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California State University

San Bernardino

INCLUSION KINDERGARTEN: A PILOT PROGRAM

A Project Submitted to

The Faculty of the School of Education

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the

Degree of

Master of Arts

in

Education: Elementary Option

By

Kerry Riddle-O'Connor, M. A.

San Bernardino, California

1991

APPROVED BY:



Advisor: Dr. Richard Gordon



Second Reader: Dr. Cheryl Fischer

INCLUSION KINDERGARTEN: A PILOT PROGRAM

Kerry Riddle-O'Connor, M.A.

California State University San Bernardino, 1991

Abstract

A pilot program in a traditional kindergarten that included eight severely handicapped students learning and working cooperatively with their regular education peers on a full time basis is described in this project. Two teachers, a special education teacher and a regular education teacher, combined their classes to form the inclusion kindergarten.

The utilization of team teaching techniques, cooperative learning strategies and the support of administrators and specialists in the inclusion kindergarten produced a model program in which handicapped students and regular education students acquired appropriate social skills and increased their academic potential.

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Introduction

For several years, parents and special education teachers have been fighting for the right to have their handicapped students schooled in regular classrooms along with regular education students. In addition, according to Public Law 94-142, handicapped students have a legal right to go to their neighborhood school and develop friendships among their peers. However, the norm in most districts is still segregated schooling for the most severe learning and physical disabilities, while more moderately handicapped students are on regular education school sites in separate classrooms. Clearly there is a need for school districts to develop programs that allow these special education students to be serviced in regular education classrooms and schools. This project addresses that need by presenting a pilot program for integrating special education students with their peers in a regular kindergarten classroom.

The current philosophy for integrating special education students with regular education students is to place both in

one classroom with most special services to students being performed directly in the classroom. Before integration can be successful, pilot programs such as the one presented here need to be established to provide working models for parents, teachers and administrators to observe.

One such model program has been established at Cypress Elementary in San Bernardino. That program, the focus of this project, is a kindergarten classroom in which regular education students and severely handicapped students learn and work together. A regular education teacher and a special education teacher work in the classroom as a teaching team. This project describes the team teaching techniques that are utilized in the classroom. Also described are: methods for the joint planning of activities, examples of behavior modification techniques, the use of instructional aides, and the support provided by the administrative personnel.

It is difficult for many administrators, teachers, and students to be accepting of special-needs students in their schools and classrooms. Fears exist about how to manage a

special education student while still being accountable for the academic progress of the others. Although the pilot program was conducted in a kindergarten classroom, most of the techniques described are applicable to other grade levels. Teachers who are willing to accommodate, compromise and accept changes will recognize that integrated schooling is possible at all grade levels and is one way to fulfill their legal obligation.

Literature Review

Most changes in schooling for students with learning and physical handicaps have taken place over the last twenty years. These changes are attributed to educators' and parents' belief in equal schooling for students with handicaps. Many special educators and parents believe that equal schooling can be achieved through an integrated approach, while others believe that schooling is equal even if the students are on separate school sites. The following sections explain the current trends in special education and the legal obligations associated with schooling special education students. The viewpoints of proponents and opponents of integrating special education students with regular education students will also be examined.

PL 94-142 and the Least Restrictive Environment

A review of the literature indicates that prior to 1975, schooling for severely handicapped children took place mainly in residential schools (Wiederholt, 1989), while children with mild or less severe handicaps remained in regular classrooms

with their learning difficulties not identified (Gaylord-Ross, 1989). The separate schooling of children with severe handicaps and the increased financial burden on parents to school their handicapped children prompted parents and civil rights lawyers to challenge segregated school settings as being discriminatory (Corrigan, 1978). After many years and court battles, Stainback and Stainback (1985) write:

Because of the growing national concern for the education of all children experiencing handicaps, in 1975 the Congress of the United States passed Public Law 94-142, mandating a free and appropriate education for all students with handicaps in the least restrictive environment [LRE] (p. 8).

Since the passage of PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, students with moderate learning handicaps continue to be educated in the regular classroom. These students meet with a resource teacher for individual instruction in specific academic areas. Some special education students are on regular school campuses, but they

are in separate classrooms with a special education teacher. They sometimes go to a regular class for certain activities (Gaylord-Ross, 1989). However, even with the progress to equally educate all handicapped children, Giangreco (1989) reports "A significant number of students identified as severely disabled continue to be educated in separate, handicapped-only schools or other variations on this theme..." (p. 139). The LRE provision of PL 94-142 is very specific. Brady, McDougall, and Dennis (1989) summarize the legislation: "That to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public and private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped..." (p. 44). The LRE in most cases concerning handicapped children of all types is the regular education classroom. There must be justification if other sites are used instead of the regular classroom (Brady et al., 1989; Corrigan, 1978; Stainback et al., 1985).

Prompted by the LRE mandate, a progressive trend is being established toward a regular class program for all

students (Falvey, 1989; Giangreco, 1989; Reynolds, Wang, and Walberg, 1987; Stainback and Stainback, 1984, 1985, 1990; Wiederholt, 1989; and Will, 1986). If this is the future trend, it is essential to identify the terms used by special educators to facilitate a regular classroom experience for handicapped students. The most common terms used for educating special education students with regular education students are integration and mainstreaming. In addition, a new emphasis has brought a new term: inclusion. All three terminologies pertain to mixing special education students with regular education students. In the following section it is evident the terminologies being defined are not equal in meaning or intent.

