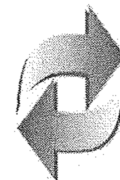
ISSUE 4



Is Full Inclusion Always the Best Option for Children With Disabilities?

YES: Mara Sapon-Shevin, from "Full Inclusion as Disclosing Tablet: Revealing the Flaws in Our Present System," *Theory Into Practice* (Winter 1996)

NO: Naomi Zigmond and Janice M. Baker, from "Full Inclusion for Students With Learning Disabilities: Too Much of a Good Thing?" *Theory Into Practice* (Winter 1996)

ISSUE SUMMARY

YES: Mara Sapon-Shevin, a professor of education at Syracuse University, argues that all students, whatever the nature of their disability, are best served within the "regular" classroom alongside their typically developing peers.

NO: Naomi Zigmond, chair of the department of instruction and learning at the University of Pittsburgh, and Janice M. Baker, an assistant professor of special education and clinical services at Indiana University of Pennsylvania, argue that the accommodations that teachers make are seldom tailored to the needs of the particular students with disabilities enrolled in their classes. They maintain that meaningful remediation requires some form of "pull out" from the regular classroom.

Public Law (P.L.) 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (1975), required that all children with disabilities, whatever the nature or severity of their disability, be provided a free and appropriate education within the least restrictive environment possible. Later laws—P.L. 99-457, the 1986 Education of the Handicapped Act, and P.L. 101-476, the 1990 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—clarified, strengthened, and expanded the 1975 legislation. Before the enactment of these laws, many children with disabilities, especially those with more severe or challenging disabilities, were segregated from their more typically developing peers. Students with disabilities attended special classes in their neighborhood schools, or they attended special schools for the disabled. In either case, they had minimal contact with their typically developing peers. Advocates for people

with disabilities argued that a separate education denies children with disabilities the same opportunities afforded everyone else.

P.L. 94-142 and the subsequent laws brought about some fundamental changes in how children with disabilities are educated in the United States, as well as changes in the roles and responsibilities of teachers and other educational specialists. Rather than being segregated, many children with disabilities are now placed ("mainstreamed") into the regular classroom on at least a part-time basis. Mainstreaming ensures that students with disabilities have contact with their typically developing peers and the regular education curriculum. In recent years, advocates for people with disabilities have successfully argued that simple physical presence in the regular classroom may not lead to full participation in the classroom's intellectual or social life. Advocates, therefore, have argued that schools must move beyond mainstreaming to full inclusion. Full inclusion refers to placement in the regular classroom with appropriate supports and services—such as an interpreter who signs the teacher's talk for a student with impaired hearing—and includes active efforts to ensure participation of the student with disabilities in the life of the class. Moreover, it is argued that these supports and services must be tailored to the unique needs of each individual as set forth in the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). The IEP is prepared annually by a multidisciplinary team composed of, for example, the school psychologist, a special education teacher, the regular classroom teacher, and a speech-language clinician, all of whom assess the student's current level of functioning and set short-and long-term goals for his or her educational progress. Inclusion is intended to ensure that students with disabilities have the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.

Although full inclusion may be the ideal, school districts have been granted considerable latitude by the courts to make educational placement. For example, the courts have allowed less than full inclusion if a student is unlikely to derive sufficient academic or nonacademic benefit from inclusion; if a student's placement in the regular classroom is likely to be disruptive, thereby "denying" his or her classmates the opportunity to gain full benefit from the curriculum; or if the cost of inclusion would be prohibitive for the district. As a result of these constraints, many students experience less than full inclusion—some may have "pull-out" classes, which segregate them from their more typically developing peers for part of the school day; others may be segregated for almost their entire school experience.

The authors of the following selections focus on students with learning disabilities, who arguably have the least severe and least pervasive impairments among the students who qualify for special education services. Nevertheless, this part of the controversy over full inclusion for children with disabilities is no less heated than in the case of students with mental retardation. In the first selection, Mara Sapon-Shevin acknowledges that inclusion will require dramatic changes in curriculum and teaching practices. She argues, however, that these changes are consistent with a child-centered philosophy and, thus, that all students will benefit. In the second selection, Naomi Zigmond and Janice M. Baker argue that meaningful remediation requires some form of "pull out" from the regular classroom.

Mara Sapon-Shevin

YES

Full Inclusion as Disclosing Tablet

If we include a student like Travis, we'll have to change our curriculum....

If we include students like Larissa, we'll have to change our teaching methods too—lecture just doesn't work with those kids....

If we include a student like Justin, the other kids will destroy him.... The kids in my class have no tolerance for kids who are different in any way....

And if we have to plan for a student like Marianna, our teachers will need time to meet and plan together....

The above statements are representative of the hue and cry that has been raised by the prospect of full inclusion in many school districts. Full inclusion, the movement to include students with disabilities as full-time members of general education classrooms, has come under sharp criticism of late, and has been blamed for a host of problems—overworked teachers, falling academic standards, lack of discipline, and poor teacher morale (Willis, 1994). Although some of these criticisms are consistent with the often inadequate and half-hearted ways in which inclusion has been implemented, negative responses to planning and implementing full inclusion tell us as much (or more) about the quality and responsiveness of the schools as it does about the challenges presented by the students themselves.

When children are being taught proper dental hygiene, the dentist sometimes gives them a little red pill to chew after they have brushed. The red dye sticks to any areas that have been inadequately brushed, thus making it obvious where problems remain. These pills are called "disclosing tablets" because they disclose the areas that require further attention.

It is possible to look at full inclusion as a disclosing tablet. Attempting to integrate students with significant educational and behavioral challenges tells us a lot about the ways in which our schools are unimaginative, underresourced, unresponsive, and simply inadequate. Full inclusion did not create these problems, but it shows us where the problems are. Children who stretch the limits of the system make it painfully clear how constricting and narrow those limits are. Full inclusion reveals the manner in which our educational system must grow and improve in order to meet the needs of all children.

Consider again the original set of complaints cited at the beginning.... What do these statements tell us about our schools?

From Mara Sapon-Shevin, "Full Inclusion as Disclosing Tablet: Revealing the Flaws in Our Present System," *Theory Into Practice*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Winter 1996). Copyright © 1996 by The College of Education, The Ohio State University. Reprinted by permission.

