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Regis University
College for Professional Studies Graduate Programs
Final Project/Thesis

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TEACHER PREPARATION TO SUPPORT AN INCLUSIVE ENVIRONMENT:
AN ELEMENTARY TEACHER INSERVICE

by

Heather Kelly

A Research Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

REGIS UNIVERSITY

July, 2008

ABSTRACT

Since the movement to educate students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom environment has become prevalent, so has the need for additional teacher training. This paper addressed the vital importance of teacher preparation associated with the inclusive classroom by using a teacher in-service training program this author has created. This in-service addressed several factors, for educators, which are critical to the academic success of students with disabilities in a general education classroom. The areas addressed in this in-service are; (a) available resources, (b) instructional techniques and (c) the development of at home activities. All of these areas can be used by the educational staff to enhance learning and retention for students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom environment.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; 1990, as cited in Fischer, Schimmel, & Stellman, 2007), students with disabilities have the right to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) possible, in regard to the severity of their disorder. Wilcox and Wigle (1994) examined past efforts in the organization and integration of special needs children into traditional classroom settings. They maintained that, in order to progress into the academic future, it is necessary to review the past educational efforts. Another group of researchers, Monahan, Marino, and Miller (2000), believed that there could be many different factors that may affect the success of mainstreaming students with disabilities into general classrooms. One of the many factors in question for both groups of researchers is that of the teachers' attitudes toward the process of inclusion. It is inevitable in this growing society that educators will have special needs children placed in their classrooms, and it is crucial for educators to understand the necessary actions that must be taken in order to provide the best education possible to all students in the general education classroom.

Statement of the Problem

Within the ever changing academic community, new educational techniques are constantly being explored. The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; 1990, as cited in Fischer, et al., 2007) initiated inclusive education environments, which allowed students

with disabilities to be educated in the same classroom as their peers. In order to provide essential educational services to students in inclusive settings, all teachers should participate in an in-service program prior to the start of the school year. The purpose of in-service programs is to provide educators with vital resources, techniques, and curricular ideas to efficiently and effectively educate all students in the classroom. When students are educated in an inclusive environment, students with disabilities have the opportunity to grow academically and socially and develop with their peers. A top priority for all educators should be to ensure that students with disabilities have the educational infrastructure to provide them with an adequate education.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project will be to supply teachers with the pertinent information related to the education of students with disabilities in an inclusive environment. This information will be presented to educators in the form of a teacher in-service, which will be provided prior to the start of a new school year. In order to maximize the educational experience for students with disabilities within an inclusive setting, educators must understand how to effectively deliver instruction. The in-service will be designed to familiarize teachers with the available resources and demonstrate instructional techniques that can be used to enhance learning in the classroom for disabled students. Also, the in-service will provide information about how to develop at home activities, which can be used to strengthen family involvement and reinforce student learning at home. Participation in teacher in-services, designed around inclusion,

will expand educators' knowledge, and they can be more proficient when they need to manage difficult situations. This would allow the inclusive classroom environment to become a more dynamic learning environment for all the students as well as the teacher. In-services, designed with teacher preparation in mind, can be used to improve inclusive environments, over time, and the learning environments can become more productive for students with disabilities.

Chapter Summery

In order to make inclusion a successful academic environment, it is critical that teachers are well prepared and that they have adequate knowledge of how to effectively manage an inclusive environment. It is the intent of this author to present a comprehensive teacher in-service to educators prior to the start of a new academic school year. The in-service will consist of vital information in regard to the education of students with disabilities in an inclusive setting such as: (a) instructional techniques, (b) available resources and (c) how to develop at home activities for students and their families. In Chapter 2, the Review of Literature, this author will present the relevant information to examine past efforts related to the education of students in an inclusive environment as well as support the movement for teacher training. In Chapter 3, Methods, the development of the teacher in-service program is detailed. It is this researcher's belief that the presence of more organized and well prepared teachers would allow students with disabilities to educationally flourish in an inclusive environment.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this project will be to develop an in-service to provide teachers with resources and information that pertains to the education of children with disabilities in a general education classroom environment. Prior to the 1970s, children with disabilities were taught by instructors who specialized in the education of children with special needs (Hass, 1993). These students were placed in focused classes with many other children, all of whom had disabilities. By the mid 1970s, the methods used to educate children with disabilities began to change in the private and public school systems. During this time, ideas began to surface that children with disabilities might learn more effective social and educational skills in a general classroom, while they were immersed in a class with other children who did not have disabilities.

Fischer, Schimmel, and Stellman (2007), cited the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA; 1975), which placed numerous costly requirements on educational institutions nationwide. However, the changes implemented in the educational system would ensure that children with disabilities were offered the opportunity to learn more comprehensively in a general classroom environment. Because of IDEA, it was ensured that children with disabilities, and their educators, were able to access any resources and materials needed for that the child's education in order to maintain, enhance, or improve his or her abilities (Fischer et al., 2007). However, not all children with disabilities are

able to be successfully integrated into general education classes. Full inclusion is strongly dependent upon the type and severity of the disability that the child exhibits. However, currently over 96% of children with disabilities are being successfully educated in a general inclusive setting (American Youth Policy Forum and Center on Education Policy [AYPF/CEP], 2001).

Selection of the Most Effective Inclusive Environment

According to Haas (1993), children with disabilities should be able to be educated in an environment that offers appropriate social and educational development opportunities. This author will explore the strategies and methods used in inclusive setting classrooms. She will identify the different components that are vital to guarantee successful integration into inclusive environments. Some of the areas, which will be explored in relation to successful inclusive environments, are: (a) selection of the correct setting, (b) preparation of those involved (c) implementation of a support network, and (d) an examination of whether inclusion can be generalized.

One of the first steps necessary to develop a successful educational situation in a full inclusion classroom is to make sure that the most beneficial classroom environment is selected for the student with disabilities (Boutot, 2007). There are two main environments with which children with disabilities will have routine daily contact, that is, the teacher and the classroom environment. Both the teacher and the educational setting need to be conducive to the learning ability of the student with disabilities in order for the inclusive situation to be academically successful for the student.

Classroom Teacher

The general education classroom teacher plays an extremely important role in the academic and social development of students with disabilities (Boutot, 2007). It is imperative, for the success of students with disabilities, that these educators have some preexisting knowledge of the student's disability and are familiar with and accept the principles of inclusion. Also, according to the members of the Illinois State Board of Education (2004), the more experience an educator has teaching in an inclusive classroom environment, the better suited he or she will be to successfully integrate the student with disabilities into the general education classroom, and thus make their educational experience successful.

Knowledge of Disabilities

In order to determine which teacher to select, one must consider the amount of overall knowledge the teacher possesses about the child's specific disability (Boutot, 2007). A teacher, who does not know the detailed characteristics of a certain disorder, cannot be effective in the education of a specific child. This could be due to the fact that the teacher is not aware of the educational methods that are most effective for the student to retain the educational and social information. In order for a child with disabilities to succeed in a general education classroom, educators must have extensive, background knowledge about the specific child, his or her disorder, and the learning techniques that will be most effective for that student to succeed.

Familiarity and Acceptance of Inclusion

Another factor, which will affect a teacher's ability to educate children with disabilities in an inclusive environment, is the teacher's familiarity and acceptance of the inclusion philosophy (Monahan, Marino, & Miller, 2000). Educators should embrace the fundamentals of inclusion such as the promotion of collaborative learning among students so that all students in the room feel like a member of the class, in order to make the classroom environment a successful experience for every student. An educator, who emphasizes the principles of inclusion in his or her instruction, will provide a more effective learning environment for the entire student body, thus, the inclusive situation will be both a more comfortable setting for the teacher and a successful educational environment for the student with disabilities.

Experience Teaching in an Inclusive Setting

The final step to choose a teacher for students with disabilities is the amount of experience the educator has teaching in an inclusive environment. Lombardo and Lombardo (1987) found a correlation between the amount of time a teacher had spent in an inclusive environment and their job satisfaction. These researchers noted that the more time and experience a teacher had in an inclusive setting led to greater satisfaction at work. Not only would more experience teaching in an inclusive room aid in the education of children with disabilities, but if the teacher were more satisfied at work, he or she would be more inclined to go above and beyond to ensure successful inclusion, educationally and socially for the student.

Classroom Environment

The successful integration, of a student with disabilities into the general education situation is largely dependent upon on the classroom environment selected for the student (Boutot, 2007). A general education classroom should contain several components, in order for the transition to be smooth and the student to thrive academically. The elements are: (a) the presence of routing and structure (McLeskey & Waldron, 2007), and (b) the size of the general education class (Meir, 1995).

