

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE MAINSTREAM: A CONFRONTATION OF LIMITATIONS?

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EFFECTS OF MAINSTREAM EDUCATION

Reflecting on the course of American education, historians of the future may well refer to the period of the 1960s and 1970s as the "Years of the Law." Litigation and legislation have addressed abuses in traditional public educational systems; the results have been dramatic, abrupt, and emotionally charged. Major Federal direction to change was contained in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (P. L. 89-10) which recognized that "millions of children did not perform adequately in their schools and that many schools and teachers were ill equipped to help them" (Halpern, 1975). Included in those groups of pupils in need of additional or compensatory help were handicapped children. Special education, that frequently neglected and overlooked part of the educational system, became a major target for change.

In addition to legislative action on the Federal level, state and local educational establishments were challenged and attacked by parents and other consumer groups. The right to education, more specifically the right to *appropriate* education, was at issue. Detailed review of the relevant litigation has been provided by other authors (see Cohen & De Young, 1973; Kirp, 1973; Kirp, Buss & Kuriloff, 1974). Of particular importance is the point that legal decisions provided the basis and impetus for change in educational programs and procedures, influencing both the nature of services and the pupil populations to be served. Although possible inequities and inadequacies in educational programs were known to educators for some time, it was legal and legislative mandates which forced a notably reluctant educational establishment to change (Weintraub, 1972).

As important as it is to emphasize the effects of litigation and legislation on changes in educational practice, it would be naive and inaccurate to report that all of the mandates have been translated into successful programs. The courts have spelled out the respective rights and responsibilities of pupils and educational systems and have mandated change. But as noted by attorney Bancroft in a recent address in San Francisco (1975), courts have limitations. Legal decisions and legislative action do not necessarily ensure

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development of optimal or even appropriate programs. Funding support is frequently lacking or, at best, minimal. There are inadequate numbers of trained personnel and limited substantive information about teaching-learning conditions for exceptional pupils. Although in most cases sympathetic with the court and legislative mandates, educators, too, have limitations. In a number of programs for exceptional children, we may be approaching a "confrontation of limitations." Many current mainstream educational efforts may well be dramatic examples.

MAINSTREAMING IN THE CONTEXT OF SOCIAL CHANGE

In the broadest sense, mainstreaming refers to instruction of pupils within the regular educational setting. Said simply, the regular educational program is viewed as bearing primary responsibility for educating all pupils, including those with handicapping conditions. In a field frequently characterized by vested interests and provincialism, the enthusiastic and almost unanimous acceptance of "mainstreaming" as the optimal plan for educating most exceptional children is truly remarkable. Few educational innovations have so caught the fancy of special educators and parents alike, and a broad variety of mainstream educational programs for widely diverse exceptional pupils

have sprung up throughout the country. On the national level, the National Advisory Committee on the Handicapped in 1974 endorsed the goal of placement in the "least restrictive" educational environment; Federal support for development of mainstream efforts is apparent at both operational and research levels—for example, major BEH funding for Project Prime (Kaufman, Semmel & Agard, 1974). Training institutions have rewritten preservice curricula for the preparation of teachers, and traditional categories of classification and grouping are disappearing. Self-contained special education is "out"; resource rooms, integrated placement, and consultant teachers are "in."

Ethnic and Minority Status

Mainstream education is congruent with other social changes involving handicapped individuals: decentralization of institutional programs to local communities; removal of physical barriers to access for physically handicapped individuals; mandated "set-asides" in Federally supported Head Start and vocational education programs. Certainly mainstreaming is consistent with broad issues involving rights to education, due process guarantees, and the like, and must be viewed within the social-political context of the 1960s and 1970s. The massive Coleman report (Coleman, 1968) provided documentation for the confounding of ethnic minority status and poor achievement in school. Recognition of inequities in opportunities and rights associated with ethnic and/or socioeconomic status were delineated, and the powerful influences of these conditions on educational decisions became apparent. It was argued that traditional self-contained special education programs inadvertently served to maintain the status quo by providing educational programs based on limited and often inaccurate assumptions about pupils' abilities and competencies—i.e., programs reinforced the very characteristics on which the pupils had been placed, so that selection and instructional systems were in a sense mutually self-supporting or self-perpetuating. Many of the practices in both selection and placement and in instructional services came under attack in the courts. As noted by Ross, DeYoung, and Cohen (1971), despite the diversity of individual cases considered in the courts, there have been common issues and complaints having to do with inappropriate selection and administration of screening and placement tests, abridgment of individual child and parental rights in screening and placement decisions, inadequacy of educational pro-

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gramming following placement, and negative effects of labelling. Although these criticisms were directed primarily at practices within self-contained special education programs, they were clearly related to the confounding of ethnic or sociocultural differences with special education status.

