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Least Restrictive Environment for Students with Disabilities

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Least Restrictive Environment for Students with Disabilities

by

Kristin Talada

May 15, 2004

A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human
Development of the State University of New York College at Brockport
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of
Science in Education

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the first Special Education cohort at SUNY College
at Brockport, 2003-2004.

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Abstract

As the number of students with disabilities in our classroom today grows, it is important to make sure we, as educators, do as much as possible to accommodate our students. Therefore, my research question is: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room? In order to answer this question, I reviewed literature, and obtained data through an observation checklist. The observational checklist was based on five specific academic behaviors shown in the general education classroom as compared to the resource room. By looking at the literature and checklists, I was able to gain a better insight into the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) and its academic benefits for students with disabilities. Results suggest that the sample of students studied is more academically successful in the resource room, pull-out program. However, more research needs to be conducted on what how teaching styles and attitudes can effect the students' success in each placement.

Introduction

I am currently placed in the Holley Central School District completing my internship for certification in Special Education. In my internship there are thirteen students who are pulled out for English Language Arts instruction, ninety minutes a day, five days a week. The same sixteen students participate in the general education classroom for all other content and special areas successfully. I have noticed the students are comfortable in the pull-out program and enjoy leaving the general education classroom. However, I have also noticed the same students enjoy the socialization with their peers in the general education classroom as well as benefit from the peer assistance and encouragement.

Throughout our Special Education graduate program, we have been learning about the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), its definition and place in the field of education, and that the LRE is mandated by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, also known as the IDEA. In the IDEA, the definition of the LRE is very broad and left to varying interpretations; it states that the LRE is where students can best perform academically and socially. There is no clear, specific definition of the LRE in the IDEA, but the IDEA implies placement should fall in the full inclusion classroom when possible.

In general, experts agree there is no clear definition of the LRE in the IDEA, but it is such an important topic that major theorists focus on what the LRE should look like in the classroom. Erik Erikson is a theorist who believes everyone is born with the same innate intelligence, but his/her environment shapes the rest (Peterson & Hittie, 2002). I believe this relates to the LRE in that everyone needs a positive, safe environment to grow and learn together. He also theorizes how human development takes place in social communities and socialization takes place through community learning (Peterson & et. al., 2002). I relate this to the modern classroom by understanding that in this positive, safe environment, a sense of

community needs to be addressed and practiced daily. The students need to feel a sense of belonging and welcoming in their classroom environment to expand their innate intelligence. Erikson believes the LRE can be displayed and created using simple teaching practices such as role play, group investigation, classroom meetings, and cooperative non-directive teaching (Peterson & et. al., 2002)

Vygotsky is another theorist who believes learning, by nature, is a heterogeneous process. He believes students learn best by reaching their zone of proximal development and challenging themselves to the next level of learning (Peterson & et. al., 2002). Teachers may help students accomplish this process by using scaffolding, multi-age learning, and multi-level grouping. I believe that Vygotsky wanted a LRE where students could interact with other students from all other ages and levels to help each other learn interactively. By making heterogeneous groups, students would be able to learn from each other's strengths and teach each other to improve upon their areas for growth (Peterson & et. al., 2002). Vygotsky suggests teachers reach this LRE by using strategies such as inquiry learning, memorization, and advanced organizers (Peterson & et. al., 2002).

In general, studies show the best placement for all students is individual for each, and a general plan for each student should be created and documented. Studies show many lawsuits brought upon by parents and teachers in question of how the LRE is clearly defined and what that means for individual students. Yell and Drasgrow (1999) and Belcher (1997) are some of the researchers who performed such studies and I have based much of my information on their findings. Therefore, I want to study the benefits of the successful placement of students with disabilities in their specific LRE. I am interested in this because I want to know if the thirteen students in my internship can be academically successful in a

regular education classroom for the content area of English Language Arts. It is my personal belief full inclusion is the LRE for these thirteen students.

My formulated question stands as: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room? This question will be answered in part by an investigation conducted with sixteen students, ten females and six males, identified with various disabilities, and all currently in the fourth grade. I will begin to answer my research question by reviewing the relevant literature as it relates to this critical issue.

