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Junior high in-class support: a program evaluation

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JUNIOR HIGH IN-CLASS SUPPORT:

A PROGRAM EVALUATION

by
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ABSTRACT

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Junior High In-Class Support:
A Program Evaluation
May, 1999
Dr. Theodore Johnson
Educational Leadership

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of a junior high school in-class support program in meeting the educational needs of students enrolled in that program by using a school-based case study method of inquiry. Additional purposes of this study include demonstration of this intern's leadership skills by using decision-making techniques, communication skills, evaluation techniques, and organizational management techniques. Methodology used in program evaluation was a stratified proportional 5% random sampling of students enrolled in Social Studies class for the years under study. Student grades and standardized group administered achievement test results were also analyzed, as were participating teachers' perceptions of the program. Findings of this study conclude that regular education students and classified students participating in ICS benefited from this program. Suggestions for further study and implications for future practice are also discussed.

MINI-ABSTRACT

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Using a case-study method of inquiry, this study evaluated the effectiveness of a junior high school in-class support program in meeting the educational needs of students. This study has also been designed to illustrate the intern's leadership skills. Conclusions indicate both regular education students and classified students benefited from participation in this program.

Acknowledgments

This study was completed in partial fulfillment of the requirement of the Master of Arts Degree of The Graduate School at Rowan University. I thank Mrs. J. Wilson and Dr. R. Ford who supported my efforts in completing this study, and my fellow teachers who kindly listened to tales of my trials and tribulations while I gathered information to develop this thesis.

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Chapter 1

Introduction: Focus of the Study

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore the effectiveness of an established in-class support program in meeting the educational needs of students enrolled in that program by using a school-based case study method of inquiry. This study will result in a performance and recommendation report to the Director of Special Services. Additional purposes of this study are to demonstrate this intern's leadership skills by analyzing and solving problems using appropriate decision-making techniques; to demonstrate this intern's communication skills by communicating with individuals and groups in a positive manner; to demonstrate this intern's evaluation techniques by applying effective strategies for assessing school programs; and to demonstrate this intern's organizational management skills by developing procedures, which comply with local policies, state and federal rules and regulations, and contractual obligations.

Definitions

For clarity of discussion this researcher offers the following definitions of terms which will be used throughout this study. "In-class support program" is defined as "an educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e., general classroom)" (Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend, p. 18, 1989). Teaching teams which participate in this program

will be referred to as co-teaching partnerships or collaborative partnerships. These teachers share the responsibility for implementing instruction, remediation and assessment and to do this, participate in a collaborative decision-making process. Special education student or classified student refers to any student who, in accordance with federal and state policy, has been deemed as having an impairment which interferes with the learning process.

Limitations of the Study

This program review will analyze student performance and teacher perceptions of those who participated in the in-class support program for grades 6, 7, and 8 during the school years of 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99. The scope of this evaluation is to compare the theoretical structure of an in-class support program to that established within the school being studied. Care should be taken not to generalize results beyond the particular program under review as contingent factors, such as school size, student age group, and socio-economic structure of community, are not considered in this study and may vary from setting to setting.

This study is limited by changes in participating teachers which may have occurred from one school year to the other. In that case, both the current teacher and past teacher will be surveyed for input. Additionally, results of the teacher survey are limited to the perception of a particular teacher and may be influenced by a particular teacher's predisposition to sharing attitudinal information.

Time is also a limitation of this study. As this program review must be concluded prior to the beginning of March 1999, group administered standardized scores for the 1998-99 school year, Early Warning Test (EWT) scores and final grades will not have

been received at this point. Therefore, grades will be extrapolated to reveal performance level through the end of the 1998-99 school year. Furthermore, standardized and EWT scores for this same school year will not be used in the analysis.

Setting of the Study

This study will take place at XYZ High School, which is located in Anyville, the county seat of Whoville County. The community is home to a highly varied population ranging from middle income professionals to single families existing on government assistance. A large segment of the Anyville population is transient and is greatly influenced by their financial circumstance to afford suitable housing. Thirty-eight percent of Anyville Public School District is determined to be in low income families and sixty percent of the District's students are enrolled in either IASA Title I, eligible for Free Meals and/or Milk or Reduced Price Meals. More than nineteen percent of the District students are classified as eligible for special education services and another twenty percent qualify for Basic Skills support.

Of XYZ High School's population of approximately 800 students, 420 attend Junior High Classes. Eighty of these Junior High students are classified and receive instruction in a variety of settings including mainstream class, resource program, behavioral disabilities program, and learning disabilities program. The in-class support program is considered a mainstream class. During each of the subject school years, approximately 45 classified students attended this program, and were served by three special education teachers and six regular teachers. For purposes of this study, students will remain anonymous and any particular reference to a particular student will be as Student 1, Student 2, etc.

The remaining 380 students are not classified and attend classes which are designated as regular, honors and accelerated. Enrollment in any of these classes is determined through a number of subjective and objective criteria which include but are not limited to teacher recommendations, standardized test scores, parent request, and report card performance the prior school year. An additional limitation of this study is the transient nature of so many of the students at this school. Therefore, students who enrolled after September 1996 will be excluded from consideration in this study.

Significance of the Study

The results of this study are significant to the Superintendent of this district who is responsible for the efficient allocation of professional staff and funding resources in providing for the educational welfare of all students within her charge. The Superintendent will benefit from the knowledge that instituting this instructional program was formidable in facilitating the students' attainment of educational proficiency.

Additionally, the results of this study are significant to the Director of Special Services who is responsible for the implementation and programming of instructional resources for classified students. This administrator will benefit from the knowledge that the program is performing the function for which it was initially designed and is delivering services in an educationally sound manner.

The teachers participating in this educational program will also find this study significant. These teachers tirelessly engage in instructional implementation and modification to meet the needs of all students within their classes, and would benefit from the knowledge that this program has met the needs of these students.

Furthermore, students receiving educational services within this program will benefit from this study because they are entitled to receive instruction and support which encourages and facilitates social and intellectual growth. And finally, the community benefits in the knowledge that its school is providing programs that reach all students, no matter what their educational or socio-economic status may be, and which encourage each student to attain his highest educational expectation.

Organization of the Study

This thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 presents the reader with an introduction to the topic and focus of the study.

Chapter 2 provides the reader a review of pertinent literature that is necessary to understand the theoretical design of an in-class support program and anticipated outcomes of such a program. An understanding of this literature is necessary to analyze the significance of an evaluation of such a program.

Chapter 3 discusses the design of this study and will answer the question, "What type of evidence can be gathered to prove that the in-class support program is of value in the instruction of the learner?" This chapter addresses five areas. The first area is a general description of the research design. The second area presents a description of the development and design of the research instruments actually used in the study. In the third area, the reader will find a description of the data collection technique used in the study, while the fourth area will contain a description of the data collection approach, delineating how surveys and grade information will be used in this study. Finally, the fifth area will provide the reader with a description of the data analysis plan.

The reader finds a presentation of research findings, which describes what information was found and what these findings mean within the context of this study in Chapter 4.