Labelling

Legal and legislative decisions have for the most part been directed at the large number of pupils removed from the general or regular educational program and placed in special self-contained programs or classes for the educable mentally retarded. Early work by Mercer (1970) demonstrated clearly that there was over-representation of ethnic minority pupils in EMR programs, and that identification and placement practices have resulted in less than optimal programming. Of particular concern was the possible negative, even insidious, effects of labelling which might be derived from placement in EMR programs. The extensive literature on expectancy effect (see Brophy & Good, 1974, for a comprehensive review) as well as common sense provide support for the notion that labels may have serious negative social and educational consequences for children. Labelling has become a major and often emotional concern where special education services are considered; and as noted by MacMillan, Jones, and Aloia (1974), in the minds of many the labelling effect "explained" the problems of children in school. The fervor with which the labelling effect was taken up suggests that some believe that children's educational problems are primarily due to their being labeled; thus, to remove the label is to ameliorate the problem. Mainstream placement was seen as a way of ensuring educational opportunity and success as well as providing educational services consistent with legal and legislative mandates, and at the same time removing possible effects of pejorative labels. It is not surprising that the mainstream idea has appeal and that it has received such enthusiastic endorsement. It reflects the social and philosophical zeitgeist of the times. There is, unfortunately, a "giant step" between concept and practice.

EVIDENCE OF EDUCATIONAL EFFECTS

Despite the popularity of the concept and the legal, philosophical, and social support for mainstreaming, review of available information on the topic yields more rhetoric than evidence. As noted by Chaffin (1974) and Kaufman, Gottlieb, Agard, and Kukic (1975), emphasis to date has

been on administrative arrangements more than on instructional or curricular matters. A variety of administrative options for delivery of services to exceptional pupils within the regular classroom or school have been described by Beery (1972), Birch (1974), Chaffin (1974), and Guerin and Szatlocky (1974). Various mainstream models emphasize somewhat different options—e.g., a contract model (Gallagher, 1972), a "zero-reject" model emphasizing responsibility of the regular class teacher for the mainstreamed pupil (Lilly, 1971), and a multi-alternative model (Adamson & Van Etten, 1972). Mainstreaming plans in other parts of the country are consistent with the six models proposed by the California State Department of Education in guidelines for return of former EMR placed pupils into regular programs, these programs referred to as "transition programs."

It should be noted that most of the mainstream models provide effective techniques for the placement of the exceptional child in the regular program and identify the kinds of special support services needed. Few guarantee, let alone evaluate, what happens to the child once placed. Administratively, the trend has been to move rapidly away from the self-contained classroom and to place pupils within the regular class setting. Guerin and Szatlocky (1974) found that former EMR placed pupils benefitted most from full day placement in regular classes. But as noted by Kaufman et al. (1975), mainstreaming and integration are not synonymous. In their view, three important components of mainstreaming are temporal, instructional, and social integration. These are likely independent but interactive. Kaufman et al. stress that mere physical time in the classroom is not enough, arguing instead that mainstreaming must involve services which lead to integration on the other dimensions. Unfortunately, support services for children and teachers in mainstream placements have frequently been variable, often limited, and sometimes missing entirely. Lacking is delineation of a possible pupil by program interaction, getting at the question of *which* kind of administrative and instructional arrangement in the regular program is appropriate for children with *which* kinds of educational characteristics. As noted by Gickling and Theobald (1975), "the philosophical commitment to mainstreaming seems to have outraced its research support" (p. 312).

Inconclusive Program Effects

Importantly, evidence which allows evaluation of program effects is for the most part lacking and, where

