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OVERVIEW

The way we define or frame a problem, to a large degree, supports or hinders our search for solutions. For example, if an individual's needs are framed around finding the levels of support needed to progress toward specified goals, our search should result in the generation of intervention ideas. Within a problem-solving paradigm, the focus of the special education (SE) identification process is defining the accommodations and modifications that will help a child succeed in the educational environment. Identifying and measuring a student-centered deficit or the magnitude of a discrepancy in achievement or behavior becomes somewhat less important. Rather, measuring an intervention's effectiveness through progress monitoring and data collection becomes the focus of our efforts.

Special education was intended to be a "problem-solving system" for general education (Deno, 1989). School psychologists now have the measurement technology that links assessment of individual needs to interventions. A current research base exists for choosing effective instructional practices and interventions. Methods to monitor students' academic and behavioral progress relative to general education (GE) expectations also are available. Thus, it is incumbent upon school psychologists to use the available knowledge base to assist educators in implementing effective instructional programs that include plans for returning SE students to GE environments.

The purpose of this chapter is to outline a set of best practices to assist school psychologists and other educational professionals in meeting this goal.

Reintegration Defined

Reintegration involves determining when it is appropriate to fade and eventually remove SE services for a student. For the purposes of this chapter, reintegration will be described as the process that occurs on a trial basis prior to a more permanent removal of SE services. This process is tied to a specific set of data-based, decision-making steps. Reintegration is not an all or nothing judgment about a student's need for SE, but is best viewed along a continuum. Thus, reintegration may be considered for a single domain (e.g., reading) or for several domains of functioning (e.g., reading, science, physical education). The process also is not restricted to students receiving SE services for academic difficulties. Reintegration may be appropriate for students receiving services for behavioral and emotional difficulties, communication and language problems, physical disabilities, and so on. Thus, the process is appropriate to consider for any student receiving SE services.

Terms most often associated with reintegration, but that may carry different meanings, include "mainstreaming" and "inclusion." Mainstreaming often refers to placing students who receive SE services into environments with non-disabled peers for the purposes of receiving instruction in a less restric-

tive setting or for social/emotional benefits to the SE student. Students who are referred to as "mainstreamed" typically are not involved in a systematic process geared toward eventual exit from SE. Rather, their mainstream placement is part of their Individual Education Plan (IEP) with goal monitoring by the SE teacher(s). Research on mainstreaming has focused more on the effects for SE students already in GE. In contrast to mainstreaming research, reintegration studies usually have focused on the process by which students return to GE for instruction (Fuchs, Roberts, Fuchs, & Bowers, 1996).

Reintegration also carries a different meaning than the term "inclusion." Often used with the descriptor "full," inclusion refers to instructing all students receiving SE services, regardless of disability category, with non-disabled peers. Inclusion generally is not a process geared toward eventual exit of the SE student, but rather attempts to reduce the segregation of students with disabilities regardless of the degree or severity of disability. Thus, inclusion decisions tend to be large-scale, values-based decisions.

Background Information and History

Considering reintegration is important for a variety of reasons including economic concerns, socio-political issues, and legal parameters. A primary economic concern is the continued exponential growth of SE and the expenses associated with this growth. According to the twenty-second Annual Report to Congress on the implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (U.S. Department of Education, 2000), 5.5 million students were served in SE or 12% of all children enrolled in public schools in 1998–1999. Of the children served in SE, more than 78% (or 4.7 million) were identified as those with mild disabilities (e.g., specific learning disabled (50%), speech and language impaired (20%), and emotionally disturbed (8%)). The overall number of children in SE represents an increase of 2.7% over the previous year and a 30.3% increase over the past decade. The costs associated with this growth are enormous. In fiscal year 2000, more than \$4.9 billion was appropriated for Part B of IDEA, Section 611. Estimates of current total dollars spent on these services range from \$30.9 to \$34.8 billion per year with the average per pupil spending estimated at \$5,435 (Parrish, 1999). To complicate matters, many stu-

dents identified with mild disabilities never exit SE despite being the most likely candidates for reintegration. Available data suggest that as few as 2–6% exit each year (Lytle & Penn, 1986; Shinn, 1986).

Reintegration is tied historically to the Regular Education Initiative (REI). The REI achieved prominence in the late 1980s after Assistant Secretary of Education Madeline Will issued a white paper on the REI (Will, 1986). The message of the white paper was clear: too many SE students were receiving services outside of their GE classes. The paper called for more collaboration between special and general educators and greater efforts to educate SE students in GE. Since that time, increased attention to outcomes and accountability for SE students relative to the GE curriculum has been incorporated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997).

Both historical and current legal parameters affect reintegration decision making. From a historical perspective, the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) clause of IDEA indicates clearly that students should be educated in the GE environment to the *maximum extent appropriate*. Specifically, the clause states:

...to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not disabled, and special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the disability of the child is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Section 612, (a)(5)(A) IDEA, 1997).

This clause has been present since the inception of the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), with relatively minor changes in wording since that time. The one noticeable change is the addition of the words "special classes." Central to reintegration are the LRE concepts of "benefit" and "satisfactory achievement." These concepts were operationalized by the United States Supreme Court in *Hendrick Hudson District Board of Education v. Rowley* (1982). Benefit was defined as satisfactory achievement in GE. Satisfactory achievement was defined by the grading and achievement standards within the mainstream GE set-

ting. Finally, recent changes in IDEA have reinforced greater attention to SE students' access to GE (Section 601 (c)(5)(A), IDEA) as well as measuring goals and objectives with the same frequency as GE (Section 614 (d)(1)(A)(vii)(II), IDEA).

Despite its clear importance, barriers to reintegration exist. First, SE typically has operated within a traditional deficit-centered model in which problems (disabilities) are viewed as relatively intractable or organic in nature. Framing problems in this manner reduces the likelihood that one would expect the student to exit SE. Another concern with this model includes the measures used for decision making. These measures often are focused on identification of student deficits and generally are not designed to contribute significantly to the development of effective interventions (Deno, 1986; Gresham & Witt, 1997; Marston, 1989; Shapiro, 1996a). The tools used to identify and re-evaluate students for SE often are not related closely to the GE curriculum or local GE standards. Instead, the measures often used are nationally normed achievement tests tied to globally derived national achievement standards. While useful for comparing students to a national standard, the tests may have little overlap with the local curriculum, often have few items at any particular grade level, and are not designed for sensitivity to individual student progress (Marston, 1989). Thus, such measures do a poor job of determining whether a student can meet the grading and achievement expectations in their local GE environment.