Review of Literature

This paper describes literature relevant to the research purposes of this thesis question. The themes I will be discussing are organized into three sections: Laws and Legal Issues of the LRE, Methods and Approaches for a successful LRE, and Teacher Training/Attitudes to create a successful LRE.

Laws and Legal Issues of the LRE

There are various studies and research pertaining to the laws and legal issues of the LRE; I believe this is mainly because of the broad and nonspecific definition that leaves the LRE open to individual interpretation- including the physical placement. The IDEA states to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are to be taught alongside students without disabilities. The courts tend to rule toward integrated settings as the preferred placement for students (Thomas & Rapport, 1998). In my opinion, the courts have a more open and advanced look upon inclusion and the LRE, than most school districts because of these rulings.

Individuality is the key to finding the LRE and ensuring the best possible education for students with disabilities, which may not always be in the inclusive classroom (Yell, 1995). The definition for the LRE in the IDEA states “to the maximum extent appropriate” students should learn alongside their nondisabled peers. For some students this means a separate location or classroom is the most appropriate, which should be stated in their Individualized Education Plan (IEP). In determining “educational benefits” of the LRE for each student, academic and nonacademic needs must be considered (Thomas & Rapport, 1998). The entire child needs to be considered when creating the individualized plan for their LRE. What is most appropriate for a child’s academic needs may not be most appropriate for

their nonacademic and social needs, therefore a unique plan finding a way to balance both sets of needs is required for all students.

Unfortunately, the mandate to provide a free and appropriate public education and the preference for education in the LRE seem to conflict (Yell, 1995). That is, an appropriate education may not always be available in a general education setting and the general education setting may not always provide the most appropriate education. This conflict brings the issue right back to implementing an individualized plan for each student pertaining to his or her LRE. Neither the IDEA laws nor the regulations delineate how school districts are to determine the LRE; in most cases, the multidisciplinary team that develops the IEP determines the LRE (Yell, 1995). The IDEA and comments to the regulations make it clear that the IEP team can make this decision only by examining each child individually and determining his or her goals based on the team assessments. It is clear that the IDEA laws anticipate, but does not favor, that these goals may at times be achieved only in specialized settings.

During my own research, I discovered various gaps in documented research of laws and legal issues. One of the gaps is the issue of the movement of students to more restrictive environments: there is no mention of specific evidence needed for the legal movement of a student to a more restrictive environment. After reading all the articles, I realize that evidence *is* needed to move students to a more restrictive environment, but no article has stated the specifics required. Court cases have been argued on whether a school district has sufficient information to move a student from a current placement, but no mention of what kind of evidence was submitted to the court was noted. I would like to know if any school districts have committed to a similar process of gathering such evidence because I feel this is important knowledge for school districts to create similar systems of documentation.

Another gap I discovered upon researching the topic of laws and legal issues is that additional services, places, organizations, or programs could be provided in an IEP, to make an LRE individualized for specific students. All the researchers on this topic agree the only way to make an LRE for each student is to individualize a plan for each student. What the research is not telling us is how we can add updated services, places, organizations, and programs to individualize each student's plan. I would like to know how programs such as the YMCA and Special Friends programs could be written into the IEP for additional services, in which, a student could receive during a regular school day. If these services and programs are going to create an LRE for specific students then they should be included on the IEP and made available on a regular basis. On a similar note, the research does not mention if the school districts would provide support and money to a student if their LRE was a home schooling program or off school grounds. In my opinion, the school district should supply these services, because it is the specific LRE for an individual student to learn successfully.

I would also like to know if the courts' decisions to implement the LRE regulations to students are true to students with severe disabilities. In all the research I have read, the courts apply the LRE regulations to students with disabilities, but there is never mention if the policies still stand firm with students with *severe* disabilities. This is a difficult subject area because often students with severe disabilities need more services and more specific IEP's. Under IDEA, a child with disabilities, whether severe or not, needs to be taught alongside their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent appropriate. Therefore, the courts should extend regulations to students with severe disabilities as well.