We'll have to change the curriculum....

Yes, we will need to change the curriculum if we want to include students with disabilities. But don't we believe that the curriculum already needs changing, is changing, and will be improved for all children by being reconceptualized more broadly and divergently?

We'll have to change the way we teach....

Yes, we will need to look at teaching structures and practices. Teachers whose teaching repertoires are limited to frontal, lecture style instruction will need to explore more interactive, engaging ways of teaching. Isn't that what the research tells us needs to happen anyway?

We'll have to pay close attention to the social dynamics....

Yes, including a child with a significant difference will mean that we need to pay closer attention to the social climate of the school. But, clearly, if children who are "different" in any way are routinely mocked, scorned, or excluded, this is not a productive learning environment. Why do we assume that a classroom in which a child with Down's syndrome would be teased is a comfortable classroom for children who are African-American, overweight, from single parent families, or non-English speaking? Wouldn't improvements in classroom climate have a salutary effect on all students?

We'll have to support teachers in their efforts at change....

It is true that including a student with a disability will require that teachers have time for collaborative planning and preparation. The kinds of creative, multi-level instruction and assessment necessitated by full inclusion make it imperative that teachers be given adequate time to think and plan together. But doesn't all good teaching require planning and preparation? And don't all teachers rise to higher expectations when they are treated as professionals who need thinking and planning time?

There is bad news and good news about full inclusion—and it is the same news. The "news" is that to do inclusion well will require changes in curriculum, pedagogy, staff development, school climate, and structures. This can be characterized as "bad news" because it means that mere tinkering on the edges of existing structures will not work; simply dumping children with disabilities into classrooms without adequate preparation, commitment, and support will certainly not work. But this same news—the need for wide-ranging change—is good news because there is considerable evidence that the kinds of changes necessitated by inclusion are consistent with and often can be a catalyst for broader, far-reaching school restructuring and reform efforts (Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Villa, Thousand, Stainback, & Stainback, 1992).

Like all reform efforts, the range of policies and practices implemented in the name of full inclusion has varied tremendously in quality and depth. Some school systems have simply eliminated costly special education services and teachers in the name of inclusion, dumping those students into inadequately prepared and supported classrooms. But in other schools, full inclusion has served as a spark, an organizing principle for wide-ranging change. In these schools, the inclusion of students with disabilities has been part of school reform and school restructuring that reaches far beyond the handful of labeled students identified as the purview of "special education" (Villa et al., 1992). Like all reform movements that are clouded by misinformation, debated by experts, and shrouded by emotion, it can be difficult to discern what full inclusion really means.

This [selection] explores the vision and possibilities of full inclusion by addressing and responding to myths about full inclusion that block thoughtful and comprehensive implementation. Responding to these myths can help us to better understand the promise and the practice of full inclusion.

Myth: Inclusion is being imposed on schools by outside ideologues and unrealistic parents who do not accept their child's disability.

Inclusion did not spring, fully-formed, from any particular group. The evolution of the movement can be traced through changes in language and terminology. Twenty years ago, our efforts were directed toward "mainstreaming"—putting selected students with disabilities into general classrooms when a good "match" could be made. When those efforts proved inadequate to the task of changing classrooms so that students would fit in, we focused our efforts on "integration"—trying to mesh the systems of general and special education. Those efforts taught us about the need for unified services and collaboration and the importance of good communication and problem solving.

We have now articulated our task as inclusion—changing existing classrooms and structures so that all students can be served well within a unified system. Rather than merging two systems, we are trying to create a new, improved, more inclusive system for all students.

While parents have certainly played an important role in the inclusion movement, they have not acted alone. Teachers and administrators have shown great leadership in designing creative solutions to the problems inherent within pullout programs and remedial education. In the best case scenarios, parents and teachers have worked together to create programs that are effective and realistic. Inclusion is a product of many people's rethinking of the nature and quality of special education, as well as a by-product of new ways of thinking about teaching and curriculum.

Myth: Inclusionists only care about students with significant disabilities.

This is a complaint often raised by those whose primary concern is for students with mild disabilities, particularly learning disabilities. They fear that the educational needs of their students will get lost in the shuffle of full inclusion, while students with extensive challenges (of which there are fewer) will become the organizing focus of inclusion. These are valid concerns, and no inclusion advocate I know is callous to the very real learning needs of students with mild disabilities who are often abandoned without support in general education classrooms under the name of inclusion.

But, by definition, inclusion involves changing the nature and quality of the general education classroom. And there is no reason that the instructional strategies and modifications provided for students with learning disabilities in segregated settings cannot be provided in more typical classrooms if we are willing to reconceptualize those classrooms. Justine Maloney (1994/1995) of

the Learning Disabilities Association of America argues against full inclusion and for a continuum of services; yet, she herself acknowledges that

> Students with learning disabilities would have a better chance of success in the general education setting if more of the strategies developed by special education, such as collaborative learning, cooperative teaching, peer tutoring and some of the innovative scheduling and planning developed in education reform models, became commonplace, rather than showpieces. (p. 25)

Myth: Inclusionists are driven only by values and philosophy—there is no research and no data.

The research in the field of inclusion is relatively recent, because it is difficult to collect data on programs and options until they exist. Advocates of full inclusion provide data indicating that students with disabilities educated in general education classrooms do better academically and socially than comparable students in noninclusive settings (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994/1995). Those who do not support inclusion cite studies indicating that special education programs are superior to general education classrooms for some types of children (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994/1995).

The controversy about the research and what it tells us is indicative of more fundamental disagreements about (a) what counts as research and (b) what research is of value and what it is of value for. Should inclusion programs have to prove they are better than segregated programs, or should the burden of proof be on those who would maintain students in more restrictive environments? What data are collected? Are reading scores the best indications of student success? Is growth in social and communicative skills considered of primary or secondary importance? And what about benefits to "typical" students? How should these be measured and valued? The lack of agreement on the quality and value of the research data gathered to this point is indicative of more basic conflicts about the value and purposes of inclusion.

Myth: Segregation is not inherently a problem—it is only bad segregation that is a problem.

