To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Jennifer L. Smith entitled, "Relationships Between School-Wide Reform and Inclusive Education." I have examined the final copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science, with a major in Special Education.

Michael Hannum, Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

Accepted for the Council:

Associate Vice Chancellor and
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RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOL-WIDE REFORM AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

A Thesis

Presented for the

Master of Science Degree

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Abstract

In this study the implementation procedures used to initiate inclusion programs were examined to determine if the presence of a school-wide reform effort increased the effectiveness of these programs. Principals across the state of Tennessee completed surveys which evaluated their inclusion programs and determined their implementation procedures. A t-test was used to compare the mean effectiveness scores of schools which implemented inclusion programs as part of a school-wide reform effort with schools who implemented inclusion programs without undergoing such a process. Although no significant difference could be seen between these two groups, several factors may have contributed to influence the data. More research is necessary before an answer can be provided to this question. (contains 22 references)

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Change is systematic. Reform must focus on the development and interrelationships of all the main components of the system simultaneously - curriculum, teaching and teacher development, community, student support systems and so on; and reform must focus not just on structure, policy and regulations but on deeper issues of the culture of the system (Fullan,1992, p. 751).

Context

Schools in every part of the United States are being forced to change (NASDSE, 1993). Some eagerly anticipate and plan for change, while others resist new programs which require them to move from the safety of the status quo. Reacting to criticism from parent groups, courts, and politicians, schools are addressing issues such as; multi-culturalism, gender bias, gangs and school violence, prayer in school, cooperative learning, and gifted and talented programs. Various advocacy groups are pressuring districts to develop programs designed to address their issues. School systems have responded in two different ways. Some schools address each of these issues

individually by making additions or specific modifications to their current delivery system. Other schools implement a broad school-wide reform effort. This reform effort addresses multiple issues through the development of a new delivery system.

One area in which schools are experiencing immense pressure to change is the delivery of services to disabled students. The increasing focus on special education is due, in part, to an increase in the number of students identified as disabled. The number of children served in U.S. public school special education programs has tripled since 1975 (US Department of Education, 1992). As advocates for the disabled focus less on identification and placement and more on the quality of programming, the pressure to reform increases. The result of this pressure is evidenced by reform initiatives such as the Regular Education Initiative and the Inclusion movement.

The Regular Education Initiative (REI) begun by Madeline Will in 1986 focused attention on unifying special and regular education into a single system (Will, 1986). Furthermore, the amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), formerly known as the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, stressed the importance of "innovations that improve the educational opportunity for disabled students" (Yell, 1992). Although IDEA did not call for the unification of regular and special

education delivery systems, it did introduce the concept of Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). The LRE concept requires schools to place students in regular educational settings to the largest extent possible. Alternate placements could occur only when a regular setting was proven inappropriate. Currently, special education is in the midst of a reform effort called inclusion, which calls for the placement of all students in their home school. This premise is based on the principle of least restrictive environment. Inclusion proponents also advocate for the delivery of special education services to occur under a unified system. Across the nation inclusion programs have experienced varying amounts of success. This is due at least in part to the different implementation procedures. Although there is agreement on the need to become inclusive among parents, educators, and professionals, the best way to achieve inclusive schools remains in question.

With both regular education reform and special education reform occurring in schools, the question arises as to whether the two reform movements should be integrated. Furthermore, if they are to be integrated, how? Should schools continue to address each area of concern separately, or should they begin to look at the "big picture" of school reform? Should inclusion programs be implemented as a special education program separate

and apart from any general education reform or should they be incorporated within the larger context of school reform? What is the best way to achieve a truly inclusive community? This study attempted to answer these questions by gathering information from the schools currently undertaking the process of inclusion and school reform.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate inclusive schools in the state of Tennessee. Some of these schools implemented their inclusion programs within the context of school reform while others tried to "add-on" inclusive programming to their existing framework of services. These inclusive schools also experienced various amounts of success in the development and implementation of their programs. This study gathered information regarding the quality of inclusive programs across the state and identified the conditions under which schools experienced the greatest level of success. Specifically, the study questioned the effect of school-wide reform efforts on the success of inclusionary programming. After first identifying appropriate indicators to judge the effectiveness of an inclusive school, the study addressed the following two questions:

1. How closely does a principal's perception of the level of inclusiveness of his/her school match the inclusiveness score from a checklist of program quality indicators?

2. Do schools that participate in a school-wide reform movement provide more effective inclusion programs than those that implement "add-on" inclusion programs?

Null Hypothesis

There is no difference in the quality of inclusive programs, as measured by a checklist of quality indicators, between schools that implement inclusion as part of a school-wide reform initiative and those that implement inclusion as a separate "add-on" program.

Definition of Terms

Although there are many definitions of inclusion in the literature today the one chosen for the purpose of this study was written by Diane Ferguson.

1. "Inclusion is a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children and youths as active, fully participating members of the school community; that views diversity as the norm, and that ensures a high-quality education for

each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching and necessary supports for each student." (Ferguson, 1995)

2. School-wide reform refers to a process in which a school reevaluates its mission and responsibilities for educating all of its members. It begins by generating a philosophical base from which to plan programs for all of its members, and continues with the development, implementation, and evaluation of a new delivery system.

3. Top-down reforms are designed and imposed by people above or outside the educational system. For example, national leaders, local politicians, or top level school administrators could design a reform initiative and require LEAs and teachers to comply.

4. Bottom-up reform is initiated and implemented by educators at the "grass roots" level. For example, a school faculty could decide to work together to write a new mission statement.

Limitations

1. Although the Program Quality Indicators (PQI) section of the survey was validated (Meyer, 1987), the first two sections of the survey were not. Therefore, complete survey validity and reliability can not be assumed.

2. The results of this study are based on the responses of principals to questions concerning the quality of their school. It is possible that the scores could be inflated since the principals were not impartial observers.

3. The response rate was not high (15%) and should not be regarded as a complete picture of inclusion in Tennessee.

Delimitations

The data collected for this study were limited to school principals from the state of Tennessee and should not be generalized to other settings.

Significance of the Study

As schools respond to the changing needs of all their students it will become important for special educators to be included in the plans for school-wide reform. In addition, proponents of inclusion will need to implement programs based on what has proven successful in other schools.

Although there continues to be some discussion about the specific qualities of inclusive communities and the best practices in which to implement, evaluate, and improve inclusive programs, there is no longer much debate about whether inclusion should or should not occur. There are, however, substantial differences among schools in the extent of inclusive

programming, the feelings of acceptance and approval experienced by the staff, and the degree of long term success these programs create. The important question we must ask, if we accept major school reform and inclusive programs as valid goals, is why some schools are better at implementing these changes than others. Furthermore, we must identify the circumstances leading to successful implementation of programs and reproduce these programs in other contexts.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE

Introduction

The review of current literature presented for this study is divided into several sections. First, regular education reform initiatives are discussed. Second, a brief historical overview of special education reform is offered including a discussion of current inclusion definitions and quality indicators. Finally, a section discussing special education reform as a part of school-wide reform is presented. This review was organized around the framework used by Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, and Leal (1995). Figure 1 illustrates their view of how special education and regular education reform efforts fit together. In their model, regular education reform is broken down into three phases. Special education reform is shown to occur at the same time, although separately.

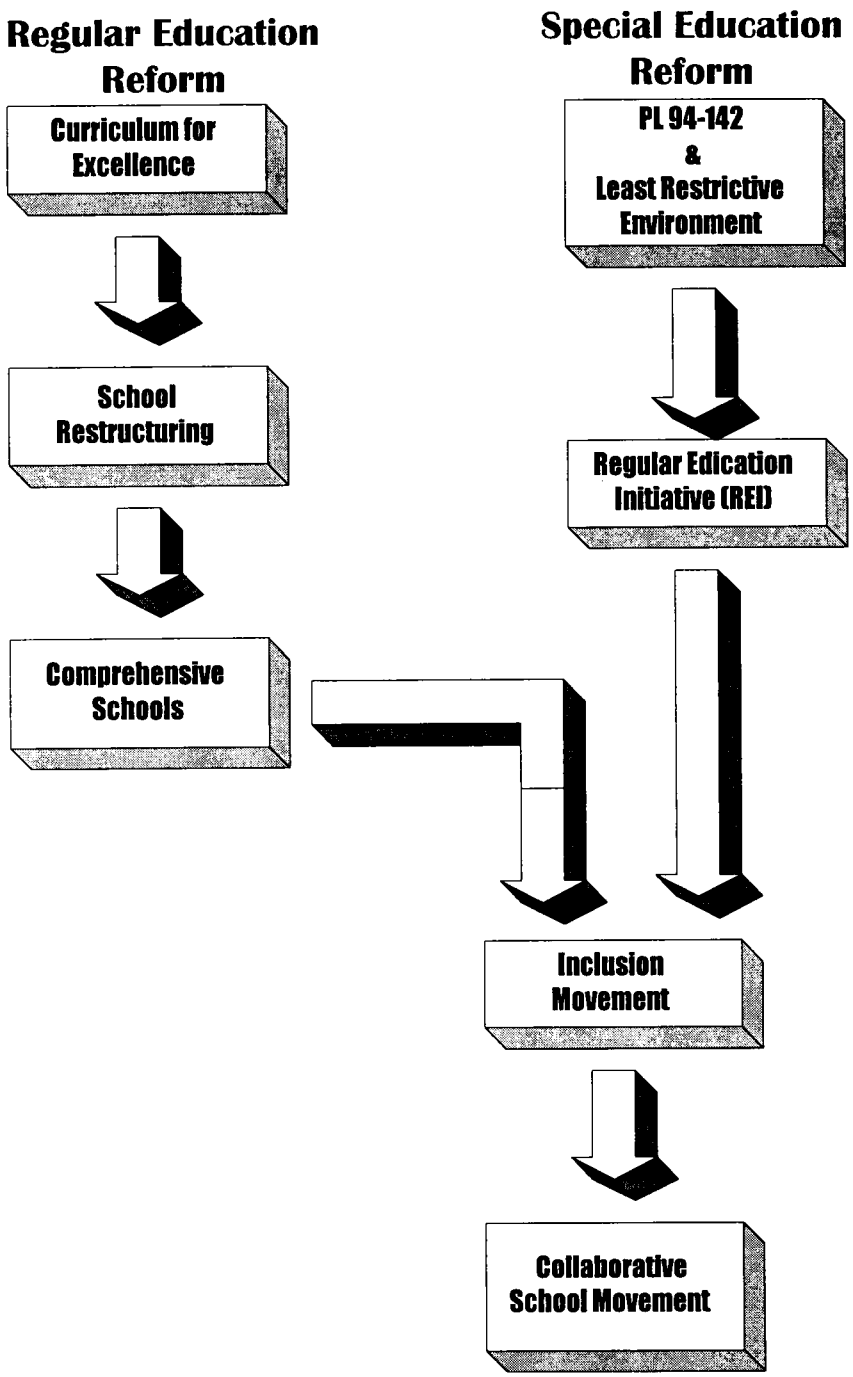


Figure 1. A Model of Regular and Special Education Reform (Turnbull et al., 1995)

Regular Education Reform

To begin to understand where special education and inclusion fit into today's reformed school, we need to first consider the larger picture of school reform. As stated before, there is not a single reform movement, but rather a "multiplicity of initiatives that have been undertaken" (NASDSE, 1993, p. 1). According to Turnbull et al.(1995), regular education reform can be divided into the following three phases: 1) Curriculum for Excellence, 2) School Restructuring, and 3) Comprehensive Schools.