Another barrier occurs when parents and teachers are unwilling to return students receiving SE services to the GE environment (Fuchs, Fuchs, & Fernstrom, 1992; Shinn, Baker, Habedank, & Good, 1993; Weintraub, 1991). For the most part, reintegration decision making has relied heavily upon the volunteerism or "goodwill" (Fuchs et al., 1992) of teachers and parents. That is, all parties involved must be "willing" to participate in and agree to the decision to return a student to the GE classroom. If any of the individuals disagrees with a change in placement, the likelihood of the student being reintegrated is reduced greatly. The attitudes of parents and teachers regarding reintegration may reflect naiveté regarding the purpose of SE as a *supplement* to rather than a replacement for GE. Parents of students identified through traditional models of practice may view reintegration efforts as a reduction of SE services that are

necessary to "maximize" their child's educational potential (Green & Shinn, 1994). In this era of high stakes testing and use of test scores for accountability, teachers may be concerned about the reintegrated student no longer receiving test accommodations that typically would be part of their IEP. Thus, unwillingness of parents and teachers may reflect anxiety about the impact of reintegration.

Special education teachers may be concerned about how their students will perform once reintegrated. General education teachers also may be reluctant to have SE students returned to their classes. Teachers may underestimate the academic and behavioral skill levels and progress of students receiving SE services. These concerns about reintegration can be remedied. For example, research (e.g., Rodden-Nord, Shinn, & Good, 1992; Shinn et al., 1993) suggests that teachers become more willing to reintegrate SE students when they are given data indicating that the student performs within the grading and achievement expectations of their GE classrooms. However, parents' willingness to reintegrate their child may be more dependent upon subjective factors rather than student performance data. For example, parents may rely heavily on SE teachers to interpret results and to make recommendations for reintegration (Ball, 1997; Green & Shinn, 1994).

Within a problem-solving model of practice, the collaboration between GE and SE teachers and parents from the onset of the process helps reduce misconceptions about the purposes of special education. School psychologists need to give due consideration to the concerns of parents, teachers, and other educational personnel so they can support reintegration decisions more adequately. Further, school psychologists need to be involved in staff-development efforts aimed at increasing skills related to reintegration success, and in making decisions about GE class placement on a more regular basis.

When Reintegration Should Be Considered

School psychologists should consider reintegration and possible exit from SE as a natural part of SE service provision. When the concerns that resulted in these services no longer warrant them, then reintegration is appropriate. For example, if a student's skills or behavior fall within the range acceptable in GE, then that student may no longer *need* SE services

and reintegration should be considered. The question becomes, then, how does one know that skills and behaviors fall within an acceptable range?

BASIC CONSIDERATIONS

To make reintegration a reality, school psychologists need to have an understanding of the principles or values upon which the best practices described in this chapter are founded. These foundational principles are not connected to a specific technology or technologies. Thus, as technology improves or changes, these principles serve as a means of judging whether new technology serves the same purpose (Grimes & Tilly, 1996; Tilly & Grimes, 1998; Tilly, this volume). These guiding principles are as follows: (a) hypothesis testing, (b) formative evaluation/ongoing progress monitoring, (c) consideration of the classroom and school ecology, (d) case-by-case decision making, and (e) consideration of legal parameters.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is an integral part of the problem-solving process. One cannot know a priori that an intervention will be successful for an individual child (Campbell, 1988; Deno, 1986, 1989). School psychologists must recommend interventions, ensure they are implemented with integrity, and measure their effectiveness. In this way, interventions are considered hypotheses to be tested. The same notion applies to reintegration. Previous research (e.g., Shinn, Powell-Smith, Good, & Baker, 1997) suggests that reintegration trials be treated as hypotheses to be tested. Some students have responded well to reintegration while others with similar problems did not. The variables that determined the success or failure of reintegration were not apparent beforehand. Without collecting data during the reintegration trial period, the success of reintegration would have been ambiguous. Therefore, it is clear that hypothesis testing is tied closely to the process of formative evaluation and ongoing progress monitoring.

Formative Evaluation/Ongoing Progress Monitoring

Formative evaluation has two primary characteristics. The first of these characteristics is consistent with the

rationale for hypothesis testing; that is, our interventions must be tested to determine their effectiveness. Second, formative evaluation involves examining student performance over time on a frequent and routine basis (Witt, Elliott, Daly, Gresham, & Kramer, 1998). "The emphasis in formative evaluation is on responsive, data-based problem-solving rather than on static diagnosis and prescription" (Deno, 1990, p. 169). This second characteristic suggests that data are collected for the purposes of making decisions about student performance and adjusting programs in a timely fashion. Thus, the purpose of formative evaluation is in direct contrast to the notion of diagnosing a problem for which one can then prescribe a specific treatment with a known outcome.

With regard to reintegration, formative evaluation is particularly important. Studies on reintegration efforts thus far (e.g., Shinn et al., 1997) suggest that the success of reintegration trials could not be predicted with 100% accuracy based upon data gathered prior to reintegration. Thus, ongoing monitoring of student performance is necessary once reintegration occurs to ensure success and modify services as needed.

Consideration of Classroom and School Ecology

Part of a problem-solving orientation is the consideration of variables that influence educational outcomes beyond those that are child-centered. A student's academic performance depends on multiple variables other than just student academic skill. School psychologists should be well versed in assessing components of instructional environments that facilitate or impede student learning or behavioral progress (Ysseldyke et al., 1997). Environmental factors such as "the nature and quality of teacher-student interactions, curricula, and materials also affect academic outcomes" (Fuchs, Fernstrom, Scott, Fuchs, & Vandermeer, 1994, p. 11). Classroom organizational structure and the diversity of students present also contribute to classroom and school ecology (Walker & Bullis, 1990). According to Witt et al. (1998), two fundamental assumptions of assessment are (a) that "individual differences among children derive their meaning from the situation in which they occur" (p. 7) and (b) "good assessment involves gathering information about the environment in which the student is functioning" (p. 12). Logically then,

consideration of classroom and school ecology is an important part of any problem-solving process including reintegration.

