

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL children

Beyond the Regular Education Initiative and the Resource Room Controversy

Glenn A. Vergason and M.L. Anderegg

Having written a number of articles during the last two years refuting the claims of proponents of the regular education initiative (REI) (Anderegg & Vergason, 1988, 1989a, 1989c, 1990; Vergason & Anderegg, 1989a, 1989b, 1990a, 1990b), and having talked with educators from across the United States and Canada, we have come to these conclusions:

1. Most special educators are in favor of improving relations with regular education.
2. Most special educators also favor working cooperatively with regular education.
3. Most special educators likewise want to improve the delivery system through implementation of the least restrictive alternative (Turnbull, 1990).

Rather than continuing the debate about REI, which will accomplish little, much can be accomplished by shifting our emphasis, in this article, to practices that have stood the test of time, research, and application.

Slavin (1989) has indicated that educators, in general, have been only too willing to implement new educational techniques without waiting for hard educational research to demonstrate their replicated effectiveness. Slavin reviewed several examples of educational practices that have been widely implemented, only to learn later that the practices were not effective.

In special education, examples such as the work of Ault, Wolery, Doyle, and Gast (1989) indicate that, in the area of moderate and severe handicaps, many strategies that are being implemented have actually not been studied in depth. These researchers looked at 31 investigations. Of the 78 possible comparisons on 13 identified strategies, Ault, et al. found that only 19 of the possible comparisons had been studied and 8 of the 19 had

See p. 8 for article on *The Regular Education Initiative Without Waivers*.

Dr. Vergason is Professor of Special Education and Coordinator, Special Education Administration Program, Georgia State University, and Dr. Anderegg is Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, Kennesaw State College (Georgia).

In contrast, we have found that many strategies and techniques have been thoroughly examined and found to be effective in a wide range of applications with mildly disabled students. These strategies have yet to be implemented widely by frontline special educators—and should be.

After having read the literature thoroughly, including studies that REI proponents have claimed to demonstrate the ineffectiveness of resource rooms (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986; Rich & Ross, 1989), we found, upon careful examination of the data, that these studies actually reflect favorably on resource rooms (Vergason & Anderegg, 1990b, 1991). This technology and other practices, we believe suggest that special education is not beyond salvage and in fact has much to contribute. Much of our opinion is based on practices that have been so effective in replication that we are recommending them as methods for improving the outcomes of students in regular education and special education. Implementation of these practices will not depend on

the type of service delivery system and can make special and regular education more effective.

PROGRAMS RECOMMENDED FOR USE

After developing a list of a number of teaching practices that we planned to recommend to special educators, we discovered a similar list by Meyen (1990). He did not have time or space to explain his list, but the similarity of his list to ours was striking. He likewise was recommending his list as practices that should be employed on a large scale.

The programs and techniques we recommend to special educators include: peer tutoring, direct instruction, cooperative learning, self-instructional training, curriculum-based measurement (CBM), instructional alignment, and learning strategies. This is not an all-inclusive list, but if only these practices were put to widespread use, we would be delighted.

Special educators work with children who usually do not profit from seatwork as much as other students may (Zigmond, 1990). These children lack the ability to maintain vigilance during independent work. The advantages Bloom (1984a, 1984b) showed with tutorial instruction are lost with the special education child while the teacher is tutoring others in the class. Thus, mainstreamed students may not be engaged during much of the instructional time. Perhaps the deficits in the engaged time of mainstreamed students explains, in part, the high dropout rate of students with mild disabilities (Butler-Nalin & Padillo, 1989) and the large number of regular education courses in which students with mild disabilities are making failing grades (Wagner, 1989). We believe one way to begin to address these problems is through peer tutoring and the other techniques we recommend to decrease the amount of disengaged time and improve achievement of learners with disabilities.

Peer Tutoring

Special education literature contains numerous studies on the effectiveness of peer tutoring (see Jenkins & Jenkins, 1985; Lloyd, Crowley, Kohler, & Strain, 1988). Locating negative findings from the literature on peer tutoring is difficult because this practice helps those who tutor as much as those who are being tutored. Peer tutoring, however, does require preliminary training and continued retraining to be the most effective (Cohen, Kulik, & Kulik, 1982; Maheady, Sacca, & Harper, 1988).

Some students with behavior disorders have actually expressed more positive behaviors after tutoring nondisabled students in lower grades. And cross-category instruc-

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN

ISSN 0015-511X

FOCUS ON EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN (USPS 203-360) is published monthly except June, July, and August as a service to teachers, special educators, curriculum specialists, administrators, and those concerned with the special education of exceptional children. This publication is annotated and indexed by the ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children for publication in the monthly *Current Index to Journals in Education* (CIJE) and the quarterly index, *Exceptional Children Education Resources* (ECER). It is also available in microfilm from Xerox University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, MI. Subscription rates: Individual, \$27 per year; institutions, \$36 per year. Copyright © 1991, Love Publishing Company. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission is prohibited. Printed in the United States of America. Second class postage is paid at Denver, Colorado. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to:

Love Publishing Company
Executive and Editorial Office
1777 South Bellaire Street
Denver, Colorado 80222
Telephone (303) 757-2579

Edward L. Meyen
University of Kansas

Glenn A. Vergason
Georgia State University

Richard J. Whelan
University of Kansas Medical Center

Stanley F. Love
Publisher

Carolyn Acheson
Senior Editor

tion enhances peer tutoring because the student in the lower grade is not maintained in an inferior role of always receiving help. The lack of equal status and its effects are discussed in an article by Cole, Vandercook, and Rynders (1988). Special educators should not place students with disabilities in a role that may be damaging to self-esteem. Therefore, knowledge of the effects of status may aid teachers in taking counteracting steps. Cross-category tutoring offers the potential to improve the self-esteem of learners with disabilities and assist other students in the program as well.