The Curriculum for Excellence phase of school reform encompasses initiatives that focused on improving education by raising standards and implementing higher requirements. In 1983, A Nation at Risk was released which sparked national attention on the failings of public schools and the subsequent onslaught of reform initiatives (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). The focus of the criticism rested on the inability of U.S. students to academically compete with students from other nations. The economic competitiveness of the United States appeared to be lagging behind the rest of the world. National leaders were behind the top down reform movement that addressed these concerns (Turnbull et al., 1995). Stanley Swartz referred to this period of reform as first generation reform (Swartz, 1993). He noted that this generation of reform focused on external

factors. For example, many school systems adopted higher graduation standards for students and competency testing for teachers. This phase of reform implied that the problems schools faced could be addressed by setting higher standards and adopting tougher policies.

By the late 80's, policy makers and educators began advocating for a new kind of reform. Called the School Restructuring period by Turnbull et al., this set of reforms focused on improving the structure of schools. It involved breaking the old mold and designing a new one, not from the top down, as in the Curriculum for Excellence movement, but from the bottom up. Local school districts were asked to form collaborative teams and follow programs such as W. Edwards Demming's Total Quality Management System in an effort to rebuild schools.

In 1991, the second phase response from the White House to mounting pressure to improve education came in the form of Goals 2000. President Bush endorsed these goals first and President Clinton and Congress passed additional legislation in 1994. The act contained the following six goals: (Yell, 1992, p. 25).

1. to ensure that every child starts school ready to learn;

2. to raise the high school graduation rate to 90%;

3. to ensure that every student leaving the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades can demonstrate competence in core subjects;

4. to make students first in the world in math and science achievement;

5. to ensure that every adult is literate and has the skills necessary to compete in a global economy and is able to fulfill the duties of citizenship, and

6. to free American schools from drugs and violence so that learning can occur.

Although there continued to be a strong element relating to increased standards and requirements, another focus was emerging. This reform focused on people (Swartz, 1993). In what Swartz identifies as second generation reform, teachers were encouraged to take part in site-based management teams. The issue of school choice by parents became a popular political issue. Swartz goes on to criticize both of these generations of reform because they did not address the needs of children with disabilities. Michell Yell echoes his concern for the disabled student placed in the middle of this reform effort.

> *It is reasonable to fear that, in the stampede to restructure education for higher achievement outcomes and to turn out students who will enable America to be competitive in a global economy, the individual needs of students with disabilities may be minimized, or more tragically, forgotten (Yell, 1992, p. 27).*

According to Turnbull et al., the third phase of regular education reform began to address these concerns. In this phase the focus was on meeting the needs of disadvantaged students. Schools began to recognize that the deficiencies students displayed at school were related to the deficiencies they experienced at home. Therefore, professionals began to recommend that services such as social, health, and mental health, in addition to education, be available at the neighborhood school. This became known as the comprehensive service approach (Turnbull et al., 1995).

Where does special education and the children they are charged to educate fit into this reform? The following section discusses the advances that special education has made to provide services for disabled students, as well as, the historical context in which the current inclusion reform takes place.

Special Education Reform

As reformers of regular education in the United States continued to strive for better schools, special educators were making strides of their own. For the most part, these early reforms occurred apart from regular education and in general increased the separation between the two systems. Legislation and judicial decisions were the vehicle used to first create and then improve services for disabled students.

In 1975 Congress passed landmark legislation called the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), or P.L. 94-142. Turnbull et al. recognize this as the first phase of special education reform. The act set up a system of funding for states to identify and then serve disabled students. The original act of 1975, as well as the updated version of 1990, renamed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), contained six important principles. Schools were required to follow these principles in an effort to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) for all students (IDEA, 1990).

1. Zero reject;
2. Non- discriminatory evaluation;
3. Appropriate education;
4. Least restrictive environment (LRE);

5. Procedural due process; and

6. Parent participation.

The concept of least restrictive environment remains a key principle in decisions regarding the placement of students receiving special education services. To address the question of appropriate placement, a continuum of service options was developed. This continuum listed types of placements from the very least to the most restrictive. IDEA required students to be placed in the least restrictive environment that could provide an appropriate educational experience for the student.

Other pieces of legislation, such as Section 504 of the Rehabilitation act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, continued to protect the rights of the disabled. However, it is the interpretation of these laws that fuels the current debate over the most equitable and effective way to provide all students with an appropriate educational experience. The next section discusses how the principles of LRE and the dual system of service have come under scrutiny in the Regular Education Initiative and the Inclusion Movement.

In 1986 Madeline Will, Assistant Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education, started a new reform called the Regular Education Initiative (REI).

Turnbull et al. include REI in their model as the second phase of special education reform. REI proponents criticized special education for keeping some students away from services they needed and for stigmatizing others by pulling them out of the mainstream (Turnbull et al., 1995). Madeline Will and proponents of REI argued for a merger between special and regular education. They believed that education needed to work toward reforming regular education classrooms in order to make them places where all students could succeed. There was mixed reaction to the Regular Education Initiative. Advocates for the moderately and severely disabled strongly supported the principle of merging the two systems, while others rejected the notion of ignoring the continuum of services set forth in IDEA (Turnbull et al., 1995).

While REI took an important step forward for improving the education of all children, it experienced limited success because it was still considered a special education issue. The development of the initiative involved very little collaboration between regular and special educators. According to the Turnbull model, it was at this time that the reform efforts in both regular and special education began to merge. This set the stage for the inclusion movement to work with both systems in an effort to influence the reforming of American schools.

According to a National Study of Inclusive Education (1994), inclusion programs have been implemented across the nation. The following information was gathered from that study.

1. Inclusion programs are taking place in every state.
2. Inclusion programs are taking place in a wide range of locations - urban, suburban, and rural school districts, large and small districts.
3. Inclusion programs are occurring at all grade levels, involving students across the entire range of handicapping conditions.
4. Inclusion programs are being initiated by administrators, teachers, parents, university faculty, state departments of education, and as a result of court orders.
5. The evaluation of inclusion programs is taking place addressing the issues of implementation, outcomes, and financing.

The question that remains is, what exactly is inclusion and what does it look like? There continues to be a debate in current literature about the definition and characteristics of inclusive schools. Although some supporters want to hang onto the continuum of services (Yell, 1992), most proponents describe inclusive schools as a single system of education in which the needs

of all students, identified and otherwise are supported and met. Ferguson describes her view of a unified system in this way.

> *Inclusion is a process of meshing general and special education reform initiatives and strategies in order to achieve a unified system of public education that incorporates all children and youths as active, fully, participating members of the school community: that views diversity as the norm, and that ensures a high-quality education for each student by providing meaningful curriculum, effective teaching and necessary supports for each student (Ferguson, 1995, p. 286).*

This definition can be broken down into five components. An inclusive school 1) includes everyone as active members, 2) values differences, 3) provides a meaningful academic program, 4) uses effective teaching and 5) provides the supports required by each student. All of the current definitions and lists of quality indicators can be viewed under this framework. In fact, many checklists of inclusive school characteristics are organized in a similar manner (La Paro & Bechtel, 1992; Meyer, 1996; Montie, 1992; Rogers, 1993; Sailor, 1992; Simon and Smith, 1991; and Vandercook & York, 1990).

The first component of the inclusion definition requires all children to be full members of their neighborhood school. Specifically, this requires schools to place every student living in their district in an age appropriate regular

classroom (La Paro & Bechtel, 1992; Meyer, 1996; Montie, 1992; and Sailor, 1992). Inclusive schools also promote the participation of all students including those with disabilities in extracurricular activities and social clubs (Meyer, 1996; Montie, 1992; and Simon & Smith, 1991). Teachers are expected to promote a sense of community among members of their class and to show their students how to value the differences among their friends.

This goal of valuing diversity is the second component of Ferguson's definition. In most checklists of best inclusionary practices this component is reflected in the requirement of a new school mission statement (LaParo & Bechtel, 1992; Meyer, 1996; and Simon and Smith, 1991). Typically, this mission statement indicates that the members of a school community believe that students of all backgrounds and abilities belong and can achieve. This diversity is supported by the members of the school community. Ferguson explains the effect of adopting this philosophy in the following statement.

> *Valuing diversity and difference, rather than trying to change or diminish it so that everyone fits some ideal of similarity, leads to the realization that we can support students in their efforts to become active members of their communities. No longer must the opportunity to participate in life wait until some standard of "normalcy" or similarity is reached (Ferguson, 1995, p. 287).*

Part of supporting a diverse population of students includes providing them an appropriate education. This third part of the inclusion definition is operationalized in many ways on lists of effective inclusionary practices. In inclusive schools all students have educational programs designed for their specific needs (Meyer, 1996; Montie, 1992). They receive instruction in a variety of grouping arrangements and benefit from support services such as, occupational and physical therapy or speech and language instruction.

Effective teaching practices are also included as a vital component of successful inclusive schools. These schools recognize that all students can benefit from the adoption of teaching strategies designed to address different learning styles. One way inclusive schools provide effective instruction to all their students is by encouraging teachers to participate in collaborative team work. Several checklists of best inclusion practices include collaborative team work of both teachers and students as a required component (Montie, 1992; Simon & Smith, 1991).

