, acceptance, positive classroom atmosphere, appropriate curriculum, effective general teaching skills, peer assistance, and disability specific teaching skills. These variables are closely related to the decisions made about education and how they play out within the school.

Leadership Factors

Research has shown examples of successful inclusion. Within those studies, leadership factors were found to aid in the success of inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment. The majority of the researchers attributed the success to effective relationships between school personnel and participatory decision making models (Guzman, 1994; Strodl, 1993; Villa & Thousand, 1992). Guzman (1994) found that administrators offered ongoing structured and collegial support to the teachers as well as providing them with professional development opportunities and specific skills and knowledge training that focused on issues related to the inclusion of special needs students. Strodl (1993) stated that interpersonal issues, empowerment, and professional development were factors contributing to effective leadership.

The organizational development of the school which utilized a participatory decision making process and collaborative staff approach were influential factors in the type of leadership provided (Villa & Thousand, 1992).

Burrello (1992) discovered that the instructional leadership role of school administrators in relation to the management of special educational programs was essential to successful inclusion. A framework was presented of the administrator's role in seven broad areas of instructional management: community, beliefs and experience, institutional context, principals' routine behaviors, instructional climate, instructional organization, and student outcomes.

These research studies provide specific characteristics that promote effective leadership and that aid in the success of an inclusive educational system. Although many of these characteristics can be found throughout our educational system, Maguire and Ball (1994) state that school leaders develop differing levels of understanding about mandated policy and the information needed to implement said policy. Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) state "practitioners do not confront policy texts as naïve readers, they come with histories, with experience, with values and purposes of their own, they have vested interests in the meaning of policy" (p. 22). In other words, as a school leader begins to interpret policy for implementation, there will be evidence of differing opinions and possibly even opposition. School leaders interpretations of the policy differ because of what they bring with them to a specific situation.

In referring to the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) in the United Kingdom, Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) state that policy

is not a text that is capable of only one interpretation and the various elements that make up the Act empower different bodies, groups, individuals in different ways, empowerment depending not only upon the 'tightness' or otherwise of the legislation but also upon the

possibilities and the limits of particular contexts and settings. In effect the ERA is being constantly rewritten as different kinds of 'official' texts and utterances are produced by key actors or agencies of government. Thus a whole variety and criss-cross of meaning and interpretations are put into circulation. Clearly these contextual meanings influence and constrain 'implementers' but their own concerns and contextual constraints generate other meanings and interpretations (p. 12).

Professionals within the field of education influence educational policy and reform based on an understanding of existing practices along with the attitudes and beliefs.

Summary

The majority of the research studies reported that the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment is seen as an overall positive experience. School personnel were in favor of inclusion; however, they did show some concerns about the academic performance of all students. Within many of the studies reviewed, the leadership factors of participatory decision making, staff development and support emerged as aides in the success of the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular classroom environment.

Through numerous court cases and legislation our national policy regarding students with disabilities has been established. Although controversy continues regarding the educational of students with disabilities in the regular education environment, building level administrators must educate themselves on mandated policies and especially policy interpretation and its implementation. Martin (1995) sums it up by stating,

There are many differing approaches to what is called inclusion, so that practices will differ markedly from setting to setting, and in fact, from teacher to teacher and from child to child.

As a matter of public policy, a federal or state government, even a local school system, cannot

responsibly adopt "inclusion" without defining its proposed program. Further, it most probably should not, as a scientific matter, use the general enthusiasm for inclusion and its adoption elsewhere as criteria for its decision. (pp. 192-3)

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which building level administrators come to understand the mandated policy regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment, its meaning to people in the schools, and the impact of their interpretations and implementation strategies on inclusive programs. The method of inquiry was an explanatory case study (Yin, 1989). A single public school district was selected to assess policy interpretation and implementation across varied educational contexts. The data from three public school sites within this suburban school district are presented in this chapter.

Case Study Procedures

The case study procedures included interviews with the building level administrators and the special education teacher involved the inclusion programs at each site. In addition to the interviews, formal and informal observations within each school site were made. The observations included students with disabilities in the regular education environment, the special education environment, and other settings throughout the school site. Finally, district documentation was reviewed. Documentation consisted of reviewing students' confidential files which included the comprehensive evaluation results determining eligibility for Special Education services and a current Individual Education Program (I.E.P.) as well as agendas of staff meetings related to the inclusion program. These case study procedures occurred during a four month time period during the Spring semester of the 1997 school year.

Case Study Sites

The three public school sites selected for this study were located in Middle Town, a large suburban community on the eastern side of a large metropolitan area. Middle Town had approximately 75,000 residents. Many of the community members were employed by one of the two large industries located on the outskirts of the community. Also located within the community was a military base.

The school district covered 97 square miles and employed 1,140 certified teachers and administrators as well as 599 non-certified personnel. There were three high schools (10-12), five junior high schools (7-9), seventeen elementary schools (K-6), an area Vocational-Technical school, and a special services center in the school district. Middle Town Public School District was accredited through the State Department of Education (K-12), North Central Association of Colleges and Schools (K-12), and the Department of Vo-Tech Education.

The school district's student population was 15,554. There were 3,349 high school students, 3,801 junior high students, and 8,404 elementary school students; approximately 69 percent of the graduating students attended college. The teacher-student ratio for the school district was 1:17.

Through associations, individuals became aware of my interest in inclusion and allowed me access to what they believed were successful inclusive programs at their school site. These sites were also reflective of district faculty and student demographics. Finally, the sites were selected because each of the administrators had been at their particular site for at least three years and were familiar with the school district's as well as the school site's special education programs.

Site Coordinators

With the building level administrator at each of the school sites, I discussed over the telephone the nature of my study and the proposed individuals to be interviewed. The

administrators at the elementary and junior high granted my request to conduct the study as well as to interview the building level administrator, to observe both regular education and special education classes, to informally discuss special education issues related to inclusion with school personnel, and to review district documentation if necessary.

At the elementary school, contact was again made with the building level administrator to schedule a convenient day and time for the interview. The administrator also agreed to be the contact person for the visitation at the site. Mrs. Adam the building level administrator at the elementary level came to Middle Town Public Schools 18 years ago as an elementary school teacher. After teaching for five years, Mrs. Adam entered the administrative intern programs where she served in that capacity for one year. She then assumed the role of the building level administrator at South Side Elementary.

At the junior high, contact was made with the building level administrator to schedule a convenient day and time for the interview. He granted my interview request while allowing the school counselor to be my contact person for the visitation at the site. Mr. Allen, the building level administrator at the junior high level, graduated from Middle Town Public Schools. Mr. Allen had worked within the field of education for 35 years, 10 years as an English teacher and 25 years as an administrator.

At the high school, contact was made and I was referred to one of the assistant principals. She followed up with our initial contact and asked that I contact one of their special education teachers, the coordinator of the inclusion program. The building level administrator felt that a greater understanding and insight into their inclusion program could be provided by the special education teacher. I then contacted the special education teacher in charge of coordinating the inclusion programs at this site by telephone. He agreed to the interview and was willing to help

coordinate my visit at that school. A packet containing a cover letter and the consent for participation in this study was given to each of these three individuals prior to my visit. Mr. Smith presently serves as the Department Head for Special Education as well as holding a special assignment as the Inclusion Coordinator at Middle Town High School. Prior to this, Mr. Smith was a special education teacher and football coach. He has taught within the Middle Town Public Schools for 17 years. Mr. Smith taught and coached at another high school within the district before transferring to this site four years ago. The signed consent forms were collected at the time of each interview.

On-Site Interviews

Telephone contacts were made to arrange a convenient time for each interview. Each of the interviewees was requested to obtain specific background information regarding the school site. Prior to each interview, a follow-up telephone call was made to confirm the day, time, and location. I was available before school, after school, and during the evenings for interviews. Two of the interviews were conducted before school hours. One of these two interviews continued into the start of the school day. And, one interview was conducted in the evening.

Given the purpose of this study, to document the ways in which building level administrators come to understand mandated policy, I needed data from the building level administrator most closely associated with the inclusion programs. Each of the participants in this case study was asked to respond to the same questions and statements regarding the inclusion program at their particular school site.

Upon completion of the interviews, telephone contact was again made to request additional information that was not contained in the interview tapes or to clarify information that could not be easily interpreted from the interview tapes. Each interviewee was sent a transcribed copy of

his/her interview for review and was asked to confirm the information and exclude any statements or comments that he/she did not wish to be included in this study. Each of the interviewees complied with my requested and informed me that the information given through the interview was correct and did not need to be altered.

Observations

Formal observations of students with disabilities in the regular education environment, special education environment, and other settings within the school building were conducted to confirm the perspectives reported by each respondent. I was at each school site for multiple days over the four month period of data collection. Prior to the formal observations, placement of special education students into both regular education classes and special education classes were discussed. South Side Elementary hand picks teachers in the regular education classes for all special education students. This was not the case at the junior high and high school level. At Jones Junior High and at Middle Town High School all students had information entered into a computer and the computer generated all class schedules.

Informal observations were also made throughout each school site. I informally visited with the faculty during class changes, at lunch, and before and after school. Data collected from the observations and visitations has been included throughout this chapter with the data collected from the formal interviewing and document review.

Document Review

Two forms of documentation were made available for my review. First were district level materials. These materials included agendas and minutes to Principals' Meetings with the Superintendent, Director of Elementary Instruction, and Director of Special Services and packets of information regarding special education issues received by the principals from the Director of

Special Services during inservice training. Second were individual school site generated documents. Each contact person reported that staff meetings were held to disseminate information and to discuss issues related to the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment. I reviewed agendas and printed information distributed during each meeting. Two of the school sites used their own teacher-made form that documented the modifications necessary for the student with a disability to successfully function and participate in the regular education settings. The form was completed for each student with a disability based on the modifications listed on his/her Individualized Education Program (I.E.P.). All school personnel that had contact with a student with a disability had a copy of the completed form.

Reporting

Specific descriptions of each school site follow. Included are descriptions of the school, its location, size, and ethnic distribution along with personnel and student population distributions. A brief summary of the formal classroom observation and informal observations follows. A detailed description of each site observation can be found in the Appendix D for the elementary, Appendix E for the junior high school, and Appendix F for the high school.

The names of the individuals interviewed or observed have been given pseudonyms. All of the administrators have been assigned a last name beginning with the letter A, the special education teachers with the letter S, and the regular education teachers with the letter T. The students included in this study have been assigned pseudonyms according to their ability level; the letter H for the students with high functioning ability, the letter M for those students with moderate functioning ability, and the letter L for the lower functioning ability students. Then, emerging themes based on (1) perspectives, (2) practices, and (3) outcomes are detailed.

Perspectives were the belief system of each participant: information regarding education and special education, definitions of inclusion, the roles that individuals play within each site, and how they came to know what they know. Practices included how decisions were made regarding inclusion, how inclusion was implemented at their site, what planning occurred, what support was provided for implementation, what concerns the faculty had, and how individuals were involved. Outcomes were specific inclusive situations observed to be happening, what participants thought about how inclusion should be implemented, and opinions regarding what was successful or unsuccessful about their program.

South Side Elementary

South Side Elementary employed 43 individuals: 33 certified personnel and 10 non-certified personnel. Of the 33 certified personnel, there was one building level administrator, 30 teachers, 1 school counselor, and 1 speech and language pathologist. Of the non-certified personnel, 2 were secretaries, 5 were child nutrition workers, and 3 were teacher assistants. The custodial staff were contracted through a major cooperation. There was one custodian working the daytime shift.

Of the certified and non-certified personnel working at South Side Elementary, a total of five individuals worked in the special education department. Three of the individuals were certified teachers while two were non-certified personnel. The two non-certified personnel worked as a paraprofessional/teacher assistant and as a teacher assistant/personal aide to a student with disabilities. This department provided two full-time and one part-time special education programs. One full-time program served 14 students identified with mental retardation. The two support personnel worked with this particular special education program. The other full-time and part-time programs served 37 students identified with a learning disability. Of the 554 students,

51 students had been identified as students with a disability and represented approximately 10 percent of the student population.

South Side Elementary had a total student population of 554. South Side Elementary had an estimated 40 percent minority level. There were 126 African American students; 67 were male and 59 were female. There were 19 American Indian students; 9 were male and 10 were female. There were 14 Hispanic students; 7 were male and 7 were female. There were 8 Asian students; 7 were male and 1 were female.

Perspectives

When asked about the special education programs and especially inclusion at South Side Elementary, Mrs. Adam, the building level administrator, described what she thought inclusion was, the special education programs at her site, and her role in those programs. She defined inclusion as a way of bringing the special education students back to the regular education environment.

I know we have been doing that from the standpoint of least restrictive environment, but I think what the legislature is wanting us to do, is to really study how we can incorporate those kids more in the regular program. Do more training with teachers-regular classroom teachers-so that they feel comfortable having them [students with disabilities] there, but also know what to do with them on a more regular basis. Because I think what they [legislatures] are hoping to see is to bring them back more into the mainstream, a lot more than what we have been doing in the past... We try not to get the mindset that this [special education] is ever permanent... Because they [the parents] know that wherever possible we do put a child back in that [regular education] classroom.

Mrs. Adam shared the thought that inclusion should be an ongoing thing; that inclusion did not really have a beginning since it had evolved from other programs and it should not have an end. Inclusion was something that school personnel should continue to move toward. Alternatives needed to be considered because some issues had been resolved while others had not. Mrs. Adam did not believe that the issues had been explored to the extent that they should be. She continued by stating,

Well I think some of the teachers have in mind that we were going to take all special ed children and there were not going to be any lab situations any more, that we were going to mainstream 100% of the time in every situation. Well, I think they have realized now that that is an unreasonable assumption or interpretation.

When asked about the specific role that the building level administrator plays in the special education programs at a school, and specifically with inclusion, Mrs. Adam said,

I am very active in that. The difficulty I have is that I am the only administrator in my building and so for just paperwork shuffling kind of things, I have to depend on other people to follow through and take care of those things...

I know every special ed student and a little bit about their history and background. I sit in on as many meetings as I can, even if I am only sitting in as part of the team observing. I want the parent and the teacher to know that that is important to me too, and I think sometimes if you don't make sure that you're visible, they tend to begin to think that they are the only one out there working on this and I don't ever want them to feel that way because I lose all the ground that we have gained if I do that...

So I spend a lot of time staffing when I need to and calling teachers in and asking them for documentation or whatever, could you have these available for us when we need, or

whatever. And, I think it pays off in the end, it is just real tough to do.

Practices

After providing me with an idea of what she believed inclusion to be, I asked how South Side went about implementing those beliefs. I wanted to know the procedures put into place, the decisions that were made and by whom, how individuals were involved in the process and how those

individuals came to know what they know about the school site decisions. In sum, inclusion practices at South Side occurred because of communication and team decision making.

When discussing the implementation of inclusion, Mrs. Adam said,

I don't know that we really... drew a line and said now we have inclusion. I am not sure that if you talk to a lot of our teachers they would tell you we do have inclusion, because they are still seeing a lot of kids going to labs and being assigned to those kinds of things... But I think over time with some key people in the building, teachers who kind of understand what was going on, we just gradually make the transition. But like I said, I suspect there are still a lot of teachers that still think we are still doing business as usual... I'll be real honest here, we are not finished. I don't know that we are ever going to be finished, because we do more than some schools, a lot less than others, and don't know how far we can take it.

