

**A QUALITATIVE INVESTIGATION OF  
MAINSTREAMING WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF  
READING INSTRUCTION**

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The child with exceptional needs is usually considered either a challenge or a burden by general and special educators. In compliance with P.L. 94-142, which mandates that children with exceptional needs must be educated in the least restrictive environment, increasing numbers of special education pupils are being assigned to regular classrooms, mainstreamed, for at least a portion of each school day, wherever and whenever possible. The mainstreaming process has come to be of particular concern to individuals responsible for or concerned about reading education, since reading achievement is a critical factor in overall academic achievement and the ability to cope with everyday life. Educators have become acutely concerned about the extent to which mainstreaming can meet the conditions of equal educational opportunity, for all children, in a manner which approximates normality, and, more specifically, how the process of mainstreaming affects the teaching and learning of reading.

Until recently, research related to reading, which has taken account of various exceptional needs, has failed to provide

much descriptive information that might assist educators in understanding how mainstreaming evolves—what actually goes on in the process of mainstreaming. Rhodes and Spencer (1971), Rapiere (1972), Johnston (1972), Brafield, et al (1973), and Schloss and Miller (1982) have examined the status of the child with exceptional needs in relation to peers, teachers and environment. Hallahan, et al (1978), Chapman and Boersma (1979), and Perl and Bryan (1980) have assessed the exceptional child in terms of self-concept/achievement as a function of perceived locus of control. These studies, however, have explored the characteristics of individuals primarily by means of measurement—usually involving some form of treatment procedure under controlled conditions in which several other variables have often been manipulated. Such research does not provide enough descriptive data to offer a perspective of the entire social context of children, teachers, and other support persons involved in the phenomenon of mainstreaming.

Quantitative and/or causalistic - deterministic investigation alone does not lend to a thorough disclosure of the characteristics of mainstreaming conditions as they exist, as they are shared, and as they develop within the social context. Qualitative investigation is necessary for developing a realistic depiction of the social context. In reference to teaching strategies, both structural and interactional, Marshall and Weinstein (1984) indicate that: although critical to consider, this assessment of implementation is in and of itself not enough. The entire classroom context in which these implemented variables operate and influence each other must also be taken into account (p. 305). In their examination of student's self-evaluations, Marshall and Weinstein adhere to a model which integrates the elements of classroom organizational structure and interactions with the quality of relationships.

The quality of relationships that evolve from the conditions of mainstreaming within the context of reading instruction can be defined by the triadic interactions of student, teacher and support persons. An investigation of the perspectives of each of these members of the triad leads to a comprehensive view of the social context in question.

### Purpose of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were: a) to deliver a realistic description of social interaction between teacher and children with regular and exceptional educational needs (EEN) within one classroom during reading instruction, b) to identify the teacher's, children's, and support person's perceptions of their roles, of each other, and of the materials and curriculum, and c) to determine the extent to which patterns and contradictions in behavior existed, and ways in which interaction might be improved in relation to these findings.

### Data Source, Instruments, and Time Frame

The data source for the study was a middle school reading class of 24 students—17 regular and 7 mainstreamed EEN children, one regular teacher, and seven support persons including a science teacher/block leader, social studies teacher, English teacher, teacher of the Trainable Mentally Retarded

(TMR), resource room teacher, reading consultant, and a classroom aide who attended to two trainable mentally retarded (TMR) students included in the EEN child count. Daily observations, interviews, audiotaping, behavior frequency recordings, notetaking, and administration of the Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (NSIES) were used to collect data. Data collection was conducted over a three month period.

### Procedures

Observation of behaviors of the pupils, teacher, and support personnel were conducted and recorded on a frequency basis and accompanied by descriptive note-taking. The behavior protocol has been derived from the question categories of the interview questionnaire. Interview responses (expressed views) and recorded behaviors were compared in order to ascertain whether personal behaviors support personally expressed meanings (views) or contradict them.