available, is inconsistent and inconclusive. Since Dunn's (1968) challenge to special educators to develop alternative models for providing services to mildly retarded pupils, a number of researchers have attempted to test various integrative plans. There are some trends which seem to support Dunn's contention that EMR pupils are better off in integrated educational programs; yet, overall, there are few clear-cut outcomes which allow definitive interpretation. Consistent with findings of Richmond and Dalton (1973), Guerin and Szatlocky (1974) found the EMR pupils' behavior in the classroom and the ways they were perceived by their teachers were a function of the program model used and the degree of integration which existed within each type or model. These researchers found that the greater the degree of integration within a program, the more "normal" the behavior of EMR pupils. In contrast, Monroe and Howe (1971) found that the amount of time junior high school EMR pupils were integrated was negatively correlated with their acceptance by regular class peers. To confound the question further, Iano, Ayers, Heller, McGettigan, and Walker (1974) report that EMRs were no better accepted by their peers in an integrated resource room than in a special class. Yet, using sociometric techniques, Goodman, Gottlieb, and Harrison (1972) found that EMR pupils who were in an integrated program were rejected significantly less often than EMRs in a self-contained special class, findings consistent with those of Gampel, Gottlieb, and Harrison (1974). Still more recently, Gottlieb, Gampel, and Budoff (1975) confirmed the high incidence of "prosocial behavior" and "positive attitudes toward school" of integrated EMR pupils when compared to those EMR pupils in self-contained classes, although these investigators noted the persistent finding of lack of acceptance by regular class peers. Using still different outcome criteria, Haring and Krug (1975) reported that lower socioeconomic status EMR pupils, given an individual experimental one year "transition" program, acquired basic academic and social skills at a rate which allowed placement in a regular class, and that they maintained academic and behavioral adjustments after one year of being in regular classes. It appears, thus, that the type of administrative arrangement and the amount of integration within a given model may differentially affect academic, behavioral, and social outcome measures for EMR pupils. Despite inconsistencies and confusion, overall there is some continuing, albeit tentative, evidence in support of mainstream placement. Still at issue is determination of the important, even critical, parameters of mainstream programming, so that in this possible "con-

frontation of limitations" individual children are provided appropriate education.

UCLA RESEARCH ON MAINSTREAMING

As part of the Special Education Research Program conducted through the University of California at Los Angeles and the California State University at Los Angeles (Keogh, Kukic & Sbordone, 1975)², researchers have been involved for several years in study of various aspects of mainstreaming in California. Of particular relevance and interest is work directed at the so-called "transition" program in California, as these programs represent a kind of pilot mainstream effort. Our data are limited but are among the few systematic and objective sets of evidence which allow other than intuitive, speculative generalizations about mainstreaming. Examination of transition programs may be useful, given the importance of mainstreaming nationally.

In 1970 the California State Legislature began a series of legislative actions which have had direct and far-reaching effects on exceptional children and the California public schools which serve them. Legislative decisions brought about changes in procedures and practices in identifying and planning for exceptional children, dealt with the confounding of educational exceptionality and ethnic minority status, and emphasized the rights of exceptional individuals to appropriate and adequate education, as well as spelled out procedures to due process. The 1970 California legislation also required that all then EMR-placed pupils be reevaluated in light of more stringent identification criteria, so that inappropriately identified or misplaced pupils could be placed in regular programs. Permissive legislation also provided financial support to local school districts for implementation of "transition" programs to facilitate pupils' return to regular classes. Estimated numbers of transition pupils range from 14,000 to 22,000. Almost 250 districts in the state had formally approved transition programs between 1970 and 1974. A comprehensive review of the legal and legislative background of transition programs may be found in the report by Keogh, Levitt, and Robson (1974). The effect of the legislation was to require review and/or reevaluation of pupils in EMR programs, to require explanations of

2. UCLA special education research projects were funded under contract between the University of California and the California State Department of Education.

variance in EMR placement when number of minority pupils exceeded their representation in the district as a whole, and to provide additional support for districts to develop effective ways of integrating these pupils into the general education program. This, indeed, was a pilot mainstream program. It seems reasonable to ask what we have learned from it that might facilitate broader mainstream efforts.

District Program Modifications

Several studies conducted through the UCLA Special Education Research Program provide evidence pertinent to the question. In one major project the focus was on delineation of the kinds of programmatic modifications developed by districts to provide supplemental transition services, the kinds of staff development utilized, the techniques for evaluation of program effectiveness, and the recommendations and suggestions of district professionals as to ways to improve services for pupils in transition status (Keogh, Levitt, Robson & Chan, 1974). Our intent was not to determine if programs had or had not been effective, but rather to find out what, in fact, happened in districts implementing transition programs. Administrators in 10 selected school districts were interviewed personally, and they provided detailed descriptions of their programs; administrators in 156 other districts with transition programs supplied information through a mailed questionnaire. Interview respondents tended to be somewhat less optimistic as to program effects than were questionnaire respondents. Several findings have direct relevance to larger mainstream questions. Whereas all districts in our study sample reclassified pupils formerly in EMR status, some districts reclassified all eligible pupils from EMR to Educationally Handicapped (EH) or to some other special education category; others placed pupils in full day, self-contained transition classes (a "new" special education category?); still others integrated former special class pupils totally into regular classes. The single most popular transition model was regular class placement with paraprofessional aides in the classroom. Almost all transition options utilized some kind of tutorial arrangement in an effort to provide individualized help in subject matter areas. Inservice training for staff serving transition pupils was conducted by approximately half the sample districts. Direct instructional personnel, e.g., teachers, aides, and tutors, were the major target groups for such specialized training; few districts provided staff development for principals, school psychologists, counselors, or others work-

ing with transition pupils and those who teach them. For the most part effectiveness of inservice programming was unknown, and administrators expressed need for help in development of comprehensive inservice planning and programming (Boyd, 1975).