Mrs. Adam stated that the IEP team members, through team meetings, discussed and determined how best to implement inclusion for a particular student with disabilities. She continued by stating,

I have told them over and over again, unless we communicate what is going on, there is no way that we can help you, number one. But number two, that we can make sure that child is being successful, that we are not losing a child along the way.

Mrs. Adam added that she did not believe that there had been drastic changes or specific procedures taken in the way that South Side included their special education students in the regular education environment. However, Mrs. Adam stated that she felt like many of the changes that had occurred to date came about due to the mindset of district level administration and from the direction of the district's special services facility.

Mrs. Adam stated that most of the information came from the central administration offices in written form either distributed at the principals' meetings or through a district level in-service for all administrators. Mrs. Adam shared the following:

I think they [Central administration] really do an outstanding job of making sure we [administrators] have that information. Once in a while I wish we could have more time; it seems like time is always the issue. So when we get this information as principals either breakup in small groups and kind of hash it about a little bit before we deal with it at the site or at least be able to maybe spend more time working with special services and kind of talking about how this might play out. You can't ever know when new things come down how they are going to play out at the district level or at the site level, but kind of playing "what if" games and giving some examples, or maybe just sharing some of the experiences that we have had, and what really worked out well and what was effective. I wish we had more time to do that....

I am always supported and feel really comfortable with special services. In this district, I don't call them and ask for a lot because we try to handle and take care of our own. But,

when I do need to call them and ask for help, I cannot recall a time when they have not tried....They do listen when we ask for something, and try to address it if they possibly can, and that goes for everybody, from the secretaries at special services to the director, and I truly mean that.

Mrs. Adam did not list specific procedures that had been used to accomplish inclusion. However, she did discuss the importance of communication and support. She stated that communication and support were two procedures used as a way of getting people involved in the process of inclusion. Communication was needed to gather information so that informed decisions could be made. Support at South Side Elementary was given through faculty helping faculty, resources, and professional development.

As far as people are concerned, we try to do them [the special education teachers] just like we would do any teachers in a regular classroom. If things are rocky that day and they need some additional hands or eyes or whatever, we try to pull people from wherever we can to give them that [help] and then they turn around and do the same things when they can help someplace else. The door is always open in the office, the teachers feel like they can come in and share anything, ask questions, and ask for help. We just sort of have some little things we know from working with each other, when we really need help....

I try to always provide each year in the budget in addition to anything else that they [special education personnel] might get, some portion of my budget for special ed. I am not required to do that, but it seems like it just makes sense, because they are working with a lot of different levels and they don't always have all of the materials that they need. So we try to put some of that aside and offer them an opportunity....

And also, new teachers need to be in-serviced right from the very beginning, what some of their responsibilities are going to be and how that will add a little bit. But knowledge of what they are expected and what they may be facing goes a long way towards not blind siding them in the classroom on down the road.... And meet with them a little more often if possible and ask about the special ed students that they are working with in the regular classroom and do they have any questions, and what are your frustrations and how long has it been since you met with the special ed teacher, have you looked at the IEP lately just to refresh your memory. Just those kinds of things.

When asked about how decisions were made regarding the special education programs or inclusionary practices at South Side, Mrs. Adam stressed the importance of including everyone through ongoing communication with the faculty, especially with the special education teachers and the counselor, as well as the feedback from parents. Mrs. Adam stated that this ongoing communication was done either through formal meetings or informal discussions. She went on to state that one of the keys in the whole process was to listen to what each individual had to say. Mrs. Adam said,

We won't always agree necessarily, but we try to listen and at least make an effort to attempt some of the things that they [parents] suggest might be beneficial to their child. But I think just the communication among the faculty and people feeling free to express ideas and make suggestions and offer alternatives really makes the difference. I think where you are in places where people feel either intimidated or ordered to do something or don't feel like they have any input, it just, it might work short term, but I don't think in the long run it would really be very effective.

Mrs. Reynolds, a regular education teacher, commented on the fact that it was much easier to work with the special education students and special education department than it had been a few years past. She gave two reasons for the current practices in regards to the special education department. First, the special education personnel shared specific information necessary to teach the special education students in the regular education environment, made modifications to the regular education curriculum, and provided alternative materials that coincided with the regular education curriculum when modifications were not successful. And second, when a problem arose, the team or those involved would meet together and talk about the issue until a mutual decision had been reached.

Mrs. Adam discussed the fact that, as an administrator, she probably instigated a lot of the talk and discussion. She stated that she felt like she had to a certain amount time. Mrs. Adam would pull her faculty together for a meeting to make sure that all were seeing and hearing the same kinds of things, and see whether a team meeting should be called or could the changes occur without one. Mrs. Adam stated that it was important for administrators to know a little ahead that something was coming down even if a decision had not been made yet. Then when the decisions were made, administrators would know that these decisions were final and that they were going to have to live by them at least for a while.

I appreciate that kind of thing and then I hope in turn passing that on to the teachers, spreading that around, helps make everybody's situation a little bit better. I think it is overwhelming sometimes when you look at all the things and some of the things we are trying to do, but I don't think it is nearly as impossible as we sometimes think it might be, but we have to communicate, you can't drop something on it.

Mrs. Adam went on to reiterate the importance of communication and team decision making. She stressed the fact that the two should go hand-in-hand. She also stressed that it was important for an administrator to "stay in tune" with the teachers and the students. She stated that it would be easy for her to sit back and tell the faculty that she had all the information needed and, therefore, she would be making the decisions about a particular special education student. She went on to state that it was not appropriate for her to handle situations in that manner.

I understand the law that says these are team decisions and I have a real difficult time when I am communicating with someone or working with someone who tends to want to make all the decisions. I have to guard against doing that.... I know that is wrong, that is the wrong thing to do. Nine times out of ten, I might even be right, but it is not the way you do it. The law, I think, was developed for that reason so that individual people were not making the decision, that a group of people who know a lot about that child can come together and share what they know so they can make a good, intelligent decision. It may not be the right decision next week, we may have more information from some other source that may let us know we need to do something on down the road, and so we do. But, nobody feels uncomfortable about doing that. Nobody feels like anybody made a mistake, because they all know how the decision was made based on the information we had at that time, those were the best decisions for that child, and that is pretty much what we stay with.

Mrs. Adam stated that one way the faculty at South Side Elementary is included in the decisions regarding the special education programs is through an annual site improvement plan. Mrs. Adam reviews the plans from the previous year, shares that information with the faculty, and allows them the opportunity to incorporate any ideas for the next year. South Side Elementary

also does site climate studies. Mrs. Adam and the faculty meet to discuss their perceptions of the school environment, what they like about that atmosphere and what they do not like about the atmosphere. The faculty also discusses current educational theories and/or practices at faculty meetings. Mrs. Adam said,

I try to do different kinds [of improvements and climate plans] every year to get different areas and from time-to-time those would be some of the things that we might want to look at or talk about. We try to bring these topics up at faculty meetings at least a couple of times every semester updating them on all the new information that might not be available to them, asking special ed people to come in who may have even more information from the state department than what I would even have, or certainly have, and just update people. We try really hard to keep individuals informed as it applies to them, and to keep that open communication so that if they are confused or they are unhappy about something then they can come in. I don't have any problem with someone coming in and saying I really am not comfortable with what we are doing or I don't like it, it does not work for me. But most of the time when those kinds of things happen, if we can sit down and talk about where it came from, why it was developed, what the purpose of it is, and how we are going to implement it together. And they almost always leave with a little different perspective. They may still be frustrated, they may still be uncomfortable with it, but at least now they are willing to go out and try it and then give us feedback. And I try not ever to leave people with "that's the end of the story, now we are through," because what I will ask them to do is to at least give this a shot, give this a try and then come back and let's talk about it some more, and they choose to do that. And, it is very rare, I think if you would talk to people in the building and say how do you like inclusion, if you just

generalized it like that, they would probably say well I don't like it. But the funniest thing is they are probably doing a great job of doing it, it's just that they see it as a really overwhelming job, and they want to do a good job.

Our discussion continued by my asking Mrs. Adam how she helps her faculty to understand what it is that they know about the school's special education programs. Mrs. Adam said,

I don't talk about it in terms of inclusion very much, I just talk about it in terms of each individual child and what's best for that child and sort of look at it from that perspective.

It may be my perspective, but it seems like maybe that term has got so much negative connotation and we have heard it for a long time before people ever really started trying to look at doing some things and I think that probably is a problem sometimes when we get a mind set about terminology. So rather than do that, I do what I have always done. Let's just look at individuals and let's do what is right for them in this team meeting or in this faculty meeting when we are talking about the general picture of our building and taking into consideration the fact that we do have these children, let's make good decisions about that and the rest of it just kind of takes care of itself.

Mrs. Adam facilitated this process by reading materials and trying to determine who needed to have that information.

I try to copy anything and get it in their hands and then maybe hand it out at the principal's meeting and talk about it. And that has to do with not only special ed, but attendance policies, residence, you know, grades, discipline, doesn't matter what it is, if they need the information, then I try to get it to them. And, from time-to-time, I do weekly memos and if there is a particular hot topic right now or an area that seems to be of concern within our building, I include it in that memo, I might put it in there a couple of weeks in a row

so they know this is something significant that we need to either talk about or they need to be conscious of or aware of.

Mrs. Adam went on to tell me that she did not want her classroom teachers to share the same feelings as she had when she was a classroom teacher. She remembered working with an administrator who did not share a lot of that information and you would have to hear it from another source.

There is something very humiliating about that. I told them I will try to give you the information, we will try to talk about it to the point that I feel like I am comfortable talking about it because I may not have all the information, then whatever your questions are, you come back and we will go from there.

Outcomes

In discussing the procedures or practices used at South Side Elementary regarding the planning, implementation, and on-going support related to the inclusion of special education students within the regular education environment, Mrs. Adam also spoke about perceived and observed results. When considering the success or lack thereof regarding the special education programs at South Side Elementary, Mrs. Adam had the following comment:

I think our program is great; very successful. I know it is for individual kids, but in the big picture...I did not see any line when I said okay this year we are doing inclusion. It is an ongoing thing and I don't know that I can evaluate what we have done there.

With that thought in mind, Mrs. Adam did provide a few comments on what might be done to make the special education programs at South Side Elementary more successful.

I think that it is real important, from the very beginning when the students first enter, to have the information that you need about that child to make a good decision. And then,

once you have that information, to work with all the people who will be involved with that child's education, including the parents, and determine what that child is really capable of doing and then kind of develop the steps that you think are necessary, and that might require starting at one place for one student, starting at another for others, but as much as possible keeping them a part of the regular routine that goes on as part of their education. I think we have done a really good job in most of our schools here, and I feel good about what we do in our school as far as the stigma of being special ed. Anymore, the kids are coming and going from a lot of different resource rooms and things in the building and that has really helped. And I think just keeping standing on that.

Mrs. Rogers, a regular education teacher, summarized her thoughts about the success of South Side's inclusion programs by stating that regular education staff is accepting of special education and students with disabilities. Regular education teachers and students without disabilities are willing to have students with disabilities participate in regular education classes and extra curricular activities. She went on to state that she did not perceive the regular education classes being any different when the special education students were there due to the modifications and curricular adjustments that were made for them by the special education personnel. Mrs. Rogers concluded by stating that the support given to the regular education staff from the special education teachers was good.

Arrangements were made for me to complete observations on two special education students, Linda and Michelle. One student was identified with a moderate disability while the other student was identified with a severe disability. The observations confirmed Mrs. Rogers comments. The two special education students were accepted and were not treated differently than any one else. Despite their time in the regular education environment, Linda and Michelle were pulled out of

that environment and into the special education environment for instruction in specific curricular areas. The observed time in both the regular education and special education environments were consistent with the information contained in each one's Individualized Education Program (I. E. P.).

Summary

Inclusion at South Side Elementary meant looking at the needs of the student and determining what was in the best interest of a particular student. Students with moderate to severe disabilities were in the regular education classes for Social Studies and Science. Observations in both regular and special education environments verified this. In other words, instruction for some subjects would be provided within the regular education environment while instruction for other subjects would be provided in the special education environment. The principal spoke of inclusion as being an ongoing process. A process that required communication and team decision making.

South Side Elementary had done some planning for the implementation of inclusion through open communication and team decision making. Mrs. Adam provided the entire staff with the necessary information for implementation once it was received from the central office administration or from the special services facility. She also provided the staff the opportunity to participate in site improvement plans and staff development. Financial resources were given to assist in the implementation of special education programs.

Overall, the faculty of South Side Elementary thought the outcomes of their inclusion program were successful. However, there were no real measures to determine its success. The students with disabilities were included in a wide variety of activities and seemed to be accepted by their peers without disabilities.

Jones Junior High

Jones Junior High School employed 68 individuals, 48 certified and 20 non-certified personnel. The office staff at Jones Junior High School were comprised of one building level administrator/principal, one assistant principal, two counselors, and four secretaries. There were 44 certified teachers, four of these staff members worked in the special education department. Besides the four secretaries in the office, the remaining non-certified personnel consisted of five teacher assistants, one computer lab assistant, one reading lab assistant, one library/media assistant, two paraprofessionals/ assistants, and there were six child nutrition workers. The custodial staff were not district employees. They were contracted through a major cooperation.

Jones Junior High School had three special education programs; two programs served students that had been identified with a learning disability and one program served students that had been identified with mental retardation. There were a total special education population of 56 students: 44 were identified with a learning disability, one student had a hearing impairment, one student had a visual impairment, and 12 students were labeled with mental retardation.

Jones Junior High School had a total student population of 562. Of the 562 student membership, 39 percent were minorities. There were 142 African Americans; 78 were male and 64 were female. There were 14 American Indian; 7 were male and 7 were female. There were 25 Hispanic; 13 were male and 12 were female. There were 22 Asian; 14 were male and 8 were female.

Perspectives

Perspectives are the thoughts and ideas of the building level administrator regarding the special education programs at this site. They also included Mr. Allen's, the building level administrator,

definition of inclusion as well as his role in the programs. Mr. Allen began by stating that his special education programs were down from several years ago. At one time, there were five special education programs at this school site and now there were three: two special education classes for students identified with learning disabilities and one special education class for students identified with the disability of mental retardation. When specifically asked about inclusion, Mr. Allen said,

First of all the law says we have to do. I say first of all, I really mean second of all. We've always put kids in regular classes as much as we could. It could mean a whole lot of different things. We were trying to mainstream kids for many years and then the inclusion law came into effect as far as making sure that we did. We have laws to make us do things we should have been doing in the first place. We end up putting kids in places where they don't really need to be, they really can't handle, just to include if we are not careful. Of course, along with that I personally think that special education students have to be able to handle it in their behavior and every other manner. We don't just put them in there so we can say that we did. I think that's wrong and the law is overriding everything we do.

Of inclusion, Mr. Allen continued,

Well, there are good things and bad things about it. I don't know that I know the exact definition, I think I do. I think it is something that should be given with special education kids. I don't think they ought to be segregated like they were in a elementary school in this district for about 25 years and then another elementary school in this district for about 10 years. I do think that special education students should be mainstreamed, inclusion, whatever, for what they can handle.... I don't think that it ought to wag the dog so to

speaking, and I think if we are not careful that's what we do. It seems like sometimes, especially in special education, we do whatever the law says we must do, even if the kid can't handle it. I think it's unfair to them. It wasn't a benefit, it was unfair.

When asked to elaborate on the ability of students with disabilities to "handle it," he discussed the fight that occurred in the art class the day before. A special education student identified with the disability of mental retardation was arguing with another student.