Presence of Routine and Structure

Selection of the correct classroom environment is another important factor in order to develop a successful inclusion program (McLeskey & Waldron, 2007). One of the most effective ways for children with disabilities to learn is in a classroom where structure and routine is present. Themes of daily schedules will aid students with disabilities with various levels of cogitative abilities. Also, the presence of daily classroom routine and structure will allow students with disabilities to make friends with more ease and comfort. The maintenance of a consistent routine for daily educational activities will provide organization, which will make transitions smoother over time for everyone in the class. McLeskey and Waldron maintained that routine and structure are two of the defining elements which indicate a well designed inclusive environment, which is especially beneficial for children with disabilities.

Class Size

Class size of students should be kept to a moderate number, which will promote one on one interaction between teacher and student (Meir, 1995). In a small class,

teachers can effectively divide their time between all the students, to ensure that all of the students' educational needs are met satisfactorily. Meir maintained that a smaller class size allowed teachers to efficiently divide their time between their students and provide valuable and rewarding education to all the students, not just those who required additional attention or instructional services.

Preparation of Parties for Inclusion

To implement a successful inclusion environment, all parties involved with the change must be prepared for the transformation that the classroom will undergo (Boutot, 2007). The parties, who should be prepared, include: (a) the students with disabilities, (b) the teacher, and (c) the general students. Once all of these individuals understand the change that will take place in the classroom and are taught the appropriate techniques and skills to cope with these changes, the inclusive educational environment will be a positive and effective learning situation.

Students with Disabilities

The first people to be notified of the potential changes are the students with disabilities; this should be done prior to the students' entry to a full inclusion general classroom environment (Boutot, 2007). The student must be made aware of what the inclusive environment will be like for him or her, such as: (a) the teaching method of the educator, (b) the classroom setting, (c) possible peer groups, and (d) additional resources to help them make a harmonious transition.

Development of Individual Education Plan (IEP)

One of the factors that can influence the educational success of a child with disabilities is an Individual Education Plan (IEP) in which the educational objectives and goals within the general curriculum for the student are identified (Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006). One way to make sure that an IEP will be effective is to have the educators use it as a guide when related academic services are scheduled. The scheduling of additional services, in accordance with the IEP, will allow the student anticipate every aspect of the day to ensure that a personalized schedule becomes part of his or her daily routine. Use of this routine will allow students to feel more like a part of the class and not just a visitor with a separate agenda.

Availability of Additional Resources

Another issue that should be discussed with the student, prior to becoming fully included into a general education classroom, is the availability of additional resources (McLeskey & Waldron, 2007). Some of these resources include: (a) accessibility to special education teachers, (b) specialized editions of textbooks and (c) other resources that will positively aid children in their academic journey. According to McLeskey and Waldron, all of the resources, which are needed for the support of the educational success of students with disabilities, should be incorporated into the classroom as naturally and unobtrusively as possible. When the classroom is designed to feel like a natural environment, this helps the student with disabilities to adapt to their new environment with more ease and comfort. Mesibov and Shea (1996) found that students with disabilities excelled in inclusive environments when additional resources and supports were easily accessed and used often in class, rather than being segregated into a

classroom comprised of other children with disabilities and without additional resources. The segregation of students with disabilities and the lack of resources, which could aid in their educational success, does not allow them to experience social and academic advances like other school students their age.

The Teacher

It is imperative that educators are well prepared for the student with disabilities, into his or her general education classroom, prior to his or her arrival (Boutot, 2007). In order to prepare teachers for students with disabilities, they should have access to additional resources, as well as knowledge of effective teaching techniques for the inclusive setting. Both of these factors will play a role in the academic and social development of the student with disabilities.

Accessibility to Additional Resources

The preparation of teachers, who receive children with disabilities into their class, is critical for inclusive classrooms to succeed (Boutot, 2007). Teachers should have access to additional resources, especially, special education teachers who can aid in the planning and implementation of specialized curriculum, which is vital if general education teachers are to provide dynamic education to students with disabilities. Boutot noted that general teachers should have some background knowledge of the disorder they work with to successfully educate the child in their class. However, if they do not, they should rely heavily upon the special education teacher for appropriate educational methods for use in the classroom.

Learning Effective Inclusive Teaching Techniques

Wilder and Williams (2001) found that students with disabilities were able to decipher the fundamental aspects of theme based concepts when they were presented in an unfamiliar story. This finding suggested that some children are able to comprehend more substance if theme grouping is used. In a recent article (Publishers' Group, 2007); there are reports that the use of educational magazines, such as *Highlights* and *National Geographic for Children*, helped children with disabilities gain a comprehensive understanding of information from the material being presented to them. Teaching methods, such as magazines and theme based curriculum, should be utilized in an inclusive classroom to ensure that students with disabilities are exposed to recent academic breakthroughs, which will aid them in their education attainments. General education teachers must learn the most effective techniques to present information for students with disabilities to retain knowledge. Another technique, that Phillips, Sapona, and Lubic (1995) found, was that when educators work in a collaborative team situation, they tend to meet the needs of diverse classroom with fewer problems. The educators in the team become proficient teachers in the classroom because they were able to share, utilize, and implement one another's' skills, experiences and knowledge of the inclusive classroom environment. Regardless of the instructional method that teachers use in the classroom, the curriculum should always be adjusted to meet the academic needs of all the students in the class (DePaw & GocKarp, 1994). Use of these procedures will eliminate any individual student from feeling excluded from the group; also, they will stimulate academic success among the students.

General Education Students

General education students, who receive a child with disabilities into their class, should be prepared prior to the student's arrival in the class (Boutot, 2007). To prepare general students, it is important to find a technique that will make the differences seem ordinary among all students. Some ways to enhance learning among students are addressed below. These techniques will help students to accept each other's differences and academically aid each another in class.

Promote Social Acceptance

The promotion of social acceptance among the student body of an inclusive classroom is one defining factor for a successful educational environment (Boutot, 2007). Educators should explore various strategies which can promote social acceptance among peer groups in order to make the students feel unified and connected. Children have an innate need to feel like they are a part of a larger social group in order to improve their social communication skills (Berger, 2005).

Make Differences Ordinary

When the teacher talks to general education students, it is important to identify the aspects that the student with disabilities has in common with his or her peers and to downplay the differences between the social groups (Boutot, 2007). This type of classroom discussion will allow the general education student to view the student with disabilities as someone "just like them" (p.159). Also, when educators begin to promote similarities among peers groups, it will help the students to begin to develop acceptance for one another and, therefore, positively affect overall student academic performance.

Establish an Environment of Support

The establishment of a supportive environment will allow students in an inclusive educational environment to succeed (Boutot, 2007). Children, with disabilities or not, have an instinctive need to feel welcomed into a specific situation. For students with disabilities, stressful situations can have adverse effects on their social and academic development. In addition, all students need to feel like they are surrounded by a supportive group of peers. Carter, Cushing, Clark, and Kennedy (2005) suggested that, when children with disabilities are able establish peer support in an inclusive environment, they will blossom socially among their classroom peers. Also, the skills that these students learn are more likely to be maintained throughout their academic career.

Establish a Support Network of Parents, Teachers, and Administrators

The establishment of an academic setting is not based solely on the efforts and actions of the administrator, the teacher, or the students and their families as individuals (Dominguez, 1994). School staff should provide a safe learning environment for students based on the collaborative efforts of parents, teachers, and administrators. The development of a support network comprised of these individuals is essential for a full inclusive classroom to be successful in any educational organization.

Family Involvement

An additional aspect to consider in the development of a support network is the amount of parent involvement with the school and the specific teachers (Dominguez, 1994). In general, parents are valuable resources, who should be accessed by educators in order to promote scholastic success for the students with disabilities in their

classrooms. According to Dominguez, knowledgeable and informed parents of children with disabilities are the best resource in order to advance their educational capabilities and social skills. Parents know their child better than anyone else, including educators. Therefore, parents can offer positive and helpful suggestions to educators. Parents' ideas will further assist educators as they plan and implement appropriate curriculum for all students with disabilities who have been placed in an inclusive setting.

Attitude toward Inclusion among Staff Members

Monahan, Marino, and Miller (2000) reported that educators must model an appropriate attitude toward the inclusion process in order to promote similar attitudes among administrators and students at the school. Both educators and members of the student body must possess open minds and good attitudes about inclusion in order to provide a safe and welcoming academic environment for children with disabilities. Siegal (1995) noted that negative attitudes and limited resources are the notable barriers to full inclusion. If inclusion is to be an effective educational tool for children with disabilities, staff members must display a general acceptance for the principles of inclusion so that students with disabilities can feel comfortable within their academic community.

