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Chapter 6
From Integration to Inclusion: The Canadian Experience

Bruce Uditsky

In the inclusive classroom the student with a significant disability, regardless of the degree or nature of that disability, is a welcomed and valued member. The student is: taught by the regular classroom teacher (who is supported as needed); follows the regular curriculum (with modification and adaptation); makes friends; and contributes to the learning of the entire class. In the inclusive neighbourhood school the student with a disability participates in all aspects of school life according to her interests and moves year to year with her peers from kindergarten through high school. In the inclusive community the child with a disability participates in the life of the community, has the possibility of a part-time job in the latter years of high school, and considers the opportunity of continuing her education at college/university or the pursuit of a career. While this is not near the reality for the vast majority of children with a disability in Canada, it is a reality for a few and a vision for many. From the dreams of many and the reality of a few a movement grows.

From Exclusion to Integration

Historical Context

A brief historical synopsis is necessary to frame the context for a critical appraisal of integration and in response to develop the concept of inclusive schooling. This analysis, while limited in scope, will serve to illustrate several themes:

1 the struggle for inclusion as a reflection of personal and cultural values not educational science;
2 parents of students with disabilities as the principal leaders and agents of change;
3 educators as allies in the process of change; and
4 inclusive schooling practices as a distinctly different process from integrated schooling.

Any complete historical overview would require an analysis of political, social and cultural values as they affected schooling organization and practices. While this is beyond the scope of this chapter, the reader must nevertheless be cognizant of these factors. For example, to the degree that a culture negates the value of persons with a disability, the social institutions within that culture will reflect those values in its practices and policies (Wolfensberger, 1989). Schools are one of those social institutions.

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The move to educate students with significant disabilities in Canadian communities began towards the last half of this century, largely as a result of parental action (NIMR, 1981). Increasing numbers of parents, mostly acting individually, were keeping their children at home, beginning to resist the counsel of professionals to institutionalize. Institutionalization had been proffered, however illogically, as providing greater benefit to children and families than living at home. The family would be relieved of their burden, and the child would be placed under the supervision of professional care and expertise. This rejection of professional advice and the status quo reflected a deepening, although not always easily articulated, perspective of parents—a child with a disability was first and foremost a child (Pivato, 1984). For the child, family and the presence of a home were necessary to well-being. This fundamental difference in world-views between the parents and the professionals with their systems characterizes even now the struggle for inclusion (Jory, 1991). The rationales for segregation are not much different from the rationales in support of institutionalization. The rationales in support of inclusive schooling are directly related to the rationales in support of growing up as a member of a family (Steinbach, 1991).

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The Parent Movement

Parents at first wondered if they were alone and began to seek each other out, sometimes, for example, by placing advertisements in local newspapers. As contacts increased, parents began to gather out of common interests and experiences. This eventually led to the development of community living and advocacy organizations on local, provincial and national levels (Neufeld, 1984). One commonality was a belief that their children could benefit from an education; that they could learn and should be in school. Parents often saw some progress from their efforts at home, and, more fundamentally, they believed their children were worth the effort. They were, however, the parents of children who had been deemed by the social authorities (educators, physicians, psychologists) to be ineducable or incapable of benefitting from an education, possibly trainable. When they approached their community school systems, they were naturally rejected (NIMR, 1981; Neufeld, 1984).

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Parents were viewed as unrealistic, and failing to cope or adjust to their child's limitations. Educators argued that they did not have the facilities, resources or expertise (except the expertise that children with significant disabilities did not belong in school). The limited resources needed to be spent on those who would benefit the most, and students with significant disabilities would disrupt the education of others.[1] The arguments against further integration have literally not changed in fifty years, regardless of the degree of access to schools acquired by students with significant disabilities (Byfield, 1991; Stolee, 1992; Elliott, 1992). This suggests that the resistance to the inclusion of students with disabilities may have deeper roots than the traditional arguments appear to represent. These roots lie in the long-term systematic devaluation of persons with a disability. This serves to explain why the struggle continues and repeats itself even today (McCallum, 1991).