By handling it, I mean, handle it emotionally and socially, socially more than any other way. We were forced because of the teacher planning periods to put them [students with disabilities] into that course [art] and Physical Education. I think P.E. has always been the dumping ground and administrators are of course responsible for that. Being a smaller junior high in this district, we're limited sometimes and especially with block scheduling now and the students just having four classes, we're limited as to what we can put special education students in. We have all these good ideas but reality is reality. I think that is something a school administrator needs to be aware of. Don't just stick them somewhere to get it done. Make sure that they can handle it ability-wise and social-wise or whatever.

When asked about his role, as the building level administrator, in the special education programs. He shared the following remarks:

Right now I'd have to say more of an advisory type, nothing other than hiring the teachers and evaluating the teachers and I don't sit in on all that many meetings except those that they come and ask me to sit in on. We have two counselors that do. One of them has a special education background and was our trainable MR (mental retardation) teacher here for a long time. Of course, I consider the teachers as the experts in the area, and not us. It's more of an advisory role, I think, than anything, and trying to understand the special

education law. That's a full-time occupation right now, trying to understand the law, being up on it and understanding it.

Mr. Allen meets with the counselors a few times a year to discuss issues and to provide his input. He feels fortunate to have worked with these people for a number of years and feels he has an understanding of how they think. He also stated that he had to stay in close communication with the counselors because there were a lot of traumatic and stressful situations that had to be worked out.

Practices

Practices were how inclusion began at this school site, how it was implemented, who aided in these practices, what kind of support was given to those involved in the practices, and how decisions were made. Once the decision had been made to do inclusion, Mr. Allen described the procedures that were taken at this school in making a change towards increasing the number of students with disabilities into the regular education environment.

I don't know that we did just a whole lot. I think we did some staff development and met with the faculty too. The problem in public schools in handling special education students is getting the faculty, all of them, to accept the fact that they, that special education students, had as much right as the regular kids. But, we did lots of meetings and talked to the teachers about as much as anything on how they could include them in the classroom and how they could modify the curriculum.

Mr. Allen described how the faculty at Jones Junior High went about modifying the curriculum for the special education students. The faculty met together to discuss what needed to be done. The special education teachers met with the regular education teachers, went to their classrooms

and did whatever they could, and offered suggestions to them about modifications such as reading a test to them, fewer test items, fewer homework problems and especially in math. One of the things that the special education teachers did was to hand out a modification sheet. A modification sheet listed the specific approaches and methods to be used in the regular education environment. Also, the school had a lot of textbooks on tape. The students could listen to the text as it was being read. Mr. Allen stated that the special education teachers had taken the lead role in helping him and the teachers with the modifications that needed to be made for the special education students in the regular education environment.

Mr. Allen continued to talk about the importance of team decision making for a successful inclusion program. Mr. Allen stated that the counselors, regular education teachers and himself depend upon the special education teachers to help provide input based on their expertise. He further stated that he informed these individuals with information such as new policies or laws by placing copies of it in the school mailbox or through discussions at faculty meetings.

An example of the faculty working together to make the necessary modifications for students with disabilities in the regular education environment occurred during the formal observation. Mrs. Snow, a special education teacher, approached Mrs. Cummings, the school counselor, with the need for assistance in reading a test to one of her students. Mrs. Cummings agreed, sent for the student, read the test to the student, and had the student return to his regular education environment when they were finished.

When asked about other individuals on the staff that had been instrumental in the current special education practices at Jones Junior High, Mr. Allen stated that his wife was the one that had helped him understand special education more than any body.

I think as of 10 or 15 years ago very few administrators in this school district really understood special education. I still think there aren't very many. I'm not saying that I do, I do think I'm fortunate to be married to a special education teacher who can explain the law to me. I can go home at night and have explained to me why you have inclusion, why we do this, why we have extended-school-year program, why the law is there, and why all of these things that I really don't understand. And I don't think as an administrator of a regular school, of a regular junior-high, you have time to stay on top and study all the special education law. You almost have to lean on somebody else, be it counselors, wife, special education director, psychometrist, teachers at your school, whatever, to help you on these things. They take the lead role and implement. I've heard administrators years go say: "I just don't know how to handle them." But who does? I didn't, and I still don't. I don't have any answers, I just know that they are human beings and we all have to work together. They have the same right to an education as any other student in this school. We've got to work that some way. It's just a learning process more than anything else. I think they understand the special education students. I don't think we'll ever really understand the law probably. But I want to say that by virtue of the fact that we have had so many people connected to special education, teachers and those people over the last 15 to 20 years, I think that has helped develop things here and our attitudes toward special education.

As we continued to discuss the special education programs at Jones Junior High, Mr. Allen stated that there were still a few teachers, regular education teachers, that seemed to be having trouble with the whole process. The concern specifically was their unwillingness to modify the

curriculum. This is a real concern to Mr. Allen due to the fact that all of the teachers at J.J.H. were given support and assistance in the implementation of inclusion in the special education programs.

We try to go over the policies that we have at Middle Town with the teachers at the beginning of the year and the law. We all think what we want to think, but these things are the law and it's the right thing to do if we do it in the right way. Let's go on about our business and not sit around and worry whether I should have to do this or that. I've heard all these things from teachers about them having little bitty classes and they get paid five-percent (5%) more. It's still galls regular teachers. Every time I hear that I invite them to go in there and take that teacher's place for a day or two. Let them swap out. I've never had any volunteers, ever. Sometimes, it's hard for regular teachers to understand. And the only reason I do, I think, is because I'm married to a special education teacher and I just think it almost takes that.

Mr. Allen continues by discussing a difficulty with inclusion.

And I don't totally understand everything but I think they may have no understanding at all and all the ramifications of special education. I try to really support the regular teachers. You can call it an improvement, you can call it whatever you want to, I don't think it's right to stick any kind of student in a classroom where they can be disruptive all the time, and that's hard to argue with. I think if the special education student cannot handle the regular education environment, in whatever manner, I think it's a disservice. Everybody doesn't agree with that. Even our special ed teachers whom I disagreed in their philosophy as far as inclusion is concerned. Of course, the law says we're supposed to and I understand that. But, if they can't handle an art class, they can't handle the

science classes, the social aspects of it more than anything at the junior high is what I am really referring to. I don't think we ought to do it because it is really a disservice. Kids are always being disruptive or the others are bothering them, and the regular kids can bother them. They ought to be learning some things, it's all window-dressing if that's the only reason for doing it. No, I try to support both of them. I try to support the regular teachers and I try to keep a balance with the special education teachers and the students.

Mr. Thomas, the math teacher, was not observed making any modifications to the math curriculum for Harry, a special education student. Mr. Thomas presented the lesson in lecture style along with the use of the chalkboard. Students were called upon to approach the chalkboard and complete one step of the math problem listed. Upon completion of that activity, the students were given the opportunity to work in groups to complete the assignment. After a short period of time, the students were requested to return to their original locations to grade the assignment. Harry was required to participate and complete the assignment without any noted modifications or adjustments.

However, modifications and adjustments were noted during the observation with Mr. Taylor, the computer lab teacher. Mr. Taylor stood in close proximity to Lisa, a student identified with a disability, as he provided the instructions for the class. Mr. Taylor provided additional instruction to Lisa as well as direct assistance in completing the assignment. While the class was completing the assignment, it was noted that Mr. Taylor walked around the classroom to monitor and assist all students while continuing to return to Lisa to provide her with direct assistance.

Outcomes

When asked to describe how successful or unsuccessful the special education programs had

been after the implementation of inclusion practices, Mr. Allen stated,

I think the changes are in the perception of regular classroom teachers and how they perceive these kids and how they understand special education. I think that's improving all the time, that's certainly not where we want it to be. I think it's fairly successful. I've always felt like everybody in this building pretty well have the kids' best interest at heart. I think if we can do that, we are doing the right thing to start with. I think that the gaining respect for special education teachers and their classes from regular teachers is in the thick of things. But as far as fall out from inclusion. There are still teachers who think that special education teachers should handle their students and I guess we will always have that.

Mr. Allen went on to state that he believed that in order for inclusion to be successful it should be structured with the help and assistance of the special education teachers. The special education teachers should inform everyone on exactly what inclusion was, what the law states, and what it means for the school. And then implement inclusion based on what they think was best for the special education students. And also, to work closely with the counselors in that they know who teaches what subjects and what classes were available.

Mr. Allen concluded by discussing the issues of mandated policies and what that meant for he and his staff.

We just try to take the mandated policies and make sure that we're legal. Do the right thing and make it legal first. We ought to do what's right for the kids next, and within that legal, and if that's bending a little in certain ways, I think we should do it. I've always said I'd like to be the first one to go before the judge and say you won't to convict me for what we've been calling bootlegging special ed kids and Title I reading program. Before we had

reading programs with LD kids, we did that for a couple of years. We got taught that from the State Department. We got called on state policy. We [were] told you [are] not to do that and we didn't have that written down anywhere. I don't know how we got caught. Middle Town has always been good about insisting especially in special ed law, you follow the law. We've had superintendents insist, which is the right way to handle it.... I think if the teachers are told that these are the laws enough times and it's emphasized, they pretty well can handle it. The curriculum aspect is hard because we have so much mandating. I don't think any consideration is hardly ever given to special education students in that planning. There's nothing wrong with all of what we're supposed to teach, it's a matter of how reasonable that is. If our regular kids are scoring below the 50th percentile, then what does somebody expect of our special education students. It's worth it to have high expectations. I think we're probably expecting a little too much out of our special education students. There's just a little too much there for them to deal with. Of course, that's part of modifying the curriculum. I don't see anything wrong with leaving some of that stuff out. I finally decided after all these years, the most important thing was to teach students to get along with one another and, all this other doesn't matter. If you can't hold a job because of their behavior, none of this is important.

Mr. Allen closed by stating,

I think inclusion is a wonderful concept, if we can do it correct, or do whatever correct is, and if it's beneficial to the special education student. I'm not saying it's not because it does include them, that's not always the best thing. It's the right thing but not always the best thing for special education kids. I've always felt like

it puts them in jeopardy. They can eat with our kids, play ball on teams, all these kinds of things and to be social. You just don't get social in a science classroom, if it's not going to work, I don't think it needs to be. I think we'll have it in the long-run; we'll just have to improve it all.

Mr. Allen's interview was completed prior to observations within the educational settings. A brief summary of the observations will be provided while a more complete description of the observations can be found in the Appendix E. The faculty had prearranged the students to be observed: Harry, a student identified with a learning disability, and, Lisa, a student identified with mental retardation.

The day began with an observation of Harry in the special education lab. Harry spent his first hour in lab while the remaining three class periods in the regular education environment. The special education teacher monitored and assisted Harry on his assignment which was for his English class. She also did the same for the other students in the class. As the bell rang, Harry gathered his things and proceeded down the hallway. Harry stopped and spoke to several students before entering his math class.

Harry's math class could be described as a traditional math class. There was a time of lecture, group work on the chalkboards, and then, seatwork. The math teacher did speak to Harry regarding the assignment after the initial assignment had been given. However, there were no noted modifications made to the assignment. Harry worked with a group of students on the assignment until the students were requested to return to their seats. The assignment was checked and was given as homework if not completed.

Lisa was observed in the computer lab. Each of the students had an assigned workstation. The classroom teacher provided instruction to the class while monitoring and assisting as they

went. The classroom teacher remained by Lisa's workstation where more direct assistance could be given. After instructions were given and an assignment was given, the classroom teacher provided additional assistance and instruction to Lisa before allowing her the opportunity to work on the assignment. There was no interaction among any of the students. The students that completed the assignment were allowed to begin work on something else.

Summary

The principal made it apparent that he was not a proponent of inclusion for all students for all subjects. His idea of inclusion was for students with disabilities to be placed in the regular education classes based on their cognitive and social abilities. The faculty seemed to hold an open and positive view regarding inclusion at J.J.H.

Modifications were noted for students with disabilities within the regular education environment. The faculty discussed the modifications with inclusion based on the sheet that the special education personnel provided on each student. Although the same curriculum was being utilized for all students, some faculty members demonstrated the ability to adapt and modify within the regular education environment.

The principal had very little to do with the inclusion program. Those responsibilities belonged to the counselors. The principal did play an advisory role in the process. However, the special education teachers provided the direct information and support to the regular education teachers. Also, the faculty received support through participation in staff meetings and staff development opportunities.

Middle Town High School

Middle Town High School (M.T.H.S.) was located in the heart of the community of Middle Town, one of three secondary facilities grades 10th -12th. Two of the five junior highs fed into

M.T.H.S.. Middle Town High School had a total student population of 1,351 students. Middle Town High School employed 93 individuals: 75 certified staff and 18 non-certified staff. The administration at M.T.H.S. was comprised of four individuals: one principal and three assistant principals. Each of the three assistant principals were assigned to a particular grade level. Middle Town High School had three full-time counselors and one part-time counselor. There were eight secretaries and six child nutrition workers. The custodial staff were contracted employees.

Middle Town High School had six certified staff members in its special education department and four non-certified personnel worked as paraprofessional/teacher assistants. Middle Town High School had five special education programs: two programs for students identified with the disability of mental retardation, one program for students identified with emotional disturbance, and two programs for students identified with learning disabilities. One staff member assigned to each program. The sixth certified staff member in the special education department held a special assignment for indirect services. This individual was the coordinator of the inclusion program at M.T.H.S.

Of the three secondary schools in this district, Middle Town High School had the largest percentage of minorities: 41 percent. There were 420 African American students; 218 were male and 202 were female. There were 67 American Indian; 34 were male and 33 were female. There were 41 Hispanic; 19 were male and 22 were female. There were 12 Asian; 9 were male and 13 were female.

Approximately ten percent of the total student population at M.T.H.S. were identified as students with disabilities. Of the students receiving special education services, 65 students were identified as having a learning disability, 34 students with mental retardation, and 15 students with emotional disturbance.

Perspectives

Although many individuals were involved in the inclusion program at M.T.H.S., responses regarding the meaning of inclusion, the roles individuals played, and how they came to know and understand inclusion were provided by the special education teacher responsible for the inclusion program. When asked to explain the special education programs and especially the inclusion programs at Middle Town High School, Mr. Smith stated

Inclusion is not only for the kids on a monitored IEP. It's for all LD students and MR students that are in this building. Basically what we do is provide a service for those students from the regular class if they are having problems in that regular class and they need extra explaining. If they need assignments broken down, if they need a test modified, if they need assignments or tests read to them, then they come down for the inclusion. I even have kids come in that aren't on an IEP. We have some 504 [Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973] kids that come in and we have some kids that can't qualify for any program.... But basically it's like extra assistance. We have to come in and take the curriculum and mold it and change it and fit it for each individual student. So, that's basically what we do with inclusion.

Mr. Smith's comments were supported by the formal observation in a Spanish II class and the informal discussion with the classroom teacher, Mrs. Thomason. Although no notable modifications were made during the lecture or assignment, Mrs. Thomason spoke directly with Hank, a special education student regarding his assignment. She also stated that modifications were made when necessary using the modification sheet provided by the special education staff.

