INCLUSIVE EDUCATION & SPECIAL EDUCATION SETTINGS: WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS ON PEER ATTITUDES?

Gary Bunch
Marsha Forest Centre
100 Waterton Road
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M9P 2R3
gbunch@edu.yorku.ca

Kevin Finnegan
Faculty of Education
York University
4700 Keele Street
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M3J 1P3
kfinnegan@edu.yorku.ca

Abstract

Attitudes of typical elementary and secondary students toward peers with disabilities are explored. Reference is made to friendship, inappropriate behaviour, advocacy, and acceptance of Special Education or Inclusion, as supportive of education of peers with disabilities. 51 students participated; 31 from Special Education schools and 21 from Inclusive schools. Students were interviewed in a one-to-one format and qualitative investigation of interview data undertaken. Findings indicate development of friendships/acquaintantships and lower degrees of abusive behaviour in Inclusive schools compared to Special Education schools. Though students in both systems advocated for peers with disabilities, advocacy was more routine in Inclusive settings. Most students under both systems believed the approach taken by their schools to be appropriate for education of peers with disabilities. Findings were related to structural aspects of the schools, to social learning and social referencing theory, and effects of Special Education and Inclusion structures on school social life.

Inclusion of students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a new and controversial international reform (Winzer, 1999) affecting education on the international level. It is a distinct departure from the Special Education Model with its range of alternate placements for students with disabilities. Special Education calls for integration into regular classes only for a portion of the group of students with disabilities. Integration is viewed simply as another placement under the Special Education Model. Accordingly, a student with disability may be moved to segregated placement at any time as a result of not meeting some undefined set of teacher expectations. Those who advocate for Inclusion consider this a flawed approach. Under Inclusion recourse to any setting other than regular classrooms would not occur except in exceptional instances. Special Education, in addition, is critiqued as not resulting in regular classroom teachers taking ownership of students with disabilities as they do for other students. Instead, many look to a Special Education teacher to assume functional ownership. Inclusive Education calls for regular class teachers taking ownership of all students equally, though collaboration with others is necessary and valued for planning and program delivery.

It is argued, as well, that inclusion is in keeping with social justice and human rights. Advocates of inclusion consider it the right of all students to be educated in the company of typical peers, and believe that Inclusion will result in stronger social and academic achievement, advance citizenship, and develop stronger community (Karagiannis, W. Stainback, & S. Stainback, 1996; Bunch & Valeo, 1997; Rioux, 1999; Staub & Peck, 1994; Bunch, 1999). Advocates of Special Education, who view specialized settings as necessary, reject such arguments and consider Special Education the most effective approach.

One aspect of education of students with disabilities and controversy over placement is development of friendship/acquaintantship. Those favouring Inclusive placement believe that friendships between students with disabilities and typical students will develop. Downing and Eichinger (1996) cite Bishop and Jabala in concluding that, for any student, and particularly for students with disabilities, one of the most important outcomes of education is "that he or she will have friends". Forest and Lusthaus (1989) agree. They suggest that friendship leads to a variety of other positive outcomes: "Children's cognitive growth and social development are optimized when they feel they belong and have relationships with others, especially friends" (p. 45).

Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin, and Williams (2000) extend Forest and Lusthaus in pointing out that schools need to "foster the development of (1) caring relationships and genuine friendships; (2) a sense of belonging for all students; and (3) holistic, heterogeneous and flexible learning opportunities for all students" if they wish to "develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to become caring and compassionate citizens" (p. 6). Evident is belief that in inclusive settings typical students care for their peers with disabilities, will help them, and will stand up for them.

Downing and Eichinger (1996), however, point out that the literature is thin when it comes to supporting those who advocate inclusion. In discussion of the role of peers in the inclusion process they note "the dearth of literature on the development of friendships in inclusive settings" (p. 141). A related and confounding factor is research literature pointing to negative effect on friendship development for students with disabilities in regular classroom settings.

Support for this view comes from a number of sources. Simpson (cited in Wood, 1998) states "Students with disabilities traditionally have lower positions of status than their nondisabled peers do, and this pattern of rejection holds in both general or special classes" (p. 152). Winzer (1999) cites Sipperstein and Leffert on social marginalization of students with disabilities in regular classes, and Luftig and Setlin and Murtaugh who found that "students with intellectual disabilities are not well accepted by their non-disabled peers and often have trouble making friends" (p. 210). Martlew and Hodson (1991) detail challenges encountered by students with mild learning difficulties in regular classes as higher levels of teasing/bullying than experienced by other children, and fewer friends.

Both Thomas (1996) and Hutt and Gibby (1979) agree and note that this group of students becomes the butt of jokes, taunting, and teasing by peers. Salend (1994) extends this theme to children differing in ability and ethnicity in references to Ford and Jones (1990). These analyses also highlight disagreement between advocates for Inclusion and advocates for Special Education regarding abusive behaviour. Those who favour Inclusion argue that such behaviour will be lessened in inclusive settings. Those who prefer special settings point to research that indicates students with disabilities are rejected and suffer inappropriate treatment from peers in regular classrooms and need the protection of Special Education structures.

Both sides of the discussion find flaws in the arguments of the other. Interestingly, both sides may be seen as basing their views on the same theoretical positions, social learning and social referencing. As Bandura (1986) states, "many behaviours are learned quickly through observation and imitation of others". Inclusive advocates support the idea that being with typical peers provides students with disabilities with role models of acceptable behaviour. They argue, as well, that placing students with disabilities with other students with disabilities provides role models for behaviour that has already been found unacceptable, but none for acceptable behaviour. Advocates of special education believe that typical students will tease and insult peers with disabilities. This view seems to arise from social learning theory as well, except that in this instance typical peers observe their peers with disabilities as not exhibiting acceptable behaviours and reject them on this basis. They wish to distance themselves from unacceptable models.