Administrative Involvement

Administrative involvement is key to the success rate of an inclusive classroom. Finkenbinder (1981) and Lindsay (1986, both cited in Arick & Krug, 1993) found that a large portion of administrators in the United States were poorly trained in inclusive educational procedures. These researchers concluded that, in order for administrators to

be an influential role for not only the school, but for the students with disabilities, they need to be provided with adequate training services directly related to the inclusive classroom environment.

As reported by the members of the Illinois State Board of Education (2004), there is a pilot program in the state in which students with disabilities are provided with a dynamic education in an inclusive environment. Staff of the program credited its success to: (a) the amount of staff and family involvement, (b) appropriate training for all parties involved, and (c) an administrative long term commitment for change. In this program, suggestions are provided and geared toward administrators, which help make inclusion successful for the school. Some of the actions are: (a) administrators provide concrete and identifiable support, (b) administrators provide leadership to the school and staff, and (c) administrators have open communication with all parties involved with inclusion. In order to make inclusion a thriving educational environment for all the students, administrators need to receive specific on the job training as well as be a pillar of support and an open line of communication for the entire academic community including: (a) staff, (b) students, and (c) families of the school.

Generalization of Inclusion

An area related to the full inclusion environment that should be explored further is whether inclusion can be generalized to all students with disabilities (Shanker, 1995). Some of the various questions that should be addressed by educators and parents before the placement of students with disabilities into full inclusion environments are: (a) will the student with disability will benefit from the exposure to peer groups, (b) will the

student be able to academically maintain or increase overall fundamental functioning, and (c) what are the attitudes held by the staff member and administrators toward full inclusion?

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2006), students with disabilities should be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE). This means that students with special needs should learn in an environment that is appropriate and conducive to their disorder. Sometimes, this can be in an inclusive situation and, other times, it may refer to a specialized learning environment.

In general students cannot academically and/or socially flourish if the educational support they need from teachers and administrators is not available or accessible to them (Shanker, 1995). Students with disabilities should not be placed into an environment that will make them feel like an outsider or an outcast; this type of setting would be detrimental to the social development of the student. Lastly a student with disabilities should be placed into a full inclusive setting only if he or she will be able to increase or maintain their overall understanding of the concepts of the general curriculum.

If a student with disabilities enters a district where staff do not support inclusion, the questions arises, would placement of that student in an inclusive environment be educationally rewarding for that particular student? Shanker (1995) maintained that the educational demands placed on general students could be harmful and destructive for students with disabilities, and lower their self-esteem if they were to fall behind their classmates academically. According to Hallahan and Kauffman (2006), the severity of the disorder is the largest determining factor in regard to students with disabilities being

successfully included into a general classroom. If the student has mild forms of a disability, he or she is deemed high functioning and able to retain more educational and social information than students who have severe forms of disabilities. There are some students with disabilities for whom no amount of additional resources or positive attitudes of the faculty would make the shift into a regular classroom safe or effective.

Chapter Summary

Students with disabilities face many challenges throughout their lives. The priority should be to ensure that these students have the academic infrastructure to provide them with an adequate education. In this chapter, the author showed that inclusive classroom settings can be highly beneficial for many students with mild forms of disabilities. To ensure inclusive success, the student with disabilities should be placed in the most effective and efficient environment and take into consideration the preparedness of the teacher and the overall classroom style. All parties involved in general inclusion, the teacher, general students, and the student with disabilities, should be prepared for inclusive procedures in order to benefit everyone. The last area that should be a focal point to produce a successful inclusive environment is a strong support network which includes parents, students, and teachers.

Not all inclusive classroom environments are suitable or sufficient for students with disabilities. Successful inclusion, for the student with disabilities, depends more on the severity of the disorder. Wilcox and Wigle (1997) pointed out that educators have made great strides in the techniques and methods used to deliver effective academic experiences to special needs children. The research presented in this chapter gives

overwhelming support for inclusive educational environments, and this author is optimistic toward future progress in this field. In Chapter 3, Methods, the target audience for this project will be identified, the procedures and goals will be described and the process of peer assessment is detailed.

Chapter 3

METHODS

The purpose of this project will be to organize and present educators with a teacher in-service, to present the pertinent information in regard to the placement of students with disabilities into the full inclusion environment. The teacher in-service will be designed to inform teachers of available resources, instructional classroom techniques and information on how to develop at home activities to enhance learning for students with disabilities. The importance of teacher preparation and training is critical for the educational success of all of the students in an inclusion classroom.

The value of teacher preparation became apparent to this researcher during the 6 months she was student teaching spring of 2008. In relation to the education of disabled students, several problems attracted the researcher's attention as the spring semester progressed. The manner in which educators managed students with disabilities, who were placed into the general education classroom, was poor. The educators seemed to be unsure of the additional resources and services which were available to aid them in the instruction of these students. Also, teachers' instructional skills appeared to ill-equipped and ineffective for the disabled students in the class. The researcher did not attribute these observations to an inability to differentiate instruction or inadequacy to educate students in an inclusive environment. Instead, the researcher believed that these actions were directly related to the lack of teacher training and preparation in regard the inclusive

environment. Thus, the researcher initiated a movement to develop a teacher in-service in order to effectively prepare educators with the information, tools, and resources necessary to educate students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom successfully.

Target Audience

This project will be designed for elementary school teachers, Grades K-6. Additionally, the tools and techniques contained within this project can be modified and adjusted for use by secondary educational teachers. Any educator who wishes to further his or her knowledge, gain insight into instruction techniques or learn how to develop at home activities, in relation to the education of students with disabilities in an inclusive environment, will be interested in this project.

Goals and Procedures

The foundation of this project will be a PowerPoint presentation, which will be presented in Chapter 4, Results, of this project. The presentation will contain relevant information related to the education of students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom situation. The information in the power point presentation is based on an extensive review of literature and a compilation of research, which was completed by the author. The goal of this project is to effectively prepare and train teachers in the methods and techniques which will make the inclusive education classroom successful. The presentation will contain important information related to: (a) available resources, (b) classroom techniques, as well as (c) ways to develop at home activities. All of these components will aid educators to successfully educate disabled students in the general education classroom.

Peer Assessment

After this project is completed, it is the intent of the researcher to have the power point presentation and the information it contains reviewed by a variety of educators (e.g., novice teachers, experienced teachers, and administrators), using the power point presentation feedback survey (see Appendix B). These educators will review the information and offer tips and suggestions to the researcher. The feedback provided will be used by the researcher to make necessary changes to the presentation such as, add, change or delete any of the information that is not relevant. The specific feedback recommendations will be detailed in Chapter 5, Discussion.

