Clarification of issues in special education: Relating to the learning handicapped junior high school student

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California State College
San Bernardino

CLARIFICATION OF ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION: RELATING TO THE
LEARNING HANDICAPPED JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT

A Project Submitted to
The Faculty of the School of Education
In Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
Education: Special Education Learning Handicapped Option

by
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1984

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CLARIFICATION OF ISSUES IN SPECIAL EDUCATION:
RELATING TO THE LEARNING HANDICAPPED JUNIOR HIGH
SCHOOL STUDENT

BY

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CALIFORNIA STATE COLLEGE, SAN BERNARDINO 1984
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INTRODUCTION

According to Gappa and Glynn (1981) it is the responsibility of the school to help parents understand their child who may not be living up to their aspirations. Also, a degree of parental involvement is essential to the maintenance of exceptional children. Dolores Woodward (1981) states that one of the disadvantages to mainstreaming is that it may not allow for the degree of parental involvement that is necessary. To understand and become involved, parents must be informed.

Among other ways to help parents better understand their child's special situation, Gappa and Glynn (1981) discussed a parent handbook that informed them of school procedures and policies. Handbooks could also be used to inform parents about certain issues in special education. These handbooks could also be used for inservice workshops conducted for special and regular education teachers as well as related service personnel.

Statement of the Purpose

The purpose of this study is to review the literature and compile four concise and understandable topical subsections on the topics of (1) assessment of the learning handicapped (LH) student, (2) curriculum in language arts for the LH student in junior high school, (3) mainstreaming, and (4) resource room vs special day class.

Definition of terms

LH - learning handicapped pertains to students with learning disabilities (LD), emotionally disturbed students (ED), and educably mentally retarded students (EMR).
LD - a learning disability refers to a retardation disorder, or delayed development in one or more of the processes of speech, language, reading, spelling, writing or arithmetic resulting from a possible cerebral dysfunction and/or emotional or behavioral disturbance and not from mental retardation, sensory deprivation, or cultural or instructional factors.

Mainstream - an administrative procedure for keeping exceptional students in the normal classroom for the majority of the day.

Special Education - the educational process for all handicapped or exceptional students.

Assessment - testing to diagnose learning disabilities.

Special Day Class - a classroom where the educationally handicapped students learn all subjects.

Resource Room - a center where handicapped students in regular classes are provided supplemental help.

Resource Specialist - the teacher in the resource room.

Inservice - a staff development program put on by the school for the purpose of learning.

Limitations

It is the assumption here that every junior high school will have a special education department to be able to use this material since this material can only be used for learning handicapped students at that level.

If the law changes or new methods are improvised the material may need to be revised.

Recommendations

Similar studies could be done on curriculum in mathematics, or language arts for different age levels or assessment of children from other areas of exceptionality.
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In the past some children were not served through standard special education programs for a variety of reasons. The California Legislature enacted the Master Plan for Special Education as a pilot program in 1974. In 1975 Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, came into being. This mandates the provision of a free appropriate public education for each handicapped student. Under the provisions of both state and federal laws, each handicapped student will be assessed to determine strengths and weaknesses. The outcome of this assessment determines the eligibility for placement of the student. Both laws prohibit placement based on tests that are culturally or racially based (California Department of Education, 1979). These laws set goals and specify the education programs that will help the student meet the goals through an Individualized Education Program (IEP). The student must be educated under this plan in the "least restrictive environment" appropriate for that student's needs. Least restrictive environment for a learning handicapped (LH) student could be regular classes with monitoring, regular classes with a resource room or a special day class.

Assessment

According to law, handicapped students must be adequately assessed by a team. Academic, language, social and other skills are examined. A variety of environmental factors may also be considered. There is assessment for identification and assessment for teaching. Educational assessment
organizes programs based on demonstrated skill deficits. Precise assessment procedures are required particularly for the mildly handicapped children (McLoughlin & Lewis, 1981). According to Haring and Bateman (1977), the process by which specific skill deficiencies are determined and remedied has been known as the diagnostic-remedial approach (Bateman, 1967), prescriptive-teaching (Peter, 1965), ability and process training (Ysseldyke & Salvia, 1974), psychometric phrenology (Mann, 1971), and task analysis (Johnson, 1967). Generally, children with specific learning problems are administered education assessment techniques for two purposes: (1) to identify children experiencing learning problems who will probably require special educational help, and (2) to gather information that might be helpful in establishing instructional objectives and remedial strategies (Wallace & Larsen, 1978).