Methods and Approaches

My second theme of the issue of the LRE is various methods and approaches attempted to create a successful LRE. The LRE may be a place or setting outside the school

district or building (Rueda, Gallego, & Moll, 2000). For example: The Fifth Dimension Project is a cultural system containing rules, artifacts, and a division of labor that mixes play, education, and peer interaction. The three goals of the Fifth Dimension Project are to create sustainable activity systems in different institutional settings, facilitate cognitive and social development, and provide a context in which undergraduate students from various disciplines could observe and test theories of learning. The project takes place in after school Boys and Girls Clubs and YMCA's. Many of the children who participate at these sites are considered at risk, have received special education services, and have diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Students who participate in these activities improve academically throughout the school year as a result (Wigle & Wilcox, 1996).

Simply placing students with and without disabilities together in a classroom does not make an LRE inclusive classroom- students need individualization and support to benefit from their LRE (Raines, 1996). When thinking of the physical integration of LRE in the classroom it is important to remember three components: age-appropriateness, concentrations, and school selection factors. When considering age-appropriateness, researcher John Nietupski (1995) writes that students should be placed in schools with their same-age peers to facilitate interactions between students with and without disabilities. I believe this can be and should be accomplished through multi-aged, multi-level classrooms. Nietupski (1995) also states the importance of remembering to balance students with and without disabilities in your classroom. Finally, Nietupski (1995) states that school factors such as accessibility and staff receptivity to integration should be considered when creating a successful LRE (Nietupski, 1995).

Before an LRE can be implemented for any student, work needs to be completed within the school staff. Team cooperation and collaboration are essential elements to

inclusive programs, as well as classroom strategies involving several learning styles and levels of participation. There are various strategies to create a successful inclusive classroom, including teamwork and collaboration planning, circle of friends/MAPS process, and cooperative learning in heterogeneous groups. For those students whose LRE is in an inclusive setting these strategies will assist in making a safe, positive learning environment for all the students in the classroom (Nietupski, 1995).

Additionally, using various programs in the classroom will stimulate a safe, positive learning environment. Using a Special Friends or Peer Buddy program in the classroom will allow students with and without disabilities to develop positive, mutually rewarding, personal relationships that will be generalized beyond the school setting (Nietupski, 1995). I believe for the students whose LRE is within the inclusive classroom, strategies that build community and partnerships will be most valuable when the students enter the “real world,” segregation within the classroom will teach segregation outside of the classroom. When considering these programs, school districts need to create a cost-benefit analysis for implementing these methods that is budgeted for an appropriate education for all students (Raines, 1996).

In the theme of methods and approaches for creating a successful LRE there again are gaps in the information. The research provides solid evidence that these methods will be successful with children with mild disabilities, but it is unknown for children with moderate to severe disabilities. I would like to know if these methods will be successful because there are students with moderate to severe disabilities who's LRE is within an inclusive classroom. Similarly, it is unclear of the cost to provide such methods and approaches within the school setting, which is important knowledge to have when discussing these programs to the inclusion team.

In addition, it is unknown whether the fact that the Fifth Dimension Project is found in a non-school setting is solely responsible for the patterns of proven success or because of other variables. The researchers are unsure of this and are currently performing more studies. I believe it is a combination of the amount of free choice the program provides and its non-school setting. In my opinion, many times when children are learning outside of school they are unaware of the knowledge they are gaining and it is less stressful. The Fifth Dimension Project allows for this less stressful environment with freedom of choice in many factors such as when to learn, what to learn, and for how long the learning will take place.

Teacher Training and Attitudes

The final theme I will be discussing is the topic of teacher training and attitudes to create a successful LRE. The criteria of student-teacher interaction and opportunity to respond suggest general classroom teachers need training to be effective in providing these learning elements for students with disabilities (Rao & Lim, 1999). Student teachers exiting teacher certification programs and general educators need to learn several aspects of special education that unfortunately are not taught. For instance, student teachers need to learn to select appropriate learning materials for students with different needs. It is a common problem in general education programs to teach teachers to “teach to the middle” level of their students. In current classrooms, the middle is the minority in most cases. Student teachers also need to use differing materials in their classroom through the use of differentiated seatwork and homework assignments. Adapting their learning objectives and their curriculum content to accommodate the needs of students in a wide range of abilities and disabilities will also benefit general education teachers before exiting their programs. With the growing number of inclusion classrooms and children with special education needs integrated into general education classrooms, I believe these elements are essential for

teachers to know and have experience with before exiting their teacher certification programs (Reber, 1995).