Cross-age tutoring has been shown to be highly effective with students who have learning disabilities and those who have mental retardation. Relevant studies have shown greater success for one-to-one peer tutoring than for teacher-led, small-group instruction (Jenkins, Mayhall, Peschka, & Jenkins, 1974). Both tutoring and peer tutoring are highly effective instructional approaches, and we will see, under instructional alignment, just how powerful these can be. An additional advantage of peer tutoring is the high cost-effectiveness of such programs (Levin, Glass, & Meister, 1984). To us, trying to implement a program for students with mild disabilities without peer tutoring is like trying to row a boat without oars!

Direct Instruction

Another highly effective instructional practice, direct instruction, was first introduced to the literature by Rosenshine (1976) in relation to effective instruction. Its suggested use here is more related to the work of Engelmann and his colleagues (Becker, Engelmann, Carnine, & Rhine, 1981; Engelmann & Carnine, 1982). Direct instruction implies attention to curriculum as well as to the techniques of teaching. The latter, however, has been the more emphasized element of the approach. Direct instruction and its advocates have come mainly from Ohio State University (Stephens, 1977; Stephens, Hartman, & Lucas (1983) and the University of Oregon (Gersten & Carnine, 1986).

The components of direct instruction include explicit step-by-step teaching strategy, student mastery of each step, strategy correction for student errors, gradual fading from teacher direction, adequate systematic practice, cumulative review, and a teaching format that anticipates potential errors (Gersten & Carnine, 1986). The benefits of this approach are well documented.

Becker and Carnine (1981) showed that students involved in direct instruction make more overall academic gains; and slow/immature learners are helped by direct instruction (Doyle, 1983). Improvements also were demonstrated in tar-

geted comprehension skills (Singer & Dolan, 1982), and direct instruction was far more effective than traditional approaches in teaching math word problems (Darch, Carnine, & Gersten, 1984). Direct instruction further was found to be highly effective in teaching the use of savings accounts to students with mild retardation (Bourbeau, 1984) and street crossing to students with moderate to severe mental retardation (Horner, Jones, & Williams, 1985).

To fully appreciate this system, teachers are urged to read an article by Gersten, Woodward, and Darch (1986). They present the usual reading exercise from a Houghton-Mifflin textbook, emphasizing how the coverage of oceanographer, tides, and currents are not appropriately presented for individuals with learning and behavioral deficiencies. They then carry through, showing how these and other types of lessons are taught by direct instruction. They present the critical features as:

1. Teach an implicit step-by-step strategy.
2. Develop [the strategy] at each step.
3. Develop strategy (or process) corrections for student errors.
4. Gradually fade from teacher directed activities toward independent work.
5. Use adequate, systematic practices with a range of examples.
6. Use cumulative review. (p. 19)

Some researchers favor direct instruction because the methods are closer to those of regular education (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987). That contention, however, appears to be a prior comparison. Regular education instruction is centered more on the masses and fails to address the systematic nature of direct instruction, its emphases being on success in learning and adjustment of the curriculum and learning tasks. Some studies report that regular teachers say they are employing direct instruction as the most frequent method of instruction (Ysseldyke, Thurlow, Wotruba, & Nania, 1990). In the same study, which obtained results from 197 fulltime regular education teachers who had students with disabilities in their classes, 58% of the elementary school teachers and 51% of the high school teachers "reported no differences in their classroom instructional arrangements due to the presence of students with handicaps" (p. 5).

In our way of thinking, these teachers certainly were not using direct instruction as described in the literature and showed little cognizance of the necessity to modify curriculum and instruction. The proper employment of direct instruction with all its precision would seem to bring superior results in resource and regular classrooms.

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning offers another encouraging technique for resource teachers, consultant teachers, and regular class teachers with learning handicapped students. A couple of recent studies (Putnam, Rynders, Johnson, & Johnson, 1989; Tateyama-Sniezek, 1990) offer a word of caution, but we believe the general technique has great merit.

Basically, a teacher who uses cooperative learning will employ group assignments to accomplish instructional goals. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to fully explain this technique, a teacher decides which cooperative approach to employ, how goals will be assigned, if at all, how much direction to give the group, and whether to structure it so everyone in the group will have some necessary part of the solution.

It is true that a wide diversity in student abilities may actually work against completion of the task, but cooperative learning does offer an opportunity for students of differing ability levels to contribute to accomplishing a task and to learn to work with people of a variety of abilities and disabilities (Johnson & Johnson, 1986; Johnson, Johnson, Warring, & Maruzama, 1986). To accomplish this, the teacher must structure the task for the groups and develop in each grouping a role for every individual.

For example, the multiple levels of Bloom's (1984a) task taxonomy can be incorporated toward completing the final product, with each learner contributing tasks at his or her personal optimal level. Thus, some students would be involved in activities in the knowledge and application tasks while some others could be dealing with the higher order processes of synthesis and evaluation.