Mainstreamed

To mainstream is the integrating of the special students within regular classes. There are both pros and cons associated with the concept. Grotsky (1976) identified several advantages and disadvantages. A couple advantages are that mainstreaming is perceived of as normalization, and exceptional students have been shown to exhibit academic progress in regular class settings provided adequate instructional services and modifications are made to accommodate their special learning needs. However, many regular classroom teachers lack the competencies necessary to effectively mainstream exceptional students, and students who feel inadequate as a result of a learning disability may, through peer comparison in the
integrated class, have these feelings further exacerbated (Woodward, 1981). To successfully build the self-image of the handicapped student, one must first help other students to develop healthy and positive attitudes toward them (Pieper, 1978).

Whether to continue remediating the adolescent's learning disability, or to teach the student compensation techniques is a prime consideration for the teacher. There is no research that definitely establishes the superiority of either approach (Woodward, 1981). There is, however, the value of criterion referenced tests. They provide direct measures of student performance on specific skills (Pieper, 1978).

This type of service delivery model to be effective depends heavily on the development of close cooperative working relationships between the regular classroom teacher and the resource teacher (Faas, 1980).

Special Day Class vs Resource Room

The educational resource center is a place to which a student comes for specific periods of time for special instruction. It may be one to two periods a week or one to two periods a day. The center also provides preparation and diagnostic testing (Neubauer-Inman, 1978).

The special day class is a full-time classroom with special programs for those students whose learning and/or behavior problems are so severe that they are not able to benefit significantly from regular classroom instruction. A learning disability becomes compounded with behavioral disorders in varying degrees. Students enrolled in these full-time
self-contained special classes do participate with students from the regular school in non-academic programs such as athletics, assembly programs, and lunch. Some students receive part-time instruction in music, art, physical education, and speech correction (Faas, 1980).

Physical surroundings in a special day class are established by organizing materials and supplies so they are ready for use and by keeping visual factors functional and motivational but not distracting. It is necessary to have a structured classroom because learning disabled students are generally fearful of surprises (Gappa & Glynn, 1981). A couple advantages of the special day class are that (1) a specially trained teacher is available to provide instruction for the students throughout the school day, (2) a totally individualized instructional program can be designed for individual students whose specific need differ from those of their classmates. The disadvantages are that (1) those enrolled in special class programs tend to become segregated from their age mates in the regular school program, (2) the students who can be identified as belonging to a group that is different may be ridiculed and rejected (Faas, 1980).

Curriculum in Language Arts-LH Junior High School Student

Marge (1972) lists four components of language behavior: listening, speaking, reading and writing. He and others emphasize that language is composed of phonological, morphological, syntactic and semantic components. Both speakers and listeners are involved in oral language. Speaking and writing are expressive language while listening and reading are receptive languages, or comprehension (Mercer & Mercer, 1981). There is only
minimal research concerning learning disabled youngster (Mann, Goodman & Wiederholt, 1978).

Learning disabled students have difficulty writing their thoughts on paper. Numerous problems face them in spelling, sentence structure, grammar, punctuation and handwriting (Hammill & Bartel, 1978). There are a few developmental writing programs to be found at the secondary level. Hammill and Bartel (1978), have compiled a list of procedures for measuring writing-readiness skills, assessing and remediating penmanship errors, and teaching conceptual writing. Some instructional strategies in the developmental program are diagnostic-instructional areas of handwriting and punctuation, syntax, spelling, vocabulary and following the assignment (Shaughnessy, 1977). Then there is another approach in developmental writing - sentence combining. Two excellent sources for this with explanations and samples are a book by William Strong and another by Frank O'Hare. Linguistics is the basis of this approach. In transformational writing, Noam Chomsky (1957) and other authors in the field draw a distinction between surface structure - how the sentence appears on the printed page, and deep structure - rearrangement of the wording giving the same meaning.

Due to the interrelationships of the language behaviors, studying one helps to learn the other. Johnson and Myklebust (1967) have made a very comprehensive study of auditory and written language as well as reading.
Non-discriminatory assessment, appropriate curriculum, and the least restrictive environment (mainstreaming, resource room, special day class) are all important issues that come out of the law PL 94-142.
DESIGN OF THE PROJECT

There will be four topical sub-sections. Each section will be from four to ten pages in length. There will be the body of information along with definitions wherever needed in each topic and references.

The sections will be written on these topics in special education: assessment of LH, curriculum in language arts for the learning handicapped youngster in junior high school, mainstreaming procedures and comparing the resource room and the special day class.

The topical sub-sections will be designed to be used by parents and teachers of learning handicapped students to become familiar with these issues. The more informed parents are the more helpful and understanding they will be for the relationship between themselves and the school. The selections can also be used for inservices or handed out to others who are interested in these particular issues of special education relating to the learning handicapped student in junior high school.

Until there is an amendment to the law, or until some new innovative procedures come into practice for mainstreaming, the resource room or the self-contained class, these booklets will be useful.

Information about other areas of exceptionality other than the learning handicapped will not be found in these selections. Neither will they discuss other school age areas than the intermediate level.
The assessment section will state the two different kinds of assessment for the learning handicapped, the purposes of an assessment, and it will give the kinds of tests used for placement into special education. It will say what must be done in an assessment and what must not be done.

