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Recommendations for service delivery guidelines for elementary students with mild learning disabilities

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**Recommendations for service delivery guidelines for elementary
students with mild learning disabilities**

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San Jose State University, 1991

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Ann Arbor, MI 48106**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY GUIDELINES
FOR
ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH MILD LEARNING DISABILITIES**

A Thesis

Presented to

**The Faculty of the Division of Special Education
and Rehabilitative Services
San Jose State University**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts**

by

Jacqueline Tuttle

December, 1991

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ABSTRACT
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SERVICE DELIVERY GUIDELINES
FOR
ELEMENTARY STUDENTS WITH MILD LEARNING DISABILITIES

by Jacqueline Tuttle

The dual purposes of this study were to investigate current service delivery options for elementary students with mild learning handicaps and to make recommendations for guidelines for the yearly planning of the delivery of services to these students. To gather data describing the use of the service delivery options in Santa Cruz County, a survey was mailed to resource specialists at all 35 of the public elementary schools, with 27 returned. Results indicated that 26 schools are currently combining pull-out and collaborative services in their resource schedules. The need for flexibility and a balance between direct and indirect services to students allows for a redefinition of each resource program on a regular basis. Guidelines focus on effective instruction, use of student time, measuring student growth, and developing a school-wide philosophy regarding service delivery to students with mild learning disabilities.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1
Background.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	4
Purpose.....	5
Research Questions	5
Statement of Significance.....	6
Operational Definitions.....	6
Assumptions.....	8
Delimitations.....	8
CHAPTER II - LITERATURE REVIEW	9
History of Services for Students with Mild Learning Disabilities.....	9
Needs of Students With Mild Learning Disabilities	12
Pull-Out Services to Students With Mild Learning Disabilities.....	15
Effective Instruction for Mainstreamed Students With Mild Learning Disabilities.....	19
Collaboration/Consultation.....	20
Full-Spectrum Resource Programs New Models in Action	26

CHAPTER III - METHODOLOGY	30
Overview	30
Research Questions	30
Research Methodology	31
Need Verification	31
Population	32
Data Collection	32
Data Analysis	33
CHAPTER IV - RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	34
Results	34
Discussion	43
Recommendations for Guidelines for Determining Service Delivery	46
Suggestions for Future Research	47
CHAPTER V - SUMMARY	48
Reference List.....	51
APPENDIX.....	60
Survey Protocol.....	60

LIST OF TABLES

TABLE	PAGE
1. Combinations of Service Delivery Models	35
2. Collaboration Models Used By Respondents	36
3. Pull-Out Teaching Time	39
4. Collaborative Teaching Time	40

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The delivery of educational services to students with handicapping conditions has progressed steadily over the past 100 years from isolated treatment facilities to local placements focusing on the least restrictive environment. Beginning in the 1940's and culminating with the passage of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, PL 94-142, in 1975, a strong movement by parents and professionals has pulled the delivery of educational services for handicapped youth from the isolated institutions to the local neighborhood (Cohen, 1982). The mandates of PL 94-142 state that every child with a handicapping condition shall have an individual education program (IEP) that will meet the specific needs of the child regardless of the availability of services. The law has been interpreted to clearly state that every child with a handicapping condition shall have access to the same variety of programs and services that are available to non-handicapped children and that every child with a handicapping condition shall have access to an education in the least restrictive environment.

What was called for by the PL94-142 mandate was a major restructuring of the delivery of educational services to students with handicapping conditions. A range of services, or a continuum of alternative placements, was needed that would serve the most severely handicapped to the more

mildly handicapped. The focus on choosing a placement for each child was to be the least restrictive environment possible in which the student could function successfully. The least restrictive environment is defined as the educational setting in which a child can succeed which is most like the regular classroom (Heward & Orlansky, 1984). It was recognized that students with severe learning handicaps and those students with severe behavior disorders would still need services provided in self-contained special education classes. In the most severe cases, institutions out of the local area would continue to provide appropriate opportunities to these students. In response to the need of mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities, a new category of special education teacher was born, the resource specialist. This resource specialist was to work at the neighborhood school level and coordinate the services of the students with mild learning disabilities.

Learning disabilities, as an educational term, was first introduced by Samuel Kirk in 1963. It is an umbrella term including many types of learning disabilities without specifically stating a student's particular learning deficiency (Kirk, 1963). The severity of the learning disability is taken into account when program placement is decided for the student. Students with severe learning disabilities, those with significant lags in several learning areas, probably need to receive special education services for the majority of their day in a self-contained classroom. However, the majority of students with learning disabilities have mild handicaps. These students can most often be successful in a regular education classroom with the support of special education services. By 1978, the resource room concept had been

developed to support the needs of these mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities. According to Harris and Schutz (1986), "the resource concept is founded on the need to bridge the gap between special and regular education with supportive and transitional services provided by the resource teacher" (p. 246). The resource teacher is a specialist who works with children with learning disabilities and acts as a consultant to other teachers, providing materials and methods to help students who are having difficulty within the regular classroom (Lerner, 1985). The resource teacher has traditionally worked from a centralized resource room, offering assessment services and remedial instruction for students. Although indirect and direct services within the regular classroom have been included in the continuum of services (Lerner, 1985), the delivery model of choice for the majority of resource specialists and regular classroom teachers has been the pull-out model. The student with mild learning disabilities spends the majority of his or her day in a regular education classroom, and is pulled out of that classroom for direct instruction by the resource teacher.

From this description of the birth of PL94-142 and the efforts to educate learning handicapped students guided by the least restrictive environment placement, we look toward future trends to serve the growing population of students with learning disabilities. There are two areas of concern among special educators today when the issue of delivering services is addressed: the lack of data affirming the efficacy of the segregated instructional practices of the resource room, and the cost effectiveness of the model (Affleck, Madge, Adams, & Lowenbraun, 1988). In attempting to address these two issues, special educators are taking a more serious look at expanding their service

repertoire to include collaboration and consultation services in addition to direct instruction to the students in the resource room. There is a very real concern among special educators that in the effort to cut the cost of services for students with mild learning disabilities by serving them in their regular classroom or through indirect service to their teachers, that service to these students not be diminished in quality.

The design of any resource program is the direct reflection of the needs of the students and teachers at a particular site in a particular year (Ravin, 1982). This need for flexibility and a balance between direct and indirect services to students allows for a redefinition of each resource program on a regular basis. To date, many individual school districts have no guidelines for the process of defining their particular mix of service delivery models for their students with mild learning disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

In the state of California, students with mild learning disabilities who are receiving services in a resource room program may be served directly by being pulled out of their classrooms for instruction in the resource room, indirectly through consultation services to their regular classroom teacher, or directly in their regular education classroom by collaboration between the resource room teacher and the regular classroom teacher. The educational needs of students with mild learning disabilities can be successfully met in a variety of ways, although there is concern among special educators that the move away from direct services may be more of a budget consideration than a motivation for superior instruction. At the current time, there are no guidelines available to assist the resource teacher in matching the availability

of service delivery options with the individual educational needs of the student with mild learning disabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this study is twofold: first, to investigate current service delivery options for students with mild learning disabilities at the elementary level, and second to make recommendations for guidelines for the yearly planning of the delivery of services to these students. The intent is not to develop the final product, but to establish the research data base from which guidelines will ultimately be developed.

Research Questions

1. What service delivery options are available for meeting the academic needs of students with mild learning disabilities?
2. What service delivery options are currently in use in Santa Cruz County in the elementary resource specialist programs?
3. How are elementary resource specialists in Santa Cruz County currently combining service delivery options to meet the needs of the students with mild learning disabilities?
4. What components should be included in guidelines to enable a resource specialist to match students' needs with the variety of service delivery options available?