Integration, Mainstreaming and Inclusion

In special education, integration is defined as putting a special education class on a regular education campus while mainstreaming is defined as putting special education students into a regular education classroom for a period of time during the day (Falvey, 1989; Sailor, Anderson, Halvorsen, Doering, Filler, and Goetz, 1989). In contrast, Inclusive

schooling for students with handicaps is explained in this passage by Stainback et al. (1990):

Inclusive schooling is related to, but different from the movement to integrate or mainstream students with disabilities into their regular neighborhood schools. Integration and/or mainstreaming is the process of having students with disabilities (who have been excluded) become an integral part of the mainstream of their schools. Inclusive schools do not focus on how to assist any particular category of students, such as those classified as disabled, fit into the mainstream. Instead the focus is on how to operate supportive classrooms and schools that include and meet the needs of everyone (p. 4).

Chris LeRoy, a special education program specialist with San Bernardino City Unified School District, further emphasizes the differences between being integrated, mainstreamed and included. He stated, in a personal communication that the placement of special education students on the regular

education campus has been implemented in phases. The first phase was the placement of students on a regular school campus. This is known as integration. An example of integration would be placing a special education class somewhere on campus and hoping that during lunch and recess the special education students and their regular education peers would interact. Phase two was the "homeroom approach," sometimes referred to as mainstreaming, in which students were put in the regular classroom for attendance, flag salute, etc., and then they went back to their special education classroom. The third phase is the "inclusive commitment," wherein special education students are made a part of the total learning and socializing process for the entire day in the regular education classroom.

While the evolution of special education programs has been toward an inclusive commitment, most proponents of inclusion agree that it has been a long and tedious process to place handicapped children onto regular school campuses, and then see them included as members of the campus community

(Reynolds et al., 1987; Stainback et al., 1985; and Will, 1986).

In most school districts the LRE mandate continues to go substantially unfulfilled. As Will (1986) states: "At the heart of the special education approach is the presumption that students with learning problems cannot be effectively taught in regular education programs even with a variety of support" (p. 412). While there are many proponents of inclusive schooling, obviously not all special education advocates would agree that disabled children belong on an inclusion oriented campus. The next section examines both perspectives.

Perspectives on Inclusion of Special Ed Students

Since the passage of PL 94-142, many progressive techniques have been implemented in special education. Will (1986) states that in the last 10 years special education has practiced individualized instruction, has included parents in the decision making process concerning their children's education, has begun to educate previously unserved severely handicapped children and has promoted improvements for millions of others. Laurence Lieberman (1985), a major

opponent of total inclusion of handicapped students on nonhandicapped sites, feels that the uniqueness of special education will be lost if the goal is to include all handicapped children in a regular education environment. He states, "... the major difference between regular and special education is that in regular education, the system dictates the curriculum; in special education, the child dictates the curriculum" (p. 514). This point of view reflects one of the major concerns of some special education advocates about attempts at total inclusion.

There are two other major types of objections to total inclusion of disabled students in the regular education classroom. First, a perception exists among opponents to inclusion that the needs of the special education student will not be effectively met in the regular education classroom. These needs include intensive academic instruction at the student's level and more direct adult supervision and contact (Coates, 1989; Lieberman, 1985; Sailor et al., 1989).

Secondly, there exists a fear of social rejection or exploitation of handicapped children by their nonhandicapped

peers. This fear has caused many adults to resist attempts to integrate their handicapped children (Falvey, 1989; Fox, 1989; Sailor et al.; 1989). As Lieberman (1990) states, "Decisions should be based on the needs of individuals" (p. 562). However, total rejection to including special education students on regular education campuses is not the intent of some opponents. They are mainly concerned with protecting the welfare of the handicapped students and preserving the quality of their instruction. Ensuring the safety and educational advances of the handicapped child may be all it takes to convince some opponents of inclusion that the benefits of total inclusion outweigh the harm.

Proponents of inclusion have ascertained that academically, students in integrated settings have a tendency to learn more than when isolated. Falvey (1989), Stalnack et al. (1990), and Voeltz (1983), all agree that when given the proper guidance from adults, students can learn to rely on each other's strengths and differences as they learn to work together. Learning to communicate, understand and respect

one another promotes a sensitivity to individual differences and builds friendships.

Proponents of integrating handicapped children with their nonhandicapped peers argue that both groups actually develop positive attitudes and social interactions. Falvey (1989) writes:

If students with severe handicaps are to become interdependent and productive members of their community, it is crucial that they and their nonhandicapped peers learn to function together throughout their educational years. Individuals with and without severe handicaps must be provided with opportunities to develop the skills and attitudes that are crucial for successful interactions both now and in the future (p. 321).

Studies have been cited that suggest inclusion promotes positive attitudes, and opportunities to socialize, communicate, and demonstrate age-appropriate behaviors (Berryman, 1989; Sailor et al., 1989; and Voeltz, 1983). There

is little statistical support for the idea that inclusion is harmful to the students with handicaps (Falvey, 1989).