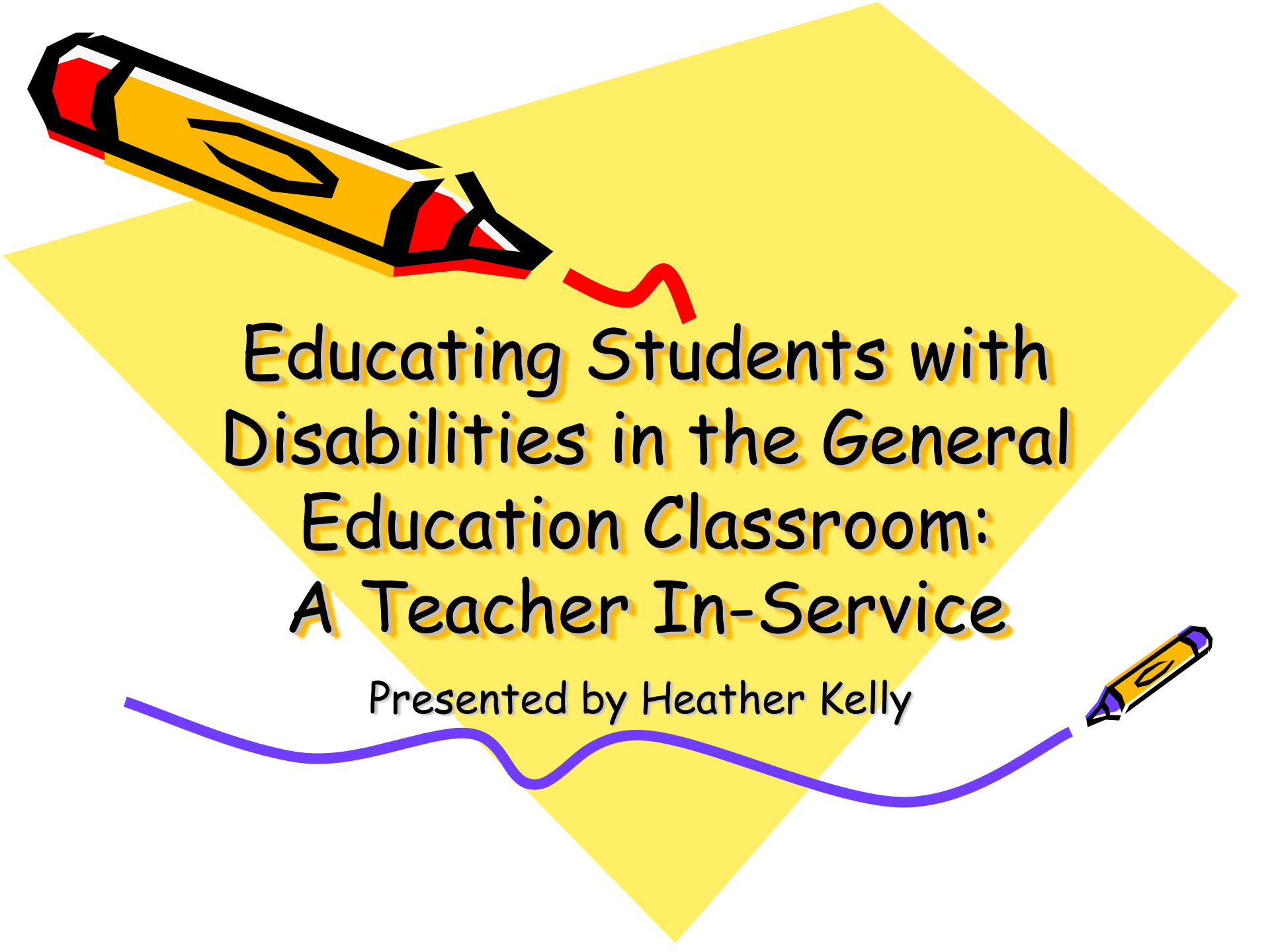
Chapter Summary

Effectively teaching children with disabilities is a major challenge for many educators. As the use of mainstreaming continues to integrate disabled students into general classrooms, it is critical to provide educators with the tools and information necessary to manage their classroom and provide high quality instruction. This project will give educators a chance to expand their current knowledge as well as gain insight into instructional techniques that will aid in the successful education of students with disabilities in inclusive environments.

Chapter 4

RESULTS

With an increasing number of students with disabilities being integrated into the general education classroom, it is imperative that educators are properly trained and prepared to educate these students. The following presentation is intended to be used as a teacher in-service training program prior to the beginning of a new school year. The goals of this in-service are to (a) inform teachers of available resources, (b) provide them with instructional techniques and (c) ways to develop at home activities for students with disabilities. All of these factors are critical to the academic success of all students in an inclusive classroom situation.



Educating Students with
Disabilities in the General
Education Classroom:
A Teacher In-Service

Presented by Heather Kelly

What to expect

This teacher in service will;

Help educators become more prepared to teach students with disabilities in the general education classroom by:

- Outlining available resources and ways to access those resources
- Discussing various instructional techniques
- Providing information on how to develop at home activities



Why is teacher training important?



Adequate training and preparation gives educators a comprehensive understanding of the:

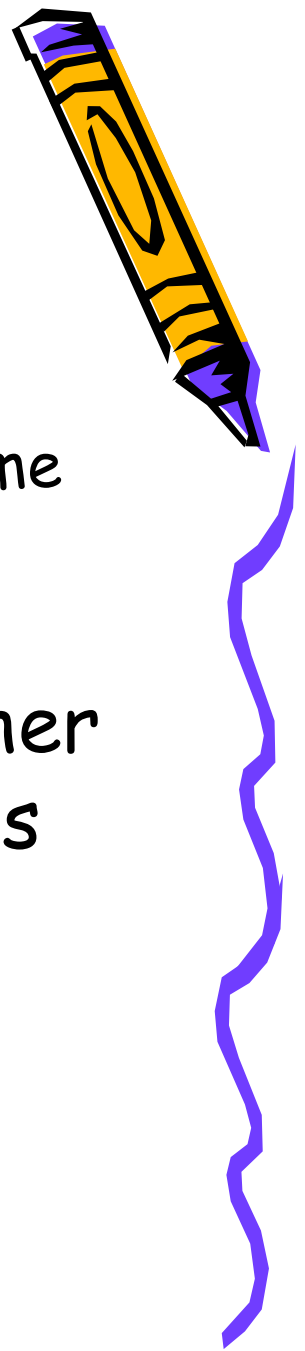
- Availability of additional student resources
- How to access to those resources
- Effective instructional techniques to use in the classroom



Why is teacher training important? (cont.)

- The knowledge and ability to develop at home activities for students

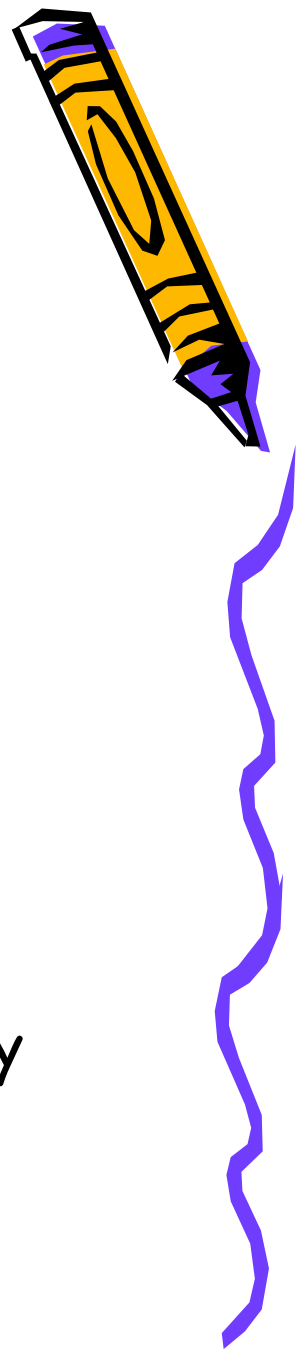
Teachers who are prepared have a higher success rate when educating students with disabilities (DePauw, 1994)



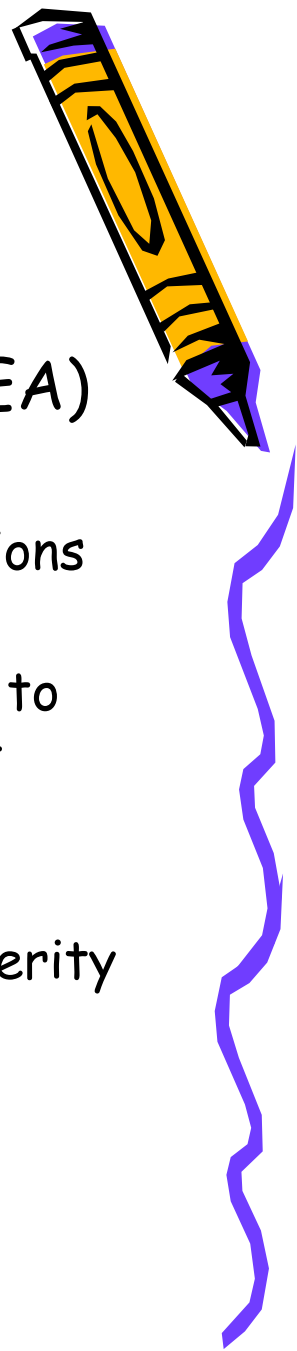
Background Information

Before 1970 disabled students were educated;

- by special education teachers with specific training
- in an environment of other students with disabilities
- were separated from the general education population for the majority of the school day
(Hass, 1993)



Background Information



Since 1975;

- The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) was passed which;
 - Required costly changes for educational institutions nationwide
 - Began a movement for students with disabilities to be educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE)
 - The LRE could possibly be in general education classrooms but was limited depending on the severity of the students disability
 - Education would occur in a classroom with other students who did not have disabilities; Inclusive classrooms (Fischer, Schimmel & Stellman, 2007)



Background Information

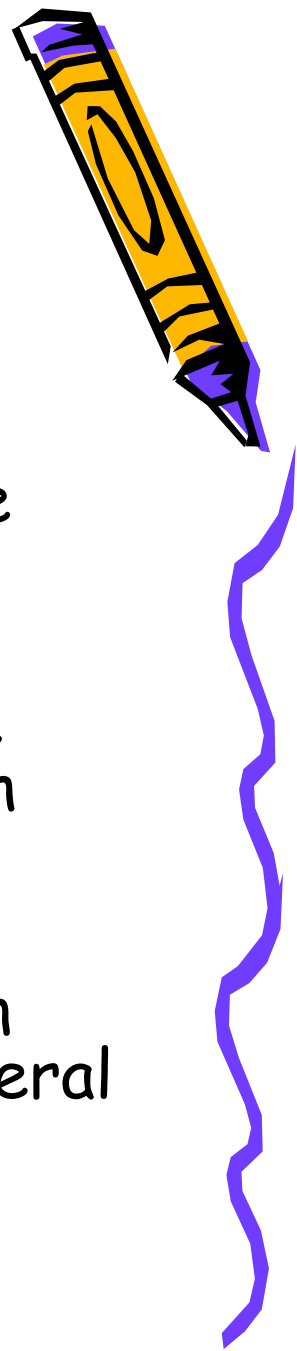
Inclusive classroom environments;