The curriculum in language arts section for a learning handicapped youngster in junior high school will discuss the interrelationships of the different language behaviors. The language behaviors are listening, speaking, reading and writing. The different techniques and approaches for teaching these behaviors at this level will also be discussed. In the beginning and at the end testing must be done. We will consider about the why and when of standardized, criterion, teacher made and observational testing.

After the assessment and the curriculum has been established, what must be decided is the least restrictive environment for that student. This booklet will compare the special day class with the regular class student who goes to a resource room for added help. We will consider the students behaviors, ability and motivation. We will discuss the physical and structural surroundings in each room and last, the advantages and disadvantages of each.

Mainstreaming procedures—this section will describe in detail the LD student who is trying to survive in the regular classroom with a little added help from the resource room. We will give some reasons why he will be successful in this atmosphere and some reasons why he may not. There will be a discussion on the necessary components for this model to have a good working relationship.
References


SUBSECTIONS
ASSESSMENT OF THE LEARNING
HANDICAPPED JUNIOR
HIGH SCHOOL
STUDENT

BY

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Testing and assessment are not synonymous, although, testing may be a part of a larger process known as assessment (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1981). "Assessment is the process of gathering information through a structured procedure for making evaluative judgments. It's a broader term than measurement or evaluation" (Mahan, 1981). "Assessment of the learning disabled is an analysis of the way the individual performs on a variety of tasks from a variety of appropriate measures in a variety of settings" (Mauser, 1981).

There are two purposes for assessment: one is assessment for identification and the other is assessment for teaching. Assessment for identification is to recognize and sometimes label (LD=learning disabled, EMR=educably mentally retarded, BD=behavior disorder) for administrative purposes those students experiencing learning problems to find out if they require special educational help. Assessment for teaching is to gather information that might be helpful in establishing instructional objectives and remedial strategies for those students identified as handicapped learners (Wallace & Larsen, 1978).

All schools have standard referral practices, that are used when a teacher's observation or other screening method identified a student in need of evaluation. Parents may request an evaluation, or one can be given when an environmental or social condition warranting a closer look such as student's misbehavior that is serious enough to call for expulsion.
or truancy from a supposedly appropriate special education program (Neisworth, 1982).

After a referral, the appropriate school personnel must examine the existing information about the student. Records, test scores, and any other available information is considered. They must make a decision about whether further testing is warranted or if the problems can easily be solved with changes in curriculum, environmental conditions, or instructional techniques (McLoughlin & Lewis, 1981).

When the parents' permission has been secured, evaluation must be conducted by a multidisciplinary team with an evaluator who is knowledgeable about each suspected area of disability. The number, nature and severity of the student's educational needs are studied by qualified personnel to offer the least restrictive and most appropriate educational placement. Placement decisions are based on the information gathered from past records, observation of the teacher or others, questionnaires given to people who know the student, assessment of student's environment including health and nutrition, the student's attitudes and values and a developmental history. Placement decisions are made by the assessment team (Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1981). The variety of tests should not discriminate on the basis of irrelevant criteria like race or sex. Prescribing the work from the information obtained by the assessment team are the members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) meeting (Neisworth, 1982).

An assessment involves such professionals as school psychologists, special education teachers, resource teachers, supervisory personnel,
guidance counselors, speech and language clinicians, reading specialists, physical and occupational therapists (Mauser, 1981). Every area of suspected disability must be examined, but only justified if there is reason to suspect a problem. Types of procedures in the collection of information relative to the assessment of the learning disabled individual are observations, screening devices, check lists and rating scales, informal consultations, structured interviews, work sample analysis, task analysis, norm referenced tests and criterion referenced tests giving a variety of formal and informal procedures (Mauser, 1981):

Observation—which refers to the study of the individual in his learning, work or social environment over a period of time.

Screening devices—are questionnaires and inventories to survey individual or group characteristics on a variety of areas.

Check lists & rating scales—are often times related to a specific setting giving descriptions and quantitative data.

Informal consultations—is discussing the variable being assessed with a knowledgeable source.

Structured interviews—require great preparation and advanced planning to gather information about the individual's area of difficulty. The sources may be himself, parents, peers, present and previous teachers and employers.

Work sample—analysis is to gather and analyze the individual's number and types of errors, patterns of errors as well as successes. This analysis can be used to develop or modify instructional systems.
Task analysis is a procedure that identifies the major component skills and appropriate sequence necessary to complete the task.

Norm referenced tests compare the individual tested to the performance of peers on the same test.

Criterion referenced tests compare the performance of the individual being tested against the content of the material to be learned.

The following criteria is used by the team to determine the student's qualifications for placement.

Specific Learning Disability
1. Child has a severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability in one or more areas when provided with appropriate experiences.
2. A disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in language that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or calculate mathematically.