Many anti-inclusionists have been angry about parallels drawn between racial segregation (Brown v. Board of Education's "segregation is inherently unequal") and the segregation of students with disabilities. Kauffman (quoted in O'Neil, 1994/1995) asserts:

> Certainly racial segregation is a great evil, and segregation that is forced and universal and unrelated to legitimate educational purposes certainly is wrong. But when separate programs are freely chosen and placement decisions are made on a case-by-case basis—not forced, not universal—I think it's inappropriate to call that segregation. (p. 9)

But most of the segregation that has been part of special education has been forced, has *not* been freely chosen, and has *not* been made on a case-bycase basis. Often parents have been forced to accept segregated special education services or nothing and have not been presented with a range of options. More importantly, it is not clear that segregating students with disabilities is directly related to a legitimate educational purpose! When all school districts offer parents and their children the choice of a well-developed, fully inclusive classroom, then we may be able to talk differently about the advisability and appropriateness of more segregated settings; until then, we cannot call segregation a legitimate choice.

Myth: The system isn't broken—why are we messing with it?

The eagerness with which educators embrace school reform in general and inclusion in particular is definitely related to the extent to which they believe that the existing system needs changing. Inclusion advocates do not believe the system (two systems, actually) is working. The disproportionate number of students of color in special education, the lack of mobility out of special education settings, the limited community connections for students with disabilities, and the human and financial costs of supporting two separate systems of teacher education, classroom programs, and curricular materials and resources have led many educators to welcome changes in the ways in which special education services are conceptualized and delivered.

Even those who recognize the need for change, however, do not necessarily agree on the nature or extent of that change. Some supporters of maintaining a continuum of services believe that we only need to do special education "better" to make it work. Inclusion advocates tend to look for more systemic, structural change; they do not see the problems as being linked to the quality or commitment of those who provide services but as more basic, requiring changes in more than just personnel.

Myth: Inclusionists think we need change because special educators are bad or incompetent.

This myth is closely related to the previous one. Those who promote inclusion in no way impugn the hard work, motives, or competence of special educators. Rather, they seek to find new ways to use those talents and skills so that all students can benefit from highly specialized teaching strategies and adaptations.

Myth: Inclusion advocates believe special educators are extinct (or should become that way).

Again, closely linked to the above two, inclusion will require that special educators reconceptualize their roles, acting more often as coteachers or resources than as primary sources of instruction or services. Conceiving of special education as a set of services rather than as a place allows us to con-

ceive of special educators as educators with special skills, rather than as educators who work with "special" children.

Myth: It takes a special person to work with "those kids."

Idealizing the special educator as someone with unique personality characteristics (often patience) and a set of instructional tricks foreign to general education classroom teachers has served to deskill general education teachers, removing the motivation and the need to develop a wider repertoire of skills. "Those kids" need good teaching, as do all students. Our goal should be to have skilled (special education) teachers share what they know with others, rather than to isolate them in ways that minimize their breadth and long-term effectiveness.

Myth: Inclusion is beyond the reach of the already over burdened general education teacher.

There is no question that many general education teachers are overburdened and under-supported. Adding students with disabilities without committing the necessary resources and support is unethical as well as ineffective. We must make huge improvements in the kinds and quality of support we provide for teachers. Although many general education classroom teachers initially say, "If I take that kid, I'll need a full-time aide," more experienced inclusion teachers identify many kinds of support as important (sometimes eliminating the need for a full-time aide), including: planning and collaboration time with other teachers, modified curriculum and resources, administrative support, and ongoing emotional support.

Myth: We're talking about the same "regular classrooms" you and I grew up with.

This myth is a difficult one. It is true that many special education programs were developed because the "regular" classroom was inadequate for the learning needs of children with disabilities. So talk of "returning" such students seems illogical—if those classrooms were not good before, why should they be appropriate now? The answer is that inclusive classrooms are not and cannot be the same rigidly structured, everyone-on-the-same page, frontal teaching, individually staffed classrooms we all remember. Successful inclusion involves radical changes in the nature of the general education classroom.

Myth: The curriculum of the general education classroom will get watered down and distorted.

There is a fear that inclusion will force teachers to "dumb down" the curriculum, thus limiting the options for "typical students" and especially for "gifted and talented" students. The reality is that the curriculum in inclusive classrooms must be structured as multi-level, participatory and flexible.

For example, all the students might be working on the Civil War, but the range of books and projects undertaken and the ways in which learning is pursued can vary tremendously. Some students might be working on computer simulations, while others might write and perform skits or role plays. A wide range of books on the Civil War could allow students who read at a range of levels to find and share information. Inclusion invites, not a watered-down curriculum, but an enhanced one, full of options and creative possibilities (Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 1994).

Myth: Special services must take place in special places.

Those who are fearful or antagonistic about full inclusion believe that we must maintain a *continuum of placements* in order to serve all children well. Inclusion advocates support the need for a *continuum of services* (e.g., occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy) but propose that those services be provided in the most integrated way possible, sometimes in the general education classroom and sometimes with other nonhandicapped students participating.

Inclusion does not mean abandoning the special help and support that students with disabilities truly need. Rather, it means providing those services within more normalized settings and without the isolation and stigma often associated with special education services.

Myth: Without special education classes, children with disabilities will not learn functional life skills—the things they really need to know.

In many special education classes, students are still learning money skills by working with pretend coins and bills, doing workbook problems. In more inclusive settings, a student with a disability may be working at the school store, making change, and interacting with real customers using real money. Creative teachers (with adequate support) can find numerous ways to incorporate functional life skills into more typically "academic" settings, often benefiting all the students in the class.

Myth: The only way to keep "special children" safe is to keep them away from other children. If you include them you are setting them up to be victims; you are setting them up for failure. They can only feel good about themselves if they're with their "own kind."

No parent wants their child to be a victim of cruelty or violence, friendless and alone, abandoned and outcast in school. But when we think of the bigger picture—the future beyond school—it becomes evident that we cannot keep students with disabilities safe by sheltering them. They must learn repertoires of accommodation and adaptation (how to deal with teasing and rejection) and, more importantly, we must take active steps to shape the understanding, commitment, and active friendship of students without disabilities who will be the lifelong peers of people with disabilities.