- Can be the least restrictive environment (LRE) for students with disabilities
- Is dependant on the severity of the students disability
- Can give students with disabilities a chance to socially and academically learn and grow among their peers
- Can have a positive effect on the educational experience for students with disabilities



Important Factors to Consider when Placing a Student with Disabilities

- The classroom teacher and the general education classroom environment should be researched prior to student placement
- Research done in advance can minimize the adverse consequences for the student with disabilities
- Some important variables to consider when researching a classroom teacher and a general education classroom are as follows:



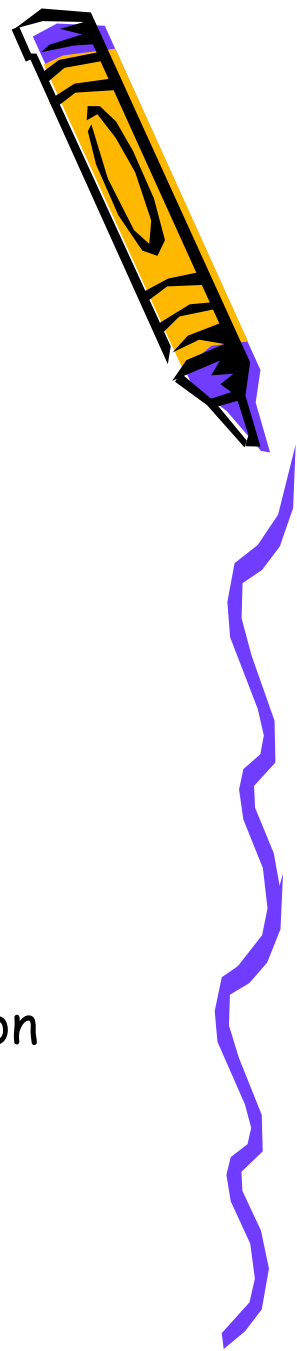
Important Factors (cont.)

General Education Teacher

- Overall knowledge of child's disability
- Familiarity and acceptance of the inclusion philosophy
- Experience teaching in an inclusive setting
(Boutot, 2007)

General Education Classroom

- Shows signs of routine and structure
- Small class size
- Environment has time for one-on-one interaction
(Meier, 1995)



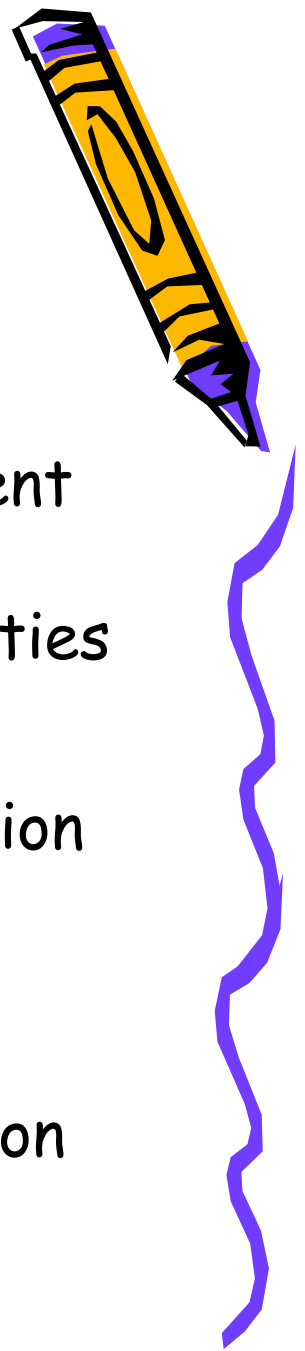
Available Resources

Resources are available for:

- The student with disabilities
- The parents and or families of the student with disabilities
- The teacher of the student with disabilities

These resources can:

- Aid the parties involved with the transition into the inclusive classroom
- Academically assist students with their work
- Aid teachers in differentiating instruction and assignments



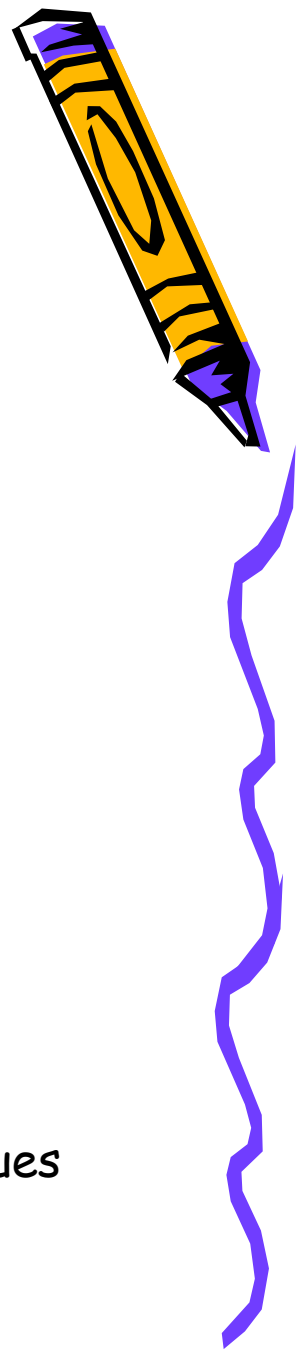
Resources for Teachers

School Staff:

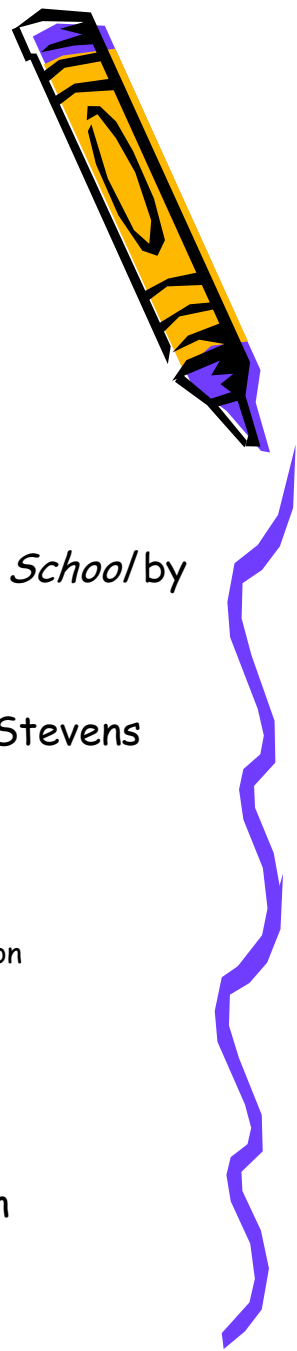
- Administrators
- Colleagues
- special education teachers
- resources teachers
- speech therapist
- occupational therapist
- physical therapist

Staff can be used for:

- Consultations
- Development of individual education program (IEP)
- Development of appropriate curriculum
- Implementation of appropriate instructional techniques



Resources for Teachers (cont)

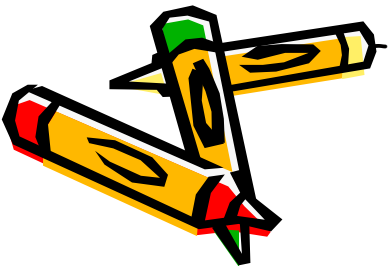


Books

- *Exceptional Learners* by Hallahan & Kauffman
- *The Developing Person* by Berger
- *Teachers and The Law* by Fischer, Schimmel & Stellman
- *No Easy Answers : The Learning Disabled Child at Home and at School* by Smith
- *Learning Disabilities A to Z* by Corinne Smith and Lisa Strick
- *Classroom Success for the LD And ADHD Child* by Suzanne H. Stevens

Websites

- <http://www.schwablearning.org/>
 - Contains information, activities ideas and instructional ideas for special education
- http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_home.htm
 - Contains state specific information about special education
- <http://www.nichcy.org/>
 - National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
- <http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/edpicks.jhtml?src=ln>
 - US Department of Education



Resources for Students

School Staff (administrators, teachers, special educators) should be available to discuss any relevant matters of the inclusion process with the student

Additional educational services can be utilized once the child is tested for a specific learning deficiency.