The final chapter, Chapter 5, presents a description of the study's major conclusions and their corresponding implications. Within this chapter the reader will also find conclusions and implications of the study on the intern's leadership development, as well as how the organization has changed as a result of the study. This chapter also addresses the need for further study. This researcher has attached references and biographical data addendum to this thesis.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Introduction

In recent years, schools across the nation have seen a change in the student population including an increase in the number of classified students, non-English speaking students, and other at-risk students, who are unable to succeed academically within the current educational structure. According to Case (1992), this trend is due to several factors including legal mandates to educate the disabled; limited resources to train personnel; changes within the family structure; and meeting the needs of a changing society. Additionally, Case suggests that instead of changing the way we meet the needs of the individual learner, we should look at the system and consider how it can deliver more dynamic educational services to all students. "With costs skyrocketing and needs escalating, special education can no longer serve all children with special needs. But if we refocus our efforts, we can improve the quality of classroom instruction for all students" (p.34).

As a viable response to this refocusing of efforts, schools utilize in-class support programs, which establish co-teaching partnerships between special educators and regular (content area) educators to address the quality of educational services to all students. Bauwens, Hourcade, and Friend (1989) define such partnerships an "an educational approach in which general and special educators work in a co-active and coordinated fashion to jointly teach academically and behaviorally heterogeneous groups of students in educationally integrated settings (i.e., general classroom)" (p.18). This chapter

explores the research basis of an in-class support program design with regard to legal requirements, the learner, the teachers and predicted outcomes.

Program Design: Addressing Legal Requirements

Idol, Newin, and Paolucci-Whitcomb (1994) trace the legislative and litigative context, which has led to the evolution of the in-class support program. Two Federal Acts: Education of All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990 (IDEA) requires schools to provide a free and appropriate education for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment. Basic tenets of IDEA recognize the importance of providing a continuum of educational options and, educating classified students in the general education (mainstream) class with their non-disabled peers because, "Mainstream participation helps these students develop critical academic and social skills needed for independent and productive adulthood" (Walther-Thomas and Carter, 1993, p.33). Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) define the continuum of placement options as "a range of placement options beginning with total placement of students with disabilities within the regular education classroom, with only consultation from the special education teacher . . . (and) at the other end of the continuum . . . special schools and facilities outside the public school system" (p.207). These authors also list general education classroom with consultative services and general education classroom with supplementary instruction and services respectively, as the least restrictive environment after general education classroom.

New Jersey Administrative Code 6A-14 reaffirms the position of educating the disabled in the least restrictive environment; providing a continuum of educational options; and also providing a transition plan for students over the age of 14 years.

Additionally, courts have upheld the continuum of options. In the case of *Doe v Withers* (1993), compensatory damages were awarded to a learning disabled student when the school failed to accommodate his disability in the general classroom (Katsiyannis and Maag, 1997).

In addition to classified students, the U. S. Department of Education regulation, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, also parallels IDEA's tenet of a free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment and extends this to all disabled students even if they do "not fall within the IDEA enumerated categories and even if they do not need to be in a special program" (Betley, 1997, p.4). In the case of *Whitehead v Board of Education* (1996), the court recognized the availability of monetary damages under Section 504, which are not available under IDEA.

Program Design: Addressing the Learners

Students with mild to moderate learning disabilities or emotional disturbance receive services in a variety of settings, which include self-contained class, resource center, in-class support program and mainstream class. According to Walther-Thomas and Carter (1993) special education students do not historically perform well in the mainstream and many learning disabled and emotionally disturbed students drop out and/or fail to develop critical skills, "needed to live as an independent young adult"(p.33). Additionally, Hines (1994) further evidences poor transition from school to adult life by pointing out that nearly one-third of mildly handicapped students are arrested at least once after leaving high school and 43% who graduate remain unemployed 3-5 years after high school.

In self-contained classes and resource centers, teacher efforts are centered on conforming to IEP requirements and establishing minimum competency in content courses. Furthermore, content instruction is not intensive, and in some cases, more than one course per content area is presented to different students within one class period. By grouping special education students in this way, "we have succeeded in isolating students physically and socially and have limited their opportunity for exposure to the established regular education curriculum" (White and White, 1992, p.1).

Without an in-class support program, special education students mainstreamed into content area classes fall by the wayside and are often returned to resource center classes to "cut their losses" and maintain some course credit. While in the mainstream, some supplemental support is provided to these students by special education staff, trained in specialized techniques. However, to receive this pull-out support, a student must miss another assigned class. The lack of support in the inclusive setting is seen as limiting the student's opportunity to participate in a continuum of educational options. With reference to students covered by IDEA and 504, Kaysiyannis and Maag (1997) state, "Schools should adhere to the notion of a full continuum of education services. Relying too heavily on either full inclusion or pull-out programs may set the stage for later claims that a child's education was inadequate because of unidimensional placement decisions" (p. 454). Of particular significance is the fact that classified students, previously exempted from passing state proficiency examinations, will be required to do so in order to receive a high school diploma. Failing to do this, the student will be given an annotated diploma, which notes the failure to achieve state proficiency. Through the

in-class support program, the learner avails himself of the opportunity to participate in a continuum of options, learn with his physically and socially equal peers, and receive instruction from a content certified teacher while receiving the specialized services of a trained special education professional.

Aside from classified students, the at-risk student population experiences classroom problems similar to the classified student (Walther-Thomas and Carter, 1993). These students, according to Wang, Reynolds and Walberg (1994), experience difficulties in school because of cultural, economic, environmental and social challenges that they face in their lives. Limited school resources and a growing diversity of learners require educational services through placement in several different pull-out programs. At-risk students and those covered by 504 receive segmented, remedial instruction in their area of need through Basic Skills Instruction (BSI) and English as a Second Language (ESL) based programs. Students are segregated into these programs because they have "unusual needs and . . . challenge teachers to the limits of their commitments, insights and skills" (p. 12)). These students are found at the academic margins of our school, struggling with academics or behavior and are in dire need of support which adapts instruction to their individual needs and strengths. The in-class support program can provide supplemental support to these students to assimilate this pull-out instruction into already faltering academic courses. According to Wang, et al. " a disproportionate number of (these) students . . .are members of racial and ethnic minorities" (p. 13).

Recent increases in the number of students receiving services under 504 have increased the necessity for the teacher to modify curricula expectations to meet the need of the individual student. Coupling such accommodations with the modifications needed

by mainstreamed, classified students, BSI students and ESL students, presents a significant challenge for one teacher attempting to meet the needs of all (Lessa, Bitam and Bailey, 1990). The in-class support program is designed to meet the needs of these students who require additional support to meet Core Content Curriculum Standards.

Idol, et al. (1994) offer a synthesis of research for the empirical context of this collaborative model by citing the following studies: Deno (1972) which "provided a collection of data-based models indicating that such a model is a valid approach that could yield appropriate and effective services for learners with special needs in general education classes" (p.29); Knight. (1981) which noted, "significant increased progress of learners receiving (such) services" (p.31); and other similar reports of validation of effectiveness of a collaborative teaching model which illustrate the "effectiveness of this approach for urban as well as rural area, over the entire range of elementary, junior and senior high schools. (See Knight, 1981)" (p. 32).

Program Design: Addressing the Teachers

In-class support teams consist of a regular education and special education teacher who "jointly deliver substantive instruction to a diverse or blended group of students in a single physical space" (Friend and Cook, 1996, p.10). In order to evolve an effective co-teaching partnership, Gately and Gately (1993) have noted that communication and professional respect are part of a developmental process. In the beginning, co-teachers may experience feelings of intrusion and invasion or inequity within the classroom, but as communication becomes more open and interactive, the relationship grows into a partnership of mutuality and collaboration.