Educable Mentally Retarded
1. Significantly subaverage general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior.

Behavior Disorder
1. Exhibiting over a long period of time and to a marked degree one or more of the following:
   a. inability to learn that can't be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health factors.
   b. inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with peers and teachers.
c. inappropriate types of behavior under normal circumstances.

d. general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression.

e. tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or school problems.

Parents must be notified in advance for the meetings pertaining to their child. The notifications and meetings must be in a language or mode of communication understandable to the parents. Parents have the right to review and inspect, as well as have an interpretation of their child's records. They have the right to challenge any decision made regarding the identification, placement and education of their child, and may have an independent evaluator if they so choose.

PL 94-142 mandates a re-evaluation of Learning Handicapped students every three years, and his/her Individualized Education Program (IEP) must be reviewed each year.

The emphasis throughout the evaluation process for gathering information that might help in establishing instructional objectives and remedial strategies for the learning handicapped students should be on the specific skills that comprise each academic area of reading, written and oral language, and arithmetic. For example, letter identification, word identification, word attack, word comprehension and passage comprehension are all specific or subskills in the skill of reading. Writing goes hand in hand with reading. When the student can identify the letters she/he must know how to form this symbol on paper. Then he/she must learn to put these symbols together to make words and be able to write the sound/symbol. First students learn to print and later write in cursive
form. From these specific skills in writing and oral language they learn to spell, write sentences and paragraphs which can also be broken down into subskills. The arithmetic skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division can be divided down into specific skills beginning with the simplest form of the problem and progressing to the more complex. Auditory discrimination, speech articulation as well as auditory reception and verbal comprehension are a few of the beginning specific or subskills to oral language. Gathering this information about specific skills can be acquired through formal or informal tests, but experience indicates that informal teacher made tests or commercially available criterion referenced tests are best suited to providing this type of data. Task oriented informal tests can easily be constructed from any of the curriculum materials like workbooks, skill sheets, etc. Teacher made tests are well suited to the need of learning disabled students because the results from such tests can be directly applied to programs of instruction. Specific skill information can be obtained from formally published tests when the student's test performance is carefully examined by the test administrator for specific errors. These findings are then applied to various teaching strategies. Nevertheless, this information is more easily obtained from an informal teacher made test. Subskill assessment outlines the precise nature of a student's difficulty. The information is obtained in terms of skill strengths and weaknesses. The teacher uses this information to determine the skills in which the student requires direct instruction. This approach is ideally suited
to the needs of Learning Disabled students because of the direct relationship between assessment findings and putting into practice various teaching strategies (Wallace & Larsen, 1978).

After identifying Learning Disabled, Educably Mentally Retarded and Behavior Disordered students, PL 94-142 states that they will be given the most appropriate education available without cost and in the least restrictive environment. Selection of the least restrictive environment for mildly handicapped students should be based on knowledge of conditions that offer the highest probability for remediating academic performance deficits and not conditions that are merely socially least restrictive. Mildly handicapped students could have regular classes with monitoring, regular classes with the aide of the resource center or special day class. From all the information obtained by the assessment team the members of the Individualized Education Program (IEP) will prescribe the curriculum to be accomplished and the least restrictive environment.
References


LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM FOR LEARNING HANDICAPPED CLASSES AT THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL

BY

KATHRYN R. GUERIN
THE LANGUAGE ARTS CURRICULUM

The four components of the language arts are listening, speaking, reading, and writing. It is in this order that a child naturally learns these different areas of language (Turnbill & Schulz, 1979). One area of language builds on the other. Piaget has shown us that there are step-like processes in a child's development. It is believed that the slow learner and the learning disabled student have had a breakdown at one or more of these developmental stages. As a result the child's method of processing remains primitive. Bush & Giles (1969) state that a teacher can learn exactly where to begin instruction by testing. Different educator's working with the slow learners have concentrated their interests on different levels of developmental progression and each group has devised an evaluation procedure whereby deficits in development can be identified at that level. The Purdue Perceptual-Motor Survey is a test for students at the early level of developmental progression. The Frostig Test of Developmental Visual Perception is at the intermediate level and the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities is at the upper level. "Using these three tests in sequence, the teacher can determine the point of breakdown in the development of the child (Bush & Giles, 1969)." Each of these tests has a series of therapeutic activities which can be used to help restore the child's developmental progression. Using these recommended activities in sequence, the teacher should be able to pick up the child at the point of his breakdown and carry him through remaining sequences until development is complete. There is a constant assumption that further growth and learning are dependent on the achievement at an earlier stage (Mann, Goodman, Wiederholt, 1978).
The components of language are a developmental sequence of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The two modes of receptive language are listening and reading. The two modes of expressive language are speaking and writing. Due to the interrelationship of these four components of language, whatever is learned in one helps the learning of the others. Language, therefore, must include instruction in all four components. The language arts or communication skills are a part of all subject areas and used throughout the school day. Communication is not only related to every area of school, but every area of life. Communication problems are common with most handicapped students, therefore, language arts is of prime importance in their program planning.