Case-by-Case Decision Making

The notion of case-by-case decision making is associated with the *Responsible Reintegration* model delineated by Douglas Fuchs (Fuchs et al., 1992). This model specifies that students be considered for reintegration on an individual basis according to their unique skills and needs. Furthermore, such an approach dictates that the outcomes of reintegration be monitored to determine the effects, both short- and long-term, for the individual student. Thus single-case, rather than group analyses, are most appropriate for evaluating reintegration decisions. Case-by-case decision making also is in direct contrast to large-scale decisions, in which groups of students are reintegrated (i.e., all students with mild disabilities). As noted by Fuchs et al., a case-by-case approach is consistent with procedures set forth in federal law (e.g., IDEA) and, more importantly, with the recent legal parameters noted in the next section of this chapter.

Considering Legal Parameters

In a problem-solving system, a problem is defined by a discrepancy between what is expected and what is occurring (Deno, 1989; Shinn, 1995). Professional judgment helps determine the standard against which student performance is judged to be problematic (Tilly, this volume). However, when it comes to reintegration and exit decisions, the U.S. Supreme Court has determined the performance standard against which a student's appropriateness for GE is judged. If a student can perform within the grading and achievement standards for GE, then that student should be educated in that environment (*Hendrick Hudson District Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982).

Several court cases have examined this issue. Specifically, three standards for determining LRE have been yielded from recent circuit court decisions. The 3rd, 5th, and 11th circuits have adopted the Daniel R.R. test. This test determines if education in the GE classroom with the use of supplemental aids and services can be achieved satisfactorily and if the school

has mainstreamed the child to the maximum extent appropriate. The following four issues are examined: (a) the steps a school has taken to accommodate the child in the GE classroom, (b) the educational benefit the child will receive from placement in the GE environment, (c) the child's overall educational experience in GE, and (d) the effect that the presence of the child with the disability has on the peers in the GE classroom (*Daniel R.R. v. State Board of Education*, 1989). Decisions in the Greer and Oberti cases in the 11th and 3rd circuit courts modified the Daniel R. R. test to allow a comparison of the benefits of GE versus SE (*Greer v. Rome City School District*, 1991; *Oberti v. Board of Education of Clementon School District*, 1993).

As another example, the 4th, 6th, and 8th Circuits have adopted the Ronker Test (*Ronker v. Walter*, 1983). For this test, the courts ask whether services in a segregated setting can be provided feasibly in a non-segregated setting and consider the following: (a) the benefits the child receives from an SE class compared to those in GE, (b) whether a child with a disability would be disruptive in the GE class, and (c) the cost of maintaining the child in GE. Finally, the 9th Circuit has used a test that applies both the Daniel RR and Ronker tests. For this test the court considers: (a) the educational benefits of full-time placement in a GE class, (b) the non-academic benefits of such a placement, (c) the effect the student has on the teacher and children in the GE class, and (d) the costs of mainstreaming the student (*Sacramento Unified School District v. Rachel H.*, 14 F.3rd 1398, 1404, 1994).

In addition to being knowledgeable of recent LRE court decisions, school psychologists must understand clearly that IDEA and recent case law do not support *maximizing* the potential of each child with a disability. Rather, the judgment in the Rowley case clearly states that education must provide services "sufficient to confer some educational benefit upon the handicapped child" (*Hendrick Hudson District Board of Education v. Rowley* p. 200). However, "the furnishing of every special service necessary to maximize each handicapped child's potential" (p.199) is not required by IDEA. Consistent with Rowley, the 4th circuit, in its opinion in *Hartmann v. Loudoun County Board of Education* (1997), indicated that IDEA does not guarantee every child with a disability the ideal educational opportunity. School

psychologists must be facile with these rulings because they may be unfamiliar to key people (e.g., parents and teachers) involved in reintegration decision making.

A misunderstanding of the purpose of SE also may exist. The purpose of SE is to provide a *free appropriate public education* (FAPE), not to maximize a child's potential. A lack of understanding of "sufficient" versus "maximum" educational benefit may cause concern when considering reintegrating a student into the low achieving group of GE peers. People may fear this standard is too low, despite the fact that it is acceptable within the grading and achievement expectations in GE. Importantly, this standard should not be construed as reinforcing lowered expectations for children with disabilities. However, to withhold the opportunity for instruction in GE because the child does not meet at least average expectations may prevent further acceleration of their skills and limit their future opportunities.