According to Stump and Wilson (1996), professional literature highlights guidelines for teachers who wish to establish a collaborative in-class support partnership. These include establishing a clear team purpose and identification of what each individual brings to the team; establishing schedules for meeting and planning times; setting expectations for student work and assignments as well as for behavior; developing systems to monitor student performance and determining grades; determining team members' classroom roles; sharing responsibilities and workload, as well as contributing expertise; and, maintaining an open line of communication.

Not all teachers are comfortable in a co-teaching arrangement and some may find the collaborative arrangement offers serious challenges, especially when members of the partnership are asked to modify teaching styles and share student responsibility. Vaughn, Bos, and Schumm (1996) highlight specific difficulties, which include student ownership, individual versus class focus, content versus accommodation, and real world versus the student world. The regular education teacher tends to plan for the entire class, while the special education teacher plans to meet the needs of the individual. "While neither position is inherently better than the other, the difference in perspective can lead to conflict (Cross and Walker-Knight, 1997, p. 270). Regular education teachers feel compelled to cover the content necessary to meet state and local guidelines, and some educators feel modifying curriculum to meet the needs of students does not prepare them for the real world (Vaughn et al. 1996). On the other hand, special education teachers advocate that real world success is contingent upon the student experiencing success in their present world.

Therefore, as a first step in program design, participating teachers must examine their own readiness to collaborate, share student ownership and develop content knowledge and skills. Participants in the program must accept significant restructuring of traditional teacher roles and engage in communication, which will foster the development of a reciprocal relationship, which is supportive and focused on empowering the student to learn.

The next step, according to Johnston (1994), is to train staff "with skills related to collaboration" and "increase teachers' repertoire of skills related to instruction for heterogeneous groups" (p.9). Gerber (1991) adds that training evidences central office and school level administrative support and shows both regular and special education teachers that the program is desirable and feasible.

Johnston (1994) suggests that participation in in-class support programs should be encouraged but not mandatory. Teachers should be encouraged to express preferences for co-teaching partners, and if possible, these preferences should be honored. In doing so, teachers build collaboration upon an already existing solid base of professional respect. After forming teams, co-teaching pairs should continue to receive on-going professional training. Johnston (1994) suggests this training address topics such as strategies for working with heterogeneous classes, cooperative learning techniques, peer tutoring and co-planning.

Program Design: Anticipating Outcomes

Idol et al. (1994) state "Both general and special educators have much to share in collaboratively articulating the elements that produce effective educational programs" (p. 52). Through an in-class support program, instruction is delivered to diverse groups of

students in a less fragmented, more efficient and effective educational system that may be used by all. This outcome is based on review of the research and reports on similar models of service delivery. A sampling of that review follows.

Messersmith and Piantek (1988) report on a co-teaching model in John Witherspoon Middle School in Princeton, New Jersey. This model was developed to "give students the opportunity to utilize the learning strategies they had already acquired" (p. 66) in a self-contained class. The partnership was composed of a special education teacher and content area teacher, who planned curricula activities and implementation to enhance the learning of all students in the class. While specialized instructional intervention was available to students, content information was reinforced through the expertise of the content area teacher. After one year, gains were noted in student motivation and achievement. Students engaged in cooperative projects so that disabilities did not inhibit their performance or negatively affect the progress of other students. Classified students developed greater self-esteem working on grade level, and demonstrated this by the number of activities completed by each. Additionally, little disruptive behavior was exhibited. Students were exposed to different teaching styles and received support as needed. The teachers reported great satisfaction and reduced feelings of isolation because of the teaching partnership.

Nowacek (1992) confirms these findings in an interview of co-teaching pairs, and also observes that this model provides an additional level of service to the student; provides the opportunity for the student to be successful in the mainstream placement; and also provides support for the at-risk student who is ineligible for special education.

In another study conducted by Johnston (1994) the following student outcomes were documented via results of the ITBS: learning disabled students in this teaching model scored higher than those not involved in this model; non-classified students enrolled in this model outscored non-classified students who were not enrolled in this model. Additionally, referrals for discipline dropped by 58.5% in one year.

Voltz, Elliott, and Harris (1995) conducted research into facilitating collaboration between special education and regular education teachers. Results of this research suggest that when given a time frame to meet and plan for instruction, teachers alter their individual roles to engage in joint problem solving and educational delivery. General education teachers agreed: they developed an increased knowledge of useful teaching strategies; improved performance of learning disabled students; and, improved professional relationships with the resource teacher. Additionally, these teachers felt collaboration with a special education teacher had a positive spill-over effect for non-disabled students and that collaboration is a process which should be continued because "it is an effective means of helping . . . (to) . . . teach students with learning problems in their classes" (p.134). This study also emphasizes special educators felt regularly scheduled communication with the regular education teachers allowed the special educator to address the problems of their students more systematically and thoroughly. The special educators also felt a strengthened professional tie with participating general education teachers, and reported this facilitated the success of learning disabled students in general education classes.

The literature pertaining to outcomes of an in-class support program highlights the positive effects a co-teaching partnership can have upon the learners and teachers

involved in a properly designed and implemented program. With the elements of theoretical program design in focus, this researcher will evaluate the design, implementation and effectiveness of such a program.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

General Description of Research Design

By using an action research design, this study evaluated the effectiveness of a currently operating in-class support program by comparing student performance and teacher perceptions of participants in this program to those of participants in similar programs highlighted in educational literature. Participants in this study are students who have attended XYZ School for the 1996-97, 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years and have attended grades six, seven, and eight, consecutively during these same years. The content area grades and group administered standardized achievement test results of students who fit this attendance criteria for the three years under study, were compared to those of the students who did or did not participate in this program. Student participants included adolescents whose ages ranged from 11 to 15 years of age and constituted a heterogeneously grouped population which included gifted, honor, average, at-risk, basic skills, ESL, and classified students. The classified student population encompassed perceptually impaired and behaviorally disturbed populations, functioning at varying levels of cognitive ability, from below average to above average intelligence. Students included in this study were limited to those who were enrolled as of September 1996, in grade six, and maintained enrollment for the 1997-98 and 1998-99 school years.

This study was conducted in the XYZ High School which serves students in grades 6-12 and which is located in a small urban city of southern New Jersey. The community is home to a highly varied population ranging from middle income

professionals to single families existing on government assistance. A large segment of the XYZ population is transient and is greatly influenced by their financial circumstance to afford suitable housing. At the time of study thirty eight percent of the XYZ Public School District was determined to be in low income families and sixty percent of the District's students was enrolled in either IASA Title I, eligible for free meals and/or milk or reduced price meals. More than nineteen percent of the district students were classified as eligible for special education services and another twenty percent qualified for basic skills support.

Of XYZ High School's population of approximately 800 students, 420 attended junior high classes. Eighty of these junior high students were classified and received instruction in a variety of settings including mainstream class, resource program, behavioral disabilities program, and learning disabilities program. The in-class support program is considered a mainstream class. During the 1996-97 school year, approximately 15 classified students were served in this program, and attended sixth grade classes. In 1997-98 school year, the program grew to include approximately 45 classified students who attended classes in grades six, seven and eight. Three special education teachers and six regular teachers served these students. Similar enrollment also existed for the 1998-99 school year.