If the eventual goal is to educate all students in regular classrooms, major changes in instructional techniques must occur to accommodate the special learning needs of special education students. Some suggestions given in the literature include spending more time on interactive and cooperative learning activities (Baker and Zigmond, 1990; Stainback et al., 1990; Wiederholt, 1989). Another suggestion is using the resource teacher and special education teachers as consultants to the classroom teacher (Coates, 1989; Donaldson and Christiansen, 1990). Collaboration with other specialists on campus should take place in the classroom so students spend their time in class (Adamson, Cox and Schuller, 1989; Stainback, Stainback and Harris, 1989). A final suggestion is to implement cooperative or team teaching situations in which both the regular education teacher and the special education teacher are jointly present in the classroom (Falvey, 1989; Stainback et al., 1989; Stainback et al., 1990). Changing

teaching techniques will help in the effort to successfully include all students on a regular education campus. However, "the successful integration of youngsters into [regular] school settings may be principally dependent upon classroom teacher's attitudes" (Garver-Pinhas and Schmelkin, 1989; p. 38).

Based on the trend toward establishing inclusive programs for integrating special education students into the regular education classroom, a pilot program for the San Bernardino City Unified School District was initiated by a special education program specialist for the district and was implemented in September of 1990. An understanding and progressive principal at the school was willing to allow the pilot program to be in a kindergarten classroom at his site. A special education teacher and a kindergarten teacher at the school were willing to combine their talents and classrooms to pilot the inclusive kindergarten program.

The Pilot Program

The kindergarten pilot program has many of the same elements as a typical half-day kindergarten class. In this chapter the pilot program is described. Sections in the chapter explain the process of selecting severely handicapped children for the class, team teaching techniques being utilized, and shared responsibility used in teaching the class and managing behavioral problems. Also described are classroom activities designed to facilitate positive interactions among all the students, and the use of support personnel in the classroom setting.

To facilitate change in the special education inclusionary policies of a school district a district level administrator must initiate the process (Giangreco, 1989). The district level administrator responsible for the inclusion kindergarten at Cypress was Chris LeRoy, a special education program specialist. Mr. LeRoy was given permission to set up an inclusion classroom by the director of special education for San Bernardino City Unified School District.

Cypress school was selected as the pilot site because it is "School Based," which means funding for different programs may be combined for use in at-risk grade levels. Greater flexibility in using school funds allows individual schools to be more innovative with the use of personnel and programs. Cypress also had several special education classes already functioning on campus which meant a special education teacher would not have to be transferred from another school to fill the position of the special education teacher in the pilot program.

The special education program director contacted the school site principal and the teacher of a severely handicapped special education class on campus. He presented his idea for establishing an inclusionary kindergarten that would combine the strengths of a regular education teacher and a special education teacher in a team teaching classroom. Support from both was readily given.

The special education teacher contacted the kindergarten teacher and asked her if she would be interested in setting up

the pilot program in her classroom. The kindergarten teacher thought the program was a good idea, and felt she and the special education teacher would be able to team teach together. The kindergarten teacher also realized that because it was an experimental program there may have been difficulties to work out, but she was willing to take the chance.

The program director and the principal filled out a state waiver so that the special education teacher could teach regular education students (see the Appendix for a copy of the waiver). The waiver outlines the reasons and objectives for having the special education teacher teach in a regular education classroom with regular education students.

Student Selection and Enrollment Process

The selection team consisted of the special education program director and the school psychologist. They considered several factors when selecting severely handicapped students for the inclusion kindergarten program. First, the child must qualify for needing intensive services from specialized

personnel, such as a speech therapist, psychologist or an adapted physical education teacher, and have at least a 50% developmental delay in one or more areas such as language, cognitive, or physical delays. Parental interest in an integrated option rather than other classrooms that are more restrictive was also considered. In addition, the handicapped students should be minimally habit trained, such as able to feed themselves, and toilet trained. Children with extreme behavior problems or those not able to communicate their needs in some manner were not considered for the program.

Three special education students were selected to attend school the first day of the 1990-91 school year. These students remained as an integral part of the class for the entire year. Five more severely handicapped children were added at various intervals to the rolls. Most of these students' parents were able to visit the classroom during school hours before enrolling their child in the program. All of the special education students were transported by special and regular buses to the school. To date, there are eight severely

handicapped children and 30 regular education students in the inclusion kindergarten program working full time with two teachers and two instructional aides. The normal ratio at the school is one teacher for every 33 students and one special education teacher for every 10 special education students in the primary grades.

Curriculum and Instruction

The curriculum for the pilot program is literature and manipulative based. This is the standard curriculum that all regular kindergartens in the district follow. The kindergarten literature series published by Houghton Mifflin is taught along with supplemental literature materials by the Wright Group and the McCrackens. The math program is Math Their Way. Socially, the goals are to have the students learn to talk courteously to others, work and play cooperatively, begin to develop the abilities to be honest, kind, and sympathetic, and to develop sensitivity to others' needs and differences. A special education teacher and a regular education teacher work together to achieve the academic and social goals set for the

pilot program.

The idea of using two teachers in a team situation, to utilize their teaching strengths for the benefit of the students, is not new to education. However, more special education personnel are seeing the benefits of teaming with regular education teachers to facilitate inclusion. Falvey (1989), and Stainback et al. (1990) have described the potential advantages of combining the strengths of a regular education teacher and a special education teacher in one classroom. These advantages include: the potential for individualized instruction, lower group size and higher teacher/student ratio, flexibility in instruction responsibilities, collaborative efforts at diagnosing problems and implementing behavior modification techniques, and the opportunity to learn from each other. In addition to the benefits listed in the literature, the two teachers in the pilot program have developed a friendship that extends beyond the classroom.