Statement of Significance

In the last 20 years, the number of identified students with learning disabilities has grown to 1.7 million (Berliner & Cassanova, 1987). The variety of models available to deliver education services to these students is numerous. School districts often leave the determination of delivery model up to the resource specialist in conjunction with the school staff. It is the hope of this investigator that the described suggestions for guidelines will contribute practical information to other resource specialists and their school staffs. By developing the research base for guidelines based on current educational research in this area, it is hoped that the resource services offered will more effectively support the mainstreamed student with mild learning disabilities.

Operational Definitions

Collaboration: To work together to jointly problem solve, plan or to teach.

Consultation: Collaborative problem solving based on mutual trust that generates commitment to an intervention plan and results in change (DeBoer, 1986).

Individual Education Program: Written document required by federal law to detail the year's plan for every handicapped child (Heward & Oriansky, 1984).

Least Restrictive Environment: Consideration of a handicapped student's placement with reference to being with nonhandicapped students.

Mild Learning Disability: A learning disability that is moderate enough to allow a student to make adequate educational progress in the regular classroom program with assistance for 49% or less of the day.

Pull-out Model: A method of delivering educational services to a mainstreamed student with learning disabilities by removing him or her from the regular education classroom for a portion of each day to receive special instruction from the resource teacher.

Remediation: An educational program designed to teach a person to overcome a handicap through training and education (Heward & Orlansky, 1984).

Resource Room: Classroom where students with learning disabilities spend up to 49% of their day receiving instruction in small groups or individually from a teacher specifically trained in the speciality of learning disabilities.

Resource Teacher: Synonymous with a resource specialist, a specialist who works with students with learning disabilities and acts as a consultant to teachers, providing materials and methods to help students in the regular classroom (Lerner, 1985).

Self-contained Classroom: A classroom in which all of the students are handicapped.

Service Delivery Model: The method or design for bringing educational programs and program modifications to students with mild learning disabilities in the public school system.

Specific Learning Disability: A person having a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language which may manifest itself in an impaired ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations, and has a severe discrepancy between intellectual ability and achievement in one

or more of the academic areas specified in Section 56337 (a) of the Education Code (Procedural Handbook, 1987).

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in conducting this study:

1. Resource specialists have flexibility to arrange the way in which they deliver services to their students to most effectively meet the needs of those students.
2. Both the pull-out and collaboration/consultation service delivery models are valid options for serving the educational needs of the student with mild learning disabilities.

Delimitations

This study is delimited to resource teachers, mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities and their programs at the elementary school level and should not be generalized to the larger learning disabled population.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

History of Services for Students with Mild Learning Disabilities

When PL94-142 was passed by the federal government in 1975, the measure of least restrictive environment was instituted as one of the guidelines for placement of students with handicapping conditions. By 1978, the resource room concept had been developed to support the needs of the mainstreamed student with mild learning disabilities. According to Harris and Schutz (1986), the resource concept is founded on the need to bridge the gap between special and regular education with supportive and transitional services provided by the resource teacher. The resource room is a place where a child can receive direct instruction individually or in small groups by a teacher trained to remediate disabilities. This instruction takes place during limited sessions when the child is pulled out of his or her regular education classroom.

According to Wiederholt, Hammill, and Brown (1978), the concept of a resource program has been used in schools since 1913. The documented program in 1913 was to assist visually handicapped children. From 1913 through the 1960's, various resource room systems were employed to assist children assigned to regular classrooms. Resource rooms were not generally used to serve special education students during these years. It was not until the early 1970's when serious questions arose about the educational and social consequences of segregated special education placements that resource room programs were used to meet the needs of the special education population.

The authors state, "unfortunately many schools confine their resource program to the resource room " (Wiederholt, Hammill & Brown, 1978, p. 4). This text was written in 1978, and at that time the authors were advocating for a broader view of the resource program as opposed to the narrow resource teacher role. They encouraged teachers to include a wide range of services for students including assistance and adaptations within the regular education classroom. In a more recent study, Wiederholt and Chamberlain (1989) list three types of services a resource program should have available: (a) assessment, (b) direct instruction, and (c) consultation support for classroom teachers. In his 1982 text, Cohen (1982) defined the role of the resource program as including informal support for regular education teachers with students with mild learning disabilities in their classroom, support for the instructional program of the regular classroom, and consultation to accompany the direct services offered to the students.

The history of special education delivery systems is one of progressive inclusion (Reynolds, 1989). Even before 1986 when Madeleine Will, then the assistant secretary in the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services for the U.S. Department of Education , gave her report "Educating Students with Learning Problems - A Shared Responsibility," there had been continuous debate among regular and special educators concerning the most efficacious delivery system for services to students with mild learning disabilities (Gartner & Lipsky,1987; Lily,1988; Reynolds, Wang & Walberg, 1987).

Stainback and Stainback (1984) wrote that it should be possible to meet the unique needs of all students within one educational system. This unified

system would have to recognize and accommodate differences. There is, however, great concern among special educators that regular education is not in any shape at the present time to take on the added responsibilities to meet the needs of the students with mild learning disabilities (Lieberman, 1985; Mesinger, 1985; Keogh, 1988; Wiederholt, 1989; Davis, 1989). Carnine and Kameenui (1990) were concerned that in the classrooms of today, the majority of the students are what they termed "at-risk." These researchers proposed that educational strategies that have been developed by special educators for students with mild learning disabilities would be beneficial for students in the general education setting as well.

In addition to examining service delivery models, there have been investigations questioning the effectiveness of special education services for students with mild learning disabilities (Tindal, 1985; Marston, 1988). Tindal took issue with the questionable reliability and validity of the studies used to discredit the effectiveness of special education services. He reported that standardized achievement tests used to measure progress may not measure what the student had been taught. Marston concluded that special education is a significant educational intervention. He suggested that time series analysis and curriculum based measurement of data be used as evaluation tools.

The debate continues to rage. The issue of whether to serve students with mild learning disabilities as part of the regular education system or as part of the special education system continues to be debated in the literature. Research to date neither clearly supports nor clearly rejects any service delivery system for all students with mild learning disabilities. Preservation

of a full range of service delivery options is necessary in order to offer appropriate education to all students with mild learning disabilities (Kaufman & Pullen,1989; Wiederholt,1989)..

Needs of Students With Mild Learning Disabilities

Needs of students with mild learning disabilities can be divided into two broad categories: social emotional needs and academic needs. Gloeckler and Simpson (1988) suggested that curriculum for students with mild learning disabilities must be both developmental, focusing on social skills, and remedial, focusing on academic skills. They suggested that both these areas must be developed for the student to return to the regular classroom full- time without special education support. Supporting the Gloeckler and Simpson study, Gresham (1984) stressed that the continued emphasis solely on academics for the student with mild learning disabilities may represent an inappropriate education. Gresham stated that teaching the appropriate social skills for peer interaction and acceptance should be a consideration when designing a program for the student.

According to Gresham, mainstreaming has not achieved its intended outcome. He contends that schools today are getting students into the mainstream with proximity, but the students are not truly integrated. His thesis is that mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities do not learn appropriate social skills just by proximity. It is necessary to have a program to teach development of appropriate social skills to these students. He continued to argue that special education has as its main focus a desire to identify incompetence in children. Our next step is to remediate these

deficiencies and turn the children into competent individuals (Gresham,1984).

Bryan (1974), McKinney and Feagans (1983), and Bender and Smith (1990) represent a range of studies that documented classroom behaviors of students with mild learning disabilities. All these researchers confirmed that students with mild learning disabilities behave inappropriately in the classroom. The students studied spent significantly less time engaged in task-oriented behaviors than their nonlearning handicapped peers. It is suggested that these maladaptive behaviors may lessen the potential for successful academic remediation (McKinney & Feagans,1983). Along with the maladaptive social and time-on-task behaviors, Torgesen (1982) suggested that one of the reasons that students with mild learning disabilities perform many academic tasks poorly is that they fail to apply appropriate task strategies. Torgesen defines a task strategy as an organized sequence of processing that helps solve an intellectual task. In the classroom these strategies are employed in memorizing spelling and math facts, in gaining meaning from reading, solving logic problems, and virtually in all academic endeavors.

