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RECEIVED

DEC 13 1976

December 9, 1976

CAMPBELL

Dr. Jay Campbell
Utah State Board of Education
230 East Fifth South Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Dear Dr. Campbell:

I have received your letter of November 22 relative to suggestions as to how you might strengthen your programs for the deaf. Perhaps you might consider the following:

1. Identify those children who are "hard-of-hearing" (not by an audiogram but rather by performance) and separate them from the classes for the deaf. These students should not consider themselves as "deaf" but rather as a hearing person with a handicap. There is a definite psychological difference in how such a person views him/herself.

2. These students should be mainstreamed--but still have a teacher for the deaf responsible for language and reading developmental skills until such time as it becomes obvious that such support is not needed. These students should not identify themselves with the deaf community--but should be given every opportunity (academic and social) to enter into the mainstream.

3. While a number of states have "dabbled" in such an approach, most of them have relied upon speech therapists for supportive services--when speech isn't the main concern. Having strategically placed classes with top-flight teachers would really pay dividends in reduced numbers of years of required services, improved employment attainment, and general success of the program.

"Speech is the birthright of every child. It is the deaf child's one fair chance to keep in touch with his fellows."

—HELEN KELLER

Dr. Jay Campbell

December 9, 1976

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b. Separate out those children identified as multiply handicapped:

- 1) Intellectually limited
- 2) Learning disabled

Set up some regional programs to serve these children. However, before you do that, establish some type of training center where teachers of the deaf can go and pick up a second master degree or about 45 hours of upper division credit in working with these students. Utah would be years ahead of the rest of the country! There is a need for some teachers of the deaf to build up expertise in working with these students. All too often they are given the "burned out" or the "grassy green," when it comes to teachers. There are hardly any universities offering any courses specifically in the multiply handicapped deaf, but you have enough resources at the U. of U. and Utah State that you could develop your own training curriculum and establish regional centers for the students. These kids are being short-changed all over the country.

These would be my two main suggestions on how to improve a program that is gaining recognition for being "independent" of the "fads and pressures" of education today.

Good luck,

Wallace E. Bruce, Director
Tucker-Maxon Oral School

WB/b

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

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RICHARD G. BRILL
Superintendent

December 9, 1976

RECEIVED
DECEMBER 10 1976

Dr. Jay J. Campbell, Associate
Superintendent
Office of Administration and
Institution Services
Utah State Board of Education
250 East Fifth South Street
Salt Lake City, Utah 84111

Dear Dr. Campbell:

This is in response to your letter of November 22, and I am enclosing copies of two articles that I have written. The one on mainstreaming was published in the American Annals of the Deaf in August 1975. The one entitled "Interpretation of Least Restrictive Environment" will be published in The California Palms, our school paper, in December. These two articles represent my philosophy, but are not direct recommendations for legislation.

I recognize the need for what is sometimes termed a "cascade of services" and I am somewhat familiar with PL 94-142 and the third draft of regulations which are as yet to be adopted.

I think that many people misinterpret the concept of "least restrictive environment" to automatically assume that placement in the most integrated situation is always to be preferred.

I believe that in Utah you have the structure for a program that does provide for a variety of programs for deaf children, and I think that centralized administration of the entire program coming from the head of the residential school is one of the best organizational patterns. The question, of course, is whether it is truly effective. To determine this, I think it takes a system of valid evaluations and continuing re-evaluations of all children in all programs. It then takes someone in authority to effect transfers of children from one program to another when the evaluation indicates that the child is not making the kind of progress in the program he is enrolled in because he is in fact in the wrong program.

Dr. Campbell

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I think that there should also be a valid, objective evaluation of total programs to determine whether they in effect are doing the job they are supposed to be.

As you probably know, I have a certain professional bias toward supporting Total Communication as the best means of carrying on an educational program for most all prelingually deaf children. I can see that there are a very few deaf children who can be successful in a totally oral program, and I think that nearly all severely hard-of-hearing children should be in such a program. One of the problems that can arise when a system such as that in Utah has a dual program is that the total communication program gets labeled as being primarily appropriate for the multihandicapped deaf and a stigma may be attached to others who are in the program. I believe this should be looked at carefully to be sure that such is not the case. Another way of looking at it is that I do not believe that mental level is a prime criterion in determining placement of children in total communication programs versus in oral programs. This is one of the kinds of things I think should be looked at when a program is being objectively evaluated.