At the beginning of each month, the pilot team plans one

or two themes that will be used as a focus for integrating the curriculum. Each week both teachers work together to develop lesson plans. They decide what literature will be focused on and then plan activities associated with the literature and theme. If there is a particular subject one of the team members would like to teach, it is agreed that person will present the lesson. Usually, both teachers will take turns at whole group instruction throughout each day.

For example, if one teacher conducts the opening activities which include the flag salute, attendance, calendar activities, and reading a story, then the other teacher would prepare for the language activities. When the children are divided into their language groups, all four staff members, two teachers and two aides are each responsible for a small group. The two teachers present the lessons, and the aides are responsible for reinforcing what was taught. When it is time for the students to reassemble on the carpet as a whole group, then one teacher conducts the whole group lesson while the other is preparing for the next set of activities.

There is not a strict rotation of duties. Many times one teacher will work with an individual student or need to communicate with a parent or other school personnel, so on a day to day basis, the duties do not always divide evenly. For success it is critical that both teachers be very flexible and cooperative. These qualities are essential for team teaching to be successful.

Daily Schedule And Routines

Two instructional aides assist with classroom instruction in the pilot program. The six hour aide is trained in special education. A four hour aide is provided by the school for every primary classroom on campus. This is the only classroom on campus with two aides. Funding for the six hour aide is through special education while the four hour aide is funded through the school's budget. During the morning hours when no children are present, the six hour aide works on room environment, prepares materials for activities, and does general organizing of the room.

The four hour aide arrives one half hour before the

students. She calculates milk money, and tabulates homework and read aloud book forms that list the books parents have read to their child at home. She keeps the earthquake packet up to date with a name card for each student, and she files student papers. Both aides work with the students during the afternoon class time. They are instructed to be with a student or supervising a group of students during the hours the students are in school.

The teachers meet weekly with the aides about duties and stress the importance of being a facilitator for social interactions among the students. The aides are very conscientious about keeping the teachers informed on how the students are socially interacting particularly during outside play time.

The typical daily schedule for the pilot class is as follows:

12:10–12:30 Opening Activities These include:

attendance, flag salute, Math Their Way calendar activities and a story or two read to the whole group.

The entire group is on the carpet for these activities.

12:30–1:15 Integrated Language Arts/Social Studies

Four days a week the students are divided heterogeneously for small group instruction. The focus during this small group time is on language arts and social studies activities such as writing, letter recognition, dictation of student stories and reading the Weekly Reader. The four groups are rotated to a different activity each day during the week. Friday is usually reserved for whole group instruction and activities such as cooking, graphing and class story writing.

1:15–1:30 Story Time Another story is read to the whole group while the aides prepare for activity time.

1:30–2:00 Activity Time Several activities are available such as a writing center, painting, listening center, art projects, blocks, trucks, legos and other manipulatives, puzzles, science, and individual instruction. Students have free choice during this

time as well as an activity assignment. The maximum number of students at one activity is eight.

2:00–2:30 Snack and Outside Play Time The students bring a snack, and they may purchase milk to drink. After finishing their snack, they are allowed to play on the playground under the supervision of the aides.

2:30–2:45 Writing Each day the students help the teacher write in the class journal. The teacher does the writing while the students think of things to put in the journal. This is an opportunity for the teacher to utilize the whole language approach and review beginning and ending sounds while she writes new and frequently used words. After the journal is completed, the teacher has the students echo her as she reads what was written. Individual students will attempt to read the journal to the group. Sometimes the students will circle repeated words or letters within the text.

2:45–3:15 Math and Individual Writing Every other day

the children will work on utilizing the Math Their Way manipulative activities. On alternate days students will write in their personal journals. Each child has a journal that is his or her own to write whatever he or she wishes. To save pages and time, the pages are dated and students are limited to the front and back side of a page. The students usually draw a picture and write a word or two. When the students complete their writing, they take their journals to a teacher or aide. The teacher or aide discusses the student's work and responds to the student by writing on their journal page.

3:15-3:30 Closing Activities Generally during this time a teacher reads a story, sings a few songs and prepares for going home.

Reasons for varying from the routine would be the usual interruptions that occur at all schools such as assemblies, fire and earthquake drills, and fieldtrips. It has been found that the students function better in the classroom with a set

routine and that some students become upset when an activity is missed or deleted from the schedule.

Facilitating Interaction

Simply putting special education students into a classroom with regular education students and hoping they will interact is not enough. There may be students who are tentative about working and playing with other students. It is the teacher's responsibility to facilitate the interactions among the students. Hanline (1985), Falvey (1989) and Stainback et al. (1990) stress that direct instruction in appropriate social interactions and reinforcement of proper behaviors be a structured element in the classroom.

The students need opportunities to interact with each other and practice the social skills they are learning. Giving the students plenty of activity choices throughout the day sets up situations for the teachers to positively reinforce good social behaviors and to encourage decision making.

In the pilot classroom there are five tables that the students sit at when doing seatwork. Each student is assigned

to a table. The tables are represented by a color. The seating of the students is arranged heterogeneously so that various capabilities are represented at each table. For example at yellow table there are two special education students, two very capable and independent students who need little if any assistance, and three average to low students who may need adult supervision to stay on task. The rest of the class is spread out similarly at the other four tables. The independent workers serve as models to the other students.