A survey administered among general education teachers across the United States found general education teachers felt unprepared and untrained to teach in an inclusive classroom. Most teachers support the concept of inclusion; however, slightly lower percentages expressed a willingness to teach students with disabilities (Rao & Lim, 1999). A minority of teachers believe students with disabilities could be a disruption to the general education classroom, but believe overall that students with and without disabilities would benefit from an inclusive classroom. However, few respondents believe that teachers had sufficient training for mainstreaming students into inclusive classrooms (Belcher, 1997). Although this survey was administered in 1996, I believe there are still teachers who have the same attitude, seven years later. In my opinion, teachers need to be trained early on in their teacher certification programs and school districts need to offer training for those teachers feeling uneducated. Inclusion is the LRE for many students and to deny that LRE because of a lack of training would be unethical.

In my research, I found an interesting study based on teacher's attitudes and how they can be reflective of what kind of training preparation they received. The study, (Belcher, 1997), stated teachers who did not receive proficient training in inclusion classrooms and special education techniques scored in the 'unwillingness to teach students with disabilities' range. On the opposite end of the spectrum, teachers that received training from their teacher certification program or school district scored in the 'very willing to teach students with disabilities' range. During interviews, the teachers who had not been trained felt unprepared and unwilling to take the risk of failing a student or group of students. The teachers who had been trained felt the inclusion classroom was the only LRE for most students with disabilities

and were excited to begin teaching in their own inclusive classrooms in the fall (Belcher, 1997). I believe teacher training has a great impact on the effectiveness of a teacher in an inclusive classroom. Teachers need the training to feel successful and comfortable to take risks for the better of their student's education.

Teacher's attitudes toward inclusion are significantly different depending on the nature of the student's disability. It was found that students with orthopedic disabilities, especially students in wheelchairs, were the most welcome in the classroom. Student with seizure disorders elicited the most negative attitude among teachers. I believe these attitudes are reflective of insufficient training and levels of comfort; it is clear that principals need and want training in special education if the current trend of educating the majority of students with disabilities by implementing the full inclusion policy or LRE mandate continues. Teachers believe that when training and experience are allowed, better, more professional attitudes will emerge (Monteith, 1994).

Researching the topic of teacher training and attitudes raised several more questions. It is not known why there are specific disabilities that elicit more negative attitudes from educators facing accommodation requests. In my opinion the negative attitudes evolve from the lack of training in the school districts and teacher certification programs. However, it is unclear if the negative attitudes evolve from the lack of training, lack of knowledge and skills, lack of comfort, or maybe none of these theories. I would like to know what the reasons are for negative attitudes so the problems can be resolved and a successful LRE can be created.

Similarly, it is unknown what specific aspects of inclusion create negative responses- perhaps teaching in an inclusive classroom is seen as too difficult to accomplish or unfair. Also, it is unclear if teacher training in the background knowledge of disabilities or methods

and approaches to teaching an inclusive classroom would be more beneficial. Discovering the specific reason for teacher's negative attitudes would resolve many problems around inclusion in the future.

Conclusion

My personal determination after reading and researching the topic of the LRE is yes; these sixteen students will be able to perform at average levels in a full inclusion classroom. All of the research states that with the appropriate services and teaching practices these thirteen students should perform at their present level of achievement in the current pull-out program. In general, experts agree there is no clear definition of the LRE and it should be individualized to each student specifically. Placing each of these thirteen students in their inclusion classroom for the English Language Arts lessons is individual and appropriate. In this classroom, several of Erickson's and Vygotsky's theories are implemented daily, which will also aid in the success of achievement for each student.

Therefore, I am going to study the benefits of the successful placement in the LRE for students with disabilities as a thesis project. As previously stated, it is my personal belief that full inclusion is the LRE for these sixteen students. My formulated thesis question is: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room? For my project, I will be including sixteen students, 10 females and 6 males; all with identified various disabilities, in fourth grade. All studies will be taking place at an elementary school. Based on my theory, law, review of the literature, and research, I believe these students will be successful in the general education setting. I will plan my research by mapping out the methodology to my formulated question.

Methods

The researcher intends to explore if fourth grade students with various disabilities can achieve the same academic success in a general education consultant program as in a pull-out resource room program. The research stems from the concept of the LRE and the requirement to place every student with disabilities in a learning environment with their nondisabled peers to the maximum extent possible (Thomas & Rapport, 1998). When finished, the researcher will attempt to answer whether or not these sixteen students are, in fact, in their LRE: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room?