It does little good to mainstream a student only to have the group exclude the individual beyond observation of the activity. Students with disabilities always have had ample opportunity to observe without participation. A mainstream placement, on the other hand, is intended to include participation. Some professionals (Orellove & Sobsey, 1987) believe that partial participation is acceptable but such limited involvement does little for learners with disabilities. Thus, we should seek maximum use of techniques with a high potential for participation.

Self-Instructional Training

Self-instructional training has variations such as cognitive behavior modification (Swanson & Kozleski, 1985) and self-control curriculum (Edwards & O'Toole, 1985), but the emphasis of such training is still on teaching cognitive control

of a specific behavior related to learning, such as attention (Lewis & Blampied, 1985) or memory (Deshler, Schumaker, & Lenz, 1984; Pressley, Scruggs, & Mastropieri, 1989). This may involve the disabled student's own knowledge of thinking or memory strategies or even self-monitoring of academic processes (Sheinker, Sheinker, & Stevens, 1984).

When one of our doctoral students at Georgia State University proposed self-instructional training using labels printed on the pages of books, with statements such as "eyes on work," "pay attention," and similar phrases, his committee was not impressed. The results of the study, however, provided strong support for the effectiveness of this approach (Davis, 1984; Davis & Hajicek, 1985; Davis, Uhler, & Kelly, 1986). Self-instruction and other cognitive training offer much to the teacher in terms of improvement in learning as well as social behaviors.

Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM)

Curriculum-based measurement (CBM) amounts to taking daily samples of student performance and using these as measures of the effectiveness of instruction. One form of implementation simply involves recording the number of errors made in one minute of reading with the number of errors plotted daily or weekly. Zigmond (1990) has shown that this technique can demonstrate to a teacher if the instruction is appropriate. If the instructional curve goes up, the teacher continues the present instruction. A downward curve, on the other hand, suggests abandoning that instructional technique and selecting a new approach based on the deficits revealed in the downward curve.

Because proponents of the REI and some reform movements advocate a noncategorical approach and request waivers from traditional assessment measures (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987), it becomes increasingly important that teachers have ways of demonstrating achievement before and after instruction. With CBM, students are not likely to get lost or to stagnate either in regular education or in special education. This technique's effectiveness and diversity over content areas have been well documented (Deno & Fuchs, 1987; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1986; Marston, 1988). CBM offers a means for improving the quality of both regular and special education and will decrease referrals to special education.

Instructional Alignment

The concept of instructional alignment comes out of the writing of Cohen (1987) and is based on the work of Bloom

(1984a, 1984b) and Carroll (1963). Bloom's work centers on instructional effectiveness and is intended to quantify the effectiveness of instruction. Much of his work involves looking for group methods that are as effective as one-to-one tutoring, and he has developed techniques for accomplishing what is termed *mastery learning*. In this context, mastery learning involves systematic instruction combined with feedback and correction to improve learning. Mastery learning differs little from task analysis and reinforcement as used in special education.

Bloom has used the regular classroom as the instructional setting. Through mastery learning he has demonstrated that a class of 30 students with mastery learning can achieve 1 mean standard deviation above traditional regular class instruction or Sigma 1. Bloom (1984b) also has demonstrated that tutorial instruction (teacher-student ratios of 1:1, 1:2, and 1:3) with feedback can produce mean performance levels of 2 standard deviations or 2 Sigma above traditional methods. Researchers, including Bloom sought ways to go beyond 2 Sigma, but without success until the work of Cohen (1987).

Cohen employed the construct of instructional alignment. He applied Bloom's technology but also inserted a preliminary step of determining and teaching prerequisite skills. Special educators may be familiar with this technique as part of task analysis. Another term that could be employed would be *readiness skills* or precursors of the instruction. Using this approach, Cohen has gone beyond Sigma 2.

The implications of these results for special education are clear. One-to-one or small-group instruction with corrective feedback are highly effective if properly done. Further, incorporating the precursor or readiness skills for the tasks to be taught can raise our success rate even higher. The low pupil-teacher ratio can be effective, but it also can be one of the greatest detriments to effective instruction in special education.

Resource teachers typically teach one or two students in a tutorial fashion while other students work individually and often are off-task. In such a case, unless the teacher uses grouping, student achievement is impeded. If the teacher emphasizes individual seatwork with his or her monitoring and offering assistance, some students will receive only 5 minutes of instruction per hour. Zigmund (1990) has shown that simple grouping can raise engaged time from 9% to 42% of the time.

Special educators and regular educators can scarcely afford to have students idle or *not* receiving intensive instruction. Thus, grouping plus Bloom's mastery learning

and the techniques of instructional alignment seem highly desirable.

Learning Strategies

Learning strategies have been demonstrated to be effective methods for teaching coping skills to students who have learning disabilities and mental retardation, especially high school students (Sheinker, Sheinker, & Stevens, 1984; Deshler & Schumaker, 1984; Larson & Gerber, 1987; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1986, 1988). As more students have been mainstreamed, it has become necessary for teachers to apply techniques that teach students self-monitoring behaviors such as notetaking, memory strategies, paraphrasing, and extraction of main ideas. These monitoring skills differ somewhat from the cognitive management skills discussed earlier but differ little from what has been labeled as coping skills for survival in regular classrooms. Thus, cognitive skills, as well as social skills, can be taught under the guise of learning strategies.