The last component of Ferguson's definition requires inclusive schools to provide necessary supports for each child. These supports could be additional personnel such as classroom associates, or professional service providers such as, physical or occupational therapists and speech/language pathologists. The checklists suggest that although regular classroom

placement is a key component, appropriately provided special education support is essential to the success of an inclusive school.

The description of inclusive schools provided above represents a summary of the general definition found in current literature. Although it is important to know how professionals define inclusion it is equally important to understand how professionals suggest schools achieve inclusion. Since most advocates believe that true inclusion can not occur without the collaboration of regular education, most of the current literature describes how special education can be improved only by working within the context of regular education reform initiatives. The following section describes what the current literature says about implementing inclusion through school-wide reform.

Inclusion and School-wide Reform

When looking at the benefits of implementing inclusion programs within the context of school-wide reform, it is helpful to return to the model presented by Turnbull et al. The final period of reform described in their model is referred to as the Collaboration Movement (see figure 1) (Turnbull et al., 1995). In this movement general and regular education share responsibility for reshaping schools to benefit all children. Collaborative schools recognize the need to involve all stakeholders in developing

programs that focus on the needs of all children. As described in the previous section, most inclusion advocates view collaboration as an essential ingredient to the successful development and implementation of inclusive programs.

Swartz describes his vision of the next and most promising reform movement as third generation reform. He encourages all educators to participate in this kind of reform because "the child, as student, is at the center of reform, rather than a variety of external factors or where adults and their roles are central." (Swartz, 1993 ,p. 6). Swartz is one example of a special education advocate who believes that the way to improve the education for all students, including those with disabilities, is to unify the two systems. His views on combining special and regular education are reflected in the following statement.

> *We must develop one single system of education that is designed to accommodate all learners. Even though learners represent a continuum of strengths and weaknesses, they can be served in a unified way that provides for the full inclusion of all children and one where every child is assured success (Swartz, 1993, p. 6).*

Both of these viewpoints discuss improving the education of disabled students by working with and through regular education. Other

professionals agree that special education reform and inclusion must take place within the context of regular education reform. The National Association of State Directors of Special Education (NASDSE) position regarding special education and regular education reform reflects this agreement.

> *Special education must become part of the national reform agenda. If not, the results of reform could be to further isolate students with disabilities, professionals, families and personnel preparation programs from the mainstream of educational change (NASDSE, 1993, p. 7).*

The NASDSE calls for a number of changes in the delivery of special education services including unifying the two systems. Other recommended changes include:

- Making modifications to the general education program with precision to ensure successful student outcomes.
- Thinking of special education as a service rather that a place.
- Actively engaging families as full partners in the educational process.
- Actively looking for collaborative opportunities to support instruction in settings students would attend if not disabled.

- Working collaboratively with other agencies in the delivery of services to students and their families.
- Utilizing resources in the most flexible manner possible to support the total instructional efforts of the schools (NASDSE, 1993, p. 6-7).

NASDSE goes on to make a strong statement regarding the role special education and special educators must play in national reform efforts.

> *These changes are necessary to improve the performance of all students, including students with disabilities. These changes must be addressed through a total restructuring of special education as part of the larger education reform movement. Special educators must be aggressively involved in the reform efforts (p. 7).*

Another author writes specifically about developing inclusion programs through this total restructuring approach. Lipsky points out the futility of trying to "fix" special education.

> *Educational restructuring does not require the "fixing" of special education nor moving it closer to nor even into the "mainstream". Rather, it is a challenge to the very nature of this dual system which utilizes mainstream education for partial integration of some special education students. This cannot be achieved merely by bringing students with disabilities into the current system (Lipsky, 1994, p. 21).*

In other words, simply placing disabled students in the current regular education system is not inclusion and does not benefit them or others. Instead, the current regular education system must be reshaped into a system that reflects the values of inclusive education. It is important to remember that these values emphasize the expectation of belonging and achievement of all students along the continuum, disabled or not.

Conclusion

This chapter summarized the historical background of regular and special educational reform as well as the present context under which the current inclusion movement is taking place. Regular education reformers have previously focused on increasing standards and improving the structure of schools. Special education reforms have historically concentrated on assuring the rights of disabled students by creating a dual system of service delivery. Although this topic is still debated in professional circles, much of the current

literature suggests that in order to improve the education of all students, regular and special education must work collaboratively under one system. The success of inclusive education rests on the ability of the two systems to work together to redefine American schools.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Introduction

In the following chapter, the design of this research study is presented. First, the subjects for the study and the survey instrument are described. This is followed by a discussion of the data collection procedure. Finally, the steps taken to analyze the data are explained.

Subjects

The subjects used as the sample population in this study were public school principals from the state of Tennessee. Only principals who were from schools where an inclusion program was in place were considered for the study. Of this group, 300 principals were identified and sent a survey form. These principals were identified by their special education supervisors. Forty-five of these principals responded to the survey. The principals who participated in this study represented schools in urban, rural and suburban settings. In addition, surveys were received from schools of all sizes.

Survey Instrument

Part One of the survey instrument used for this study contained questions requesting demographic information about the school and community. It also contained a question which required the principal to give the school an inclusiveness rating, from "not inclusive" to "very inclusive." This inclusiveness rating was later compared to the school's mean score on the Program Quality Indicators (PQI) checklist of characteristics of effective inclusive schools.

Part Two of the survey was created to gain information about this study's independent variable; a school's teaming and reform efforts. In responding to these questions, the principals simply indicated the presence or absence of certain kinds of teams at their schools and the level of their effectiveness. The question regarding the presence or absence of a school based reform effort was later used to divide the surveys into two groups for the second of the two statistical analyses. This analysis compared the inclusive programs of schools who implemented their inclusive programs as part of a larger school wide reform to those who implemented their programs as separate add-on special education programs.

Part Three of the survey instrument was a checklist of Program Quality Indicators (PQI) developed by Luanna Meyer of Syracuse University.

Permission was requested and granted to use the checklist as part of this survey. This section of the survey was designed to collect information about this study's dependent variable; the quality of an inclusive school as indicated by their PQI score. The checklist was comprised of four sections that contained indicators of quality inclusive programs. The section headings were: LEA District Indicators, Building Indicators, Educational and Related Service Indicators, and Individual Student and Program Indicators. In each section there were nine or ten characteristics which the principals responded to using a scoring code indicating the degree to which these characteristics were present at their school.

Data Collection Procedure

The goal of this study was to gather information about inclusive schools from across the state of Tennessee. To do this, we relied on special education supervisors from around the state to identify inclusive schools in their area and to distribute the surveys to the principals of these schools. The number of surveys given to the supervisors to distribute depended upon the number of schools in their area. Of the 139 school systems in Tennessee, 106 systems were asked to participate in the study and 33 were not. These 33 systems were the smallest in the state, all having three or fewer schools within their districts. Of the systems included in the study, the number of surveys

distributed to each depended on the number of schools within the district. The three largest districts were each given 25 surveys while the smallest included systems received only one.

The surveys were initially distributed at a state conference for special education supervisors. The supervisors were given oral and written directions regarding distributions procedures. Included in the survey packet was a letter of introduction, a self-addressed stamped envelope, directions for completion and return as well as the survey instrument itself. A second mailing occurred a week later to those supervisors unable to attend the conference.

Statistical Analysis

In order to answer the two research questions of this study, the data were treated in several different ways. The first question involved looking at how closely a school's self-rating of inclusiveness compared to an actual inclusiveness score using a checklist of quality indicators. To answer this, we compared each of the principals' self ratings to their school's PQI score. A series of bar graphs were created showing the results. This data is presented in Chapter Four.

To address the second and central question of the study; *Do schools that participate in a school-wide reform movement provide more effective inclusion*

programs than those that implement "add-on" inclusion programs?; the surveys were divided into two groups. Group One consisted of surveys from schools that were participating in the process of school wide reform. Schools that fell into this group answered "yes" to the question on section two of the survey regarding the presence of a team designed to guide a major restructuring effort. Group Two consisted of surveys from schools where no such effort was underway. The PQI scores for each group were averaged and a t-test applied to compare the two means. The t-test was chosen to determine if the null hypothesis could be rejected by showing a significant difference between the two means. If the null hypothesis can be rejected it would show that in the sample population schools undergoing school wide reform were significantly different in regards to their inclusionary practices from schools that were not involved in reform. If the null hypothesis can not be rejected, it would show that no such difference existed.

Since the two groups considered for this second question were not of equal size (n=11, n=31), equal variance between the two groups could not be assumed. Therefore, a test of equal variance was used. Hartley's F-Max test was applied to compare the variances to determine if any significant difference was present. The results of this test, as well as the statistical

analysis related to the two research questions, are presented in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Introduction

In the following chapter the results of this study are presented. In the first section information about the respondents is provided. The second and third sections address each research question through an analysis of the data provided by the surveys. The first question examined principals' perceptions about the quality of their inclusive school. To address this question, data from the checklist of Program Quality Indicators was compared to the principals' self-rating. In the third section of this chapter, the second research question is addressed. To answer this question, the data was analyzed to determine if any significant difference in the quality of inclusive programming existed between schools that implemented inclusion as part of a school-wide reform effort and schools who implemented inclusion as an "add-on" special education program.

Information About Survey Respondents

Of the 300 surveys distributed to principals across the state, 45 were completed and returned. This translated into a low response rate of 15%.

Five of these surveys were discarded due to incomplete data. Data collected from Part One of the survey provided demographic information about the schools the respondents represented. Specifically, three characteristics were examined in order to gain information about the sample population. These characteristics were size of school, level of school (elementary, middle, or high), and school environment (urban, suburban, rural).

Figure 2 shows that surveys were returned from all three sizes of schools. Of the 40 schools whose data were considered for this study, 38% were schools with less than 500 students, 39% were schools with 500-1000 students and 23% were schools with over 1000 students. Although, schools with 1000 or more students returned fewer surveys than the smaller schools, they were well represented. The surveys were not as evenly distributed across the other two characteristics.