In addition, as a result of this arrangement, some of the regular education students have "naturally" learned how to assist another student in completing his/her work. The teachers however, make an effort not to set up "helping" situations, but refer to it as working "cooperatively" with each other. It is important not to give students the impression that they need help, but rather that they are just as important as other students and have the ability to contribute to the class.

The opportunities to teach appropriate social behaviors occur naturally throughout the school day. Time is scheduled

to discuss with individual students appropriate ways to ask for something from another student or teacher. When arguments arise between students, either special education or any of the others, students are asked how that situation could have been better handled, and the teachers elicit appropriate answers from them.

When students display appropriate behaviors, the teachers intervene with verbal reinforcements such as "You two are sure working well together," or "Isn't it nice to share with your friends." These positive interventions need to be stated daily by the teachers and aides. As mentioned earlier, it is important to be careful not to make any student feel that they are inferior. Falvey (1989) states that teachers should "Facilitate 'reciprocal' rather than 'helping' interactions" (p.337). Expressions such as, "Thank you for helping him with his work," may sound innocent, but the message the student who is receiving the help hears is one of needing help rather than being a helper.

Occasionally, students utilize improper verbal or

disruptive behavior. Giving the student time-out away from the group is necessary. Before the student returns to the group, one of the teachers will talk to the student about the inappropriateness of the action. Sometimes the student is directed to look at the rest of the group to see if anyone else is exhibiting the same behavior. The student may make the decision that the behavior was inappropriate.

The teachers confer with one each other as needed about how to handle a certain student or situation. For example, one special needs student was having difficulty lining up, moving from one activity to another and sitting with the group when it was time. It was determined that the student needed to be positively reinforced when displaying desired behaviors. The guardian was contacted to discuss a behavior plan.

Each day for a period of about a month, the student wore a card on a string around her neck. A sticker was given for each time the student moved from one activity to another, lined up with the group or sat down with the group. If the student failed to do these things, a sad face was drawn on the

card. At the end of the day, if there were no sad faces on the card, the student chose a big sticker as a reward. The card was sent home nightly so that the guardian had a progress report.

Eventually, the student was able to make the decision to no longer need the card. The other students were very sympathetic and would make an extensive effort to encourage the student to get up, line up, or sit down. The student is now able to make the transition from one activity to another with very little prompting from the teachers or aides.

Collaborative Consultation

Support specialists are also part of the daily routine. Many students in the class receive services from a speech and language specialist, and a physical education specialist. Stainback et al. (1990) writes "...when diverse students are educated together in mainstream classrooms, a variety of services will be needed to meet their needs... it will be necessary for a variety of individuals to work together" (p.153). The teachers of the pilot program consult weekly with

the specialists who work with small groups of students from the class.

The speech and language specialist, for example, comes to the classroom weekly and plans a day for the next week to give a lesson to the entire class. Usually on a Friday or a Monday, a language lesson is taught that is congruent with the theme being studied. During the lesson, the speech specialist asks many questions giving all the students a reasonable chance to answer. After a whole group lesson, the class completes an activity at their tables. During this time the speech specialist talks to the students individually. This is a chance to informally evaluate all the students in the class.

Twice a week the speech specialist removes individual students from the classroom for half hour blocks of time. These students are both special education students and regular education students who are identified as needing speech and language services.

Students who need gross and fine motor specialized instruction are also removed from the classroom once a week

for half an hour by a physical education specialist. The teacher keeps the classroom teachers informed of the students' progress. When the teachers asked about specific activities for strengthening fine motor control, the physical education teacher provided a list of activities that could be used in the classroom and suggestions for parents to use at home.

The school also has a psychologist who meets regularly with individual students. The psychologist does not currently work with individual students in the pilot program, but is part of the process for selecting students for the program. The teachers regularly talk with the psychologist about student progress.

Most of the collaborating with others occurs during the morning hours when the students are not in school. The teachers prefer not to have their teaching interrupted. However, with two teachers in the room there is usually one who can break away and talk briefly with an individual. There are times when groups of people, other teachers, principals,

and parents, visit the class. Before they leave the room, one of the teachers makes time to talk with them and/or answer questions about the program.

Assessment

All the students in the class are assessed in more than one way. A language arts portfolio is maintained for all students. Samples of the student's work are maintained in the portfolio that show progress in writing skills, drawing, dictating stories, and student selected materials. A kindergarten assessment test is administered to the regular education students. These records are also kept in the student's portfolio.

The special education teacher also uses the kindergarten assessment test with the special needs students. Although this test is not required, it can be used to compare their progress with the regular education students' progress. In addition, the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development is administered to the special education students. An individual education program is written and maintained for

each of the special education students.

Academic assessment of the students is necessary, but equally important is the assessment of social skills. The class is not formally tested in social skills. Instead the teachers rely heavily on their observations and collaborations with one another to assess the students' social progress. If either teacher feels that a student is not making adequate social advances, they explore the possibilities for having that student interact more with the other students. One of the options used is to assign the hesitant student a buddy. The two of them are given an assignment to complete together or are told to participate together in an activity on the playground.

The aides are instructed to encourage hesitant students to play with the other students, or the aides will initiate a game that will include many students. Frequently, the aides will report socially appropriate behavior to the teachers. Daily communication among the adults in the classroom helps the teachers keep tabs on the students' social progress.