The interview questionnaire consisted of a series of corresponding questions which were asked of the regular classroom teacher, the exceptional and non-exceptional pupils, and the support personnel. The questions were derived from two sources: Flanders' theory of dominant/integrative classroom interaction, with regard to teacher influence, student dependence, and learning goals; and the critical areas of concern of the study—*self-concept* and *perception of roles and responsibilities, interaction between teachers, pupils, and support personnel, and teaching/learning styles*. These areas were examined in order to determine the ways in which understandings are perceived and shared.

Daily notes and audiotapes were used to supplement and verify the findings of the interviews and the observations of behavior. The notes and tapes also provided much of the information included in a "thick description" of the social context in question. Interactional diagrams were also used to delineate relationships within the social context of the classroom.

The appropriate Nowicki-Strickland Internal-External Scale (1973) was administered to the exceptional and non-exceptional children, the teachers, the reading specialist/coordinator, and the classroom aide. This scale has been designed for the purpose of determining an individual's orientation (internal-external) in relation to generalized expectancies. Comparisons were made between interview responses, recorded behaviors, and orientation, in order to determine whether there are relationships among these characteristics which indicate particular patterns of interaction between children and adults involved in the process of mainstreaming during reading instruction. Student's t-test was applied to several variables—to expressed views, observed behaviors and other recorded characteristics—to determine significant differences between regular and exceptional and internally or externally oriented students. A significance level of  $p < .10$  was chosen due to the small number of individuals involved.

## FINDINGS

### Student Characteristics and Perceptions

The class consisted of a combination of sixth and seventh graders, 11 females and 13 males. Of the total class, there were

seven EEN students — five females and two males. It should be noted that, from the EEN group, two females were trainable mentally retarded. (This was of particular significance at this school since it was the first time that TMR students were mainstreamed into a reading class.)

All of the students were said to be reading below and up to the fifth grade reading level. The diversity of particular strengths and weaknesses was not readily apparent, since there were no skills or ability level groupings within the class. The class was generally referred to by the teacher as the "low" or "slow" group.

Among the EEN members of the class there was a great variety of physiological and personality types. One student who had recently been identified as EEN was on the cheerleading squad and another had been absent from class for approximately two weeks while undergoing tests and related services at a detoxification clinic. One of the TMR students showed no physical manifestations of her handicap, while the other TMR student bore physical features common to Down's Syndrome. In terms of discipline, both of the TMR students were among those who were consistently least disruptive.

After several days of observation, it was still possible for the observer to pick out all of the EEN students on the basis of behavior, appearance, class participation or social interaction. (The observer had initially requested of faculty/staff members only to be told how many EEN students were present in the teacher's class and not to be informed of who they were.) Some of the mainstreamed students exhibited no peculiar idiosyncracies, were as much like their classmates in appearance, and engaged in verbal class participation as well as social interaction with their peers. During turn-taking for oral reading, distinctions between EEN and regular students were not evident, since reading performance varied across the entire class. Some of the mainstreamed students read just as well as the regular students in terms of pronunciation, intonation, and fluency.

The seating arrangement gave no evidence of a distinction between mainstreamed students and regular students, save for one exception. Most of the mainstreamed students were interspersed among the regular students, since the seating was designated according to alphabetical order by last name. However, the two TMR students were placed on an end row, out of alphabetical order, as the only students in this row.

In an effort to identify and describe each of the students, in terms of factors relevant to the social context of the reading class and socio-cultural attributes related to reading, various characteristics were monitored and recorded. The selected characteristics which combine to create each "student's profile" are: public library membership, number of types of books borrowed from the school IMC and Reading Room, classroom activity preference, rank in off-task behavior, number of times called on to participate, number of times unprepared for class, number of times absent, EEN or regular status, and internal or external orientation (as indicated by Locus of Control Scale).

Although public library membership and the number and types of books borrowed from the IMC and Reading Room are external to the social context of the classroom, they are factors indicative of reading attitudes and behavior which, to

some degree, reflect the extent to which the social context of classroom learning is generalizable or the extent to which exploration beyond the introduction of concepts in the classroom is pursued. If one of the goals of mainstreaming is to help EEN students manifest behaviors and characteristics which are as culturally normative as possible, then individual interest or initiative in reading activity, outside of the classroom, is a significant indicator of whether EEN students are as much a part of the mainstream as their regular counterparts — whether they approximate the cultural norm.