This study commenced in the fall of the 1998-99 school year and was completed by March of that same school year. This study evaluated the effectiveness of the in-class support program by comparing the design and outcomes of theoretical program to the outcome and design of the program as it existed in the XYZ High School.

Variables active in this study were those associated with the learner, the teacher, and legal requirements. These variables were identified through a review of the seminal literature and research pertaining to this type program. The function of the learner within this program was considered with relation to the nature of the student (classified or non-classified), grades received, achievement test results, social skills, and study skills. The teacher imparted many factors, which were addressed as part of program design, such as, communication and collaboration, classroom roles, training, and instructional practices. Outcomes of the program evaluation were contingent upon student performance and teacher perceptions. Additionally, legal requirements which demand providing the student with a continuum of options and instruction in the least restrictive environment were considered as variables because the school's local interpretation and provision of these requirements effected the program design and thus the program outcome.

Development and Design of Research Instruments

Information pertaining to teacher communication, collaboration, classroom roles, participation and perceptions was gathered through a survey. Each question used emanated from criteria established in current educational literature. (See Chapter 2). The purpose of the survey was to query teacher perceptions of the current structure of the in-class support program and then compare these responses to the characteristics of the theoretically developed in-class support program found in literature. The survey consisted of 41 questions to which teachers indicated their responses by checking categories or answering "yes" or "no" to specific questions. In addition to these 41

responses, a section of the survey requested that teachers feel free to add any comments or constructive criticisms that they felt might be relevant to the in-class support program.

Information pertaining to student performance was collected by this intern and recorded on a "Student Performance Record", which indicated: if the student was enrolled as of September, 1996, and remained enrolled for each of the two subsequent school years; if the student participated in the in-class support program for grades six, seven, and eight; what the student's earned grade was for the content area under study; and the score received on the ITBS for that same content area. The content area under study was the area of social studies, as this is the class in which the in-class support program was conducted for grade six in 1996-97, grade seven in 1997-98, and grade eight in 1998-99 school years.

Description of Data Collection Technique

Using a stratified sampling design with proportional allocation, four strata were identified: those participating in in-class support program for social studies, both classified and non-classified, and those not participating in this program, both classified and non-classified. A random 5% sampling of each stratum was conducted. Using teachers class rosters, students were selected by identifying those who were attending grade eight in-class support social studies for the 1998-99 school year, and reviewing rosters of the grade seven in-class support social studies class for the 1997-98 school year, as well as rosters for the grade six in-class support social studies class for the 1996-97 school year. Once identified for applicable strata, students were selected in

alphabetical order and an appropriate number of students were used to assure a 5% proportional representation within that strata.

Student grades and standardized group administered achievement test results were gathered from each student's permanent record cards and recorded accordingly. The mean social studies grade of the participating students, both classified and non-classified, was compared with each of the two participating strata, as well as with the mean grade of the two strata of non-participating students. A similar analysis and comparison was completed with ITBS scores.

Responses to the teacher survey were anonymous. Each response was coded according to the category, which it addressed: legal requirements, the learner, and the teacher. Responses of the nine participating teachers were then sorted according to coding and tallied; then results were analyzed relative to criteria established in the literature.

Data Collection Approach

This intern obtained student grades and ITBS performance results from the permanent records cards available for each student. An analysis of this information was used to determine if students experienced academic success as predicted in the literature. Likewise, this intern distributed teacher surveys to each of the nine teachers who had been identified as having participated in the in-class support program in any of the school years being studied. These teachers included three special education teachers, and six content area teachers. The content area teachers were from the Social Studies and Science areas for the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years. To the contrary, the 1998-99 school year, one Science teacher was replaced by a Mathematics teacher. This survey

was designed to measure if the participating teachers experienced those effects as defined through a search of the literature.

Data Analysis Plan

To analyze student grades, an arithmetic mean was calculated for participating and non-participating groups of students. These means were compared to determine if the students achieved the academic success predicted in the literature. ITBS scores were analyzed in a similar way. The comparison of means included an analysis of growth from the year preceding participation to ascertain if statistical growth in fact did take place.

Responses to the teacher survey were analyzed according to the coding category and these results were compared to those obtained through the literature search to determine if in fact the teacher had developed a sense of mutual collaboration and less feelings of isolation.

Chapter 4

Presentation of the Research Findings

What Information was Found?

Each teacher who participated in the in-class support program during 1996-97, 1997-98, or 1998-99 school years completed a survey, which was designed by this researcher to gather teacher perceptions on various aspects of the program. Of the nine teachers who completed surveys, 3 were from grade seven, 4 from grade eight, and 2 from grade six. In particular, the teachers' responses reflected their opinions of the program design with respect to the legal requirements, the learners, and the teachers themselves. In all, nine respondents offered their input to questions which required a "yes" or "no" response. It should be noted, however, that some teachers added "DK" ("I don't know") for questions of which they had no knowledge. Additionally, teachers added addendum comments, additional information, and constructive criticisms, throughout the survey, wherever they felt appropriate. These comments were addressed in this presentation of findings.

Survey questions relating to the learners included those designed to discern the perceived mix of the class as well as those geared to gain insight into the teachers' perceptions of their students social and academic skills. When asked to indicate the mix of students within the class, teachers were asked to choose all that applied from a list which included students who could be described as gifted and talented, honor, average, at-risk, basic skills, ESL, perceptually impaired, or behaviorally disordered. One of the respondents perceived that students within his class were representative of all the listed

categories, while four teachers felt they had a mix of average students, basic skills students, and perceptually impaired students in their classes. The remaining four teachers indicated their classes were mixes of at-risk, basic skills, and perceptually impaired students.

When asked if the teacher felt classified students participating in this program had developed critical academic skills which they may not have otherwise developed, five responded "yes", three "no", and one "D.K.". However, when asked if the teacher felt that students participating in this program had developed social skills which they may not have otherwise developed, 7 responded "yes" and 2 "no". Similarly, when queried if the teacher felt if classified students mixed with regular students with whom they may not have ordinarily, the teachers were unanimous in their responses of "yes". Five of the teachers surveyed also responded "yes" when asked if there were less incidents of disruptive behavior in this class setting, while 4 responded "no".

With reference to curricula content of the class, 8 teachers responded that they felt ICS does not "water down" the curriculum, while 1 responded it did. Additionally 8 teachers felt that it was not necessary to complete the entire course curriculum, while 1 did. When queried if teachers felt modifying curriculum does not truly prepare students for the real world, 5 responded "yes", while 4 responded "no". One teacher indicated that he felt instruction in ICS focused on accommodation, while 8 responded that it focused on content. According to teacher responses, 9 felt instructional planning included the entire class, and did not specifically address regular, classified, or individual students. When asked if cooperative projects were used as part of the instructional process, 8 teachers responded "yes" and 1 responded "no".

Accommodation for the classified student is an integral part of this program; therefore, several survey questions addressed this issue. Teachers unanimously responded "yes" to giving special accommodations to classified students in this program. When asked to select the accommodations provided from a pre-determined list, teachers did so, and some respondents added other accommodations that they felt were significant. Following are the accommodations utilized within this setting, and the numbers of teachers who indicated these were provided: modified grading 4, modified homework expectation 1, modified testing 9, preferential seating 8, modified instruction 2. Additional accommodations added to this list by teachers included the following: extra credit, more parent contact, extra instruction prior to tests, and allowing the student to retest. All of the teachers surveyed felt there was a positive "spill over" for regular education students.