Administrators reported generally positive but mixed perceptions of outcomes or effects of transition programs on pupils and school personnel. For the most part findings were consistent across district parameters of size and ethnic representation. Administrators were in agreement that the review and reclassification process had corrected some previous inequities in placement, but there was less confidence that transition programming *per se* had been consistently beneficial to transition or regular class pupils. Placement in regular programs was viewed as having positive effects on transition pupils' social adjustment, self-concepts, and the like; there was less support for the beneficial effects of placement on pupils' educational achievement. Overall, there was a high degree of uncertainty about program effects due, in large part, to inadequate systems for evaluation. In the few districts evaluating their transition programs, findings were generally positive but lacked comprehensiveness. It was not possible to determine with confidence the kinds or extent of program outcomes although, subjectively, perceptions of the administrators tended to be positive. Unfortunately, data on which to evaluate program effects on transition and regular pupils were frequently not kept. Comprehensive descriptions of operational aspects of programs are lacking. In a sense, we are left to assess unknown programs in terms of unknown outcomes. The point is critical given the importance of the mainstream movement.

Transition Pupil Performance

The major purpose in a second project was to follow up formerly EMR placed pupils to determine how effectively they were performing in regular programs (Levitt, Keogh & Hall, 1975). Said directly and simply: How successful are transition pupils in regular classes? Despite the simplicity and directness of the question, operational criteria for determination of success and failure are complex; review of relevant research demonstrates that they vary according to investigator and study. In the present project the two major areas or general criteria were academic achievement and social-behavioral adjustment. Three sources of information provided evidence relevant to these two criteria—systems information having to do with demographic findings, e.g., school attendance, referrals for special help,

and the like; classroom teachers' current perceptions of pupils' characteristics as measured by a series of academic and social-behavioral rating scales; results of district-wide achievement tests.

The study was conducted in a large California school district serving a major metropolitan area. Socioeconomic status of residents ranged from high income to welfare levels, and the district is generally consistent with the total state in pupil ethnic representation. The subject population was drawn from all 18 junior high schools serving grades 7, 8, and 9. This grade range was selected because transition funding existed for a four year period (1970-74) and the majority of EMR pupils could be expected to have been in the upper elementary grades at the time of reclassification (Keogh, Becker, Kukic & Kukic, 1972). An additional reason for limiting the sample to the junior high school range was that high dropout rates may be expected as transition pupils enter senior high school (Watkins, 1975; Yoshida, 1975). In this district a total of 399 pupils were reclassified from EMR to regular status between 1970 and 1972. Of these 399 pupils, 267 or 67% were identified as junior high school pupils in grades 7, 8, or 9 in the spring, 1975. Current school placement (location), administrative status (regular or special class), and demographic characteristics (sex, ethnicity, etc.) were determined for these 267 target pupils. At local school sites researchers were able to locate 153 of the 267 target pupils. Overall, 57% of the original junior high target sample was located at local schools within the district. This group constituted the primary target sample.

Each of the 153 transition pupils was matched with four regular class pupils drawn from his/her required English class. These regular class peers, matched to the target pupils for similarity of sex and ethnicity, were selected randomly within each English class, comprising a comparison group of 497 pupils; 530 additional regular class controls were also added as a comparison sample. Use of large numbers of peers not only provided reasonable comparison groups, but also protected the confidentiality of former EMR placement of the transition pupils. Regular class teachers (N=145) were asked to summarize their impressions of each sample pupil in their classes, using a series of simple rating scales and a semantic differential scale. Teachers were not told that any pupils had ever been in special education programs. Teachers were asked to rate each pupil relative to other pupils in the class. In addition to teachers' perceptions of pupils' current educational and social-behavioral performance, current standardized achievement test scores were used. Six of the 18 junior

high schools were Title I schools and served over 70% of the transition sample. The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills had been administered by district personnel to all pupils in these schools; thus, it was possible to compare transition and matched and control pupils on this index as well as on demographic records and teachers' perceptions of pupils' performance.

