

The Roles of Special Educators and Classroom Teachers in an Inclusive School

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The research examined one school's attempts to include and integrate deaf and hard-of-hearing children. Interviews with teachers and observations of classrooms over a 3-year period revealed the critical roles played by the special educators and the classroom teachers. The responsibilities of the special educators, the adaptations and accommodation made by the classroom teachers, issues regarding ownership and attitude of the classroom teachers, perceptions of the special educator role, and specific areas of concern expressed by the special educators and classroom teachers are described.

One of the major philosophical premises of inclusion is that the classroom teacher will assume the primary responsibility for educating all children in the classroom and that classroom teachers and special educators will work in partnership to make adaptations in the curriculum and to structure the classroom in a manner that will promote social and academic integration of all children (Jenkins, Pious, & Jewell, 1990). Although there is little information about the manner in which special educators and classroom teachers work together to promote integration of deaf or hard-of-hearing students (D/HH), there is a considerable body of research on the inclusion of children with other disabilities

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(Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993; Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991; Schumm, Vaughn, Haager, McDowell, Rothlein, & Saumell, 1995; York & Tundidor, 1995). This research suggests these conclusions:

1. Teachers who have experience with children with disabilities in their classroom develop personal relationships with them and take ownership for their instruction (Giangreco et al., 1993).

2. Teachers are willing to make adaptations that involve social or motivational adjustments such as establishing a personal relationship with students with disabilities, or involving the students in classroom activities. They are less willing to consider adaptations that require changes in curriculum, planning, evaluation or activities that are not typical for their classroom. However, they will adopt instructional practices that can be used with all their students (Giangreco et al., 1993; Schumm & Vaughn, 1991).

3. Teachers consider special educators a valuable source of information and value working as a team with other specialists. They also welcome the help of trained paraprofessionals. However, clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the teachers and the specialists is crucial to the success of working in a team (Giangreco et al., 1993; Janney et al., 1995; Schumm et al., 1995; York & Tundidor, 1995).

4. Barriers to inclusion include specialist help that is disruptive of classroom routine, excessive traffic through the classroom created by the coming and going

of children and specialists, and lack of sufficient time for planning and collaboration with specialists (Giangreco et al., 1993; York & Tundidor, 1995).

5. Administrative support is seen as crucial to the success of inclusion (Janney et al., 1995; Larrivee & Cook, 1979).

The purpose of this article is to examine the roles, responsibilities, and relationships of classroom teachers and special educators working in a school where inclusion of children who were D/HH was being attempted. The data reported in this article were collected as part of an exploratory, longitudinal case study to identify and examine the school and classroom factors that influenced social and academic integration of D/HH children within an inclusive setting.

The school in which the case study was conducted was selected because it met several theoretical assumptions that were hypothesized to be necessary for academic and social integration of D/HH children. These theoretical assumptions were derived from Allport's contact theory (Allport, 1954) and its application to the social integration of D/HH children (Lee & Antia 1992):

1. Contact between children who are D/HH and hearing would be regular and intensive and would occur under conditions that facilitated frequent and cooperative interaction.

2. Children who are D/HH would not be perceived by teachers and classmates as visitors to the classroom but would be an integral part of the classroom social structure.

3. School administrative personnel and the school community would support the goal and process of integration.

The school selected was one where some initial interviews and observations indicated that these essential characteristics were likely to be met. The goal of the case study was to examine the process of inclusion within a "best-case scenario."

Method

Research Design

A case study was designed following guidelines established by Yin (1994). The primary data source was in-

terviews with three classroom teachers, two special education teachers, three interpreters, the school principal, and the special education coordinator. These interview data were supplemented by field notes obtained from live observations and videotapes of each classroom each year, and notes taken during classroom visits and conversations with teachers and administrators. The researchers obtained three years of longitudinal data following one child from kindergarten to second grade and three years of cross-sectional data in one kindergarten classroom that included one child who was D/HH for each of three years.

Setting

The study was conducted at the lower elementary school (K, 1, 2) of a rural school district in the southwestern United States. During the first year of the 3-year study, the school had a population of approximately 400 children, which increased to 500 by the third year of the study. Between eight and ten special needs children (including three D/HH children) were served during each of these three years. A special education coordinator directed services to all the special education students in the district.