Furthermore, all nine teachers indicated that they felt this program provided an additional level of service for classified students and likewise agreed that this program provided the classified student with an opportunity to be successful in the mainstream. Five of the 9 teachers surveyed agreed that this program provided support for the at-risk student who is ineligible for special education, while 2 responded "no" and 2 "DK". When queried if each felt ICS participation helped the special education teacher more systematically and thoroughly address the needs of the classified student, 6 responded "yes", 1 "no", and 2 did not respond.

In addition to the aforementioned accommodations, teachers were asked about legal requirements for providing services to students. Eight teachers responded there was

no other option for students to receive instruction in this content area, while 1 teacher responded "DK". When asked if any students within this class received services under Section 504, 2 responded "yes", 2 "no", and the remainder "DK". When those who responded "yes" were asked about the nature of the accommodations provided to these students, both indicated that neither was aware of the nature of the accommodation.

Teacher willingness to be part of ICS is fundamental to the success of a collaborative, co-active teaching relationship. To this end, survey questions also addressed teacher feelings in this area. When asked if the teacher volunteered to participate in this program, 6 responded "yes" and 3 "no". Of those who responded "no", 2 responded that they would have wanted to participate, while 1 responded "DK". Five teachers did not select their co-teaching partner, while 3 did. (One teacher did not respond to this question.) Of those who did not select their partner, 4 responded that they would like to have done so, while 1 said "no". Of the 9 teachers surveyed, 8 responded that they would like to continue participating in this program, while 1 responded "no".

Training and preparation is necessary for the co-active delivery of instruction and services by participants in ICS. When asked if they received training prior to initiating ICS, 8 teachers responded "yes" and 1 "no". Five teachers indicated that they have received on-going training in techniques for this program, while 4 responded they did not.

The survey also generated responses to the teacher's personal perceptions of the collaborative process and its effect upon the instructional roles and responsibilities of the participants. With reference to the collaborative process, 6 teachers responded that they felt a better relationship existed between the regular education teacher and the special

education teacher because of this program, whereas 3 responded "no". When asked if both teachers engaged in problem solving when faced with instructional dilemmas, 7 responded "yes" and 2 responded "no". Additionally, 5 teachers responded "yes" when asked if they felt that instructional decisions were arrived at mutually with their ICS partner, whereas, the remaining 4 responded "no".

To determine what roles were assumed by each of the partners in ICS and to what extent collaboration played a part in determining these roles, teachers were asked if they felt that they and their partner had clear expectations for each other. Six responded "yes", and 3 "no". Six teachers responded "yes" when asked if they felt able to identify what their partner contributed to the process, while 3 responded "no". When asked if the content area teacher presented all or most of the instruction, 8 responded "yes" and 1 "no". Furthermore, 7 responded that the special education teacher provides supplemental instruction services to any student in the class as needed, and 1 responded that the special education teacher supports classified students only.

When asked to select the activities, in which both partners participated, teachers selected activities from a list of activities. Teachers' perceptions of mutually determined roles and mutual participation were as follows: 4 felt they had mutually established schedules for meeting and planning; 9 perceived mutually established expectations for student work and assignments; 7 recognized mutually set standards for behavior; 9 felt they mutually developed systems to monitor student performance and grades; 7 perceived they had mutually determined each teacher's classroom roles; 7 felt they shared the responsibility and workload; 7 perceived that each contributed expertise; and 7 accepted that each maintained an open line of communication.

Overall teacher perceptions as professionals participating in ICS were surveyed through several questions which addressed this issue. Four teachers responded that they felt supported by school administration in participating in this program, while 4 responded "no" and 1 did not answer. Five teachers responded that they felt less isolated from other teachers while participating in this program, while 1 responded "no" and 3 did not answer. When asked if they felt intruded upon by having another teacher in their class, 8 teachers responded "no" and 1 did not respond. Six teachers felt that they had learned useful teaching strategies from their ICS partner, while 3 felt they had not. Overall, 7 teachers felt that the positive aspects of the program outweighed the negative aspects, while 1 responded "no" and 1 remained unanswered.

Addendum to the survey was a section for teachers to offer their constructive criticisms, recommendations for future planning or personal feelings of the program as it currently exists. Following are actual teacher responses. Teacher 1: "I feel that the program, as it exists, is successful. There is no way that I could give the assistance to the needy students without in-class support. When the support teacher is not there for some reason, I am pulled in too many directions! On the downside, I do feel that I have made my tests easier by including word-banks for all students and I'm not sure that I should have done this. I also tend to slow down and teach to the middle and I don't feel that I am challenging the brighter students in the class. However, this is one of my weaknesses in all classes, not just classes with in-class support."

Teacher 2: "I love it! Problems are with homework and task completion, which is killing ICS students. It works great because I get to meet with students and go over work

projects with them. If I were only seeing the students in ICS it wouldn't work. Additional contact time is so important!"

Teacher 3: "I feel the program is successful for Science. My students can handle the workload and like to volunteer in class. They feel comfortable with the curriculum. Their relationship with the regular education teacher is also positive because she takes the time to help and give them extra credit. A very positive environment if offered to the seventh grade ICS science program."

Teacher 4: "If team teaching is going to be effective, it can't just be for one class period a day. This one class becomes filled with all the mainstreamed students and other parents and students feel that they are in a special ed class. Both teachers need to share the responsibility of planning in advance and implementing those plans. Both teachers should be knowledgeable enough in the subject matter to feel comfortable teaching the entire class and grading work done by the class. It should not be a "what are we doing today?" situation when the special ed teacher walks in the room. In-class support is not the appropriate setting for all special ed students. This can't be the only placement available for a particular class in that grade level. There has to be somewhere else to place a student if their behavior is poor or it their attitude or effort is lacking and they are failing the course. Teachers who are paired should have similar teaching styles/philosophies so that you don't have two extremes of teachers trying to come together at a "happy medium". Team teachers should have a specific time set aside to discuss and prepare future lessons in a one-on-one situation and to discuss ways to accommodate special ed students, etc.

Teacher 5: "I thoroughly enjoy ICS, however, I feel it is not for every subject. I also feel the ICS teachers should have a say on who to work with."

The effect of ICS participation on student performance was evaluated by comparing the mean ITBS social studies score of classified and non-classified participants with the mean ITBS social studies score of classified and non-classified non-participating students. Using a stratified sampling design with proportional allocation, a 5% random sampling of the four strata was conducted. Through proportional allocation of each stratum this researcher determined that the representative population of non-participating student subjects consisted of 13 non-classified and 2 classified students, and that the representative population participating student subjects included 4 non-classified and 2 classified students. The random sampling was conducted in accordance with the procedure described in Chapter 3, and scores and grades were also gathered and noted as explained in that same chapter. It should be noted that among non-participating students, the random sampling procedure selected 9 students who were enrolled in the honors program. Due to the small size of the available population, which was not excluded for reasons discussed in the selection process, sampling procedure could not be changed to accommodate a smaller percentage of honors students. In order to ascertain if this high representation of one population skewed results, a separate analysis of this strata was offered for the reader's consideration. A summary of data is contained in Table 1.