Teachers in elementary schools have been surveyed concerning the characteristics and needs of the students with mild learning disabilities. McKinney and Feagans (1983) found that students with mild learning disabilities were seen as less teachable than their classmates. In addition, teachers viewed the intellectual abilities of students with mild learning disabilities less favorably than classmates in the same mainstream setting. In a recent study, Baker and Zigmund (1990) found that teachers' mind set was

conformity as opposed to accommodation when discussing the students in their classrooms. The authors concluded that any student who could not conform would likely be unsuccessful. Munson (1987) found that mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities continued to exhibit learning problems and needed substantial education program modifications. She found that regular education teachers were either unable or unwilling to make the modifications necessary for the students to be successful. "Least restrictive environment placement decisions should assure a match between the educational needs of the handicapped student and the regular education teacher's willingness and skill in areas of necessary program modification" (Munson, 1987, p.499).

In an article on the gifted student with mild learning disabilities, Landrum (1989) brings out the point that these students must have access to alternative materials for gathering information and for demonstrating their knowledge. Information access adaptations include audio and video tape, films, and picture books. Alternative ways to demonstrate mastery include oral rather than written reports, slide shows, artwork, and dramatic productions. He reaffirmed the idea that students with learning disabilities should be allowed and encouraged to demonstrate their knowledge in a format that is appropriate to their strengths. Dyck and Dettmer (1989), in another study looking at the needs of gifted students with learning disabilities, found that a significant number of the students studied were able to continue to function in the regular classroom. The problem was that they were functioning nowhere near their potential. These authors suggested that

the collaborative/consultation model of serving students with mild learning disabilities might reach these gifted students with indirect services.

In addition to the teachers surveyed, information from parents and students is invaluable. Jenkins and Heinen (1989) asked students about their preference for receiving special services. These researchers found that "regardless of typology (regular, remedial or special education) students do not wish to draw attention to their skill deficit" (Jenkins & Heinen, 1989, p. 152). Their results suggested that the majority of students would be inclined toward a total mainstreaming model, where they would receive help in the regular classroom from someone who is familiar with them and their curriculum. Myles and Simpson (1990) stated that their most significant finding is the willingness of parents of children with mild learning disabilities to support full-time mainstreaming of their children as long as the parent's mainstreaming recommendations were considered. The authors found that parent and family input into the mainstreaming decision was crucial for success. Parents surveyed in this study also had suggestions leading to direct services to their children in the form of reduced class size, additional paraprofessionals in the classroom, availability of support personnel, and consultation between teachers and other professionals.

Pull-Out Services to Students With Mild Learning Disabilities

The model described here is usually called the resource room, and is the most widely used alternative to the regular class setting (Friend & McNutt, 1984). Generally it is used to serve students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. In California, students can spend up to 49% of their day receiving instruction in the resource room. According to Friend and McNutt,

one problem of trying to establish the effectiveness of this type of program is that there is no guarantee that one resource room is like any other.

Thurlow, Ysseldyke, Graden, and Algozzine (1983) concluded that the time students were engaged in active instruction was not significantly different in the resource room as compared to the regular classroom. This particular study had a very small sample size, eight students, and because of this limitation may be difficult to generalize to other resource room programs. In a study examining the opportunities to learn available to students with and without learning disabilities, it was found that students who have been identified and placed in programs for students with learning disabilities do benefit from placement by receiving more individual instruction (Thurlow, Graden, Greener & Ysseldyke, 1983). Along these lines, Roddy (1984) suggested that isolated instruction may be valuable but overused. He recommended that isolated instruction (pull-out) should only be continued to the point that the child is compatible with some group of students in his or her regular classroom.

As early as 1976, Jenkins and Mayhall listed five steps for direct service: (a) identify core tasks, (b) assess task performance, (c) plan and implement intervention program, (d) provide one on one daily instruction, (e) instruct from a data base, and (f) terminate direct services (Jenkins & Mayhall, 1976). Their emphasis was using direct instruction only when necessary and for a limited amount of time.

Classroom teachers perceive certain advantages to pull-out programs for their students with mild learning disabilities. Coates (1989), in his examination of teacher attitudes concerning more mainstream time for

students with mild learning handicaps, reported that regular classroom teachers requested additional pull-out time for their students. The teachers expressed interest in expanding support services. These programs offer minimal distractions, intense and structured instruction, and individualized curriculum with a focus on students' strengths and weaknesses (Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelich & Gallagher, 1990). In this same study, teachers also listed the negative aspects of pull-out instruction as missed classroom instruction, added stress for the children, and limited collaboration time for teachers. For which children do the benefits of this model out-weigh the disadvantages? According to the authors, " There do not appear to be any easy generalizations concerning the 'type' of student who will benefit from involvement in a pull-out or pull-in program (Meyers, et al. p. 543).

One guideline for measuring the success or effectiveness of the pull-out service delivery model is to look at the student's improvement or growth in the regular education program. Anderson-Inman (1986) looked at the failure of skills learned in the resource room to transfer to the regular classroom. She found that the two things that were the most positive about the pull-out program (instruction that was different in structure and format and smaller groups with higher densities of reinforcement) were also the negative aspects that interfered with the transfer of learned skills. The author stated that the failure of skills to transfer is increasingly apparent in the upper grades. She stressed that strategies that incorporate skills for transferring learning from the resource room program to the general education classroom must be included in instruction. Several of these strategies suggested by the

author included student requested pre-teaching, curriculum specific transfer training, and self-monitoring check lists.

When looking at the pull-out model, Haynes and Jenkins (1986) selected three areas to observe to gauge the effectiveness of the program: (a) use of student time, (b) methods of instruction, and (c) degree of coordination between the classroom teacher and the resource room teacher. Their results indicated that schedules in resource rooms are based more on the needs of the school rather than on the students' needs. Also, on the average, more than half of the students' time was spent on organizational tasks. They observed that methods were much the same in the resource room, and because of the lack of coordination of goals and curriculum, the complexity of the troubled learner's environment was increased. Gallagher (1984) also surmised that what was transpiring in resource rooms might fit the requirements of the least restrictive environment, but was not making effective change in the students with mild learning disabilities. He suggested these students might need much more intervention than the pull-out resource model could provide.

In an interesting juxtaposition to the studies criticizing the pull-out model for being ineffective, Durkin (1990) studied classroom reading instruction and the effectiveness of the regular classroom teachers' attempts to match classroom instruction to reading abilities. She found that the need to adjust classroom instruction in ways that accommodate differences in students' abilities remained largely unfulfilled. Durkin summarized that too many teachers define their responsibilities in relation to "covering" material. Large class size, testing practices, and dependence on basal readers contributed

to the ineffectiveness of the reading instruction for some learners. Lenz (in Graden, Zins, & Curtis, 1988) stressed that for reading instruction to be effective, the selection of an intervention must match the diagnosis of the difficulty.

Effective Instruction for Mainstreamed Students With Mild Learning Disabilities

An abundance of research has been published concerning the effectiveness of teaching and learning techniques and strategies for regular and special education. Christianson, Thurlow, and Ysseldyke (1987) summed it up most succinctly when they said, "effective instruction is effective instruction regardless of setting" (p.80). The goal of their study was to document the qualitative nature of instruction. They examined diagnostic-prescriptive teaching, mastery learning, and direct instruction for groups and individuals. They concluded that for instruction to be effective: (a) tasks must be offered at the appropriate academic level for the student, (b) students must know what they are expected to learn and how to demonstrate that knowledge, (c) activities must have a high degree of continuity, (d) learning must be monitored, (e) the teacher must model the task, (f) positive behaviors should be regularly reinforced, and (g) there must be continuous feedback to the student.

