

How Much Time Should Students with Severe Intellectual Disabilities Spend in Regular Education Classrooms and Elsewhere?

Lou Brown, Patrick Schwarz, Alice Udvari-Solner, Elise Frattura Kampschroer, Fran Johnson, Jack Jorgensen, and Lee Gruenewald
University of Wisconsin and Madison Metropolitan School District

Students with severe intellectual disabilities should be based in the same schools and classrooms in which they would be based if they were not disabled. However, a regular education classroom base in a home school is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for minimally acceptable education. These students should spend some of their time elsewhere. Nine of many factors to consider when determining the amount of time and the kinds of instruction that should be provided in regular education classrooms and other settings are addressed. The ideological and instructional assumptions underlying the benefits that can accrue from functioning in both regular education classrooms and elsewhere must be realized.

DESCRIPTORS: community-referenced instruction, educational placement, IEPs, integration, mainstreaming, nonschool instruction, normalization, placement, service delivery

Fifty years ago, individuals who were severely intellectually disabled did not live very long. Now their life expectancies are increasing annually (Siwolop & Mohs, 1985). Thirty years ago, the argument was whether or not they should receive educational services in public schools. Goldberg said yes, Cruickshank said no, and Goldberg was right (Goldberg & Cruickshank, 1958). Fifteen years ago, policy debates focused on whether or not they should be required to attend regular or segregated schools (Sontag, Burke & York, 1973). Regular schools are better.

The end of the arduous placement journey is immi-

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nent. Each year more students who function intellectually within the lowest 1% of the school age population attend, not only regular schools, but those they would attend if they were not disabled, that is, their home schools (Brown et al., 1989a). As a result, two issues are becoming increasingly important: (a) should they be based in special or in regular education classrooms, and (b) how do we determine the amounts of time each will spend in regular education classrooms and elsewhere?

When considering the important components of living in a culture in which citizens are assumed free and equal under the law, differences between those who function with and without severe intellectual disabilities should be minimal. However, the effects of severe intellectual disabilities cannot be denied, ignored, or minimized in importance. They must be acknowledged and accounted for in educational services. Indeed, if the students of concern are to achieve their maximum potential for functioning in integrated environments, some educational services that are different from those offered nondisabled peers must be provided.

The 0% Club and The 100% Club

I am going to fight this. I will hire as many lawyers as I can and spend as much time and money as it takes to make absolutely sure that this child does not spend 1 min of her life in a regular education classroom.

Those who believe that students with severe intellectual disabilities should not spend even 1 min of any school day in regular education classrooms are members of the 0% club. The arguments they use to justify total exclusion from regular classrooms are documented elsewhere (Burton & Hirschoren, 1979a, 1979b; Jenkins, Pious & Jewell, 1990).

Joe is totally deaf and blind. He has no arms or legs and is profoundly retarded. He has AIDS, herpes, hepatitis Q, and screams all the time. Those

crazy extremists believe that he can receive the most appropriate education in regular calculus, chemistry, and Latin classrooms.

Members of the 100% club argue that only by spending every minute of each school day in regular education classrooms can true, whole, full, meaningful, and pure integration/inclusion be realized. Spending less than 100% of each school day in regular education classrooms is segregative, exclusionary, and discriminatory. The 100% club may not have a member. The authors do not know anyone, nor could they find a printed reference, that argues that all the students of concern should spend 100% of their school time in regular education classrooms.

There are substantial differences between being *based in* and being *confined to* regular education classrooms. "Based in" refers to "being a member of a real class," "where and with whom you start the school day," "you may not spend all of your time with your class, but it is still your group and everyone knows it." At the elementary level, "based in" means that the student starts the day in, and is an acknowledged member of, Ms. Thomas's third grade. Being a member of her class influences the social relationships developed, helps establish self-esteem and personal identity, determines which teacher or teams will be mentors for the entire school year, makes a big school seem small, offers a place to become well known by at least a few people, and provides somewhere to go for support and guidance. In middle and high schools, the student starts the day in a regular homeroom. He/she then follows an individualized schedule with access to the same regular classes, extracurricular activities, and other opportunities available to nondisabled peers, but can also be somewhere else part of the day if it is judged more appropriate.