When students grow up together, sharing school experiences and activities, they learn to see beyond superficial differences and disabilities and to connect as human beings. This applies to differences in race, religion, economic status, and skill and ability, as well as physical, emotional, and learning differences. It is vital that all students feel safe and welcome in the world, and inclusion provides us with an excellent way to model and insist on a set of beliefs about how people treat one another with respect and dignity.

Myth: Inclusion values "social goals" above "educational goals."

The accusation that inclusion advocates only care about "social" integration and that valuing social growth means that academic progress is not considered relevant or important has persisted for many years. In fact, all learning is social and all learning occurs in a social environment. Learning to talk, make friends, ask questions and respond, and work with others are all educational goals, important ones, and foundational ones for other learning.

There is little doubt that certain specific, concrete drill and practice skills can be better taught within intensified, one-on-one instructional settings; what is less clear is that those are the skills that matter or whether such learning will generalize to more "normal" environments. There is also little evidence that most special education settings are particularly effective at teaching academic skills. Some of the original motivation for mainstreaming, then integration, and then inclusion, was the recognition of the low expectations and distorted goals that were set for students with disabilities within more segregated settings.

Myth: Inclusion is a favor we are doing for children with disabilities at the cost of other children's education.

There is no evidence that the education of other students suffers in any way from the inclusion process. Al Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) and a leading anti-inclusion force, commented on the students pictured in the Academy Award-winning film, *Educating Peter* (Wurtzberg & Goodwin, 1992), which detailed the classroom experience of Peter, a boy with Down's syndrome, during his third grade year:

> I wonder whether the youngsters in that class had spent a whole year in adjusting to how to live with Peter and whether they did any reading, whether they did any writing, whether they did any mathematics, whether they did any history, whether they did any geography.
>
> And it seems to me that it's a terrible shame that we don't ask that question. Is the only function of the schools to get kids to learn to live with each other? Would we be satisfied if that's what we did and if all the youngsters came out not knowing any of the things they're supposed to learn academically?
>
> Will any of them, disabled or non-disabled, be able to function as adults? (Shanker, 1994, p. 1)

The answer, Mr. Shanker, is that their teacher, Martha Stallings (1993, 1994) reports that the students in her class all had a wonderful year, learned their math and their history and their geography, did a great deal of writing and reading, and learned to be decent caring human beings as well. That seems like an incredibly successful year to me!

Will any of them be able to function as adults? Yes, they will function as adults who, in addition to knowing long division and the states and their capitals, also know how to actively support a classmate who is struggling and know not to jump to early conclusions about whether or not someone can be a friend.

Myth: It takes years of planning and preparation before you can start to do inclusion.

Planning and preparation certainly help inclusion to work well. And there is no denying that adequate lead time and thoughtful groundwork improve the quality of what can happen when students with disabilities are included. But it is also true that no teacher, school, and district ever feel truly ready to begin inclusion, and what is most necessary is ongoing support and commitment. Even schools that are well known for their inclusion programs acknowledge that there are always new issues and concerns. Although some aspects of the inclusion process become easier, they still require time and planning because every child and every situation is different.

The AFT has requested an inclusion moratorium, citing the many problems that schools experience when they attempt to implement inclusion. Shanker (1994/1995) cites lack of adequate preparation for teachers and lack of ongoing support as the two major barriers to successful inclusion. I would agree with his analysis completely. His conclusion, however, is quite different from mine. His solution to the lack of preparation and support is to call for a moratorium on inclusion. My solution is to commit the resources we know are required to do inclusion well.

Myth: If we just ignore inclusion long enough and hard enough, it will go away.

I cannot imagine that parents who fought so hard for the right to have their children included in general education classrooms will be willing to go back to segregated programming. And teachers who have experienced successful inclusive teaching are not likely to want to return to a segregated system. But is society willing to commit the funds and the human resources necessary to do inclusion well? That is a larger question that brings us to the very heart of our values and our priorities about children and their educational futures.

Conclusion

Examining these myths and the responses to them allows us to see how much is affected by our decision to include students with disabilities and how much change will be required for it to be successful. At stake is not just our special education programs, or even our educational system. What is at stake is our

commitment as a democracy to educate all children to the best of their abilities and to teach them all to be responsible, caring citizens, cognizant of their interrelationships and their mutual needs. A stirring song by Bernice Reagan, performed by the group "Sweet Honey in the Rock," says, "We who believe in freedom cannot rest until it comes." An appropriate paraphrase for thisstruggle might be: We who believe in inclusion cannot rest until it's done (well)!

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NO

Naomi Zigmond and Janice M. Baker

Full Inclusion for Students With Learning Disabilities

Inclusion is not a new concept for students with learning disabilities (LD); school personnel have been educating students with LD in general education classrooms for more than 2 decades. Ever since the passage of PL 94-142, the Education of Children with Disabilities Act, in 1975, and its reauthorization as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, public school systems have been obliged to provide special education and related services to students diagnosed as having LD and in need of specialized instruction or curricula. Consistent with the law, schools have organized special education services to allow eligible students to receive appropriate instruction from a special education teacher and also to participate, to the maximum extent possible, in the instruction being delivered to nondisabled peers in general education classrooms....

Historical Perspective

As early as 1970, Kephart was advocating for a full continuum of services. For some students with LD, "the so-called hard-core case[s] whose interferences are so extensive that [they] will probably need major alterations of educational presentations for the length of [their] educational career[s]" (p. 208), Kephart recommended a segregated classroom. But for those with somewhat less severe problems, "whose interference with learning is such that much of the activities of the [general education] classroom become meaningless ... [and who] need more intensive assistance than the classroom teacher can be expected to provide" (p. 208), Kephart suggested what would later be known as a resource room model:

> a clinical approach in which [the student] is removed from the classroom for a short time, a half-hour or an hour a day. During this short period, individually or in small groups of two or three, intensive attack is made on [the] learning problems—not upon curriculum matters, but upon the learning problem itself and the methods by which [the student] processes information. (p. 208)

The child with minor learning problems, Kephart believed, had much more to gain from interactions with peers in the general education classroom than from intensive activities in a segregated program. This child could be helped by the regular classroom teacher and would be fully included in the mainstream.

From Naomi Zigmond and Janice M. Baker, "Full Inclusion for Students With Learning Disabilities: Too Much of a Good Thing?" *Theory Into Practice*, vol. 35, no. 1 (Winter 1996). Copyright © 1996 by The College of Education, The Ohio State University. Reprinted by permission.