Mr. Smith continued to state that M.T.H.S. became aware of an inclusionary education model as the district began receiving information about mainstreaming and how this concept was

becoming a trend nation wide. The district discussed the issue of wanting everybody mainstreamed for every class period. Mr. Smith stated that he had the first program in the state for the high school level. It was a cooperative team teaching program where Mr. Smith went with the special education students to the regular education environment. Mr. Smith stated that this program had to be done this way because of the size of the school and the number of teachers. He continued by stating that the program was successful because it made the students "better students." Many of the students went from making Ds and Cs to As and Bs. Mr. Smith believed this occurred because he was able to stay in close contact with the students as well as see firsthand what materials and information were being presented. However, it was logistically a nightmare in the fact that he could not work with these student on a consistent basis due to the number of students needing special education services. The state department informed the district that he could not teach any of those classes. In other words, he must assume the role of a tutor. So, the district looked at that program and then came up with an alternative which was the current inclusion model; to have an office area where a special education teacher could intervene with more students. Instead of going to the students, the students came to the teacher. Mr. Smith added that it was unfortunate because one was not able to stay in as close contact with the students, making sure that they did the work.

The administration was supportive in the inclusion process yet Mr. Smith stated that he basically handled everything. He continued by explaining Mr. Anderson's, the principal, role as an advocate in the inclusion process.

Basically, the larger the school, you have the less role the administrator has because they have so many other things going on. They are an advocate for us with the regular classroom teachers. They do provide some input when they are available to come to our

meetings. If there is a specific disciplinary problem with a student and we need them to be involved because we are writing a disciplinary objective in the IEP, then they definitely attend. However, our counselors take the administrator role as far as the IEP team....

The administrators are really good advocates between us [special education staff] and the students and us and the teachers [regular education staff].... They refer a lot of students to us for additional help or to see if they have ever been tested or to see if they might need to be tested.... Mainly, though, the role with inclusion is to help us if there's a problem with the regular teacher but that doesn't occur very often.

Mr. Smith went on to describe his opinion about how individuals should be involved in the implementation of special education policy, how administrators should deal with special education policy and how individuals should be informed of the decisions.

I guess we're pretty lucky in the fact that they [administration] feel like we're the experts. I mean, they are involved, don't get me wrong. And in my opinion, I think that's what an administrator should do. Some administrators feel like they have to get their fingers in everything and that they have to have total control of everything. I feel like the role of the administrator is to be an overseer or a manager and if you don't have the people working with you that can do the things that you think they need to be doing then maybe you need to get some new people. We're lucky in the fact that we have administrators that let us take our role and run with it. There have been times in the past when I wished they would have been a little stronger on the disciplinary part of it because they're ultimately the ones that have to make the decision on discipline. I think if there were any one thing that I would tell an administrator or if I were telling an university about educating administrators, it would be more education on the processes of special education and the

policies and procedures. I think an administrator needs to be up on policies and procedures in special education. I do feel like that since Dr. Samson [Director of Special Services] has come to this district our administrators are more up on policies and procedures. I think they're more informed. But on the other hand those policies and procedures tend to change every two or three years.

Practices

Practices provided information regarding how inclusion was implemented, how decisions were made and by whom, involvement of school personnel, and the kinds of support given to ensure success.

Decisions regarding special education programs throughout the district were made at special services or at the administration building. Decisions were then passed on to the administrators at a principal's meeting and subsequently to the special education teachers at a meeting for all special education personnel. Mr. Smith stated that he reviewed the information with the special education staff before passing it on down to the regular education teachers. And then, that information was implemented. Mr. Smith reiterated that for this particular school site the decisions were made by the special education department and then taken to the administration for their approval before implementation.

As far as individuals that have aided in the current special education practices at this school, a great deal of credit was given to the special education teacher that held his position prior to his taking on the role. Mr. Smith stated that the two of them, with the administrators, devised and implemented the current program. When discussing other individuals that had also assisted in this process, he added,

The feds and the state departments have aided in the fact that they are moving everything towards more mainstreaming. The problem that I have with what they're doing is they're going overboard in the fact that they want some of these TMR and the severe and profound kids... in the regular site and they want them mainstreamed and there is no place to put them... as far as classes to take that has hindered us a little bit....

One thing that the feds and state have helped us with is getting kids out in the normal class and getting them more like everybody else. Letting them fit in and to be integrated into society better. But on the opposite side of the coin they have hurt us is with the disciplinary policies and plans. They've tied the administrator's hands because we have some higher level students that have had weapons and drugs and things like that and we can only suspend them for ten days total or go to an alternative setting, unless we want to file due process to get rid of them or go on a court battle. We can't treat them like a normal student. So, they have helped them in the academic area but they have hindered the administration in the disciplinary area.

Mr. Smith stated that the teachers greatest concern was over the disciplinary policy and what could be done in certain situations. He stated that no one would want to deprive special education students of a free and appropriate education but sometimes they deprive themselves of that. It is difficult because some teachers did not want to open themselves up to danger when a special education student could bring a gun to school and was disciplined with a 10 day suspension. Another really big concern was that many of the students are not going to go on to college. Mr. Smith said,

The vocational education program is the best thing for the majority of our students. The vocational educational center is getting real particular on which one of our students they

wish to let in. They're segregating them to a certain extent by adaptive behavior forms and the recommendation forms that we're having to fill out. No other student has to fill out. We're in the process right now of getting that done away with. But it's a battle that we're having to fight that we shouldn't have to fight. Probably that in itself and the fact that the curriculum required for graduation credits and the new diploma are probably our major concerns.

Mr. Smith went on to discuss a few of the procedures that were established for implementing the inclusion programs. He stated that he maintained a notebook which included all of the special education students' schedules. Also, a modification sheet was developed that included information about the special education student's I.E.P. goals and objectives along with suggestions for curriculum modifications. The regular education teachers were notified in writing as to who the special education students were and what their modifications were. Mr. Smith also met with individual teachers to let them know what they could do to assist the student. He sought their input as to whether or not they would be opposed to the plan or if they would be bothered with him being in their classroom.

Outcomes

Upon discussing the procedures used to establish the inclusion program, Mr. Smith went on to describe the success of the special education programs after the implementation of inclusion practices. He discussed the fact that the programs vary from year to year depending on the individual students. But that, the inclusion program had helped to deal with students maintaining a passing grades, getting rid of the failure syndrome, the graduation process, keeping students interest in being at school, and the drop out rate. Mr. Smith added, "It's been successful in helping them be better students... So far, inclusion has kept kids in school."

This whole building really does a good job as far as not singling out the special ed students. They don't do anything necessarily anything special for 'em but they don't do anything different for them either. It was successful in getting some of the regular teachers to work with individual students; to teach to the different learning modalities.

Lanny, a student with disabilities, had made friends in his regular education class. Lanny was seen leaving a weight-lifting class with a group of regular education students. Lanny was overheard telling the group of male students a story as they proceeded to the foyer area. The group of students along with Lanny joined with others. Lanny was not observed to act differently than the other students. Lanny spoke to the group as a whole as well as with individual students. After interacting with several groups, Lanny and one of the students from the group proceeded to the cafeteria where they had lunch together. Lanny was again observed to openly interact and communicate with the students at that table.

Mr. Smith stated that as far as the structuring of an inclusion program M.T.H.S. did a good job of implementing inclusion with the resources that were available.

We could use a few more resources financially but everybody could. I think we've done a good job with touching base with the teachers with time allocated during the day. I think the kids need to come and check in more than what they do. But, they're adults and we like to treat 'em that way. They won't admit they're having trouble sometime.

The interview with Mr. Smith was completed prior to the formal site observation. A condensed summary of those observations follow while the complete description of the observations can be found in the Appendix F. Observations had been prearranged by the staff on three students. The first observation was completed on Hank, a student identified with a learning disability. Hank spends his entire school day in the regular education environment. Hank was

observed in a Spanish II class. The class began with a lecture and then question and answer.

Hank was encouraged to answer a question and provided cues when unable to answer correctly with the first response. The class then broke into groups for an activity. The classroom teacher allowed the groups time to discuss and work through the activity before beginning another question and answer format. This method of teaching continued until the bell rang and class was dismissed.

Michael, the second student, was observed in a class designated as L.D. English. Michael was continuing to work on a class project. The classroom teacher reminded the students to review the information on their study sheet and follow the steps listed. She asked for questions before allowing the students to proceed. The classroom teacher then met with each student to review their project and provide instruction. The student worked independently for the remainder of the class period. There was little interaction among the students while they worked. As it grew closer for the class period to being over, the students began conversing. The students were allowed to do so until the class came to a close and they were dismissed.

Observation on Lanny began in the hallway as he was exiting his classroom of weight lifting with a group of other male students. Lanny was telling the group something as they proceeded down the hallway to the commons area. The other students listened attentively and interjected on occasion. This group of students was joined by others and the conversations continued. Lanny eventually left this group and joined another where he was readily accepted. This continued until Lanny and another student left the group in pursuit of the cafeteria. Again it was noted that Lanny was readily accepted in a group of students where all present actively participated in the conversation. After finishing his lunch, Lanny left the group and the cafeteria.

Summary

Inclusion at M.T.H.S. placed student identified with the disability of Learning Disabled in the regular education classes along with their nondisabled peers. They were treated like all other students with the exception of returning to the special education teacher for assistance when needed unless they were specifically assigned to an "L.D." class. The regular classroom teacher was expected to follow through with the modifications given them.

The process of moving to a more inclusive education model was a district initiative. It was stated that the district did an adequate job of disseminating information regarding special education and its policies. Support for inclusion from administrators was giving their approval while allowing the special education staff to implement as they saw fit.

Cross-Site Summary

When comparing the data collected from the three sites that make up this case study, there were notable similarities and differences. In terms of demographic similarities, the minority level at each of the school sites were virtually identical: the elementary level was 40 percent, the junior high level was 39 percent, and the high school level was 41 percent. Each of the school sites served approximately 10 percent of the total student population within the realm of special education services. All three of the school sites had programs serving student identified with mental retardation and with learning disabilities. At the elementary school and the junior high school sites, the building level administrator/principal was responsible for the inclusion programs. At the high school site, the building level administrator/principal delegated those responsibilities to one of the special education teachers. This particular special education teacher held a title of inclusion coordinator.

Differences in demographics were found in student ethnic backgrounds and special education programs. The ethnic background at the elementary and the high school sites showed that African American students held the largest percentage followed by American Indians, Hispanic students, and then Asian students. The junior high site showed that African American students also held the largest percentage followed by Hispanic students, Asian students, and then American Indian students. In addition to the two programs serving students with mental retardation and learning disabilities, the high school had a program serving students with emotional disturbance.

Table 1 summarizes the demographic information gathered from each site.

Table 1

Demographic Summary

	South Side Elementary	Jones Jr. High School	Middle Town High School
<u>Site Staff</u>	43	63	93
<u>Special Education Site Staff</u>	5	6	10
<u>Site Enrollment</u>	554	562	1,351
<u>Minority Enrollment</u>			
Caucasian	387	359	802
African American	126	142	420
American Indian	19	14	67
Hispanic	14	25	41
Asian	8	22	12
<u>Special Education Enrollment</u>	51	56	114
<u>Special Education Categories</u>			
Mental Retardation	14	12	34
Learning Disabled	37	44	65
Emotional Disturbed	0	0	15
Other	0	2	0

Data

The collected data from the case study appears in the categories of (1) perspectives, (2) practices, and (3) outcomes.

Perspectives. The participants at South Side Elementary, Jones Junior High and Middle Town High School shared a similar definition of inclusion. Each of the participants stated that they thought inclusion was placing students with disabilities in the regular education environment with the exception being a regular education class that the student with a disability could successfully perform and achieve in. The junior high level participant was the only participant that made specific reference to inclusion being a “law.” Each of the site representatives discussed the use of modifications to the regular education curriculum as a part of inclusion. The junior high and high school developed a modification sheet to be given to the teachers in the regular classroom environment.

The individuals that were actively involved in the inclusion process varied at the school sites. Although the administrator at South Side Elementary stated that she could not always be actively involved, she was a part of as many meetings as her schedule allowed. In addition, she made it a point to know every student receiving special education services as well as information about their background and their educational needs. At Jones Junior High and Middle Town High School, the counselor assumed the role of the inclusion administrator in terms of dealing with paperwork and meetings. The building level administrator at Jones Junior High stated that he advised the counselor on special education meetings and paperwork before delegating those responsibilities. At both of these sites, the administrators were said to be supportive and give assistance in times of need. The administrators at Jones Junior High and Middle Town High School intervene when a problematic situation arises.

The participants from each of the school sites made mention of the special services facility and staff as resources to help provide explanations and understanding related to special education and inclusion. There was a general consensus that the director of special services provided information to the administrators through an administrators' meeting as well as to the special education teachers through a meeting. Both South Side Elementary and Jones Junior High stated that they were given assistance and information through their school psychologist/psychometrist. Also, the participants stated that information was given through memos or a meeting by Central Office.

The understanding of inclusion and special education policies and procedures by each administrator varied. The participant at South Side Elementary stated that along with receiving information from the central office and special services facility through memos and inservice training information was obtained by reading current publications. The participant at Jones Junior High gave credit to his wife since she was employed within the field of special education. He mentioned being able to go home and ask her for an in-depth explanation or clarification regarding issues dealing with special education. While the participant at Middle Town High School was a special educator. The participant at M.T.H.S. received formal training and was certified in the field of special education and continues to receive inservice training through the district regarding special education policy and procedures.

Table 2 summarizes the perspectives of inclusion at each school site.

Table 2

Perspectives of Inclusion by School Site

	South Side Elementary	Jones Junior High School	Middle Town High School
Definitions:			
It is the law	--	X	--
Students with disabilities treated the same as other students	X	--	--
Use of regular education curriculum	X	X	X
Use of modifications	X	X	X
Administrator involvement:			
Active	X	--	--
Advisory	X	X	--
For Discipline	X	X	X
Person Responsible:			
Administrator, others as needed	X	--	--
Others, administrator as needed	--	X	X
How Site Participant Gained Knowledge:			
Self Taught	X	--	--
District Taught	X	X	X
Other Taught	--	X	X

Practices. In the practices category, the participants at the three sites discussed the ways in which decisions were made regarding the special education programs and the planning that occurred before the implementation of inclusion. They then described the procedures they felt the school site had taken toward the implementation of inclusion as well as the types of support given for its implementation.

Each of the school sites shared the belief that the decision to move toward a more inclusive educational model was twofold. First, information received from central office and special services personnel was the fact that inclusion was the result of "law." And second, the district as a whole was supporting inclusion. They thought that the district had been participating in some type of inclusion for a number of years.

Each school site showed some similarities as well as differences as far as procedures used to implement inclusion. South Side Elementary and Jones Junior High did not believe that specific procedures were defined and taken. Yet, each of these sites made mention of strategies used. South Side Elementary discussed the use of communication and support. Although not observed or confirmed through document review, Jones Junior High School discussed the use of communication and team decision making. Both South Side Elementary and Jones Junior High mentioned financial resources were provided for special education programs. Middle Town High School stated that their current inclusion program was modeled after another program. Each of the three participants in this case study mentioned discussions at faculty meetings, I.E.P. team members meeting, and inservice as a means of providing information to the entire school staff. One difference that should be noted was the method of placing special education students in the regular education environment. At South Side Elementary, special consideration was given to the placement of special education students in that teachers were selected to receive special education

students within their class. At Jones Junior High and Middle Town High School, student schedules were generated based on information programmed into the computer.

Table 3 summarizes the process used to implement an inclusion program at each school site.