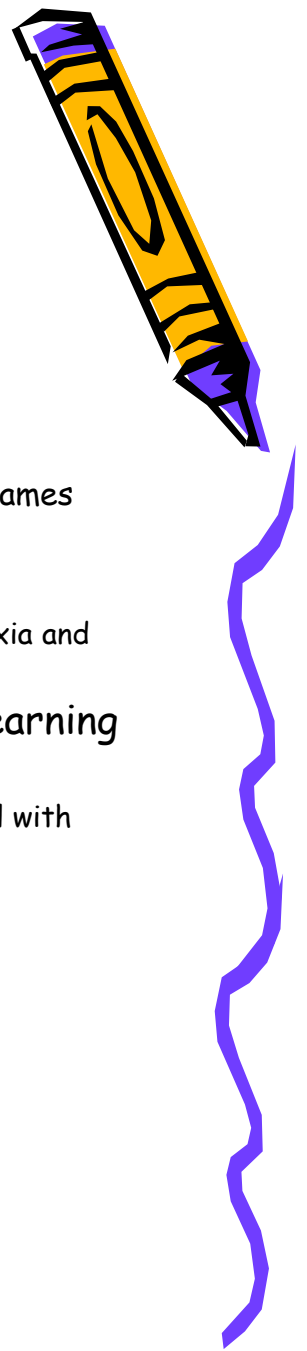
- Some of the available school resources included;
 - speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, as well as assistance in fundamental subjects like reading, math, science and social studies

Books

- *The Don't-Give-Up Kid and Learning Differences* By Jeanne M. A.Gehret
- *Hank Zipzer, World's Greatest Under-Achiever* By Henry Winkler
- *All Kinds of Minds* By Mel Levine
- *Keeping a Head in School* By Mel Levine
- *The Survival Guide for Kids With LD: Learning Differences* by Gary L. Fisher
- *Whoa, Wiggle-Worm: A Little Lemon Book about an Overly Active Child* by Betsy B. Lee
- *Many Ways to Learn: Young People's Guide to Learning Disabilities* by Judith M. Stern, Uzi Ben-Ami, Michael Chesworth
- *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco
- *Leo the Late Bloomer* by Robert Kraus



Resources for Students (cont.)



Websites

- <http://www.sparktop.org>
 - Created by Schwab Learning, helps students with disabilities by utilizing games and fun activities to teach
- <http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=529>
 - A male student's autobiography, dealing with issues such as growing up with dyslexia and learning disabilities
- http://www.kidshealth.org/teen/diseases_conditions/learning/learning_disabilities.html
 - Contains educational information about learning disabilities, as well as how to deal with them

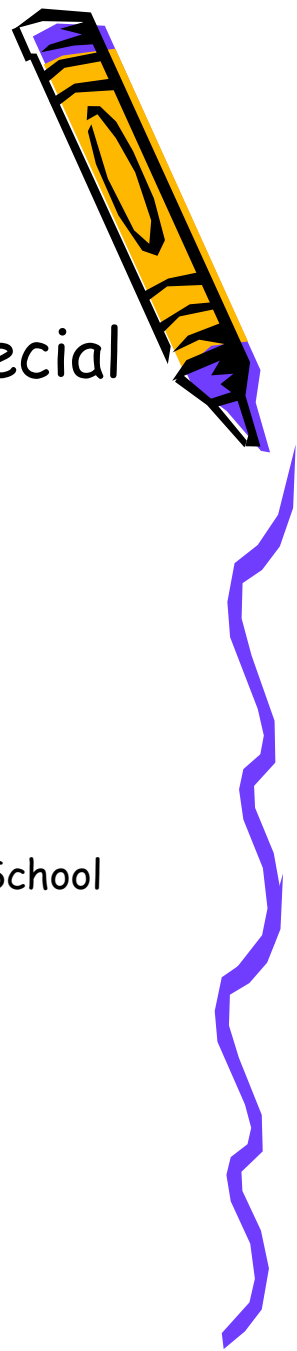


Resources for Parents

School Staff (administrators, teachers, special education staff etc.) can be utilized for questions, comments or concerns

Books

- Learning Outside The Lines by Jonathan Mooney and David Cole
- Teaching Kids to Read for Dummies by Tracey Wood
- No Easy Answers : The Learning Disabled Child at Home and at School by Sally L. Smith
- Learning Disabilities A to Z by Corinne Smith and Lisa Strick



Resources for Parents (cont)



Websites

- <http://www.wrightslaw.com/info/iep.index.htm>
 - Provides information about the laws in place for special education
- <http://www.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>
 - Outlines an individual education program (IEP) process
- <http://www.nclld.org/>
 - A good resource for parents is the National Center for Learning Disabilities
- <http://www.schwablearning.org/articles.asp?r=291>
 - Helps parents understand their child's disability and ways to help
- http://www.cde.state.co.us/index_home.htm
 - Colorado Department of Education website contains specific information about laws, regulations and additional services that are available for special education students within the state of Colorado



Instructional Techniques for the Inclusive Classroom



General techniques:

- Differentiation (used for instruction, class work and home work) (Hallahan, & Kauffman, 2006)
- Accommodations and Modifications (used for assessments; see appendix A)
- Theme Grouping (Wilder, 2001)
- Use of magazines (Publishers Group, 2002)
- Promote social acceptance among students (Boutot, 2007)
- Develop an IEP

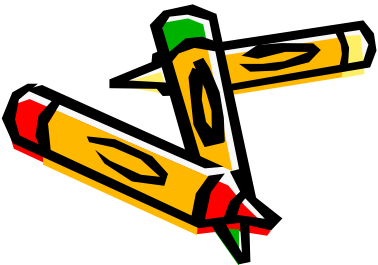


Students with Learning Disabilities



Classroom techniques:

- Allow the student to work in partnership with a peer he/she feels comfortable with. Slowly add peers to the increase the size of the group.
- Do not label the student by calling them irresponsible, or telling them they are always tardy.
- Ask questions in a clarifying manner, then have the students with learning disabilities describe his or her understanding of the questions
- Provide and teach memory associations (mnemonic strategies)
- Frequently verbalize what is being written on the chalkboard
- Have more complex lessons recorded and available to the students with learning disabilities



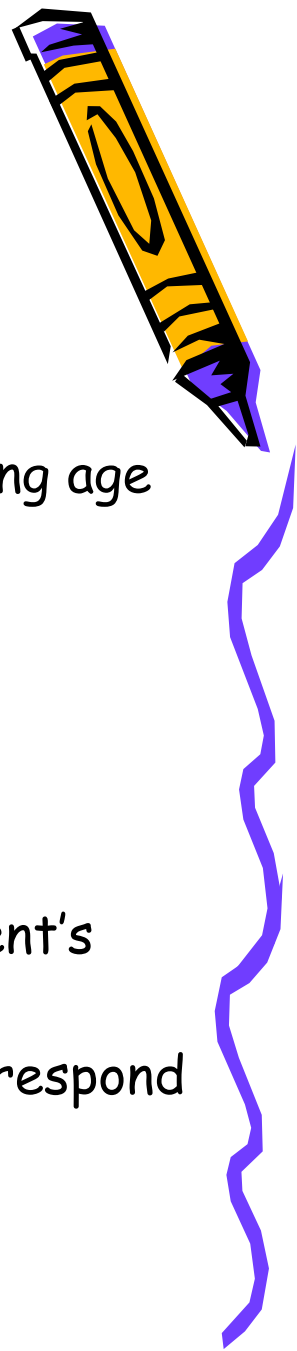
(National Center for Learning Disabilities, 2008)

Students with Autism

Classroom techniques:

- Functional Academics
- Social skills which are appropriate for the learning age
- Peer play skills
- Useful and applicable daily living cognitive skills
- Socially appropriate behavior
- Spontaneous communication
- Create schedules and routines and expectations
- Utilize classroom interpreters to strength student's social interpreting
- Demonstrate for students how to appropriately respond to social cues

(Autism Society of America, 2000)



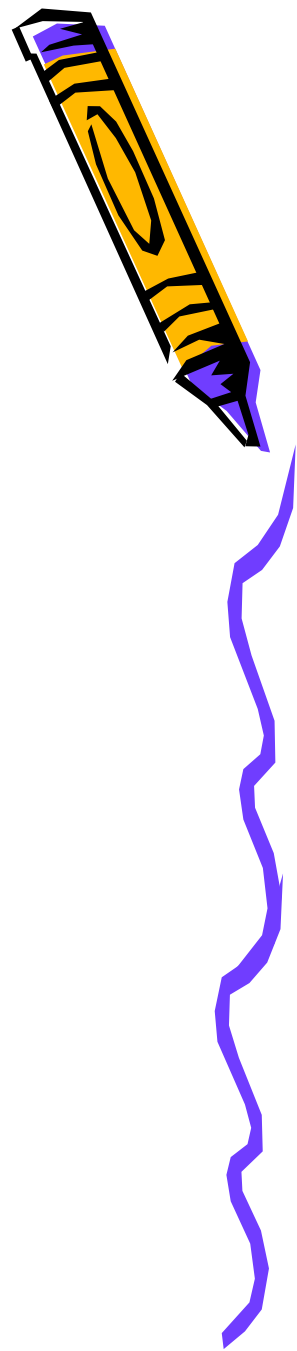
Students with Mental Retardation

Classroom Strategies

- Functional Academics
- Systematic Instruction
- Constant Time Delay
- Progressive Time Delay
- Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA)
- Positive Behavior Support (PBS)