In the first edition of Lerner's classic textbook on LD (1971), she, too, called for a continuum of placements matched to the educational needs of the child with LD: special classes for students with severe problems, itinerant teaching services for children whose learning disability is not severe enough to warrant a special class, and resource rooms for most students with LD at both elementary and secondary school levels. By 1975, Hammill and Bartel were suggesting that special schools and special classes "should be used with considerable caution and viewed as a last resort" (p. 3). They also advocated a resource room model, which would permit the student

> to receive instruction individually or in groups in a special room ... [in which] the emphasis is on teaching specific skills that the pupil needs. At the end of [the] lesson, [the pupil] returns to the regular classroom. (p. 4)

Nearly 20 years later, this part-time model of service delivery, in which the student is included but also pulled out, is still preferred. The *Fifteenth Annual Report to Congress* (U.S. Department of Education, 1993) indicates that, across the nation, fewer than 25 percent of students with LD are placed in separate classes or separate schools; 54 percent of students with LD are based in general education classes and receive part-time special education services for 21-59 percent of the school day; but 22 percent of students with learning disabilities are in general education classrooms at least 80 percent of the school day.

Implicit in even the earliest descriptions of these service delivery options was a recognition that the prescribed educational intervention would be provided by a highly trained professional capable of diagnosing the child, planning a teaching program based on this diagnosis, and implementing the teaching plan (Lerner, 1971). That teaching plan would be "designed to support the students' accommodation in the mainstreamed curriculum.... Students [would] learn skills that will help them cope with the requirements of their mainstream classes" (Robinson & Deshler, 1988, p. 132). Furthermore, placement in the pullout setting would be *temporary*....

Instruction in the pullout setting would also be intensive. Indeed, "intensity of instruction" is what distinguished the special education that the students were to receive from the general education they were already getting (Meyen & Lehr, 1980). The goal was to have students acquire a significant number of skills and strategies in a relatively short period of time, so that they could more successfully benefit from the instruction being offered in their mainstream classes. "Regardless of what is being taught, it is imperative that it be taught with maximum effectiveness and efficiency" (Robinson & Deshler, 1988, p. 134).

Once students acquired the needed skills and strategies, they would no longer require direct, intensive, pullout instruction. A change of placement would then be initiated and, slowly, full reintegration would be accomplished. Students with LD assigned full time to a general education classroom were assumed to be capable of coping, on their own, with the ongoing mainstream curriculum so long as "the regular classroom teacher is trained in adapting materials and methods to the student's specific needs and has access to resource materials and consultation" (Meyen, 1988, p. 40).

Thus, inclusion for students with LD is not new; neither is full inclusion for those students with LD who have been taught successfully in a pullout program and are ready for full reintegration, or who have very mild disabilities. As early as 1969, a description of full inclusion services for students with LD appeared in the literature (see Serio & Todd, 1969). In Ohio, students with LD who had "graduated" from pullout programs and whose needs could now be met simply through adjustments within the regular classroom received no pull out services at all.

The Call for Full Inclusion

What *is* new is full inclusion for students with LD for whom, in the past, pullout services would have been deemed appropriate. The impetus to place these students with severe LD in general education classrooms *in lieu of* providing them with pullout special education services derives in large part from the call by Will (1986) for a greater sharing of responsibility for students with learning problems between general education and special education. The movement, dubbed the Regular Education Initiative (REI), received additional impetus from advocacy groups that consider access to the general education class setting as a right of all students, even those in need of a special education (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Snell, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1989).

REI was also spurred by the growing national criticism of another large, pullout program, Chapter 1 (see Allington & McGill-Franzen, 1988; Allington, Steutzel, Shake, & Lamarche, 1986). The fact that there were data indicating that resource room programs for students with LD were actually beneficial (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Madden & Slavin, 1983) seemed to matter little. Full inclusion was advocated for all students, regardless of individual needs.

In response to the REI, practitioners and researchers implemented alternative service delivery models that virtually eliminated pullout services for students with LD. Now students who had been diagnosed, and for whom an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) had been written, were retained in the general education class full time, and special education resources were "pulled in," instead of the students being "pulled out." There were many variations on the theme (see Jenkins, Jewell, Leicester, Jenkins, & Troutner, 1990; Reynaud, Pfannenstiel, & Hudson, 1987; Stevens, Madden, Slavin, & Farnish, 1987; Wang, 1987; Zigmond & Baker, 1990), but in each of them, students who would otherwise have attended special education classrooms full or part time were returned full time to general education classes.

Lewis and Doorlag (1991) describe two components of instruction for mainstreamed students with LD.

> In the *remediation* approach, the teacher instructs the student in skills that are areas of need. For example, extra assistance might be provided to a fourth grader who spells at the second grade level. *Compensation*, on the other hand, attempts to bypass the student's weaknesses. For instance, to compensate for the reading and writing problems ... the teacher might administer class tests orally. (p. 240)

Wang (1989) describes these same two components (but in the reverse order) as *adaptive instruction,* which should be available to students in full inclusion models. It involves:

> modif[ication of] the learning environment to accommodate the unique learning characteristics and needs of individual students, and [provision of] direct or focused intervention to improve each student's capabilities to successfully acquire subject-matter knowledge and higher-order reasoning and problem-solving skills, to work independently and cooperatively with peers, and to meet the overall intellectual and social demands of schooling. (p. 183)

It is reasonable to question whether, in full-inclusion models judged to be successful by teachers, administrators, parents, and professional colleagues, students with LD are, in fact, experiencing both compensation (adapted learning environments) and remediation (direct or focused instruction in skills and strategies that would enable them to cope with the mainstream curriculum). If only the first were in place, students might be "managing the mainstream" but not learning fundamental skills and strategies that would allow them to become independent, self-directed learners. If only the second were going on, students might be spending a considerable portion of each day in failure experiences.