BEST PRACTICES

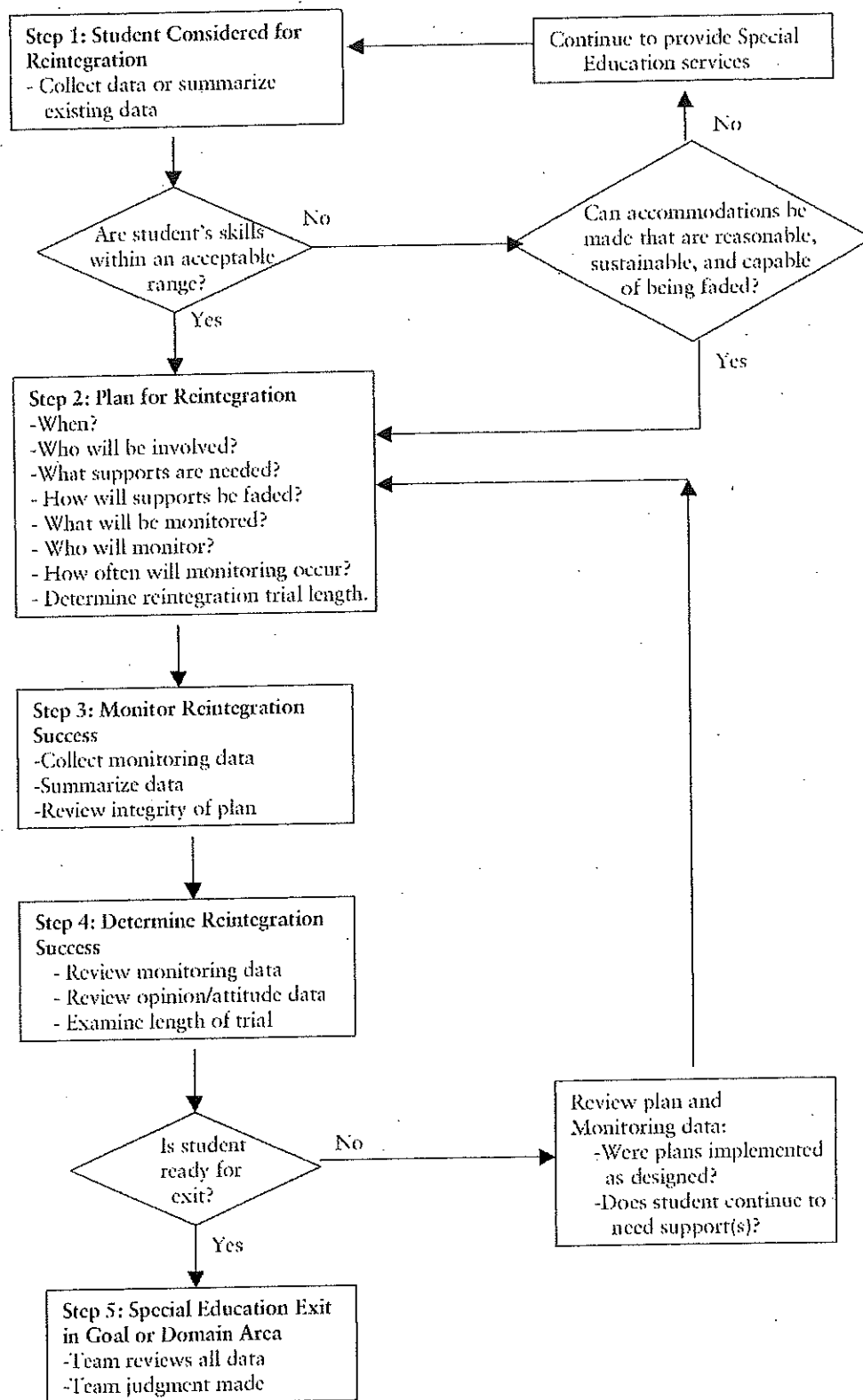
Within a problem-solving model of practice, students are identified for SE services because of a mismatch or a discrepancy between their current performance and what is expected of them (Deno, 1989; Shinn, 1995). *Problem identification* begins with data-collection activities that focus on functionally relevant behaviors of concern (e.g., fluency in reading decoding, accuracy of math computation, level of academic engagement, frequency of behavioral outbursts). The purpose of problem identification is to measure and define the significance of a discrepancy. The data collected help substantiate the significance of the discrepancy and contribute to the diagnosis of the problem (*problem analysis*). Hypotheses generated from the assessment data and from problem analysis lead to the selection and implementation of interventions that have the highest probability of reducing the discrepancy between the target student's performance and GE expectations. Goals and interventions needed for the student to achieve satisfactorily compared to the typical students' performances are discussed (i.e., *intervention planning and goal setting*). *Progress monitoring* of the student's achievement occurs over an agreed upon period of time. Finally, intervention effectiveness is evaluated at the end of the progress-monitoring period (i.e., *program*

evaluation) by collecting data to determine whether a significant discrepancy still exists.

In a problem-solving model, reintegration decisions flow naturally from the activities involved in progress monitoring and program evaluation. Best practices in reintegration and exit decisions within a problem-solving model incorporate provisions for exit that are discussed at the time of initial identification. At that time, outcomes for the student are discussed with an eye toward eventual reintegration and exit. For example, the skills and behaviors needed to be successful in the GE environment are discussed. As teams meet to develop an IEP and more long-range plans (5 years or more), they would conduct their planning with the notion that reintegration, whether in a single domain or across all domains, is a potential goal. Relevant areas to consider might include: cognition; achievement; social, behavioral, and emotional adjustment; communication and language; sensory status; motor skills; and health status. Consistent with the problem-solving process, at each checkpoint the student's progress relative to reintegration and exit is discussed, whether it is at the end of the grading period, annual review, 3-year review, or during transition planning. Reintegration and exit may not be a realistic or appropriate goal in all domains for all students receiving SE services. However, reintegration should be discussed at the time of identification if there is to be any chance of it occurring in a systematic manner.

The reintegration and exit processes outlined in this chapter follow a series of steps consistent with a problem-solving model. These steps also are consistent with the foundational principles outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Specific questions and activities are delineated at each step of the process (see Figure 1). Step 1 begins the process with the student being considered for reintegration, followed by planning for reintegration (Step 2), monitoring reintegration success (Step 3), determining reintegration success (Step 4), and exiting SE in the goal or domain area (Step 5). Any person involved in the student's education (parent, GE teacher, SE teacher, principal, counselor, and/or school psychologist) could prompt a closer look at reintegration at any time. Most typically, the timing of these decisions would be at the natural decision-making points for student evaluation (e.g., interim reporting, quarterly grading periods, annual review).

Figure 1. Reintegration and exit process, specific steps, and activities for each step



Step 1: Student Considered for Reintegration

In systems not currently operating within a problem-solving paradigm, reintegration decisions continue to be necessary and feasible. However, within these systems, reintegration and exit issues are more challenging. Data collected for eligibility and placement decisions typically do not link to goals and effective interventions. Eligibility test data are primarily administrative and procedural in purpose rather than functional and diagnostic. "Attempting to 'link' administrative assessment strategies to the development and evaluation of interventions is problematic" (Barsche & Knoff, 1995, p. 570). Thus, additional data similar to those collected within a problem-solving model must be obtained to facilitate reintegration and exit decision making. The relevant questions continue to be whether the target student is making adequate progress in comparison to GE peers and whether there has been a significant decrease in the discrepancy that resulted in SE service provision. Answering these questions requires obtaining samples of the academic and/or behavioral skills of the identified student and of the comparison students within the receiving GE classroom.

ACADEMIC SKILL DOMAINS

When considering academic skill domains, examining the performance data of the target student and the typical GE peers may be multifaceted. First, we could access existing achievement data typically collected by schools or districts. Second, we could sample directly the academic skills of the target student and comparison peers in the receiving reintegration classroom. Finally, we could interview the receiving GE and SE teachers and observe in the environment of interest to determine which academic survival skills are needed within the reintegration environment.