"Confined to" refers to spending 100% of each school day in regular education classes, leaving only if, when, and under the same circumstances as nondisabled classmates.

Why Some, but not All, of the Time

It is our position that it is unacceptable for students with severe intellectual disabilities to spend either 0% or 100% of their time in regular education classrooms, although the latter is a better alternative than the former. Self-contained regular and self-contained special education are both rejected because each extreme disallows important experiences and opportunities. The preference is that students with severe disabilities be based in the regular education classrooms in which they would be based if they were not disabled, and that individually meaningful amounts of time to be spent elsewhere should be arranged as needed. A number of reasons can be given for this approach.

The best language, social, dress, and behavior models are in regular education classrooms.

The high frequency opportunities necessary to build meaningful social relationships with nondisabled peers are in regular education classrooms. However, many important social relationships can be developed, maintained and/or enhanced at school, but not in regular education classrooms, particularly during high school years. Participating in extracurricular activities, "hanging out" in the commons, and going to and from areas of the school are good vehicles for social relationship development.

Regular education classrooms are chronological age-appropriate environments, at least until age 19.

The future leaders, tax payers, service providers, and parents of children with disabilities are in those regular classrooms. They need direct experience with the kinds of children they will produce and the diversity of citizens with whom they will associate.

Many changes that will be made in regular education classrooms will enhance the development of *all* students.

It is better to be an "insider" who goes out for short periods of time, than it is to be an "outsider" who comes in.

In many instances therapy and mobility training services can and should be provided in regular education classrooms. In some instances they must be provided elsewhere (Sternat, Messina, Nietupski, Lyon, & Brown, 1977).

Individualized, systematic, comprehensive, and long term instruction in a wide array of nonschool environments must be a critical component of an educational service plan (Brown et al., 1983).

Most nondisabled students learn to use restrooms within minutes after entering a school. It may take months of direct and systematic instruction for a student with severe intellectual, physical, and sensory disabilities to learn the same thing. Direct instruction on the school grounds, but not in regular education classrooms, must be provided.

The students of concern are in need of some highly specialized and individualized instruction by competent personnel over extended periods of time in important, high status, and highly preferred work environments during school days. Banks, hospitals, insurance companies, and government offices are examples. By confining instruction to regular education classrooms, opportunities to learn to function in these important work environments are denied because they are rarely available after 4:00 p.m. and on weekends.

If all known aspects of intellectual functioning were delineated, it is quite likely that the students of concern would be the least competent in all of them. Six facets of intellectual ability will be addressed here. The purpose is not to accentuate negatives or offer justifications

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for segregation, but to assist in the process of enabling individuals to benefit both from what is available in regular education classrooms and from what is available elsewhere.

1. *The Number of Skills that Can Be Learned*

When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school. . . (Simon, 1973)

Nondisabled students are capable of learning the basic skills, attitudes, and values necessary for a reasonable quality of life. They are also capable of learning thousands of other bits of information that may or may not be valuable, interesting, or otherwise needed. Furthermore, even if they are taught things in school that are not relevant to their current or subsequent lives, they still have the ability to acquire other information or skills elsewhere. Paul Simon is doing fine, despite what he learned in high school.

The instructional realities for the students of concern are different because, by definition, they learn less than approximately 99% of their peers (Fox, 1989). In addition, they rarely develop many important skills and attitudes without direct, systematic, and individualized instruction by competent persons. Thus, fewer risks can be taken with their instructional time and energy. That which is most important for functioning effectively in integrated current and subsequent school, nonschool, and postschool environments and activities must be selected for development. Many experiences available in regular education classrooms are important for nonschool and postschool functioning, but many are not (Sailor, 1988).

2. *Concrete versus Abstract*

Concrete refers to the real and tangible. Abstract refers to the representational and symbolic. A real apple is more concrete than a picture of an apple, which is more concrete than the printed word apple. The more intellectually disabled the student, the less it is likely that he/she will learn from the representational and symbolic. The students of concern should therefore be involved in concrete experiences as much as possible and in abstract experiences as little as possible.