We have had the opportunity to explore this question in considerable depth in a qualitative study recently completed on full-inclusion elementary school models, described more completely in a special issue of *The Journal of Special Education* (Zigmond & Baker, 1995-b). In that research project, we studied five elementary school buildings that had, for several years, implemented a full inclusion service delivery model for students with LD. In two of the buildings, the full inclusion program was part of a continuum of services, and only students who no longer needed more intensive services were integrated full time. But in three of the buildings, full inclusion was the only special education service available, and students were reintegrated full time into general education, "ready or not." Observations and interviews in these three buildings illustrate what services are provided to students with LD in full inclusion models, and whether both features of adaptive education are addressed in meeting the needs of students with LD.

We searched our interview data from special and general education teachers and our observation notes from 2-day observations in a primary and an intermediate classroom in each building for evidence of the two kinds of services that students with LD could be receiving in these full inclusion models: (a) adaptations or accommodations that were designed to make the curriculum and instruction manageable for the student with LD by "bypassing" the student's deficits and (b) focused, remedial instruction that would increase the capacity of the student with LD to cope with curriculum and materials, however they were presented. We found a lot of the former, and disappointingly little of the latter.

The Schools

The three sites relevant to this discussion were located in Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Washington State (for a complete description of these sites and the educational experiences of students with LD in these sites, see Baker, 1995; Zigmond, 1995-a, 1995-b). The Pennsylvania school had an enrollment of about 460 students, K-6, and 16 students with LD on IEPs. The school was located in a small rural community. Full inclusion at this school was a school-wide effort, involving all of the teachers in the building. Two special education teachers (1.5 full-time equivalent) provided in-class support (coteaching), giving more time to teachers who had students with LD/IEPs in their classrooms (30 minutes, four times per week) and less time to teachers who did not (30 minutes, once or twice per week). Students with LD were distributed across teachers in the building so that no one teacher was particularly burdened by the inclusion.

The school in Kansas was urban, with an enrollment of about 315 students in grades K-5, two classes per grade level. The 45 students on IEPs were assigned in groups of seven or eight to one particular mainstream class at each grade level. At the primary level, one special education teacher formed a team with one first grade and one second grade teacher, and the special education teacher cotaught with each team member for 3 hours per day. At the intermediate level, one third, one fourth, and one fifth grade teacher collaborated with two special education teachers, each special education teacher spending 2 hours per day in each of the three classrooms.

The Washington school had over 400 students in grades K-6, and 42 students with LD, all placed full time in general education classrooms dispersed throughout the school. Special education services provided in the general education classroom replaced the more traditional resource room program in which students had been enrolled. One special education teacher and one paraprofessional provided support services on a flexible schedule, working in classrooms with small groups of students or with individuals, helping to modify academic assignments, and facilitating a cross-age peer tutoring program offered daily to any student who needed extra reading practice.

Adaptations and Accommodations

Accomodations for the Whole Class

Many of the teachers described how they altered an activity, an assignment, or a test based on their perceptions of the needs of the children with LD in their classes. But they invariably used the adaptation for the entire class, because it was easier to implement that way or because they wanted to avoid stigmatizing the specific target children. For example, after hearing from the special education teacher about the value of repeating instructions for students with LD, one fifth grade reading teacher informed us that she began "just more consciously going over it with everybody" (interview, 3/2/93). An intermediate

math teacher began to make available to his whole class materials that he had not thought to use before.

> I have those product finders [for multiplication facts] that I allow those who are having difficulty to use and ... just a few will, and I can't recall if maybe two or three times that he [the student with LD] used the product finder when we did multiplication. (interview, 3/2/93)

Reading the textbook aloud was a frequently used accommodation in many of the classes we visited. "We'll talk about it [science, or health, or social studies] and I'll have them read it [the textbook] silently, then we'll read it together so even if he [the child with LD] doesn't read it silently he still hears it," said a second grade teacher (interview, 3/3/93). Reading tests aloud was also a common class-wide accommodation. A sixth grade general education teacher told us,

> If she [a student with LD in the sixth grade classroom] needs to have the test read, we just open it up to the whole group. We say, "I'm going to read the test; if you want to come with me that's fine." (interview, 5/3/93)

A fifth grade general education teacher also began to read her tests to the whole class after the special education teacher had advised her that it might help the students with LD.

> Another thing that I have found ... accommodation-wise for these kids,... it is just about as easy to read [the test] and do the whole thing with the whole class. Then there [are] no misinterpretations. I think that that has been one thing that I have put in my bag of tricks and it has helped everybody. I would say probably 90 percent of the time I do that now. (interview, 3/2/ 93)

An interesting extension of this idea of implementing something for the whole class because it might benefit the students with LD was seen in intermediate classes in one of the schools. Teachers in grades 3-5 routinely implemented peer tutoring (Greenwood, Delquadro, & Hall, 1989), in which all students in the class participated, to afford students with reading problems extra practice in reading fluency and comprehension.

In two of the schools, curricular changes for the whole school were spurred, in large part, by a concern for the students with LD who would be integrated into mainstream classes. A primary level special education teacher reported:

> Because of the thinking skills that we put into place and the way we use mediational questioning, the strategies we use, the graphic organizers we use, the way we set everything up, [the child with LD is] not getting any more than anybody else, but those things are from a special education background and do allow [the child] to function at a much higher level. (interview, 5/3/ 93)

Reducing Work Load

A second strategy that we found in these full inclusion classrooms was a conscious reduction of the work load for students with LD. These students were expected to do less of a specific assignment. As one second grade teacher put it,

> We may not expect an identified child, like in writing, to write pages and pages in their journal as I would someone else ... I mean if we feel like there are children that have done as much as they can do with an assignment, then that's fine. (interview, 5/3/93)

The same was true in another building. "We modify how much written work she [a student with LD] needs," the special education teacher told us (interview, 5/20/93).

The most common adjustment in work load came during spelling. In one school, students with LD were usually assigned a shorter list for the weekly spelling test, but in the other two schools, adjustments were also often made to the difficulty level of the words. According to one special education teacher, "Sometimes ... if there's a list that has pretty obscure words on it, [the sixth grade teacher will] delete some of those and put on some of the most frequently used words" (interview, 5/20/93). A second grade teacher said,

> I go ahead and choose four words of a skill I want to work on. Then they get to choose four or five words that they just want to learn to spell. They are usually on their level. The higher level kids choose words that are higher level. (interview, 5/3/93)

Accommodations for a Specific Student

Very few accommodations were focused on the needs of a particular child with LD. Those we did hear about were characterized as being easy to implement. For example, in one school, teachers highlighted key words on work sheets, homework assignments, and tests, specifically for the students who had serious reading problems. "I highlight things occasionally, like with the story problem ... just to focus him in, because he wouldn't know what the words were," the second grade general education teacher noted (interview, 3/3/93). Sometimes highlighting would be combined with oral reading, as reported by the mother of one of the children we observed. ... Another teacher reported, "Everything I give him I read to him" (interview, 3/3/93).