Schools often assess student achievement and compile the results using multiple methods. These data can be examined for performance trends between districts, buildings, and classrooms. For example, assessments may include state proficiency tests, standardized achievement tests, competency-based evaluations, portfolios, performance-based projects, Curriculum-Based Measures (CBM) (Deno, 1985; Shinn, 1989), and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) (Kaminski & Good, 1996, 1998). Standardized proficiency and achievement

tests are less direct measures of the behaviors of concern in the classroom. However, the information obtained may help to define performance discrepancies. The definition of average or below average achievement is a local district decision. For example, some districts may consider students performing below the 25th percentile to be at risk for academic failure. Other districts may recognize the 16th or 10th percentile ranks as the cut off for defining children who are in need of additional resources. Conversely, a district may consider students to have average skills if their reading and math scores on a standardized achievement test range from the 16th to the 84th percentiles. Some district personnel may discuss these issues in terms of the degree to which students meet grade level expectations. For other districts, no formal definition may exist.

Once a school psychologist determines the district's definition of average, low average, and below average achievement, it is possible to analyze data from various achievement results by grade level or by classroom. Comparisons of the target student's performance to that of typical peers may indicate a significant discrepancy on various achievement measures that are collected school or district-wide each year. A more direct and functional assessment of basic academic skills would include CBM or DIBELS collected at the individual classroom, building, or district level. CBM of reading, math, spelling, or written language and DIBELS measures provide excellent comparison data and when normed at the district or building level may include percentile ranks or median scores by grade level or by classroom.

In addition to reviewing existing data, direct assessment of the target student's academic skills in comparison to students in the receiving reintegration classroom will be necessary. The dimensions of comparison are determined by the behavior(s) of concern and the instances in which the target student will be required to use the skill. For example, many students receiving SE services have reading skill deficits that affect numerous areas of performance in the classroom. A comprehensive assessment for a student considered for reintegration would include basic reading fluency and comprehension of the GE language arts curriculum. However, because reading ability affects numerous other academic tasks, it is necessary to assess the student's application of reading to successfully complete in-class assignments and homework,

as well as other academic course work (e.g., math, science, social studies).

In all instances, the performance of the target student is compared to the expectations in the reintegration environment, defined by the performance of GE peers. Collecting local classroom-norms offers a viable method by which to obtain this comparison. A classroom norm is obtained by asking the receiving teacher to nominate five to seven students who perform at the lowest acceptable level in the GE classroom. Next, the students nominated for the micro-norm and the target student are assessed across academic behaviors of interest, using the same measurement tools. For example, several previous studies have demonstrated the utility of using CBM for these purposes (see Powell-Smith & Stewart, 1998, for details). The median or average results of the typical students' academic performance on any given academic behavior provide the micro-norms to which the target student's performance is compared. The overall task is to determine if the target student is performing academically within the range of students in GE. If the student considered for reintegration is successful on tasks performed within lowest acceptable performing instructional group, then that instructional setting may represent the LRE for the student. If the target student continues to demonstrate a discrepancy in performance, consideration should be given to the accommodations and supports in the reintegration classroom that would allow the student to be successful. If the student exhibits discrepancies that are so significant that accommodations and supports would be beyond what GE could provide, then reintegration may not be an option.

Beyond examination of the target student's specific academic skill development, other considerations may include the academic survival skills necessary to be successful in the reintegration environment (e.g., academic-engaged time, organizational skills, self-management strategies, and study- and test-taking skills). Information about academic survival skills may be obtained by observing the behaviors of the local normative group and the target student. This task may be difficult if the student considered for reintegration receives services in an SE pull-out program. However, even within a smaller teacher/student ratio, these behaviors would be present and observable. It also is possible to have a trial reintegration period with the intent of collecting data in the most natural environment possible.

Finally, teacher interviews may be conducted to obtain information about the target student's skills as well as the expectations in the reintegration environment. The SE teacher will have valuable information about the student's specific academic skills, rates of attention and academic engagement, work completion and accuracy rates, and self-management strategies (i.e., academic task-related behaviors). An interview with the GE teacher would provide information about the academic task-related behaviors expected in the GE environment. School psychologists may have formal or informal interview methods by which to gather this information. The interview should focus on the teacher's expectations for academic task-related behaviors from students throughout each instructional period and during alterations in the schedule and daily routines (e.g., substitute teachers, assemblies, guest speakers). School psychologists may choose to review the literature and programs available to organize and structure a teacher interview (e.g., Kame'enui & Darch, 1995; Paine, Radich, Rossellini, Deutchman, & Darch, 1983; Sprick, Garrison, & Howard, 1998). The interview could, in turn, assist school psychologists and teachers in designing classrooms that help students meet the expectations in a variety of environments. Teachers who clarify their expectations for student success during the instructional day may have better-managed classrooms. In turn, a well-managed classroom may be the most appropriate reintegration setting for a student, depending on the reasons for SE placement.

BEHAVIORAL AND OTHER CONCERNS

The questions to consider in making reintegration decisions for students receiving SE services for behavioral, social-emotional, communication, and other concerns, are similar to those for a student receiving SE services for academic concerns. The standard for when to consider reintegration remains the same; reintegration should be considered when the student can meet not only the grading and achievement expectations for GE, but also the behavioral and social-emotional requirements to be successful in the GE environment. The goal is to determine what the grading and achievement expectations are with respect to behavior and social-emotional functioning for the GE environment.

Several variables might be examined to determine if the student meets GE environmental expectations

for behavior and social-emotional functioning. These variables include those that are student focused such as coping strategies, teacher pleasing behaviors (e.g., follows directions, accepts consequences, listens), self-help and problem-solving skills (e.g., works independently, makes need for assistance known, controls anger), and positive peer interactions (e.g., cooperates with others). Other variables include those that are more teacher focused, such as tolerance for student misbehavior, teacher attention, motivational procedures, classroom management practices. Finally, specific classroom environment variables to consider include: (a) classroom organization and routines, (b) instructional arrangements, (c) classroom physical arrangement, (d) number and length of transitions, and (e) the involvement of others (e.g., paraprofessionals, support specialists) in the classroom.

Obtaining information about the normative expectations for student behavior is accomplished best through direct observation techniques. School psychologists can choose from a number of published behavioral observation codes such as the Code for Instructional Structure and Student Academic Response (CISSAR; Stanley & Greenwood, 1981), the State Event Classroom Observation System (SECOS; Saudargas, 1992), and the Behavioral Observation of Students in Schools (B.O.S.S.; Shapiro, 1996b). School psychologists also could develop their own behavior observation code. Should school psychologists choose to develop their own code, they may want to consult published resources (e.g., Alessi & Kaye, 1983; Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 1987; Hintze, this volume) for ideas about how to develop useful and reliable protocols to document students' behavior within various instructional environments.