Demographics

The three data sources yielded interesting if sometimes discouraging findings as to the current performance of transition pupils. While 57% (153) of the former EMR placed pupils were being served in regular classes, a significant proportion of the original 267 pupils were, again, clearly outside of mainstream education. Eighteen (7%) pupils had been reassigned to special classes for EMR, and 26 (10%) had been placed in classes for Educationally Handicapped. Twelve (5%) were "lost" from the transition sample because of court placements to residential or correctional schools; sixteen (6%) had been transferred to other schools or were in suspended status due to some kind of guidance action; fourteen (5%) transferred to other schools outside the district; twenty-eight (11%) pupils were unknown to local schools. Thus, fifty-six (22%) of the pupils in the original sample had been reassigned to special education status within regular schools or were assigned to court, correctional, or district continuation schools. The 22% figure appears consistent with data offered by Watkins (1975) who found 25% of her transition pupil sample required continued special education services.

Teacher Perceptions

In terms of performance of former EMR placed pupils who were being educated in regular programs, it was found that transition pupils were consistently rated by their teachers as doing less well academically than were their matches in the same classrooms. Watkins (1975) also found that teachers gave lower grades to transition pupils than to their peers. While not as clear as academic performance measures, transition pupils in our sample were rated by teachers as having significantly more social-behavioral difficulties and adjustment problems than their classmates. It should be emphasized that pupils were not being rated in terms of national norms or standardized scores, but were rated relative to pupils in regular classes where they were placed. Thus, findings of consistent and significant differ-

ences between transition and nontransition pupils are especially powerful.

Achievement Tests

In addition to teacher/pupil referenced data, transition and matched pupils' performances were compared on norm referenced, standardized achievement tests. Analysis of achievement data was confined to six schools receiving Federal support monies. Although there were 18 junior high schools in the district, these six schools contained 70% of the transition pupil sample. In terms of academic performance as measured by standardized achievement tests, transition pupils did significantly poorer than their matched peers. Differences held for both reading and arithmetic measures. The six sample schools generated achievement scores below grade level expectations compared to other junior high schools in the district and to the normative group to which this test is referenced. The point to be emphasized is that transition pupils performed significantly below their nontransition peers even when the performance of peers was not up to the average in the district and/or in the normative sample. This significant and consistent difference in achievement was particularly discouraging when coupled with the results of the analyses of teachers' assessments of their pupils' performance.

Teachers perceived significant differences between transition and nontransition pupils even when nontransition peers scored "below average" on standardized achievement tests. This point becomes especially important given the fervor with which special educators eschew pupil labels. It is often argued that traditional special education disability labels are prime variables influencing, even causing, low pupil achievement and social and behavioral disturbance. In the present study, the vast majority (over 95%) of teachers did not know that any of the sample pupils had formerly been in special education classes. Thus, it seems unlikely that performance levels can be explained primarily in terms of labelling or teachers' expectancy effects. Rather, it seems more likely that poor achievement levels may be related to inadequate preparation for regular programs, to specific deficits in subject matter skills, and/or to needs for more powerful supplemental instruction. Drawing on an earlier study of EH and EMR pupils (Keogh et al., 1972) in which characteristics of over 1300 special education pupils were reviewed, it was found that EMR pupils as a group were approximately 3-4 years behind their chronological age grade placement expectancy and that specific skill deficits continued to be large as the

child moved into the upper grades. In the case of transition pupils in our current sample, it is likely that they were behind in skill levels while still in special education classes. Apparently earlier special education experience or later placement in a regular program for as many as four years was not sufficient to bring them to the performance levels of their classmates.

Teacher Attitudes

Finally, results of several studies of teachers' attitudes and knowledge about exceptional pupils and how to teach them are of direct relevance to mainstreaming. Hewett and Watson (1975) presented elementary school teachers ($N > 1000$) with a series of six vignettes describing behavioral and learning characteristics of children previously placed in self-contained special education classes. Teachers were asked to indicate how these pupils should be taught in a regular classroom, what was the probability of their success, if their presence in the regular program would work to the benefit of other children, and the like. In essence, these investigators found that teachers were able to distinguish among the various patterns of pupils' characteristics described in the vignettes but that teachers had little knowledge of how to provide differential instruction for them. Although the majority of teachers felt that the exceptional children described would be better off in a regular program than in a self-contained one, they were also concerned that there would be negative effects on regular class peers and, importantly, that the demands on teachers would be increased greatly. Few felt confident in meeting these demands.

Hewett and Watson's findings were consistent with those of McGinty and Keogh (1975) who developed a questionnaire aimed at determining what teachers think they need to know in order to teach exceptional children in the mainstream, and to determine how competent they feel in these areas. Replies from almost 400 teachers demonstrated that there was considerable agreement as to what teachers thought they needed to know; unfortunately, there was almost unanimous agreement that they did not know it. As example, 88% of the respondents indicated that knowledge of the characteristics of exceptional children was important, yet only 27% felt qualified in this area. Taken as a whole, the findings indicated that, despite their willingness to work with exception children, few teachers feel competent to do so.