All three D/HH children spent their entire day in the regular classroom except for occasional short periods of pull-out (perhaps ½ hours a day) for special instruction. Specific classrooms at each grade level were designated special education classrooms. These classrooms usually had between two and four special needs children (including the D/HH children).

Participants

Table 1 depicts the participants in the research for each of the three years. All have been given fictitious names to protect their privacy.

Children. Valencia, Carl, and Edmund were the three children who were D/HH. All three children were from Hispanic families. Valencia and Edmund were profoundly deaf from birth and primarily used sign language to communicate. Prior to kindergarten, both children had received services through the State School for the Deaf Parent Outreach Program and had also attended an integrated preschool on the campus of

Table 1 Participants

	Year 1	Year 2		Year 3	
Classroom observed Children	Kindergarten Valencia (D)	Kindergarten Carl (HH)	Grade 1 Valencia	Kindergarten Edmund (D)	Grade 2 Valencia
Classroom teachers	Lydia	Lydia	Karen	Lydia	Jill
Special educators	Kay	Kay	Kay	Kay	Patricia
Interpreters	Sheila	none	Sheila	Jasmine, Pauline	Sheila

the elementary school. Carl was hard of hearing, with spoken Spanish as his first language. He had also attended the preschool for one year prior to kindergarten.

Classroom teachers. Three classroom teachers participated in the research: Lydia, Karen, and Jill. Lydia, the kindergarten teacher, had degrees in both special education and elementary education. She had previously worked as a special education teacher for two years and as a kindergarten teacher for three years. She spoke both Spanish and English. Karen was Valencia's first-grade teacher. She had a degree in elementary education and had taught preschool for three years and first grade for two years. Jill was Valencia's second-grade teacher. She had a degree in elementary education and additional certification in teaching English as a second language. She had 27 years of experience teaching grades 1–3.

Special educators. The two special educators, Kay and Patricia, were both certified in education of D/HH children. In addition, Kay was certified in elementary education and education of mentally retarded children. She was the “resident” special educator for the school and served all the special needs children, including the D/HH children, in the preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade classrooms. Patricia was an itinerant teacher who worked with Valencia (the deaf child) in second grade for three days a week for a total of five hours.

Interpreters. We observed and interviewed three interpreters. Sheila interpreted for Valencia in kindergarten, first and second grade. Pauline and Jasmine shared the interpreting for Edmund in the kindergarten during the third year of the research.

Administrators. Both the school principal and the district special education coordinator were interviewed each year of the project.

Data Collection

Interviews. Each year, all the adult participants involved with the target children were interviewed. Thus, several individuals were interviewed each of the three years, resulting in a total of 27 interviews. All interviews were conducted by one of two researchers at times and places chosen by the interviewees. Generally, interviews were conducted in classrooms, lunch rooms, or offices either immediately after school or during teachers' free periods. A separate list of questions was developed for each interviewee, following guidelines by Spradley (1979). The questions were designed to obtain information on the routine of a typical day; the interviewees' beliefs, roles, and responsibilities; and their assessment of the D/HH children's social and academic progress. During the interview, the researchers were free to follow up on interesting topics or to clarify comments. Each interview was between one and three hours and was audiotaped with the permission of the person being interviewed.

Videotapes. The interview data were supplemented by videotapes taken during classroom visits. The purpose of the videotapes was to record the D/HH children's classroom experiences. The video recordings were made by either the researchers or one of two research assistants. A camera with a wide angle lens was focused on the target, who was followed for an entire morning or afternoon. Each D/HH child was videotaped a minimum of three times each semester.

Field notes. These were taken by two researchers during classroom observations that occurred approximately 1 day each month during the first year of the study, and between 3 and 6 days a semester for the next 2 years. The researchers recorded the behaviors of the target child, the classroom teacher, the interpreter, and the special education teacher (when she visited the class-

room). They also described the classroom activities that occurred and the manner in which the classroom was organized. Finally, the researchers took notes of relevant conversations with teachers, aides, parents, and administrators.

Data Analysis

The interviews were transcribed by a secretary or research graduate assistant and checked by a second assistant. The interviews were analyzed using two levels of categorization. At the first level of categorization, each line of each interview was coded as describing actions, beliefs, or relationships. After this initial coding, the interviews were recoded by topic. The topic codes were determined after an initial reading of the interviews and by discussion between the two researchers and a research assistant. These three individuals coded the interviews together until the coding categories were determined and defined, after which the coding was completed individually by one member of the team and checked by a second member. Disagreements were discussed and resolved by all three individuals. Several lines of interviews were often coded within one or more topics.