Analysis of the data indicated the following facts with relation to student ITBS social studies scores for the 1996-97 and 1998-1999 school years. Non-participating non-classified students' mean score grew from 76 the first year to 83 the second year. These scores ranged from a low of 41 to a high of 90 in 1996 and in 1997 ranged from 53

to 99. Scores of classified non-participating students grew from a mean of 6 to a mean of 17. In 1996, these scores ranged from 1 to 11, and in 1997 ranged from 11 to 23. Overall, the mean of non-participating students changed from 67 in the 1996-97 school year to 75 in the 1997-98 school year.

The non-participating non-classified population was composed of nine honors students and four regular students. This population mix was uncovered when reviewing records of subjects obtained during random sampling of strata. For reasons discussed earlier, the following analysis of data is offered of those nine honors students with relation to the four regular students. In 1996-97, ITBS social studies scores for the honors students had a mean of 74 for scores which ranged from 41 to 90, and in 1997-98, these scores ranged from 53 to 96 with a mean of 86. Overall, the honor students' mean ITBS social studies score grew from 74 to 86 over the two years of study. The four remaining regular students had ITBS social studies scores for the 1996-97 school year which ranged from 69 to 99 with a mean of 81; and, during the 1997-98 school year scores had a mean of 78 with scores that ranged from 61 to 99. Overall, the four regular students' mean ITBS social studies score declined from 81 to 78 in the years of study.

Table 1

Mean ITBS Scores

	1996-97	1997-98
Non –participating students		
Non-classified	76	83
Classified	6	17
Combined	67	75
Participating students		
Non-classified	50	61
Classified	16	18
Combined	39	47

Students participating in the ICS program, who were non-classified saw their mean performance grow from 50 in the first year to 61 in the second. Scores in 1996 ranged from 28 to 77 in 1996, and 44 to 84 in 1997. Likewise, a growth in the mean of classified participants' scores grew from 16 in 1996 to 18 in 1997. Scores ranged from 7 to 25 in year 1 and from 8 to 27 in year 2. Overall, participants saw an average growth from a mean of 39 to 47 in the two years of ICS.

Grades achieved by students were also analyzed for the 1996-97, 1997-98, and 1998-99 school years. (As the 1998-99 school year was not complete, grades for the first two marking periods were averaged to predict a hypothetical grade for that school year.) A summary of data is contained in Table 2.

Non-participating non-classified students' grades ranged from 72 to 90 in the first year and had a mean of 84. The next year, these same strata had grades, which ranged from 74 to 91 with a mean of 82. In the third year, this strata achieved grades which were estimated to range from 76 to 90 with a mean of 85. The classified non-participating student had grades with a mean of 82 and a range of 73 to 90 the first year, a mean of 83 with a range of 79 to 83 the second year, and during the third year, a mean of 80 with projected grades that ranged from 70 to 90. Overall during the three years under study, the non-participating students' grades had means of 84, 82, and 84, respectively.

An analysis of grades of the nine honor students provides a mean grade of 85 in the first year of study, 84 in the second, and 85 projected for the third. Additionally, analysis of the four regular non-participating students provides a mean of 81 for year 1, 77 for year 2, and 85 for year 3.

Table 2

	Mean Grade		
	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99*
Non –participating students			
Non-classified	84	82	85
Classified	82	83	80
Combined	84	82	84
Participating students			
Non-classified	83	68	73
Classified	72	75	67
Overall	79	70	71

*Estimated grade based on half-year report

Participating non-classified students during the 1996-97 school year had grades with a mean of 83 and ranged from 79 to 87; during the 1997-98 school year had a range of grades from 62 to75 with a mean of 68; and during the last year, a mean of 73 for grades which ranged from 68 to 80. Classified students participating in ICS during the first year had a mean grade of 72 with a range from 63 to 80; during the second year, grades had a mean of 75 and a range from 74 to 74; and during the third year, estimated grades ranged from 65 to 69 with a mean of 67. Overall, students participating in the program during the three years of the study, respectively, obtained grade means of 79, 70, and 71.

What does this mean?

Integrating information gleaned from teacher survey responses with grade and ITBS score analysis this researcher identified certain issues which are pertinent to the functioning of an ICS program. By definition, the ICS program delivers services to classes of heterogeneously grouped students. Teacher responses indicated a split perception about the mix of the students in their ICS classes. The majority was split between two mixes: average students, basic skills and perceptually impaired students on one hand, and on the other, a mix of at-risk, basic skills, and perceptually impaired students. Likewise, this researcher identified no honors students enrolled in this program, and a high percentage of honor students who made up the remainder of the non-participant population.

Through analysis of ITBS social studies scores, the mean of non-participating non-classified students increased by 7 over the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, while participating non-classified students saw an increase of 11 in their mean performance for

these same two years. Research also indicates that the mean ITBS social studies score for non-participating classified students saw a gain of 11 points over the two year period, while the mean for participating classified students saw an increase of 2. An analysis of the mean grade across the four strata saw no consistent pattern of increase or decrease over the period of study.

A further analysis of non-participating students indicates a high number of honor students did not participate in this program. Of the 13 students selected for these strata, 9 were honors and 4 regular students. Data suggests that the mean ITBS social studies score for honor students increased over the years of the study from 74 to 86. To the contrary regular non-participating students experienced a decline in the mean of their ITBS social studies scores from 81 to 73. An analysis of grades for these groups revealed information similar to that of the entire strata, as there was no continual pattern of increase or decrease.

Through analysis of ITBS social studies scores, the mean of non-participating non-classified students increased by 7 over the 1996-97 and 1997-98 school years, while participating non-classified students saw an increase of 11 in their mean performance for these same two years. Research also indicates that the mean ITBS social studies score for non-participating classified students saw a gain of 11 points over the two year period, while the mean for participating classified students saw an increase of 2. An analysis of the mean grade across the four strata saw no consistent pattern of increase or decrease over the period of study

The majority of the participating teachers felt their students developed academic and social skills, which they may not have ordinarily acquired. Additionally, the majority

of teachers perceived classified students mixed with students with whom they may not have ordinarily socialized. These perceptions appear to be consistent with responses to questions indicating their perceptions that students appeared to have less incidents of disruptive behavior in these classes.

Results of this research also indicate that ICS teachers offered a variety of accommodations for the classified student and that there was a positive "spillover" for regular education students. A majority of teachers agreed that modification did not "water down" the curriculum and felt it was not necessary to complete the entire course curriculum. However, their responses to other curricula based questions appear to contradict their feelings towards a modified curriculum. That is, a majority of teachers felt that a modified curriculum does not prepare the student for the real world. Likewise, a majority felt instruction addressed content not modification. Additionally, teachers agreed that instructional planning was for the whole class and did not consider the classified or individual student. Teachers unanimously agreed that this program provides an additional level of service for classified students and that this program provides the classified student with an opportunity to be successful in the mainstream. Likewise the majority of teachers felt that this program provides support to the at-risk student who might not avail himself of other services.

This researcher queried teacher's knowledge of legal requirements within the instructional environment. A minority of teachers claimed to have students requiring accommodation of instruction or services under 504, but none could identify the nature of these accommodations. Additionally teachers were aware that a continuum of options for placement of classified students did not exist. This fact was also highlighted in Teacher

constructive comments.