Regular education classrooms are heavily laden with abstractions. Thus, students with severe intellectual disabilities can be expected to learn relatively little. In addition, abstract activities accentuate differences and concrete activities minimize them. When meaningful concrete activities are available, or can be arranged in regular education classrooms, the students of concern should be there to experience them. When abstract activities dominate, it is often more appropriate for these students to be elsewhere.

3. *Instructional Trials and Rates of Curricular Progression*

The more intellectually disabled the student, the more teaching trials will be needed to generate acquisition at meaningful performance criteria (Mercer & Snell, 1977). Increases in the number of teaching trials require concomitant increases in time and decreases in curricular progression rates.

Progress through the curriculum in regular education classrooms is usually determined by time. The Revolutionary War, the Civil War, World War I, and World War II are covered in November, December, January and February, respectively. Unfortunately, time-based curricular progressions are extremely difficult for students with severe intellectual disabilities. For example, to respond appropriately to the question, "What are the dates of the U.S. Civil War?" 100 direct instructional trials and 2 weeks may be necessary. The progress of the nondisabled students cannot be held in abeyance until the appropriate number of direct instructional trials and amounts of time are allowed. When activities require large discrepancies in trials and time, the information may not be worth the associated expenditures, and something more valuable can be developed elsewhere.

4. *Practice-Forgetting*

Without practice students with severe intellectual disabilities forget more, forget relatively more quickly, and recoup with much more difficulty than nondisabled peers (Snell, 1982). Natural practice refers to performance in criterion environments under the conditions available to nondisabled persons who engage in the same activity. Artificial practice refers to performance under other than criterion environment conditions. When Paul started his training at Kohl's Department Store, he required daily direct instruction by his teacher to learn to clean 10 mirrors acceptably. The direct instruction and the associated supervision by the paid professional were faded over time. When Paul cleaned the mirrors under the supervision of his teacher, he was engaging in artificial practice because the teacher is not a natural condition of the store. Now he practices the skills required to clean the 10 mirrors at the store (the criterion environment) every day after school under natural conditions, that is, with the same supervision available to nondisabled coworkers. If he does not practice consistently in the criterion environment, he will forget more, and more quickly, than any other worker. If he is allowed to forget, he may require the same amounts of time and instruction he needed for the original learning.

Regular educators rarely arrange for natural practice because they seldom assume responsibility for the performance of classroom-taught skills in other environments under natural conditions. It is rarely acceptable to spend valuable resources teaching the students of

concern skills that will not be practiced later in criterion environments under natural conditions. Thus, before the selection of most objectives, commitments for practice must be secured from those who naturally function in criterion environments. Instructional personnel then will not have to spend valuable time arranging for and monitoring artificial practice. If professionals are monitoring practice, they are not teaching. By turning practice responsibilities over to others, valuable resources can be devoted to continually enhancing repertoires.

5. Generalization

The performance of a skill under conditions that are different from those under which it was acquired is called generalization (Fox, 1989; Horner, McDonnell, & Bellamy, 1986; Stokes & Baer, 1977). For our purposes, the more intellectually disabled the student, the less confidence one can have that what was acquired in one environment will be performed acceptably in another. A primary characteristic that defines the students of concern is substantial difficulties with generalization. This can be addressed in several ways.

The classroom as the criterion environment option. An important part of what is learned or experienced at school is an end in itself, in that it is inherently valuable for effective functioning in regular education classrooms. Examples are being a contributing member of a team, imitating the appropriate actions of others, learning cooperatively, having fun, developing friendships and self-esteem, using an electric wheelchair, and contributing to the growth of others.

School is also a means to an end. The end is not living, working and playing in school, but in integrated society. There are many important skills and other phenomena crucial to meaningful functioning in integrated nonschool and postschool environments and activities that simply cannot be learned or experienced in regular education classrooms. Riding appropriately on a real public bus, shopping effectively in a real grocery store, and safely crossing busy streets at night in an electric wheelchair are examples.

If all efforts are devoted to developing skills necessary for effective functioning in regular education classrooms, and no efforts are devoted to effective functioning elsewhere, an unacceptable imbalance results. Reasonable proportions of resources must be devoted to the direct instruction of meaningful functioning in both nonclassroom and nonschool environments.