I hope these random thoughts will be of some value to you.

Yours sincerely,

Richard G. Brill
Richard G. Brill
Superintendent

RCB:bp
Enclosures

ORIGINAL ARTICLES**Mainstreaming: Format or Quality?**

by Richard G. Brill, Ed.D.

The implementation of the philosophy of mainstreaming is a current wave in American education initiated and supported by certain parent groups, some administrators in the field of education, many professors of special education, and certain groups formulated for the protection of individual and civil rights. The methods used to attain mainstreaming in education are through legislation and through court orders resulting from law suits. Many professional educators of the deaf and many parents of deaf children are greatly concerned about the quality of the education of deaf children that may result from the mainstreaming movement. Thus it is time to analyze the factors involved.

As had been cited in many places, the Pennsylvania case involving the Association for Retarded Children and the Mills vs. Board of Education case in Washington, D.C., were the first two landmark cases in this area.¹ A significant principle in these court decisions is, "the right to educational services equal to those received by typical children and the right to an education in the least restrictive or most typical school setting possible". The interpretation of this has been that every child is generally best placed in a regular classroom, secondly, he is best placed in a special class or being provided special supportive services while still in his local school, and only as a last resort should he be separated physically from all of the so-called typical children in his educational placement.

Dr. Brill is Superintendent of the California School for the Deaf at Riverside.

This has great appeal to parents who quite naturally want to keep their children at home. They also want to continually reassure themselves that in fact their child is not very different from other children. They hope that in time the child's handicap will be completely overcome, and there will be little or no difference between their deaf child and other members of society. All proponents of mainstreaming or integration of prelingually deaf children make the tacit assumption that every child will achieve optimal emotional, social, and intellectual development, be accepted by his peers, and have access to vocational training in any program where a child is allowed to attend school, without any knowledge as to what is necessary to bring about these much-to-be desired objectives.

Local educational administrators often bear the brunt of criticism and accusations that they resist providing a local program for deaf children because it is costly. Frequently they are not credited with the professional integrity which has resulted in their resisting local programs because they are aware that a truly appropriate program cannot be established in a local area where there are insufficient numbers of children.

We seem to be in an era of simplistic solutions to complex problems. The less one knows about the details of the situation, the easier it is to generalize and pronounce panaceas. Unfortunately, jurists, lawyers, legislators, general educators, and strangely enough, parents of many deaf children, know very little about the actual educational problems facing prelingually deaf children.

It was no accident that special education for deaf children was the first type of special education established in the United States in 1817. The first school for the blind was not established until 1837, and the first program for the education of the mentally retarded was undertaken in 1848. The reasons why deaf children require special teaching and special services are just as true today as they were 158 years ago.²

While much publicity has been given to the Pennsylvania case and to the Mills case which were referred to above, another very important case occurred in California in which a Superior Court judge found that the professional staff of a school for the deaf were those most competent in determining the appropriate placement for a particular deaf child with additional handicapping conditions.³ The issue was not whether or not the state had a responsibility for providing appropriately for the child, but rather the issue was one of who was to determine what was appropriate. The findings in *Case vs. the State of California* were upheld by the Appellate Court of the State of California. The appeal by the plaintiff to the California State Supreme Court was rejected.

In determining appropriate educational programs for various categories of handicapped children, those categories must be analyzed both in terms of the degree of the handicapping condition of the child and also in terms of the incidence in the population. The generic term of Hearing Impaired ranges from the person who has a mild hearing loss to those with a moderate hearing loss and eventually to those with a profound hearing loss. By definition, the person with a hearing loss which still allows him to hear and understand connected speech is defined as hard of hearing, while the individual who has such a severe or profound hearing loss that he cannot hear and understand connected speech, even with the assistance of amplification, is defined as deaf.

Also contributing to the degree of the educational handicap of deafness, in addition to the amount of hearing loss, is the age of the child at the time deafness was acquired. Today we find that nearly all children who are deaf have been deaf since birth and thus are prelingually deaf, meaning that they have no language or speech which was ac-

quired through hearing. Until a few years ago a large number of the children who were classified as deaf were postlingually deafened as a result of one of a variety of common childhood illnesses during which they had a high fever over an extended period of time. The educational problems of this type of child were quite different from those of the prelingually deaf child's because the postlingually deafened child had a communication base rooted in a knowledge of language. The reason such children are not prevalent in our schools today is due to the development of various medications that successfully treat the diseases associated with high fever in young children before they reach the stage where deafness can develop. Thus nearly all deaf children today are prelingually deaf and constitute the most severely handicapped group in the general category of the hearing impaired.