To determine what the normative expectations are for the receiving GE environment, the school psychologist would observe students in the classroom (or classrooms) that represent the lowest *acceptable* standard for behavioral and social-emotional functioning. The school psychologist should consult with the teacher(s) in those classrooms to determine who these students are. In keeping with the lowest *acceptable* level as the standard, students chosen for observation should not be ones considered at-risk for referral for behavioral or social-emotional concerns. Neither should they be students considered model classroom citizens. Multiple observations using the same instru-

ments for both target student and comparison peers should occur in the receiving classroom(s). Ideally, observations should be made across several days and times to see the range of the student behaviors and to increase the reliability and accuracy of the information. Observations should occur during structured academic periods (e.g., reading, math, science) and during less structured academic periods (e.g., art, P.E., music). Direct observations also should be conducted while students are in hallways, on the playground, and in the cafeteria where many student misbehaviors occur. Information on the range of behaviors acceptable within the school at large will help to successfully reintegrate students who have difficulties with self-managing behavior. From these observations, local micro-norms for behavior can be developed (see Alessi & Kaye, 1983; Canter, this volume). Once these micro-norms are developed, the data collected on the target student's behavior across a variety of settings can be compared to those norms to determine if his/her behavior falls within an acceptable range. A concern with this process is that the reintegration candidate may not be observed in the exact same settings and under the same conditions as the GE comparison group. However, these data will provide some basis for comparison. When combined with other data, these data should contribute significantly to reintegration decision making. Notably, similar procedures can be used for examining reintegration for students with concerns in other domains (e.g., communication/language).

Another important task for determining a student's appropriateness for reintegration is obtaining information about GE teacher expectations and classroom environmental variables. Direct observation and teacher interview are the two best methods for examining these variables. School psychologists could use narrative direct observations to examine the natural flow of classroom events as well as how transitions are managed. During observations, school psychologists can observe classroom management techniques such as posted rules and schedules, reinforcement and feedback for rule-following, length of transition times, management of mild disruptive behaviors, etc. Again, published observation codes can be used to examine these variables such as the Classroom Ecological Inventory (CEI) Classroom Observation (Fuchs et al., 1994), the Instructional Environment Scales (TIES) (Ysseldyke & Christen-

son, 1987), the CISSAR, and the SECOS. Alternatively, school psychologists may choose to develop their own observation code.

Teacher interviews can be used by school psychologists to obtain information about classroom environment, teachers' motivational strategies, classroom rules, allocation of instructional time, as well as information about teacher tolerance for mild disruptive behavior. School psychologists could use questions from published interview formats such as: (a) CEI Teacher Interview (Fuchs et al., 1994), (b) the TIES, (c) the Teacher Interview Form for Academic Problems (Shapiro, 1996a), and (d) the Instructional Planning Form Interview (Powell-Smith & Stewart, 1998). School psychologists also can create their own set of interview questions based upon review of the literature on programs that emphasize proactive classroom management and instructional techniques (see Kame'enui & Darch, 1995; Paine et al., 1983; Sprick et al., 1998). School psychologists also can take advantage of published resources regarding interviewing procedures in general (e.g., Bergan & Kratochwill, 1990; Lentz & Wehmann, 1995). Again, the purpose of observations and interviews is to determine the discrepancy between the potential receiving GE classroom and the SE classroom. The degree of discrepancy along with the student behavioral observation data serves as the basis for making reintegration decisions. Ultimately, the team of individuals responsible for reintegration decisions will need to determine the behaviors and skills to be examined for the individual student's reintegration to be successful. Resources related to assessment and progress monitoring of student performance are provided in the reference and annotated bibliography section of this chapter and in Tilly (this volume).

Once Step 1 of the process is completed, possible decision outcomes include the following: (a) reintegrate and monitor; (b) reintegrate and provide training, support, and monitoring; or (c) wait on reintegration until the match between the student's skills and the demands of the environment are aligned more closely. Both outcome (a) and outcome (b) would occur at Steps 2 and 3 of the reintegration and exit process. As evident by outcome (c) the activities involved in this process will cause special education and student services personnel (e.g., school psychologists) to examine more closely the kinds of training and supports necessary to achieve reintegration.

These supports might include: working with GE teachers to increase their classroom management skills, working with SE teachers to incorporate more of the elements found in the GE classroom into the SE classroom (i.e., training for generalization), and/or training the individual student in the skills needed to be successful in GE. Ultimately, this process forces a discussion of reintegration issues and allows for greater collaboration and communication between SE and GE.

Step 2: Plan for Reintegration

Once the reintegration and exit process moves to Step 2, the tasks are essentially the same in systems using traditional SE identification practices as well as those used in school systems using a problem-solving model. These tasks include: determining which team members are needed for planning, when reintegration should occur, measures to be implemented and frequency of progress monitoring activities, person(s) responsible for measurement activities, supports and accommodations that are necessary for success, length of the reintegration trial, and techniques for eventually fading the plan and supports (see Figure 1).

The reintegration planning team includes those individuals who have direct knowledge of the target student's current academic skills and behavioral status and anyone who may instruct the child in the new class. Teams should include the parent(s) of the student, the SE teacher, the receiving GE teacher(s), and the student, if appropriate. Teams also may include paraprofessionals, administrators, and support staff (e.g., school psychologist, speech pathologist, behavior intervention specialist, etc.). If the student is involved with outside agencies (e.g., mental health provider, medical personnel, social worker, case manager), it may be appropriate to invite representatives to attend the planning meeting(s) to coordinate services.

Reintegration may occur as soon as the team's reintegration plan can be implemented. It is possible that the student could be placed immediately into the GE environment for the domain considered. In other cases, the student might be introduced to the new environment gradually. For example, the plan may call for the student to be involved in only a portion of a class (e.g., group discussion, teacher-led instruction, pre-writing activity). The student might then

receive assistance from a SE support person or a paraprofessional to complete the required assignments. Over a period of time, the student's involvement in the GE class would increase as the student increases timely work completion and accuracy. Another example involves the student reintegrated into a GE class with adequate skills to complete assignments, but lacks behavioral strategies to follow rules, remain academically engaged, interact with peers appropriately, etc. This student's plan may call for reintegration in the receiving class with incremental increases in time being dependent upon the student's skills in maintaining appropriate behavior.