Table 3

Practices in the Implementation Process

	South Side Elementary	Jones Junior High School	Middle Town High School
District:			
Mandate	X	X	X
Directive from Central Office	X	X	X
Directive from Site Administration	X	X	X
Planning	X	X	X
Inservice/Staff Development	X	X	X
Site:			
Directive from Site Administration	X	X	X
Site-level administrator support: information dissemination	X	X	X
finances	X	X	--
Open two-way communication	X	--	--
Trial and Error	X	--	--
Site self review	X	--	--
Inservice/Staff Development	X	--	--
Design of Modification Sheet	--	X	X
Scheduling of Special Education Students:			
Teacher/student match	X	--	--
Computer generated	--	X	X

Outcomes. A theme that emerged from each of the school sites in this case study that would indicate success was the fact that students with disabilities were placed in regular education classes for all or part of their school day. Both Jones Junior High and Middle Town High School discussed the difficulties in finding appropriate classes, especially academic classes, for students with moderate to severe disabilities to take. It was mentioned that part of the difficulty was with block scheduling. In other words, the length of the classes in block scheduling could be a hindrance for some students with disabilities.

Another emerging theme was that the perception of teachers in regular education classes were changing. Teachers were more accepting of students with disabilities, had a better understanding of special education, and were more willing to address modification needs.

All three of the school sites stated that they thought their inclusion programs were successful. Both South Side Elementary and Jones Junior High stated that to evaluate their inclusion programs at this time would be difficult. They continued by stating that inclusion was an ongoing process and that each site was continuing to make improvements. Although no measures were taken, students with disabilities placed in the regular education environment were making passing grades with the use of modifications. Regular education and special education teachers at all three school sites appeared to work cooperatively together as well as cooperatively with the students with disabilities.

Even though it was not specifically mentioned when discussing outcomes, all of the participants mentioned the support provided by central office, special services facility, administrators, and staff to ensure that the outcome of the inclusion programs were positive and successful. Table 4 summarizes the outcomes of the inclusion programs.

Table 4

Outcomes by School Site

	South Side Elementary	Jones Junior High School	Middle Town High School
Compliance with the law	--	X	--
Change in teacher perceptions	--	--	--
Cooperation among regular and special education staff	X	X	X
Collaborative Teams	X	X	--
Student Success:			
For individual children	X	--	--
For special education children	X	X	X
No special education stigma	X	--	--
Metaphor for the administrator:			
Supporter	X	--	--
Advisor	--	X	--
Troubleshooter/Manager	--	--	X

Chapter IV will present an analysis of the case study.

CHAPTER IV

ANAYLSIS OF THE DATA

Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) imply a causal relationship between local administrator knowledge bases and policy implementation. In other words, the more specific policy related knowledge administrators possess, the more likely they will possess a “policy supportive” lens through which to view their own and organizational activities and processes which support specific policy. In this study then, the more inclusion knowledge administrators possess, the more likely it will be that they possess an “inclusion supportive” lens through which to view their own and organizational activities and processes which support the policy of inclusion.

Analysis of this relationship through the data obtained and reported in Chapter III will follow several steps. Conceptually it was expected that the knowledge each administrator or individual charged with the implementation of inclusion possessed would impact inclusion at each site. In other words, the more each individual knew about inclusion, the more inclusion appropriate strategies would be evidenced at each site. And, given that all sites were within one district, each site was subject to the same interpretations of policies and had available to them the same support for inclusion through in-services for administration, faculty, and staff and/or district level services and support personnel.

The first step in this analysis was to establish the inclusion knowledge bases of each of these individuals. We needed to know what they knew about inclusion and inclusive practices. In their own words, what was inclusion? How was it accomplished? What did it result in? What were its

intended outcomes? Of interest as well was how they came to know “inclusion.” How was their knowledge base built? Did it come from their academic and educational backgrounds or from other sources? The next step was to examine inclusive practices at each site. We needed to know what was available for students? What was available for faculty and staff? And, generally what did inclusion look like at each site? With these two sets of information we could then begin our analysis of the relationship between perspectives and policy implementation.

What do these administrators know about inclusion?

Definitions of inclusion, perspectives about the accomplishment of inclusion at their school site, and knowledge of inclusion answer this question. Each site representative’s perspectives follow.

South Side Elementary

According to Mrs. Adam, the building level administrator, South Side Elementary participated in an inclusive educational model from the component of the law of least restrictive environment as well as a district initiative. From her standpoint, inclusion was a process that had yet to be completed. Inclusion was ongoing. Inclusion was in a state of evolution. And, inclusion was a matter of incorporating students with disabilities into the regular education environment more than what was being done at the present time. Speaking of inclusion, Mrs. Adam said, “I know we have been doing that from the standpoint of least restrictive environment, but I think what the legislature is wanting us to do, is to really study how we can incorporate those kids more in the regular program.”

Mrs. Adam spoke of several factors essential for the accomplishment of an inclusive education model. First, the staff at South Side Elementary communicate. They communicate regarding the educational needs of a student with disabilities, when assistance was needed, and when the

devised educational program was not working. Second, inclusive education was being accomplished in this district because of the support and direction of the central administration office and of the special services facility. Third, South Side Elementary provided training for all new personnel. Finally, the transition from the current education model to a more inclusive education model was made gradually through trial and error. Mrs. Adam sought to help her faculty pursue inclusive practices. She stated, "Let's just look at individuals and let's do what is right for them... When we are talking about the general picture of our building... let's make good decisions about that and the rest of it just kind of takes care of itself."

Mrs. Adam gathered information regarding inclusion through district in-service for administrators and reading current publications. Mrs. Adam then shared this information with the staff. Mrs. Adam stated that the special education programs and especially the inclusion program at South Side Elementary were successful. However, she continued by stating that it was difficult to determine success or lack thereof because South Side was continuing to make changes as they were needed. Mrs. Adam believed that an inclusive education model was successful when you had all the pertinent information, the team members made good decisions, and the team worked together to educate students. Mrs. Adam says, "... once you have that information, to work with all people who will be involved with that child's education... determine what that child is really capable of doing and then kind of develop the steps that you think are necessary... keeping them a part of the regular routine that goes on as part of their education."

Jones Junior High School

Mr. Allen, the building level administrator, stated that inclusive educational models were occurring because there were laws that said it must be done. Mr. Allen did not provide a specific definition of inclusion or how it was accomplished but instead stated that inclusion was

"something that should be given with special education students." And that, inclusion within the regular education environment should only be what the student could handle. Mr. Allen stated, "We have laws to make us do things we should have been doing in the first place. We end up putting kids in places where they don't really need to be, they really can't handle, just to include if we are not careful."

Mr. Allen stated that his staff spent time meeting with one another and participating in staff development. "I think we did some staff development and met with faculty too." He also stated that he supported the regular education teacher and worked to keep a balance between special education and regular education. Mr. Allen also made reference to the information received from central office administrators and from the special services facility personnel.

Mr. Allen stated that his understanding of inclusion and how to achieve an inclusive education model has resulted because his wife worked within the field of special education. She had explained the laws to him and he in turn explained the specifics about the law to his staff. "... I don't think as an administrator of a regular school, a regular junior high, you have time to stay on top and study all the special education law. You almost have to lean on somebody else." He continued by stating that inclusion at Jones Junior High was successful because of the expertise of the personnel working in the field of special education and the entire staff willing to work together. Mr. Allen states, "... we have had so many people connected to special education... I think that has helped develop things here and our attitudes toward special education."

Middle Town High School

Mr. Smith, coordinator of the inclusive programs, stated that inclusion was a service provided to students with disabilities enrolled in regular education classes. These special education students receive additional help with their regular education classes. Students not qualifying for

special education or students being served under Section 504 were also able to partake of this service. Students that were having difficulties performing successfully in the regular education environment with curricular modifications could seek the assistance of special education personnel in a special office area. Of inclusion at M.T.H.S., Mr. Smith said, "Basically what we do is provide a service for those students from the regular class if they are having problems in that regular class and they need extra explaining."

According to Mr. Smith, inclusion came about at M.T.H.S. due to the district's interest in national trends and policy. He continued to state that this particular program was modeled after a program he had while a special education teacher at another high school. Mr. Smith stated that there were two main reasons that inclusion was accomplished in this district. The first was the mandates by the federal and state governments. And secondly, central administration and special service facility mandates. Once those mandates were received at the site level, Middle Town High School initiated a few procedures to assist in the process. These procedures included a notebook with the schedules of all special education students, a modification sheet listing curriculum adaptations, and meetings with all personnel involved. Mr. Smith said, "The feds and the state departments have aided in the fact that they are moving everything towards more mainstreaming... getting kids out in the normal class and getting them more like everybody else. Letting them fit in and to be integrated into society better."

Mr. Smith is a special education teacher and received a formal education in the field of special education. He also continues to receive in-service training through district meetings. He stated that the inclusion program was successful because the administration relied on the expertise of the personnel within the special education department. "... The role of the administrator is to be an overseer or a manager and if you don't have the people working with you that can do the things

that you think they had to be doing then maybe you need to get some new people. We're lucky in the fact that we have administrators that let us take our role and run with it." Mr. Smith also reported that the administrators at M.T.H.S. relied upon the special education department to interpret, design, and implement a site based policy in accordance with district guidelines received through in-service training. The administration was supportive of inclusion but at the same time not directly involved in its implementation.

Summary

Similarities were found among all three of the sites in terms of reference to inclusion as a legal term. However, none of the three sites used the terminology of "inclusion" when discussing their definition or programs. The elementary site mentioned the legal principle of least restrictive environment. The provision of LRE is the intent of the law. The junior high site specifically referred to inclusion as a "law." A law that schools must compile with. In other words, "inclusion" was the letter of the "law" and not so much the intent of the law. And, the high school site discussed tutorial assistance and specifically made mention of Section 504 as a means of aiding the students with inclusive practices.

The elementary site defined inclusion as a means of gradually incorporating students with disabilities into the regular classroom. The junior high site administrator did not provide a definition but stated that all students with disabilities should have access to an inclusive environment. However, he felt that participation in the regular education environment should occur only when the student with a disability would be able to function like the other students in those classes. The high school site representative referred to inclusion as a service - a tutorial program for student with disabilities. Table 5 summarizes this analysis.

Table 5

What they know about inclusion

	South Side Elementary	Jones Junior High School	Middle Town High School
LRE	X	-	-
Modifications	X	X	X
Separate but equal	-	-	-
Mainstreaming	-	X	-
IDEA	-	-	-
94-142	-	-	-
Section 504	-	-	X
Process	X	-	-

Another noted similarity among all three of the sites dealt with the accomplishment of inclusion. Each stated that the accomplishment of inclusion came about through the central office administrators and the personnel from the special services facilities providing specific information regarding inclusion to all district administrators.

There were several differences among the sites as each sought to accomplish inclusion. First, the South Side Elementary stated specific strategies used to accomplish inclusion at this site. These strategies established a set culture of this school site. There was an information flow, support, capacity building, and evaluation process. Second, the administrator at Jones Junior High did little to facilitate inclusion. He received information from others and in turn delegated those duties and responsibilities to other individuals. Third, Middle Town High School stated that inclusion was mandated and by directive from the central administration offices.

All three of the administrators gained their knowledge through different means. The administrator at the elementary was self-taught. She sought to gain the information needed for her school site. The administrator at the junior high level relied on others to provide him with the information. He relied upon other individuals to two ways. First, he relied upon the special education personnel to know, understand and do what was required by "law." And second, he relied upon his wife to clarify and assist in his understanding. The building level administrator at the high school level had little to do with the process of inclusion and relied on the special education coordinator of the inclusion program to fulfill all duties and responsibilities of interpreting and implementing inclusion at the site. Each representatives stated that their inclusion programs were successful. However, there were no specific measures to indicate success or failure. Differences were noted in the knowledge base of each participant.

In what ways do their schools engage in inclusive practices?

Services and supports offered and available for students and staff and what was happening in terms of inclusive practices at each of these sites answer this question. Each site representative's perspectives follow.

South Side Elementary

South Side Elementary provided academic instruction for students with disabilities in both the regular education environment as well as the special education environment. An emphasis was placed upon the individual needs of each student. Mrs. Adam stated, "I don't talk about it in terms of inclusion very much, I just talk about it in terms of each individual child and what's best for that child."

A variety of supports and services were available for the faculty and staff to communicate their understanding or need for additional information. Mrs. Adam continued to stress how important she feels about individuals and the faculty communicating with one another. For instance, Mrs. Adam had regularly scheduled faculty meetings in which special education issues were addressed, IEP members had informal meetings to discuss issues that arose, special education personnel and administrators were provided with district in-services related to special education law and policy, and new personnel at South Side Elementary received in-service training. Mrs. Adam summed it up by stating, "communication among the faculty and people feeling free to express ideas and make suggestions and offer alternatives really makes the difference." She said that the law mandates team decisions and that South Side Elementary strives to do just that. She continued by stating that team decisions were developed "so that individual people were not making the decision, that a group of people who know a lot about that child can come together and share what they know so they can make a good, intelligent decision. It may not be the right decision

next week, we may have more information from some other source that may let us know we need to do something on down the road, and so we do. But, nobody feels uncomfortable about doing that. Nobody feels like anybody made a mistake, because they all know how the decision was made based on the information we had at the time, those were the best decisions for that child, and that is pretty much what we stay with.”

The key to South Side’s inclusive practices stems from the following quote by Mrs. Adam. “It is an ongoing thing and I don’t know that I can evaluate what we have done there.” Throughout the interview with Mrs. Adam, she made reference to the inclusive practices at South Side Elementary being in a period of evolution. Mrs. Adam further stated that South Side Elementary was doing more toward inclusive practices than what had being done in the past but that they were “not finished” with the process.

Jones Junior High School

Services available for the students were not specifically addressed during the interview. However, there was mention of a modification sheet given to all regular education teachers working with a student identified as having a disability and audio tapes for each curricular area that had a textbook. Also, modifications were noted in some classrooms during observations.

While discussing the services available for the faculty and staff, Mr. Allen stated, “I don’t know that we did just a whole lot. I think we did some staff development and met with the faculty too.” He continued to state “the special education teachers met with the regular education teachers, went to their classrooms and did whatever they could, and offered suggestions to them about modifications...” Mr. Allen also made reference to the information and in-service that was provided by the central office and special services personnel.

Mr. Allen stated that he had specific concerns with teachers being unwilling to modify the curriculum for students. It was a concern since all services and supports were given to all faculty and staff. Inclusive practices at Jones Junior High were inconsistent from classroom to classroom. For instance, the school counselor was approached in the hall to assist a student with disabilities with a test from the regular education environment. The student needed the test read to him. While at the same time, a math class was observed where the classroom teacher failed to make any modifications for the student with a disability.

Mr. Allen also stated that he believed that the perceptions of teachers in the regular education environment were changing. Their perceptions were changing in the way that they saw students with disabilities and how they understood the policies of special education. He further stated, "I think inclusion is a wonderful concept, if we can do it correct, or do whatever correct is, and if it's beneficial to the special education student. I'm not saying it's not because it does include them, that's not always the best thing. It's the right thing but not always the best thing for special education kids.... I think we'll have it in the long-run; we'll just have to improve it all."

Middle Town High School

When discussing what was available for the students at Middle Town High School, Mr. Smith stated, "Inclusion is not only for the kids on a monitored IEP. It's for all LD students and MR students that are in this building. Basically what we do is provide a service for those students from the regular class if they are having problems in that regular class and they need extra explaining.... I even have kids come in that aren't on an IEP.... But basically it's like extra assistance. We have to come in and take the curriculum and mold it and change it and fit it for each individual student. So, that's basically what we do with inclusion."