The generalization skill development option. Assume a teacher argues that she cannot teach Sue to function appropriately in every important environment and activity. However, if she can improve Sue's generalization skills, Sue's ability to function effectively without direct instruction in a wide variety of nonclassroom environments and activities will be enhanced. The problem with this extremely seductive option is that no one has ever been able to develop the ability to generalize in the

students of concern to the extent that what is learned in simulated settings can be expected with reasonable confidence to be performed acceptably on busy streets or in real work environments, etc. Thus, until it is demonstrated how the generalization abilities of students with severe intellectual disabilities can be sufficiently developed, the prudent educational strategy lies elsewhere.

Test-teach-test options. A third method of addressing generalization difficulties is (a) to evaluate performance in a criterion environment, (b) follow with germane instruction in a regular education classroom, and then, (c) reevaluate performance in the criterion environment. If it is less than acceptable, additional instruction in the regular education classroom can be provided, additional generalization checks can be conducted, etc., until performance in the criterion environment is adequate.

The obvious advantage of this, and the many variations of the test-teach-test option, is that valuable time and other resources can be saved by not having to go to the criterion environments of each student for all instruction. The obvious risk, indeed, the obvious reality, is that too much of what is taught in regular education classrooms is never generalized acceptably to criterion environments.

Before test-teach-test options can be considered educationally tenable, two conditions should be met. First, empirical evidence that reasonable generalization skills are operative should be available. Second, the resources devoted to the simulated instruction needed to produce acceptable performance in the criterion environment should be less than those needed to generate acceptable performance through direct instruction in the criterion environment only. Test-teach-test options are educationally viable for some, but not all.

The teach only in the criterion environment option. If a particular student generalizes little, if anything, from simulated to criterion environments, direct instruction can be provided only in criterion environments. In short, as regular education classrooms are rarely criterion environments, instruction must be provided elsewhere.

6. Difficulty Ranges

Most information can be ordered into ranges from the least to the most difficult or complex. Although each educationally meaningful range may contain hundreds of skills of similar difficulty, acquisition probabilities decrease as information across ranges increases in complexity. The students of concern function within the lowest difficulty ranges.

Learning skills within a particular range is referred to as horizontal enhancement. Learning skills of increasing difficulty, or across difficulty ranges, is referred to as vertical enhancement (Brown et al., in press). In some instances it may be appropriate to operate within

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a particular range indefinitely, because it is extremely unlikely that a skill in a more difficult range can be acquired. In other instances, instruction can be provided within one range and reasonable returns on the educational investment can be anticipated if a move to a more difficult range is engineered.

Many activities in regular education classrooms demand rapid vertical progression through difficulty ranges. For example, students are often expected to learn how to multiply and divide whole numbers and then to learn how to multiply and divide fractions. Vertical enhancement strategies that require learning a few skills within one range and proceeding immediately to the next must be used with extreme caution, because the students of concern quickly enter ranges that contain information that is beyond their acquisition potential.

The strategy of choice is to determine the difficulty range appropriate for a particular student and then to teach the important elements within that range as much as possible. If movement to the next higher range seems reasonable, it could then be initiated. Mike was learning to make a sandwich of bread and cheese in his home. After he learned to prepare a cold sandwich, it was decided to teach him to grill it in the microwave oven using pictures of dial settings as aids. Making a cold cheese sandwich is relatively simple. Grilling a cheese sandwich in a microwave oven is relatively complex, and therefore is in a higher difficulty range. Given that students with severe intellectual disabilities have great difficulty in moving across ranges, how can functioning in regular education classrooms be managed?

Option 1—adapt the regular education curriculum downward. In a regular education high school chemistry class, students were learning to mix three chemicals to produce a detergent. When the turn came for the class member with severe intellectual disabilities, the teacher lowered the intellectual requirements of the activity by instructing her to "touch green," that is, to touch the glass beaker that contained green fluid. Some argue that the "adapt downward" option is acceptable because the student is at least partially participating in a chronologically age-appropriate and integrated environment and is either developing or engaging in social relationships with nondisabled peers.