There were initially no legal requirements compelling public schools to serve students with significant disabilities. In some instances a school system was legally entitled

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temporarily to exclude a student with 'special needs' until such time as that student's needs could be accommodated. Temporary exclusion was forever in too many school jurisdictions. There was no universal right to education, at least none that had been interpreted by school systems or courts (Gall, 1984). In Canada schooling is a provincial jurisdiction exclusively.

Segregated Schools

Just as parents had resisted the advice to institutionalize, they now resisted the expertise that negated the potential of their sons and daughters. As a consequence of being rejected, but sustaining a belief in the educability of their children, many parents and parent organizations, with the help of community allies, started their own schools (NIMR, 1981). Often with little money, donated space and untrained volunteers, the disabled could learn. Within and between schools students were categorized on the basis of disability. Accordingly, curricula and instructional strategies were developed. These schools did not transcend the categorization and separation according to degree of disability that characterized education in general. The schools, while challenging educational systems on the issue of educability, at the same time engaged in practices that would contribute to future segregated schooling in general.

Over time the schools grew, became formalized and legitimized—subject to government regulations (e.g., teacher qualifications, reviews, approved curricula) and recipients of government funds. Parents had proved their point and more. Some schools would become the responsibility of public systems; some public systems would establish their own segregated systems; and a few schools remained under the auspices of parent/community organizations (NIMR, 1981). This evolution took place over approximately twenty-five to thirty years. The demonstration of educational benefit had been coupled to segregation by default. Segregation, an artifact of a rejecting history, not of educational knowledge (Stainback, Stainback and Bunch, 1989), had been elevated to a higher order good.

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Segregated Classrooms

In the 1970s another movement began (Gall, 1984; Stainback, Stainback and Bunch, 1989). New generations of parents were developing their own ideas, concepts which were extensions of what parents before them had dreamed. Like so many past reformers, the radical parents of old became the protectors of the status quo—the segregated school (NIMR, 1981; Neufeld, 1984). Parents of younger children, having had the way partially paved by the previous generation's struggles, perceived their son or daughter as being entitled not only to an education, but also to the delivery of that education in regular schools under the auspices of the public school systems. Parents argued that if their children could learn in a classroom, you could put the classroom anywhere, and logically the best place was in a regular school. They wanted to collaborate in their child's education, not be responsible for the continued management of schools.

By being housed in a regular school, students could be better distributed throughout the community (shorter bus rides). In a regular school there would be an opportunity to be

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with non-handicapped peers; there would be access to facilities and resources. Integration at this point, for students with significant disabilities, was defined as being in a segregated classroom in a regular school. Resistance to this form of integration, which came from both public schools and private segregated schools, was based on the same arguments as stated previously. However, a number of factors combined to overcome this resistance in addition to the advocacy of parents.

In many urban centres the 1980s would see changing demographics resulting in many public schools in different communities across the country finding themselves with empty classrooms which threatened the viability of a community school. Filling those empty classrooms could keep a community school open. Students with a significant disability were now entitled to government funds and were required to be taught by certificated teachers (members of the teacher unions). Further, public systems were under pressure to fund the education of students with significant disabilities, as students resident in their district. Segregated schools were increasingly expensive to operate. By accepting students previously excluded, monies would remain within the system (some schools would eventually have a quarter or more of their school population labelled and organized around special classes). What is of issue here is that other than child-centred educational principles were at play. Integration founded on these somewhat mercenary factors would be vulnerable to poor practice and quality.

Schools had been providing an education to many students with mild and moderate disabilities, some integrated in regular classrooms and many in segregated classrooms (Gall, 1984). Criticisms of segregated classrooms for those with mild disabilities were forthcoming within the education system. For students with significant disabilities the arguments were about extending the system's responsibility, not about changing the model of education. An increased number of provinces had mandatory legislation (implemented to greatly varying degrees) that supported the education of all children (Gall, 1984; Stainback, Stainback and Bunch, 1989). The Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which supported equality for persons with disabilities, was reflective of changing community attitudes (Porter and Richler, 1991). Nonetheless, as late as 1987 some jurisdictions still tried to declare students as ineducable (Sobsey, 1987).