To these strategies Zigmund (1990) has added teacher-pleasing behaviors, which include getting to school, being on time, having books and other appropriate materials on hand, and recording homework assignments. These teacher-pleasing behaviors might better be referred to as prerequisites to successful high school programming.

In two recent nationwide studies the lack of school success appeared in the same cluster of prominent at-risk factors as absenteeism (Butler-Nalin & Padilla, 1989; Frymier, 1989; Lombardi, 1990). The techniques we have discussed here, though not difficult to teach or to learn, when matched to the student's specific needs and cognitive level, can reduce the student's at-risk status and make the difference in maintaining these students in school.

SUMMARY

Suggestions have been offered for techniques that can assist special educators and regular educators in maintaining students with disabilities in mainstream settings, assuring that these students receive an education appropriate to their functioning successfully and independently in academic situations. Many of these techniques can be applied equally well in regular education, and special educators should not lose sight of this fact.

This article recommends the use of peer tutoring, direct instruction, cooperative learning, self-instructional training, curriculum-based measurement, instructional alignment including Bloom's mastery learning, and learning strategies.

Although their originators may consider each of these approaches as separate, they have common denominators: an emphasis on engagement of the learner, the presence of task analysis or precursors to learning, the application of theory to instruction, systematic application of precision to the process, and the belief that all student learning can be fostered by application of these methods.

Before we toll the bell for special education, we should implement the most substantial technology our research affords us. This idea is not original with us. Such use of our technology was visualized and recommended by Deno in 1970 while PL 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, was still only a dream. We wholeheartedly recommend implementing what we know works while we continue to seek better solutions.

REFERENCES

- Anderegg, M.L., & Vergason, G.A. (1988). An analysis of one of the cornerstones of the regular education initiative. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 20, 1-7.
- Anderegg, M.L., & Vergason, G.A. (March, 1989a). No more teachers: Bah, humbug: An answer to Stainback and Stainback. *TASH Newsletter*, 15(11), 7, 10.
- Anderegg, M.L., & Vergason, G.A. (1989b, March). The regular education initiative: What CEC members ought to know. *Confederation*, 2-3.
- Anderegg, M.L., & Vergason, G.A. (1989c). The rest of the story: An answer to "The regular education initiative, A force for change in general and special education." *Education & Training of the Mentally Retarded*, 24, 100-101.
- Anderegg, M.L., & Vergason, G.A. (1990). *Four data based objections to the regular education initiative*. Submitted for publication.
- Ault, M.J., Wolery, M., Doyle, P.M., & Gast, D.L. (1989). Review of comparative studies in the instruction of students with moderate and severe handicaps. *Exceptional Children*, 55(4), 346-356.
- Becker, W., & Carnine, D. (1981). Direct instruction: A behavior theory model for comprehensive educational intervention with the disadvantaged. In J. Bijou & R. Ruiz (Eds.), *Behavior modification*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bloom, B.S. (1984a). The search for methods of group instruction as effective as one-to-one tutoring. *Educational Leadership*, 41, 4-17.
- Bloom, B.S. (1984b, June/July). The 2 Sigma problem: The search for methods of group instruction as effective as one-to-one tutoring. *Educational Researcher*, 13, 4-15.
- Bourbeau, P. (1984). *An experimental analysis of the generalization of teaching skills from the classroom to trained and untrained bank settings in the community*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Oregon, Eugene.
- Butler-Nalin, P., & Padillo, C. (1989, March). Dropouts: The relationship of student characteristics, behaviors, and performance for special education students. Paper presented at Council for Exceptional Children International Convention, San Francisco.
- Carroll, J.B. (1963). A model of school learning. *Teachers College Record*, 64, 723-733.
- Cohen, P.A., Kulik, J.A., & Kulik, C.C. (1982). Educational outcomes of tutoring. *American Educational Research Journal*, 19, 237-248.
- Cohen, S.A. (1987). Instructional alignment: Searching for a magic bullet. *Educational Researcher*, 16(6), 16-20.
- Cole, D.A., Vandercook, T., & Rynders, J. (1988). Comparison of two peer interaction programs: Children with and without severe disabilities. *American Educational Research Journal*, 25(3), 415-439.
- Darch, C., Carnine, D., & Gersten, R. (1984). Explicit instruction in mathematical problem solving. *Journal of Educational Research*, 4, 155-165.
- Davis, R.W. (1984). Cognitive behavior modification and performance of exceptional learners in mathematics. *Tennessee Educational Leadership*, 11(2), 76-80.
- Davis, R.W., & Hajicek, J.O. (1985, August). Effects of self-instructional training and strategy training on a mathematics task with severely behaviorally disordered students. *Behavioral Disorders*, 10(3), 275-282.
- Davis, R.W., Uhlir, R., & Kelly, L.J. (1986, Summer). Strategies and self-instruction for behaviorally disordered students: A direct instruction approach. *Directive Teacher*, 8(1), 18-19.
- Deno, E. (1970, November). Special education as developmental capital. *Exceptional Children*, 36, 229-237.
- Deno, S.L., & Fuchs, L.S. (1987). Developing curriculum-based measurement systems for data-based special education problem solving. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 19(8), 1-16.
- Deshler, D.D., & Schumaker, J.B. (1984). An instructional model for teaching students how to learn. In J.L. Graden, J.E. Zins, & M.J. Curtis (Eds.), *Alternative educational delivery systems: Enhancing instructional options for all students* (pp. 391-411). Washington, DC: NASSP.
- Deshler, D.D., Schumaker, J.B., & Lenz, B.K. (1984). Academic and cognitive interventions for LD adolescents (Part 1). *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 17, 108-117.
- Doyle, W. (1983). Academic work. *Review of Educational Research*, 53(2), 159-199.
- Edwards, L.L., & O'Toole, B. (1985). Application of the self-control curriculum with behavior disordered students. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 17(8), 1-8.
- Engelmann, S., & Carnine, D. (1982). *Theory of instruction*. New York: Irvington.
- Frymier, J. (1989). *A study of students at risk: Collaborating to do research*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappan Educational Foundation.
- Fuchs, L.S., & Fuchs, D. (1986). Effects of systematic evaluation: A meta-analysis. *Exceptional Children*, 53, 199-208.
- Gersten, R., & Carnine, D. (1986). Direct instruction in reading comprehension. *Educational Leadership*, 43(7), 70-78.
- Gersten, R., Woodward, J., & Darch, C. (1986). Direct instruction: A research-based approach to curriculum design and teaching. *Exceptional Children*, 53, 17-31.
- Haynes, M.C., & Jenkins, J.R. (1986). Reading instruction in special education resource rooms. *American Educational Research Journal*, 23(2), 161-190.
- Homer, R., Jones, D., & Williams, J. (1985). Teaching generalized street crossing to individuals with moderate and severe mental retardation. *Journal of Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 10(2), 71-78.
- Jenkins, J., & Jenkins, L. (1985). Peer tutoring in elementary and secondary programs. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 17(6), 1-12.
- Jenkins, J.R., Mayhall, W.F., Peschka, C., & Jenkins, L.M. (1974). Comparing small group and tutorial instruction in resource room. *Exceptional Children*, 40, 245-250.
- Johnson, D.W., & Johnson, R.T. (1986). Mainstreaming and cooperative learning strategies. *Exceptional Children*, 52, 553-561.
- Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R.T., Warring, D., & Maruzama, G. (1986). Different cooperative learning procedures and cross-handicap relationships. *Exceptional Children*, 53(3), 247-252.
- Larson, K.A., & Gerber, M.M. (1987). Effects of social metacognitive training for enhancing overt behavior in learning disabled and low achieving delinquent. *Exceptional Children*, 54(3), 201-212.