Related to both reactions is social referencing theory, which suggests that one gains information about a social setting from a familiar, trusted person. If a teacher, for instance, responds to a student with disability in a manner, which marks that student as different than typical students, typical students would model the teacher. If a teacher responds to a student with disability in

accepting manner, typical students would model the teacher. The first scenario would lead to inappropriate behaviour, from which students with disabilities must be protected by being placed in a special setting. The other would lead to students getting to know and accept each other. In both scenarios typical students learn their behaviours through observation and imitation of peers, and through reference to familiar and trusted figures.

This brief review makes it clear that the literature and opinion is divided on whether regular class placement of students with disabilities has positive or negative impact in terms of friendships/acquaintantships and related dynamics. The picture is obscured in that Inclusion is a recent approach and so much of the available literature speaks to effect of integration, a part of Special Education, and not to effect of Inclusion. The theoretical frameworks mentioned suggest possible explanations of why typical students react to peers with disabilities as they do, or as adults believe they will, and why alternate educational approaches are advanced for students with disabilities.

The study described here attempted to contribute to the discussion by examining attitudes toward peers with disabilities of students being educated under the Special Education and under the Inclusive Model. Typical students from both systems were interviewed to determine whether they knew peers with disabilities in their schools, whether they were friends with these students, whether peers with disabilities were treated appropriately or otherwise, whether they became advocates, and whether they accepted the model for education of students with disabilities chosen by their school system.

PARTICIPANTS

Participants were Ontario, Canada typical elementary and secondary students without disabilities from Grades 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 11, and OAC (final year of secondary). Participating schools were selected from a Special Education system (placements for students with disabilities ranging from full time special class to full time integration), and from an Inclusive system (regular class placements for all). One Inclusive elementary and one secondary school participated and one secondary and three Special Education elementary schools. The Special Education system asked to have three elementary schools participate as they wished wider representation from their elementary schools for purposes outside the scope of this study.

Each school was requested to select randomly 3 students without disabilities from class lists for each nominated grade. Thirty-five students were interviewed and 21 retained from the Special Education elementary schools compared to12 interviewed and 12 retained from the Inclusive elementary school. Nine Special Education secondary students were interviewed and nine retained, with students representing all secondary grade levels. In the Inclusive secondary school 10 students were interviewed and nine retained. All those not retained either had a disability themselves, or were from elementary grades not requested as part of the study (see Table 1).

METHOD

Interviews were conducted by a teacher experienced both in elementary and secondary schools and in both Special Education and Inclusive systems. Guide questions framed interviews. Ancillary questions were asked as deemed appropriate. Guide questions were of two types: general questions designed to assess knowledge of disability and overall attitudes of students toward peers with disabilities, and more specific questions if a student with disabilities was taught by anyone other

than a regular classroom teacher.
Interviews were transcribed and responses coded to support development of categories of interest. Four categories emerged; Friendships/Acquaintanceships (whether typical students were friends with any peer with disability); Teasing and Insulting Behaviour (whether typical students were aware of

Table 1: Numbers by Grade Level of Participating Students from Special Education Model and Inclusive Model School Systems

Grade Level	Special Education Model	Inclusion Model
1	3	3
3	5	3
5	6	3
7	7	3
9	2	3
10	2	
11	1	3
12	1	
13	3	3
Total	30	21

students harassing peers with disabilities); Advocacy (whether typical students defended peers with disabilities); and Exclusion - Inclusion (views of typical students regarding appropriateness of the model under which peers with disabilities were educated in their school systems).

FINDINGS

As noted, four categories of interest emerged from data analysis. They are discussed individually below. Selected quotes are provided as exemplars of typical statements of students. From such statements significant points suggestive of attitudes of regular students are drawn for each of the Special Education and the Inclusive systems.

Friendships/Acquaintantships

Considerable difference existed between students in Special Education schools and Inclusive schools in terms of whether individual students had friendships with peers with disabilities, and whether students with disabilities were perceived to have friends in the schools and community in general.

Special Education Model:

Students in Special Education elementary schools tended to know of one or more students with challenging needs, but few indicated personal friendships/acquaintantships. Many did not know the names of students outside their own classes. When asked if they knew any peers with disabilities in their own classes typical responses were:

Brian, Grade 5: A- *Not in my class. In another class.*
Brigette, Grade 7: A- *None in class. There's two kids in Grade eight.*

However, friendships between regular students and their peers with disabilities did exist. Bert in Grade One said *"Dave is one of my friends"*. Overall, though, friendships were uncommon in Special Education schools. The majority of elementary students gave neutral responses, not indicative of presence or absence of friendships. Students in Grades 1 and 3 also did not know whether their peers with disabilities were friends with other students. However, by Grades 5 and 7 students routinely stated that peers with disabilities did have friends, but that these friends were other students with disabilities. When asked why friendships did not exist with typical students in many instances in their schools, Bert and Brigette explained that, except for gym, students with disabilities were in their Special Education class all day. Brigette said of the students with disabilities:

> *They all hang out together. Like, you see them, they all run out in this big group and they go out and play in the field together.*

When asked whether students with disabilities mixed with other students, Brigette explained, "*No, not really. Some people.*"

Other comments in this area reinforce this picture of restricted friendships for students with disabilities.