There was compelling evidence as to the need for comprehensive inservice training to prepare regular class

teachers for mainstreaming. Several major topics in addition to knowledge about exceptional children stood out. Few teachers felt knowledgeable in planning and implementing specialized remedial educational programs; few were comfortable in teaching exceptional children in a broad spectrum of subject matter areas, viz. physical education, science; few were aware of resource or support services within or outside the school. Interestingly, a large number of teachers in the sample expressed awareness of the importance of the social and affective aspects of mainstream classrooms; the majority of sample teachers, however, reported that they were not knowledgeable or comfortable in how to help pupils in this regard. As noted earlier in this paper, there is evidence that the nature of the interaction between mainstream pupils and their peers is a critical ingredient for success, yet few regular class teachers feel that they can help children on these important social and affective dimensions.

Results of the studies of teachers' attitudes and competencies are particularly interesting given the results of an earlier project assessing the role of school psychologists in special education programs (Keogh, Kukic, Becker, McLoughlin & Kukic, 1975). Review of school psychologists' training and actual on-the-job activities suggested that, whereas the majority are well qualified to test and, in fact, spend most of their time in various aspects of testing, almost none is expert in classroom management, remedial curriculum planning, and the like, and few are experienced in facilitating affective, social aspects of the educational program.

Taken as a whole, findings from this series of studies identifies forcefully the need for inservice training for all regular program personnel in order that they may deal effectively with mainstreamed pupils. The point is particularly important, as mainstreaming by definition requires accommodation of both regular pupils and staff as well as the exceptional pupils who are being mainstreamed. Whereas the direction and mandates for mainstreaming of exceptional pupils have come from forces external to the regular education system, it seems inescapable that it is the regular system which must respond and change. A major question concerns the ability and willingness of those in the regular educational program to make these changes.

SOME CONCLUSIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Our review of the work of others as well as the findings from studies conducted through the UCLA research

program leads us to some conclusions or generalizations which, although equivocal, are nonetheless worthy of consideration. As an idea or concept, mainstreaming has received considerable attention and widespread support. As an operational program it has received limited attention and lacks evidence or data upon which to make evaluation or even analysis. Mainstreaming as an educational plan came about because of externally imposed pressures on the system and because educators recognized the need to provide more effectively for pupils viewed as mildly retarded. The concept has been generalized and broadened to include pupils with other handicapping conditions—indeed, in the minds of some, to include all pupils alike. The difficulties come when the idea is translated into programs, as the parameters of programs relative to characteristics of handicapped children are uncertain, even unknown. What kinds of instructional modifications ensure academic and social success for a visually or hearing impaired child in the regular classroom? How can we structure a teaching program to provide for the full range of individual differences in skill level within the mainstream classroom? The full continuum of services as an ideal receives enthusiastic endorsement; but how to deliver these services remains uncertain. It is of some interest to note that, from our ongoing contacts with public school personnel, it is apparent that the closer one is to the actual operation of programs, the less certainty there is about mainstreaming. Legislators and state or district administrators are enthusiastic advocates, building principals are for the most part positive, and classroom teachers are frequently ambivalent.

Despite good intentions of regular and special educators alike, it is apparent that formal educational programs have had only limited success in providing for exceptional pupils. Examination of educational histories of many of our "transition" pupils yields a kind of *deja vu* feeling. Early on in the elementary school classroom teachers identified particular pupils as being different from or less adequate than their peers on academic, social, or behavioral dimensions. These pupils were referred to school psychologists who, in the main, painstakingly elaborated the obvious to teachers; the referred pupils, indeed, evidenced deviant scores of one type or another. As some special education program was viewed as necessary, many of these pupils were placed in special classes for the educable mentally retarded, thus removed from the mainstream. A combination of external legal and legislative pressures coupled with questions as to the efficacy of special classes and the confounding effects of socio-

economic background on school achievement lead to enthusiastic support for return to regular classrooms. Many pupils with varying educational competencies and skills were placed in regular programs and expected to perform *as if* they had had the same experiences and skills as their regular class peers. We seem to have come full circle. Teachers now identify many of the same pupils as underachievers and as having problems, and these pupils continue to score below their classmates or normative groups on standardized achievement measures.