Some of the major difficulties often associated with the adapt downward option are that: (a) the activity often selected for instruction may not be meaningful in, or generalized to, any other environment; (b) the adaptation is boring to nondisabled students and wasteful of their time; (c) the student is engaged in an unacceptably low percentage of an entire activity for less than the amount of time needed for meaningful acquisition; and (d) more important skills can be developed elsewhere. The adapt downward option should be used, but with caution, because in many instances

more important skills can be taught elsewhere in ways that minimize devaluation, generalization difficulties, and the waste of resources.

Option 2—generate alternative activities. Sue uses a wheelchair and functions in a regular physical education class. Rather than attempting to teach her to walk on a 3-foot high balance beam, two beams were placed on the gym floor and she was taught to traverse them in her wheelchair. Instead of being lifted so that she could hold onto rings that hung from the ceiling, the rings were lowered and she was taught to raise and lower herself from her seat, a skill that also assists in wheelchair transfers.

The advantages of providing alternative activities in regular education settings are that students with disabilities can learn something meaningful in the presence of nondisabled peers and that nondisabled peers can learn to adapt so that those with disabilities can participate. The disadvantages are that (a) students with disabilities may be involved in one-on-one instructional arrangements that are too specialized for constructive interactions with nondisabled peers, (b) what is taught may not be generalized to criterion environments, and (c) low priority instructional objectives may be selected.

Option 3—provide instruction in other environments. There are activities appropriate for nondisabled students in regular education classrooms that are within the difficulty ranges of the students of concern. Playing cooperative games, communicating with nondisabled classmates, learning social manners, preparing and serving snacks, and drawing are examples. Conversely, there are regular education classroom activities that are appropriate and important for nondisabled students, but not for those with severe intellectual disabilities. Learning the dates of the U.S. Civil War, reading and discussing novels, and memorizing the capitals of the countries of South America are examples. While nondisabled peers are dissecting frogs and dividing decimals, it may be more appropriate for a student with severe intellectual disabilities who also has significant visual and fine motor difficulties to receive instruction elsewhere. Some examples are learning to communicate manually to a store clerk, participating in the preparation of a meal at home, and functioning in an integrated nonschool worksite.

In sum, the student under discussion is a student who can learn, but not as fast or as much as 99% of his peers; who needs substantially more instructional trials and time than all others; who must practice continuously because he/she forgets more, and more quickly, and recoups with more difficulty than anyone else; and who has extreme difficulty generalizing from one environment to another. In addition, a significant proportion of school learning is a means to an end and that the end is maximal participation in integrated society. Therefore, how much time should this student spend

in regular education classrooms and how much time receiving direct, individualized, longitudinal, and systematic instruction in the actual integrated environments in which he/she functions, or is likely to function, during nonschool and postschool life?

Factors to Consider When Determining Time Spent in Regular Education Classrooms and Elsewhere

Nine important factors should be considered when determining how much time will be spent in regular education classrooms and elsewhere. Many have been presented in other forms or for other purposes (Brown et al., 1989b). Space does not allow detailed treatments or the consideration of other factors such as cost, safety, health, teacher comfort and convenience, logistics, and personnel-to-student ratios.

1. Chronological Age

Unfortunately, students who are severely intellectually disabled cannot learn to function acceptably in integrated community environments when instruction is confined to regular education classrooms (Sailor, 1988). Thus, as chronological age increases, functioning in nonschool environments should take priority over functioning at school. When these students attend elementary schools, they should spend individually determined, but substantial, amounts of time in regular education classrooms. During middle and high school years, time spent in regular education classrooms should decrease annually, until relatively little, if any, time is spent there during the last 2 or 3 transition years (Sailor et al., 1986).

2. Related Services

Most students who are severely intellectually disabled need the services of mobility, physical, occupational, speech, and language (and other) specialists during some or all of their lives. In fact, these needs probably require training at school, at home, getting to and from home, school, parks, and stores; in classrooms, hallways, and bathrooms; and in about every other place in which the student functions. However, although it is appropriate to provide many therapeutic and other related services in regular education classrooms, there are also instances in which the relationship between the student and the therapist must be private. Further, as schools are not hospitals or clinics, the emphasis given therapeutic and other related services must be balanced against the need for developing relationships with nondisabled peers, the learning of functional skills and many other important educational phenomena.