Figure 3 shows that the majority of surveys were returned from elementary schools. Specifically, 39% of the surveys were from elementary schools and 23% were from schools that served students in elementary through middle school. Schools that served only middle school students returned 12%, whereas high schools returned 24%. A very small number of

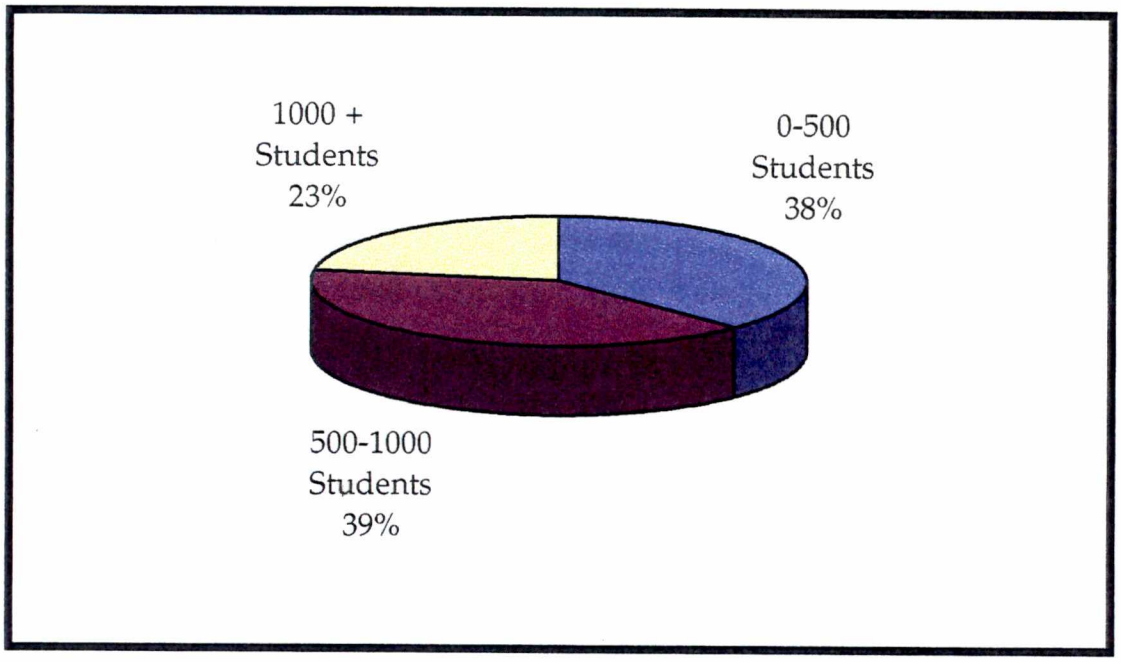


Figure 2. Percentage of Surveys From Different Size Schools

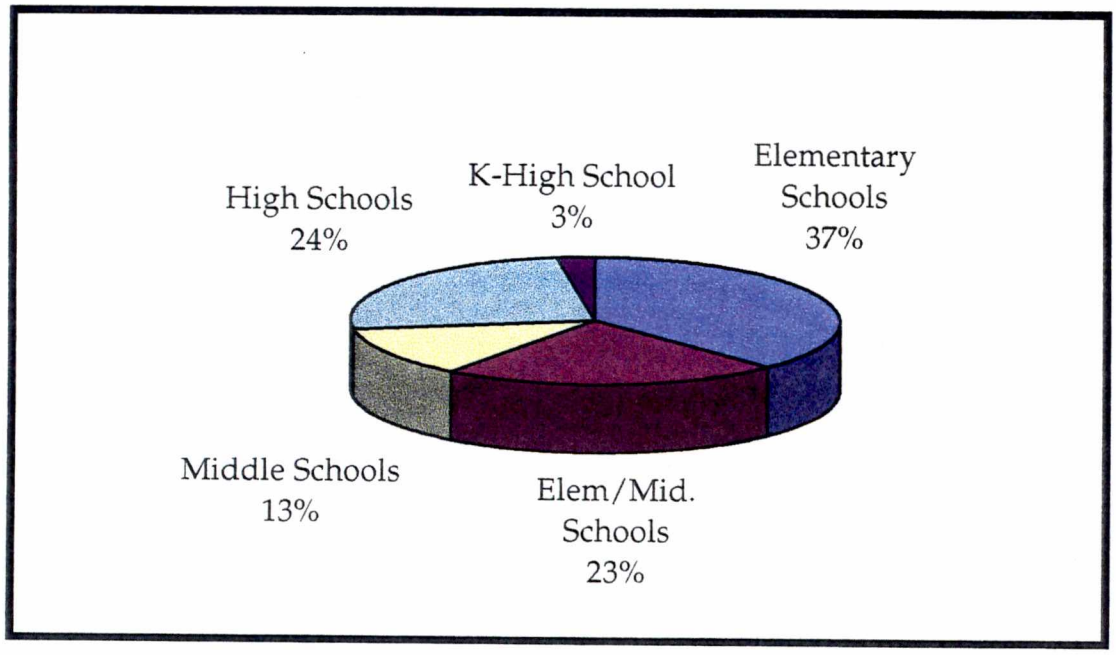


Figure 3. Percentage of Surveys From Different School Levels

surveys were returned from schools who served students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Although more surveys were returned from lower level schools, all school levels were well represented.

School environment was the last demographic characteristic to be considered. Figure 4 illustrates the proportion of surveys that were returned from schools in rural, suburban and urban settings. More than half (55%) of the returned surveys were from schools in rural environments. The second largest percentage (32%) were from suburban schools, while only 13% of the surveys were from urban schools. These results confirm the information provided in the National Study on Inclusive Education which indicated that inclusion programs are evident in all areas, at all school levels, and in schools of all sizes.

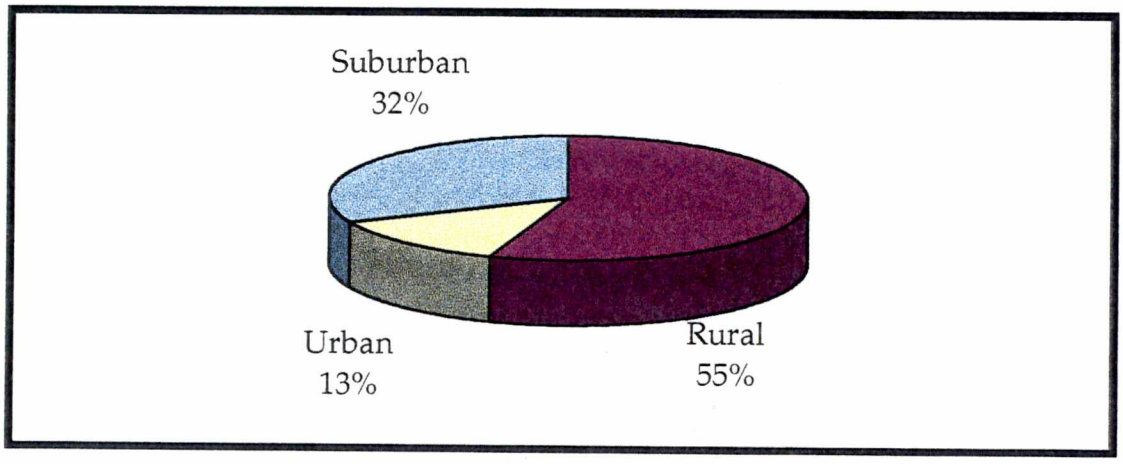


Figure 4: Percentage of Surveys From Different School Environments

Analysis of School Inclusiveness Score and Principal Perception of Inclusiveness

This section presents the data from this study related to the first research question: *How closely does a principal's perception of the level of inclusiveness of his/her school match the inclusiveness score from a checklist of program quality indicators?*

To answer this question, information was taken from Part One and Part Three of the survey instrument. In Part One, the principals were asked to give their school a rating based on how inclusive they believed it to be. Possible responses ranged from zero, indicating least inclusive, to four, indicating very inclusive (See Appendix). This score was compared to the information provided in Part Three of the survey. In the third part of the survey, the principals were asked to respond to statements describing characteristics of an inclusive school. They scored each question by indicating the extent to which the characteristic was present at their school. The scoring scale ranged from a score of zero, indicating not present at all, to a score of four, indicating present for *all* students. This checklist, called the Program Quality Indicators checklist (PQI), was broken into four levels and a mean score was tabulated for each level as well as the total checklist. The total checklist mean scores were compared to the principals self-ratings.

The results of these comparisons are shown in the following figures. The principals' were placed into three groups based on their reported self-rating score. Of the 40 surveys, 13 principals recorded a self-rating of one, 12 principals recorded a self-rating of two, and 14 principals recorded a self-rating of three. No principal recorded a self-rating of zero and one principal chose not to provide a self-rating.

Group One consisted of the 13 principals who recorded a self-rating of one. The corresponding PQI mean score for this group was 2.34. The distribution of PQI scores for this group is illustrated in Figure 5. As the figure illustrates, one PQI score fell between .5-1.5, six PQI scores fell between 1.5-2.5, while the remaining six PQI scores fell between 2.5-3.0.