All of the characteristics presented in the students' profile are personal attributes with the exception of two—number of times called on to participate and absence. Although the teacher was ultimately in control of how often individuals are called upon to read or to answer questions, and such instances are not reflective of the students' personalities in and of themselves, these instances do illustrate, to some degree, the amount of social entree extended to various individuals. Absence from the reading class, or from school in general, may be due to a variety of factors such as uncontrollable illness, family circumstances, or participation in some other form of instruction within the school building, and therefore is not reflective of the students' personalities in and of themselves. However, both number of times called upon and absence from class are influential in the way individuals are perceived by their classmates and/or the teacher and are, therefore, reflective of social status within the group. If we compare selected social characteristics of both EEN students and regular students, then we can make some determination of the extent to which the mainstreamed EEN students approximate cultural norms in such aspects.

Among the students of the integrated reading class, expressed views reflecting significant differences in relation to regular and exceptional or internally oriented and externally oriented students are both worth consideration, since the students did not readily identify themselves by these imposed, etc, categories and were often implicating themselves in attribute associations instead of being associated with certain characteristics by someone else. (It is interesting to note that the students categorized themselves only as boys vs. girls or sixth graders vs. seventh graders—the emic viewpoint.)

With regard to regular vs. exceptional status, characteristics which might cause procedural conflicts within the context of the integrated class—"last finisher," "problems with work," and "different from most others"—were significantly more often associated with exceptional students. Personal characteristics reflecting significant differences between regulars and exceptionals seem to indicate that it is most advantageous, from a social viewpoint to be a regular—internally oriented student. However, from an academic viewpoint, regular students were significantly more often associated with off-task behavior—perhaps indicating that, within the culture of the integrated class, regular students are generally more popular and pay less attention to tasks, while exceptional students must be more attentive to succeed but rank low in popularity.

In terms of the value system upon which the students based their ideas of *roles* and *responsibilities* among themselves, the teacher, and support persons, as many students in the teacher's reading class indicated that they preferred having

a choice of assignments as those who preferred being told exactly what to do. More students relied on personal (metacognitive) indicators to determine whether they were doing a "good" or "not so good" job with their work than relied on the teacher to tell them so, and a majority of students indicated that they raised their hand for help when they didn't understand assignments.

Fewer students perceived themselves as help-givers, and of those who did, most of them were internally oriented, but two EEN students (one internal and one external) were included. Most of the students indicated that they liked participating in class and few said that the teacher expected them to do better than they could do. Most students indicated a preference for a longer introduction to individual seatwork and said that the teacher did do extra things to help them understand. A majority of the class characterized the teacher as friendly or both strict and friendly and indicated that he disciplined the class often.

Although half of the students said that no one helped them improve or become interested in reading, outside of the reading class, the majority of students who did give credits referred to support personnel—the reading room staff, first, and then the English teacher, Social Studies teacher, and counselor, second, as well as parents, siblings or friends.

Additional opinions of the students about *themselves* and their peers provide a closer look at their ideas of the premises upon which they operated within the sub-culture of the integrated class. Most individuals in the teacher's reading class cited EEN students as classmates who usually needed extra time to complete work, had more problems with the work, and were different from most others in the class. Many of the students were perceived by their classmates as being different from most of their peers in the reading class. Consequently, some regular students were cited as often as EEN students—for positive or negative reasons. A majority of those perceived as different, both by peers and by teachers, were externally oriented. Almost all of the students indicated that those who were "different" still belonged in the class—because of their reading level. Students did not differentiate themselves as regular and exceptional, but rather as girls and boys or sixth and seventh graders.

Almost all of the students stated very positively that they could do well in the teacher's class—including most of the EEN students. A majority stated that no one received extra attention from the teacher; but a majority of the EEN students were named, along with regulars, by those who felt that some peers did get extra attention. As many students were perceived as receivers of extra attention for disruptive behavior as those who needed help with the work. When students did express the opinion that they might learn more if others were not in the reading class, they cited such individuals for disruptive behavior—a minority of the EEN students.