3. The Number of Environments in Which a Student Functions

Assume that you counted the number of environments in which a nondisabled student functioned dur-

ing a 7-day period. Assume further that you did the same for a student with severe intellectual disabilities of the same chronological age, neighborhood, and socioeconomic status. You then determined that the nondisabled student functioned in 50 environments and the student with disabilities functioned in 10. You decide that too large a discrepancy exists and that reasonable amounts of educational resources should be devoted to decreasing it.

Stated another way, you decide that it is better to teach a few skills in many rooms than it is to teach many skills in a few rooms. Given the choice of teaching (a) many skills in the kitchen and none in the bathroom, den, yard, and basement, or (b) teaching a few skills in the kitchen, bathroom, den, yard, and basement, you choose the latter. It is extremely important to identify the actual environments that will enhance the general life space of your student and then to take him/her to them and teach the essentials.

If educational services are confined to regular classrooms, who is left with the responsibility for teaching acceptable functioning in a wide variety of important nonschool environments? Although some parents/guardians have the time, skill, inclination, and whatever else is necessary to ensure that their child functions acceptably in a variety of nonschool environments, most do not. Some instructional time in regular education classrooms must be traded for instruction in integrated nonschool environments. Thus, a critical question that must be asked in the instructional objective determination process is: Will a particular objective and the associated expenditures of resources enhance functioning in an increased number of environments? If not, they may be much less valuable than others that will.

4. Personnel Qualities

Success in a particular environment is often a function of the qualities of the nondisabled people who are responsible for the instruction and support in that environment (Boomer, 1982). There are many teachers, therapists and other school personnel who are competent, creative, flexible, compassionate, and effective. It is extremely important that all students be given access to their talents. If a regular education classroom teacher operates an environment in which a student can benefit substantially, time should be spent in that classroom. If a regular education classroom is operated by a relatively incompetent teacher, the same student might learn much more receiving peer tutorial assistance in a study hall, in an integrated nonschool environment, or elsewhere. Time spent with competent persons should be maximized and time spent with incompetent persons should be minimized, regardless of degrees, certifications, years of experience or management-labor agreements.

5. Effectiveness

One and relationships within schools. Large environmental relationships developed (Back, 1989). Activities specifically rounded student potential a reasonable must be

6. Parental Involvement

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7. Problem Solving

Select instruction will be valuable also is something with real

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8. Functional Assurance

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5. *Effects on Social Relationships*

One of the most important functions of educational and related services for students with severe intellectual disabilities is to develop a wide array of social relationships with nondisabled peers that can be expressed both in school and nonschool environments and activities. Large amounts of time spent together in the same environments and activities are needed for social relationships with appropriate, nondisabled peers to develop (Biklen, 1989; Forest & Lusthaus, 1989; Stainback, Stainback, & Slavin, 1989; Strully & Strully, 1989). Conversely, the less time a student with disabilities spends with nondisabled peers, the lower the probability that the array of relationships critical for a well-rounded social existence will be formed. Thus, before a student is removed from a regular education classroom, the potential effects on the probabilities of developing a reasonable array of important social relationships must be studied carefully.

6. *Parent/Guardian/Student Priorities*

Many parents/guardians have clear preferences as to where their children should receive instruction. Some feel strongly that learning to function more effectively in their homes is extremely important. For others, learning to function in integrated work environments is a very high priority. Others are concerned that their children develop a wide array of social relationships with nondisabled peers. If parents/guardians assign a high priority to developing social relationships with nondisabled peers, more time should be spent in regular education classrooms. Obviously, the preferences of students must also be given due value in the same deliberations (Guess, Benson, & Siegel-Causey, 1985; Shevin & Klein, 1984).

7. *Probability of Acquisition*

Selecting a relatively meaningless concept or skill for instruction just because there is a high probability it will be learned is unacceptable. Selecting a potentially valuable concept or skill that is not likely to be learned also is not acceptable. The option of choice is to select something that is valuable *and* likely to be developed with reasonable instructional resources.

There are many concepts and skills that are extremely important to the students of concern that can be acquired in regular education classrooms. However, much that is presented in such classrooms is beyond their abilities (Sailor et al., 1986). Placing them in such environments should be avoided. When complex, highly abstract, and nonfunctional activities that offer low probabilities of acquisition are scheduled, it is acceptable for these students to move to another setting and other activities.