As stated in Step 1, the techniques needed to monitor student progress in the reintegration environment and the length of the trial period are based on the academic skills or behaviors of interest. These decisions will be based on research related to the target behaviors and professional judgment. For example, the literature on reintegration in reading indicates that a minimum of 8–12 weeks of CBM progress monitoring is recommended (Powell-Smith & Stewart, 1998). Ultimately, academic skills or target behaviors must be monitored over an appropriate time frame to determine the student's success or lack of progress within the new environment. The reintegration plan should include specific review periods at which time student performance data can be reviewed and alterations made in the plan if needed.

As a part of the reintegration plan, it is appropriate that team members be assigned specific tasks to complete before the next review period. The plan should be clear regarding the exact measurement techniques to be used and the person(s) responsible for data-collection activities. Team members should be willing to step outside their traditional roles to support the success of the reintegration plan. For example, paraprofessionals and school psychologists are excellent members to support data collection efforts. Any training needs for personnel unfamiliar with data collection techniques should include follow-up support and reliability checks to ensure treatment integrity. Timelines for plan implementation and data collection should be specific with agreed upon review dates set in advance.

Modifications of the reintegration plan may occur, if necessary. The planning team should meet at periodic intervals to review and document the progress-

monitoring data and to consider the accommodations and supports necessary for student success. Many modifications may mirror those that are typical for all students. For example, repeating directions, additional time for task completion, adjusting task length, frequent prompts and feedback, mass practice of skills, and individual or small-group instruction from teacher, paraprofessionals, or Title I teachers, all may be possible accommodations. Considering supports that occur naturally within GE will help the student generalize and maintain skills after the reintegration plan is faded. Modifications must be *documented* so that the team can determine the types and levels of support necessary for a student to succeed. This documentation coupled with progress monitoring data also allows the team to determine if and when support can be faded should the target student demonstrate significant progress in the new environment. Conversely, if documentation demonstrates that the levels of accommodations and supports are so significant that GE cannot sustain them, then the student may not be ready for reintegration.

Step 3: Monitor Reintegration Success

Once the reintegration plan is completed, it is necessary to begin the trial reintegration period and the data collection activities delineated in Step 3. Determination of reintegration success will be based on the results of both direct and indirect data collection methods. Direct data collection procedures will include assessing the target student's academic achievement and behavior through progress monitoring activities specified in the plan. Also, plan implementation integrity will be monitored through direct observations of intervention adherence. The measures of treatment integrity may indicate that additional training is necessary for participants to successfully carry out their responsibilities as the plan indicates.

Indirect measures of the plan's success may include questionnaires about participants' level of satisfaction with the reintegration plan, the interventions, and the training and support for implementation and data collection. It also will be important to survey attitudes of parents, the reintegrated student, general and special education teachers, and paraprofessionals about the success of reintegration trial (see Powell-Smith & Stewart, 1998, for examples). School

psychologists can play a vital role in providing the training for progress monitoring, assessing treatment integrity, and in developing surveys that assess participant satisfaction with the reintegration process.

Step 4: Determine Reintegration Success

After the reintegrated student has been monitored for the length of time specified in Step 2, a determination about the success of reintegration can be made. All monitoring data collected up to that time are examined along with data collected on teacher, student, and parent attitudes toward the reintegration. The monitoring data are important because they provide both formative and summative information about the impact of reintegration on the student's skills. From these data, we can examine whether the student's progress is commensurate with that of the GE peer comparison group. Parent and teacher attitudes are important to gauge because their involvement in the process is consistent with best practices. Also, their attitudes may present possible barriers to continued reintegration efforts. Student attitudes are important to assess as they also may influence the success of reintegration efforts (Powell-Smith & Sheble, 2001). The length of the reintegration trial also should be examined.

Finally, the question of whether the student is ready to exit SE is asked. No set timeline for making such decisions exists because there is very little research in this area. Clearly, this decision should be based upon the data gathered and professional judgment. If the answer to the question is yes, then we proceed to Step 5. If the answer is no, the process cycles back to Steps 2 and 3 to review the initial reintegration plan, determine if plans were implemented as designed, and re-examine the monitoring and attitude survey data collected. A critical question at this point is, does the student still need support(s)? If the answer is yes, the team needs to make the necessary modifications to the original plan developed at Step 2. Once the modified plan is implemented, the process moves to Step 3 and so on.

Step 5: Special Education Exit in Goal or Domain Area

Step 5 is the culminating activity in the reintegration process. At this point, the team has reviewed the data

and decided that SE exit in the goal area(s) or domain(s) for which the child was reintegrated is appropriate. This decision involves professional judgment based upon the preponderance of the data. Not all students will progress to Step 5 (e.g., those with more significant disabilities, those that began much farther behind). Some students may need greater support in content areas or upon reaching middle or high school. Also, there is no reason a student could not be considered again for SE services should they become necessary in the future. However, these steps are designed to preserve the SE continuum, while forcing a closer examination of LRE and exit decisions.

SUMMARY

Reintegration is a process by which students receiving SE are returned systematically to the GE environment for instruction. The process is not to be equated with "mainstreaming" or "inclusion," both of which indicate that students continue to need SE services. Rather, candidates for reintegration are those students who originally were identified as needing special services, but no longer demonstrate large gaps in their academic skills or behavioral repertoire. In other words, the problem(s) that resulted in SE placement no longer warrant SE services. These students may be appropriate for instruction in the same environment as their GE peers, with the eventual possibility of exiting SE on a permanent basis.

Considering SE students for reintegration is no longer an afterthought, but rather is an integral part of the IEP process and service delivery. Neither is reintegration an all or nothing decision. It is a process that is accomplished by determining the LRE for students on a case-by-case basis. This single subject model of examining a student's appropriateness for reintegration results in the most appropriate educational decisions for individual children.

Planning for reintegration of a student occurs at the onset of the IEP process. Implementing a trial reintegration plan is accomplished by incorporating a problem-solving framework that involves persons who are key to student success, identifies student needs and current levels of performance relative to those of GE peers, and makes data-based decisions about student progress on a frequent and repeated

basis. If the data collected indicate that a student is successful according to the grading standards established in GE environments, then that class may represent the LRE for that student.

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Kame'enui, E. J., & Darch, C. B. (1995). *Instructional classroom management*. White Plains, NY: Longman.