As far as services provided to the faculty and staff, district policies regarding special education were given to all administrators through district level in-services by the district special services personnel prior to their meeting with all special education personnel. Then, the special education personnel passed the information on to the regular education teachers. Mr. Allen stated that the special education department reviewed all information received from the district special services facility, determined a plan for implementation, presented the plan to the building level administrators for approval, and then, shared this information with the faculty. Also, Mr. Smith stated that regular education teachers serving students with disabilities were notified in writing as to who those students were as well as received a modification sheet describing curricular adaptations.

During one of the observations completed in the regular education classroom, it was difficult to identify the student with a disability. The teacher in the regular education classroom presented the information to the entire class and then addressed an individual student. After addressing the individual student, I was told that the modification sheet was followed when needed but that this particular student was performing successfully without modifications to the assignments.

Summary

There were numerous similarities found among all three of the sites in terms of services and supports for both students with disabilities and faculty and staff. Students received services and support through the instruction they received in both special education and regular education environments. Services and supports consisted of accommodations noted either through the students' IEPs or an individual accommodation sheet. Accommodations were noted at all sites. However, the accommodations were provided through varied degrees. The elementary sites was the only sites that showed consistency throughout all learning environments. Although

accommodations for students with disabilities were observed to be occurring in some classrooms at the junior high and high school sites, there were other classrooms where students with disabilities had an accommodation sheet in place yet no accommodations were being made.

Other noted similarities were the in-service training received by building level administrators and special education personnel and the processes used for disseminating information. Information regarding special education laws and policy were forwarded to the central office administration/special services facility. From there, central office and special services facility personnel shared that information with building level administrators and then with special education personnel.

Differences were noted at each school site in terms of how faculty and staff received the information regarding special education laws and policy. The elementary school site provided regularly scheduled faculty meetings, informal meetings with IEP team members, and in-service training for all new site personnel. The junior high administrator thought some staff development had been provided. The high school site did not specifically mention how the information was passed on to the teachers in the regular education classes. The high school site did mention that each teacher serving students with disabilities received in writing the names of those students along with an individual accommodation sheet.

All three of the school sites approached the practices of inclusion in a different manner. The elementary site stressed the fact that inclusion was an ongoing process and that the transition to more inclusive practices was not complete at this time. The elementary site also stressed the fact that inclusion meant different things for different individuals. Inclusive practices were determined based on individual decisions by each student's IEP team members. Both the junior high and high school sites stated that their inclusive practices were successful. The administrator at the junior

high stated that the perceptions of the faculty were becoming more positive in nature and more supportive of inclusive practices. The high school coordinator stated that the services they provided met students' educational needs. However, observations throughout the school site did not confirm this.

These responses are summarized on Table 6.

Table 6

Examination of inclusive practices

	South Side Elementary	Jones Junior High School	Middle Town High School
LRE	X	X	X
Modifications	X	X	X
Separate but equal	X	X	X
Mainstreaming	X	X	X
Process	X	X	X
Supportive Administrator	X	--	--
Conducive environment	X	--	--

Summary

What is the relationship between local administrator knowledge bases and policy implementation as alluded to by Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992)? I do not believe a causal relationship was found. First, there was no relationship in terms of what each administrator talked about and what was done. Second, the role of the administrator and the resulting strategies in place at each of the school sites were not clear. Administrators will not talk of inclusion using special education terminology or jargon (See Table 5). Each of the school sites had some type of inclusive model in place (See Table 6). This study did not seek to evaluate the degree of success of the inclusive program but if the components of the program were in place.

In fact, the findings of this study would indicate the inverse to be true. The elementary building level administrator had the least amount of knowledge regarding special education policy and specifically inclusion yet was the administrator doing the most as far as supporting the implementation of policy. At the same time, the inclusion coordinator at the high school level had the most knowledge regarding special education policy yet was doing the least to support the implementation of policy.

The findings also showed that the components of the inclusion programs at each site were consistent across all three school sites. This consistency occurred despite administrator knowledge bases and/or implementation processes.

Chapter V will present the summary, conclusions, recommendations and implications, and a commentary of this study.

CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
AND IMPLICATIONS, AND COMMENTARY

This chapter contains a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations and implications, and a commentary obtained from the three data collection sites in this explanatory case study.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the ways in which building level administrators come to understand the mandated policy "inclusion," including its purpose, its meaning to people in the school, and strategies used to facilitate its implementation. The purpose of this study was achieved through:

- The collection of data from three public school sites from within a single school district using the procedures of interviews, participant observations, and document review.
- The presentation of data into the categories of (1) perspectives, (2) practices, and (3) outcomes from each of the three sites and then collectively.
- The analysis of the data against the conceptual frame of Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992).

Data Needs

Data from the building level administrator and/or individuals associated with inclusive practices were need to more fully understand the role administrators play in the interpretation of

policy and the implementation of special education students into the regular education environment. Requirements to accomplish this purpose were to interview the building level administrator and to observe individuals with and without disabilities in varied contexts throughout the school setting to gather data on their perceptions and actions of inclusion programs.

Data Sources

Three school sites from within a single urban public school district were used as data sources. One of the school sites was an elementary school. The second school site was a junior high school. And the third school site was a senior high school.

Data Collection

This explanatory case study utilized three methodological procedures to gather evidence: interviews, participant observations, and document review. The interviews were conducted to elicit perceptions in terms of what, why and how about inclusion from the participants. Students with disabilities were observed in both the regular education environment and the special education environment as well as other areas within the school building. Documents reviewed were the Individual Education Programs (I.E.P.) of students' with disabilities, district records, faculty inservice agendas, and other relevant information.

Data Presentation

Before the collection of data began, a review of the literature was completed. The themes that emerged from the data were then compared to the literature. Continuous comparison of information occurred until no other themes emerged (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen 1993). Through this process, three data categories emerged: (1) perspectives, (2) practices, and (3) outcomes.

Perspectives. Perspectives were the belief system of the participants: views of education and special education, definition of inclusion, the roles individuals and specifically the building level administrator play, and how they came to understand what was occurring at their site. The perspectives of those interviewed was to include students with disabilities in the regular education environment with the exception being regular education classes that the student with disabilities would successfully achieve in with specified modifications.

Not only did the administrators look favorably upon the inclusion of students with disabilities in the regular education environment but, the regular and special education teachers in this study held similar views. This finding was noted in the research of Villa (1996), Arick and Krug (1993), Criswell, Anderson, Slate, and Jones (1993), Pearman, Huang, Barnhardt, and Mellbom (1992), and Garver-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989). It could also be noted that the views held by the school personnel were reflective of the building level administrator. This finding confirms the research noted in Morgan and Demchak (1996) and Fullan (1991).

All three of the participants noted that administration and individuals directly involved in the education of special education students rely on the expertise of the special education personnel for direction. At the elementary level, the administrator discussed her involvement in the inclusion. However, at the junior high and high school level there was little involvement from the building level administrator. Those roles had been delegated to other individuals within the building. Yet, each of the sites were involved in some type of inclusive education. This finding is contradictory to the research of Villa (1996) and Van Dyke (1995).

Practices. Practices were how decisions were made regarding inclusion, how inclusion was implemented, what planning occurred, what support was provided, what concerns were present, and how individuals were involved. The participants in this study indicated that the mandated

policy of inclusion and the need for implementation at the site level came from the administrators. The decision to initiate inclusion was made by the central administration offices and the special services facility. This decision was then passed down to the building level administrator at individual school sites within the district. It was at the site level where final decisions regarding the implementation were set. This finding is congruent with the literature reviewed (Morgan & Demchak, 1996).

Each of the three data sites was responsible for staff development and inservicing of the school personnel. The participants indicated that administrative support was provided through staff meetings when necessary. Also, each of the sites noted additional meetings with all individuals involved in the education of a particular special education student when necessary.

Outcomes. Outcomes were specific inclusive situations observed to be happening, what participants thought about how inclusion should be implemented, and opinions regarding what was successful or unsuccessful about their program. Each of the three data sites perceived their inclusion program as successful. The elementary and junior high level stated that it was difficult to determine success because the process of inclusive education is still evolving. Although there were no measurable means to determine success, the participants talked of success in terms of special education students achieving satisfactorily in the regular education classes, social benefits of students, and appropriate behaviors of the special education students.

Analysis

Data from each of the school sites were compared with the framework established by Bower and Ball with Gold (1992). The framework posits a causal relationship between the knowledge an individual holds and the results produced.

Two specific questions were raised to determine the relationship between an individual's knowledge base and policy implementation. The questions were: what do these administrators know about inclusion and in what ways do their schools engage in inclusive practices?

Findings

The findings of this study would not support a causal relationship. The individual with the greatest knowledge regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education classroom did not produce the school site with the most inclusion supportive program. The school site with the administrator who possessed the least background knowledge or resources to draw upon was producing the greatest inclusion supportive results.

Also, the inclusive practices at each of the school sites were very similar. The district provided ongoing in-service training to all administrators and special education personnel regarding inclusion and special education law. All three of the school sites had in place similar components. In addition to the components that the junior high and high school possessed, the elementary school site had an administrator that was involved and supportive and sought to produce an environment conducive to inclusive practices.

Conclusions

What is inclusion to do? For whom? By whom?

The data indicated that the building level administrators may not fully understand all of the components associated with the mandated policy of "inclusion" but did understand inclusion in terms of a mandate/law. Each of the three administrators eluded to the fact that inclusion was a legal principle or procedure that must be provided for students identified with a disability. Although there were components of the inclusion policy mandate present in each of the school sites, these participants did not speak of education for students with disabilities or of programs

outcomes in terminology associated with inclusion. It could also be noted that the building level administrators at the junior high and high school sites relied on others to ensure that the requirements were being met while the building level administrator at the elementary level assumed those duties and responsibilities.

How does a district accomplish it? A site accomplish it?

In this study, other individuals were instrumental in the implementation of inclusion. The building level administrators at the junior high and high school were not involved unless specifically requested to be. Those involved in the implementation of inclusion included the special education teachers and the counselors. At the elementary school, the building level administrator was involved in most special education meetings and took time to become informed about each special education student within her building.

It should also be noted the importance of the district level context of this study. At each of the school sites there was a strong district influence regarding the information received about students with disabilities, laws associated with special education, and especially inclusion. This information was provided to all building level administrators by the director of special education and central office administrators through regularly scheduled meetings and inservice held throughout the course of the school year.

Summary

The findings obtained from the data presented in this study are as follows:

1. Further defining of the context should be considered. Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) make reference to the local level in terms of its importance with policy interpretation and implementation. This study examined the local level context of individual school sites within a single district. Each school site being its own context yet the study found that the site-level

context did not make a significant difference in terms of policy processes of interpretation and implementation. The difference was noted at the district level. Therefore, the context may be the district instead of the individual school site.

2. What administrators know doesn't matter as much as the district level support and focus. In other words, we can explain the lack of knowledge of the elementary administrator and her success in terms of district level support and focus. We could also explain it in terms of the pedagogy and ideology of elementary education. District level support and focus explains the outcomes for all levels and is probably what we should conclude.

Implications and Recommendations

This research was designed to meet three criteria: (1) to build upon existing knowledge, (2) to impact practice, and (3) to clarify or add to existing theory (Erlandson et al, 1993).

Research

The findings of this case study added to the knowledge base of the roles and responsibilities of the building level administrator regarding policy interpretation and implementation by documenting perspectives, processes, and specific practices associated with inclusion. With the noted lack of knowledge about special education laws and specifically inclusion by the elementary administrator and her success in terms of district level support and focus, future research might examine specific strategies for policy interpretation and implementation in terms of perspectives, practices, and outcomes at the primary level as opposed to the secondary level. Also, additional research might examine the context in terms of the district level as opposed to the site level. In conjunction with the district context, future research might examine the power and influence of district policy.

Practice

Upon examining the current practices in each of these school sites, inclusion was not described and defined in terms of the law yet components of inclusive practices were taking place at each school site. The building level administrator at the elementary site took an active role in the inclusion process while the building level administrators at the junior high and high school level assigned those roles and responsibilities to other individuals. While at the same time, the processes of LRE, modifications separate but equal, and mainstreaming were occurring at each school site.

Recommendations for practice are the need to understand a mandated policy in terms of district interpretation and site level interpretation as well as strategies for implementation. Also, there is a need to understand how people learn about inclusion so that preparation and education could occur thus resulting in better inclusion practices. Colleges and universities through programming and preparation courses in educational administration must seek to determine an individual's knowledge base regarding a particular educational practice and link that knowledge to strategies supportive of the particular educational practice. Hence, providing a foundation of knowledge regarding the education of students with disabilities would result in more supportive practices. Finally, professional development must continue to provide training and learning for all school personnel dealing with students with disabilities.

Theory

The conceptual frame of Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) implies what people know and believe impacts how they interpret policy. From this perspective, the more knowledge an individual has the greater the possibilities for positive results for policy implementation. In this

case study, that was not found to be true. The findings of this case study indicated the strong focus and support from the district level impacted the current practices at individual school sites.

Commentary

When this study began, I was interested in examining how administrators put programs into place based upon an interpretation of mandated policy. I believed that special education programs and policy implementation were ultimately left to the special education personnel. Left to the special education personnel to make decisions due to their knowledge and backgrounds. I believed this to be the case because the number of students being served in special education was limited compared to the number of students in regular education and building level administrators spent the majority of their time consumed with the majority of the school population. Although I still believe this to be true in some cases. I am now able to see additional issues and concerns. First, was the realization of the importance the administrator plays in the process. Building level administrators play a vital role and are an essential link in the process (Fullan, 1991). As seen through with the elementary school site in this study, good administration is good administration for inclusion.

Second, mandated policy like inclusion and its implementation must be a multi-level process. In order for there to be inclusive education models, the special education personnel cannot accomplish this feat along. I also do not believe that the intent of mandated policy was compliance by a single entity. However, I do believe that one individual, be it the special education teacher or the building level administrator, can produce policy and provide the support needed for the policy implementation to occur.

Third, I realize the importance of change in our educational system. Whether the mandated policy be initiated at the federal level, the state level, the district level, or the site level, some

changes must occur. Those changes do not always occur in a uniformed fashion. This case study was completed in a single school district with all building level administrators receiving the same information regarding special education and its mandated policies such as inclusion. Yet, the perspectives held by the participants varied greatly. The yielded results at each school site differed.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

IRB FORMS

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW**

Date: 03-05-97

IRB#: ED-97-067

**Proposal Title: THE FIXED TEXTS AND POLICY INTERPRETATION:
INCLUSION**

Principal Investigator(s): Adrienne E. Hyle, Rene Axtell

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

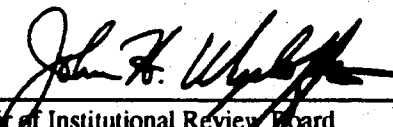
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR DATA COLLECTION FOR A ONE CALENDAR YEAR PERIOD AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:



Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: March 17, 1997

cc: Rene Axtell

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORMS FOR STUDY PARTICIPANTS

CONSENT FORM FOR A STUDY OF
ADMINISTRATORS' INTERPRETATION OF MANDATED POLICY
RELATED TO INCLUSION
(For School Officials and Building Level Administrators or Designee
Who Participate in the Study)

General Information

You have been asked by a graduate student of Oklahoma state University working on a research project (dissertation) to be interviewed and/or observed about your role as a member of a **GROUP TO BE INTERVIEWED AND/OR OBSERVED** (those building level administrators or designee involved in the special education processes and procedures at your school building).