Most school systems opened segregated classrooms without addressing or confronting their historical practices and assumptions. A student could travel on a different bus, attend for a shorter day, have an entirely different curriculum, be subjected to aversive procedures, be housed in a separate wing or area of the school, perhaps have a different principal than the one located at the school, have no contact with any non-disabled peers, be located at a school that is age-in-appropriate and still be considered as integrated (Knoll and Meyer, 1986). This was the integration that many students with significant disabilities were to experience and that many continue to experience—a practice consistent with the least restrictive placement models, models which legitimized institutionalization, segregation and categorization. Any model based on least restrictive options applied in a context of devaluation would result in the most restrictive options (Taylor, 1988). It was a Kafkaesque system that parents were expected to understand.

In some parts of the country legislation was improved to give students a right to education; however, this did not presume a right to a fully integrated education. In fact some legislation which assured a right to education entrenched segregated classes as the

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principal means of delivering education (Bill 82, 1980). Many regulatory policies supported and required special classroom placements, to meet standards and receive funding. Coupled with the improved legislation were more formal appeal processes. While a step in the right direction, in some provincial jurisdictions parents chose one of the three panel members, while the school system chose the remaining two (the system never loses). In other provinces the local school board determined the appeal process, and parents might have to face the entire board in opposition to the board's own administration. These appeal processes were at best a formal beginning recognition of the parental right to appeal.

Some systems did not provide segregated classrooms for students with significant disabilities but preferred to contract out this service. Canada has two public school systems: Catholic and non-denominational. Those systems which were smaller and had fewer resources would sometimes send their students with significant disabilities to the classrooms operated by the other public system. In the long term this would be a positive advantage for some of the dispersing systems as they would have less of a segregated system to dismantle. This in itself did not prevent other of these same systems from being resistant to integration even today.

Partial Integration

One of the premises governing the move to include students with significant disabilities in regular schools was the opportunity for contact with non-handicapped peers (Brown *et al.*, 1989). In many instances this was virtually non-existent or so minimal as to be meaningless. One response to this situation was partial integration (Schnorr, 1990). A variety of models evolved from the segregated classroom and its philosophical underpinnings. Individual students might be integrated for various classes from the segregated class or resource room (or some other empty room to which they had been assigned). They might go from their segregated setting to a regular class, return to the segregated class and repeat the process, depending on when and where they were being integrated. For some students this might be an extensive process and for others very limited. In-class support might be provided by a teacher, peers and/or aides. The process of deciding which class to integrate might be based, depending on the school system, on student preference, teacher preference, teacher receptivity, size of the receiving class and/or non-academic nature of the receiving class. Other partial integration models included being individually integrated one day a week (possibly at a different school), integrated mornings or afternoons; half-time in kindergarten and another grade (some students spent years in kindergarten). While being partially integrated, students could still be under the responsibility of the special education teacher. Other models included reverse integration, where a small number of neighbourhood non-disabled students would be placed with a group of disabled students (congregated from different neighbourhoods), often with a higher ratio of students with a disability to students without a disability. In other models students with a disability would be placed in pairs in regular classrooms to share support resources. All of these variations and more continue to exist.

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Integration

As before, each step forward, while initially holding much promise, quickly demonstrated the limits of the reform. Many parents and schools were satisfied with the limits of partial integration, assuming that this was as far as things could progress. Others developed a different vision. The early 1980s would bring the next wave of reform-minded parents wanting a more individualized and personal integration—a more complete integration where the student would be a fulltime member, as much as possible, in the regular classroom at their neighbourhood school (Stainback, Stainback and Bunch, 1989; Lipsky and Gartner, 1989). Support would be provided within the regular classroom as needed. The student would also participate in regular classroom and school activities as much as possible. Teachers and others would support the possible development of friendships between students with and without disabilities. At those times when a student could not remain in the regular class or it did not make sense to be in the class, the student would have individualized support to engage in an alternative learning activity (Forest and Lusthaus, 1989).