Within the regular classroom, grouping of students for instruction had some positive benefits, according to Bickel and Bickel (1986), when the following conditions are evident:

- Number and size of groups are dependent on student characteristics and content taught.

- Different groupings are used for different subjects.
- Frequent shifts among groups occur during the school year as well as between years.
- Groups are based on current levels of specific skills.
- Groups are established as a result of instruction.
- There is a combination of small group and whole group instruction.
- Groupings are responsive to instruction.(Mackenzie, 1983, p.494).

Effective group instruction techniques have also been addressed in the literature. "Techniques such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and reciprocal teaching may serve as effective frameworks within which to develop both the academic and social skills that are expected to be demonstrated by the mainstreamed student" (Conway & Gow, 1988, p. 39).

They emphasized that these group teaching procedures can be a very important part of the mainstreaming process. As the regular class more often becomes the placement for students with mild learning disabilities, the regular classroom teacher may be asked to provide services beyond the capabilities of any singular person. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) suggested that team teaching, where teachers work in a coordinated way to jointly teach academic subjects, or complementary instruction, where the special educator offers supportive instruction, might be ways to alleviate the pressure to do it all alone.

Collaboration/Consultation

Collaboration and consultation are used interchangeably in this section to mean peer or collegial collaboration as opposed to expert consultation.

School-based consultation is what Conoley and Conoley (1988) call an ecological model of consultation composed of a combination of practices from three distinct disciplines: (a) mental health consultation, (b) behavioral consultation, and (c) process consultation. According to Friend (1988), consultation has become one of the most significant trends in educational services for students with special learning needs. Although consultation is only one of the models currently being examined and introduced in schools, the author stated that the decisions that are made now about the practice and guidelines for the use of consultation in the schools will affect programs for the future. The researcher outlined the development of consultation as a professional practice across disciplines that are represented in schools. She contended that consultation is not a recent phenomenon, but rather a natural extension of a system that has outgrown its direct service capacity. She is quite clear that a standard definition of consultation in regard to special education services is not available. As a result, school districts are warned to consider consultation as a continuing part of the whole spectrum of available services, but not to be so overconfident as to install this model as the sole method of providing services. According to Graden, Zins, and Curtis (1988):

Consultation represents the foundation on which alternative service delivery systems are based. It is the problem solving process through which students' needs are clarified and appropriate strategies for intervention are developed and implemented. (p. 35)

Consultation-based programming within the educational system is occurring more frequently in recent years due to the increased need for a more comprehensive range of services for students with mild learning

disabilities. Phillips and McCullough (1990) have stated that although consultation-based programming is widely supported by school districts, implementation of this type of service delivery model is sporadic. They discussed the fact that delivering services with a collaborative-consultation system must have a clear standard in effect, not merely in intent. According to the authors, in order to accomplish successful implementation of the collaborative-consultation model, schools must address the issue of developing a collaborative ethic and consider ecological relevance and efficacy. Listed as aspects to be included in the formulation of a successful collaborative-consultation service delivery program are: (a) administrative support, (b) participatory planning and decision making, (c) ownership of the program by the participants, (d) feasibility as to format or program changes, and (e) practical and specific staff development activities.

As an example of one way consultation is being implemented in the elementary school, Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb, and Nevin (1987) have written about the triadic model of consultation. The research and design for this model are derived from Tharp and Wetzel (1969). The triadic model takes the consultee, usually the classroom teacher, and uses him or her as the mediator of change. The target is the person, usually the student, in whom a change in behavior is sought. The consultant is the person who can share knowledge and help to mobilize or to get working on the problem. The authors focus on four principals of successful collaboration. They are: (a) team ownership of the problem, (b) recognition of individual or educational differences in progress, (c) the use of reinforcement principles resulting in improved target skills, and (d) data-based decision making through analysis of behaviors.

The triadic collaborative consultation model has several advantages. First, the special educator and the regular educator share responsibility for the student. Second, there is increased professional sharing. Third, parents and community agencies can be brought into the school setting. Fourth, services are based on academic and social needs, not exclusively on special education categories, and fifth, this is a student centered model (Idol, Paolucci-Whitcomb & Nevin, 1987). An interesting benefit in this model is that as consultees go through the process and gain skill, they can then move on to become consultants for other triads. In this way, many regular education teachers at a school site could become participants in joint problem solving even the most difficult cases. West and Idol (1990) argued that collaborative consultation supports two crucial shifts in service delivery: (a) from a segregated/specialized services orientation to a school-wide focus, and (b) from an expert orientation to a shared decision-making role. According to these authors, the role of the special educator is to assist in preventing learning and behavior problems, to remediate learning and behavior problems, and to coordinate instructional programs.

In support of the trend toward school-wide collaboration, Johnson, Pugach and Devlin (1990) stated that it is time to shift the role of special educators from reactive to proactive and toward a more prevention oriented position. They confirmed that it is mandatory for classroom teachers to be full partners in the development of alternatives for students who are having difficulty. "Diversity is the norm rather than the exception in today's schools" (Johnson, Pugach, & Devlin, 1990, p. 10). To work with this reality the authors declared that collaboration must be a mutual and school-wide

activity. In an earlier study (Johnson, Pugach, & Hammittee, 1988) the authors concluded that all teachers should be provided with the time necessary to consult/collaborate with others who have the knowledge that will help them solve classroom problems. According to Pugach and Lily (1984):

If support services are delivered most often within the context of the regular classroom, a fundamental aspect of the preparation of regular classroom teachers will include the collaborative nature of professional responsibilities and the specific skills needed for achieving an effective collaborative relationship. (p. 52)

Johnson and Pugach (1991) completed a study examining the effectiveness of the peer collaboration/consultation process. The authors found that by using the structured consultation process, teachers were able to generate successful interventions more than 75% of the time. A significant finding in the study was that teachers in the group using the consultation/collaboration process increased their tolerance for the range of students' cognitive abilities in their class.

Another way consultation is being implemented in schools is using The Art of Consulting (DeBoer,1986), a comprehensive guidebook for implementing the consultation model. Consulting is explained as "understanding how to get things done when you don't have or don't want to use direct authority" (DeBoer, 1986, p.7). Consulting is delineated as a two part program, content and process. The content is dealt with when the consultant and consultee use their curriculum knowledge and experience to think up possible solutions to a problem situation. The process, definitely the

more tricky of the two, is the relationship between the consultant and consultee. It is this second part, the process of consulting, that is the focus of DeBoer's book. The text started out helping the readers to identify their own interpersonal-cognitive style, or how they think about the world and deal with others. Identifying both the consultant's and the consultee's particular style is critical in this consultation model.

The second key in successful consulting as identified by DeBoer is effective listening, or squelching the urge to interrupt or to give advice. "Many communication experts believe that a major barrier to effective listening is the tendency most people have to either judge, evaluate, disapprove, criticize, ridicule, contradict, or reject the message that they are receiving" (DeBoer, 1986, p. 82). Thirdly, the author spoke about expressing your thoughts clearly. She stressed a variety of successful communication techniques. The fact that too much or inappropriate questioning is a sure way to defeat the consultation effort is discussed at length. The researcher found this section to be particularly informative, since questioning is often perceived as a way of listening and being involved.

The author concluded the text with the advice to go into any new consulting situation with a plan. She suggested, "You can't cross a bridge until you come to it. But at least try to lay down a pontoon or two ahead of time" (DeBoer, 1986, p.159). In conjunction with DeBoer's plea for planned consultation, Phillips and McCullough (1990) contended that " Consultation which develops informally, without structure and predictability, generally proves ineffective and shortsighted" (p.294).