The oral language skills of listening and speaking are referred to as the primary language system since people develop these first. They must be mastered, then the skills of reading and writing can build on them. Many children do not acquire functional skills in listening by themselves. The basic skill of listening can be improved through teaching and practice. Listening differs from hearing. When teachers ask children to listen they are expected to comprehend the message being sent. This same comprehension is needed in reading.

Some activities for teaching auditory discrimination skills are:

1. Auditory recognition of initial and final consonants
   Say words and have the students write the beginning letter on his/her paper.

2. Consonant blend bingo
   Make bingo cards with consonant blends and consonant digraphs in the squares. Read words and ask the students to cover the blend that begins each word.
3. Same or different
   This can be done with consonants or blends. Say three words, two of
   which have the same initial consonant or blend. Ask the student to
   identify the word that began with a different sound.

4. Substitutions
   Help the student learn to substitute one initial sound for another to
   make a new word.

5. Hearing vowels.
   Vowels are more difficult than consonants for some students to hear.
   Have the students listen for and identify short and long vowel sounds.
   The techniques used for the consonants and consonant blends could be
   adapted for the vowel sounds.

6. Awareness of rhyming sounds
   Have the student listen to three words said in succession and tell
   which two of the three words rhyme.

7. Hearing syllables
   Pronounce a multisyllabic word and have the student determine the
   number of syllables in the word. Students need to know that not each
   vowel makes a syllable, but each vowel sound.
   Hearing syllables is necessary for reading and spelling also. This
   conveys the interrelationship between the language components.

8. Riddle rhymes
   Example: I rhyme with look. You read me. What am I? The teacher
   reads the rhymes and the student gives the answer or the student
   could make up the riddle.
Listening comprehension and reading comprehension are the same skill with a different input. Therefore, the following activities could be reading or listening activities.

9. Understanding sentences
Say or read (or Write) different sentences and have the student identify whether that sentence is a statement, question, direction or a command.

10. Listening for details
Read a story to the student and ask detail questions like who, what, when, where and how questions.

11. Sequence of events
Read a story then ask the student to put a pictorial series like a comic strip in the proper chronological order.

12. Following directions
Read directions on making something. Have the materials and ask the student to make it as the directions stated.

13. Getting the main idea
Read a short story and have the student make up a title for it or give him/her some titles to choose from.

14. Making inferences and drawing conclusions
Read a part of a story. Stop at an exciting point and ask the student to tell the ending. This could be studied in written expression class.

15. Recognizing absurdities
Tell a short story with absurd words or phrases that do not fit the story. Ask the student to tell you what is foolish or does not belong in the story.
16. Listening to advertisements

Have the student listen to an advertisement and determine how the advertisement is trying to get the listener to buy the product. Getting the student to recognize propaganda techniques can also be done in reading class using a weekly reader.

The expressive side of the primary language made is speaking. All junior high school students need to build on their vocabulary. The learning handicapped student's speaking in life will probably be informal or informative conversation, not a formal speech; therefore, the vocabulary to enhance should be job related or what might be found in the daily newspaper. There is always needed vocabulary from the content area of different school subjects.

Activities to promote practice in the proper use of oral language and speaking for the handicapped junior high school students:

--planned discussions
--oral book reports
--descriptions of TV or radio broadcasts, etc.
--job related interviews
--role playing

The secondary language system of reading and writing depend on a sound and firm foundation in oral language. Lerner (1981) states, "It has been found that the language ability of poor readers is often inferior to that of good readers." The most complex form of communication is written language.
The ability to write down ideas requires some prerequisite skills such as oral language, ability to read, some skill in spelling and a legible handwriting (Lerner, 1981). Writing is an output of ideas—there can be little output without an abundance of input. If a student has a great deal of input from his environment and past experiences, writing should be easier for him. Johnson and Myklebust, (1967) describe this form of expressive language as a complex process using the highest forms of language. They attribute difficulties in written language to deficits in auditory comprehension such as auditory discrimination, oral syntax, disorders, reading difficulties and disturbances in visual-motor integration. There must be a good foundation in the developmental steps of listening, talking, reading on which to build good writing skills. According to Myklebust this developmental process continues through adolescence (Sitko and Gillespie, 1978).

Activities for teaching written language:

1. Sentence writing
   Daily sentences to teach different concepts—like a complete sentence must have a subject and a predicate. All sentences begin with a capital letter (other capitalization usage), punctuation and types of sentences: statement, question, direction, command.