For now the informal ways of assessing social progress are sufficient. In the future, if inclusive schooling becomes an integral part of every school, a more formal evaluation of social skills may be needed to assess and record individual social progress.

Critical Evaluation of the Pilot Program

As with any pilot program, the inclusion kindergarten program has aspects that are working very well and others that need to be improved or changed. Classroom management and routines were maintained throughout the year. The areas of curriculum and instruction, and facilitating interaction were particularly strong. Part of the strength comes from the advantages which are inherent in having two teachers and two aides working full time in one classroom. The teachers also had the support of their principal and other district personnel which greatly enhanced the program. It would have been much more difficult to achieve success if this support were not given. However, there were some areas of the program that could be changed or improved to enhance the overall quality of the program. To better understand both the strengths and weaknesses of the program a systematic evaluation of its components is necessary.

Student Selection and Enrollment Process

The criteria for selecting students for the pilot program

was acceptable and appropriate for the kindergarten program. They entered knowing some appropriate social skills and they were able to communicate their needs. Perhaps the weakest area of the program was the procedure used to enroll students in the program. It was originally planned to limit the pilot kindergarten teacher to only twenty-five students leaving room for as many as ten special education students for the pilot program. Cypress was having to send kindergartners to other schools because of over enrollment. It was not possible to justify busing students when one kindergarten class was not filled to capacity, which is 33 students for a kindergarten classroom in the San Bernardino City Unified School District. Throughout the school year the number of students enrolled in the pilot kindergarten class varied from a starting ratio of twenty-five regular education students to three special education students, to a high of thirty-one regular education students to eight special education students. Thirty-nine students and four adults in one classroom was hard to manage at times.

Classroom space was not sufficient for so many students and adults to feel comfortable. This was an especially poor situation since the average kindergarten classroom on campus had thirty-three students. The problem of enrollment stems from having separate rolls for the regular education students and the special education students.

Besides the initial enrollment, another problem occurred because some of the special education students chosen to be in the class entered at various times during the year. While it is expected that some special education students will take longer than others to socially adjust to working and playing with more than thirty other students, the ones that came in later seemed to have the most trouble adapting to the classroom routine. They were previously in other kindergarten programs, and this caused them to be confused about the new classroom rules and routines. It would benefit the students if they were all targeted to come to school the first day of the school year. Despite these problems, the students seemed to adjust well to the high number in the class, and parent support was

maintained.

The parents of the special education students selected to be in the pilot kindergarten were enthusiastic about the program. More often than not, these parents were very willing to reinforce at home the teachers' plan to modify their child's social behaviors. They were pleased with their child's progress, and they frequently commented on how much their child enjoyed being in the class. Communication between the parents of the special education students and teachers occurred more often than with the parents of the regular education students. The special education program director communicated often with both the parents and the teachers about the progress of the students placed in the class.

One solution to the problems encountered with enrollment may be to include the special education students on the regular kindergarten teacher's attendance roll instead of having separate rolls. The special education program director is working on this problem at this time.

Curriculum and Instruction

Current theory suggests that special education students and regular education students will benefit positively when educated together in an environment rich in academic challenges. To promote these positive challenges, the program incorporated the idea of the special education teacher and the regular education teacher team teaching in one classroom. The pilot kindergarten program was consistent with these recommendations. The special education teacher and the regular education teacher collaborated with each other on curriculum and classroom procedures. From a special education point of view one of the more unique aspects of the program, besides the mode of instruction, was the curriculum.

Unlike many other special education programs, the chosen curriculum for the pilot kindergarten class is standard for most kindergarten classes. Academic achievement was a priority for all students. The special education students participated in all academic activities, but the curriculum was geared to their level of achievement. For example, the

students may have had an assignment to copy a dictated story. Many of the special education students and some of the regular education students were not able to write letters or to transfer the writing from the dictated page onto their papers. These children received assistance from a teacher or an aide to complete the assignment. Many times a regular education student would seat herself next to a special education student and guide the student while he or she finished an assignment. Some of the special education students were able to keep up with the instructional pace, and they retained a large amount of information.

Team teaching was a successful method of utilizing the strengths of the special education teacher and the regular education teacher in the pilot program. Neither teacher felt stressed about handling the teaching load and dealing with behavioral problems. Having another teacher in the room who shares the same philosophy of pedagogy was essential. Considering the high number of special education students in the pilot program, the team teaching component was the

critical element for this inclusion program.

Curriculum and instruction was a team effort from the beginning of the pilot program. The teachers managed to provide an enriched environment through cooperative planning and mutual respect. Both teachers have come to realize by accepting the challenge of initiating the pilot program, the benefits of risk taking and the benefits of collaborative teaching.

Daily Schedule And Routines

Though not specifically recommended by the experts on inclusion, the daily schedule and routines of the pilot program contained the elements for establishing communication, structure, and organization for a successful kindergarten inclusion program.

Communication was essential when there were so many adults working toward the same goal. In general, the communication between the teachers and aides in the pilot program was adequate. Formal meetings with the aides were held to review goals and duties. Informal communication, such

as reminders to prepare for activities, was needed to ensure smooth transitions during the day. Without both types of communication, continuity in the program would have broken down.