(Hallahan & Kauffman, 2006)

(United States National Library of Medicine, 2007)

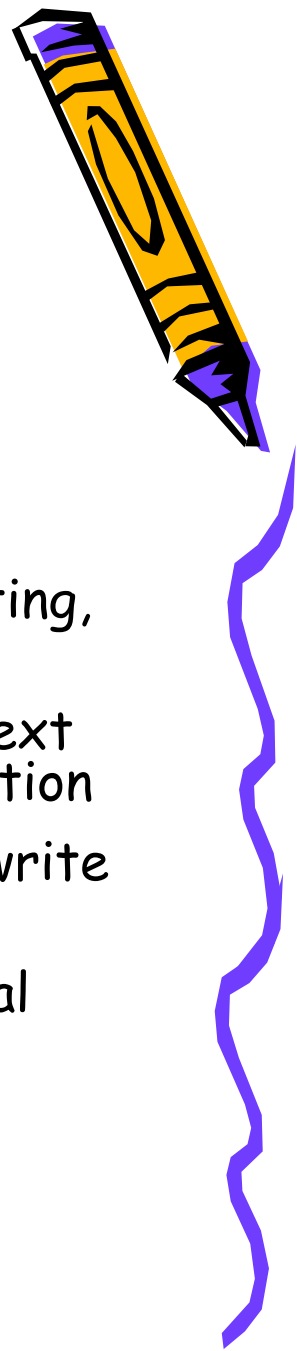


Students with Physical Disabilities

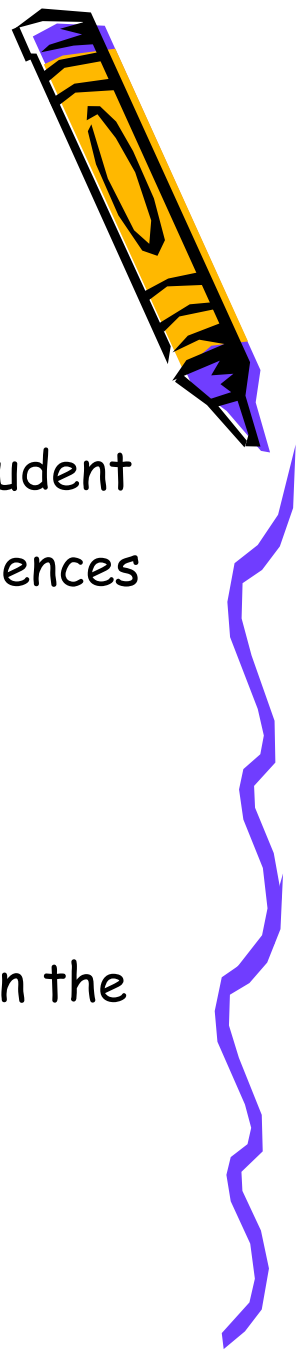
Classroom Techniques:

- Encourage students to be self-sufficient
- Teach vocational skills
- Teach gross motor function such as head rolling, sitting, standing
- Teach Fine motor skills should be taught in the context of daily lessons that involve self help and communication
- Make modifications such as allowing the student to write with their foot or mouth
- develop communication between, school, home medical personal and special education teachers

(Venn, 1989)



Students with Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

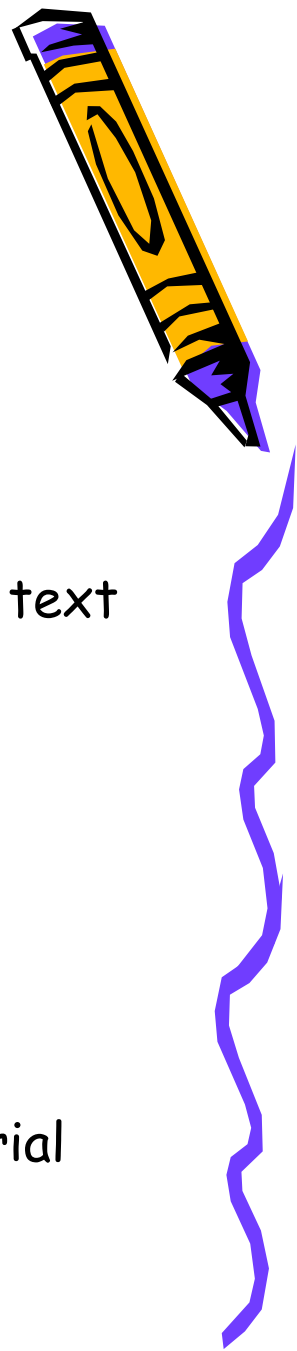


Classroom techniques:

- Quick reinforcement positively reinforces the student
- Have clearly defined classroom rules and consequences for undesirable behavior
- Develop routines and procedures to minimize the appearance of teacher control
- Create a behavior contract
- Use relaxation techniques to manage stress within the room
- Utilize group work to encourage positive peer interactions



Students with Visual Impairment



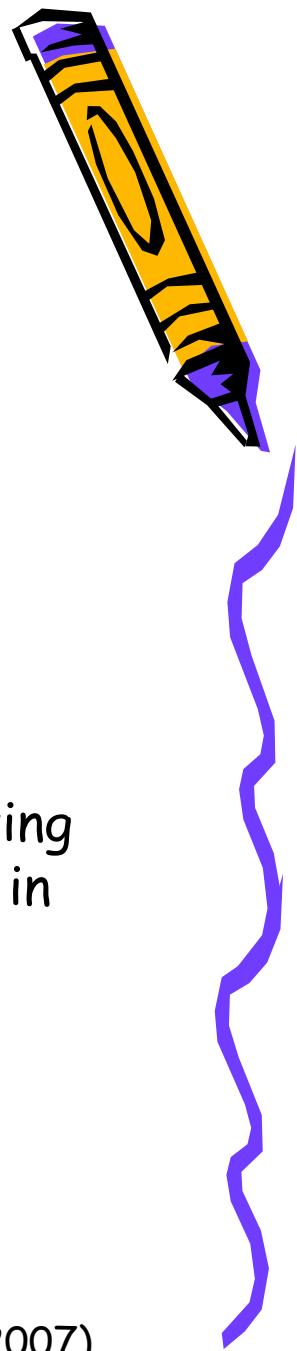
Classroom techniques

- use of 3 dimensional objects as opposed to drawing representations
- encourage the use of Braille, books on tape or large text resources
- offer magnifying accessories
- utilize reading buddies
- offer slope top desks
- minimize room re-organization
- always use verbal instruction along with visual material

(Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), 2008)



Students with Hearing Impairment



Classroom technique:

- Have adequate lighting available in the classroom
- Intensive Instruction
- Specific Intervention
- Use Braille resources in the classroom
- Place students with hearing aids away from distracting environments such as doors, windows or block areas in the classroom
- Auditory-Verbal approach
- Auditory-Oral approach



(National Association of the Deaf, 2007)

(National Institute on Deafness and other Communication Disorders, 2007).

Development of at home activities



At home activities:

- Increases family involvement
- Reinforces students daily learning at home

Resources to develop at home activities:

- *Bonding While Learning: Activities to Grow Your Relationship While Preparing for Reading Success* by Gary Kosman and Grace Chiu
- *What Happens Next?* By Laura Dwight and Cheryl Christian
- www.edhelper.com

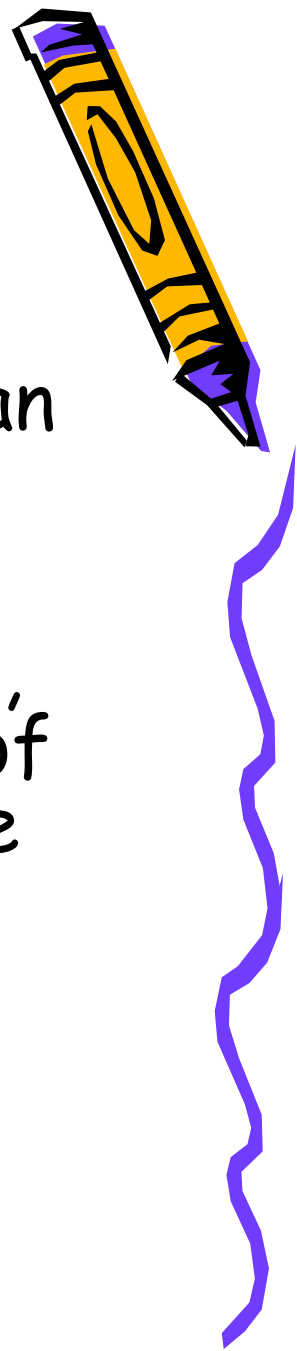
At home activities are critical to the academic success of students with disabilities



Conclusion

The importance of teacher preparation and training is critical to the educational success of all students in an inclusive classroom.