- Levin, H., Glass, G., & Meister, G.S. (1984). *Cost-effectiveness of four educational interventions*. Stanford, CA: Institute for Research on Education Finance & Governance.
- Lewis, R.O., & Blampied, N.M. (1985). Self-management in a special class. *Techniques: A Journal for Remedial Education & Counseling*, 1, 346-354.
- Lloyd, J., Crowley, E.P., Kohler, F.W., & Strain, P.S. (1988). Redefining the applied research agenda? Cooperative learnings, prereferral, teacher consultant, and peer-mediated interventions. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 21, 43-52.
- Lombardi, T.P. (1990, April). *The relationship between special education and students at risk: Report from the Phi Delta Kappan National Study*. Paper presented at Council for Exceptional Children International Convention, Toronto.
- Maheady, L., Sacca, M.K., & Harper, G.F. (1988). Classwide peer tutoring with mildly handicapped high school students. *Exceptional Children*, 55(1), 52-59.
- Marston, D. (1988). The effectiveness of special education: A time series analysis of reading performance in regular and special education settings. *Journal of Special Education*, 21(4), 13-26.
- Meyen, E. (1990). Quality instruction for students with disabilities. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 22(2), 12-13.
- Orellove, F.P., & Sobsey, D. (1987). *Educating children with multiple disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes.
- Pressley, M., Scruggs, T.E., & Mastropieri, M.A. (1989). Memory strategy research in learning disabilities: Present and future directions. *LD Research*, 4(2), 68-77.
- Putnam, J.W., Rynders, J. E., Johnson, R.T., & Johnson, D.W. (1989). Collaborative skill instruction for promoting positive interactions between mentally handicapped and nonhandicapped children. *Exceptional Children*, 55(6), 550-557.
- Reynolds, M.C., Wang, M.C., & Walberg, H.C. (1987). The necessary restructuring for special and regular education. *Exceptional Children*, 53(5), 391-398.
- Rich, H.L., & Ross, S.M. (1989). Students' time on learning tasks in special education. *Exceptional Children*, 55(6), 508-515.
- Rosenshine, B. (1976). Classroom instruction. In N. Gage (Ed.), *The psychology of teaching methods: The seventy-fifth yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scruggs, T.E., & Mastropieri, M.A. (1986). Improving the test-taking skills of behaviorally disordered and learning disabled children. *Exceptional Children*, 53(1), 63-68.
- Scruggs, T.E., & Mastropieri, M.A. (1988). Teaching test-taking skills to behavior disordered students. *Behavior Disorders*, 13, 240-244.
- Sheinker, A., Sheinker, J.M., & Stevens, L.J. (1984). Cognitive strategies for teaching the mildly handicapped. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 17(1), 1-15.
- Singer, H., & Dolan, D. (1982). Active comprehension: Problem solving scheme with question generalization for comprehension of complex short stories. *Reading Research Quarterly*, 2, 166-186.
- Slavin, R.E. (1989). The PET and the pendulum: Faddism in education and how to stop it. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71, 752-758.
- Stephens, T. (1977). *Teaching skills to children with learning and behavior disorders*. Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill.
- Stephens, T., Hartman, A., & Lucas, U.H. (1983). *Teaching children basic skills: A curriculum handbook*. (2nd ed.). Columbus, OH: Charles Merrill.
- Swanson, H.L., & Kozleski, E.B. (1985). Self-talk and handicapped children's academic needs: Applications of cognitive behavior modification. *Techniques: A Journal for Remedial Education & Counseling*, 1, 367-379.
- Tateyama-Sniezek, K.M. (1990). Cooperative learning: Does it improve the academic achievement of students with handicaps? *Exceptional Children*, 56(5), 426-437.
- Turnbull, H.R., III. (1990). *Free appropriate public education: The law and children with disabilities*. Denver: Love.
- Vergason, G.A., & Anderegg, M.L. (1989a, February). *Data-based objections to the regular education initiative*. Paper presented at Supervision Leadership Meeting for Oakland School District, Pontiac, MI.
- Vergason, G.A., & Anderegg, M.L. (1989b). Save the baby: A reply to Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 71(1), 61-63.
- Vergason, G.A., & Anderegg, M.L. (1991a). Preserving the least restrictive alternative in special education. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Issues in special education*. New York: Allyn & Bacon (in preparation).
- Vergason, G.A., & Anderegg, M.L. (1990b). The regular education initiative and special education reform in California. *The Journal: California CEC*, 39(3), 8-9.
- Vergason, G.A., & Anderegg, M.L. (1991b). Rich & Ross: A mixed message. *Exceptional Children*, 57, 475-476.
- Wagner, M. (1989). *The school programs and school performance of secondary school students classified as learning disabled: Findings from the National Longitudinal Study of Special Education*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI.
- Ysseldyke, J., Thurlow, M., Wotruba, J., & Nania, P. (1990). Instructional arrangements: Perceptions from general education. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, 22(4), 4-8.
- Zigmond, N. (1990). Rethinking secondary school programs for students with learning disabilities. *Focus on Exceptional Children*, 23(1), 1-16.