The final coding scheme permitted the researchers to know who provided the information; in what year; whether the interviewee was talking about beliefs, actions, or relationships; and the topic. Finally, I examined the material collected for each topic and developed it into a narrative. Before the final narrative was completed, the interviews were reread to ensure that material was not interpreted out of context.

The field notes were analyzed using the same topic codes as were the interviews. The videotapes were observed to confirm the behavior and incidents reported in the interviews. The multiple data sources, as well as multiple informants, allowed for triangulation of information.

Results

This section will describe the responsibilities of the special educators, the adaptations and accommodations made by the classroom teachers, issues regarding communication and relationships between the teach-

ers, issues regarding ownership and attitudes of the classroom teachers, perceptions of the special educator role, and specific areas of concern expressed by the special educators and classroom teachers.

Responsibilities of the Special Educators

The responsibilities of the special educators included direct teaching, adapting teaching strategies and materials, coordinating instructional planning, scheduling and directing special education aides and interpreters, promoting peer relationships, teaching sign language, interpreting for the deaf students, and communicating with parents.

Direct teaching. The special educators worked individually or within a group with the D/HH children for whom they were responsible, mostly within the classroom, but occasionally in a pull-out situation. Both special educators worked with the D/HH children at activity centers, or during other class activities, providing additional help. Such work was supplementary for content and teaching strategies. Kay, the special educator, explained: "I've been teaching sight-word approach to Carl [the hard-of-hearing child]. . . . We do cover the same things. I incorporate games and learning which they don't always do in the classroom." Frequently, such teaching was a preview or a review of concepts that were found to be or anticipated to be difficult. Kay said, "If I see a center that I know he'll [Edmund] have trouble with or he hasn't done before, I want to do it with him. If there's a concept that I know she's [the kindergarten teacher] introducing and I know it's something that he doesn't have, . . . I will go in and switch with them [the interpreters]." Lydia, the kindergarten teacher, confirmed this: "I think that if I see a problem with him, [Edmund] or if Pauline [the interpreter] doesn't think he understands, we call in the cavalry, we call in Kay. Sometimes she anticipates a new topic. . . . Then she'll rearrange her schedule and come in."

Kay's help was requested by either the interpreter, who saw that the child was having trouble, or the teacher. Sometimes Kay was called in after the teacher had tried and failed to clarify the problem for the child.

Unlike Kay, Patricia, the itinerant special educator,

was unable to come into the classroom during times when difficulties were anticipated because she had a set weekly schedule. Instead, she consistently found herself “coming into a work already in progress.”

Adapting teaching strategies and materials. One of the main responsibilities of the special educators was making adaptations of methods and materials used in the regular classroom. Often, the adaptations involved explaining or demonstrating the adaptive strategies to the classroom teacher. Lydia, the kindergarten teacher, reported: “If she [the special educator] has to run through it with me, actually visually do it with me as if I were Valencia [the deaf child], then that’s what I need so that I can do it.”

Sometimes adaptations involved bringing in adapted or additional teaching materials. An example of such an adaptation to the curriculum was mentioned by Lydia: “I really had no clue how to do poetry with Valencia [the deaf child] . . . but Kay [the special educator] brought in a tape and we did some ASL poetry . . . the other kids got exposed to it.”

When possible, the special educator got the written plans from the classroom teacher in order to plan adaptations ahead of time. However, classroom teachers made curricular decisions day by day, which created difficulties for the special educators. This was explained by the special education coordinator:

People aren’t planning week to week anymore, they’re planning day to day. They don’t know until the end of today what they’re going to do tomorrow. Imagine the dilemma this plays for Kay, especially for Valencia [the deaf child], who you desperately want to be able to preview content areas before it gets into the big whole group instruction, because you want to introduce them to vocabulary. . . . [Y]ou don’t have time for material preparation.

Because of the day-to-day planning by teachers, both special educators mentioned that they often had to think on their feet and make adaptations “on the spot.”