Most of the students indicated that they liked the activities in the reading class. Aside from free time, a majority indicated high priority for class discussion, working alone or reviewing work, while listening to the teacher and giving a report were of low priority. A majority of externally oriented students placed reviewing work in high priority, as opposed to a majority of internally oriented students who placed working alone in high priority. The *skillsbook* activities were preferred by most

of the students, including a majority of the EEN students, primarily attributing their preference to the idea that the *skillsbook* was easy.

The following behaviors reflect or contradict some of the students' expressed opinions. Some students who stated that they liked to participate in class actually did not participate very often, as compared to peers, particularly some of the EEN students. However, in relation to attributes such as working non-stop or taking breaks, being "cued" for discipline, and getting attention from the teacher, students' indications were reasonably accurate, as reflected in frequency recordings of off-task behavior, reprimands, and being called on. One EEN student who was cited by several peers as being different from most of his classmates named himself as different, and his explanation of why—that he thought differently and had different tastes—was substantiated by the fact that one of his peers considered him different for the very same reason.

The following *general statements* seem warranted by the *student's* expressed views and behaviors.

- EEN and regular students reflected positive and independent attitudes about themselves and their peers.
- EEN students' views and behaviors reflected as much of a range in attitudes and patterns as the views and behaviors of regular students in a majority of instances.
- There were more notable differences in views and behaviors between regular and exceptional individuals than differences between internally and externally oriented students, but students did not refer to each other on the basis of these categories.
- A majority of the class, including the EEN students, expressed positive opinions of the reading teacher.
- Support persons were considered instrumental in providing additional help or encouragement in relation to reading.
- A majority of regular and EEN students indicated that they preferred using their basal *skillsbook*.
- The students' expressed views of themselves and their peers, as well as their actual behaviors, reflected patterns of classroom characteristics unconsciously associated with internally or externally oriented individuals.

#### Teacher Characteristics and Perceptions

Some of the most salient findings reflect the teacher's ideas of his professional *roles* and *responsibilities*, and the roles he ascribed to the students. The teacher said that the placements of all of the EEN students in his class were based upon their general abilities to function in the regular classroom setting. All of the students in the fourth period class were referred to by him as the "low or slow" group. He was consistent in indicating that he was not aware of any student's diagnostic category (label), but was also non-specific about their individual needs in reading. In relation to their potential capabilities, EEN students were referred to solely in terms of their classroom performance.

The teacher indicated that he was confident about working with the EEN students, and attributed this confidence to personal characteristics such as experience, skills, and an "inward perception of the children." He indicated that the ex-

change between regular and special education persons had decreased, in his estimation, since there was no longer a classroom aide for all of the EEN students. The teacher's discussion of collaboration with support personnel referred to a counselor, who assisted him with behavioral problems, and the TMR teacher and the aide, who were considered helpful because they attended his class to take notes and reinforce his lessons by using his books in their TMR room.

In reference to the *children*, the teacher did not address the potential for including EEN students in small group activity. He indicated that he did not conduct small group activity because of dissatisfaction with previous experience of this nature—scores dropped—and apprehensions about disciplinary problems with specific students in the current class. The teacher was not consistent in his optimistic references to specific EEN students like LANA (E) whom he indicated was one of those students most willing to conform to his requirements, able to perform effectively in situations of choice, enthusiastic about class participation, competitive with regular peers in relation to a variety of positive attributes, and also regarded as one of the most devoted students to five out of six classroom activities. The teacher was less optimistic in his references to EEN students like DENNIS (E) whom he said he viewed as needing to have choices made for him, being indifferent to classwork and/or peers, calling on the teacher for assistance during seatwork, and frequently needing extra clarification about steps in completing a task. There was little evidence of optimism in his references to MARGARET (E), one of the TMR students. He indicated that the regular students demonstrated impatience with her and that she spent most of her time preoccupied with preparation of her materials.

As for *materials* and *techniques*, the teacher regarded the basal reader series (Houghton - Mifflin, 1979) as most effective with both the regular and EEN children. He emphasized his opinion that the constant use of drill and repetition was important to the reinforcement of concepts presented in the reading class. He also indicated that he did not find it necessary to alter written assignments in reading instruction for any of the EEN students and that they did not cause any extra responsibilities for him except the writing of IEPs. He made no reference to mutual exchange of methods or techniques with support persons but did indicate that they were the most important resource in helping him to accommodate the mainstreamed students because "they tell us the students' needs and problems . . . including problems at home."