Dawn, Grade 7: A- *He's not very popular in the school. They're like, I don't know. He tries. He's nice and he tries to make friends, but I guess people just don't appreciate him.*

Lorne, Grade 5
Q. Does he have a lot of friends too?
A- I think he probably does. My mom's friend Judy works here and she usually has to help him exercise and stuff. And I think there's another teacher in the school. I think she helps him too.
Q. You don't see them because they spend most of their time in a special class?
A- Ya. I think they spend all their time there.

This general picture extends to the secondary school level.

Ken, grade 13: A- *For sure most of their friends are within the [special] classroom. Everyone knows who the special people are and they'll talk to them if they approach them and there's a conversation or something. But I think most of their friends are within the [special] classroom.*

Joyce, Grade 9: A- *Well, they'll come up to us and go 'Hi' and they'll start a conversation or whatever and we'll talk to them in the hallways and stuff. But then whenever I see them, they're with a friend from their class.*

Q. Do you see them around?
A- Ya. It's just usually in the 100 hall though, 'cause that's where their classroom is.
Q. Would they go to regular lunch with you guys?
A- What they do is they go to a kitchen. I guess maybe it's in there. But I see them with plates of food that's different from everyone else's and they don't eat in the caf[eteria].

No secondary student claimed friendship/acquaintantship with any peer with disability. Every secondary student stated or believed that students with disabilities had friends, but that these were other students with disabilities. Both elementary and secondary students indicated little familiarity with friendship status of peers with disabilities outside school. Those suggesting that such friendships/acquaintantships did occur used vague phrasing such as "Probably. I'm not sure".

Summary:

Special Education schools were characterized by distance between typical students and peers with disabilities. This was particularly apparent at the secondary level, but also where segregated Special Education classes or extensive withdrawal programs existed at the elementary level. It is interesting to note the hypothetical nature of a number of responses. Phrases such as *"I think"* used as a preface suggest that some students were uncertain of the extent of friendships, both in school and in the larger community. The following points emerged from analysis.

- Structures such as grouping and special treatment of students with disabilities acted as barriers to establishment of relationships between the two student groups.
- Social and academic separation existed between regular students and peers with disabilities with few exceptions. Though most evident at the secondary level, this point also held true at the elementary level. Secondary students were unfamiliar with peers with disabilities, not knowing their names in most instances. Elementary students tended to have some familiarity with peers with disabilities and knew the names of some such peers.
- Typical students believed peers with disabilities to have friends, though most indicated these friends were other students with disabilities. This view was strongest at the secondary level.
- Few instances of awareness of friendship status beyond school were noted. Where noted, existence of friendships was stated with uncertainty.
- There were instances, limited to the early elementary level, where typical students were friends with peers with disabilities.

Inclusion Model

Degree and quality of friendships/acquaintantships between those with and without disabilities were significantly different in the Inclusive Model schools. At the elementary level all students interviewed were friends of peers with disabilities and were aware of the quality of friendships their friends had in class, school, and the larger community.

Carol, Grade 1: A- *I know she has lots of friends because some of her friends come and play with her. And when I play with her, I see lots of her friends.*

Martin, Grade 3 *Q. Does she have friends outside of school?*
A- Yes. I'm sure she has them. Because she is nice and she has neighbours she can talk with.

Kevin, Grade 5: A- *He's got people who he thinks is [sic] his friends, but they're using him, kind of. Because he's got very good Pokemon cards. And I think his friends just act like they're his friend to get his cards. They, like, use him.*

Katie, Grade 7: A- *Because she's with us, so we consider her as our friend, and she considers us as her friends.*

Elementary students in the Inclusive school know students with disabilities in their own classes and often are friends with them or other peers with disabilities. They also know students in other classes by name and are aware of their friendship status. Interestingly, they have valuable insights into the quality of friendships and know when they are real or contrived. There is evidence of awareness of friendships and acquaintantships in the larger community.
These patterns repeat at the secondary level.

Marilyn, Grade 9: A- *Yeah. A lot of people talk to him. Like when I come in, I say 'Hi' to him all the time. And other people talk to him. Like the guys talk to him. There's no reason why not. He's pretty well to get along with. He doesn't talk much. He's quiet. He's like everyone else.*

Interestingly, a number of students in the Inclusive schools commented on effect of the model on the development of friendships. Carol in Grade 1 said that she wanted to have her friend Alexandra in her class "because you make new friends" in the regular class. Sue, an OAC student, noted, "I think it's a good idea for them to get more interaction. 'Cause I know, with Suki, she didn't have as much interaction with other people as she would've liked. So that gave [her] more opportunity".

Summary:

Both elementary and secondary students in Inclusive schools knew peers with disabilities personally and by name. They were aware of friendship status in school and, at times, out of school.

- Students at elementary and secondary levels claimed friendships with peers with disabilities and knew names of peers with disabilities in their own and other classes.
- Students were aware of the friendship status of peers with disabilities in the school as a whole.
- Students evidenced familiarity with friendship status beyond school as well.
- Students were aware that some friendships were superficial or contrived to the advantage of one or more typical students.
- Some students connected the Inclusive Model and development of friendships.

TEASING AND INSULTING

Concern with teasing and insulting of students with disabilities often is advanced as a reason to place students in segregated settings. There, the theory suggests, they will be protected from unpleasant encounters which, it is feared, would characterize life in inclusive, or even integrated, environments. Proponents of Inclusion believe that no such protection will exist in a Special Education environment, but that Inclusion will reduce teasing and insulting behaviour.

Special Education Model

Teasing and insulting behaviour was a part of life in elementary schools under the Special Education Model. However, such behaviour was not generalized. The majority of elementary students, asked if their peers with disabilities were teased or insulted, indicated they were not aware of such behaviour.