Coordinating instructional planning. Although the special educators were responsible for writing the Individual Education Plan (IEP) goals for each child, the classroom teachers were responsible for implementing

many of these goals. Kay mentioned that she gave the classroom teachers the child’s IEP objectives and decided, with the classroom teachers, which objectives to focus on during a particular time period and, as part of the planning process:

I guide her [Lydia, the kindergarten teacher] to what he needs practice in, we do a lot of talking back and forth so we know . . . what our goals are for that, what our objectives are for that activity because a lot of times the objective for Edmund [the deaf child] will be different from the objective for the regular class.

When aspects of instruction might be a challenge, Kay and Lydia worked together to plan the unit. Patricia, the itinerant special educator, in contrast, was not able to plan with the second-grade teacher, Jill, because of her scheduling constraints.

Record keeping. Both special educators said they were responsible for and developed a variety of procedures for monitoring the children’s attainment of their goals. They observed the children in the classroom; developed record-keeping systems to help classroom teachers to record information, kept anecdotal records, and used standardized testing. Both special educators also depended on the interpreters to inform them of the day-to-day progress of the children. Finally, the special educators were responsible for writing report cards and helped the classroom teachers complete their report cards for the special education children.

Scheduling and directing special education aides and interpreters. The special educators were responsible for scheduling all special-education aides and interpreters. They also directed them as to the strategies and materials to use or adapt when working with the children.

Promoting peer relations. This responsibility was mentioned more frequently in regard to the two deaf children than with the hard-of-hearing child. The special educators taught the hearing peers sign language through formal and informal means and prompted hearing peers and the deaf child to sign to each other. Kay encouraged the D/HH children to invite their hearing friends to a social lunch period in her special

education room during which time she prompted sign communication between them instead of interpreting for them. She also taught a once-a-week peer-planning period during which she discussed solutions to peer problems with all the children.

Teaching sign language. Both special educators provided formal and informal sign language instruction for the hearing children. In the kindergarten, the special educator, Kay, set up a language experience center that incorporated sign learning. In-class sign-language sessions were also held for the kindergarten and first-grade children. Sometimes Kay would include a sign component within a unit; for example, when studying poetry Kay did a section on American Sign Language (ASL) poetry using videotapes. In second grade, the itinerant special educator, Patricia, would bring in ASL stories on videotapes every week and Jill, the classroom teacher, would put time aside for the whole class to watch these. Patricia also did some informal sign language instruction: "I will try and walk around, and it's interesting because I won't use my voice with them, and it's really neat because they'll sign right back to me, they won't use their voice and they'll tell me what they're doing."

Interpreting. Although interpreters were present in the classroom for the two deaf children, both special educators interpreted lessons taught by the classroom teacher. Kay chose to interpret when she felt that the lesson was likely to be difficult, while Patricia reported that she interpreted because the dynamics and structure of the classroom left her little else to do.

Communicating with parents. Both special educators kept in touch with parents. Kay exchanged written communication books. Patricia exchanged messages with Valencia's parents through the interpreter who lived in the community and knew the parents well.

Classroom Teachers' Responsibilities Regarding Curricular Adaptations and Accommodations

The classroom teachers made several adaptations in the classroom to accommodate the D/HH children. These included adapting objectives for activities, use

of visual materials and strategies, monitoring children's progress, adapting to the use of the interpreter in the classroom, and using sign language with the deaf children.

Adapting objectives. All three teachers had a range of children in the classroom and routinely had different expectations for different children. Karen, the first-grade teacher, stated:

I just have different expectations for them all and I expect when Felix or John complete their journal, they can tell me what they wrote and they have a picture that correlates with what they wrote, that's great for them. I expect Mandy or Kris to write three or four sentences in their journal starting with the capital and ending with the period.

Thus, the teachers were willing to adapt some expectations for the D/HH children. Karen, for example, accepted differences in Valencia's writing and spelling.

Use of visual materials and strategies. The kindergarten and first-grade teachers, Lydia and Karen, mentioned that they learned to use visual methods and tangible materials to clarify concepts for the D/HH children. Lydia mentioned that her main adaptation was "providing a lot of visuals, I'm a decent drawer and I draw a lot of things spur of the moment on the chalkboard." Jill, the second-grade teacher, tried to write more than usual on chalkboard so that the deaf child, Valencia, could see the English words.

The teachers also mentioned that they borrowed ideas from the special educators and interpreters and used them in the classroom for all the children. The first-grade teacher, Karen, stated: "Sheila [the interpreter] does something, these little things that makes it so easy for Valencia and then I see her do that and it's something I didn't think of and then I'll just take it and the whole class will do it."