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The movement for integration grew stronger and more active. The Canadian Association for Community Living and its provincial member associations made integrated schooling a primary goal (Porter and Richler, 1991). Integrated education workshops were offered at national and local levels featuring prominent educators and parents. National and provincial newsletters and journals published articles on the benefits of integration, often relating personal stories of schools and parents. University summer workshops and courses were offered on community and school integration. In a few provinces Integration Action Associations sprang up as singularly focused advocacy groups. Both Integration Action and Community Living organizations were joined by educators supportive of integration. Videotapes were produced promoting and describing integration. In almost every province there were positive examples of schools and/or school systems that had made a commitment to integration. Some were offering parents choices, and others were dismantling their segregated classrooms. Some provided the option of neighbourhood schooling; some moved gradually and some moved quickly. Many began providing integration at the elementary years and others at any year. Across the country where integration in the regular classroom was denied, parents challenged the system. These challenges and the outcomes are described in a subsequent section.

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As noted, provincial legislation and educational policies had gradually improved during the preceding decades. The right to education was more firmly established along with appeal procedures regarding special education placements (McCallum, 1991). Legislation in some parts of the country more clearly supported integration, although patents would still have to resort to the courts (McCallum, 1991). A number of jurisdictions instituted policies supporting neighbourhood schooling and individual integration of students. Many jurisdictions required individual education plans to be developed with parental input. Integration, often in all its varied manifestations, was increasingly considered by government regulation as a legitimate option where appropriate, sometimes the preferred option (although legislation in most instances still did not guarantee a right to a fully integrated education). Provincial rights legislations provided protection against discrimination for persons with a disability, as did the

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Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (Porter and Richler, 1991). Yet in spite of the examples at systems and individual school levels and the improved legislation, the vast majority of students with significant disabilities remained segregated. Established cultures and social institutions (e.g., schools systems and teacher organizations) do not abandon their values and rituals easily. Most remained actively opposed or passively resistant.

Some school systems claimed that their partial integration models within designated sites were equivalent to full integration. Others took the process a little further by dispersing the students across existing regular classrooms. This could be done where there was a limited number of students to begin with and they happened to be of the right ages to facilitate appropriate dispersal. This was not, however, neighbourhood schooling. It was a model rooted in assessment, placement and categorization. The designated site model typically had an overrepresentation of students with a disability. Further complete participation in the life of the school was difficult, especially after school, given travel needs. Friendship possibilities outside school were inhibited as the students with disabilities did not come from the neighbourhood.

Integration in the regular classroom clearly had positive results (Dreimanis *et al.*, 1990). There were no negative effects on the students without disabilities and potentially even some positive effects (e.g., increased knowledge of individualized accommodation). Teachers and peers were more accepting in practice than had been anticipated. Students with disabilities learned as much or more, being integrated. There were reported diminishments in behavioural difficulties, and peers proved to be effective teachers. Some friendships did develop. Students without disabilities improved their attitudes and could identify positive gains from integration. While integration in the regular classroom was generally positive, simple physical placement in a traditional classroom had some serious shortcomings.

Too often the process of placing a student with significant disabilities in the regular classroom was inexorably linked to all the trappings of segregated special education. Many students found themselves placed in desks that were in various ways separated from the mainstream—to the back, to the side, side-by-side with the teacher's desk or the aide's, behind a barrier or cubicle to minimize distractions. Even on an individual basis within a regular classroom students would be physically separated as a prelude to their social separation. Friendships did not develop to the degree anticipated simply as a result of physical presence. One of the assumed main facilitation methods to integration, the classroom aide, often became an unintentional human barrier (York *et al.,* 1990). In other instances aides became the student's primary teacher. In some schools a student could be full-time in a regular classroom and still be the responsibility of a special education teacher. Curricula would follow the same individual education plan (IEP) as in the segregated classroom. Even following the same IEP process was a way of indicating to all involved that this student was different. Peers who were also seen as possibly the best facilitators of learning and integration were sometimes turned into mini-aides or social workers (Brown and Holvoet, 1982; Kohl *et al.,* 1983). Their role was as helper, not friend. Integrated students would be pulled out for therapy or grouped for instruction. The promise of integration in regular classrooms was not materializing sufficiently for all students. The process of integration clearly needed to be rethought.