Subjects

All sixteen of the subjects in this study are fourth grade students attending a rural school district. The subjects' ages range from nine to eleven years old. All of the subjects are of Caucasian ethnicity and have middle to low socioeconomic status, no student lives in an upper socioeconomic status. The subjects have various classified disabilities, including learning disabilities, speech and language disabilities, and other health impairments (Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder).

Instruments

One instrument will be employed for data collection in this research study. The instrument is an observational checklist. This is an unpublished instrument developed by the researcher for the purposes of this study (see Table 1). The checklist is designed to measure the academic success for each of the sixteen students based on a set of five criteria in both the general education setting and the resource room setting. The researcher will gather reliability

and validity measures as part of the analysis procedures for this study using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS, version 12.0).

Procedures

The researcher will be planning to collect data for this study in one-month time. In this time, the researcher will be conducting observations on the sixteen students, four consecutive days a week, in two thirty- minute intervals. Using an observation checklist, the researcher will be observing during thirty minutes of math in the general education classroom as consultant service personnel. The researcher will be completing the checklist, watching for the five criteria listed and placing the numbers one, zero, or a star for all appropriate behaviors. The researcher will then be observing the same students in a pull-out resource room program for English Language Arts and complete another observational checklist in the same fashion.

After a month, the data will be collected and analyzed. Planned statistical analyzes include descriptive statistics (such as percentages, mean, and standard deviation) and inferential statistics, using a Individual Samples *t*-test to determine whether a statistical significant difference exists between the checklist recording in a resource room pull-out program and a general education consultant program. The validity of the observational checklist will be conducted by consulting an expert. The researcher will be asking a special education teacher to examine the observational checklist and ascertain its validity for measuring academic success in the two programs. To establish reliability, reliability will be computed on the observation checklist using the SPSS (version 12.0) program. The instrument will be conducted in a consistent fashion, by the same researcher, at the same time, everyday, and subjective judgments will be made on specific criteria stated in each behavior of the checklist itself.

These are the subjects, instruments, and procedures that are planned. Information collected will be presented in the results section as well as any changes and limitations that may occur throughout the study.

Results

My research question was: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room? The planned analysis was, using the SPSS (version 12.0) program, to establish descriptive statistics (mean, percentages, and standard deviation) on gathered data and also to run an Individual Samples *t*-test between the pull-out and consultant programs. The Individual Samples *t*-test was to discover if any significant differences exist between the pull-out program and the consultant program. Analyses went as planned.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistical procedures were computed using the SPSS (version 12.0) program. The mean, percentages, and standard deviation results (N=16) were converted to a table. The results of descriptive statistics are shown in Table 2.

Inferential Statistics

To determine the validity of the observational checklist used in this study, an special education expert examined the content and concluded the checklist to be valid. The reliability of the observational checklist was computed using the SPSS (version 12.0) program and was computed to be .526. Inferential statistics were produced using an Individual Sample *t*-test, computed using the SPSS (version 12.0) program. The results of this test are shown in Table 3. Significant differences were found between pairs three and five. No significant differences were found between any other pairs.

Conclusions

The research question I studied was: Can fourth grade students with identified disabilities obtain the same level of academic achievement in the general education classroom with consultant services as compared to a pull-out program in the resource room? In my internship, there are sixteen students who are pulled out for English Language Arts instruction, ninety minutes a day, five days a week. The same sixteen students participate in the general education classroom for all other content and special areas successfully. I became interested in this topic because I noticed the students are comfortable in the pull-out program and enjoy leaving the general education classroom. However, I also noticed the same students enjoy the socialization with their peers in the general education classroom as well as benefit from the peer assistance and encouragement. In order for me to determine if a significant discrepancy existed between two variables, I developed an observation checklist, listing five prominent academic behaviors. I used this checklist by marking, each day, if I observed the students displaying the behaviors in each of the pull-out and consult programs.