It seems clear that neither regular nor special programs have adequately prepared these pupils for academic, social, and/or behavioral success. It might be argued that, if special education placement had a viable impact on pupils' performance, our transition data would reflect higher outcome indices. Additionally, it might also be argued that placement in a regular education program had only limited effects, as the majority of mainstreamed pupils are still behind their classmates in performance levels. The process began with teachers identifying pupils' academic and social-behavioral problems. Many years later teachers continue to identify the same pupils as having academic and social-behavioral problems, in spite of interventions of both special and regular education. We, indeed, may be approaching a confrontation of limitations.

Several specific points derived from the research literature deserve attention, as they may help point the direction for future more effective mainstream programs.

- Mere physical placement in the regular classroom is not enough to ensure either academic achievement or social acceptance. Many exceptional pupils have specific needs which require accommodation and attention. Exceptional pupils are frequently behind their classmates in actual skills levels, requiring specialized and continuing remedial help. Exceptional children and their classmates may also need help in the social-affective aspects of life in the classroom. As noted by Kaufman et al. (1975), mainstreaming has temporal, physical, and social dimensions. We propose an additional "educational" dimension such as relevance. Mainstreaming is not just a function of time and proximity. It seems more likely that successful mainstreaming occurs when there is congruence in educational competence.
- The impact of labelling as an explanation for educational failure or behavioral deviance is seemingly

overestimated. Removal of a pejorative label does not necessarily lead to changes in pupils' behaviors or competencies. Teachers respond in part at least to how pupils behave and how they achieve, not just to what they are called. As there is considerable evidence to suggest that labels provide little insight into remediation of children's problems, labels are undoubtedly best forgotten wherever possible. It is naive, however, to suggest that pupils' problems are in fact "caused" by labels, and thus can be "cured" simply by removal of those labels. To suggest that we can ensure successful mainstreaming of exceptional pupils by removing labels is to overlook real and important individual differences which must be taken into account in educational planning.

- Despite recognition that mainstream education places major, perhaps prime, responsibility for education of exceptional pupils on regular educators, it is clear that few regular class teachers feel competent to take on this task. Preservice training and credential requirements for teachers must include study of exceptional children. Implementation of inservice training for teachers already in the classroom is critical. Given the consistent evidence as to regular educators' lack of understanding of educational characteristics of exceptional children, the inservice aspect of mainstreaming is of the highest priority.
- Effective individual instructional programs require appropriate analysis of pupils' educational abilities and styles. Traditional psychometrics, the stock-in-trade of many school psychologists, are limited in educational power and relevance. More sensitive and educationally oriented analytic techniques are needed to provide the basis for educational programming for exceptional pupils in regular programs. Closely related, school psychologists and counselors, key people in decisions about individual pupils, often lack background and experience in dealing with exceptional pupils. As with regular class teachers, pre- and inservice training of school psychologists must be part of a total mainstream effort.

A POINT OF VIEW

In an address on mainstreaming pupils into regular education programs presented at the American Association

on Mental Deficiency meeting in 1974, Jane Mercer suggested that the *why* of mainstreaming is to be understood in the perspective of history, that the *who* of mainstreaming is in large part a decision of the courts, but that the *how* of mainstreaming "is the current challenge of public education" (Mercer, 1974). We agree with Professor Mercer's analysis and suggest further that the *how* of mainstreaming is plagued by inadequate research, poor record keeping, and confusion of political, social, and economic influences on education. Despite the intuitive appeal of many approaches to mainstreaming, we have seen little data which argue persuasively for any particular program. We strongly endorse the point of view that, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, pupils should be educated in the mainstream. We argue vigorously, however, that optimal education requires more than categorical placement, even if the category is the regular class.

In order to achieve success in school many exceptional pupils need specialized, ongoing help as a supplement to regular instruction. Where the primary educational program for exceptional pupils is carried out within the mainstream, these specialized services must be available and functional in regular classes. In our opinion it is both reasonable and possible that these important supplemental services can be provided within the context of regular class instruction. It should be emphasized, however, that such services are often expensive and require coordination and cooperation of a number of professionals and paraprofessionals within the educational system. The point to be made is that successful mainstreaming may well require more, not less, attention and effort than did traditional special educational programs.

Finally, and most importantly, we emphasize that the real value of any educational program must be established in terms of effects on the pupils who are the participants. Educators in general, and special educators in specific, seem prone to confuse their own good intentions and enthusiasms with program outcomes. In the case first of segregated programs and now of mainstreamed programs, there are few firm data on which to determine program effects. In our generalized enthusiasm for one kind of program or another, we seemingly have overlooked the most important ingredient—the pupils who require educational accommodations. It seems likely that no single program is "best" for all pupils. We must, therefore, focus our efforts on identification of the pupil and program characteristics of relevance. We must be willing to put our philosophies and our motives to the test. We must be pupil advocates, not program advocates.