Dean, Grade 7: *Q. Did people call him names or anything like that?*
A- No.

Ted (Grade3), Ed (Grade 5), and Brian (Grade 5) all indicated that teasing and insulting were not elements in their classes. Brian responded, when asked whether it was appropriate to call other people names, "*No. Everybody's a human being*".

Nevertheless, other elementary students were aware of teasing and insulting. Such behaviour appeared not uncommon. Dawn (Grade 7), who originally said she was not aware of teasing and insulting, then indicated that in the case of one boy in her class:

Some people do make fun of him 'cause he has disabilities.

She described the behaviour as covert and behind the individual's back.

Lorne (Grade5) agreed that name-calling is part of what happens at school, saying *"People I know call them different things"*. Laura (Grade 7) commented on examples of name-calling and its effect from experiences during recess, "*I think they feel sort of weird because people call them names. Like, they're dumb and stuff.*"

At the secondary level higher degrees of abusive behaviour were brought out. Only one secondary student, Patty in Grade 11, said unequivocally that people in her group did not name call.

Other students mentioned negative interactions involving their typical acquaintances, often stating that they did not agree and halted such behaviour if they could. Jane, Grade 9, said that some students would tell peers with disabilities "*something that's not true*" simply to take advantage of them. Such behaviour was both overt and covert. Joyce in Grade 9 knew people who dismissed peers with disabilities saying, "*Oh, he's retarded. He shouldn't be in here*". Ray, Grade 10, said that some of his peers would show disgust when others were "*playing around*" with students with disabilities. In Ray's experience abusive behaviour was hidden at times, but was in public view at others as tormentors liked "*to see how they react....They talk to them and say things to see how they react*".

Grade 10 Sara reinforced the idea that student reaction had two sides:

Sometimes when they [students with disabilities] walk by there are kids who make faces or

start whispering to each other. That's all I see. If they go up on stage, 'cause sometimes they have spirit days, everybody cheers for them and claps in a nice way".

Lastly, Owen in Grade 13 held the view that public abuse of peers with disabilities was more common than was hidden behaviour. To support his point he provided the example of some peers saying to a student with disability: *'Go ask that girl out. I think she likes you.'* simply to laugh at the girl's reaction.

Abusive behaviour appeared to be more a secondary school dynamic than an elementary one in Special Education schools. It took a variety of forms: name-calling, embarrassment in public, whispering, and active rejection. Evidence of such behaviour was apparent in elementary schools, though not generalized, particularly at early grade levels. The majority of secondary students, when asked, indicated awareness of abuse by their peers, though those interviewed did not suggest that they participated in such behaviour.

Summary:

Abusive behaviour was an acknowledged aspect of life in elementary and secondary Special Education schools. However, it did not involve all typical students, being limited to relatively few individuals.

- Abusive behaviour was a dynamic in the schools. The majority of students from Grade 5 to OAC mentioned instances of such behaviour.
- Teasing and insulting behaviour was both overt and covert.
- Abusive behaviour tended to take the form of name-calling, public embarrassment, whispering and making faces when those with disabilities were nearby, though less direct harassment also was noted.
- Teasing and insulting behaviour was attributed to student focus on differences in peers with disabilities, opportunities to create situations humourous to other typical students, and sheer dislike.
- A number of students at both the elementary and secondary levels indicated in one way or another that they disagreed with abuse of peers. At the secondary level some students indicated that they would intervene to halt such behaviour. Others stated that they would not intervene.

Inclusive Model

Abusive behaviour was not a concern of any extent in Inclusive schools. Though minor evidences of such behaviour could be ferreted out from interviewee remarks, the picture was starkly different from Special Education schools. As Rose (Grade 11) suggested, "*Our school is pretty respectful with the disabled and they don't make fun of other kids going in there*".

Almost no suggestion of abuse among elementary students was found. However, a few students mentioned inappropriate behaviour. Kevin in Grade 5 spoke of nondisabled peers pretending a friendship to get Pokemon cards. As was the case in Special Education schools, some students used students with disabilities for their own needs.

Desiree (Grade 5) speaks of rejection of a particular student with disability who "*may pick her nose, or she might be at a different level of learning because she doesn't understand that maybe*

you can't do that .... She's not treated very well by some other students who say 'Eew. Go away".

However, the response of the large majority of Inclusive school elementary students is best described by Diane, Grade 7:

> *Well, my opinion is I don't think that some of the students should make fun of [students with disabilities] because it's not really their fault. She was born that way, born with a disability.*

Comments of secondary students were almost entirely in defense of their peers with disabilities and the value of Inclusion. Edith (Grade 9) indicates that some students who do not know what to do when a student with disabilities acts inappropriately."*are sort of paranoid by the fact that [a particular student] has a disease and you really don't know what to do*". The only other evidence was provided by Wayne and Rose (both of Grade 11) who refer to students who joke at the expense of students with disabilities as "immature".

The majority of Inclusive Model secondary students offered comments such as:

Francis, Grade 13 — *A- We don't have the nicest people here, but I have never heard anyone say anything....I would speak out against any derogatory words. I don't tolerate that. It's not in my nature. People just don't realize what they're saying. If someone was saying something like that to them, they wouldn't really enjoy it. So there's no need for them to be doing it to other people.*

Summary:

There appear to be some students in the Inclusive schools who would abuse peers with disabilities. There also appear to be many more students who would not tolerate such behaviour because, in their view, such behaviour violates the principles of Inclusion and relationships with others.