By definition, ICS is a co-active collaborative process of providing instruction to students. The majority of the teachers agreed that they would like to continue participating in this program, and that a better relationship exists between regular education and special education teachers because of this program. Teachers indicated they did not volunteer for this program, nor did they select their co-teaching partners. Perceptions of collegial collaboration were evidenced through the majority of teachers' responses to questions which indicated that they engaged in mutual problem solving when faced with instructional dilemmas as well as mutually arriving at instructional decisions. Again, a majority of affirmative responses indicated each partner knew what the other contributed to the collaborative process, and roles were mutually and clearly defined.

While a majority of teachers responded that the content area teacher presents all or most of the instruction, the majority also indicated that the responsibility and workload was shared and that each contributed expertise and maintained an open line of communication.

As professionals, the majority of teachers felt less isolation participating in this program and did not feel intruded upon by having another teacher in their classes. Teachers agreed that they learned useful teaching strategies from their ICS partners and that the positive aspects of the program outweighed the negative.

In Chapter 5, this researcher will expand these findings by discussing conclusions and implications suggested by this study, as well as by addressing the need for further study. Additionally, the reader will find conclusions and implications of the study on the

intern's leadership development, as well as how the organization has changed as a result of the study.

Chapter 5

Conclusions, Implications and Further Study

In this last chapter, the reader finds a description of major conclusions of the program evaluation and their major implications, as well as the effect of these upon the intern's leadership development. Additionally, the reader will find a discussion on how the organization has changed as a result of this study, as well as suggestions for further study.

This study has been designed to compare the theoretical structure and results of an in-class support program with that of one which has been operating at XYZ Junior High School. Theoretical structure was discussed within the literature review contained in Chapter 2, and research findings related to the structure of the currently operating ICS program were presented within Chapter 4.

The in-class support program was originally designed to provide for the needs of the classified student by providing supported instruction within the least restrictive environment. This study suggests that the students participating in the program under evaluation received accommodation for their disabilities and modification of instruction in a setting, which permitted participation with their non-classified peers. However, teacher comments suggest that a continuum of options did not exist, and, therefore, students who could not adapt academically or behaviorally within the in-class support program had no alternative placement available to them. A review of school programming confirmed this, as well as suggested that there were fewer ICS placements than there were classified students. (According to New Jersey Code, only nine classified

students may attend this program if another teacher is in attendance.) These facts infer, then, that classified students not participating in ICS, and not receiving instruction in a self-contained class, are receiving instruction in regular classes. Furthermore, once the maximum number of students have been enrolled in the ICS class, the remaining students have only one option for instruction, and not a continuum as required under law. One should note, however, that placement of the students in ICS was done based by specifying such a program in the student's IEP. Never the less, optional instructional placement settings were not available for special education students who were unable to succeed in the regular class even with in-class support.

Additionally, research uncovered that honors and accelerated students did not attend the ICS program, suggesting that the theoretical heterogeneous design was dropped in lieu of a practice of grouping honors and accelerated in one program, and in another, placing average, at-risk, ESL, classified, and behaviorally disordered students. This student grouping was confirmed through two sources: the teacher survey in which teachers described the mix of their classes, and through a review of records which was conducted in order to analyze data.

One must question how this change in basic design effected the anticipated behavioral and academic benefits of the ICS program. Teacher responses indicated their perceptions that students developed social skills, which they may not ordinarily have, and that there were fewer incidents of disruptive behaviors within this program than in their other classes. As teachers indicated they and their ICS partners had mutually developed behavioral expectations. This would suggest that the presence of two teachers within this setting, sharing the same expectations, curtailed incidents of disruptive behavior, and

within this setting students may have demonstrated better social skills. However, this study can not conclude that, in fact, the student generalized these social and behavioral standards to other situations. This perhaps suggests an area in need of further study.

Academically, teachers within this program indicated they modified and accommodated instruction to meet the needs of the classified student. Teachers indicated that they modified grading, homework expectation, testing, and instruction in addition to providing preferential seating, extra credit, more parent contact, extra instruction prior to tests, and permitting students to retest. Likewise, teachers indicated that they did not "water down" the curriculum; for the most part focused teaching on content; and felt it was not necessary to teach the entire curriculum. Additionally, teachers felt that ICS helped the special education teacher more systematically and effectively provide for the needs of the classified student.

To verify the academic growth which teachers perceived, an analysis of student ITBS scores and grades was conducted. This researcher focused analysis on the social studies area, as the population of classified students had the opportunity to participate in ICS in this content area over the study period. As the reader recalls from Chapter 4, classified students participating in ICS saw a mean growth of 2 points on their ITBS scores as opposed to a growth of 11 points on the mean of classified, non-participating students. (A review of records indicates the non-participating students attended the Learning Disabilities Program (LD).). Thus, this study concludes that with special accommodation and modification in ICS, the classified student experienced less academic growth in ICS than in the LD class.

Furthermore, teachers indicated that they perceived the ICS program as providing

support for the at-risk student who is ineligible for special education. (One would infer that this included at-risk learners, ESL, and 504 students). To verify the perception, ITBS scores were analyzed, and it was found that non-classified students participating in ICS saw a growth of 11 points on the mean ITBS score as opposed to a growth of 7 on the mean score of those not participating in the program. This data analysis suggests that non-classified students participating in ICS improved more than non-classified students not participating in ICS did.

This fact is confirmed through a further analysis of non-participating, non-classified ITBS scores, which indicates that if honors students are excluded from the mean, the mean score of the non-participating non-classified student declined 3 points in the years of study. Thereby confirming that ICS provided benefit to non-classified students whom participated.

It should also be noted, that of the 13 students, which comprised the non-participating strata, 9 were honors and 4 regular students. As this was a random sampling of non-participating students, one must question the proportion of honors students to regular students within the population of all students. As this question was not part of the original design of this research study, this intern suggests that further study should be conducted to establish the criteria for participation in the honors program and if in fact, separating these students in a track by themselves has had an effect upon the overall performance of those students tracked into the regular classes.

Student grades were also analyzed to determine if the mean grades of participating and non-participating students varied. Overall, non-participating students and participating students saw no significant net change in grades over the three years

from 1996 through 1999. Student grades did not reflect the trends found in ITBS scores. This may be due to subjective nature of grading and further suggests that no conclusive evidence may be drawn from analysis of teacher-issued grades.

Literature suggests that teachers should volunteer to participate in this program so that the cornerstone for collaboration is established from the origin of the collaborative relationship. Data confirms that, although all did not volunteer to participate, only one teacher indicated he would not wish to continue participating. Teachers were trained through various activities. However, approximately one-half the teachers indicated this training was not on going. This fact may be among the reasons teachers indicated a perception that they were not supported by administration.

A review of schedules indicated teachers taught with specific co-partners. Teacher survey responses indicated that they engaged in collaborative activities and shared instructional responsibilities. Overall, analysis of the data suggests teachers experienced less feelings of isolation while participating in this program, and perceived a better relationship between regular education and special education teachers. Teachers felt supported in the delivery of instruction to the diverse learner. This is inferred through the use of collaborative techniques, and confirmed by their responses to survey questions querying this topic. Teachers found this program beneficial because special education teachers could more systematically address the needs of the learners, both classified and at-risk. This fact was highlighted by the results of the data analysis which indicated that classified and non-classified participants in ICS saw gains in their mean ITBS social studies scores, while the non-participating regular education students, excluding honors students, saw a decline.