The following *general statements* seem warranted by the *teachers' expressed views and behaviors*.

- The reading teacher expressed awareness of and concern for students' task related scores and behavior within the parameters of classroom performance.
- Mainstreamed EEN students were said to create no extra responsibilities except the completion of IEPs.
- The teacher's attitude toward mainstreaming of EEN students ranged from optimism to pessimism depending upon the particular student. For example, LANA'S (E) weaknesses were not mentioned.
- Adjustments to or provision of a variety of materials or techniques was not considered necessary for EEN students because they were on the same level as the

rest of the group.

- Collaboration with support personnel concerning EEN students in the mainstream setting was limited to behavioral matters.
- The teacher's expressed views did reflect patterns of classroom characteristics unconsciously associated with either internally or externally oriented students.

#### Support Personnel Characteristics and Perceptions

Regarding *roles* and *responsibilities*, most support personnel described EEN students according to specific individual needs and were either unaware of or chose not to discuss categorical labels. They expressed opinions about EEN students' potential for future employment, survival skills (lifestyle), and social adjustment. They expressed the opinion that appearance was an influential factor in other individuals' acceptance of or estimation of the EEN student—in essence, the roles that others would ascribe to the EEN student. (One TMR student was said to *look* like she knew more than another TMR student, who manifested features of Down's Syndrome, although she did not actually function on a superior cognitive level.)

All of the support personnel indicated that they were confident about working with the EEN students, and they attributed this increase in confidence to an increase in experience and/or collaboration with other support persons. On the other hand, support persons indicated that there was less exchange between EEN and regular teachers; regular teachers said that visits and assistance by EEN personnel in previous years had since been discontinued. References to existing collaboration indicated that most mutual exchange took place between the reading consultant and the content area teachers.

In reference to the *children*, very few support persons said that they perceived any difficulties in including EEN students in small group activities. The majority indicated that they viewed most EEN as willing to conform to the teachers' and peers' social agenda. They viewed EEN students as capable of performing in a situation of choice as well as a situation where the choice was made for them, enthusiastic about class participation in most instances, and competitive with regular peers in relation to a majority of positive attributes. Support persons also indicated, however, that EEN students were often unrealistic about their weaknesses, even when they were actually aware of them.

As for *materials* and *techniques*, there was no consensus about any single resource (material or individual) as being most helpful in the process of delivering reading instruction to EEN students. Some credited no specific resource, while others gave credit to parents' reinforcement at home, to other support persons' classroom reinforcement and professional exchange, or to special materials in their personal collections—not available schoolwide. The English teacher, for example, indicated that he used a variety of materials, with a wide range of grade levels, that he had gathered from his own collection, the special education teachers, or other teachers in the district. There was very little reference to mutual exchange of methods or techniques between the regular *teacher* and the support personnel, although one support person perceived the reading teacher as contributing "practical" input about students' achievement on mastery tests in reading.

Observed *behaviors* among the teacher and students served to reflect many of the values expressed by support persons, in relation to their views on roles and responsibilities and opinions about the children, materials, and the reading teacher. In some instances observed behaviors also reflected contradictions to the views expressed by support personnel.

A majority of students, both regular and EEN who were said to be most in need of cues for acceptable behavior, assistance with seat work, or extra clarification about what steps to take in completing a task, were the same students who actually asked for or received help from the teachers most often. On the other hand, a majority of students named by support personnel as most willing to conform to the direction of support persons were also the ones who were least often reprimanded by the teacher; however, he named only one of them when asked about students' conformity in his classroom.

As another example, the English teacher, stated that he perceived no extra responsibilities to EEN students and indicated that the work was the same for everyone, even though his expectations were different for each student. It is noteworthy, however, that one of his lessons was conducted such that every student was called on, in turn, from row to row, but anyone who had difficulty was individually taken through the same item several times and engaged in a physical demonstration of the concept, if necessary, until (s)he understood. For example, a student would be told to act out how (s)he "quickly" or how (s)he "sofas" if (s)he identified these words as verbs, or the student would be told to act out a verb and asked to supply the appropriate ending, "-ing" while acting or "ed" after completing the act.

Support persons' views of specific students indicated significant differences between regular and exceptional students in terms of "seeming indifferent," "responding favorably to reprimands," "indicating difficulty in completing work," "responding favorably to directions," and "needing direct statements" (predominately exceptional students), while the differences between internally and externally oriented students were reflected in terms of "seeming indifferent," "needing extra clarification," "not being able to complete work" (predominately externally oriented) and "being most capable of performing without immediate reinforcement" (predominately internally oriented).

The following *general statements* seem warranted by the *support persons'* expressed *views* and *behaviors*.

- Support persons expressed awareness of and concern for individuals academic needs as well as students' capabilities in terms of non-academic skills—even when they said that they held no extra responsibilities to EEN children.
- Mainstreaming of EEN students was, for the most part, viewed optimistically.
- There was no consensus about materials or methods of delivering reading instruction to EEN students.
- There was limited professional collaboration concerning EEN students in the mainstream setting.
- Support persons' expressed views reflected patterns of classroom characteristics associated with internal or external orientation despite the fact that the support persons were unaware of the formal distinction.

### Interaction of the Triad

In terms of *roles* and *responsibilities*, the support persons, reading teacher, and students did not share exactly the same views of individual needs. The support persons seemed most aware of the specific needs of individual students in terms of social and academic skills as well as cognitive deficits and associated diagnostic labels. The reading teacher chose not to focus on categorical labels; but, at the same time, he did not express awareness of individuals deficits and needs in any specifics. The students only demonstrated awareness of deficits in themselves or classmates in a global sense—that of being slow, needing more practice, or having a low reading level.

Perceptions of the extent to which EEN students would function like their regular peers were not expressed on the same basis as expressed by the teacher. Support persons considered social and occupational possibilities as well as academic potential, and they expressed the opinion that all of the EEN students would achieve at least reasonably close to normal functioning in terms of employment—but perhaps exhibit some deficiencies in social adjustment and age-grade academic achievement. The reading teacher expressed his opinions of future capabilities of EEN students solely on the basis of academic achievement and classroom functioning. Although the students were not questioned about what they thought they might be doing in the future, their expressed opinions of how well they could function in the immediate context of the reading class were positive.

The support persons and the reading teacher expressed confidence in working with the EEN and regular students, but their reasons varied somewhat. Both support persons and the reading teacher attributed their confidence partly to experience, but they differed in that support persons indicated collaboration with colleagues as an additional factor, while the reading teacher did not account for collaboration and, instead, referred to his "inward perception of the children."

A closer look at the *students'*, *teacher's* and *support personnel's view of each other and the materials* that they used for teaching and learning reading also reflect similarities and differences. Support persons indicated little difficulty in including EEN students in small group activities (some of them did conduct small group work occasionally) or classwork in general. The reading teacher indicated that there were some difficulties in including one of the TMR students and that he conducted no small group activities due to doubts about the benefits of the approach and apprehensions of disruptive behavior. A majority of the students, however, indicated that they would like participating in small groups.

Support persons in the content areas made references to mutual exchange with the reading consultant concerning delivery of reading instruction to EEN and other students more often than they made references to the reading teacher or EEN personnel. The reading consultant's references to mutual exchange reflected the same trend—sharing with support persons from the content areas. The reading teacher indicated that mutual exchange occurred more between himself and the EEN counselor/liaison, concerning disciplinary matters. (Other EEN personnel, the teacher and the aide, were viewed as helpers.) The students credited the reading teacher for doing extra things to help them understand and referred to the

content teachers and reading room staff as people who also helped them with reading.

Although some support personnel did not indicate that they used any special or different reading materials for EEN students, others indicated that they did individualize and used a variety of materials to accommodate EEN and regular students. The reading teacher did not individualize or use varied material and the children did not express dislike for the basal materials but often indicated that they were easy.

The following *general statements* seemed warranted by expressed *views* and *behaviors* of the members of the *triad*:

- In terms of strengths and/or weaknesses, students' roles were expressed differently by each set of individuals.
- Support persons' views of EEN students' ability to function extended beyond the classroom to real life situations; whereas, the teachers' view was limited to the classroom.
- The three sets of individuals expressed the opinion that they were confident in working with each other, although the reasons varied.
- Small group activities were not equally valued by all parties involved in the teaching/learning of reading.
- Statistically significant differences between ratings of classroom characteristics of regular vs. exceptional and internally vs. externally oriented students reflect patterns which lead to implications for practice in the context of the integrated reading class.

#### IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE

Information obtained from observations, interviews, and administration of the Nowicki - Strickland Locus of Control Scale was used to render a detailed description of the views and behaviors of the teacher, support persons, and students involved in a social context of mainstreaming. This information is also a basis for suggestions for meeting the needs of exceptional and non-exceptional children in the integrated reading class.

In view of the fact that many individuals have preconceived notions reflecting lack of faith in their ability to accommodate the mainstreamed child in the regular classroom and lack of faith in the child's ability to cope, much of the data presented in this study should serve to eliminate these attitudes. The majority of the EEN students perceived themselves as able to do well in the reading class, indicated that they liked participating in the class, and generally felt good about being in the class. (When asked how she felt about being in the reading class, the TMR student, considered to be one of the most severely handicapped participants, responded that she felt "happy.") Some EEN students were perceived by their regular peers as helpers, as getting extra attention at independent seatwork, and as those who got along well with other regular peers. They were often perceived by the support persons and/or the reading teacher as easy to include in small group activities and willing to conform to the teacher's requirements or the demands of peers (the general social agenda) and were also less frequently found off task. For these reasons, practitioners should continue to make efforts to encourage mainstreamed students to participate in class and to feel as though they are integral members of the class.

As for the possibility of negative effects upon regular students—due to the presence of or interaction with exceptional students—there appeared to be very few if any. Exceptional students were not cited by their regular peers for getting extra attention any more often than other regular students who were named; they were not referred to by regular peers as disruptive as often as some of the regular students were named; there were no complaints from regular students referring exclusively to EEN students; and EEN students were not perceived by peers as individuals who didn't belong in the class—even when they were considered somewhat different from most other classmates. The exceptional student received no special individualized assignments and received individual attention no more than any of the regular students. Although regular students were described by the teacher as impatient when EEN students were called upon, regular students did not appear any more impatient with any particular EEN student than with any of their other classmates; and, in instances where parts of a lesson were slowed down or repeated, one of the support persons (the English teacher) indicated that these situations provided beneficial reinforcement of concepts for regular as well as exceptional students. The TMR teacher also expressed the opinion that the presence of EEN students in the regular class was beneficial to the rest of the students because it caused the teacher to "break down" lesson presentations more carefully. Since regular children are given group counseling about mainstreamed students, it would seem to follow, then, that regular students should not be "indoctrinated" into believing that EEN students will always require extra attention or cause additional problems in the classroom.

Comparisons of the interview responses and observed behaviors of students, teacher and support personnel, in relation to the internal or external orientation of students, revealed a number of instances of significant differences. These instances relate to activity preferences. Externally oriented students placed reviewing work in high priority and internally oriented students placed working alone (seatwork) in high priority. Since a majority of EEN students in the reading classroom were found to be externally oriented, efforts to incorporate such students in the mainstream context should include review of work on a regular basis, and efforts to help improve independent work habits should also be considered.

Finally, the improvement of articulation between support personnel and the classroom teacher toward the accommodation of exceptional students might be accomplished in a variety of ways. Some of the following suggestions have been generated solely on the basis of the observer's perspective of the context in question, while others reflect the opinions of those involved:

1. Exchange perspectives on the potential of individual EEN students in terms of employment and survival skills as well as academic possibilities.
2. Arrange regular meetings for "pairs only" of members of the multi-disciplinary and/or block team, in lieu of some of the team meetings, on a rotational basis, such that all members meet with each other on a one-to-one basis as many times as possible and are considered subcommittees to the team.
3. Set the agenda for team meetings in advance and choose

- a specific focus requiring input from each member.
4. Arrange mutual observations of all team members delivering instructional services.

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