2. Sentence combining
   This activity is combining two or three sentences into one.
Example:
Music is playing.
It is playing on the radio.
The radio is in the car.
These will be combined to make the sentence read—The music is playing on the car radio.
A sentence combining activity should start with simple sentences and progress to more complex ones.

3. Expanding Sentences
The students start with a simple sentence and think of descriptive words and phrases to add to the noun and verb phrases. This would be a good time to introduce a thesaurus to the students.
Example:
a. The wind blew.
b. The strong howling wind thundered through the tall trees.

4. Prewriting
This is a period for planning and organizing what will be said and in what sequence it will follow. Outlining is a good procedure but confusing for many handicapped students; therefore, brainstorming some ideas and clustering them in related groups is easier. The teacher writes the ideas on the chalkboard as the students think of them. Clustering is also done by the group. Prewriting and writing do not need to be completed in one day. Leaving it for the next day often produces new ideas.
5. Paragraph writing

The topic is suggested by the teacher, some handicapped students need this help. A paragraph needs a topic sentence and a closing sentence. The students may need help with this in the beginning. Prewriting makes writing for these students easier.

6. Language experience

The student dictates a story to the teacher. The teacher writes down the story. The student reads the story. To generate input there is a prewriting activity. During the prewriting activity, the teacher guides the students in word choice, sentence structure and specific skills such as spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization and correct sentence structure. The story is written, edited, and revised on the chalkboard. The students can copy and read. The teacher models both oral and written communication.

The language experience uses all the language components-listening, speaking, writing, and reading. It is mainly a way of teaching beginning reading. It may, however, be used with older students for corrective instruction and motivation. Mercer and Mercer (1981) say that when teacher organization is provided as well as provisions for teaching word attack and comprehension skills, the language experience approach may be used effectively to teach children with learning problems.
Additional activities that may provide variety to a junior high writing program include:

- dictation
- descriptive paragraph
- a journal
- compare and contrast
- ending a story

Grading should be motivational to avoid discouraging the pupil. Teachers may choose to grade only ideas or content for some assignments. There may be two grades given: one for ideas, one for a particular technical skill that is being studied, such as capitalization. Holistic scoring which covers the overall paper is an excellent way to score. A complimentary comment about one phase of it is always motivational with any score.

Spelling and handwriting are a part of the written language. Learning to write is a psychomotor process and handicapped students may be unable to execute efficiently the motor movements required or the cause may be poor instruction in handwriting skills. For students in the junior high school the cursive form should be used. Reinforcing the system the student has been using in the past seems to be a wise strategy. The electric typewriter has proved to be useful for children with severe motor difficulty.

The written grapheme does not have a complete one-to-one correspondence with the spoken phoneme of English. Spelling, therefore, is not an easy task, even for students who are not afflicted with learning disabilities.
Poor visual and auditory memory as well as discrimination are given as causes of spelling difficulties in adolescents (Mann, Goodman, Wiederholt, 1978).

### Spelling Competencies

**Auditory discrimination**—Ability to discriminate consonant sounds and vowel sounds and pronounce.

**Consonants**—Knowledge of consonants in initial, final and medial positions and consonant blends in words.

**Phonograms**—Ability to identify phonograms in initial, medial and final positions in words and ability to identify word phonograms.

**Plurals**—Ability to form plurals by adding S, es, changing f to v, making medial changes, and knowledge of exceptions.

**Syllabication**—Ability to divide words into syllables.

**Structural elements**—Knowledge of root words, prefixes and suffixes.

**Ending changes**—Ability to change ending of words which end in final e, final y, and final consonants.

**Vowel digraphs and diphthongs**—Digraph forms one sound (ai, ea, ay, ei, ie) or a diphthong forms a blend (oi, ou, ow).

**Silent e**—Knowledge of single-syllable words that end in silent e.
Phonetic rules can help the student determine how sounds should be spelled (associate a sound with a particular letter or combination of letters). Through phonics instruction the student can learn to spell words according to syllables. The student breaks up the word into recognizable sound elements, pronounces each syllable, and writes the letter or letters that represent each sound.

In the multisensory approach the student must be able to exhibit visual and auditory recognition and discrimination of the letters of the alphabet and must have motor control to write the word.

The test-study-test procedure is a good approach. A test is given, he/she studies the words that were misspelled on the pretest, a post-test is given to determine the student's mastery. A progress chart is kept and the words missed on the post-test are added to the list of words for the following unit of study.

Activities and games may be used to supplement the spelling program. They stimulate interest, provide practice, and add variety in teaching techniques. These can be found in commercial materials (Mercer and Mercer, 1981).
References

Bush, W.J. & Giles, M.A. Aids to psycholinguistics teaching. Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill, 1969.