Time and activities in the pilot program were structured, but the teachers remained flexible to changes as was necessary. The students had plenty of choices, and they were aware of the rules concerning conduct and use of materials.

Organization of materials and the classroom environment helped to keep delays in routine to a minimum and gave the students a feeling of belonging. The adults and students in the classroom knew where to find materials, and the materials were kept in designated areas. Student work was displayed around the classroom.

Establishing routine is one way the teachers of the pilot program avoided unnecessary problems. In the literature very little is said about specific schedules and routines. But they do say that there should be flexibility. Simple things such as putting the markers back in the basket or untangling the

headphones helped to keep the program running smoothly.

The pilot program had a strong balance between structure and flexibility. Each teacher had the freedom to make decisions about her own schedules and routines. This program used schedules and organization to add a certain element of structure to the program, but each teacher remained flexible. The schedule was regarded as a guideline rather than a rule.

Facilitating Interaction

Direct instruction in appropriate social interactions and reinforcement of proper behaviors are recommended by the experts as being a structured element in the classroom. The pilot program deviated from this recommendation by not scheduling a specific time of the day when social behaviors were taught. Instead, the teachers of the pilot program took the opportunities to teach appropriate behaviors as these opportunities occurred naturally throughout the day.

Classroom activities were planned to facilitate social interactions while giving the students several choices and opportunities to practice the social skills they were learning.

As students participated in the daily activities, each student had an opportunity to model correct behaviors and also an opportunity to learn from the other students. The teachers intervened at appropriate times to positively reinforce correct social behavior and, when necessary, to give instruction in correct behavior. Growth in social skills was demonstrated through cooperative play, appropriate behavior and the use of acceptable language in the classroom.

If having a specifically scheduled time for teaching social behaviors is deemed necessary, as illustrated in the literature, the pilot program could have incorporated some structured activities for this purpose. For example, role playing, which was not included in the pilot program, is one way recommended to give direct instruction in social skills to the whole group. The pilot program may need to add this activity at a scheduled time during each week. Specific socially desirable behaviors or deviant behaviors could be discussed by the whole group. Then the necessary reinforcement of these behaviors could be dealt with on an

individual basis. In any case, the opportunities to teach appropriate behaviors must be taken and be a part of the daily routine.

Collaborative Consultation

The program did have support personnel working in the classroom as recommended in the literature. However, these support personnel did not operate in a way completely consistent with the philosophy of the program. They were a speech therapist and an adaptive physical education teacher.

The speech therapist was willing to teach a whole group lesson to the class once a week, but continued to work with small groups of students on a pull-out basis twice a week. The ideal inclusion program would have the therapist in the classroom working with individual students instead of taking them out of the classroom.

The adaptive physical education teacher worked once a week with students identified as needing her services. Again, the teacher took the students away from the group to conduct her exercises. Inclusionary programs focus on maintaining

group support rather than isolating individual students for treatment. Perhaps whole group instruction in physical education is possible during a scheduled time of the week. All students could be participating in fine or gross motor activities while the physical education teacher concentrates on identified students.

The practice of performing needed services in the classroom or with the whole group may be the most difficult to initiate. Even so, regular consultation with specialists did occur in the pilot program. The teachers were aware of the services being administered to their students and they took the initiative to inquire about student progress.

Assessment

In accordance with district guidelines for assessment of kindergarten students, the kindergarten teacher in the pilot program evaluated the regular education students periodically during the school year. The special education teacher maintained an individual education program for each of the special education students. There were no specific

recommendations for evaluating student progress in an inclusion kindergarten program to be found in the literature. Therefore the teachers of the pilot program had to rely on district guidelines for assessment.

Social progress in the pilot program was evaluated through teacher observation. A formal evaluation may be needed to provide concrete data of a student's social progress. This information is needed to further justify the existence of the inclusion kindergarten program.

Overall, the quality of teaching, curriculum, and social interactions in the inclusion kindergarten pilot program was high. The teachers displayed enthusiasm and belief in their goal to educate the students in this program. Improvements in assessment procedures and enrollment of students selected for the program will strengthen the case for establishing new programs in other classrooms.

Conclusion

The success of the pilot program presented in this project shows that inclusive programs can work. The goals of the program were to promote social contact with and appropriate behaviors in the regular and special education students. Academically the regular education students were expected to make normal progress and it was hoped that the special education students would achieve higher success than originally outlined in their I.E.P. goals.

The handicapped students in the program have demonstrated success in both academic and social skills. Much of their success is attributed to having nonhandicapped peers model correct behavior and work habits. They have developed friendships with many students in the class. The regular education students also improved their social skills and their ability to work cooperatively. Interacting with the special education students provided increased opportunities for the regular education students to develop leadership skills. In addition, working with these students helped the regular education students develop a healthy attitude toward and a

better understanding of students with handicaps. Due to its success and the positive feedback from all involved, the program will be continued for another year.

Because the pilot program is an innovative idea, other teachers and administrators have expressed the desire to replicate it. Teachers and administrators from other schools within the district and from neighboring districts who had the opportunity to observe the pilot classroom, were favorably impressed with the quality of interaction displayed by the students and with how smoothly classroom activities were conducted. They were also impressed by the teamwork displayed, the collaboration between teachers, the support of administrators and the level of parental support. Although this type of program could be implemented at all levels, K-12, the best place to start is with the kindergarten classroom. Implementing a program such as this in the early grades may prevent the children from developing stereotypical attitudes toward the handicapped and may allay some of the fears of opponents to inclusion that students may be taken advantage of

or ridiculed. Introducing an inclusive program in later grades may be more difficult, especially if the regular education students have had little contact with special education students. Therefore, starting an inclusion program in the early grades may be the necessary first step to making the move toward total inclusion.