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Beyond Integration to Inclusion

The Nature of the Struggle

Before the concept of inclusion is described, there is one other developmental factor that requires review. As history does not develop linearly, nor did inclusive schooling. The parent struggles of the 1980s and early 1990s actually transcend the movement from integration to inclusion. These battles differed qualitatively from those of previous decades. For one, they were far more personalized, formal, public and precedent-setting (Batten, 1988; McCallum, 1991). For another, during the course of the struggle the objectives changed. Initially parents' efforts were directed at getting their child integrated in the regular classroom in the neighbourhood school. As the practice of integration was appraised and found wanting, the goal shifted to inclusion. Integration was an end in itself. Inclusive schooling was a process.

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While the goals of the struggle shifted, the essence of the struggle remained the same: the *valued presence and participation* of a student with significant disabilities in the regular classroom. Though parents and their allies reconsidered the goals of their advocacy, systems resisted for the same reasons as always (Stainback, Stainback and Bunch, 1989). The change in focus was too subtle. From their perspective the process of including a student with a disability was not the issue; the issue was in reality not wanting students with a disability in the regular classroom and certainly not at the discretion of parents. This is a critical point. The struggle of the 1980s exposed the heart of the matter. The decision to include or exclude was entirely arbitrary and not a function of professional educational knowledge. Exposed was the fact that segregation was an artifact of historical values and in fifty years had no substantive supportive evidence (Dreimanis *et al.,* 1990). It exposed why systems resisted even when research in favour of integration was forthcoming in a relatively short time, given the much longer history of segregation. This exposure plus the results of integration as described above were the two main contributing factors in the development of inclusive schooling.

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Integration: An Arbitrary Practice

In requesting the integration of their child, parents experienced a range of responses from open hostility to open acceptance, with a fair degree of apprehension and uncertainty in between. The responses were completely arbitrary and bore no relationship to the student and any accommodations required by the student. Acceptance or rejection depended entirely on: where you lived; which public system you belonged to; and/or the principal, the senior administrator or the written or unwritten policies of the school districts that year. All the mechanisms and pseudoscientific claims of assessment and placement were rapidly called into question. Two children could live in the same community, belong to different public systems and one would be welcome and one would not. The same student rejected in one community would be accepted and welcomed at another. The same student rejected by one principal would be welcomed by another. There was no relationship to the degree of disability, the size of the school or school systems, the age of

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the student, urban or rural, well resourced or poorly resourced. Values made the difference, and the only difference.

The contrast in receptivity was striking. Across the country one could find school districts prepared and willing either to accommodate or to move to the accommodation of every student as a valued member of the regular classroom (Flynn and Kowalcyzk, 1989; Porter, 1986). Most of these systems were influenced to varying degrees by parent action as well as by individuals in key leadership positions who supported integration as a means to a quality education for all children. In some communities there might not be a school system but individual schools who would do the same. At the same time many parents would find the door to their neighbourhood school closed, if not slammed, in their face (Till, 1990).

The Struggle

Across the country individual parents and families found themselves in uncomfortable and unfamiliar roles. Some were single parents, some the parents of a child with a mild disability, others a severe disability. They came from different walks of life. Some had children entering the school system for the first time, some students were nearing the end of their schooling and had been segregated for years. Very few parents would describe themselves as radicals. They were, however, united in their commitment to their children, in their unerring belief in the equal merit of their child and the necessity that they be educated in the mainstream. They envisaged a life in the mainstream of the community, and school was one of the important avenues to this dream. These parents, sometimes very much alone initially and later with extensive supports, chose to stand in opposition to the regular education and special education empires.