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CLASSROOM FORUM

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Several children are being mainstreamed into my regular third grade class for certain periods of the day. A child with cerebral palsy will soon join the class. I am concerned about meeting the needs of these "special" children as well as of the children in my regular class. Can you offer some suggestions as to things I need to be aware of in mainstreaming children?

Your concerns for meeting the needs of all the children in a class are quite valid. Much has appeared in print about improved learning as a result of mainstreaming, but little help has been offered to the teacher to give ideas in the implementation of such transitions. Not only are physical logistics of the transition involved, but also the emotional changes that merit attention by the teacher. The child being mainstreamed has to deal with some of his own limitations as well as capitalize on his areas of strength. Therefore, the transitioning of a special child into a more normal placement places many demands for attention to the needs of all involved, both of children and teacher.

Because of the extensive responsibilities placed on the teacher to meet the needs of all children, the teacher's attitude can be one of the most crucial factors in developing a supportive emotional atmosphere in which a child can develop. It is important for a teacher to arrange her priorities so that active concern for the emotional needs of the child is as important as sequenced, academic tasks. Acceptance of any deviancy requires as much of our efforts as does, for example, the mastery of multiplication facts by the student. It means, in essence, establishing a supportive community in the classroom.

In establishing such a supportive environment, the following are ideas that perhaps merit some emphasis:

1. *Acknowledgment that everyone has problems.* It is often helpful for the child to know that he is not unique in having problems. Each of us has problems, though the problems vary in nature and in extent. "There are some things that I can do well, but there are other things that give me problems."
2. *Verbalization of concern for others in the classroom.* Though many times we as teachers feel our concern for the students is obvious, it is often helpful to reinforce this with verbalization of concern. "John is absent today, and I am sorry." "If you all think you need a longer bathroom break, we can try to work it out."
3. *Attention to the importance of nonverbal behavior.* Physically touching each child in ways that say "You are important to me" is as necessary as hiding one's dismay when a child having a difficult time shatters a well-planned time schedule. Yet, with other children who have difficulty being touched, there are other appropriate methods of communicating one's concern—a smile, a wink, etc.
4. *Appreciation of individual attributes.* Public recognition of both the personality traits and the physical appearance can aid the child in acquiring a more positive self-concept. Helping the child to make the best of his limitations by capitalizing on strengths is most important.
5. *Nonjudgmental approach to conflicts.* In asking a child "what happened" rather than "why," we are giving the child a chance to give his perception of the conflict. Also, it is often helpful to let the child discuss "what are we/you going to do about it." Such a discussion can help the child learn to share in acceptance of responsibility for his actions, thereby helping to improve self-concept.
6. *Utilization of action oriented problem solving.* Such programming encourages children to appreciate the variety of individual contributions, encourages the strengths of those with more performance-based skills, and encourages the sense of community.

The successful integration of the physically handicapped child can bring unique problems to the classroom which forethought might be able to alleviate. Some

suggestions for the teacher to keep in mind during such an integration are as follows:

1. Find out as much as you can about the physical and/or emotional problems that the child experiences. If the child, for example, is diabetic or seizure-prone, it is important that the teacher clarify with the parent what procedures to follow in an emergency, danger signals, etc. Be certain to write such information down so that it is readily available should an emergency arise.
2. Visit the child before he enters your class. This should help to ease the child's feelings about going to a different situation and encourages a relationship to begin.
3. Prepare your class to welcome a new member whether or not he needs special help. It is sometimes beneficial to encourage the children to verbalize their own feelings when being a stranger in a new place. Role playing can be an important technique in this situation. If the child has a visible physical handicap, this can be discussed openly and honestly. The child's uniqueness could be discussed prior to the child's joining the group, as could the many ways in which he is like the rest of the class, i.e., he laughs, he worries, he likes TV, etc.
4. Be prepared to answer such questions as "What happened to John?" Keep it simple, for example, "He was in an accident" or "He was born that way." Remember that young children often wonder "Will I ever be like that?" This often will not be expressed, but the teacher might need to be aware of this possibility.

The teacher needs to consider her role in helping the atypical child. She must not feel guilty about the limitations automatically placed on the time she can give each child. Hopefully, there will be additional resource teachers to give attention to the various needs of the special child.

Mainstreaming may or may not turn out to be the method of choice for teaching the atypical child, but its potential for increasing human concern and helpfulness is unlimited.

We wish to thank Mary Elizabeth Christiansen for writing this column.