Focused Instruction on Skills or Strategies

Many of the teachers we talked to were surprised at how difficult it was for the students with LD integrated into their classes to learn what they were being asked to learn.

> The thing that is so amazing about these special ed kids is you always have to teach them: "Look at me, I'm talking; look at me; here I am, where's your eyes supposed to be?" Every day. Usually second grade, by the second week of school, you just say, "These are rules; here's the signal; I do this, you look." But

> [these kids], you just have to keep [going over it again and again]. (second grade, general education teacher, interview, 5/19/93)

So, in addition to accommodations, these teachers attempted to find time and personnel to provide students with remedial instruction. To do so, they turned to the special education teacher who was coteaching with them, to the paraprofessionals available in the school, and, most often, to classroom peers.

Peer-Partners

The most available "personnel" for extra instruction were classroom peers. "I just go in and check on her [the student with LD], make sure that she has a very helpful partner," a second grade teacher said (interview, 5/19/93). In one of the schools, a second grader with LD was assigned to another second grader specifically for some extra drill on sight words in reading. In another school, very heavy use was made of study buddies, classmates paired together for up toa month at a time, so that the stronger could help the weaker complete classroom assignments.

"We try and pair usually a high child with an identified child just so they have someone else there, especially when I'm in the room by myself. They [the study buddies] are good teachers" (second grade, general education teacher, interview, 5/3/93). In no case did the partner receive training on what to teach or how to teach it.

Small Group Instruction

During coteaching periods, one special education teacher provided small group instruction to students with LD and other low achieving students in the class (often as many as one-third of the students). This was often a parallel lesson to the one being taught to more competent students by the general education teacher at the same time. The small group parallel lesson permitted more careful monitoring of the students' responses, more active student participation, and more feedback to the students on their answers and mistakes. The teacher did not focus the instruction on skills that might have been missed in earlier lessons, nor did she spend time teaching strategies for independent functioning.

> We're not teaching them *how* to read. I think we're just doing total accommodation. Nobody has time to teach these kids [fifth graders] how to read back at their second grade level. In about two periods a week, I'm not going to teach kids how to read. (special education teacher, 3/3/93)

In another school, supplemental small group instruction was offered to any students who needed it, whether or not they were identified as in need of special education. Interestingly, for the convenience of both the general education teachers and the special education teacher and paraprofessional, this small group instruction was usually offered *outside* the classroom.

For example, each morning, the special education teacher or the aide provided 15-minute phonics lessons to small groups of primary grade students in the hall outside their classroom. There were three groups of first grade phonics students, three second grade groups, and one third grade group. Small group lessons were also offered before school or during lunch (by the special education teacher), and after school (by the paraprofessional) for primary and intermediate level students, respectively.

During these lessons, the teacher or the aide previewed the upcoming general education classroom work in reading, math, or language arts, "offering instruction that supports what they do in the classroom" (special education teacher, 5/20/93). There was no time for instruction on skills that might have been missed earlier or for explicit instruction in learning strategies. "It's all based on what the classroom is doing. I mean, I don't do a different curriculum," the special education teacher reported (interview, 5/20/93).

Individual Instruction

We saw a lot of individual attentionprovided to students—teachers stopping beside a student, looking over his or her shoulder, and giving feedback or on-the-spot tutoring. With two teachers in the room coteaching, there seemed to be more opportunities for this. In one building, the special education teacher reported:

> Sometimes I have pulled ... Gladys away from the group and we've worked in either skill groups or just one-on-one out in the hall where I've tried to show her some strategies on how to come up with the answer. With our program, oftentimes we don't have time to actually work one-to-one with that child. So I've tried to show her little strategies as we go around. (interview, 5/3/93)

Nevertheless, these one-to-one episodes were unplanned and infrequent.

We saw almost no other attempts to provide individual *instruction*,in which a student was explicitly taught skills or concepts that had been identified as outside her or his current repertoire yet needed for coping with the mainstream curriculum. No one had the time for it. The only way they could achieve one-to-one time was to use parent volunteers. "[When volunteers come on Fridays,] I have an adult that works with her," a second grade teacher told us (interview, 5/20/93).

There was one exception. In one second grade, the teachers had identified a student whose reading was very deficient. For this student, the special education teacher, the second grade teacher, and the Chapter 1 teacher had collaborated to offer 15-minutes per day of remedial instruction. On Monday through Thursday, this was provided before school officially started (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays by the second grade teacher, Tuesdays by the Chapter 1 teacher). When her schedule permitted, the special education teacher added a Friday session during the afternoon.

But for the fifth grader in that same school who needed more than was being provided in the full inclusion model, the parents arranged for privately funded, after-school tutoring, once a week. The fifth grade general education teacher recognized the need for this tutoring, and its utility, but made no attempt to find out about it or to influence what went on in it. In fact, the

tutor and the teacher did not communicate even though they were both teachers in the same building.

Too Much of a Good Thing?

We have no doubt that full inclusion of students who in other schools would have been attending pullout programs carried with it many benefits. In all three schools, the planning for inclusion was quickly coopted into a total school improvement effort, involving all of the teachers in a reconsideration of curriculum, materials, pacing, and grading. The coteaching that accompanied inclusion of students with LD brought new educational opportunities to all students in general education. Adaptations that teachers implemented made the curriculum more accessible to a wider range of students than before and permitted the teachers to teach, more effectively, a far more diverse set of students.

Students with LD did not miss any instructional time or any of the noninstructional activities that occurred throughout the school day. They were fully integrated into the social fabric of their classes, participating in classroom and school events. The full inclusion programs eliminated whatever stigma results from the sorting that inevitably occurs when only a small number of students have access to special services. In-class services were available to everyone, and in the Washington school, new pull-aside services reached as many as one-third of the students in the school, because they were made available to any students referred by the teacher, whether or not they had been diagnosed as having disabilities.