The other important factor is the ratio of incidence in the population. Certain handicapping conditions have a high incidence. These include the mentally retarded, children with speech handicaps, and perhaps those with learning disabilities. Included in low incidence groups are autistic children and deaf children. There is less than one deaf child per 1,000 children. For each 10,000 hearing children enrolled in public schools, there are approximately 7.5 deaf children requiring special education placement. If children who are classified as severely hard of hearing are added to this number, it raises the incidence to approximately 10 deaf and severely hard of hearing children per 10,000, or one child per thousand which can be used as a valid figure for estimate purposes. However, it must be remembered that the 10 children per 10,000 may range in age from about 5 to 18, or the same age span normally encompassing the years of primary and secondary education. Since about two-thirds of the children enrolled in public school systems are on an elementary level and the other third on a secondary level, we might expect to find, in a school population of 10,000 hearing children, about seven in elementary programs and three in secondary programs. If these children are distributed proportionately according to age, this means that for every 10,000 hearing children there is less than one deaf child for each of the 12 chronological years

of the typical school program extending from the first grade through the twelfth grade.² These are very important facts, generally completely ignored by people with simplistic answers, when considering the establishment of an appropriate educational program for deaf children.

The essential problem is to provide the best and the most appropriate educational program so that every deaf child has the opportunity to develop to his maximum potential. To devise an appropriate solution to this problem three components must be analyzed and understood.

The first of the components is the nature and effect of deafness. We are talking about the prelingually deaf child who as a result of lack of hearing does not naturally acquire language through hearing as is true of nearly everyone else. He does not learn that he has a name, that there is a name for milk, for table, for chair, for mother, and thus he does not have a knowledge of a basic symbol system for communication. Knowledge and learning is dependent upon communication. An individual's mental health, his acceptance by his peers, his general adjustment to society, and his ability to earn a living are all dependent upon communication. This is not to say that there are not other important factors, but rather that without communication the other factors cannot play their part. So the educational program must concentrate on helping the child to overcome this communication handicap, and simultaneously provide him with all the skills and content knowledge that the communication handicap has prevented him from obtaining.

Given the nature of the effect of deafness, the second essential in analyzing the problem is to review the competencies needed by the teacher who is going to assist this child in overcoming his deficits. In addition to having knowledge about the general learning processes and teaching methods used with people who have normal communication channels, the teacher of the deaf must develop the competencies to teach the deaf child to overcome his communication handicap to the highest degree possible. Communication itself is very complex. Communication must utilize a symbol system, which in this country is basically the English language. Communication is both expressive and receptive, and the

two are not identical. Modes of expressive communication are writing, speech and manual communication. Modes of receptive communication are reading the written or printed form, speechreading the voiced form, and reading of manual communication. Every one of these is different. It takes highly developed specific skills and competencies, much experience, and the supportive services of a supervisor who knows more about the problem than the teacher himself for a teacher of deaf children to function successfully.

In addition to teaching communication in all of its aspects, the teacher of deaf children also must have the abilities and competencies to teach subject matter. This requires a different skill from that of the teacher of typical hearing children. Hearing children bring a great deal of knowledge to the classroom which they have acquired as a result of their constant auditory input all of their waking hours. This continuous input makes possible the accumulation of an extensive body of knowledge which the child's teacher guides, directs and refines in the educational process with hearing children. In contrast, a deaf child brings very little incidentally acquired knowledge to the classroom. The teacher is essentially responsible for the deaf child's total input. This not only applies to the content material commonly expected to be taught to all children, but it also includes the many aspects of incidental learning concerned with social living which deaf children have not been able to acquire from their parents and their peers because they have not had the continual meaningful input through their hearing.

Having looked at the nature and effect of deafness and very briefly at the competencies of the teacher, how are these appropriate resources which are required by the deaf child to be brought to him? Here is where the factor of incidence becomes of maximum importance.

The deaf child learns best when he is in a small class composed of children who are approximately the same age and educational level. The class must be small enough to allow constant eye contact between each pupil and the teacher. Ideally this is a class of six to eight pupils. If the pupils are to get the most from the time spent with the teacher there cannot be wide discrepancies in the

communication ability level of the class members.