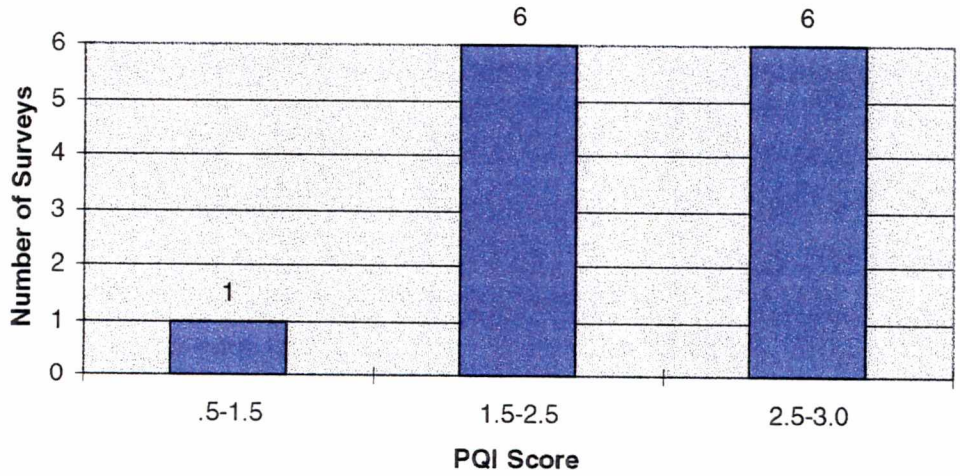


Figure 5: PQI Scores of Surveys With a Self-Rating of One

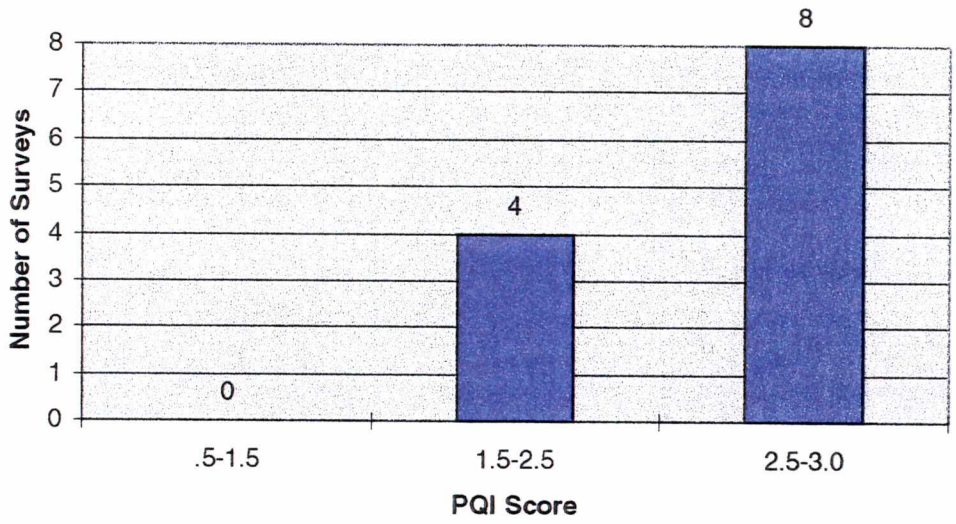


Figure 6: PQI Scores of Surveys With a Self-Rating of Two

Group Two consisted of the 12 principals who recorded a self-rating of two. The corresponding PQI mean score for this group was 2.55; the highest of the three groups. The distribution of PQI scores for this group is illustrated in Figure 6. As indicated by the figure, four PQI scores fell between 1.5 - 2.5, while the remaining eight PQI scores fell between 2.5-3.0.

The last of these three groups' scores is summarized in Figure 7. This group consisted of the 14 principals who recorded a self-rating of three. The corresponding PQI mean score of this group was only slightly lower than the second group (2.53). As Figure 7 illustrates, six PQI scores fell between 1.5-2.5 and eight PQI scores fell between 2.5-3.0.

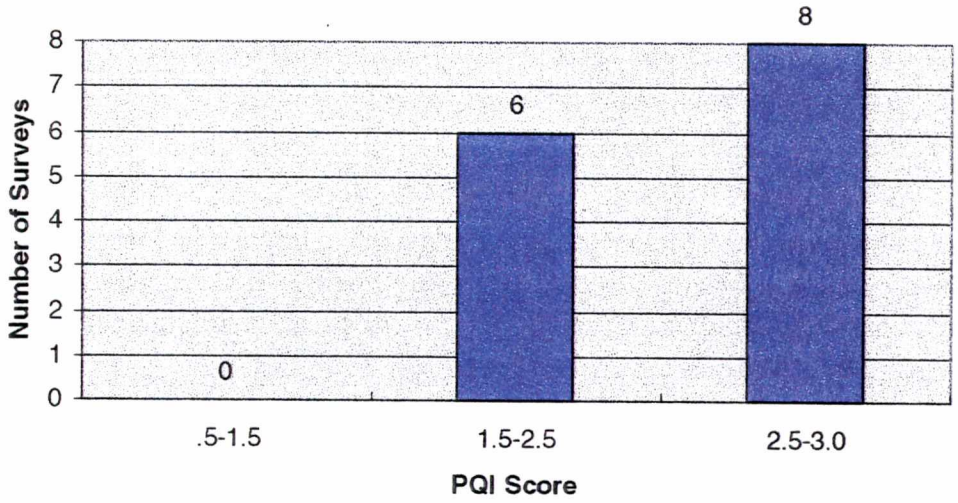


Figure 7: PQI Scores of Surveys With a Self-Rating of Three

Analysis of School Inclusiveness Score and Implementation Procedures

This section presents the data from this study related to the second and central research question: *Do schools that participate in a school-wide reform movement provide more effective inclusion programs than those that implement "add-on" inclusion programs?*

To answer this question, information was taken from Part Two and Part Three of the survey instrument. In Part Two, the principals responded to questions about the kinds of teams present at their school (See Appendix). Specifically, they were asked if a team designed to facilitate a school-wide reform effort was present at their school. Since all of the schools had

implemented inclusion programs, it was interpreted that if a school had a reform team, then their inclusion program was implemented through that team's efforts. Conversely, if a school indicated that they were not undergoing a school-wide reform effort, it was interpreted that they implemented their inclusion program as a separate special education program. The principals representing schools were divided into two groups based upon this distinction. Group One contained principals representing surveys from schools that implemented their inclusion program while undertaking a larger school-wide reform, whereas Group Two contained principals representing surveys from schools that implemented their inclusion program as a separate add-on program.

The number of principals in each group was not the same. Group One contained 29 principals, while Group Two contained 11 principals. Since these two groups were not equal in size, equal variance within the two groups could not be assumed. Whenever two group means are compared it is important to address the equal variance assumption in order to maintain test validity. To address this concern, a test called Hartley's F-Max test was applied to the data to verify equal variance. The test compared the variance of each group to determine if there was a statistically significant difference. The test indicated a calculated value of 1.22 and a critical value of 2.07. Since

the calculated value was less than the critical value, the null hypothesis of no difference could not be rejected. This indicates that the variances of the two means were not statistically different at the .05 level of significance. Therefore, the t-test assuming equal variance was used in the calculations of this data.

As stated previously, Part Three of the survey was the checklist of Program Quality Indicators(PQI). The principals were asked to respond to a checklist of characteristics of inclusive schools as described above. The total test scores from each group were averaged and then compared to determine if any statistically significant difference existed between the two groups. The data from the two groups is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 shows the survey results from Group One. The mean scores and standard deviations for each survey question are recorded as well as the level means and standard deviations and the total PQI mean and standard deviation. As the table illustrates, the level scores ranged from 2.41 to 2.65. The total PQI mean for Group One was 2.50. Table 1 also shows the survey results from Group Two. Compared to Group One, the level means from Group Two showed greater variability. The level scores ranged from 2.21 to 2.61. The total PQI mean for Group Two was 2.40.

Table 1. Average PQI Score and Standard Deviation for Groups I and II

Question	Question Title	Group I		Group II	
		Average	Std Dev	Average	Std Dev
	Level 1: LEA District Indicators				
1.1	Home School Enrollment	2.41	0.68	2.36	0.92
1.2	Home School Policy	2.13	1.02	2.18	0.98
1.3	Mission Statement	2.86	0.35	2.64	0.50
1.4	Staff Development	2.52	0.74	1.91	0.83
1.5	Unified Staff/Faculty	2.66	0.48	2.55	0.69
1.6	Staff Assignment	2.52	0.63	1.73	1.42
1.7	Regular Class Placement	2.55	0.57	2.18	1.17
1.8	Unified Support Staff	2.52	0.63	2.36	0.50
1.9	Universal Student Outcomes	2.51	0.57	2.45	0.52
1.1	Medical/Behavioral Emergencies	2.45	0.69	1.78	1.04
Level 1		**2.51**	**0.39**	**2.21**	**0.42**
	Level 2: Building Indicators				
2.1	Family School Relations	2.22	0.86	2.27	0.65
2.2	Transportation	2.60	0.67	2.18	0.98
2.3	Site based Management	2.21	0.82	1.73	1.19
2.4	Enrichment/Extracurricular Opportunities	2.69	0.54	2.91	0.30
2.5	Team Planning Meetings	2.10	0.90	1.55	1.04
2.6	Services in Regular Education	2.62	0.56	2.55	0.52
2.8	Instructional Assistant Assignments	2.59	0.50	2.64	0.50
2.9	Medical/Behavioral Plan	2.39	0.77	2.00	0.89
Level 2		**2.43**	**0.41**	**2.23**	**0.49**
	Level 3: Educational Placement Indicators				
3.1	Regular Education Membership	2.62	0.56	2.91	0.30
3.2	Daily Schedule	2.93	0.26	2.91	0.30
3.3	Regular Education Instruction	2.69	0.54	2.64	0.50
3.4	Differentiated Instruction	2.48	0.69	2.45	0.52
3.5	Appropriate Relevant Modifications	2.66	0.55	2.55	0.52
3.6	Student Expectations	2.69	0.54	2.64	0.67
3.7	Social Relationships	2.55	0.57	2.55	0.52
3.8	Support Services Delivery	2.72	0.45	2.55	0.52
3.9	Transition Planning	2.49	0.62	2.73	0.47
Level 3		**2.65**	**0.41**	**2.66**	**0.28**
	Level 4: Individual Student/Program Indicators				
4.1	Modified General Education	2.62	0.56	2.73	0.47
4.2	Linguistic/Cultural Differences	1.69	0.96	2.15	0.96
4.3	Diverse Curricular Options	2.20	0.65	1.82	1.17
4.4	Modified Student Outcomes	2.41	0.62	2.47	0.51
4.5	Related Services Delivery	2.66	0.48	2.82	0.40
4.6	Self Actualization Focus	2.59	0.57	2.64	0.50
4.7	General Education Enrichment	2.39	0.56	2.73	0.47
4.8	Behavioral Issues	2.48	0.78	2.55	0.52
4.9	Daily Routines	2.62	0.62	2.73	0.47
Level 4		**2.41**	**0.46**	**2.51**	**0.37**
Overall		**2.50**	**0.38**	**2.40**	**0.34**

The total PQI means from each group were compared to determine if any statistically significant difference existed. To make this determination, an t-test was applied to the data. The results of this t-test are shown in Table 2. As illustrated, a t-test assuming equal variance was applied. This resulted in a calculated value of -0.76. The calculated value was then compared to the critical value of 2.02. Since the critical value exceeded the calculated value, it was determined that no statistical difference existed between the two means at the .05 level of significance. In reaching this conclusion the null hypothesis of no difference failed to be rejected. Thus, the data suggests that there is no significant difference in the effectiveness of inclusion programs between schools that implement their programs within the context of school reform and those that implement their program as a separate "add-on" program.

Table 2 Summary of t-Scores for Groups I and II

Level	*Group*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t**
Level 1	I	2.51	0.39	- 2.10
	II	2.21	0.42	
Level 2	I	2.43	0.41	- 1.30
	II	2.23	0.49	
Level 3	I	2.65	0.41	0.06
	II	2.66	0.28	
Level 4	I	2.41	0.46	0.69
	II	2.51	0.37	
Total	I	2.50	0.34	- 0.76
	II	2.40	0.37	

* critical t-score is 2.02 ($\alpha = 0.05$)

Further analysis was conducted using the data from one of the four levels of the checklist. A t-test assuming equal variance was applied to the group means from Level One of the PQI checklist. Level One of the PQI contained characteristics related to district level indicators of effective inclusive schools. A t-test assuming equal variance was used because there proved to be no significant difference between the variances of the two level means. As indicated in Table 1, the Level One mean for Group One was 2.51. The level mean for Group Two was 2.21. These two means were compared to determine if any significant difference existed. The results of this t-test are shown in Table 2. The t-test produced a calculated value of -2.10. This exceeded the critical value of 2.02. Thus, it can be concluded that a statistical difference existed between the two groups at the .05 level of significance. Although this test does not have direct implications for the study's null hypothesis, it provides some interesting information which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Although a conclusion should not be reached based solely on this data, the difference between the two groups is large enough to warrant discussion. However, there are reasons to question the reliability of the responses of the PQI survey. This is evidenced by the large standard deviations. Several factors may have contributed to the large variability of the scores. These

factors include poor survey design and inaccurate responses due to either lack of standardized ratings or rater bias. These factors will be addressed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter is a discussion of the interpretations made from the data presented in chapter four. For each research question the implications behind the data analysis are considered along with suggestions for future researchers who may be interested in the further study of these topics.

Discussion of Data Related to Principals' Perceptions of Inclusiveness

Research question #1: *How closely does a principal's perception of the level of inclusiveness of his/her school match the inclusiveness score from a checklist of program quality indicators?*

The data collected for the first research question indicated that the self-ratings of the participants of this study tended to be related to actual effectiveness scores from a checklist of quality indicators. As presented in chapter four, the principals who recorded a self-rating of 1 scored lower on the PQI checklist than those principals who recorded self-ratings of 2 or 3. The group of principals who reported the low self rating score of 1 reported a

mean score of 2.34, whereas the groups who reported a self-rating of 2 or 3 reported higher mean scores of 2.55 and 2.53. Also as stated in chapter four, the data suggests that the PQI scores were inflated across all self-ratings. This problem could be addressed by reevaluating both the quality of the raters and the survey question regarding the self-rating.

One concern which arises when looking at this data is the practice of using principals to evaluate their own school. Although the number of principals in each self-rating group was roughly the same, the PQI scores tended to be high in all groups. Professionals who wish to study the quality of self-ratings may want to consider using a consistent and impartial rater to complete the effectiveness portion of the survey. Another possibility would be to use multiple raters and average the results of their surveys to provide a more accurate score for each school. This would also help address concerns regarding the use of the PQI checklist which are discussed in the second section of this chapter.

Another suggestion regarding the self-ratings relates to the type of question used to gather the data. More information could be gained by asking a more open-ended question in addition to the request for a self-rating score. In this way more descriptive information could be gathered that would indicate how the principal reached the conclusion about the level of

inclusion present at their school. Another interesting question that could be included deals with the principals' opinion about inclusion programs in general. It would be interesting to see how much a principal's attitude about inclusion effected the school's score on the PQI checklist. Again, this comparison would be more appropriate if impartial or multiple raters were available to complete the checklist portion of the survey.

Discussion of Data Related to Implementation Procedures

Research question #2: *Do schools that participate in a school-wide reform movement provide more effective inclusion programs than those that implement "add-on" inclusion programs?*

The effect of different implementation procedures was addressed in research question #2 and was the central issue of this study. The current literature suggests that schools which undergo a more comprehensive school reform process tend to provide more effective inclusion programs (see Chapter 2, p. 23-27). The analysis of the data in this study, however, does not strongly support this assertion. In fact, according to a t-test, there was no significant difference in the mean scores of the two groups. The reason for this may be found by looking at the variability of the data. Items on the PQI checklist could be given a score within the range of 0- 3. The items for each survey and each group were then averaged. A mean score and a standard

deviation were calculated for each group. The comparatively large standard deviations indicate the great variability of scores around each mean. For example, the mean score for Group One to question 1.2 was 2.13 with a standard deviation of 1.02. This means that around 68% of the scores (those within about one standard deviation) fell between 1.11 and 3.15. This spread represents 2/3rds of the possible range. If a curve was drawn to show the distribution of this data, it would be rather flat. The mean score was not a strong and clear statement regarding the central tendency of the groups. As a result of the large standard deviation, it was difficult to show a significant difference between the two groups using a t-test. There may be several reasons why the data showed such variability. Two factors which may have influenced the data were poor survey design and inaccurate responses.

An example of the poor survey design can be seen in the number and complexity of the survey questions. When the survey was originally developed many items were included that could have been left out The large number of items, as well as the lengthy and wordy PQI section made the task of completing the survey long and difficult. At most in question was the way in which information regarding school reform was gathered. At the beginning of the project, the survey focused more on the types and activities of school teams than on the presence or absence of a school wide reform

effort. A better question could have been designed to obtain more accurate information regarding this variable. This is a key point in discussing the results of this study. Most of the schools who responded to the survey reported that a school-wide reform team existed at their school (29 of 40). It is highly improbable, however, that all of these schools were actually undergoing substantive school-wide reform. This is partially the fault of the poor survey question as well as the probable inflated responses of the principals.

This tendency to provide inaccurate responses accounts for the second reason to view the study's results with caution. One reason that may account for inaccurate scoring can be found in the lack of a standardized rating system. In other words, the scores may have varied so much due to the inconsistencies in the ratings of the principals. This is a problem in any study that uses multiple raters to respond to survey questions. Any two principals may have interpreted the questions differently, or viewed the activities in the school differently. The length and complexity of the PQI checklist may also have contributed to inaccurate responses. On the PQI checklist of many of the surveys, the items were marked with identical scores. This indicates that the respondents most likely spent little time on each question increasing the likelihood of inaccurate scoring. In addition, many of the PQI checklist

results contained the highest score for each question This indicates the tendency for school principals to overate their schools. This may have been a result of poor survey design or simply a desire on the part of the principals to over emphasize any inclusive activities that may have been occurring at their schools. This is an example of how rater bias may have effected the quality of the data.

Given all of these concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the data, it is difficult to state with any certainty the meaning behind the data analysis. Although on the surface there appears to be no link between implementation procedures and program effectiveness, the lack of reliable data prevents any statements describing a cause-effect relationship. It is interesting to note that there was one area in which a significant difference was seen between the two groups. The t-test results showed a significant difference between the two groups in Level One of the PQI survey. This section of the checklist involved qualities of inclusive schools at the district level. For example, the checklist described a revised district mission statement, a home school enrollment policy, and staff development opportunities as important components to a district level commitment to inclusive programs. Group One scored significantly higher on average than Group Two. This suggests that the schools in this study who implemented

their inclusion programs as part of a broader school-wide reform provided more effective inclusion programs at the district level.

The only clear implication of these results is that more research is needed in this area A common criticism of education today is that professionals are too quick to jump on current trends in hopes that they will be the cure for an ailing educational system (Kaufman, 1993). It is therefore important to continue to research this topic of inclusion. Researchers should study both the service delivery techniques that are suggested for inclusive programs, as well as the ways in which inclusion programs are implemented most successfully. Studies could be designed using a more concise checklist of quality indicators. This would help decrease the concern related to poor survey design The participants chosen to evaluate the schools could be either impartial observers or professionals at the school who are in a better position to observe the day to day qualities of inclusion than the building administrator. This would decrease the possibility of inaccurate scoring. By continuing this research we can assure our colleagues and our critiques that inclusion through school-wide reform is not only the right thing to do in theory, but the most effective thing to do in practice as well.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS

Those of us who come from a special education perspective must integrate our ideals about inclusion into the larger discourse occurring around schools as caring communities. We cannot advocate for inclusion on behalf of only one child or only children with disabilities: Our schools must become inclusive of all children. Increasingly, we must join together with constituencies who represent the many children who may not feel welcome in school - children who are poor, children who speak a language other than the language of the school, children whose culture differs form that of the teachers and administration - just to name a few (Meyer, 1996, p. 18).

Introduction

In the following chapter the conclusions are presented for this study of school reform and inclusion. First, the study is briefly summarized, then the conclusions and recommendations are stated.

Summary of the Study

Schools throughout this state and many others are in the process of implementing inclusion programs at the building or district level. These programs experience varying amounts of success. These schools choose different ways in which to implement their inclusion programs. Some view inclusion as a special education reform initiative and as a new way to provide special education services to disabled students. Others view inclusion as part of the broader issue of school wide reform. These schools implement more inclusive policies which have implications for all students under a larger restructured framework. This study was designed to gain information about two specific questions.

1. How closely does a principal's perception of the level of inclusiveness of his/her school match the inclusiveness score from a checklist of program quality indicators?

2. Do schools that participate in a school-wide reform movement provide more effective inclusion programs than those that implement "add-on" inclusion programs?

To answer these questions a multi-part survey was distributed to principals across the state of Tennessee. The surveys requested demographic information associated with each community as well as information

regarding the qualities of inclusive education present at each school. Each principal was asked to provide a self-rating regarding the level of inclusive education provided at their school. The surveys also requested information regarding how each school's inclusion program was implemented: as a separate and special program for disabled students, or as part of a broader school wide reform effort. In addition, a nationally validated checklist of program quality indicators (PQI) was used to measure the effectiveness of each inclusive program.

Data received from these surveys were treated in several ways. The surveys were divided into two groups depending upon their implementation procedures. Their effectiveness scores were then compared. A t-test was applied to the data to determine if a significant difference was present between the two groups. No such difference was noted and the null hypothesis failed to be rejected. However, several factors may have worked together to create the great variability in the data. This variability leaves room to question the results of this study. It still appears appropriate to recommend that schools engage in a school-wide reform effort in an attempt to ensure successful implementation of inclusion programs. The following section presents the conclusions of the study based on the statistical analysis of the data and the interpretation of that data.

Conclusions

1. Inclusion programs are occurring in schools of all kinds, sizes and in all types of communities across the state of Tennessee.

2. A principal's self-perception of the level of inclusiveness of their school appears to be related to an actual score of inclusiveness on a checklist of quality indicators. However, the data suggests that the effectiveness scores were probably inflated.

3. According to the data provided by this study, there appears to be no significant difference in the quality of inclusive programs between the schools involved in this study who implemented inclusive programs within the context of school-wide reform and those who implemented inclusion as a separate special education program. The null hypothesis, therefore, failed to be rejected.

4. There is, however, a significant difference between the two groups in Level One of the survey. This level lists qualities of inclusive programs found at the district level.

5. The large variability in the data makes any conclusions drawn from this study questionable. This variability may have been due to poor survey design and/or inaccurate scoring by the participants.

Recommendations

1. Further research is needed before any connection between effective inclusion programs and implementation procedures can be stated with any certainty.

2. Professionals researching this topic should consider using a more concise evaluation tool to judge program effectiveness.

3. It may be advantageous for researchers to use a consistent and impartial rater when completing the evaluation tool.

4. Based on current literature and the opinions of this researcher, schools are encouraged to take part in school wide reform in an effort to ensure the best educational experiences for all students.

5. It is vital that special educators join in the current national debate over education reform. It is important for the interests of disabled students to be considered in this discussion, but it is far more important for special educators to recognize and communicate how the values of inclusive education can address the needs of every student in every school.

The fundamental issue at the center of this study involved school reform. The study was designed to question the effectiveness of inclusion programs

that were initiated without all share holders of a school community going through a change process and as a result committing to the values of inclusive education. Current literature supports the idea that substantive change in the delivery of educational services, special or otherwise, does not occur by imposing new programs or by continuing dual and competing systems. On the contrary, change appears to be an ongoing process that must involve all effected participants and must serve as the vehicle which unites these participants in one collaborative effort. Through this consensus building effort, the educational experiences for all students, including those classified as disabled, can be improved.

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APPENDIX

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Office of Research
404 Andy Holt Tower
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-0140
PHONE: (423) 974-3466
FAX: (423) 974-2805
URL: http://www.ra.utk.edu/ora

04/02/96

IRB # : 4998 A

Title : The Role of Collaborative Teams in Inclusive Schools

Smith, Jennifer L.
Holistic Teach/Learn
308 Claxton
Campus

Hannum, Michael
Holistic Teach/Learn
308 Claxton
Campus

The project listed above has been reviewed and has been certified as EXEMPT from review by the Institutional Review Board.

Unless there are major changes in the experimental methods or project design, no further reporting to this office is required. The responsibility for oversight of this project becomes that of the Principal Investigator, Student Advisor (if any), and the Departmental Review Committee.

We wish you success in your research endeavors.

Sincerely,

Steven B. Pulik
Coordinator of Compliances

cc: Lester Knight

Attachment: Form A

FORM A
Certification for Exemption from Review by Full Committee for Research Involving Human Subjects

IRB# 4998-A

Date received in ORAD MAR 7 1996

A. **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR(s) and/or CO-PI(s):**
Jennifer L. Smith, GA Michael Hannum, Ed.D.

B. **DEPARTMENT:** Holistic Teaching and Learning, College of Education

C. **COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER OF PI(s) and CO-PI(s):**

308 Claxton, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN 37996 974-3435

D. **TITLE OF PROJECT:** The Role of Collaborative Teams in Inclusive Schools

E. **EXTERNAL FUNDING AGENCY AND ID NUMBER** (if applicable):
F. **GRANT SUBMISSION DEADLINE** (if applicable):

G. **STARTING DATE:** Upon certification by Coordinator of Compliances. (NO RESEARCH MAY BE INITIATED UNTIL CERTIFICATION IS GRANTED.) March 20, 1996

H. **ESTIMATED COMPLETION DATE** : December, 1996

I. Objective(s) of Project (Use additional page, if needed.):

This study will involve the collection of information regarding collaborative team practices and inclusive characteristics of schools. The information will be obtained using a survey form distributed to school principals from various schools districts within Tennessee and across the country that are known to have inclusive school communities.

II. Subjects (Use additional page, if needed.):

The participants of the study will be a group of principals from across Tennessee and in different areas of the U.S.. They will be asked to complete a one-time survey which should take 30-45 minutes to finish. All of the principals involved will be chosen because of their involvement in an inclusive school community.

III. Methods or Procedures (Use additional page, if needed.):

A survey form involving questions regarding the characteristics of collaborative team practices as well as the inclusive characteristics of the school will be delivered or mailed to each principal. The third section of the survey is a checklist previously published by L. Meyer of Syracuse University. A consent form will be attached with an explanation of confidentiality. The names of the principals will not appear on he survey forms themselves, and will be separated from the consent forms upon their return. The materials and data associated with this study will be kept in disk and paper form in the office of the principal investigator. Only the PI and her advisor will have access to the data. Results of this study will be shared with L. Meyer, the author of the checklist.

IV. CATEGORY(s) FOR EXEMPT RESEARCH PER 45 CFR 4C: 2

CERTIFICATION: The research described herein is in compliance with 45 CFR 46.101(b) and presents subjects with no more than minimal risk as defined by applicable regulations.

Principal Investigator	Jennifer L. Smith	Jennifer L. Smith	3-7-96
	Name	Signature	Date
Advisor	M. C. Hamman	M. C. Hamman	3-7-96
	Name	Signature	Date
Dept. Review Comm. Chair	THOMAS N TURNER	Thomas N. Turner	3-7-96
	Name	Signature	Date
Dept. Head	Lester N. Knight	Lester N. Knight	3-7-96
	Name	Signature	Date
APPROVED:	Steven B. Pulik Coordinator of Compliances Office of Research Administration		4-02-96
		Signature	Date

MAR 2 5 1996

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

College of Education
Holistic Teaching/Learning
142 Claxton Addition
Knoxville, Tennessee 37996-3400
(615) 974-3034

March 20, 1996

Dear Principal,

I am a graduate student in the Holistic Teaching/Learning Unit at the University of Tennessee working towards my Master's degree in Special Education. As part of my thesis work I am distributing surveys to school principals to gather information for my study. I would greatly appreciate your participation in this study.

The purpose of the following survey is to gather information regarding the practices of successful inclusive schools. Your school has been identified as one that participates in inclusive activities. Filling out the survey should take you 30-45 minutes. The third section of the survey is a checklist developed by L.H. Meyer from Syracuse University. The results of this section of the survey will be included in a national data base of inclusive schools. If you are interested, I will provide you with information regarding both the results of this survey and information about L. Meyer's national study.

Your participation is voluntary and you may withdraw at any time. The information you provide for this study will be kept confidential. The consent form which you return will be kept on file for three years here at the University of Tennessee. Only this investigator and her advisor will have access to the data, with the exception of the data from section three which will be sent to Syracuse. Your name will be separated from your responses upon receipt of the survey and will not be forwarded to the national study.

Please sign the consent form below, fill out the survey and return them both in the enclosed envelope at your earliest convenience. If you have any questions regarding this study or survey, please contact me at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, at (423) 974-6796 or 3435.

Sincerely,

Jennifer L. Smith

Jennifer L. Smith
Graduate Assistant
(423) 974-6796 or 3435

APPROVED
By
Date 4-02-96

Enclosures

I have read and understand this explanation of the purpose and conditions of this project. I voluntarily agree to participate.

Signature _____ Date _____

School _____

____ Please send me the results of this study.

Part One: Demographic Information

Directions: Please answer the following questions to provide information regarding your school.

1. How many students are enrolled at your school? _____

2. What are the grade levels at your building? _____

3. How many students are classified as special education students? _____

4. Please indicate the number of students served at each option of service. (See your latest census report.)

   Option 1 _____ Option 4 _____ Option 7 _____

   Option 2 _____ Option 5 _____ Option 10 ____

   Option 3 _____ Option 6 _____

5. How many faculty are employed at your school? (Include teaching positions of all kinds, including special educators.)

   Full Time _____ Part Time _____

6. How many special education teachers are employed at your school?

   Full Time _____ Part Time _____

7. How many educational paraprofessionals are employed at your school?

   Full Time _____ Part Time _____

8. To what degree do you consider your school to be "inclusive?" (Please circle one number.)

   0 -------- 1 -------- 2 -------- 3

   Not inclusive Moderately Inclusive Very Inclusive

9. How would you describe your school community? (Please circle one)

   Rural Suburban Urban

Part Two: Collaborative Teams

Directions: Please answer the following questions to provide information regarding the kinds of teams currently operating in your school and your perception of their effectiveness.

In the first column, indicate if this kind of team is present in your school by choosing yes or no.

In the second column, indicate how effective you think the team is by writing in a number from the following scale. (Answer only if the team is present in your school)

0 - - - - - - - 1 - - - - - - - 2 - - - - - - - 3
Ineffective.....Moderately Effective.....Very Effective

A team or committee ...	YES/NO	0-3
1. ... of classroom teachers responsible for planning activities at their grade level.		
2. ... of classroom teachers/special education teachers and other support providers that meets to plan instruction, classroom modifications, and problem solve for a particular identified student.		
3. ... of classroom teachers that meets regularly with other classroom teachers to provide pre-referral modification suggestions.		
4. ... of parents, teachers and other support providers designed to review evaluation results, consider placement options, and plan, implement, and evaluate IEP programs for a particular identified student.		
5. ... designed to guide a broad school change or restructuring effort. Members could include teachers, administrators, parents, and members of the community. (Inclusion may be a component of this team's responsibility)		
6. ... designed specifically to address the development of inclusion programs in the school or district. Members include teachers, parents and administrators.		

Part Three: Critical Features of Inclusion

Program Quality Indicators (PQI), Third Edition. A checklist developed by L. Meyer,1994

Directions: Please answer the following questions to provide information regarding the inclusive practices of your school. Use the score code below.