These full inclusion models, with coteaching and often joint planning between general and special education teachers, achieved the first goal of adaptive education (Wang, 1989): "Teachers modified the learning environment to accommodate the unique learning characteristics and needs of the students" (p. 183). Teachers willingly changed assignments, activities, and tests. They learned new ways to teach through their collaborations with special education teachers and profited from the opportunities made available by having an extra teacher or paraprofessional in the classroom.

For the most part, however, the students with LD did not get the second feature of adaptive education—"direct or focused intervention to improve each student's capabilities" (Wang, 1989, p. 183). As we have described elsewhere (Zigmond & Baker, 1995-a), the special education we saw was superficial, impromptu, and hardly likely to have a lasting impact or to achieve long-term goals. It was seldom preplanned, and it lacked intensity. There was no sense of urgency over what needed to be taught and learned. It had none of the features of good special education practice outlined recently by Scruggs and Mastropieri (1995). And yet, the students with LD in these full inclusion models were clearly students who were still in need of focused, intensive, individualized instruction and would have been receiving pullout services if full inclusion had not been the prevailing social force.

We do not wish to imply that, had these students been in pullout special education settings, they would have received an appropriate (i.e., carefully planned, focused, intensive, goal-directed) special education. There is much legitimate criticism of current pullout special education practice (see Kauffman, 1993; Kauffman & Pullen, 1989; Leinhardt, Zigmond, & Cooley, 1981). Nor are we ruling out the possibility that this second feature of adaptive instruction, "direct or focused intervention" (Wang, 1989, p. 183), could be provided within a general education classroom. We must report, however, that it *was not* and *could not have been* provided in the general education classrooms we have seen. These classrooms were not organized or managed in ways that would have sustained direct and focused interventions for a select few students. That the phonics lessons in Washington were conducted in the hall outside the classroom indicates that the teachers themselves understood this, and believed that the opportunities for direct and focused instruction were limited within the four walls of the general education class. In general education classrooms, where the learning and social interactions of dozens of students must be orchestrated, the *how* of instruction (materials, instructions, structure) can be tinkered with, but the *what* of instruction (curriculum, pacing) is less amenable to change.

More than a decade ago, Meyen and Lehr (1980) described learning environments that were conducive to intense instruction. They are characterized by opportunities for consistent and sustained time on task; immediate, frequent, and appropriate feedback to the students; regular and frequent communication to each student that the teacher expects the student to accomplish the task and demonstrate continuous progress; and a pattern of interaction in which the teacher responds to student initiatives and uses consequences appropriate to the student's response. Like Meyen and Lehr, we believe that pullout settings are more likely to provide these opportunities. Furthermore, short-term, part-time, pullout programs should also afford a teacher and a student the opportunity to engage in intense instruction on material that a particular child must learn, that others have already learned, or that others will pick up on their own.

Based on our research, we cannot support elimination of a continuum of services for students with LD. Inclusion is good; full inclusion may be too much of a good thing. We do not mean to suggest that we return to business as usual in special education resource rooms. The hallway lessons in Washington worked well because only the students involved in the lessons were present for them; no other students were assigned to the special education teacher during those 15 minutes and thus no other students had to be put to work on something else while the directed phonics lesson was taking place. Also, the students assigned to the special education teacher did not have to be put to busy work while the teacher worked with another group. But the hallway was noisy, the students sat on the floor, and the teacher had no access to a chalkboard or supplemental materials.

Scheduling and excessive case loads have prevented special education teachers from accomplishing their intended purposes. Nevertheless, for students with LD, there are skills and strategies that need to be acquired if instruction in the mainstream is to be meaningful and productive, and these skills and strategies must be taught explicitly and intensively. Providing a

venue and the resources for delivering this instruction is not only our moral obligation to students with LD, it is also our obligation under the law.

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POSTSCRIPT

Is Full Inclusion Always the Best Option for Children With Disabilities?

It is possible that research on inclusion to date has been inconclusive because researchers have focused on the wrong question. Much of the research in this area seems to have been designed to determine "once and for all" whether students with disabilities have better outcomes in segregated or inclusive educational programs. It is unlikely, however, that inclusion in all its forms will lead to better outcomes for all students and under all conditions. This has led some scholars to encourage researchers to ask more focused questions, such as, What types of students benefit from inclusion? What types of strategies are needed for inclusion to be effective? What types of training and belief systems do teachers need for inclusion to work? and, What resources are associated with effective inclusive programs? Addressing these questions may help educators to learn more about when and why inclusion is effective or ineffective.

Some scholars have argued that deciding whether or not inclusion is the best option for students with disabilities is an ethical question and, therefore, not answerable by research. See, for example, "Inclusion Paradigms in Conflict," by Peter V. Paul and Marjorie E. Ward, *Theory Into Practice* (vol. 35, no. 1, 1996). These scholars argue that segregated education is by its very nature discriminatory because it denies students with disabilities access to the same experiences and opportunities afforded everyone else. Although these scholars see a role for empirical research, that role is not to learn whether inclusion should occur but rather how it should occur.

Readers interested in pursuing this topic further can turn to edited volumes by Dorothy K. Lipsky and Alan Gartner, *Inclusion and School Reform: Transforming America's Classrooms* (Paul H. Brookes, 1997) and Susan Stainback and William Stainback, *Inclusion: A Guide for Educators* (Paul H. Brookes, 1996) for histories of educational practices and legislation relating to students with disabilities. Suggestions for implementing inclusive educational practices can be found in "School Change and Inclusive Schools: Lessons Learned From Practice," by James McLeskey and Nancy L. Waldron, *Phi Delta Kappan* (September 2002). Discussions of barriers to inclusion can be found in "Barriers and Facilitators to Inclusive Education," by Jayne Pivik, Joan McComas, and Marc Laflamme, *Exceptional Children* (Fall 2002) and "Attitudes of Elementary School Principals Toward the Inclusion of Students With Disabilities," by Cindy L. Praisner, *Exceptional Children* (Winter 2003). An argument against the proliferation of inclusive practices can be found in "The Oppression of Inclusion," by David A. Zera and Roy M. Seitsinger, *Educational Horizons* (Fall 2000).