It is most unlikely that a limited geographical area will contain a small number of deaf children, all of approximately the same chronological age and educational level. Rather, a large population area, which may extend over a large geographical area, will provide a sufficient number of deaf children to organize homogeneous classes. The number of classes in turn must be sufficient to justify having a supervisor who should be highly skilled and experienced as a teacher of the deaf and who also has the ability to help the trained teachers working with each class. It is only with such an educational team that the majority of the pupils will be able to achieve their educational potential.

Thus, if the real objective is to provide a quality education, personnel with the appropriate competencies, a structure to use these competencies to the maximum, and other appropriate supportive services are essential.

The structure must provide for an enrollment of deaf children which will ensure homogeneous grouping in relation to chronological age, intellectual ability and academic achievement. In terms of grouping, this would require a minimum of 40 children for an elementary program and a minimum of 150 students for a secondary program. In terms of incidence figures, it would require a population of 60,000 children, not a total population of 60,000 to yield 40 deaf children for an elementary program. Not only should there be a sufficient number of children, but the teachers should have full specialized preparation, they should have supervisors and there should also be adequate diagnostic testing services.⁴

The rationale for the existence of residential schools has been, and continues to be, the fact that even with our urbanized areas, a large majority of deaf children live in areas too sparsely populated to provide for a sufficient number of children to form a base for adequate local programs. Where there are a sufficient number there is no reason why a local program should not be established. But the program should be one which provides the specific educational program needed by the deaf child, utilizing teachers who are professionally competent to carry it out.

Having reviewed the components of the nature and effects of deafness, the compe-

tencies needed by the teacher of the deaf child, and the manner in which the appropriate resources required by the deaf child can be brought to him, it is appropriate to relate these to the principles of mainstreaming. As was pointed out earlier, the interpretation of the right to an education in the least restrictive or most typical school setting possible has been that every child is generally best placed in a regular classroom, secondly, that he is best placed in a special class by being provided special supportive services while still in his local school, and only as a last resort should he be separated physically from all of the so-called typical children in his educational placement.

The typical deaf child with a tremendous communication handicap is not best placed in a regular classroom. The teacher in the regular classroom does not have the competencies to meet this child's needs. Placement of one deaf child in a class of hearing children precludes his receiving the proportionate amount of time he needs even from the best intentioned teacher. The deaf child's lack of knowledge and communication as compared to the typical hearing children in his class further magnifies the misplacement. The prelingually deaf child is almost never appropriately placed in a regular classroom.

Where there is a single special class for hearing impaired children, homogeneous grouping can rarely be achieved. A wide age span in such classes is what is usually found. This mitigates against a quality educational program. Even if the special teacher of such a class has been prepared as a teacher of the deaf, but works without the support of other teachers of the deaf and more particularly without a supervisor who is highly knowledgeable, she can rarely provide even mediocre teaching, much less superior teaching.

The claimed integration of deaf children in a special class with the hearing children in a school is most frequently a token integration. The children are on the playground at the same time and in the lunch room together. There is usually little communication between the groups. Thus there is a superficial format of integration because of physical association, but it is not real integration when real communication is lacking. Placing a nine year old deaf child in a third grade with hearing children because that is where

other nine year olds are, completely ignoring the fact that the nine year old deaf child does not have the communication skills or the total amount of knowledge of the average third grader or even the slow third grader at the bottom of the class, is not doing justice to the deaf child.

Special supportive services in an integrated program generally mean some individualized tutoring. This is not sufficient for the typical prelingual deaf child. He needs a constant total program and he needs to associate with other children in the class who are truly his peers if he is going to learn to get along in society.

The majority of parents of deaf children have no real understanding of the educational implications of their child's hearing loss nor are they aware of the potential negative consequences of mainstreaming for their child. Similarly, many professional educators are naive about the educational needs of such children and the administrative considerations inherent in providing a quality education for them. With very few exceptions the prelingually deaf child requires a very special educational program. The details of such a program have been spelled out in a policy statement by the Conference of Executives of American Schools for the Deaf in 1973.⁴

It has been stated that there is no objective evidence that segregation of the more severely handicapped children, which would include the deaf, results in any better education for them. It must be assumed that the term objective evidence is in terms of data obtained through research studies. To an extent this is true, but the reason for this is that research studies of this type, to be valid, require well matched groups and the control of all but one independent variable. Because the tendency throughout the country for many years has been that the child with the greater hearing loss attended specialized programs for the deaf while the children with a less severe hearing loss attended less segregated programs, any conclusions drawn on a comparison of the level achieved by the school leavers of either group were not valid. The

relatively small numbers of children and the large number of variables is the reason there has been relatively little valid research on this subject.