Each had asked for their child to be integrated in a regular classroom in their neighbourhood school and been refused. Most, if not all, the parents had assumed that their school systems would respond in a rational and considerate dialogue. They were unprepared for the degree to which the systems would resist on every level using all the resources available to them. Besides the issue of integration school systems did not want to lose power over student placements. Placements were the domain of professional knowledge and served the vast institution of special education. Wrapped up in the struggle over integration were professional identities, territories, traditions, power and fundamental values about the role of schools in our communities.

The structure of each battle was different as provincial policies and legislation differed. Some parents found themselves in administrative appeal processes that were neither fair nor simple. It was not unusual to take a year to move through the entire process. Each step required preparation, experts, testimony, letters, documentation, hearings, meetings, lawyers, expenses, time, pain, frustration and fear. School systems in their unwarranted opposition, in their refusal even to try to accommodate the child, would pit schools and teachers against child and family. Other parents explored different options, including the courts and human rights commissions (McCallum, 1991). In some instances court cases have dragged on over five years. However, almost every struggle was won. Those students waiting for the resolution of their legal battles have all been integrated in schools that were open. Most were settled without recourse to the courts, and recently in one

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court case the parents were awarded damages (McCallum, 1991). Advocacy skills and the evidence in support of integration have developed sufficiently to enable parents to win with less and less of a struggle. Nevertheless, unless initiated by parents who are firm in their commitment, integration is not readily offered except in a few places in Canada.

Inclusive Schooling

Inclusive schooling, like integration, suffers from a lack of a coherent definition. The concept is still evolving, and what follows is an interpretation of inclusive schooling. It is quite likely that the term will grow in popularity and ambiguity, rendering it less than useful in the long term. Nevertheless, the term is very useful as a conceptual change agent.

Fundamental to the process of inclusion is a set of principles which ensures that the student with a disability is viewed as a valued and needed member of the school community in every respect. It requires an educational perspective that acknowledges the painful legacy of the past, a broad educational perspective that takes into account the total child and that best teaching practices are applicable to all students, a perspective where parents are truly seen as equal and valued partners in the educational process. These are the values and educational perspectives we almost all want and see as necessary for all children. The following are some of the key components to the practice of inclusive schooling.

Membership. When the parents and students approach their neighbourhood/ community school, they are welcomed. The student is enrolled in the appropriate year of education as is any other student. Parents are consulted on the support they feel their child will need. In the inclusive classroom the child with a disability is a fully fledged member (Forest and Lusthaus, 1989). An effort is made to provide the student with a sense of belonging. The regular classroom teacher or teachers are responsible for students' education (Stainback and Stainback, 1989). The student participates in the various roles students may be assigned (giving out supplies, monitor, peer support), goes on field trips, sits among the students, participates in intramurals, supports school teams, attends dances and participates in concerts, and has access to the same options as other students. This is not an exhaustive list but illustrates the concept of embedding the student within the normative educative pathways within the classroom and the school. The student may only be able partially to participate and may require support and adaptation to do so. In some schools a distinct effort is made to create an environment in which all students look out for one another.

Curriculum. There is one curriculum for all students. Whatever the curriculum for that year and school system, the student with a disability participates to the maximum extent possible. In some instances the student may be able to participate as any other student. Other curricular components may require modification: modifications may be simple, as in math where one might be working at a lower skill level; they may be complex, as in science where the objective might be altered from describing why something has changed to pointing to the change (of course, there may be parts of the experiment that the student with a disability could do partially and, if necessary, with assistance). Each modification is individually based, and there is no separate curriculum based on labels. What is

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functional is being as culturally literate as possible by participating in the cultural basis of the school—the curriculum. Adaptations relate to how the student's participation might be facilitated—for example, using a talking book for language arts, focusing on non-symbolic communication or augmented communication systems. Subsequently, assessment is classroom-based and curriculum-referenced, built from what it is expected the student will learn. Many teachers find this a much more rational curriculum development concept and less time-consuming than traditional lEPs. There is no role for traditional assessments and placement practices.