Harris and Schutz (1986) summed up the areas of potential strength and weakness of the collaboration/consultation model when they stated:

Consultation should be a function of the resource program, however, the ratio of direct to indirect services provided by a resource program must be determined for each program individually. The knowledge and skills of the resource teacher, the resource teacher's credibility among regular classroom teachers, the support of administration and supervision, and the degree to which a full spectrum of services exists within a school or district are critical considerations. (p.246)

Huefner (1988) also examined the risks and benefits of the consulting teacher model. The author pointed out the risks in implementing the consultation model are: (a) premature replacement of the resource model, (b) ineffective case management, and (c) inadequate training. Benefits listed were:

- (a) regular and special education teachers plan together and take joint responsibility for all students, (b) reduction of stigma for the students, (c) reduction of mislabeling, (d) spill-over to regular education students, and (e) training for regular educators in traditionally special education techniques.

Full-Spectrum Resource Programs: New Models in Action

Many school districts around the country are in the process of examining, restructuring, and revising their service delivery model for mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities. Model programs can be loosely divided into two groups: (a) those dedicated to expanding and augmenting the resource teacher model, and (b) those moving toward full-time integration of students with mild learning disabilities into the regular classroom.

In 1984, Wang and Birch described their Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM). Their theory was that we must create school environments that maximize each student's opportunities to master basic academic and social skills. " Schools are viewed as social systems which must respond effectively to individual differences" (Wang & Birch, 1984a, p. 392). Their program combines a highly structured prescriptive learning component with open-ended activities promoting social and personal development. Students with learning disabilities are regular members of the ALEM classroom and are not separated out for additional instruction. In a comparison of the ALEM program and a resource program approach it was noted that the self-ratings of students in the areas of social competence and self-esteem were identical in the mainstreamed class, while in the resource/pull-out situation, the students with mild learning disabilities consistently rated themselves lower in these areas (Wang & Birch, 1984b). The authors suggested in this study the "feasibility of restructuring regular education programs to much more adequately serve students with diverse learning characteristics and needs, including many of those students who currently are served by compensatory and special education pull-out programs" (p. 39).

Critics have examined the ALEM program and continue to have questions regarding using this program exclusively. Vergason and Anderegg (1989) responded that the ALEM program ignored many of the useful parts of current special education practices such as prereferral interventions and curriculum based assessment.. Hallahan, Keller, McKinney, Lloyd, and Bryan (1988) maintained that many questions still remained unanswered regarding

student and teacher mix, teacher behaviors and attitudes and service configurations that lead to the best student outcomes. Until these areas offer more definitive evidence, they argue, a variety of service configurations should be available for students with mild learning disabilities.

Wang, Reynolds and Walberg (1989) answered the critics by declaring, "We advocate programs that address the real needs of students who require intensive, effective instruction but that dispense with the labels and discontinuities of the present, categorical, segregated systems" (p. 66). Continuing in the defense and explanation of the ALEM model, Wang and Zollers (1990) clarified the role of the regular education teacher as being responsible for serving all of the students in the classroom with the support of specialized professionals.

Another fully integrated model for serving students with mild learning disabilities is the Integrated Classroom Model (ICM) from the University of Washington. In the ICM model, class size is limited to 28 students including up to 8 students with handicaps. Guidelines for these classes include: (a) special education students are completely included; (b) the majority of teacher time is spent on active instruction; (c) at least a 2:1 ratio of positive to negative teacher comments is desirable; and (d) adaptations of material are made by teachers for individual instruction. Classroom strategies include direct instruction, cooperative learning, and independent study. It was found that special education students in ICM classrooms made comparable gains to their peers who received academic instruction in resource rooms (Affleck, Adams, & Lowenbraun (1988). In a follow-up study the social effects of the ICM program were examined. The

authors concluded that, "while special education students in both programs have significantly lower social status on average than their non-special education peers, the children in the ICM have a better opportunity to blend successfully into the regular classroom than the children who go out to a resource room" (Madge, Affleck, & Lowenbraun, 1990).

Idol (1989) outlined a proposal for combining the best of the traditional resource/pull-out model with the more radical consultation model when she proposed the resource/consulting teacher. According to Idol (1989):

The resource/consulting teacher offers direct instruction to students who are experiencing serious learning problems, and who are functioning well below expected grade level as measured by curriculum-based assessments. The focus of this instruction is on helping the student to master curricular materials needed for more normal classroom participation and achievement. (p. 40)

In addition to the direct services outlined above, for a portion of each day the resource/consulting teacher works as a consultant with the regular education staff. This model builds upon the basic framework of the resource room model (Wiederholt, Hammill, & Brown, 1978) while it expands special education services to indirect, consultative support as well (Idol, 1983).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Overview

The problem addressed in this study concerns the fact that in the state of California, students with mild learning disabilities are receiving educational services based on a variety of service delivery models. There is no available guideline to assist a resource specialist in matching the variety of service delivery models available with the needs of the students on the case load each year. The purpose of this study is to investigate current service delivery options for students with mild learning disabilities at the elementary level and to make recommendations for guidelines for the yearly planning of the delivery of services to these students.

Research Questions

1. What service delivery options are available for meeting the academic needs of students with mild learning disabilities?
2. What service delivery options are currently in use in Santa Cruz County in the elementary resource specialist programs?
3. How are elementary resource specialists in Santa Cruz County currently combining service delivery options to meet the needs of the students with mild learning disabilities?
4. What components should be included in guidelines to enable a resource specialist to match students' needs with the variety of service delivery options available?

Research Methodology

The type of research to be carried out in this study is descriptive. The purpose of descriptive research is to describe and afterward to interpret present situations and trends (Charles,1988). Since the purpose of this study is to investigate current service delivery options for students with mild learning disabilities at the elementary level and to make recommendations for guidelines for the yearly planning of the delivery of services to these students, descriptive research was chosen.

Need Verification

Since the inception of the resource specialist program to provide services to students with mild learning disabilities in 1975, consultation services as well as direct instruction to individuals and small groups of students have both been used as delivery models for student services. However, the pull-out model has been the most prevalent way of delivering these services. Beginning around 1984, updated forms of the collaborative-consultation model were reintroduced in the literature. The collaborative/consultation model provides services to students with mild learning disabilities within their regular education classroom. How is a resource specialist to decide the variety of service delivery models that will make up his or her program? What are the strengths and benefits of each of these delivery models? The special services coordinator of the Live Oak School District was interviewed concerning the availability of a guideline for service delivery options. It was established that there were no commonly used or readily available guidelines for this purpose. The need for guidelines

to coordinate the service delivery options with the educational needs of the students each year in the resource specialist program became evident.

Population

The service delivery models that were studied fall under the two broad categories of either collaborative/consultation or pull-out/direct services. All programs studied were limited to those at the elementary level. All the school sites with resource specialists at the elementary level in Santa Cruz county were surveyed for their opinion and experience. There were 35 school sites with resource specialists serving elementary students in Santa Cruz county at the time of the study. Resource specialists in this study all held a regular education teaching credential from the state of California, as well as a learning handicapped credential (or learning handicapped internship credential), and a resource specialist certificate. The recommendations for guidelines are specifically for the elementary learning disabled population, including grades 1-6.

Data Collection

The literature review in Chapter II was used as the means to explore the service delivery options currently available for serving students with mild learning disabilities. To address the second and third research questions, data was gathered by survey (see Appendix). The survey was mailed out to resource specialists at the elementary level in Santa Cruz County. Thirty-five surveys were mailed out with a return of 27. The survey questions focused on issues regarding schedule, planning, and delivery of services. Questions were a mixture of open-ended and forced-choice. There was an expert committee set up including a site principal, a resource specialist, and a district

administrator. This committee read and evaluated the survey before it was sent out to the target population and gave feedback regarding clarity, ease of answering, and relevance to the resource specialist. Data collected were nominal and both qualitative and quantitative. To answer the fourth research question, making recommendations for guidelines to match the available service delivery model to the needs of students, information was taken from both the survey and the literature review. It was necessary to search the literature in two areas: (a) to determine a list of educational needs that mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities have, and (b) to look at the strengths and weaknesses of the pull-out and the collaboration/consultation models.