The Regular Education Initiative Without Waivers

Brenda Smith Myles and Richard J. Whelan

Perceived inefficiencies and ineffectiveness in the present educational system have led researchers and practitioners to advocate a restructuring of the educational system—the so-called regular education initiative (REI). Madeleine Will, former Assistant Secretary for the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services in the Department of Education, has called for reform, stating that it is imperative that both special and regular education programs collaboratively contribute skills and resources to educate children with individual needs. Will (1986) and others (i.e., Pugach & Lilly, 1984; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1987) have proposed that states and local school districts support experimental trials for innovative educational practices.

Even some of those not supportive of educational reform agree that improvement is needed within special education. In fact, the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders (CCBD) (Executive Committee, 1989) proposed that “. . . a prudent course might be to seek more modest changes in the current system . . .” (p. 203). The CCBD further stated, “Continued research and the development of effective programming which allows more handicapped students to be served in regular classrooms for a greater part of their school experience should be encouraged” (p. 205).

Thus, those supportive of educational reform and those not supportive of this alternative seem to share common ground. They both affirm a research agenda that permits students with disabilities to receive an appropriate education in regular classrooms. There has been, however, some confusion as to how these experimental programs could be initiated. Researchers have indicated that in order to accomplish a restructuring of current federal regulations, waivers must be granted to local school districts and states that would guarantee categorical funds during experimentation. These researchers further posited that without these waivers, change in the educational system would be difficult, if not impossible (Reynolds et al., 1987; Stainback & Stainback, 1987; Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1986).

An analysis of Public Law 94-142, as amended [now the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), PL 101-476], and

the Code of Federal Regulations (34 CFR) reveal that waivers may not be necessary for educational change or restructuring as proposed by Will and others. It is recognized that some advocates of restructuring special education desire a complete systems change (e.g., eliminating special education as currently practiced) and that waivers are only one, although significant, component of the proposed changes (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1988). Nevertheless, change proponents perceive that waivers are needed to test out new structures for special education, and unless they are forthcoming, reform will be stymied.

Is this perception about waivers accurate? We believe that it is not. The public law and regulations permit flexibility in the educational system. Modifications of the status quo can be accomplished by working within the guidelines set forth by the federal government.

First, we are not aware of any master list of waivers that should be considered in a plan to restructure special or regular education. Second, we are not suggesting the comingling of categorical special education funds with general education funds. That, in all probability, would not stand an audit unless an exception by appropriate state and federal authorities were granted in advance. We do believe, however, that bookkeeping procedures are not an obstacle to reforms suggested by advocates. Students would still be identified, as described subsequently, assuring a district that excess costs for special education and related services would follow from federal and state reimbursement dollars. A district need not be concerned about losing \$100,000, for example, in reimbursement dollars because students with disabilities are served in regular classrooms; special education teachers will still be needed, in our view, when the REI is attempted at the district level. Instead, we are describing briefly a sample of policy arenas that a district could consider if it is interested in experimenting with REI initiatives. These arenas are windows of opportunity for reform for special and regular educators to enter.