- Though abusive behaviour was known in Inclusive schools, it was a minor element.
- Abuse, which did exist, was reported to be both overt and covert.
- Teasing and insulting tended to be credited to immaturity and lack of knowledge in the tormenters.
- A number of elementary and secondary students indicated in one way or another that they did not accept abuse of peers with disabilities.
- A number of students suggested that proactive educational programs for students and teachers would be of value in reducing resistance to placement of students with disabilities in regular classrooms.

ADVOCATE

Some students defend the rights of peers with disabilities if they are teased or insulted, or if suggestions are made that they remain apart from regular classes. A common form of defense is to be reactive, to speak to and correct the abuser. A second form is proactive, one in which peers ensure that abilities and challenges of those with disabilities are understood through an educational program. Comments indicating some type of advocacy position were almost entirely restricted to the secondary level under both Special Education and Inclusive Education.

Special Education Model

As noted previously, abusive behaviour did not appear to be a dynamic in the earliest grades. Students in higher elementary grades indicated they would take advocacy positions.

Alex, Grade 7 — A- *Some of my friends make fun of people, but I just tell them that its not nice. I don't want to be part of it.*

There was a sense of tentativeness to some such statements.

Dean, Grade 7 — *Q. If someone said anything nasty to him, would you say anything?*
A- *I think I might. I don't know.*

Others forthrightly said that they actively declined such roles, electing a passive response.

Dawn, Grade 7 — A- *Well, Greg knows that he's made fun of terribly ... I just don't get in the way. I just try not to say anything.*

Laura, Grade 7 — *Q. What do you do when you hear somebody calling them names. You ever do anything?*
A- No. I just go on.

Beyond these examples, few elementary students referred to advocacy in any way. The situation was quite different at the Special Education secondary school.

Examples of the reactive approach were found in the school with almost half of the students interviewed indicating they would actively intervene. In most instances reaction was in direct response to witnessed abuse, as may be seen in the following quotations.

Jane, Grade 9: — A- *Ya, like, I mean although I've seen a lot of people insulting them and doing all kinds of stuff to them, but usually I try to stop it.*

Miro, grade 13: — A- *Ya. I tend to interfere. I'll just walk up to my friends and just say 'Leave him alone'. Try and change the topic and divert them from encouraging [other] students.*

It is obvious that students in this school are personally familiar with incidents of abuse. A few responses, however, had a hypothetical tone. It was unclear in these instances whether abusive behaviour had been witnessed personally. Nonetheless, it was apparent that the individuals concerned believe they would advocate for peers with disabilities.

Sara, Grade 10: — *Q. Would you speak out if someone was offensive"*
A- Ya, I would. I would defend the person because it's not fair that they're getting picked on for something that they can't help.

Owen's (Grade 13) response introduced a passive response category much like that noted at the elementary level. This type of response indicates that though an individual might be aware abuse, no action would be taken. Other responses of this type appeared in grades 11 and OAC:

Q. Did you ever feel inclined to say 'I've gotta end it here, because this is wrong the way they're treating the kids?'
A- Sometimes I sort of feel like it, but I never acted on it.

Summary:

Secondary and later grade elementary students in Special Education schools indicated rejection of inappropriate behaviour directed at peers with disabilities. While a number indicated that they would intervene to prevent such behaviour, an equal number would not.

- Half of the secondary students indicated they would actively intervene in instances of abusive behaviour.
- Half indicated that their response would be to do nothing.
- Need for advocacy was not mentioned in early elementary grades. At higher elementary grades it either was not mentioned or preference for passive response was noted.

Inclusive Model

Responses from the Inclusive secondary school fell into categories similar to those found in the Special Education school. One difference was the commonly hypothetical tone of some responses, which suggested that actual incidents of teasing and insulting had not been witnessed. Need for advocacy was not mentioned by elementary students.

Karl, Grade 11: A- *I could try to correct them. Some people might call them retards or something and that's wrong.*

to *do*

Francis, grade 13: A- *Not derogatory. We don't have the nicest people here, but I have never heard anyone say anything like that....So, it would be - no....Totally....I don't tolerate that. It's not my nature.*

In addition to the reactive category, other categories were introduced by students in the Inclusive school. Some students dismissed as immature those who teased or insulted their peers with disabilities, but also corrected them, or took other action.

Wayne, Grade 11: A- *There's some kids that are immature, but we just ignore them. If you ignore them, they don't say anything....If it got really bad, I'd probably tell the bus driver or principal.*

Rose, Grade 11: A- *And the ones who laugh at them, they're just immature.*
Q. Would you say anything to the students who laugh at them?
A- Oh, for sure I do.

An insightful suggestion by a few secondary students was that educational programs to reduce abuse be introduced.

Karl, Grade 11: A- *Other kids don't know enough about him. They're not educated*

that way. We could educate other people. I think they get educated just by Ralph being in this place.

One student extended this suggestion to the teacher level.

Sue, Grade 13: A- *We should be working with teachers on how to address issues. Some teachers are great, but some they ----.*

Summary:

Elementary student responses suggested that no need for students to advocate arose. There were no examples offered of abusive behaviour.

Secondary Inclusive school students routinely indicated that they would act as advocates. Compared to secondary students in Special Education schools, they articulated a larger range of reactions to the idea of inappropriate behaviour was articulated.

- Secondary students did not report significant numbers of abusive instances. Advocacy responses tended to be phrased hypothetically with the implication that they were not based on actual witnessed events.
- The majority of secondary interviewees indicated that they would actively intervene if witnessing abusive behaviour.
- A subset of secondary students indicated that they would not intervene directly, but would advise a respected person in authority of abusive behaviour and ask these individuals to intervene.
- Secondary students suggested that abuse was related to immaturity and lack of knowledge and recommended that such behaviour could be reduced through an educational program that would explain disability and its effects.