Planning with the special educators and interpreters. When possible, the classroom teachers and special educators planned both curriculum content and adaptations together. The teachers mentioned that time to plan with the special educators was always difficult to find but that planning with the interpreters was frequent be-

cause they spent more time in the classroom than the special educators and were therefore more available.

Monitoring children's progress. The teachers monitored the children's progress in various ways. In kindergarten, Lydia set up a system where the deaf child, Valencia, signed all answers (even for those questions addressed to other children) to the interpreter, Sheila. Thus, Sheila was able to constantly monitor Valencia's understanding and to alert Lydia when there were problems. Although the first- and second-grade teachers did not do such intense monitoring, both of them obtained information about the children's daily progress through the interpreters. The second-grade teacher, Jill, stated: "If she's not getting it, usually Sheila [the interpreter] will say, 'Valencia's having a lot of trouble with this, she's not understanding this.' So sometimes, I have pulled her aside after, and the three of us will go through it again."

Learning to use the interpreter. All three teachers had some difficulty adapting to an interpreter in the classroom. They mentioned having to learn to adapt to the children's need to give sequential visual attention.

Using sign language. In kindergarten and first grade, the teachers, Lydia and Karen, both learned sufficient sign language to interact with the deaf children without always needing an interpreter. The field notes show numerous examples of such interaction :

Valencia takes a paper to show Lydia who signs WHAT THAT. Valencia shrugs and shakes her head. Lydia then signs IS THAT YOUR NAME YOUR LAST NAME and prompts Valencia to write it.

Edmund is telling Kay that he can't draw. Lydia comes up to him and signs I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT YOURSELF. NOT KAY. I SAW YOU THE OTHER DAY.

Karen learned sufficient sign to occasionally switch roles with the interpreter: "One day Sheila [the interpreter] and I decided to do something different, Sheila read, and I interpreted the story, and I had to do a lot of practice—three days before I could do it."

Jill, the second-grade teacher, however, did not learn any sign, and, as a result, there was little direct communication between her and Valencia:

Well, if we're working where I'm available, where I'm not tied up with somebody, she raises her hand and then I call on her and then Sheila [the interpreter] interprets it. . . . Not too often does she ask me a question about what to do. You know, I've given directions, if she's not real sure what to do, if Sheila's working with her she just asks her. If she's supposed to be independent then she'll raise her hand. And if she's working and Sheila has left her on her own and she suddenly thinks she needs help she waves her hand and makes noises and makes sure Sheila comes back.

Communication and Relationships between Special Educators and Classroom Teachers

All the interviewees mentioned the importance of communication and establishing a good relationship between the special educators and the classroom teachers. The school principal explained at length that communication with the classroom teachers was the prime responsibility of the special educators. The teachers mentioned that they were able to communicate with the special educators regarding difficulties that cropped up. The main barrier to communication was time. Often the teachers and special educators met for short periods after school or caught each other for 5 or 10 minutes at recess. Although regular meeting times were established, informal meetings were preferred. The special-education coordinator reported:

The most valuable times . . . have been the 10 minutes that we catch between recesses. . . . On the spot problem solving. She [Lydia, the kindergarten teacher] found those to be more valuable and provided her with more support than the plan, we're going to meet for 15 minutes on Monday and talk about what we're going to do. Lydia, when we got into that discussion, shared the fact that she can't plan a week like that.

However, meeting times were valuable to keep everyone informed of what was going on, and teachers ex-

pressed dissatisfaction when there was not sufficient time to meet with the special educators.

Both special educators mentioned that they met with the interpreters more frequently than with the classroom teachers. All three classroom teachers also reported more communication and a closer relationship with the interpreters than with the special educators.

The interpreters often acted as an information conduit between the special educators and the classroom teachers. They informed the special educators about the happenings in the classroom, the effectiveness of specific teaching strategies and the D/HH students' progress. According to Kay:

There's a lot of contact with my aides and whoever is in there with him [Edmund, the deaf child] . . . I require them . . . sharing with me, whatever activity they did they'd tell me how it went, . . . I want to know whether it went well, didn't go well, understood or not understood so that then I make my modifications.