Our focus is on students with disabilities and professional educators, the two central participants in effective teaching and learning activities. As described, waivers are not required to carry out these essential activities in innovative, experimental, and, most important of all for students, non-stigma-producing learning environments. Specifically, issues related to (a) eligibility criteria, (b) special class

placement and (c) change of placement are examined in the context of special education reform and federal regulations.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

According to 34 CFR 300.124, annual program plans must report the number of handicapped students by age and categorical label who are receiving a free appropriate public education. The logical extension many practitioners take is that, to receive funding, these students must be publicly labeled and receive education based upon that label. This, however, is not mandated by regulations. Students and their parents need not be burdened with a label that may provide little relevant information. Indeed, as described in 34 CFR 300.346, labels are not required on individualized education plans (IEP).

For example, IEP requirements include, among several items, a statement of the child's present levels of educational performance. But, according to 34 CFR Part 300, App. C, 36, "The statement should accurately describe the effect of the child's handicap on the child's performance in any area of education. . . ." (p. 82). The CFR includes the following note: "Labels . . . may not be used as a substitute for the description of present levels of educational performance" (p. 82). Thus, labels do not have to be an integral part of the educational process.

The definition of special education (see 34 CFR 300.14), not the categorical label that designates a handicapping condition, is the eligibility criterion for the provision of a free and appropriate public education (FAPE). As defined in the regulation, "special education means specially designed instruction . . . to meet the unique needs of a handicapped child . . ." (p. 16). The key criterion is the need for specially designed instruction and not whether a student's evaluation profile is congruent with one or several of the categorical labels defined in 34 CFR 300.5. In fact, a student can display a perfect match with a label definition, but when the observed condition does not impair educational performance to the extent that "specially designed instruction" is required, a need for special education and related services cannot be established.

Thus, the screening and comprehensive evaluation process could, and probably should, reverse the current practice of searching for a handicapping label to match the categorical definition by concentrating on identifying the eligibility criterion of need for specially designed instruction. If that need can be validated first, associating it with one of several categorical labels is of secondary importance. Special education is, first and foremost, about assisting in the teaching

and learning of students with unique needs, and not the designation of diagnostic labels or syndromes.

As further support that the Congress and the U.S. Department of Education did not intend for categorical labels to be used for other than reporting purposes, one need only turn to the definitions of handicapped children in 34 CFR 300.5. In 10 of the 11 categorical definitions given, a statement is inserted that refers to the importance of curricular and instructional issues in making a decision about eligibility for special education and related services. That statement is "which adversely affects educational performance." For example, "*mentally retarded* means significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the development period which adversely affects a child's educational performance." Thus, a student may have subaverage intelligence and may have problems in adaptive behavior, but the eligibility for special education services must hinge on a decision as to whether the conditions are adversely affecting education performance. The same holds true for the definition of *seriously emotionally disturbed*.

The only categorical definition that does not include the phrase "adversely affects the child's education performance" or the phrase "causes severe or other educational problems" is the definition of "specific learning disability." The reason that the phrase is not included in that definition is because it focuses on problems in curriculum and instruction—"understanding or using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or to do mathematical calculations."

Using a categorical label to identify a student with a disability clearly is an administrative, regulatory requirement that school districts and states must meet to comply with federal law. This is because student counts by disability categories are needed to determine numbers of students served. Numbers served then are factored in to a funding formula to determine the number of dollars, which then are distributed back to states and school districts. Neither the law nor the regulations require that the label be placed on the IEP, nor do they require that the parents and the teachers who serve students be informed of the exact label.

One can envision a school district setting up a system in which a label is determined, placed on a computer, and reported to the state for counting purposes only. The state, in turn, would submit the count by labels to the federal government. To meet unique instructional and curriculum needs for teaching and learning, the label itself need not appear on the student's permanent record or in any other file associated

with his or her education to meet unique instructional and curriculum needs for teaching and learning. Thus, delabeling students without a waiver of regulations could be arranged with little or no difficulty at the district level.

SPECIAL CLASS PLACEMENT

Special education refers to specially designed instruction, including classroom instruction, that meets the unique needs of children with disabilities. Specially designed instruction does not have to be delivered in a specific environment. In fact, federal regulations state that, to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities are to be educated with nonhandicapped students (34 CFR 300.550). Further, special classes or other removal of students with disabilities from the regular education environment should occur only when education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily (34 CFR 300.550).

A continuum of alternative placements must exist for children with disabilities in school districts (34 CFR 300.551). Alternative placements, such as special classes and special schools, as well as supplementary resources, such as resource room or itinerant instruction, must be provided. Regulations do not state, however, that all possible delivery models must exist. Innovative service delivery models also are permitted. Agencies have the latitude to design delivery models appropriate for specific students. Combinations of service delivery models also may be approved.

Researchers who suggest that the optimal educational experience for all students occurs in the regular education environment can design innovative delivery models or use standard delivery models, such as consultation, to provide a specially designed education for students with disabilities. Regulations do not mandate that specific models be utilized.

CHANGE OF PLACEMENT

A waiver is not necessary to introduce students with disabilities into an innovative educational program. Written notice must be given to the parents within a reasonable time before the school proposes to alter the educational placement. Consent may not be required if the placement is not the initial placement. Thus, an innovative program may not require a new IEP. If an innovative program is initiated that does not alter amount of services, a new IEP is not needed. If a change in the amount of services is not altered, but scheduling changes are made, these alterations can be made without an IEP meeting. Changes in the amount of services,

however, require an IEP meeting (34 CFR, Part 300, App. C., 51, p. 85).