Data Analysis

The results of the survey were categorized and visually presented. All results were tallied and tabulated. Analysis of the data included frequency distributions. Survey results were presented both narratively and graphically. The data clearly described the current usage of service delivery models, and no further statistical analysis was performed.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

How is a resource specialist to decide the variety of service delivery models that will make up his or her program? What are the strengths and benefits of each of these delivery models? School districts often leave the determination of delivery model up to the resource specialist in conjunction with the school staff. The educational needs of students with mild learning disabilities can be successfully met in a variety of ways. At the current time, there is no guideline available to assist the resource teacher in matching the availability of service delivery options with the individual educational needs of the student with mild learning disabilities.

In this study a survey was used to attempt to describe current service delivery practices and to determine suggestions for future guidelines to assist resource specialists in deciding service delivery options for their students. The survey questions focused on issues regarding schedule, planning, and delivery of services. Surveys were sent to all 35 elementary school sites in Santa Cruz County that have resource specialist programs. Twenty-seven surveys were returned for a return rate of 77%.

Results

The survey (see Appendix) was mailed in September, 1991 to 35 elementary school sites. The survey contained a total of 13 questions which required a combination of forced-choice and opened ended answers. Of the 27 (77%) returned surveys, one was determined to be invalid. The total number of surveys tallied for this study was 26. Survey results are reported by

addressing each survey question separately. Some questions were answered with more than one response so the total number of answers frequently is greater than 26.

Survey Question 1 "Which service delivery model or models do you use in your weekly schedule?"

Of the 26 respondents, 26 (100%) had pull-out services as part of the program, 22 (85%) had collaboration as part of the weekly program, 20 (77%) respondents included consultation in the weekly program, and 11 (42%) were team teaching weekly. In total, 25 of 26 schools were combining a variety of service delivery models in their weekly program. One school (.04%) used pull-out services exclusively. Table 1 presents the data illustrating the variety of combinations of service delivery models currently in use as reported by the survey.

Table 1

Combinations of Service Delivery Models

A = Pull-Out Services

C = Consultation

B = Collaboration

D = Team Teaching

<u>Combinations</u>	<u>n</u>	total <u>n</u> = 26
A - B	6	
A - C	2	
A - B - C	7	
A - B - D	1	
A - B - C - D -	10	

Note. n = number of responses.

Survey Question 2 "If consultation or collaborative-consultation is part of your program, is there a particular model or framework that you use?"

Of the 25 sites responding to this question, 13 (52%) included the resource/consulting teacher, 12 (48%) used cooperative or team teaching, 19 (76%) included collaborative consultation problem solving, and 4 (16%) listed other models used including: demonstration teaching, coaching, reverse mainstreaming, and a parent-teacher partnership. Of the 25 sites, 15 combined one or more of these collaborative service delivery models.

Table 2

Collaboration Models Used by Respondents

Model	<u>n</u>
Resource/Consulting Teacher	13
Cooperative/Team Teaching	12
Collaborative Problem Solving	19
Other : Reverse Mainstreaming	4
Demonstration Lessons	
Strategy Instruction	
Parent/Teacher Partnership	

Note. n = number of responses.

Survey Question 3 "If any of the collaboration or consultation models are part of your program, do you meet with the general education teachers at your site at regularly scheduled times?"

Twenty-five school sites responded to this question. Ten (40%) did not meet with general educators on a regular schedule, while 15 (60%) did meet regularly with the general education staff members.

Survey Question 4 "If yes on #3, how much time is set aside each week for regularly scheduled collaboration/consultation meetings?"

Ten sites responded to this question. Five sites (50%) had less than 1 hour set aside for regular meetings with general educators to collaborate, 3 sites (30%) set aside from 1-2 hours weekly, and 2 sites met for more than 2 hours weekly.

Survey Question 5 "If yes on #3, when during the day have you found is the best time to meet regularly?"

Before school was used for a meeting time by 2 sites (20%), after school was used by 6 sites (60%), recess was not chosen by any sites. Lunch was used by 4 (40%) of sites to meet, and five (50%) of the sites used release time to meet with the general education teachers. Two of the five sites using release time had a restructured day allowing all teachers collaboration time, while 3 of the 5 sites utilized a roving substitute teacher.

Survey Questions 6 and 13 "Please fill in the percentage of your time spent each week in each area. The total should equal 100%." "In your estimation, what would the ideal division or use of time look like for a resource program teacher? Please list percentages of your ideal week below, total to equal 100%."

These two questions were combined for reporting purposes because the comparison of the current arrangement of service delivery options and what teachers reported the ideal arrangement of service delivery options to be was significant. Resource teachers were asked to look at eight responsibilities of the job and to list the percentage of time spent each week performing each

responsibility. In four of the eight areas, there was very little change from the current schedule to the ideal schedule.

Teaching preparation time now takes up 10% or less of the schedule for 15 of 16 respondents. In the ideal schedule, the results were identical. In the category of assessment, 13 respondents listed this activity taking up 10% or less of their time, 7 listed assessment as using 11-20% of their time, and one listed assessment as using 21-30% of their schedule. In the ideal schedule, 11 respondents wanted assessment to take 10% or less of the schedule, and 4 listed assessment as taking 11-20% of the schedule.

Parent contact and parent education took 10% or less of the current schedule for 15 of 15 respondents in this category. On the ideal schedule, 13 of 14 respondents listed parent contact and parent education as taking less than 10% of the schedule, and one respondent listed 11-20 % of the ideal schedule would be devoted to this area. Four respondents on the current schedule and three on the ideal schedule listed 10% or less of their time was devoted to other than listed responsibilities. These "other" areas included report writing, meeting with the aide, staff meetings, and professional growth time.

The four areas showing greater change from the current schedule to the ideal schedule were pull-out teaching, collaborative teaching, consultation, and staff in-service. Results in the area of pull-out teaching, both current and ideal schedules, appear in Table 3. Twenty-four respondents noted that pull-out was a part of the program. Of these 24, 15 reported that pull-out was 50% or more of their program. In the ideal schedule, pull-out was listed by 18 respondents as being part of the program, but 16 of the 18 would use pull-out instruction for 50% or less of the schedule time.

Table 3**Pull-Out Teaching Time**

	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>n</u>	
Pull-Out	1	0-10	1	Pull-Out
Teaching	1	11-20	3	Teaching
Current	0	21-30	4	Ideal
	4	31-40	2	
	3	41-50	6	
	6	51-60	1	
	3	61-70	0	
	5	71-80	1	
	0	81-90	0	
	1	91-100	0	

Note. n = number of responses.

Seventeen respondents currently use collaborative teaching as part of their program. Of the 17, 10 collaboratively teach 10% or less of the time. In the ideal schedule, 18 respondents included collaborative teaching. Four listed use at 10% or less, while 14 respondents would increase the amount of collaborative teaching time in their schedule. Comparisons can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4**Collaborative Teaching Time**

	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>	<u>n</u>	
Collaborative	10	0-10	4	Collaborative
Teaching	3	11-20	4	Teaching
Current	1	21-30	3	Ideal
	2	31-40	3	
	1	41-50	3	
	0	51-60	0	
	0	61-70	1	
	0	71-80	0	
	0	81-90	0	
	0	91-100	0	

Note. n = number of responses.

The number of respondents including staff in-service in their schedule increased from 6 on the current schedule to 11 on the ideal schedule. All respondents on both questions counted in-service time as 10% or less.

The last of the four areas addressed by these two questions that showed the greatest amount of change from the current to the ideal schedule was consultation time. On the current schedule, 17 people responded, all listing consultation as taking 10% or less of the schedule. On the ideal schedule, 16 people included consultation. Of the 16 respondents, 12 said consultation takes 10% or less of the schedule, 3 reported 11-20% of the schedule, and 1 increased collaboration to 21-30% of the ideal schedule.