Limitations

I found limitations to lie in the small sample size and small span of diversity used for this study. The small sample size consisted of sixteen students from one rural school district, all in the fourth grade. Therefore, the sample size was limited to a rural community school district's educational policies and procedures. There was no information collected in suburban or urban school districts. Also, the small student sample consisted of all Caucasian ethnicity with average to low socioeconomic backgrounds. Therefore, it is assumed that the results of the study are specific to Caucasian students with low to average socioeconomic backgrounds and no information was collected from any other culture or socioeconomic status. In addition, a limitation discovered was within the various teaching styles and

attitudes. Each classroom had different procedures, rules, and expectations for the students. Therefore the limitation was the different variables between educational settings, which had an effect on the study results. The observational checklist reliability was computed as .52 (52%) reliable, which is also a limitation of this study.

Interpreting

Through this research study, I have determined some findings concur with Raines' (1996) study. Raines determined simply placing students with and without disabilities together in a classroom does not make an LRE inclusive setting- students need individualization and support to benefit from their LRE. I also found that students in the consult program were sometimes lost in the sea of students and it was difficult for the special education teacher to provide needed services. Therefore, there seems to be a relationship between students' inappropriate behavior in a large group versus a small group setting.

The findings also concur with Belcher's (1997) study. Belcher determined that teachers who did not receive proficient training in inclusion classrooms and special education techniques scored in the 'unwillingness to teach students with disabilities' range. I also found that in the general education classroom, when the general education teacher had limited training in special education modifications and accommodations, the students were confused and unable to following along with the general activities. Therefore, there seems to be a relationship between student's unwillingness to volunteer for needed assistance in a large group versus a small group setting.

In contrast, no information existed before this study on the different types of academic behaviors exhibited in the general education classroom versus the resource room. The findings seem to suggest that students' ability to use appropriate behaviors and their ability to volunteer for needed assistance in the pull-out program are greater than in the

consult program. The students were less successful with these two behaviors in the consult program. Therefore, if teachers continue to combine consult and pull-out programs and are aware of and teach consistently between the two programs and settings, there may be an increase in academic benefit.

Recommendations

While the findings did not reach significant levels in all five academic behaviors, there was a significant difference between inappropriate behavior and volunteering for needed assistance. When the students were in the resource room setting in a pull-out program, they had only eight students in the room with three adults. This made it much more difficult for the student to behave inappropriately and more time was focused on the lesson. Also, because of the smaller setting, students seemed to feel more comfortable and asked for assistance whenever needed, without hesitation. However, when the same students were in the consult program in a general education setting, twenty students and two adults surrounded them. The individual attention for each student decreased and the inappropriate behavior increased. Also, I noticed the students would only ask for assistance when called upon or if an adult was in close range of their desks.

Although Belcher (1997) found that teachers who did not receive effective training in inclusion classrooms and special education techniques were less willing to teach students with disabilities, no information was found in the Review of Literature about what specific disabilities elicit more negative attitudes. It is unclear if the negative attitudes evolve from the lack of training, lack of knowledge and skills, and/or lack of comfort, or maybe none of these theories. Therefore, a recommendation for future research might include determining what causes the negative attitudes among general education teachers and how the attitudes can be altered.

Also, Raines (1996) stated that you simply cannot place students with and without disabilities in a classroom and call it a LRE inclusive classroom, however, no information was found in the Review of Literature about the options of various LRE school placements and settings. Therefore, a recommendation for future research might include determining various school placements and settings and measuring the academic success of students with disabilities in each.

In addition, future research might include determining if specific disabilities impact the academic success in either the consult or pull-out programs. This study did not take into consideration the various disabilities among the sample population.

In conclusion, the future for academic achievement in a consult program for students with disabilities looks hopeful. Students are being placed in consult, general education classrooms more and more and it is important to provide instruction appropriately, so as to meet the needs of each student. By continuing research on various educational programs within the school setting, it may ensure students with disabilities are achieving success within the inclusive classroom or their individual LRE.