ACCEPTANCE OF EXCLUSION - INCLUSION

Special Education Model

Interviewees accepted with little question the structures developed in their schools to support learning by peers with disabilities. Some Special Education school students questioned the value and effect of segregation while Inclusive school students did not question Inclusion, but did reject segregation.

Mitchell, Grade 3: *Q. Do you think that children like to go or do they prefer staying in their own class.*
A- I think they would like to go because it's more easy to concentrate when it's not so loud.
Q. Do you think it's a good idea that they go out?
A- Ya.

Brigette, Grade 7: *Q. So they don't have a regular class like yours?*
A- No. They join other classes for gym. That's all.
Q. What do you think about that?

A- I think it's a good idea because if they can't keep up in regular classes, then they should have special teachers to try to get them to understand it because they might have more troubles than other people.

A lesser number of elementary students pointed to value of regular classroom experience as a complement to Special Education. Both responses of this type came from students speaking of peers with disabilities who were placed full-time in Special Education classes.

Lorne, Grade 5:

A- *But it would be better if they could do half time in our class. And another time in a special class.*
Q. 'Cause they spend most of their time in a special class?
A- Ya. I think they spend all their time there.

Related to these responses indicating perceptions of positive values for special class placement are other responses that suggested negative possibilities.

Laura, Grade 7:

Q. So, somebody was in grade seven and they had a learning disability problem, they wouldn't be in your class. They'd be in that [special] class. What do you think of that idea?
A- I think it's pretty good because, so then they'll understand what they're learning better if they're in a class that has extra help.
Q. How do the kids themselves feel about being in there?
A- I think they feel sort of weird because people call them names. Like they're dumb and stuff. 'Cause they're in another class.

Some secondary responses also supported the value of experience both in regular and Special Education classes. These responses came from students who were in a school where full-time segregation was the norm. First, evidence that segregation was the norm.

Patty, Grade 11:

Q. Do you think it's a good idea they go to special class? Do you think it's good for them?
A- Ya. I'm pretty sure because in our class, we learn a chapter a day. For them, maybe, it'd be too fast, since they're not totally with us.

Ken, Grade 13:

Q. Would you come into contact with those students?
- No, I wouldn't normally. 'Cause I'm just not around them. Just not in class or anything. We're actually at opposite ends of the school.

Despite the fact that students in the Special Education secondary school did not spontaneously question the segregation model, when asked they found concerns with it. Also, when asked, they found positive aspects to peers with disabilities being placed in regular classes for part of their learning.

Joyce, Grade 9: *Q. Do you think these students should spend more in regular classes and maybe go out for help or have a [Teaching Assistant] help them? A- I think it would be good because you have all these kids who are sitting there and they're making fun of them because they have a disability. I just think it would be better. 'Cause then you could get to know them better if they were in regular classes.*

Summary:

Views in Special Education schools were mixed. Initial responses with regard to segregated placement of peers with disabilities accepted that such placement was necessitated by the needs of their peers. Further, valuable learning was believed to result. Considering placement more deeply brought out suggestions by some students of negative effect of segregation and possible values of regular class placement

- Elementary and secondary students were supportive of segregated placement in Special Education classes for peers with disabilities.
- This support was based on the perception that peers with disabilities needed help available only in Special classes.
- The help available would result in peers with disabilities learning more than they would in regular classes and they would "catch up" to regular peers.
- A limited number of students suggested that peers with disabilities might not enjoy special class experience as it centred them out as different.
- A subset of students believed experience in both special and regular classes would result in peers with disabilities getting the help they needed and also in interaction with regular students.
- Secondary students had almost no interaction with peers with disabilities compared to elementary students who had somewhat more.

Inclusive Model

In Inclusive schools inclusion was the norm for all, with the exceptions of short-term withdrawal for some elementary students, and a resource room at the secondary level where some students spend part of their time. The result was that during interviews in Inclusive schools few references to Special Education were made. Special classes simply do not exist. Those few comments made, however, indicated that special placement was inappropriate. Even the idea of having a resource room at the secondary level was questioned.

Karl, Grade 11: *Q. [Do] some think Ralph should be in a segregated school for the blind?*
A- Other kids don't know enough about him....If they got to know him, they might change their views. I believe he should be here.

Francis, Grade 13: *Q. Does Lucy have friends in your class?*
- Yes. It's just like anyone. I don't think they belong in a special school.... I would be very upset if they decided to move them out of this school into another school.

Barb, Grade 130: *Q. What do students think of peers with disabilities going to the resource room at times?*
A- It's not the topic of conversation. It kind of gets some negative connotations toward it. 'Cause, you know, if you're going into a separate room and it's not really what everyone else is doing. Then, if it's out of the normal, then more attention is drawn to it. People will talk about it.

These comments typify responses of Inclusive school students about special placement of peers with disabilities. No student suggested that students with disabilities should be anywhere but in regular classes. The one secondary student who felt a peer with disabilities should not be in her class due to the academic nature of the work, did not suggest special placement, but simply placement in a less academically oriented regular class.

A number of students indicated in various responses that they understood many peers with disabilities required adaptations and modifications in regular classes. They were quite comfortable with such supports and participated in their provision.

Carol, Grade 1: *Q. If someone said to you "Would you help Shalini with her work?", would you do it?*
A- Yes, only a little bit.
Q. Why only a little bit?
A- Because she has to do it.