MAINTREAMING OF THE LEARNING HANDICAPPED
STUDENT IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

BY

KATHRYN R. GUERIN
Mainstreaming

The concept of mainstreaming is not new; to some degree, special children have always been in the regular classroom. Until recently, however, mainstreaming and individualizing were considered desirable but not really attainable for very many exceptional children. Public Law 92-142 changed that. PL 94-142 requires that all children receive an appropriate education in the least restrictive placement, that means, if appropriate, with non-handicapped students. Mainstreaming is how this will be obtained for many of these individuals.

A simple definition by Joynt and Blackwell (1980)—"Mainstreaming is the educational arrangement of placing handicapped students in regular classes with their non-handicapped peers to the maximum extend appropriate."

Teacher competencies necessary for mainstreaming are in these areas:
--familiarity with resource and support systems such as records, professional resources, equipment, workshops and conferences.
--to know the preferred media and different learning styles of the handicapped children.
--familiarity with the attitudes of a handicapped child and skills to plan for, implement and measure change in attitudes.
--when assessing student needs, having the skills necessary to measure, interpret and report results for handicapped children.
--familiarity with goal setting and the skills necessary to select, modify and develop curriculum materials for handicapped children.
to have the skills in different behavior management techniques and teaching strategies used with handicapped children.

--familiarity with norm referenced and criterion-referenced evaluations

--the ability to interpret and report results.

--the ability to work with others in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs for handicapped children (Goodspeed & Celotta, 1982).

The Learning Handicapped students in the regular classroom are (a) academically handicapped, often labeled "slow learners" or "mildly retarded" who intellectually have difficulty with learning (b) behaviorally/socially handicapped students who have enough emotional controls so that they can benefit from regular classroom placement and (c) the student with a specific learning disability while other areas of learning are normal.

Mainstreaming will not take place in a day. A gradual entrance of the special student into the regular classroom must be considered. The sensitivity of both the regular and special students in the area of acceptance must be considered. A flexibility must be exhibited by the regular and special classroom teachers so that students can move easily within the different educational settings. An important point to remember is that some special students will not be in the regular classroom the entire school day. The placement must be the "best fit" of all alternatives available for the special students. The special students' ability to adjust to regular classroom placement, regardless of handicap will depend upon the cooperative effort between the regular class teacher and the special educator. A successful placement depends upon a continuous working relationship between the teaching professionals involved (Joynt and Blackwell, 1980).
Criteria for selecting handicapped students for mainstreaming are the matching of pupils' educational needs and the capability of the mainstream program to meet those needs. Mainstreaming may be done at any level, preschool thru secondary school.

The resource teacher has a resource room where the mainstreamed pupils may come for additional help or have certain periods of instructional time away from the mainstream rooms to which they are assigned (Birch, J.W., 1978).

The three key objectives to be considered in helping meet the needs of the mainstreamed special education student are: first, appropriate individualized assessment; second, the development and utilization of individualized educational programs and third, the utilization of key resource personnel. Assessment facilitates a better understanding of an individual in such areas as education, social, emotional, physical, and perceptual. It is only after such a complete assessment that critical decisions can be made concerning the educational future of the special student. Following this assessment a staff of qualified people - psychologists, teachers, other individuals who play a vital role in the students' life, plus the parents - will deal with the comprehensive interpretation of the assessment and develop a formalized individualized education program (IEP). It is necessary for successful integration to have supportive services or resource personnel to assist the regular classroom teacher with the special students in her class. The resource teacher can assist the regular classroom teacher by suggesting educational methods and resource materials and by student counseling. Regular class teachers are responsible
for the grades and report cards, but they may consult with special education teachers on the grading. Conferences should be held regularly to discuss any issues confronting the regular class teacher and how to better meet the educational needs of special students. Providing the regular teacher with literature that can help her understand the special student would also be helpful assistance. The regular class teacher should notify the resource specialist concerning problems dealing with the special students so that if counseling is necessary, immediate help is provided. The resource teacher is especially trained to work with special students as well as to offer guidance to the regular classroom teacher. There is a resource room, as stated above, that has been created for the purpose of offering special part-time help to special students.

Supportive help is essential if the regular classroom teacher is to succeed with the mainstreamed students. All professionals involved in the mainstreaming of special students must be willing to give of their time so that a meaningful working relationship is maintained and keep the channels of communication open. The ultimate goal should be to provide the best learning environment possible for the special education students.
References


RESOURCE ROOM VS SPECIAL DAY CLASS

BY

KATHRYN R. GUERIN
Resource Room vs Special Day Class

The word resource applies to anything, person, action, etc. to which one turns for aid in time of need or emergency. Very aptly, this refers to the resource room and person to the resource specialist and the tutors who help in that room.