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Table 1

Observation Checklist
Resource Room: Pull-Out ELA Program, 30 minutes OR General Education Classroom: Consult Program, 30 minutes
Date:

Student Number	Prepares for the appropriate task with minimal distraction and in a timely fashion.	Raises hand to answer questions during a lesson or answers questions when called upon.	Stops or prevents misbehavior with minimum disruption to the class.	Handles all activities within the lesson efficiently and without disruption or distraction.	Volunteers the need for assistance when needed from an appropriate individual.	Comments
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						

Ratings:

1= observed during the 30 minute time period

0= not observed during the 30 minute time period

*= no opportunity to observe in the 30 minute time period

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics

Percentages, Mean, and Standard Deviation for the Pull-Out Program

Variables	Percentages	Mean	Standard Deviation
Prepares for appropriate task	100	1.0000	.00000
Raises hand to answer questions	100	1.0000	.00000
Stops misbehavior quickly	94	.9375	.25000
Handles activities appropriately	50	.5000	.51640
Volunteers need for assistance	63	.6250	.50000
Totals	100	1.0000	.00000

Percentages, Mean, and Standard Deviation for the Consult Program

Variables	Percentages	Mean	Standard Deviation
Prepares for appropriate tasks	93	.9375	.25000
Raises hand to answer question	81	.8125	.40311
Stops misbehavior quickly	56	.5625	.51235
Handles activities appropriately	69	.6875	.47871
Volunteers need for assistance	25	.2500	.44721
Totals	81	.8125	.40311

Table 3

Inferential Statistics

Comparison of the Pull-Out and Consult Programs

Variables		t	df	p
Pair 1	Prepares for appropriate task - Prepares for appropriate task (2)	1.000	15	.333
Pair 2	Raises hand to answer question – Raises hand to answer question (2)	1.861	15	.083
Pair 3	Stops misbehavior quickly – Stops misbehavior quickly (2)	3.000	15	.009**
Pair 4	Handles activities appropriately – Handles activities appropriately (2)	-1.379	15	.188
Pair 5	Volunteers need for assistance – Volunteers need for assistance (2)	2.423	15	.029*
Pair 6	Totals – Totals (2)	1.861	15	.083

* = p less than .05

** = p less than .01

Vita

Kristin Talada

Teacher Certification

New York State Initial Certification:
Childhood Special Education, Grades 1-6, September 2004

New York State Provisional Certification:
Elementary Education, Grades PreK-6, September 2003

Education

Master of Science in Childhood Special Education
State University of New York, College at Brockport, May 2004
GPA 4.0, Dean's List All Semesters

Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Arts for Children
Cum Laude, GPA 3.40, Dean's List Six Semesters
State University of New York, College at Brockport, May 2003

Child Abuse Training and Violence Prevention and Intervention Training, January 2003

Related Experience

Special Education Intern

Fall 2003 Semester
Spring 2004 Semester

Holley Elementary School
Holley, New York

- Interned in a rural school district in a resource room, inclusion classroom (team-taught with regular-ed teacher consisting of regular-ed and special-ed students), and delivered consult services.
- Initially trained in the Orton-Gillingham-Stillman multisensory reading strategy.
- Interacted with therapists, psychiatrists, and social workers.
- Participated in team meetings to review individual students' progress.
- Met jointly with students and/or families to develop and coordinate services.
- Assessed students with learning disabilities using the Key Math test, WRMT, TOWL, and others.
- Used the internet and other computer-assistive devices to develop research skills.
- Administered and participated in the scoring of the 2004, fourth grade ELA tests

Teacher Candidate
Spring 2003 Semester

Ginther School, Grade K
Oliver Middle School, Grade 6
Brockport, New York

- Taught in two diverse inclusion classrooms in a suburban school district.
- Developed, delivered, and assessed lessons and units in all academic content areas.
- Developed and administered a classroom management plan.
- Assessed student progress using a variety of instruments, including and running reading records.
- Worked with students with a variety of needs, skill levels, learning styles (including learning disabilities, speech and language impairments and OHI), and adapted learning experiences accordingly.

Summer Camp Counselor
Summer 2003

Camp Abilities
Brockport, New York

- Worked with children ages 9-19 years old with moderate to severe disabilities.
- Provided support and care for campers.
- Assessed activities and communicated/collaborated with families and staff.
- Provided assistance and guidance to participate in sports activities.
- Participated in research by interviewing several children and assessing their lifestyles.

Computer Skills

- Trained in many forms of Assistive Technology including, Co-Writer and Kurzweil 3000. Also can run statistical procedures using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program.
- Can manipulate basic word processing programs, such as Microsoft Word and Excel .
- Can create and present Power Point Presentations.