8. *Functionality*

Assume that a student is asked to perform an action and does not. If someone else must then perform that

action, it is considered functional. If a student is asked to perform an action and does not, and no one else must then perform that action, it can be designated other than functional. The ability to perform functional skills allows autonomy, choices, privacy, and other personal freedoms. Conversely, the fewer functional skills a person can perform, the more dependent he is, the fewer choices he has, the less privacy he will be allowed and the more he will be dominated by others. Repertoires cannot be confined to the functional skills that can be acquired in regular education classrooms. There are many extremely important functional skills that can only be developed by competent personnel in home, community, and work environments.

9. *Preparation for Postschool Life*

The clock is constantly ticking and school time decreases accordingly. Is Jo being prepared to be as productive and as competent as possible in important postschool environments and activities? Is what she is being taught going to be obsolete, chronologically age-inappropriate, demeaning, and unnecessary by the time it is taught? Is there anything more relevant to living an integrated life after school than what is being developed? These and similar questions must be addressed constructively to provide educational experiences that result in maximal functioning in integrated society during the postschool years. As the clock ticks, what is important in adulthood must be given a higher priority during the school years than what is not. Many experiences in the regular education classroom may not be as important for adult functioning as those that are available elsewhere.

Sacrifices, Trades, and Compromises

In the past most of us had a few good ideas about what these students should learn, but not many actually knew how to teach them. Our disciplines contained few really talented and creative members, and we were overwhelmed by homogeneous groupings and segregated environments.

During the last 20 years, tremendous advances have been made in the sciences, technologies, and ideologies upon which the education of students with severe intellectual disabilities is based. We now have the ability to teach any student much more than time allows; each month more and more talented young persons enter our disciplines, and each year we become more ideologically advanced. This much needed and hard-earned progress places the educational community in a challenging, complex and delicate position. We now have the luxury of deciding which of many possibilities to teach. That luxury also requires the responsibility of deciding what will not be taught.

All of our resources could be spent developing social relationships with nondisabled peers in regular education classrooms, but we would be sacrificing teaching

what is necessary for effective functioning in real buses, streets, workplaces, parks, and stores. If we devote all our resources to teaching functional skills, we would be trading away important social relationships with non-disabled peers and critical recreation/leisure repertoires because these do not meet our definition of functionality. We could provide all instruction in nonschool environments and therapy rooms. If we did, we would be compromising _____

The educational careers of students who are severely intellectually disabled must be balanced across environments, persons, activities, attitudes, values, and skills. One or two components cannot be allowed to dominate. Although we may emphasize something for a period of time, over a 21-year career we must provide services that truly prepare for comprehensive functioning in integrated postschool life. Sacrifices, trades, and compromises are inevitable. No parent, student or professional should have the power to impose imbalanced or disproportioned educational services. How much time should be spent in regular classes? Enough to ensure that the student is a member, not a visitor. A lot, if the student is engaged in meaningful activities. Quite a bit, if she is young, but less as she approaches 21. There is still a lot we do not know.

We need desperately to educate future parents, teachers, coworkers, taxpayers, legislators, and friends. All must grow up with individuals with disabilities if meaningful integration is to be realized. Each day more and more of those responsible for the state of regular education realize that changes must be made to accommodate to an increasingly diverse and complex student population. As teacher education evolves so that regular educators can better serve more diverse students, special education must also change. In the past, "special" meant separate, segregated, and parallel. It is time to join, grow together, co-mingle, and become involved in the larger process. If we bring collaborative teamwork, individualized adaptations, instruction in natural environments, inclusion ideologies, and other components of our arsenal with us, we can share in the exciting, challenging, and awesome responsibility of arriving at the best possible educational services for all.

Finally, the evolution to regular classroom bases in home schools raises many substantive administrative issues. How much will it cost? What kind of preservice and inservice training is needed? What kind of changes in regular education curricula, organization, and management are appropriate? How must teacher-student ratios, licensing, and certifications change? These and other administrative factors will be addressed in a subsequent paper.

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