The interpreters also communicated the special educator's ideas and comments to the teacher. Patricia stated:

Most of my contact during the day is with her [Valencia's] interpreter . . . and I wind up giving Sheila [the interpreter] all of the information. . . . [T]ime is a factor. . . . She [the classroom teacher, Jill] has the classroom to deal with, and I find that it's almost impossible to sit down and talk about strategies. I don't know always if it's to the right person but Sheila is really great about transferring information to [Jill].

One of the difficulties mentioned by the classroom teachers was the number of specialists with whom they had to communicate: special education, bilingual education, art, and so on. The teachers frequently mentioned that those who take on the special-education children needed to be flexible and tolerant of adults going in and out of the classroom. According to the special-education coordinator, some teachers' reluctance to accept special-education children (including D/HH children) had more to do with the number of adults working with those children than the children themselves.

Ownership of Classroom Teachers Toward the D/HH Children

During the first two years of the project the special educator and special-education coordinator assigned children to classes with the consent of the classroom teacher. After two years, the principal decided that the classroom teachers, who worked in grade-level teams, would select the special-education students with whom they wanted to work. The special educators were asked to inform the grade-level teams about the children but not to assign the children to specific teachers. The teachers who chose special-education children would have a reduced class size. Thus, in the third year of the project, all the teachers who had special education children in their classrooms were volunteers. The principal felt that such a procedure allowed teachers to feel ownership of the students and, therefore, commit to their success:

And we do it in I feel a very unique way in the fact that all the teachers on the team are included in the meetings and all the teachers hear about the special-needs students that are coming in so that there's an ownership. That's the purpose in my mind, there's an ownership by the team of teachers for this group of students that are coming in. . . . I try to make sure that I don't state my opinions because the bottom line is the teacher has to feel that they can do what they can do. It doesn't matter if the principal tells him or the special needs teacher or the special ed. director, it's the actual classroom teacher.

The special-education coordinator also stated that ownership of students by regular educators was the key to the successful inclusion of children:

The teachers that we feel have effected the most beneficial programs for our students that are placed there are the ones with the strong personalities that say, you put this child or I selected this child for my program, he is a member of my class first and a member of your program second. . . . He's my kindergarten student. And I'll call on you when I need your help or I'll push you out of the way when I think you're getting in the way.

However, when the classroom teacher had ownership of the children, the special educators lost "con-

trol” of the children’s program, a situation in which there was potential for conflict. The teacher who took the most ownership of the special-education children was Lydia, the kindergarten teacher, who once mentioned, “I think I have been fighting for control . . . and to establish territory.” She stated: “Nobody has really asked me who can really affect my problem. The special-education coordinator and Kay [the special educator] have never asked me what I want. Because they’re . . . the experts. They know better than I do, or they think that they know better than I do.”

Role Perceptions

An interesting issue revealed through the various different interviews was the manner in which the role of the special educator was defined by various participants. Kay felt that she should take responsibility for the special-education children resulting in her taking various roles: “I’m an aide sometimes, I’m an interpreter sometimes and sometimes I’m a teacher.” She stated that her major responsibilities were to adapt curriculum, to take responsibility for the IEP process, to stay in contact with the parents, and to facilitate and empower teachers to serve the special education children:

My job entails popping in here and there, observing . . . saying “let’s try this, that might work, or we need to get this prepared,” so that the next time in the same activity they can participate more. . . . I’m trying to facilitate what the children need and facilitate or empower the people I work with to facilitate method . . . so I see myself going around the campus trying to make sure everything is going OK and if they are having problems, what do I need to intervene or do I need to assist them to intervene.

The other special educator, Patricia, in contrast, saw the role she was playing in the classroom as that of an interpreter and an aide: “I would say that I do more interpreting which doesn’t make me too happy.”

The special educators were perceived by the classroom teachers and the interpreters as the “experts” and “problem solvers” for the special-education children. However, at the same time, the classroom teachers felt that the special educators were focused exclusively on these children, and were, therefore, unable to perceive

the children’s progress in relationship to the rest of the classroom.

Some teachers gave over responsibility to teach part of the curriculum to the special educators. For example, in second grade, Jill stated that she relied on Patricia, the special educator, to take charge of Valencia’s reading. The kindergarten teacher, Lydia, however, perceived the special educator as a resource for herself, rather than working directly with the children:

I really think that she’s another brain to pick for ideas. . . . It’s like a dictionary, she’s a tool that you can use. She has ideas that you may not think of, or she can look at a situation with outside eyes. You as the teacher are very absorbed and you just can’t see the tree through the forest, you can ask her to come in and say “You know, I can’t figure this out. Help me. Tell me what’s happening here.”