The resource room is the most commonly used vehicle for providing services to the learning disabled children of the nation (Gearheart, 1977). These students require more special assistance than a tutor or an itinerant therapist can provide, but not enough to require a special day class where the students are in this self contained classroom 51% of the time. Generally, if students are able to succeed in the regular classroom program with 1½ to 2 hours of special assistance the resource specialist's program with the resource room is their least restrictive setting. If a student must have much more than 2 to 3 hours of special assistance, he should perhaps be in a self-contained program (Gearheart, 1977). The self contained classroom should be used only when it seems certain that any other least restrictive setting will not achieve the desired results. For example, a hyperactive student with sever learning problems might be in a special day class all day. A student with less severe learning problems may be in a regular classroom part of the day. Generally these are reading or math lab, physical education, music, art, woodshop or other electives of that kind (Fass, 1980).

Full time special class programs are for those students whose learning and/or behavior problems are so severe that they are not able to benefit significantly from regular classroom instruction. Students enrolled in these full-time self contained special classes do participate with students from the regular school classes in nonacademic programs such as athletics, assembly programs and lunch (Faas, 1980).
The organization of the space in a classroom greatly influences both the instructional program and the attitudes of the students. Space must be provided for small-group instruction, individual work areas, interest centers and material display and storage (Mercer & Mercer, 1981). See figures 3.2 and 3.3 for resource room organization. See figure 4.1 for the organization of a special day class room. Classroom management begins with establishing an environment in which desirable behavior is more likely to occur. It should not only create a general learning environment conducive to appropriate behaviors, but should delineate certain behaviors for different special areas of the classroom. Certain areas of the room can be assigned for various activities by the placement of furniture. Space divided in this manner reminds the student of the behavior required in each area. (Afflect, Lowenbraun & Archer, 1980). Physical surroundings in a special day class are established by organizing materials and supplies so they are ready for use and by keeping visual factors functional and motivational but not distracting. It is necessary to have a structured classroom because learning disabled students are overly distractable, have a short attention span, are impulsive, have a limited ability to concentrate and Gappa and Glynn (1981) tell us learning disabled students are generally fearful of surprises.

A well-equipped resource room contains a wide variety of instructional equipment and material for the wide variety of students coming there. Resource specialists usually engage in screening, diagnosis, parent counseling, writing IEPs, preparing instructional materials, conferring with regular
classroom teachers and other specialists, observing and arranging student follow up. Only 20% of their time should be free to spend in these activities, the remaining time should be devoted to providing direct service to their students. (Faas, 1980). With such a nebulous, flexible schedule to write a weekly and daily schedule seems critical for the resource specialist, to carefully budget the time in order to accomplish an equitable and well organized service. (Aiello, B., 1978). See schedule examples, in appendix.

Advantages to using resource rooms to serve students who have learning problems:

1. The students are given special assistance without being segregated from their age mates for extended periods of time.

2. The students are able to benefit from the services offered in the resource room while continuing to benefit from the program being offered in the regular classroom.

3. Special equipment and materials that are not usually found in the regular classroom are available in the resource room.

Disadvantages of the resource room:

1. Students must miss part of the instruction that is being provided in the regular classroom to receive instruction in a resource room.

2. Some school districts tend to view resource rooms as a cure-all capable of handling problems of all types and degrees of severity.

3. It's not always clear which teacher is responsible for reporting to the parents on the student's progress.
Advantages of full-time special classes:

1. The students can be provided with intensive day-long instruction in a structured environment.
2. The full-time special classes have a specially trained and certified teacher.
3. The students have a totally individualized instructional program.
4. The students who are highly vulnerable to ridicule and isolation in regular classrooms are provided with shelter and the possible support of an accepting peer group.

Disadvantages:

1. The students in full-time special classes become segregated from their age mates.
2. The students' membership in a group that can be identified as different may result in ridicule and rejection.
3. The absence of a peer group that does not have apparent problems means students do not have appropriate models from which to pattern their behavior.
4. Placement in a special class tends to foster the creation of a self-fulfilling prophecy that uses the student's history of failure as a basis for predicting and/or justifying future failure.
Advantages of part-time special class enrollment:

1. The students may participate in those parts of the regular school program where success is possible.
2. Intensive small-group and one-on-one services are available in those areas where special instruction is needed.
3. The special classroom teachers are able to help the students with preparation for their regular classes.

Disadvantages of part-time special classes.

1. The students are segregated from their age mates for a portion of the day.
2. The students spend part of each day in a program that is recognized by their peers as being different.
3. Problems are often encountered when attempting to integrate them into regular school programs in gaining teacher and peer acceptance.
Note: This classroom has been arranged so that special areas are designated for specific activities accompanied by expectations for child behavior. The teacher (T) is always positioned so that she can visually monitor all areas of the classroom, which will reduce the occurrence of behavior problems (e.g., fighting between children, loud talking, wandering around the room).
FIGURE 3.2
Sample floor plan for a small resource room.


FIGURE 3.3
Sample floor plan for a large resource room.

OURCE ROOM

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AFTER SCHOOL
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