Substantial changes in the required components of the IEP require a reconvening of the IEP team. Parents must be notified concerning an IEP meeting, in accordance with regulations, but they need not be in attendance to sign the new IEP as long as the agency has documented efforts to contact parents (34 CFR 300.320). Clearly, though, parents and school personnel should function cooperatively in planning special education and related service programs. When such cooperation exists, and all parties are committed to what is best for students with handicapping conditions, creative teaching and learning programs are not only permissible under the law and its regulations but are actually mandated under the free and appropriate public education (FAPE) requirement.

FINAL COMMENT

Reform in regular and special education is possible without waivers. PL 94-142, as amended, and the Code of Federal Regulations offer flexible guidelines to support experimental trials for innovative educational practices. Moreover, changes in the regular education system, whether radical restructuring or prudent educational change, seem to be possible within the confines of these regulations. The law does not require the establishment of a separate educational program; it requires a free and appropriate public education for all students with disabilities (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987).

REFERENCES

- Code of Federal Regulations—Education, 34, Parts 300–399. (1988). Washington, DC: Office of the Federal Register, National Archives & Records Administration.
- Executive Committee, Council for Children with Behavior Disorders. (1989). Position statement on the regular education initiative. *Behavioral Disorders*, 14(3), 202–207.
- Lipsky, D.K., & Gartner, A. (1987). Capable of achievement and worthy of respect: Education of handicapped students as if they were full-fledged human beings. *Exceptional Children*, 54(1), 69–74.
- Pugach, M., & Lilly, M.S. (1987). Reconceptualizing support services for classroom teachers: Implications for teacher education. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 35(5), 33–55.
- Reynolds, M.C., Wang, M.C., & Walberg, H.J. (1987). The necessary restructuring of special education in regular education. *Exceptional Children*, 53(5), 391–398.
- Stainback, S., & Stainback, V. (1987). Integration versus cooperation: A commentary on "Educating children with learning problems: A shared responsibility." *Exceptional Children*, 54(1), 66–68.
- Wang, M.C., Reynolds, M.C., & Walberg, H.J. (1986). Rethinking special education. *Educational Leadership*, 44, 26–31.
- Wang, M.C., Reynolds, M.C., & Walberg, H.J. (1988). Integrating children of the second system. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 70, 248–251.
- Will, M.C. (1986). Educating children with learning problems: A shared responsibility. *Exceptional Children*, 52, 411–416.

NEW

Behind Special Education

A Critical analysis of Professional Culture and School Organization

Thomas M. Skrtic

University of Kansas

This new work is a critical analysis of the nature of disability, special education, school organization, and reform progress. It compares values to actual outcomes. It asks if what we do is what we really believe is best for the children, families and society. The book develops a conceptual framework to analyze PL 94-142, the regular education initiative, and the excellence movement. The volume proposes a new alternative configuration for school organization. All forward thinking educators will want this new book on their desk. The author makes a new proposal that allows the excellence goals of general education and the equity goals of special education to be addressed at the same time. This innovative text brings new perspectives to the field of special education and regular education for policy and leadership.

9-9007/paper/ISBN 0-89108-217-4

\$24.95

Contents

Part One - PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

1. The Crisis in Modern Knowledge
2. Critical Pragmatism as a Method of Social Inquiry

Part Two - PROFESSIONAL CULTURE

3. The Crisis in Special Education
4. The Crisis in the Professions
5. The Special Education Knowledge Tradition
6. Critical Pragmatism as a Mode of Professional Discourse

Part Three - SCHOOL ORGANIZATION

7. Two Discourses on School Organization
8. Toward an Antifoundational Theory of School Organization
9. Special Education and Disability as Organizational Pathologies
10. Special Education Paradox



LOVE PUBLISHING COMPANY

1777 South Bellaire Street, Denver, Colorado 80222

Professional update

March 20-22, 1991

National Association of School Psychologists
Loews Anatole Hotel
Dallas, Texas

Contact: NASP (301) 608-0500

April 1-5, 1991

Council for Exceptional Children
Annual Convention
Atlanta, Georgia

Contact: CEC (703) 620-3660

May 19-23, 1991

American Association on Mental Retardation
Hyatt Regency Crystal City
Arlington, Virginia

Contact: AAMR, P.O. Box 1202,
Washington, D.C. 20013

May 22-25, 1991

International Association of Special Education
Conference
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Contact: Dr. Barbara Reid or Dr. Todd Stephens
(414) 472-3165

October 9-12, 1991

Council for Learning Disabilities
Marriott City Center
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Contact: CLD, P.O. Box 40303,
Overland Park, Kansas 66204

October 9-12, 1991

Division on Career Development of CEC
Holiday Inn Crowne Plaza Hotel
Kansas City, Missouri

Contact: CEC
1920 Association Drive
Reston, Virginia 22091

November 10-12, 1991

"Children on the Edge"
Topical Conference on At-Risk Children and Youth
New Orleans, Louisiana

Contact: CEC, 1920 Association Drive,
Reston, Virginia 22091

November 8-10, 1991

National Association for Gifted Children
Allis Plaza Hotel
Kansas City, Missouri

Contact: NAGC, 1155 15th Street, N.W.,
Suite 1002, Washington, D.C. 20005