Teaching practices. Good teaching practices are good for all students (Thousand and Villa, 1989). For example, cooperative learning is an excellent teaching strategy and is very conducive to teaching within the inclusive classroom. The cooperative process not only results in positive learning outcomes, but demonstrates the valued role each can play in learning (Falvey *et al.,* 1989). Experiential or activity-based learning is another effective strategy applicable to all students, including students with a disability. Teaching language arts across all curricular domains and in meaningful contexts is of benefit to all students. Inclusive schooling implies the utilization of effective schooling practices. This is not to suggest that particular instructional strategies for the student with a disability should be abandoned but that they need to be supplemental rather than dominant.

Friendship. All schooling is concerned with the social relationships among students. Relationships are critical to the development of the human capacity within any person. Friends contribute to the shaping of our identity, to our personal security, to our experiences, memories and self-esteem. Friendship is a universal human need. The process of inclusion contributes to the possibility of friendships developing. In addition, inclusion requires a conscious effort to support this possibility by identifying common interests, interpreting students with disabilities, discussing friendship, encouraging collaboration and cooperation, and facilitating participation (Strully and Strully, 1989). Teachers have a lot of implicit knowledge about fostering relationships that needs to be called upon and applied more overtly at times. Relationships need to be seen as reciprocal, without students with disabilities in the perpetual role of helpee. Teachers are powerful role models and need to consider in their own life how to be open to friendships with adults with significant disabilities.

Supports. Supports need to address the needs of the teacher and the classroom, and not be exclusively attached to the student with a disability. Effective teaching supports include collaborative teaming, with parents and administrators included as members of the team (Thousand and Villa, 1990). Teaching is improved in general where teachers have an opportunity to be collaborative, share ideas and support each other directly in the classroom. Consultation models where support is readily available and comes into the classroom are necessary. Team teaching and sufficient time to prepare are assumed. Opportunities must be made for in-service courses and visits to others working on inclusion. Peer support and peer tutor strategies that respond to all students, including students with a disability, are features of supportive classrooms (Stainback and Stainback, 1989). In classrooms assistants are only employed to the degree necessary, and as supports to the entire class. Based principally on teacher judgments, supports should be ready and accessible. Sufficient support is available so that, when appropriate and necessary, the student with a disability can leave the classroom and engage in

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alternative educational experiences. The emphasis is always on maximizing education within the classroom while at the same time recognizing the challenges and limitations of our knowledge.

Conclusion

Inclusive schooling is still the exception, although examples of including students with the most severe disabilities exist in many communities, rural and urban, across Canada. A few examples of large-scale systems change exist with most efforts at the local school level. Students are making friends and exceeding expectations. Many teachers are eager to address the challenge, and there are many examples of special educators entering the regular classroom as teacher in support of inclusion. Increased sharing is occurring between special and regular educators. A greater percentage of consultation is direct and within the classroom. Inclusion, as with any other aspect of education, is far from problem-free. That is not the objective. The objective is to be in the right educational and values-based context to work on the problems. Inclusion requires effort; it requires support. Friendships and acceptance are not automatic, and when issues arise, they need to be addressed.

Inclusive education may take generations before it is properly understood or practised. Exclusion and segregation were built on centuries of devaluation. Those of us who are parents and teachers have not grown up or been immersed in a culture where inclusion and friendship with persons with a disability is an ordinary and typical life occurrence. We, with this serious long-term deficit, have the responsibility to ensure that this does not happen to our children. Our children need to develop a more inclusive understanding of community. We need to do this in our own lives as well as in our schools. Inclusive education has the potential to contribute to positive generational change, to a more caring culture (Forest, 1988). This, after all, is what we dream for our children.

Note

1 The term 'significant disability' refers to intellectual disabilities which range from moderate to profound.

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