Katie, Grade 7: A- *She sits beside me. Sometimes she needs help with a certain word. What does it say or what does it mean? Or she doesn't understand a question, what the work is asking. So she kind of asks me to help her out.*

Francis, Grade 13: *A- Ernie has been in a few of my classes throughout high school in English and Religion mainly, and they write the same test almost. They participate the same. They're marked a bit differently overall.*

Summary:

- Inclusive school students rarely mentioned any placement other than the regular classroom and then only to reject segregated provision.
- Mention was made of a modest amount of withdrawal at the elementary level and of a resource room model in the secondary school.
- Some students questioned the need for a resource room on the grounds that it separated students.
- Students accepted that included peers with disabilities should work at their own pace.
- Students believed it was part of their responsibility to actively support peers with disabilities with their work.

DISCUSSION

Findings indicated differences and similarities in attitudes of typical students toward peers

with disabilities in terms of whether students attended schools operating under Special Education or Inclusive Models of education. Previous discussion highlighted areas of Friendships/Acquaintantships, Teasing and Insulting Behaviour, Advocacy, and Acceptance of Exclusion – Inclusion.

Though advocates of both types of education service delivery for students with disabilities claim that their approach is superior in the social area, a search of the literature did not yield one research study focused on differences and similarities between Inclusive and Special Education models in the social sphere. Studies either examined the integration option of Special Education or were anecdotal and exhortative in advocating inclusion. The present study, though dealing with a modest number of typical peers, does explore effects of Special Education and Inclusion and suggests differences and similarities exist. Why they exist will not be answered by one study. However, sufficient difference was found to warrant cautious exploration of this "Why" question.

Friendships/Acquaintantships:

The salient finding in this area is that students in Inclusive schools have friends and acquaintances with disabilities, whereas students from schools with Special Education structures do not. This occurs regardless of whether a school supports a withdrawal, a part-time special class, or a full-time special class program. Difference in friendships is apparent from early elementary (Grade 5) through secondary levels.

What lays behind this fundamental difference? Student responses point to simple routine contact, in the case of the Inclusive Model, between typical students and peers with disabilities. As Katie, grade 7, states, "*Because she's with us, so we consider her our friend, and she considers us her friends*". Wayne, grade 11, echoed Katie. "*Abdul's just in the class. No big deal. Just Abdul. Most people like that*". In the Special Education schools students noted disruption or lack of such contact. Grade 5 Lorne, who attends a school supporting a special class, in response to a question asking why he did not interact with peers with disabilities said, "*I think they spend all their time there* [in the special class]". Taylor (Grade 3) attends a school with a part-time special class/withdrawal program. He comments that two students in his class "*always go out*" and "*read different books than us.*" Joyce, whose secondary school has a special class, comments that she sees peers with disabilities, but only "*in the one hundred hall, 'cause that's where their classroom is*".

Such comments underline the reality that social and academic interaction between typical students and their peers with disabilities are markedly different in schools with different structures for educating students with disabilities (see Table 2), and that structures have effect on friendship development and related dynamics. They also have before them the examples of teachers and administrators who do not question these different structures.

In this study, when educational service delivery is based on encouraging contact in all aspects of school life, friendships develop. When structure separates students due to differing abilities (see Table 2),

Table 2: Typical Student Friendships with Peers with Disabilities by Grade

Grade	Special Education	Inclusion
1	1/3	3/3
3	0/5	3/3

5	0/6	3/3
7	0/7	3/3
9	0/2	3/3
10	0/2	
11	0/1	3/3
12	0/1	
OAC	0/3	3/3

friendships tend not to develop. Worthy of note is that a number of Inclusive secondary students questioned appropriateness of a resource room as part of their school structure. They questioned it as it separated students from students. At the same time a number of students in the Special Education schools questioned the value of segregation and suggested value in having both groups together in regular classrooms at times.

Teasing and Insulting Behaviour:

Those who favour Inclusive settings and those who favour special settings differ on the issue of which setting results in less abusive behaviour toward students with disabilities. Findings support those who argue that Inclusion promotes appropriate behaviour between students more so than they do the arguments of those who prefer Special Education structures. From Grade 5 on it was apparent that students in schools with Special structures reported more inappropriate behaviour toward peers with disabilities than was reported in inclusively structured schools, though such behaviour occurred in both systems.

In the Special Education schools, 14 of 23 students (61%) interviewed from Grade 5 to OAC mentioned that they had witnessed abusive behaviour. Catalysts for the behaviour were differences apparent in peers with disabilities, opportunities to entertain other typical students at the expense of peers with disabilities, and sheer dislike of peers with disabilities. In the Inclusive schools 3 of 15 students (20%) indicated that they had witnessed typical peers acting inappropriately toward peers with disabilities. Others hypothesized that such behaviour could occur, but had not witnessed it.

How might this difference between differently structured systems be explained? Again the answer may be simple and point to the structures themselves. One system has structures which bring students together. The other separates students on the basis of disability. Students in the Inclusive system find little inappropriate behaviour directed at peers with disabilities. The majority of students in the Special Education system have personal knowledge of such behaviour. Students in the first system report that they have friends who are disabled. Such reports are rare in the second system. The analysis which comes most readily to mind is that we do not tease and insult as readily those who are our friends and acquaintances, as we might those with whom we do not associate and whom the system centres out as different. While a necessarily tentative analysis, the evidence points in this direction.

Advocacy:

Little mention of advocacy by typical students for peers with disabilities was mentioned in Inclusive or Special Education Model schools prior to grade 7. From grade 7 on, obvious differences appear. A number of students in the Special Education secondary school (5 of 9 or 55%) indicated

that they would react as advocates if witnessing acts of abuse. The others would ignore it. Similar findings were made at higher elementary grades. All students in the Inclusive secondary school indicated that they would advocate directly or would report to school officials were they to witness inappropriate behaviour.