The principal also expressed the view that the special educator should be primarily a resource to teachers:

You just have to go around and facilitate because you can’t be in control. . . . She has to let go of the control. . . . if she doesn’t have all her special needs children together she has to give away control. And the control has to be owned by the teacher, and the other staff she has working for her.

The principal expressed a preference for a special education teacher who would monitor the special-education children through daily communication with the teachers and aides and only work directly with children when a determination was made that the staff or classroom teacher could not satisfactorily provide for the child’s needs.

Concerns

The specific concerns expressed had to do with the special educator’s case load, visitor status in the classroom and school, pullout time, and suggested adaptations.

Case load. A concern about the numbers of children and the different classrooms in which these children were served was expressed by the classroom teachers, the special educators, and the special education coordinator. Kay, the resident special educator, worked with be-

tween 10 and 18 children spread out among several different classrooms; while Patricia, the itinerant special educator, had a case load that involved traveling long distances between schools. Kay stated that she found it difficult to adapt materials and strategies for the large numbers of teachers, especially as it was unusual for her to have much advance notice of their plans.

As case load increased, direct teaching time decreased for the special educators, who, together with the classroom teachers, expressed concern that the children's needs were not being met. Kay thought she ought to meet with each child each day and expressed her frustration: "I don't think I could ever . . . give everybody, every week, every day, the 10 of them something of what they need." Jill in the second-grade classroom echoed this concern: "She's [Patricia] not here enough. She's in for three quick shots a week and we really need somebody every day."

Visitor status in the classroom. This concern was expressed primarily by the classroom teachers. One of the concerns of the classroom teachers was that the special educators, who came in for a short period of time, had no knowledge of what was happening in the classroom and therefore made inappropriate adaptations and suggestions. In addition, their continuous exits and entrances interrupted the instructional flow. Lydia expressed many concerns about simply "visiting" a classroom: "She walks in, I'll kind of have an ear out because she'll see something out of context, and she will assume that it is a problem . . . think that happens a lot, from my perspective, and it is just because a teacher is always in and out." Visitor status also led to isolation. The special education coordinator stated: "Being an itinerant special-education teacher in a rural community is really hard in terms of professional identity. There is nobody to talk to, nobody to speak your language."

Concerns about pull-out. The decision regarding inclusion for these children was made before either special educator was employed. Both special educators seemed ambivalent about offering all services within the classroom and both wished to increase the amount of pull-out time because the reading curriculum was difficult

to adapt, the children needed more repetition and a slower paced curriculum, and therefore more direct teaching time from the special educator.

The classroom teachers had mixed feelings about the pull-out. In first grade Karen talked about Valencia being pulled out during reading:

Sometimes when she gets pulled out of some of the groups I didn't know if that was exactly the best thing to pull her out at that time . . . they just pulled her out and they would do something else. And then they kept her back in the group . . . I liked it best when she was still with us.

In second grade, however, Jill thought it might be a good idea to have a short pull-out time: "I think that might be beneficial really and truly, just to take her [Valencia, the deaf child] out and work on reading. Away from everyone else just for a half an hour."

Concerns about adaptations. Although the classroom teachers felt that they accommodated the D/HH children, the special educators did not always perceive that adaptations were made in the classroom. Kay stated that the teachers were willing to plan with her to make adaptations but were soon overwhelmed with their work and, except for Lydia, were relieved to leave the adaptations to her. On the other hand, sometimes teachers felt that the adaptations that were suggested were not practical, or unnecessary, or conflicted with other practices. Jill reported:

I'm being told one thing by . . . whoever's in charge of good methods, . . . that you walk around the room at all times. That's what I'm used to. I'm here, I'm there, I'm everywhere. Well then, with Valencia they said, but you always need to be in the front of the room so she knows where you are, so Sheila [the interpreter] knows where you are, and then these are two completely opposed ideas I'm going to have to adapt somewhere in the middle. Just a lot of things like that.

Discussion

This research explored the roles of classroom teachers and special educators when D/HH children are in-

cluded in the classroom. The major issues to be discussed are the varied responsibilities of special educators, the kinds of adaptations made by the classroom teachers, and issues of time, communication, and ownership.