The movement toward full inclusion of all students into regular school settings is dependent upon teachers' and administrators' willingness to take risks. Inclusion requires a commitment from all individuals involved, administrators, teachers, parents and students, to place students in the least restrictive environment and to allow students, with or without disabilities, the opportunity to attend their neighborhood school. If programs such as these can be implemented, perhaps existing prejudices toward children with handicaps could be abolished and the quality of education will be enhanced for all students. Continuing quantitative research may be the next step leading to full implementation of inclusion programs.

APPENDIX

DRAFT: JULY 1, 1990

**SCHOOL-BASED WAIVER REQUESTS
TO INCLUDE SPECIAL CLASSES**

1. HOW WILL THE WAIVER BENEFIT BOTH REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THIS SCHOOL? HOW DID YOU DETERMINE THAT THIS WAIVER WAS NECESSARY?

Both regular and special education students will benefit socially and academically from the increased teacher and student interaction in the program. The waiver was deemed necessary as a means to accomplish a program where full inclusion could be established.

2. HOW HAVE SELPA DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION STAFF AND ADMINISTRATORS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THIS WAIVER REQUEST TO ASSURE COORDINATION, AS WELL AS COMPLIANCE WITH OTHER STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS?

The program was reviewed by Dr. Agin's office. It was written with the assistance from the learning handicapped coordinator and the program specialist in special education. The program was submitted to the Director of Special Education for compliance with federal and state law.

3. SINCE THERE ARE NO CLASS SIZE REQUIREMENTS FOR SPECIAL CLASSES, HOW WILL CLASS SIZES BE MONITORED TO ASSURE THAT IDENTIFIED SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS WILL CONTINUE TO RECEIVE THE SERVICES OUTLINED IN THEIR IEP'S.

School district contract limits will be followed. By having two teachers as well as two classified people in

the classroom sufficient personnel are on hand greatly decreasing the student/teacher ratio.

4. HOW MANY STUDENTS DO YOU ANTICIPATE WILL BE INVOLVED IN SPECIFIC CLASSES (REGULAR, SPECIAL EDUCATION AND OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE SCHOOL)? BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE NATURE OF THE DISABILITIES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION STUDENTS.

Approximately 38-40 students will be involved in the kindergarten class at Cypress. The disabilities of the of the students involved vary. All students qualify and meet the criteria under the SH designation.

5. DESCRIBE THE PROCESS USED TO DETERMINE THE NEED OF NON-IDENTIFIED STUDENTS TO RECEIVE THE SERVICES OF A SPECIAL CLASS TEACHER. INCLUDING CRITERIA USED, TESTING AND PLANNING. IF A FORM (SIMILAR TO AN IEP FORM) WILL BE USED, PLEASE ATTACH. IF A FORM IS NOT USED, HOW WILL THESE DECISIONS MADE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS BE DOCUMENTED?

There was no criteria for initial placement into this class on the side of the regular education students. Throughout the process, students deemed "at risk" will be sent through the student study team process. The expertise of the special education teacher will be relied upon to service the needs of the non-identified students.

6. HOW WILL PARENTS OF NON-IDENTIFIED STUDENTS PARTICIPATE OR BE INFORMED OF DECISIONS MADE THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS DESCRIBED IN ITEM 5? WILL PARENT CONSENT BE REQUIRED OR REQUESTED?

An information sheet will be developed describing the program and requesting their approval for their child to be enrolled in the team teaching environment. If students are deemed "at risk" normal parent notification procedures will be implemented.

7. HOW WILL REGULAR AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (AND ANY OTHER SERVICES PROVIDED TO THESE STUDENTS) BE COORDINATED ON AN ON GOING BASIS?

The regular and special education services will be coordinated through the team teaching and interaction of the two teachers involved in the program. Mr. Chris LeRoy has acted as the facilitator during the first year of the unique program.

8. DESCRIBE THE DUTIES OF THE SPECIAL DAY CLASS TEACHER(S) UNDER THIS WAIVER. HOW HAVE THE SDC TEACHERS BEEN INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING PROCESS FOR THIS WAIVER?

The duties of the SDC teacher under this waiver are similar to that of the regular education teacher. Lesson planning is coordinated together as well as strategies for teaching. The special education students have IEP goals. These goals are met through testing, student work, and observation in the classroom. The SDC teacher saw a need for an inclusion program and has been involved in its planning from the beginning.

9. DOES THE SPECIAL DAY CLASS TEACHER(S) AGREE TO THE CHANGES IN THE DELIVERY OF SERVICES PROPOSED IN THIS WAIVER?

The SDC teacher not only agrees to the changes in the delivery of services proposed in the waiver, but wholeheartedly sees its importance and success.

10. HOW WILL THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CHANGES RESULTING FROM THIS WAIVER BE EVALUATED (PARTICULARLY EFFECTS ON STUDENT OUTCOMES)?

The effectiveness of the changes will be evaluated from using the kindergarten developmental assessment test.

The social skills gained will be evaluated through observation and documentation.

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