Teachers perceived that participation in a modified program does not prepare the student for the real world. This, once again, reflects the lack of a continuum of options as students requiring severe modification may not receive the total modification and support which can be provided in a small group setting.

Through this study, this intern grew professionally in the area of leadership by applying human relations skills through effective interaction with others and by analyzing and solving problems using appropriate decision-making techniques. Additionally, this researcher experienced professional growth in the area of communication skills by communicating with individuals and groups in a positive manner, and listening actively and responding appropriately to the ideas and opinions of others. Furthermore, this intern realized professional growth by identifying existing and potential support by services to enhance staff and student performance.

By applying effective strategies for assessing school programs and utilizing the practical applications of organizational theory, this intern has helped to develop procedures, which comply with local policies, state and federal rules and regulations. These organizational changes utilize administrative practices, which meet the unique needs of all students within XYZ School.

As a leader, this intern recognized, as a result of this action research study, that staff training is essential to ensure the on-going success of this program, and recommends that participating teachers be encouraged to take advanced training sessions on an annual basis. Additionally, this intern questions the nature of the instructional climate within the regular education classes where it appears students have been tracked into honors and regular classes. Studies have shown that heterogeneous mixes of students generally

result in higher achievement for the regular student. As a leader, this intern suggests further study into the effect that tracking has had upon the student population, and if the regular education instructional program could be enriched to benefit all students. Additionally, results of this program evaluation suggest that classified students attending a self-contained special education class grew more academically than those within the ICS program. This intern questions whether special supports and services provided to students within the special education program can be duplicated in the ICS program, and if they would achieve the same effect. Research is needed to identify the differences in these two programs, and to quantify the benefit that such supports and services would yield for the ICS student.

Instructionally, further research is needed to establish a better assessment system for students than the teacher issued grades. These have proven subjective, as they did not reflect student performance on the ITBS. As an example, a portfolio of the student's work would demonstrate growth in subjective knowledge, as well as highlight the levels of analysis and synthesis which the student was able to achieve.

This study also has highlighted to this intern, the need for teachers to feel supported by administration, and it important that further study is conducted to identify why teachers perceive a lack of support.

In summary, the conclusion, which may be drawn from this program evaluation, is that ICS program has provided support to both the classified and non-classified students at XYZ High School. Implications of this study is that the non-classified participants have out performed their non-classified, non-participating peers on the ITBS, thus suggesting that the ICS program should be expanded to include more of the regular

student population. Additionally, results of this evaluation suggest further study is needed to ascertain the effect tracking of honors students has had upon the regular student population.

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Appendix

Research Instruments

In-Class Support Program Evaluation Survey

This survey is intended to be completed by teachers who have participated in the In-Class Support Program (ICS) in grades 6, 7, or 8.

Responses to this survey are anonymous and represent a compilation of perceptions and observations of the ICS and will be used along with other information to evaluate the effectiveness of this program.

1. Students in my in-class support class included: (Check all that apply)
   - ___gifted and talented students
   - ___average students
   - ___perceptually impaired students
   - ___behaviorally disordered students
   - ___basic skills students
   - ___ESL students
   - ___honor students
   - ___at-risk students

2. With reference to classified students, was an option available to the student to attend ICS or another setting, i.e. resource room, for this subject? **(YES/NO)**

3. Do you feel that classified students participating in this program have developed critical academic skills which they may not have otherwise developed? **(YES/NO)**

4. Do you feel that students participating in this program have developed social skills which they may not have otherwise developed? **(YES/NO)**

5. Do you feel classified students have mixed with regular students whom they may not ordinarily have? **(YES/NO)**

6. Do you feel classified students receive special accommodation for disability in this classroom? **(YES/NO)**

7. If you answered "yes" to number 6, please indicate below the capacity in which they was delivered:

   - ___modified grading
   - ___modified testing
   - ___modified instruction
   - ___modified homework expectation
   - ___preferential seating
   - ___other (Please specify)_____

8. Does your ICS class include students who are receiving services under 504? **(YES/NO)**

9. If you answered "yes" to number 8, what is the nature of the accommodation?

   _____

10. Does the content area teacher present all or most of the instruction? **(YES/NO)**

11. (Check all that apply). The special education teacher provides supplemental instruction services to: ___any student in the class, as needed; ___classified students only.

12. Did you volunteer to participate in the in-class support program? **(YES/NO)**

13. If you answered "no" to number 12, would you have wanted to participate? **(YES/NO)**

14. Did you select your co-teaching partner? **(YES/NO)**

15. If you answered "no" to number 14, would you have wanted to participate? **(YES/NO)**

16. Would you like to continue participating in ICS? **(YES/NO)**

17. Do you feel intruded upon by having another teacher in your class? **(YES/NO)**

18. Do you feel ALL students are treated equitably when participating in this program? **(YES/NO)**

19. Do you feel instructional decisions are arrived at mutually with your ICS partner? **(YES/NO)**

20. Do you feel you and your partner have clear expectations for each other? **(YES/NO)**

21. Do you feel you and your partner identify what each contributes to this program? **(YES/NO)**

22. (Check all that apply.) You and your partner:

___establish schedules for meeting and planning

___mutually establish expectations for student work and assignments

___mutually set standards for behavior

___mutually develop systems to monitor student performance and grades

___mutually determine each teacher's classroom roles

___share responsibility and workload

___contribute expertise

___maintain an open line of communication

23. (Check all that apply). Do you feel instruction focuses on: __content; __accommodation.

24. (Check all that apply). Instructional planning includes: ___entire class; ___regular students; ___classified students: ___individual students

25. Do you feel it is necessary to complete the entire course curriculum? (**YES/NO**)

26. Do you feel ICS program "waters down" the curriculum? (**YES/NO**)

27. Do you feel modifying curriculum does not truly prepare students for the real world? (**YES/NO**)

28. Did you receive training before initiating ICS? (**YES/NO**)

29. Do you feel supported by administration in participating in this program? (**YES/NO**)

30. Have you received on-going training in techniques for this program? (**YES/NO**)

31. Do you use cooperative projects in this setting? (**YES/NO**)

32. Do you feel incidents of disruptive behavior in this class are fewer than others? **YES/NO)**

33. I feel less isolated from other teachers while participating in this program. (**YES/NO**)

34. I feel this program provides an additional level of service for classified students. (**YES/NO**)

35. I feel this program provides the classified student with an opportunity to be successful in the mainstream. (**YES/NO**)

36. I feel this program provides support for the at-risk student who is ineligible for special education. (**YES/NO**)

37. I feel I learned useful teaching strategies from my ICS partner. (**YES/NO**)

38. I feel a better relationship exists between the regular education teacher and the special education teacher because of this program. (**YES/NO**)

39. I feel both teachers engage in problem solving when faced with instructional dilemmas. (**YES/NO**)

40. I feel there is a positive "spill-over" for regular education students. (**YES/NO**)

41. I feel participation helps the special education teacher more systematically and thoroughly address the needs of the classified student. (**YES/NO**)

YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE. . .

Please feel free to add any insights you have developed while participating in this program. These insights may include constructive criticisms, recommendations for future planning, or your personal feelings of the program as it currently exists.

Biographical Data

Name	Louise Sullivan
High School	West Islip High School West Islip, NY
Undergraduate	Bachelor of Arts Mathematics Dowling College Sayville, NY
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