A note of caution is required here. The issue of personal accountability in the face of abusive behaviour is a sensitive topic. It may be too sensitive for some students to speak. Interpretation of advocacy or non-advocacy between students in the two systems must be cautious given this possibility. A minimal analysis is that responses of a significant number of students in both systems suggested awareness that abusive behaviour toward peers was inappropriate and unacceptable, and that it was their responsibility to intervene.

However, not all determined to intervene as advocates. The difference between Special Education and Inclusive groups in terms of ignoring witnessed instances of inappropriate behaviour is important. The number of students from the one school system who chose to ignore and walk away in the face of abuse by typical peers was high. Typical students in inclusive settings, when discussing abusive behaviour, all said they would intervene.

The question of why some students choose to defend peers with disabilities and some do not is left to future studies. The present study points to the difficult fact that some students in schools structured under the Special Education Model choose to be proactive and others passive when peers with disabilities are abused. Students in Inclusive schools choose to be proactive.

Acceptance of Exclusion – Inclusion:

Both Inclusive and Special Education students accepted the model of education for students with disabilities approved by their school systems. The reasoning behind this acceptance was diametrically opposite for the two groups of students. Those in the Special Education system believed that peers with disabilities could not keep up in a regular class, that they needed a special setting due to their disabilities, and that Special Education settings were effective in answering their educational needs. Some believed that peers with disabilities would "catch up" to regular class peers as a result of special class experience. They were reinforced in this belief by school structures and teacher example that separated students on the basis of achievement.

In Inclusive schools there was strong belief that the most suitable place for education of peers with disabilities was the regular classroom. Peers with disabilities would make friends in a regular setting and it was there that all students would come to know and value each other. Achievement did not enter into consideration. In fact, some secondary students questioned why a resource room designed to support achievement was needed when it emphasized difference between students. Students in Inclusive settings also realized and accepted that they had some responsibility for supporting their peers with disabilities to do well. Little such recognition of shared responsibility was apparent among students in schools with Special Education structures, though it was a dynamic at the elementary level. School structures and teacher example come into play here.

Finally, whereas no student in an Inclusive setting questioned regular class placement, and some strongly rejected segregated placement, some students in Special Education Model settings questioned segregation. These students perceived value in all students being together at least part of the time. A few went so far as to question the instructional effectiveness of special settings in spite of the model put before them by teachers and administrators. As Owen in OAC said:

I think they should almost go to both [regular and special education settings]. *Cause I don't know what they're learning. But they can't be learning much.*

Finding that students accepted that with which they were familiar was not surprising. It is human nature to accept, that which characterizes society around you, what is modeled as routine and accepted by those those in positions of trust. Of interest, however, is that some students in Special Education schools questioned special placement to the exclusion of classroom interaction with typical peers. There is a suggestion here that some students did not accept separation, particularly complete separation, of peers on the basis of disability.

In sum, under Acceptance of Exclusion-Inclusion, dramatic differences in views of students in the two systems were found on what constitutes appropriate education for peers with disabilities. Full-time or part-time segregation was accepted by one group. A few members of this group also suggested that some regular class experience would be of value. The Inclusive group supported regular class placement for all and questioned need for a resource room. This group valued the social interaction of the regular classroom over academic homogeneity. Fundamentally, both groups accepted as appropriate the structures determined for students with disabilities by the leaders of their individual school systems.

Theoretical Notes

It is important to explore the roots of attitudes of any group if educators are to provide the most positive education structures possible for all students. Certainly, it is important to do so when the same theoretical positionings are employed in support of diametrically opposed educational approaches. Such tangled webs are confusing and must be untangled.

Social learning theory states that we learn from observation and imitation of those around us. Social referencing theory states that we look to familiar and trusted figures for guidance in our actions. We have in this study two quite different social responses to education of persons with disabilities. One approach creates structures, which separate students in order to provide appropriate programming for all, and to protect some students from inappropriate typical peer behaviour. Findings of this study indicate that the result of this modeling through school structures is disruption of friendship development, abusive behaviour as a school dynamic, less than routine choice to advocate, and almost uniform acceptance by typical students of separation of students. Some students, though, do question lack of classroom interaction between typical students and peers with disabilities, and mention possible detrimental effect on learning.

The other response models that it is beneficial to educate all students together in regular classrooms. Friendships will be made. Administrators and teachers have developed structures to support routine peer interaction. This study notes that all students interviewed believed friendships develop, that learning goes on for all, that an amount of abuse, though comparatively minimal, behaviour occurs, that advocacy is routine, and that students do not question the system, which has been established. A number of students reject the idea that students should be separated for any reason.

There is a suggestion in this study that the Special Education Model results in negative typical peer relationships compared to the effects of the Inclusive Model. This finding implies that educators must be aware of the effects of systemic structures on social development, and that social

learning and social referencing theory may be of value in understanding effect of structures.

Closing Word

Conclusions of this study must be tentative. They conflict directly with that side of the literature which suggests that students with disabilities learn effectively and, at the same time, are protected by special education structures from the slings and arrows they would experience if placed in regular classrooms with typical peers. This, also, is one study of limited size and involves only two school systems.

Nonetheless, this study suggests support for those who argue that Inclusive education compared to Special Education results in more positive social relationships. This holds true whether one looks at formation of friendships/acquaintantships, teasing and insulting behaviour directed at those with disabilities, or advocating for peers with disabilities. The closing discussion suggests that these differences do not lie in the students themselves, but in the educational arrangements characterizing their education and that of their peers with disabilities.

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