The interview and/or observation serves two purposes:

- (1) Information collected in the interview and/or observation will be used by the student interviewer to prepare a scholarly paper (dissertation) about those people involved in the interpretation of policy related to special education student at your building.
- (2) Information collected by the doctoral student may be used in scholarly publications of the student and/or the project director (dissertation advisor).

The interview should last from one to one and one-half hours and will be recorded. The questions asked will be developed by the doctoral student. All subjects will be asked the same general questions and their interviews will be tape recorded. The doctoral student will type transcripts of the interview for analysis. The project director (dissertation advisor) may review these transcripts. All tapes and transcripts are treated as confidential materials. These tapes and transcripts will be kept under lock and key for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. Only the project director (dissertation advisor) and doctoral student will have access to these tape recordings and transcripts during this 5 year period.

The observation times will vary according to the length of time required to meet and/or staff on special education students. Notes will be taken by the doctoral student. The project director may also review these notes. All notes are treated as confidential materials. These notes will be kept under lock and key for a period of 5 years and then destroyed. Only the project director (dissertation advisor) and doctoral student will have access to these notes during this 5 year period.

Doctoral students will assign pseudonyms for each person that they interview and/or observe. These pseudonyms will be used in all discussions and in all written materials dealing with interviews and observations.

Lastly, no interview or observation will be accepted or used by the doctoral student unless this consent form has been signed by all parties. The form will be filed and retained for at least two years by the project director (dissertation advisor).

Subject Understanding

I understand the participation in this interview and/or observation is voluntary, that there is no penalty for refusal to participate, and that I am free to withdraw my consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty after notifying the project director/dissertation advisor.

I understand that the interview and/or observation will be conducted according to commonly accepted research procedures and that information taken from the interview will be recorded in such a manner that subjects cannot be identified directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

I understand the interview and/or observation will not cover topics that could reasonably place the subject at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subject's financial standing or employability or deal with sensitive aspects of the subject's own behavior such as illegal conduct, drug use, sexual behavior or use of alcohol.

I may contact the project director (dissertation advisor), Professor Adrienne Hyle, Ph. D., Department of EAHED, College of Education, Oklahoma State University, OK; Telephone (405) 744-7244 should I wish further information about the research. I also may contact Gay Clarkson, Institutional Review Board Executive Secretary, University Research Services, 305 Whitehurst, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, OK; Telephone (405) 744-5700.

I have read and fully understand this consent form. I sign it freely and voluntarily. A copy has been given to me.

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of Subject)

I certify that I have personally explained all elements of this form to the subject before requesting the subject to sign it, and provided the subject with a copy of this form.

DATE: _____ TIME: _____ (A.M./P.M.)

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of Student)

I agree to abide by the language and the intent of this consent form.

DATE: _____

SIGNED: _____
(Signature of Project Director/ Dissertation Advisor)

APPENDIX C

LETTERS TO STUDY PARTICIPANTS

January 27, 1998

Dear

Thank you for agreeing to be one of the participants in this study. I will be at your school Tuesday, January 27, 1998. During that time I would like to interview you. The interview will take approximately 1 hour and will be on the topic of your interpretation of federal mandates regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment. Also at that time, I would like to schedule a time when I would be able to observe your participation in a situation involving the special education program.

The purpose of my study is to examine the ways in which building level administrators at the elementary, junior high, and high school come to understand the mandated policy "inclusion," including its purpose, its meaning to people in the school, and strategies used to facilitate its implementation.

I have sent consent forms to your school for you to sign giving me permission to interview and observe you. Please sign two copies, then keep one and give the other one to me when I arrive to begin my study.

If you have any questions, please contact me at my school, (405) 739-1676 or at my home, (405) 478-2778. Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Rene D. Axtell
2405 Shady Tree Lane
Edmond, OK 73013

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Each participant in this case study was asked to respond to the following questions and statements.

1. Tell me about your special education programs.
2. Tell me about inclusion.
3. How did your school decide to go about the implementation of inclusion?
4. After the decision had been made to do this, what procedures did your school take in making the change toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into the regular education environment.
5. What is the building level administrator's role in the special education programs at your school? Inclusion?
6. Who and what else aided in the current special education practices at your school?
7. What are the primary concerns of the special education teachers regarding your special education programs?
8. Describe the support teachers receive at your school.
9. How successful or unsuccessful do you think your special education program is after the implementation of inclusive practices?
10. Describe how you feel inclusion should be structured and implemented and why.
11. Who makes the decisions about your special education programs?
12. How are the individuals involved in the implementation of special education policy informed of the decisions made?

APPENDIX E

OBSERVATION AT SOUTH SIDE ELEMENTARY

Appendix E

I arrived at South Side Elementary a few minutes before the start of the school morning. Mrs. Adam, the building level administrator escorted me to the special education classroom where I met Mrs. Scott, the special education teacher. She was expecting me. The staff at South Side Elementary had prearranged observations on two sixth graders: Michelle, a student identified with the disability of orthopedically impaired, and Linda, a student identified with the disability of mental retardation. Michelle and Linda were both in the same homeroom class. Mrs. Scott stated that the two students began the school day with their homeroom class. Their attendance and lunch count was taken. From there, Michelle and Linda along with their homeroom class went to their activity period. Mrs. Scott stated that they rotate their activity classes. Today, the activity period was music. Mrs. Scott informed me that once she began her class, she would take me to meet Michelle and Linda in the music room.

The music room was average size. The walls were painted white and there was brown carpet on the floor. The room was well lit. The students were sitting on the risers facing the piano and stereo. Michelle and Linda were sitting on the front row at the end of the riser. Mrs. Tatum, the music teacher was standing in front of the students directing them as they sang a song. After the students had finished this song and the stereo had been turned off, Mrs. Tatum had encouraging remarks for the students and then gave directions regarding the next song that they would be singing. Mrs. Tatum started the stereo again. Upon completing that song, Mrs. Tatum asked the students to stand for the next song. Again, directions were given to the students. The students sang the song while using hand motions and gestures. The students seemed to enjoy this particular song because they

sang it louder than they had the other two songs and their motions and gestures were lively and animated.

The atmosphere in the classroom was pleasant and relaxed. All of the 17 students actively participated in the singing. The students seemed to enjoy the class. There was interaction among the students in between the songs. Some of the students spoke to others sitting close to them. It was noted that Michelle and Linda began talking when each song was finished. They were also observed talking to the two girls sitting directly behind them. I was unable to determine what the four students were talking about. However, the conversation did not seem to be dominated by one student and they all were seen talking. The interactions and talking among the students never reached a level where their voices were too loud. When Mrs. Tatum began to speak, most of the students immediately became quiet and the others very quickly grew quiet. Mrs. Tatum did not have to ask the students to quite down.

Mrs. Tatum asked the students to line up at the door and wait for Mrs. Turner. Michelle and Linda got in line together. Michelle and Linda were standing in the middle of the line. Two other students were speaking to Michelle. Mrs. Tatum opened the classroom door. There was another class waiting outside. The students began to file out of the music room and Mrs. Turner met them. Mrs. Turner's class continued on to their classroom while Michelle and Linda proceeded to the special education lab.

I followed behind the two students to observe any interactions in the hallways. The two students passed two younger students moving in the opposite direction. Neither spoke to one another. I looked down another hallway as Michelle and Linda continued moving forward. That particular hallway ran north and south through the building. It

appeared that the students at South Side Elementary had been instructed on behaviors and rules within the hallways. In this particular hallway, a student was observed to be walking north and remained along the right hand side of the hallway. There were also two students headed south down this same hallway. These two students were walking along the opposite side of the hallway. Traffic within the hallways was smooth.

As Michelle and Linda entered the special education lab environment, they immediately went to their desks and sat down. Their desks were right beside one another. Mrs. Scott was working with a small group at one table while the teacher assistant was assisting an individual students.

The classroom was not crowded. The walls were painted white and the floor was covered in brown carpet. There were centers located along the walls throughout the classroom. There was two chalkboards in the classroom. Each having assignments listed. Facing one of the chalkboards was a table in the shape of a horseshoe. Located at the other chalkboard were desks of varying sizes positioned in a semi-circle and facing the board. There were four desks in the middle of the classroom. Two of the desks were facing one another and had been pushed together (Desk #1 and Desk #2). A third desk (Desk #3) was positioned so that the student's back would be to the two desks. The fourth desk (Desk #4) was in close proximity to the third desk. The student that was sitting in this fourth desk had his back to the student sitting in the third desk. Located to the right side of the horseshoe table was another group of five desks. These desks were smaller in size. Although they were not touching one another, they were very close together and placed in an U shape facing a bulletin board. The bulletin board had a calendar on it. Below the calendar and attached to the wall were ziploc bags with

instructional materials in each. There was also a small desk next to the bulletin board with stackable trays sitting on it. There were papers in each of the trays. The teachers desk was located in the back of the classroom. There was a bookshelf directly behind the teacher's desk with textbooks, manuals, and teacher materials on the shelves along with a few pictures of Mrs. Scott's family and some nick-nacks.

Michelle and Linda pulled folders out of their desks and began working. After approximately 3 minutes, Mrs. Scott approached the two students and began providing instruction. Mrs. Scott explained each of the worksheets in their folders along with an assignment in the reading book. Mrs. Scott answered a question for the student sitting in Desk #3. Mrs. Scott proceeded to work with Michelle and Linda on reading assignments. Mrs. Scott was again interrupted by the student sitting at Desk #3. Mrs. Scott answered her questions and asked her to turn around while putting her feet under her desk and to raise her hand if she had a question or needed help. Mrs. Scott turned again to Michelle and Linda. On two other occasions, Mrs. Scott redirected and provided instruction for the student sitting at Desk #3. Mrs. Scott turned to me and said, "She is new. We have only had her for a couple of weeks." During the time that Mrs. Scott was instructing Michelle and Linda with their reading, the teacher assistant was working with the group of students that Mrs. Scott had previously been working with. After Mrs. Scott had redirected the student in Desk #3, the teacher assistant approached her desk to provided her with individual assistance and instruction. The teacher assistant then went back to the group that she was working with. Upon completing the reading lesson with Michelle and Linda, Mrs. Scott assigned independent work to each. Mrs. Scott moved about the classroom providing assistance and monitoring the work for each of the students. The group of

students that the teacher assistant had been working with got up and left the special education lab environment. Mrs. Scott turned to me and said, "They are returning to their homeroom classes for a while."

Michelle and Linda remained in the special education lab environment for approximately 2 hours. Each was provided with instruction and independent work. The subjects that Michelle and Linda worked on within that 2 hour time frame were Reading, Phonics, Spelling, and Language.

Michelle and Linda then returned to their homeroom class for Social Studies. Mrs. Turner was already teaching the lesson. As the two students entered the classroom, they sat down at their desks and got out the materials they would need. Mrs. Turner stopped the lesson and walked over to Michelle and Linda to provide instruction to the two girls; thus, letting them know what page to turn to as well as the topic that the class was working on today. Mrs. Turner provided a short synopsis of what the class had done thus far and then continued the lecture style teaching to the entire class. Mrs. Turner then began to call upon students to read sections from the textbook. After each student read a section, the class would orally discuss what had been read. Mrs. Turner asked questions of the students and specifically called upon two different students to answer questions. Linda was one of the two students called upon to answer a question. Mrs. Turner encouraged and provided praise to the students as they discussed the material. The lesson continued in this manner for the next 30 minutes. Mrs. Turner brought the lesson to an end and no homework was assigned. Mrs. Turner then asked the students to line up at the door to go to lunch. A few students picked up lunch pails before getting into the line. Michelle and Linda got in line together at the end of the line. Once all of the students

were in line, Mrs. Turner turned out the lights, opened the door, and allowed the students to proceed down the hall.

Mrs. Turner's classroom was not unlike the other classrooms in the building. The walls were painted white and there was brown carpet on the floor. The wall opposite the door contained 4 large windows with mini blinds. The classroom was well lit. On the same wall as the classroom door, there was a large chalkboard with a bookshelf underneath. Next to this chalkboard was the teacher's desk. The teacher's desk was positioned in an angle facing the students' desks. There was a file cabinet behind the teacher's desk. There was a large bookshelf next to the teacher's desks. It divided off the rest of the classroom. Behind this large bookshelf were coat hooks and places for students to put their items that were not needed at their desks. There was also a chalkboard on the wall to the right of the door. The students' desks were arranged in groups of 3 or 4 in the middle of the classroom.

The climate within the classroom was warm. All of the students were equally treated by the classroom teacher. The students were allowed to interact and talk during the discussion part of the lesson. As mentioned earlier, the students never seemed to talk too loudly or get too out of control. The students always became quiet when Mrs. Turner began speaking.

As the students proceeded to the cafeteria, I followed them. I remained in the cafeteria to watch Michelle and Linda get through the lunch line, sit down at a table, and begin eating their lunch. As the two girls went through the line and before they sat down at a table, they ended up not being in line together. So that, when Michelle and Linda finally sat down at a table, there were two girls sitting in between them. I continued to observe

the lunch period for approximately 10 minutes. The two girls sitting in between Michelle and Linda mainly carried on a conversation amongst themselves. However, there was an occasion when the entire group of students sitting at this table were talking together as a group. Michelle and Linda were included in that talk.

I then left the cafeteria. I began walking down the hallway toward the office to meet Mrs. Adam. Mrs. Adam was walking down the hallway to meet me. We proceeded to the teachers' lounge for lunch. I informally visited with the teachers eating lunch. Mrs. Adam had already informed the staff of my coming and the purpose of this study. The teachers eating lunch at this time openly talked with me.

As Mrs. Adam and I entered the teachers' lounge, there were two other teachers sitting and eating their lunch. I approached their table and asked if I might visit with them. It was apparent that they knew who I was, what I wished to discuss with them, and they offered me a chair. I asked each if they would mind telling me about the special education programs at South Side and how the special education students are included in regular education classes and activities. Mrs. Rogers, the first teacher that offered information was a fifth grade teacher. Although she did not state a specific number of years, she stated that she had only been teaching for a short while and had not had any special education students in her class. She went on to state that she did not believe that her class would be any different than it was at the present. Mrs. Rogers stated that most of the teachers with special education students did not complain about it or about having special education students in the regular education classes. She stated that the teachers just did what they had to do for the kids because that was the right thing to do and that regular education teachers get help with modifications and materials from the special education teachers

when they need it. She said that she was already making modifications and changes to the curriculum for many of her students. She went on to say that the regular education students seem to readily accept the special education students and were willing to have them participate in activities.

The second teacher's comments were not unlike the first. Mrs. Reynolds taught in the fifth grade as well. She had had several special education students in her classroom throughout her teaching career. She informed me that it was much easier working with the special education teachers and students now than it was a few years ago. She stated that the special education teachers were very good about informing them of any pertinent information regarding the special education student such as I.E.P. goals, modifications that were needed, suggestions for accommodating their needs, and extra materials to coincide with the lessons being taught. She also stated that if there were questions or problems everyone involved would get together and talk about things until a consensus had been reached.