The value of knowing available resources, teaching techniques and development of at home activities is especially valuable for the academic and social growth of students with disabilities.



Chapter 5

DISCUSSION

Teacher preparation is essential to academically and socially support the needs of all students placed in an inclusive classroom environment. This teacher in-service, which was presented in Chapter 4, outlined vital factors for educators who were teaching in an inclusive classroom. Some of the factors which were addressed in the presentation were; (a) available resources, (b) classroom techniques, and (c) ways to develop at home activities. Educators must be provided with critical information pertaining to the specifics of teaching in an inclusive classroom. Knowing this fundamental information is necessary in order to make the classroom environment successful for everyone.

Contribution of the Project

The teacher in-service presented in Chapter 4, Results, was intended to be presented as an additional training and preparation tool for educators who will be teaching in an inclusive classroom. This information needs to be delivered to educators in order to make the inclusive classroom successful for students with disabilities. The teacher in-service presented important information to the educational community; this information is needed to properly equip educators to teach in an inclusive classroom situation. Additional teacher training is extremely important for educators in order to adequately prepare them to educate all students in an inclusive classroom setting.

Without appropriate, comprehensive training, teachers cannot be expected to meet the needs of all students in an inclusive classroom, especially those students with disabilities.

Resolution of the Original Problem

The goal of this project was to supply teachers with valuable information pertaining to education of students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom; this goal was achieved successfully. The teacher in-service presentation resolved the need for additional teacher preparation and training, specifically related to the issues surrounding an inclusive classroom. Since these environments educate students with disabilities together with their peers, who do not have disabilities, it is critical to provide teachers with additional training so that all the academic and social needs of the students are met and/or exceeded. Proper teacher training and preparation are necessary for the successful education of students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom.

Limitations to the Project

There were some limitations associated with this teacher in-service presentation. There was an abundant amount of information to cover, in relation to teaching techniques connected with each specific disability. The presentation could have been segmented into several teacher in-services, so that more specific information could be addressed with the training. The in-service could have been more specifically directed toward one type of learning disability an educator might encounter in the inclusive classroom. That way the presentation would be more focused on specific resources, teaching techniques and at home activities for a certain disability; as opposed to a broader range of accessible resources, teaching techniques and development of at home activities.

Recommendations for Future Research and Study

Future research should be focused on developing segmented, disability-specific in-service presentations that could be utilized as additional resources for educators. These additional presentations could be developed into a longer, more detailed in-service program. They could also be used to provide specific information to educators experiencing difficulty maintaining an inclusive classroom.

Given the wealth of information available on teaching students with disabilities, focused research and information on all commonly encountered disabilities would be a useful tool set for educators. This information should include classroom management techniques, adaptable teaching methods, learning limitations, and locations to find additional information. This information should be in a format that is readily available and easily disseminated to educators.

Assessment, Feedback and/or Changes

The power point presentation feedback survey (see Appendix B) was handed out to eight educators, including; novice teachers, experienced teachers, and administrators. Based on the results from the feedback survey, displayed in Appendix C, the overall satisfaction with the teacher in-service was high. Many of the respondents believed that the presentation was well organized and presented in a manner which captured the audiences' attention. After reviewing the data from questions 4 and 5 of the power point presentation feedback survey it was clear that the respondents felt that slide 12, which addressed resources for teachers, was one of the most valuable slides. Respondents also felt that slides 13 (resources for students), 14 (resources for students), 16 (resources for

parents) and 18 (teaching techniques for students with learning disabilities) were beneficial to them personally. Educators who reviewed the PowerPoint presentation felt that slides 6 and 7, which addressed information about IDEA and the definition of an inclusive classroom, covered redundant material which teachers should already be familiar with. Instead, teachers would have rather seen more detailed information relating to specific disabilities, more graphics and some case study examples within the presentation.

Project Summary

Students with disabilities, who are placed in an inclusive classroom should, have the chance to socially grow and develop among their peers, while building social relationships with one another. It is imperative that teachers receive additional training and preparation related to the inclusive classroom environment in order to ensure the academic success of all students in that class, specifically students with disabilities.

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APPENDIX A

Accommodations and Modifications for Assessments

Accommodations

- Offer testing material in Braille
- Allow students to respond orally to tests or assessments
- Offer scribes to students who present their answers orally
- Supply larger text testing material
- Have tests or assessments presented orally
- Have head phones available for students
- Offer assessment material in segments over a week period
- Use multiple editions of assessment material
- Read directions or instructions orally,
- Create a document with instructions written instead of orally presented
- Allow students to write answers on computers or other word processors
- Allow students to point out answers for assessments

Modifications

- Include built in breaks to testing brackets
- Allow students to be assessed in a various locations, other than the classroom
- Offer students a flexible testing schedule
- Decrease the amount of assessment questions
- Offer alternatives to paper based assessments such as oral presentations
- Utilize information used by students during large group discussions as an alternative assessments
- Underline key points in testing directions; or use verbal directions
- Have visual magnification tools accessible for students
- Offer a variety of testing components on a given assessment such as; fill in the blank, matching and short answer/essay
- Present multiple examples on an Assessment

APPENDIX B

Power Point Presentation Feedback Survey

Using a 1-5 rating scale, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent; please rate questions 1-3

1. Was the presentation easy to understand?
2. Was it presented in an organized manner?
3. Did the presentation grasp the audience's attention?

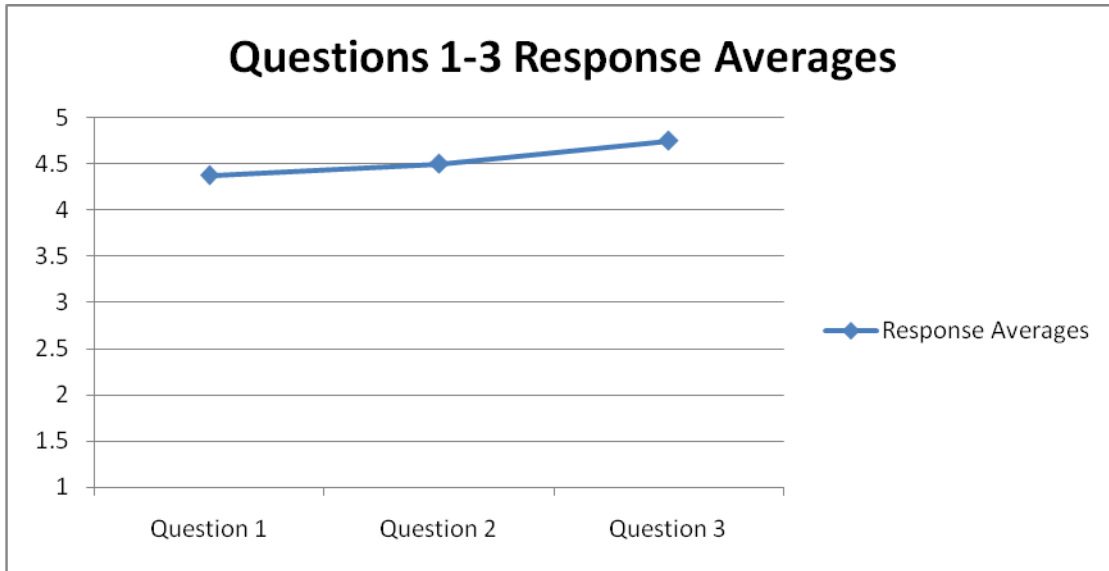
Recalling the power point slides 2 through 26, please answer questions 4 and 5

4. What slides did you find the most valuable?
5. What slides did you feel were not helpful?
6. What information would you like to have seen addressed in the presentation?
7. Please list any other suggestions or changes you would like the author to know about below.

Thank you for your time and feedback

APPENDIX C

Graph of Feedback Survey



Question 4:

What slides did you find the most valuable?

Slide Numbers	Votes
12	3
13	1
14	1
16	1
18	2

Question 5:

What slides did you feel were not helpful?

Slide Numbers	Votes
6	3
7	2
11	2
13	1