Survey Question 7 "When setting up the schedule for this year, how did you decide which children would be served with direct pull-out services and which childrens' needs would be met with some form of indirect collaboration/consultation services?"

Ten respondents (38%) cited scheduling as the deciding factor, 21 (81%) cited student need, 7 (3%) cited parent request, 7 (3%) cited team decision as the deciding factor, 3 (1%) decided because of school or district policy, and 3 (1%) other. Comments from the "other" category included teacher preference and previously set collaborative teaching time.

Survey Question 8 "Some students in my resource program were selected to receive pull-out services because:"

Student behavior was selected by 23 (88%) of respondents as a reason for pull-out services. Academic skill level two or more years below grade level was chosen by 20 (77%). Pull-out services were also chosen by 13 (50%) of the sites because of teacher request, by 5 (19%) sites because the school serves resource students this way, and by 5 (19%) sites for other reasons. Managing the number of students, embarrassment at being served in class, lack of common planning time, and not fitting into a previously made schedule were all mentioned in the "other" category.

Survey Question 9 "Students in my resource program who are served indirectly were chosen because:"

Student needs were cited by 19 (73%) of the respondents as the reason for choosing indirect services, 7 (27%) cited teacher request, 4 (15%) chose a better schedule, 3 (1%) serve all resource students in their classrooms, and 5 (20%) listed other reasons. The others included watch and consult were

recommended by the individual education plan, pre/post testing supported this model, students were close to exiting the resource program, and non-identified students who were being served with the collaboration model.

Survey Question 10 "When building your yearly schedule, what services to students with mild learning handicaps do you feel must be included?"

Social skills were listed by 17 (65%) of the respondents, learning strategies were listed by 24 (92%), individual academic instruction was listed by 20 (77%), small group academic instruction was listed by 24 (92%), and 8 (31%) listed other student needs. Student needs listed in the "other" category were curriculum modifications, remediation of perceptual difficulties, computer skills, self esteem support, and collaboration with doctors and therapists.

Survey Question 11 "When building your current program, were identified children grouped in regular education classes to facilitate service delivery?" Six sites (23%) group identified children, while 20 sites (77%) do not group identified children. One respondent commented in large print that not grouping identified students at her school site was a major drawback for collaborative teaching.

Survey Question 12 "If yes on #11, the size of the groups of mainstreamed students with learning handicaps in the general education classroom is:"

Of the six reporting school sites, four sites used groups of 2-3 students, five sites grouped from 4-5 students, and 1 grouped by six. The number of responses is larger than six because several of the sites grouped differently depending on grade and student needs.

Discussion

The dual purposes of this study were achieved. First, the service delivery models currently available to the resource specialist were examined through the literature. Second, recommendations for developing guidelines for service delivery decisions were developed. Elementary resource specialists in Santa Cruz County were surveyed to determine how they arrived at the model or combination of models they use in their program. Trends for the future were explored by asking for an ideal schedule projection without restrictions of budget or bureaucracy.

Results of the survey reflected trends that were found in the literature review. Resource specialists in Santa Cruz County expressed interest in what Reynolds called progressive inclusion (Reynolds, 1989). It was clear from the survey that resource specialists continued to support a full range of services for the student with learning disabilities. In the surveyed population, as in the literature, there was no mandate to support exclusive use of one service delivery model over another for all students with learning disabilities regardless of particular student need. Preservation of a full range of service delivery options is necessary in order to offer appropriate education to all students with mild learning disabilities (Kaufman & Pullen, 1989; Wiederholt, 1989).

Another area explored by the survey was student needs. When asked about the factors considered when choosing a delivery model for serving the student with learning disabilities, the responding resource specialists listed individual student weaknesses, followed by severe academic delays, and

student behavior issues. Teacher requests and scheduling considerations were mentioned, but in a limited capacity. In the literature it was noted that teachers often required conformity as a condition for success in the general education classroom (Baker & Zigmond, 1990). It is possible that the move toward more collaborative teaching seen in the survey will address this issue. If the student is encouraged and supported in the regular classroom environment, strategies to conform to the requirements of that classroom may be more readily included in the special education instruction.

Other necessary student services noted in the survey results were social skills, learning strategies, and individual and small group instruction. Torgesen (1982) suggested that students with mild learning disabilities failed to make progress in the regular classroom because they failed to employ learning strategies. McKinney and Feagans (1983), concluded that maladaptive social skills contributed to the lack of success of the student with learning disabilities. The survey results of this study support the findings of Torgesen (1982), and McKinney and Feagans (1983) in listing learning strategies and social skills as equal parts of the program for the mainstreamed student with mild learning disabilities.

Although the literature review examined the Adaptive Learning Environment Model and the Integrated Classroom Model, neither is in use in the Santa Cruz County area. The survey respondents using consultation or collaboration in their current program were all using either collaborative problem solving, collaborative or team teaching, the resource/consulting teacher model, or a combination of them all. Idol (1989) defines the resource/consulting teacher model that combines the best of the pull-out and

the collaboration worlds. While serving students with severe academic needs by using pull-out services, resource teachers also provide support for students and teachers in the regular education classroom as a part of the everyday program. Along these lines, Roddy (1984) suggested that isolated instruction may be valuable but overused. He recommended that isolated instruction (pull-out) should only be continued to the point that the child is compatible with some group of students in his or her regular classroom. The survey completed for this paper supports the literature findings in these areas. Teachers appear to be interested in maintaining a full-spectrum program, while changing the balance from being heavily weighted with a pull-out program, to a more equal balance between pull-out and collaborative services. A point that was emphasized repeatedly in the survey returns, was that resource teachers could not commit to a rigid, set schedule because the needs of individual students must always be addressed when developing the yearly program plan.

The challenge in encouraging additional collaborative work between special and regular educators is not to lose the expertise of either group. Teachers today are finding higher and higher numbers of students with different learning needs in the regular classroom. Carnine and Kameenui (1990) were also concerned that in the classrooms of today, the majority of the students are what they termed "at-risk." The special education techniques that are brought into the classroom through collaboration can benefit larger numbers of students. Effective group instruction techniques, such as cooperative learning, peer tutoring, and reciprocal teaching have proven effective in the regular education classroom (Conway & Gow, 1988).

The key for successful collaboration noted in the literature is time (Johnson, Pugach, & Hammittee, 1988). Comments noted on the survey returns also listed time as a crucial factor. Schools in Santa Cruz County are beginning to recognize the benefits of incorporating collaboration as a part of their program and are attempting to allow for collaboration to occur by providing officially sanctioned and structured collaborative planning time. Two of the responding schools have restructured the school day to plan collaboratively. Three respondents reported using roving substitute teachers to allow time to plan, while others expressed frustration with irregularly scheduled planning times.

Recommendations for Guidelines for Determining Service Delivery

The following recommendations are based upon the results of this study.

1. Guidelines must originate from a whole school philosophy. In order for a plan to be successful it must not be random, but rather guided by an overarching framework that links together all school student service programs.
2. Support from site personnel and administrators is mandatory.
3. Focus is placed on the best use of student time (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986).
4. Methods and effectiveness of instruction must be a match between teacher and student (Lenz, 1988). This is an essential item to maximize learning potential.
5. Flexibility and a mix of service delivery options should be a part of the program. Both the literature and the survey returns stressed the need for including pull-out instruction, consultation, and collaboration in a comprehensive program. The majority of respondents reported on the survey that they were currently combining service delivery models.

6. Measure student growth to evaluate learning and effectiveness of placement. Tindal (1985) and Marston (1988) suggested the use of curriculum based assessment to guide teachers in making program adjustments.

This researcher is in agreement with the literature that although there are similar program titles and frameworks, each school site and each resource program is unique and there is no guarantee that one program should or will be like any other (Friend & McNutt, 1984).