No other teachers entered the teachers' lounge while I was in there. I left the teachers' lounge and returned to the special education lab. Michelle and Linda were just returning from lunch and recess. Mrs. Scott informed me that their time in the special education lab environment would typically be very similar to what was observed during the morning session. However, the school was taking class pictures today. Michelle and Linda sat down at their desks, pulled out materials, and began to work. Linda had pulled out a library book and asked Mrs. Scott if she could go to the library. Mrs. Scott gave her permission. After 15 minutes, a student came to the door asking for Michelle and Linda to go to the cafeteria for their class picture. The teacher assistant told the student that

Linda was in the library. He agreed to go and get Linda. In a few minutes, the same student was back at the door asking Mrs. Scott to come for the picture. I accompanied Mrs. Scott to the cafeteria. Along the way, Mrs. Scott told me that for the past 3 years many of the regular classroom teachers have invited her to be a part of their class picture. She told me that initially she felt a little uncomfortable about it and wasn't sure if she should be a part. She then stated that the regular classroom teachers let her know that she and the special education students that were placed in the classroom for a portion of the school day were very much a part of the class. Mrs. Scott stated that it was that comment that made her decision and her decision was to be a part of the picture.

APPENDIX F

OBSERVATION OF JONES JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Appendix F

Upon my arrival at Jones Junior High, I entered the school office. I told the secretary that I was here to see Mr. Allen, the building level administrator. She asked my name and asked that I please be seated. She then walked down a hallway. After about 15 minutes, she returned and asked that I follow her. Mr. Allen and I briefly spoke about my day there at J.J.H. while he escorted me to the counselors' office. The counseling offices were located in the foyer across from the main office. Mr. Allen introduced me to Mrs. Cummings, the school counselor that would be my contact person for the remainder of the study. Mrs. Cummings and I sat down in her office while Mr. Allen returned to his office. After briefly discussing what had been prearranged for me, Mrs. Cummings escorted me down the hall to Mrs. Snow's classroom. Mrs. Snow was a teacher that taught students that had been identified with a learning disability. As Mrs. Cummings and I were walking down the hall, Mrs. Snow approached us with papers in her hand. Mrs. Snow told Mrs. Cummings that one of here students had returned from the regular classroom environment with a test that needed to be read to him. Mrs. Cummings agreed to help the student. We then proceeded to Mrs. Snow's classroom.

Mrs. Snow's classroom was neatly arranged. The classroom was average in size. It was well lit with 5 windows along the back wall. The windows had mini blinds on them. The walls were painted blue and the floor was covered in white tile. Mrs. Snow's desk was in the far corner of the classroom next to the windows. It was positioned at an angle so that when she was seated she was facing the students. On the wall next to Mrs. Snow's desk was a computer station with one computer. There were chalkboards hanging on the other two walls. There was assignments posted on the chalkboards. The students' desks

were arranged in a traditional classroom style. There were 4 rows of student desks with 3 desks in each row. The desks were facing one of the chalkboards. There was a small round table located in the corner of the classroom.

Mrs. Cummings introduced me to Harry. Harry was placed in the special education lab environment for one class period per day while the remaining three class periods were spent in the regular classroom environment. Harry began his school day in the special education lab environment.

Mrs. Cummings approached a student seated at the small round table. The student got up and the two of them left the classroom. The class period was already in session. Mrs. Snow informed me that Harry had already been provided with instruction and was working independently on an assignment. It was an assignment that he needed to complete for his English class. Mrs. Snow told me that it was an ongoing assignment that the English class was working on and Harry needed some extra help in order to get it completed.

There were three other students in the classroom. There was a female student working on the computer. There were two male students sitting in the row next to Harry. They were sitting one behind the other and were working independently.

While the students were independently working, I asked Mrs. Snow about her program. I specifically asked her how the classes were selected for the students she was serving in her special education program. Mrs. Snow informed me that the special education students' personal information was entered into the computer just like the regular education students. From there, enrollment in classes was programmed by the computer. Mrs. Snow stated that adjustments in the special education students' schedule

were made on an as need basis. Mrs. Snow stated that in previous years the counselors and special education personnel hand picked the class and teachers for each special education student. Mrs. Snow went on to say that the school had discontinued this practice several years ago. Since that time, there had not been any major problems with the special education students' schedules.

As we were talking, one of the students seated in a desk raised his hand. Mrs. Snow assisted him. After helping him, she monitored what the other male students were doing. Mrs. Snow provided positive feedback and made suggestions for correction to the students. Each of the students returned to his assignment. Mrs. Snow made her way to the computer and visited with the female student for some time. They worked together on her assignment for the remainder of the class period. Mrs. Snow occasionally questioned each of the male student regarding their assignment. Right before the bell rang, Mrs. Snow checked the assignments of the male students and then dismissed the students.

Mrs. Cummings had provided me with directions on how to get to Harry's next classroom just in case she was not able to meet and escort me there. Mrs. Cummings had not returned to Mrs. Snow's classroom. Therefore, I proceeded to observe as Harry walked down the hallway. Harry stopped and spoke to several students in the hallway. Harry also enter the boys' restroom before entering his next classroom.

I had already entered the math classroom and briefly spoke to Mr. Thomas, the classroom teacher. I then took a seat in one of the student's desk in the back of the classroom. Mr. Thomas' classroom was arranged like a traditional classroom - the teacher's desk was at the front of the classroom while the students' desks were in rows facing the teacher's desk. There were 4 rows of student desks. There were 5 desks in

each row; one directly behind the other. The decor of the classroom was just like that of Mrs. Snow; the walls were blue, the floor was covered with white tile, there were chalkboards hanging on two of the walls, and there were 5 large windows with mini blinds.

The students were entering the classroom in small groups of 2, 3, or 4 students. As the groups entered the classroom and found seats, they were talking and interacting. The bell rang and Mr. Thomas began class. The students quickly began to get their materials situated. Many of the students had not yet gotten their textbook or paper out of their backpacks. Mr. Thomas gave the students time to locate the materials that they would need while reviewing in a lecture style what they had discussed and worked on the day before. Mr. Thomas reminded the students that the information they were discussing was new. Mr. Thomas presented the lesson using the chalkboard. He then put up an additional math problem on the chalkboard. Mr. Thomas began to call on students to assist in completing this problem one step at a time. Two more math problems were worked through as a group. Mr. Thomas did not wait long for a student to respond before calling on another student. Mr. Thomas did praise and encourage the class when the group work was complete. The presentation of the lesson and collective class work continued for 25 minutes. Mr. Thomas gave the students an assignment and allowed them to work in small groups. Mr. Thomas approached Harry and discussed his assignment. The students moved their desks around and formed small groups. Harry worked in a group with three other male students. Mr. Thomas moved around the room monitoring the students' work and answering questions. On one occasion, Mr. Thomas returned to the chalkboard where he provided instruction through the math problem. After the

students had worked in their groups for approximately 35 minutes, Mr. Thomas requested that they return to their original location so that they could go over the assignment together.

Mr. Thomas would call on a student to go to the chalkboard and work a problem. Mr. Thomas told the students that they needed to check their papers as they went along. This continued until the remainder of the class time. As the bell rang and the students were putting away their things, Mr. Thomas told the students that if they had not finished the assignment then it should be taken home for homework.

Mrs. Cummings met me at the door to escort me to the next classroom; the computer lab. Mrs. Cummings introduced me to Mrs. Taylor; the computer teacher, and Lisa. Lisa was a seventh grader. Lisa had been identified with the disability of mental retardation. Lisa was placed in the special education program for half of her school day and placed in the regular education environment for the other half of her school day.

The computer lab was arranged with computer work stations along three of the four walls of the classroom. The fourth wall had a chalkboard hanging on it. The teacher's desk was sitting in front of the chalkboard and facing the computer stations. In the middle of the classroom, there were two tables with chairs. The walls in the computer lab were painted yellow and there was gold carpet on the floor.

As the students entered the classroom, they proceeded to a particular workstation or stood talking and interacting until the bell rang. The students sat down at a computer and many of the students began working on something. Mr. Taylor had been detained outside of the classroom by another teacher. Upon entering the classroom, Mr. Taylor immediately began providing instructions to the students. Mr. Taylor stood by Lisa as he

gave instructions. Mr. Taylor would occasionally walk around the classroom and assist other students but would return to the station where Lisa was. After providing instruction for approximately 30 minutes, Mr. Taylor gave an assignment. Mr. Taylor again walked around the classroom monitoring and assisting the students but returning to Lisa for more direct assistance. The students continued to work on the assignment until the bell rang. However, there were a few students that had completed the assignment and Mr. Taylor allowed them the opportunity to work on something else. There was no homework given.

APPENDIX G

OBSERVATION OF MIDDLE TOWN HIGH SCHOOL

Appendix G

Observations were conducted on three different students; Hank; a male classified as a senior that received indirect special education services for an identified learning disability, Michael; a sophomore male with a learning disability, and Lanny; a senior male with the identification as moderately mentally retarded. The three students observed were selected by the staff members. Two of the observations occurred in classrooms while the third observation occurred in the hallway and commons area.

Hank was observed in a Spanish II class with 16 students. The classroom was spacious and neatly arranged. The arrangement was that of a traditional classroom - the teacher's desk was at the front of the classroom with the students' desks facing the teacher's desk. The students' desks were placed in four rows of six desks each. The students sat one in front of the other. The classroom was well lit. There were four large windows with black mini blinds on the east wall. The walls were painted a cream color and the floor had light brown tiles. There were a few posters hanging on the walls throughout the classroom and in the northwest corner of the room hung a flag. The classroom had a row of computers on the east wall and a small computer station with two computers on the north wall. Close to the small computer station was two rectangular tables used for work stations.

As the students entered the classroom, they were interacting with one another and talking among small groups as they sat down at their desks. Mrs. Thomason began class shortly after the bell rang. The students quickly became quiet when Mrs. Thomason began. The information was presented in lecture form with the use of the chalkboard. Students were expected to participate verbally. On occasion, Mrs. Thomason called on a

particular student. It appeared that Mrs. Thomason included all of the students. Mrs. Thomason was very encouraging and provided the students with cues when they were unable to respond to the question. She provided enough cues to illicit the correct response from the student. When Mrs. Thomason did call on Hank to answer a question, she did not treat him unlike any of the other students in the classroom. The question was based on information presented during the lecture. Hank did not answer the question correctly the first time. Mrs. Thomason gave Hank a cue and then he provided the correct response. Mrs. Thomason praised him for listening to the lecture. This portion of the class took approximately 30 minutes.

Once the lecture and practice drills had been completed, Mrs. Thomason broke the class into groups for an additional activity. The students quickly formed their groups. Mrs. Thomason passed out packets of picture cards while providing instruction. Mrs. Thomason gave the students 15 minutes to discuss the pictures and place them into categories. Mrs. Thomason roamed the classroom while the students were working in their groups. On a couple of occasions, she had to remind the students of their loudness. The students responded by getting quiet. Mrs. Thomason proceeded to her desk, sat down, and read something. She glanced at the clock and stood up. Mrs. Thomason got the attention of the students and they eventually grew quiet. Mrs. Thomason provided instruction on how the activity was to be completed. The activity was a game where points were kept. The groups with the most points at the end of the activity would be the winners. Mrs. Thomason would ask a question in Spanish. Each of the groups would quickly arrange their cards. Once the cards were arranged, the team leader would raise his/her hand and Mrs. Thomason would check their answer. This activity continued for 20

minutes. Mrs. Thomason gave an assignment for the students to work on during the remainder of the class time and stated that it was to be taken home and completed if not finished. The students worked independently for the remainder of the class. Several students approached Mrs. Thomason's desk where she provided additional assistance with the assignment. Hank was one of the students that approached Mrs. Thomason's desk.

Although there were no notable modifications made for Hank during this class, he seemed to be capable of completing all of the activities and assignments given. Mrs. Thomason did state that on occasion she did make modifications for Hank. That modifications were made on new information or assignments that she felt like might be difficult for Hank. Those modifications were based on the modification sheet that she had been given by Mr. Smith. However, Mrs. Thomason stated that Hank was maintaining a B average without many modifications. She also stated that Hank was allowed to complete all activities and assignments like his nondisabled peers if he so chose to. Mrs. Thomason stated that this was often the case and that Hank did very well.

The students were allowed to interact with one another throughout the class time. It was very apparent that there were cliques within the classroom. Certain students entered the classroom together, sat together, and were grouped together. Some of the groups interacted among other groups while not interacting with some of the other groups. Hank was in a group that interacted with other groups.

Mr. Smith met me here in Mrs. Thomason's class as the bell rang. He then escorted me to the lab class for students with learning disabilities. I would be observing what Mr. Smith called L.D. English. He told me that this class and an L.D. Math class were designed for students that were unable to handle the regular education curriculum even

with modifications. Mr. Smith introduced me to Mrs. Sharp and pointed out Michael, the student that I was to observe. As we entered the classroom, the students were already present. There were 9 students, 1 female and 8 males.

This classroom was not unlike the first classroom as far as the color of the walls, flooring, and mini blinds. The room arrangement was not of the traditional setting. The teacher's desk was the first thing you saw as you entered the classroom. It was positioned so that when the teacher was seated at the desk it was facing the classroom. On the wall behind the teacher's desk was a chalkboard and a file cabinet. This was the south wall. The west wall had a large storage cabinet, two small study carols, and a bookshelf full of textbooks. The north wall had a large chalkboard. There were three computers; a large rectangular table with two computers on it as well as a computer table that held one computer. The east wall had the windows with the mini blinds. Also on this wall was a bookshelf full of textbooks and an overhead projector. Sitting in the Southeast corner of the classroom was an additional teacher's desk. There were 7 student desks in the center of the room. These desks were not arranged in any order.

Mrs. Sharp informed me that the students were working on a class project. There were three students seated at the computers working. There were two students working at the carols. The other four students were seated in student desks. Since this was an ongoing project, instruction had already been provided. Mrs. Sharp reminded the students to follow the steps listed on a study sheet and then provided the students with a short review. This took about 15 minutes. The students began working. Mrs. Sharp made her way around the classroom where she talked with each of the students. She then looked over their project and provided additional comments. After talking with each of the students,

Mrs. Sharp sat down at her desk while the students were to work independently. The students seated at the student desks in the center of the classroom eventually began talking to one another. Mrs. Sharp made no attempt to redirect them.

Mr. Smith arrived about 10 minutes before the bell rang. He wanted me to observe Lanny in the hallway and in the commons area. Lanny was enrolled in a weight lifting class with 16 other males students. Mr. Smith and I took in the hallway just down from the locker room. Lanny exited the locker room with a group of other male students. Lanny was right in the middle of them telling a story. The students listened to his story as they proceeded to the commons area. At the commons area, a few of the students went on while most of the groups stood talking. Other students joined the group. Lanny stood and talked with this group for about 10 minutes. Lanny was not unlike any of the other students within this group. He talked with individual students, with a few students, and at times the entire group was involved together. Lanny left this particular group to join another. The group of students that Lanny approached accepted him and began to interact. This group was much like the first. Lanny stood talking with this group for only 5 minutes. As he left, he touched another student on the back and told the group that he was going to get some lunch. That student joined him and the two proceeded to the cafeteria.

The cafeteria was crowded and very loud. The students had several choices from which to choose. The students could eat the cafeteria food or select items from fast food carts. There were round tables scattered all around. Lanny and the student that joined him got their lunch and found a place to sit. There were two other students sitting at the table. Within a few minutes, the table was full and there were a few students standing

around talking. After finishing his meal, Lanny continued to talk with the group for about 20 minutes. He then got up and left.

VITA ✓

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