Responsibilities of special educators. The results indicate that the responsibilities of the special educators in this inclusive setting were extremely varied. Although they were responsible for some direct teaching, they were also responsible for assisting classroom teachers to make curricular adaptations and for planning cooperatively with them. Thus, their major role appeared to be providing services to classroom teachers rather than to the children. Their job, therefore, required, in addition to their expert knowledge, a knowledge of general classroom curriculum and methods as well as specific knowledge about the classroom in which the D/HH child was included. Lacking this knowledge, special educators may have unrealistic expectations of teachers and make suggestions that do not fit the classroom culture or the classroom teacher's style or needs. As a result, the D/HH children may not be integrated into the academic life of the classroom because such a mismatch may result in the conclusion that pull-out instruction is the easy solution. Clearly, the special educators in inclusive settings need to view their role as much more than direct instruction to children. Particularly, they need to have the collaboration skills to work with the classroom teachers.

Classroom teachers' adaptations. An important concern of special educators is whether classroom teachers will make the adaptations necessary for the D/HH children. As reported by other researchers (Fuchs, Fuchs, Hamlett, Phillips, & Karns, 1995; Scruggs & Mastropieri, 1994; Schumm et al., 1995), the teachers were most ready to make adaptations that they perceived as benefiting the entire class, for example, visual strategies. Sign language was accepted by the teachers because they felt that it was a visual supplement that would benefit other children. Adaptations that were seen as specific for only the D/HH children (e.g., staying in one place) were less acceptable to teachers and were most likely to be left to the special educator to implement. Thus, certain adaptations, for example,

visual strategies for reading, may be best provided in pull-out situations as suggested by the two special educators.

York and Tundidor (1995) mention that one of the facilitators of inclusion is diversity within the community. An adaptation made by teachers, which was not specific to the D/HH students, was the acceptance of diversity. All three teachers mentioned that they designed their classroom instruction so as to allow for a range of student learning and responses; thus, adaptations for the D/HH children seemed to be acceptable along a continuum of adaptations for the entire class. It may be, therefore, that multiage, multigrade classrooms might be good environments for including D/HH students because teachers may be more accustomed to the diversity of learning needs in these classrooms.

Communication and relationships. As with other research on inclusive settings (York & Tundidor, 1995), time was mentioned as a barrier to planning and communication. This barrier was most frustrating and severe for the itinerant special educator, Patricia, because of her visitor status. Although time for scheduled meetings was important, informal communication was seen as equally important, putting a visitor at a considerable disadvantage. This finding echoes that of Janney et al. (1995), who recommend that developing a "collaborative culture" may be more important than freeing up specific blocks of time for teachers to work together.

An interesting finding was that both the classroom teachers and special educators communicated more frequently with the interpreters than with each other, possibly because the interpreters spent more time in the classroom than the special educators. The finding also highlights the importance of the interpreters for the children's educational program. Not only did they spend time working with the children, their observations provided crucial information to both sets of teachers.

Ownership. Though ownership of special needs children by classroom teachers was viewed positively by the administrators in this project and by researchers (Giangreco et al., 1993), it can, ironically, create problems between the classroom teachers and the special educators. One reason for such problems may be that teach-

ers are used to working and making decisions without regard to other teachers (Janney et al., 1995). Thus, decisions or suggestions made by one may be seen as threatening to the other. Also, special educators may see their particular expertise as undervalued when classroom teachers take on the major responsibility for the education of the D/HH children. Again, this points out the value of developing a collaborative culture in the schools and helping special educators realize that their main responsibility may not be providing direct services to students but to other teachers. This perception of the role to be played by the special educators was, in fact, recognized as important by all the participants. However, dissonance created by these two roles, that is, service to teachers and direct service to students, may be one of the factors that resulted in increased requests for pull-out from the special educators.

Conclusions

Inclusive classrooms demand a collaboration between teachers that requires rethinking the role of the special educator. The special educator performs a careful balancing act between service to children and service to classroom teachers. When providing help to classroom teachers, the special educator needs to be knowledgeable and respectful of the classroom context. However, knowledge of this context may be difficult to acquire if the teacher is a visitor to either the school or the classroom. Facilitating ownership of the children by classroom teachers is clearly important and may be related to the teachers' willingness to make adaptations for the children, but giving up ownership of the children requires a recalibration of the role, and perhaps the preparation, of the special educator.

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