This book outlines an instructional approach to classroom management, a technique that emphasizes proactive teaching of expected classroom behavior. The impact of instructional task dimensions such as complexity, modality, and response form on classroom management is discussed along with how to integrate classroom management during each temporal phase of instruction. Assessment models, as well as chapters on reinforcement, punishment as a transition tool, and a three-phase implementation across a 180-day school year, are presented. A procedural model for managing persistent behavior problems is also provided along with the features of an effective school-wide discipline policy.

Paine, S. C., Radicchi, J., Rossellini, L. C., Deutchman, L., & Darch, C. B. (1983). *Structuring your classroom for academic success*. Champaign, IL: Research Press.

This book outlines basic classroom management techniques including classroom organization, involvement of others in the classroom, use of teacher attention and classroom rules, managing materials and paperwork, and managing behavior problems. Feedback chart procedures for developing good work habits and guidelines for phasing out special procedures also are presented. The procedures are based on the Direct Instruction Model. The authors provide a survey of relevant research at the end of each chapter, as well as scripts that teachers can use to implement each technique.

Powell-Smith, K. A., & Stewart, L. H. (1998). The use of Curriculum-Based Measurement in the reintegration of students with mild disabilities. In M. R. Shinn (Ed.), *Advanced applications of Curriculum-Based Measurement* (pp. 254-297). New York: Guilford.

This chapter provides an overview of the Responsible Reintegration of Academically Competent Students (RReACS) model for students with mild disabilities, including the philosophical and legal foundations for the model and the incorporation of CBM in the six implementation steps. Research outcomes of RReACS, such as numbers of potential candidates for reintegration based on both nomothetic and idiographic approaches, teacher and parent attitudes toward reintegration, and student achievement outcomes also are presented.

Sprick, R., Garrison, M., & Howard, L. (1998). *CHAMPs: A proactive and positive approach to classroom management*. Longmont, CO: Sopris West.

The authors of this book present a research-based model

for classroom management for grades K through 9. The CHAMPs behavior program consists of eight modules, each representing a key aspect of effective classroom management: Vision, Organization, Expectations, the First Month, Motivation, Monitor and Revise, Correction Procedures, and Class-wide Motivation Systems. The modules include self-assessment tools as well as activities and discussion questions that can be used by teacher work groups. CHAMPs emphasize teacher expectations, and each letter in the acronym stands for a type of expectation that should be clarified for students:

Conversation (can students talk?), Help (how do students request help?), Activity (what is the objective of the activity?), Movement (can students get out of their seats?), and Participation (how do students show they are participating?).

AUTHOR NOTE

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Special Education: A Service, Not a Sentence

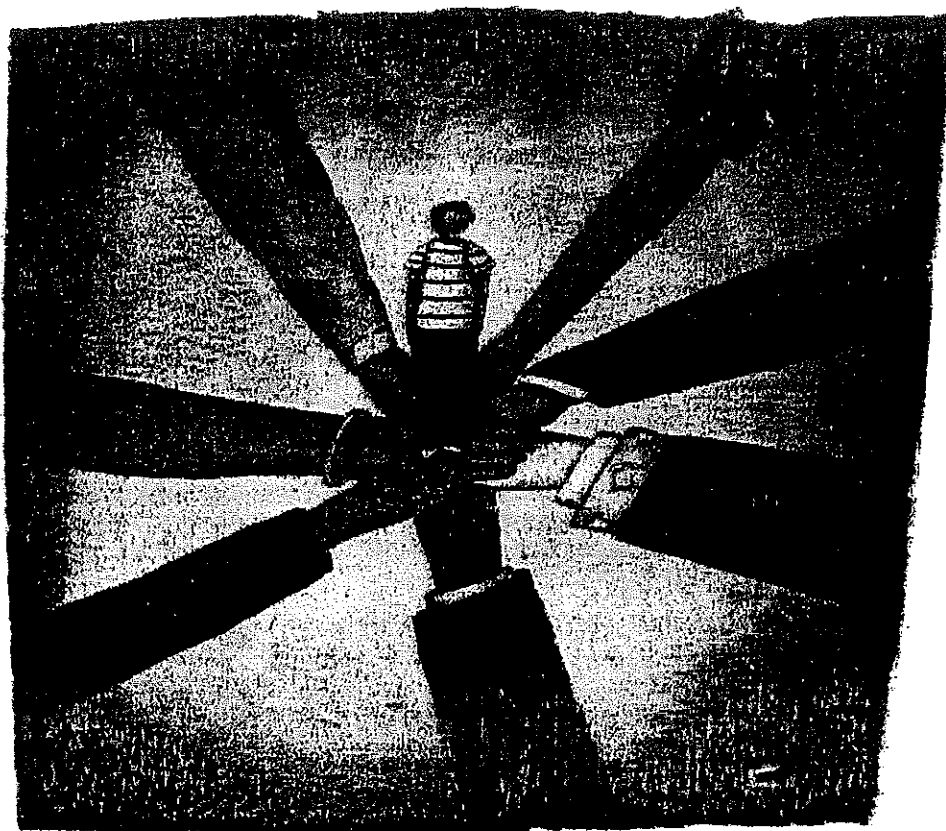
The general classroom is the right place to support students with disabilities—even when their behavior presents significant challenges.

Patrick A. Schwarz

Oscar is an inquisitive, charming 5th grader who loves baseball, music, and computers. He has dark hair, a quick smile, and an engaging wit. He lives with his mother, father, and brother in a blue-collar Chicago suburb. His parents are supportive and involved with his schooling.

Because he has significant auditory processing problems and is an English language learner, Oscar receives both special education services and English as a Second Language (ESL) support. Oscar's education team—which includes his parents, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, an ESL teacher, a speech therapist, and a social worker—is hardworking and believes in him.

During 1st through 3rd grades, Oscar



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attended a self-contained classroom for students labeled as having learning disabilities. His individualized education program (IEP) also provided for speech/language and social work services to support his learning.

When Oscar started 4th grade, his school adopted an inclusive education model. His special education, ESL, and speech/language services were now de-

livered primarily in the general education classroom through adaptations, differentiated instruction, and universal design strategies. His team planned together weekly, with the general educator e-mailing electronic lesson plans in advance to all team members (a school requirement). His teacher provided a range of supports to help with his significant auditory processing challenges,