SCORE CODE:

- **0** = No evidence of this indicator.
- **1** = No evidence of this quality indicator for most students with disabilities, but the district/program is in the process of planning for implementation and staff development.
- **2** = Some evidence of this quality indicator for all students, including those with the most severe disabilities.
- **3** = The quality indicator is clearly evident for all students/staff/resources, including programs for students with the most severe disabilities.

	SCORE
Level 1: LEA District Indicators **1.1 Home School Enrollment:** Parents can enroll their child in their home zone school or, if magnet/choice opportunities exist for some children and their families, these same opportunities exist for all students regardless of disability, cultural or linguistic background, ethnicity, or other personal characteristics without prejudice.	
1.2 Home School Policy: There is a written district policy guaranteeing the right to attendance at the neighborhood school, including guarantees of attendance at choice/magnet schools if these are available within the district, with necessary services and supports.	
1.3 Mission Statement: The district's mission statement includes the following explicit statements of principle and practices: (a) all children can learn; (b) diversity is valued; (c) children are entitled to receive needed educational services and supports within the general education classroom; (d) general education programs will accommodate individual needs through appropriate adaptations and accommodations; and (e) valued outcomes include both academic goals and preparation of students for their role as fully participating citizens of their community.	
1.4 Staff Development: A district-wide staff development plan exists that describes clear staff development activities for the coming year designed to address identified building, curriculum, and student-referenced needs established through a systematic needs assessment process.	
1.5 Unified Staff/Faculty: Professional and other staff are part of a unified general education system, evidenced by administrative and programmatic organization within each building.	

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	SCORE
1.6 Staff Assignment: Staff are assigned to age-appropriate/grade level classrooms or teams rather than levels or categories of handicapping conditions (e.g., at elementary level, one special education teacher assigned to grades K-1, another to 2-3, and so on; at secondary level, one special education teacher assigned to each interdisciplinary team serving 125 students).	
1.7 Regular Class Placement Programs and classrooms are not categorically based, that is, children are not grouped homogeneously for services based upon their diagnostic label, level of disability, or eligibility for particular services or supports. Any categorical labeling to determine eligibility for services that exists is used only for child-count purposes and assigning individualized services and supports to children within general education classrooms.	
1.8 Unified Support Staff Educational support personnel, including psychological, therapeutic, and various other entitlement and discretional programs and services for students and their families (e.g., Chapter 1) are part of a unified general education system, evidenced by administrative and programmatic organization at both the building and district levels.	
1.9 Universal Student Outcomes Student Outcomes for the district are universal, rather than tracked, referencing generic skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, citizenship, and other outcomes applicable to all academic areas and skills needed for success in non-school, criterion environments career, home, and community. All students are expected to achieve individually relevant mastery of these universal outcomes.	
1.10 Medical/Behavioral Emergencies A written policy exists for medical and behavioral emergencies and staff are trained and monitored relative to their role in policy implementation.	
Level 2: Building Indicators	
2.1 Family School Relations An explicit policy and activity structure exists for family-school involvement that minimally includes strategies to solicit and incorporate family input into decisions regarding individual students, curricular goals, and student support services appropriate to each school community.	

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	SCORE
2.2 Transportation: Students travel to and from school using the general education transportation system, accessible to persons with physical challenges.	
2.3 Site based Management: Decisions regarding discretionary budget expenditures (e.g. Ch 1 dispersements) and staff development activities are made at the building level and are determined from input by faculty and staff.	
2.4 Enrichment/Extracurricular Opportunities: Educational enrichment and extracurricular activities, materials, and resources are made available to all students based upon interest and without prejudice with regard to student achievement level, gender, disability, ethnicity, language, race, family background, or socioeconomic status.	
2.5 Team Planning Meetings: Instructional teams of professional and support personnel participate in regularly scheduled meeting time (at least weekly) to plan curricula and design individually appropriate adaptations and accommodations for students with diverse abilities in the general education environment.	
2.6 Services in Regular Education: Student entitlements to individually appropriate services and supports, including those specified on an IEP or IFSP, are provided to address student needs within general education and community environments.	
2.7a Primary Instructional Arrangements: At the preprimary and elementary levels, a variety of instructional arrangements and staffing patterns are evident to address diverse learning needs of heterogeneously grouped students within appropriate age groupings. These may include team and consultant teaching of both age-graded and cross- age non-graded primary classrooms by personnel with certification in regular and/or special education.	

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	SCORE
2.7b Middle/High School Instructional Arrangements At the middle and high school levels, a variety of instructional arrangements and staffing patterns are evident to address diverse learning needs of heterogeneously grouped students within appropriate age groupings or teams. These include interdisciplinary teams of academic content, unified arts, and special education and other support personnel with educational responsibility for a subgroup of students with diverse abilities.	
2.8 Instructional Assistant Assignments Instructional support personnel (including paraprofessionals and volunteers) are assigned to classrooms rather than individual children, with balanced responsibilities to support individual student needs and assist the teacher in the delivery of instruction for all children.	
2.9 Medical/Behavioral Plan An in-school medical and behavioral plan exists including procedures to address behavioral crisis related to student's handicapping condition where expulsion would not be appropriate.	
Level 3: Educational Placement and Related Service Indicators **3.1 Regular Education Membership** Students are grouped heterogeneously within classrooms or classes that would be regarded as socially appropriate for their age level, with full membership of all students evidenced by attendance patterns, school calendar, homeroom participation, and participation in academic and extracurricular opportunities without prejudice based upon level or type or disability or other socio-personal characteristics.	
3.2 Daily Schedule Students follow socially appropriate daily schedules and educational routines, including academic class enrollment, class changes, non-academic activities and routines (such as lunch and non-instructional free time), and varied educational opportunities (such as library and computer services), available to all students within general education and community based instructional activities.	

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	SCORE
3.3 Regular Education Instruction Individually appropriate educational supports and services identified on the student's IEP or a determination of eligibility for any entitlement program are provided to students within the general education class/classroom through the use of supplementary aids and services. Any removal from general education settings (e.g. for vocational training in the community) would be consistent with regular education instructional programming at that age level.	
3.4 Differentiated Instruction Differentiated instruction is evident within heterogeneously grouped classrooms/classes, including individually appropriate curricular and instructional adaptations and modifications.	
3.5 Appropriate Relevant Modifications Curricular and instructional adaptations and modifications are congruent with the activities of age-peers, community and family values, and do not contribute to the further stigmatizing of students with diverse abilities and special needs or imply their isolation, separation, or social exclusion from their peer group.	
3.6 Student Expectations Classroom and school educational practices incorporate social and behavioral expectations and opportunities for students to develop positive motivational structures, social support networks problem solving and critical thinking skills and positive attitudes and social behaviors to prepare them for criterion environments.	
3.7 Social Relationships School support resources and activities are provided to enhance positive social relationships among students,including friendship and community building, anti-racism training, aggression replacement training, and other extracurricular inter- and intrapersonal supports that might be needed to develop good citizenship.	
3.8 Support Services Delivery Individual and emergency supports services such as social work, guidance counseling, family support, and protective services are provided to students according to most promising practices and the legal and ethical requirements of each profession and agency.	

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3 = The quality indicator is clearly evident for all students/staff/resources, including programs for students with the most severe disabilities.

	SCORE
3.9 Transition Planning Team planning is evident to prepare child and setting for the next environment through transition planning, such as school to work or elementary to middle school depending upon chronological age.	
Level 4: Individual Student and Program Indicators **4.1 Modified General Education** Individual student needs for curricular and instructional modifications and adaptations as specified on the IEP are met within general education classes including placement with appropriate modifications and adaptations for the range of academic and unified arts classes enrolled by non disabled peers with special education services and supports.	
4.2 Linguistic/Cultural Differences The needs of a student who is linguistically and/or culturally different from the majority of teachers or the dominant school culture are addressed through state-of-the-art bilingual/ESL and multicultural curricular and instructional practices as well as staff development activities to support those practices.	
4.3 Diverse Curricular Options Age-appropriate patterns of enrollment in academic, unified arts, community-based experiences, and vocational/career counseling and training activities are available to all students, including community based instruction, college preparatory course work, and supported work training for eligible students. Standards must be evident at all levels to insure that such program options do not require tracking and segregation of students into separate classes and environments throughout the school day.	
4.4 Modified Student Outcomes Where individualized student instructional needs involve curricular goals at levels discrepant from standard subject-area grade criteria, those needs are addressed through goals embedded within the context of meaningful activities occurring within general education and community-based instructional activities to support achievement of stated student outcomes in proximity to non disabled peers.	

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- **3** = The quality indicator is clearly evident for all students/staff/resources, including programs for students with the most severe disabilities.

	SCORE
4.5 Related Services Delivery Related services including speech/language, occupational, and physical therapy and psychological counseling services are provided to students as specified on the IEP or other entitlements through transdisciplinary and integrated therapy approaches.	
4.6 Self Actualization Focus Educational and social opportunities to learn and exercise choices, self-determination, and advocacy appropriate for the student's age, setting, social situation, and family/community expectations are provided for all students.	
4.7 General Education Enrichment Access to specialized and enriched educational opportunities is available within general education without requiring tracking or academically segregated classes or schools through heterogeneous and flexible grouping strategies.	
4.8 Behavioral Issues Behavior problems are addressed within the context of the general education setting with appropriate individualized services and supports that are non aversive, reflect most promising practices, provide the student with instruction in behavioral alternatives, and emphasize long term development of positive self-control and self-determination strategies as well as the short term decrease in problem behavior to meet sociopersonal needs.	
4.9 Daily Routines Daily routines and transition times in school and school related experiences are utilized as context for teaching and learning critical skills in self regulation, social-communicative, and work habits as well as academic domains as appropriate.	

VITA

Jennifer L. Smith was born and grew up in Kansas City, MO. She obtained an undergraduate degree in Elementary and Special Education from Peabody College of Vanderbilt University in May of 1991. Following graduation she taught in an elementary resource classroom in Mount Vernon, Iowa for four years.

After relocating to Knoxville, Tennessee in 1995, Jennifer began work on a Master's degree at the University of Tennessee where she also worked as a graduate research assistant. During these two years Jennifer and her husband Brennan had a little girl named Sarah.

After graduation Jennifer plans to continue work in the field of special education.