Suggestions for Future Research

This was a study limited to the 35 resource specialists working at elementary sites in Santa Cruz County. Further research is needed to explore these issues with a larger population sample. Would the results be the same for a rural or urban area? Is Santa Cruz County a representative population for the country? The number of students in our school population thought to be "at risk" of academic failure is rising. Will the current blend of service delivery models be adequate to meet this need? These issues all demand further research.

This study depended on survey information that was self-reported. In further studies it might be instructive to interview and also make site visitations to observe resource specialists during actual implementation. More in-depth information on individual service delivery options could be gathered by focusing on one model at a time at a variety of sites. From the information provided in this study it is impossible to determine the reasons for a resource specialist making a particular service delivery choice for a student. Further research using interviews might begin to answer these questions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

The purposes of this study were to investigate current service delivery options for elementary students with mild learning disabilities and to make recommendations for guidelines for the yearly planning of the delivery of services to these students. A literature review was completed and a survey was designed to gather answers to the following questions:

1. What service delivery options are available for meeting the academic needs of students with mild learning disabilities?
2. What service delivery options are currently in use in Santa Cruz County in the elementary resource specialist programs?
3. How are elementary resource specialists in Santa Cruz County currently combining service delivery options to meet the needs of the students with mild learning disabilities?
4. What components should be included in guidelines to enable a resource specialist to match students' needs with the variety of service delivery options available?

The first purpose of the study, to investigate service delivery options for students with mild learning disabilities, was completed with a search of current literature in the field. To gather data describing the use of the service delivery options in Santa Cruz County a survey was mailed to resource specialists at all 35 of the public elementary schools in the county. Twenty-seven surveys were returned for a return rate of 77%. Results indicated that 26 schools are currently combining pull-out and collaborative services in their resource schedules. On their current schedule, most resource programs

are more heavily weighted with pull-out services, while still including 10 or 20% of the schedule for collaborative activities. In the ideal schedule, most resource specialists speculated that 10 or 20% of their schedule would continue to be used for pull-out services, while the majority of the program time would be used for collaborative activities.

Although there are several models combining special and regular education completely, the Adaptive Learning Environment Model (Wang & Birch, 1984a) and the Integrated Classroom Model (Affleck, Adams, & Lowenbraun, 1988), neither of these models is currently in use in Santa Cruz County. Collaboration, consultation, pull-out services, and the consulting teacher model are other service delivery options explored in the literature that are currently being utilized in Santa Cruz County.

The second purpose of the study was to develop recommendations for guidelines for determining service delivery to students with mild learning disabilities. Combining the survey results and data from the literature review recommendations were developed.

Guidelines must originate from a whole school philosophy. In order for a plan to be successful it must not be random, but rather guided by an over-arching framework that links together all student service programs. Regular and special education teachers, along with parents, students, and administration are all significant participants in determining the service delivery options offered at each school site. Focus for program determination must be placed on the best use of student time (Haynes & Jenkins, 1986). Schools sometimes lose sight of the needs of the student when service delivery options are being considered and focus exclusively on teacher

convenience or ease of scheduling. Teaching and learning styles and methods of effective instruction must be a match between teacher and student (Lenz, 1988). This match is essential to maximize learning potential. A compatible match of teaching and learning styles is desirable for all students, but critical for the success of mainstreamed students with mild learning disabilities. Flexibility and a mix of service delivery options should be a part of the program. Both the literature and the survey returns stressed the need for including pull-out instruction, consultation, and collaboration in a comprehensive program. The majority of respondents reported on the survey that they were currently combining service delivery models. Since there is no current research that definitively places the effectiveness of one service delivery model above any other for all resource students, a comprehensive program is a necessity. And finally, schools should implement a program to measure student growth to evaluate learning and effectiveness of placement. Tindal (1985) and Marston (1988) suggested the use of curriculum based assessment to guide teachers in making program adjustments.

This descriptive study has begun to look at the continuously evolving resource specialist program. Student need is demanding an ever-changing schedule that requires a mix of service delivery options. This was an overview study. Further research should now focus on the effectiveness of these programs. In-depth information examining the mix of services in resource specialist programs would further expand our ability to serve students with mild learning disabilities in the mainstream population.

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APPENDIX

SURVEY PROTOCOL

Survey for Elementary Resource Specialists

Thank you for taking the time to answer this survey. When marking your answers, please check all the items that describe your program. Some questions may need more than one check to be complete. Also, please comment on any answer that you believe needs further explanation. This survey is an attempt to develop a profile of how we in Santa Cruz County are serving mainstreamed students with mild learning handicaps.

1. Which service delivery model or models do you use in your weekly schedule?

(a)___pull-out (b)___collaboration (C)___consultation (d)___team teaching (e)___other, please list_____

Definitions to refer to for this survey:

Collaboration: To work together to jointly problem solve, plan or to teach.

Consultation: Collaborative problem solving based on mutual trust that generates commitment to an intervention plan and results in change(DeBoer,1986).

2. If consultation or collaborative-consultation is part of your program, is there a particular model or framework that you use?

(a)___resource/consulting teacher (b)___cooperative or team teaching (c)___collaborative consultation problem solving..

(d)___other, please specify_____

3. If any of the collaboration or consultation models are part of your program, do you meet with the general education teachers at your site at regularly scheduled times?

(a)____yes (b)____no

4. If yes on #3, how much time is set aside each week for regularly scheduled collaboration/consultation meetings?

(a)____less than 1 hour (b)____1-2 hours (C)____more than 2 hours

5. If yes on #3, when during the day have you found is the best time to meet regularly?

(a)____before school (b)____after school (c)____recess

(d)____lunch (e)____teacher relieved when class is in session

(f)____other, please list

6. Please fill-in the percentage of your time spent each week in each area. The total should equal 100%.

(a)____pull-out teaching (b)____collaborative teaching

(c)____consultation

(d)____staff inservice (e)____parent contact/education (f)____assessment

(g)____teaching preparation (h)____other, please

explain_____

7. When setting up the schedule for this year, how did you decide which children would be served with direct pull-out services and which

childrens' needs would be met with some form of indirect collaboration/consultation services?

- (a)_____it depended on scheduling (b)___it depended on the particular instructional needs of the student (c)_____it depended on parent request (d)_____it depended on a team meeting decision (e)_____district or school policy on service delivery model (f)_____other, please list
-

8. Some students in my resource program were selected to receive pull-out services because:

- (a)_____their academic skill level is two or more years below grade level (b)_____their teachers requested pull-out services (c)_____our school serves students with mild learning handicaps in this way (d)_____student behavior necessitates a smaller learning group with less distractions (e)_____other, please explain _____
-

9. Students in my resource program who are served indirectly were chosen because:

- (a)_____we serve all resource students in their classrooms (b)_____teachers requested this model (c)_____the students' needs were better met with this model (d)_____the schedule worked better this way (e)_____other, please explain _____
-

10. When building your yearly schedule, what services to students with mild learning handicaps do you feel must be included?

- (a)____social skills (b)____learning strategies
 (c)____individual academic instruction (d)____small group academic
 instruction (e)____other, please list _____
-

11. When building your current program, were identified children
 grouped in regular education classes to facilitate service delivery?

- (a)____yes (b)____no

12. If yes on #11, the size of the groups of mainstreamed students with
 learning handicaps in the general education classroom is:

- (a)____2-3 (b)____4-5 (c)____6 (d)____other, please

note _____

13. In your estimation, what would the ideal division or use of time
 look like for a resource program teacher? Please list percentages of your ideal
 week below, total to equal 100%.

- (a)____pull-out teaching (b)____collaborative teaching
 (c)____consultation
 (d)____staff inservice (e)____parent contact/education (f)____assessment
 (g)____teaching preparation (h)____other, please explain
-
-
-

Additional Comments: