

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Education 379-3

The Exceptional Child in the Regular Classroom

Summer Session, 1990

Instructor: Brian Cullen

M T W R F S

8:30 - 12:20

August 16-25, 1990

Location: Prince George

Prerequisite: Certified practicing teacher.

Course Description:

St. Francis School, an elementary school in Kitchener Ontario is a Model of what many educators and observers are calling "inclusive community". This school had served special education students in segregated classrooms for a number of years and recently has undergone a dramatic shift in philosophy and daily pedagogy which is reflected in the total school environment. Inclusive community essentially means that everyone needs to belong and needs to be welcomed as a full member in his/her school and community. This course will deal in practical terms on how schools can become inclusive communities for all students.

Articulating the Vision:

What is it I do every working day? Why am I doing it? What are the motives, the goals and the resulting commitment I bring to each day?

Educational Leadership:

An examination of school leadership profiles will be expanded upon and discussed as a sub-topic. Collaborative team/leadership building in a school is essential to operationalizing the philosophy of an inclusive school.

E.S.R. and School Improvement Plans:

Effective schools research is topical and timely information when reflecting upon the historical roles of schools and particularly special education practices. A school committed to educating students with severe disabilities must consider adopting their process direction from sound effective schools research.

Staff Development Process:

Effective staff development programs need to be investigated and implemented to assist schools to break out of traditional segregated models and programs. The concept of team building will be examined as an essential component in this process.

Evolving Roles of Teachers:

Historical roles of both special education teachers and regular class teachers will be examined and redefined with a view to offering practical suggestions regarding this evolutionary role. These changing roles will also be clarified as participants provide a forum and ideas for one another relative to their own professional experiences.

Curriculum Organization and Modification:

In molding and nurturing an inclusive school, certain academic realities must be addressed. Current curriculum and expectation for achievement for students must be maintained. To include students with challenging needs in the regular program now mandates that all children be assured an equitable and quality education. Strategies for the school and school personnel will be explored which will describe various ways and mean to organize classrooms and modify and adapt curriculum to suit the needs of all individual children.

M.A.P.S.:

As an intricate component of the curriculum design process, MAPS (McGill Action Planning System) developed by Dr. Marsha Forest will be thoroughly reviewed. Participants will have the opportunity to become highly involved with this process through a series of case studies and videotapes. Participants will also have the opportunity to facilitate an initial M.A.P. under supervision of the course instructor and his assistant.

Building Support Circles:

When a child has very challenging needs the onus should be on the school environment to problem-solve and make adaptation as appropriate to all involved. Planning and the building of support circles involving teachers, special education teachers, physiotherapist, speech and language pathologists, etc. will be illustrated. Additional support systems for parents will also be explored.

Circle of Friends:

Many people labelled as disabled have few or no friends. For most people, it would be hard to imagine living without family and friends, yet for many children with challenging needs, this is sometimes an unspoken area of deep concern and despair. Participants will have the opportunity to learn and further develop facilitation skills to build circles of friends for others. Case studies will graphically illustrate successful techniques that have successfully been used. Small group problem-solving projects will allow participants further exploration on what could be considered to be the most important facet in building inclusive community.

Participant Evaluation:

The course relies heavily on the commitment, interest and personal and professional experiences of the participant. Participants will be expected to be conversant with the bibliography associated with the institute as well as selected materials that will be daily presented. Daily experiential logs and a minimum of one group project/presentation will be required.

Required Readings:

Information on pre-reading and Institute reading lists, as well as the availability of this information, will be provided upon registration in the course.