There is a great deal of evidence from the parents of older deaf children, as well as from school administrators, of the great harm done to many children in the past whose parents would not allow them to attend an appropriate program established for deaf children because it was a segregated program. When the children became older many parents then discovered that their children had neither communication nor an education. The segregated schools have been deluged with requests to salvage the lives of children who had been misplaced educationally for many years. Unfortunately, the best school program cannot overcome the effect of years of misplacement.

Are proponents of mainstreaming more concerned with a format for education which seems to serve a particular philosophical position or with the opportunity for a truly quality education for every deaf child?

In view of the present social climate, it is unfortunate, but nevertheless probable that there are going to be many more deaf children who will suffer irreparable harm as a result of being placed in the mainstream where their needs will not be met rather than being placed in a program that can provide a quality education.

References

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3. Lori Case, etc., et al, v. Department of Education, et al, Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Riverside, No. 101679, Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law, January 1973.
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INTERPRETATION OF LEAST RESTRICTIVE ENVIRONMENT

by

Richard G. Brill, Ed.D

The term "least restrictive environment" is used frequently in a discussion of both the philosophy and the implementation of the educational concept of Mainstreaming. In actuality, those three words taken alone have been lifted out of context and are frequently universally applied to all forms of special education when such was not the intention of those truly knowledgeable in the entire area of special education or by the wording of the fundamental legislation itself.

The fundamental federal law PL 94-142 refers to the least restrictive environment which is appropriate to provide the necessary educational program. Specifically, Section 612 (5) states "... special classes, special schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes, with the use of supplementary aids and services, cannot be achieved satisfactorily".

It is important to analyze the educational handicap of prelingual deafness and the factors that must be considered in overcoming this handicap in order to relate the educational procedures needed in this special field, to the intention of the law.

First, it is necessary to define the population being referred to. The prelingually deaf child is the one whose hearing loss, usually from the time of birth, is so great that even with amplification, the child is unable to understand

the spoken language and thus is unable to learn his native language through hearing. Thus this person suffers a major communication handicap from the earliest years. While other children are learning to communicate very extensively long before they enter a school program, these children generally do not even know they have a name by the time they are old enough to enter school.

The communication handicap of the prelingual deaf child is in both the expressive and receptive forms of communication. He cannot communicate to others and he cannot receive communication from others.

Another very important factor is the matter of incidence. Early deafness is a low incidence handicap. The ratio is approximately one per one thousand children. With the typical proportional age span and typical proportional distribution of children, this means that only an occasional elementary school would have as many as one child living in its district, and generally two or less living in the district served by any particular high school.

A communication handicap is not only a barrier to learning, it also contributes to social isolation. The term "restrictive environment" is generally thought of in terms of physical barriers or physical placement. Such a concept assumes that if one is physically placed within a group that automatically the individual is part of that group. In actuality, communication and psychological relatedness are essential for integration or lack of restriction in the environment. If an individual is at the dining room table with members of his family, but no one at the table can communicate with him or includes him in the conversation, that individual is in effect isolated. On the other hand, if that same individual is with a group of people with whom he can communicate easily, perhaps through using manual communication, then in a very literal, as well as psychological sense, that person is part of the group and is not in a restrictive environment.

Thus, merely because a child is placed in a regular classroom with many other children rather than in a special class, does not mean that this child is automatically in a less restrictive environment. If there is little communication between the child and other children in the same class, if it is not possible for the deaf child to be part of the continuing flow of communication between teacher and the class as a group, between the teacher and other children as individuals within the class, between other children and the teacher, between one child and another, then that deaf child is in fact isolated in that class.

When children with normal hearing enter school they have an extensive formal symbol system which we call the English language. Knowledge of this system includes understanding the meaning of various words, understanding the concepts to be communicated when these words are put together into phrases and sentences, being able to transmit ideas using these words expressed through speech, and understanding ideas that are expressed by speech through the sense of hearing. One of the major problems in public schools today is the teaching of reading. Reading is the ability to understand a symbol system in written form which again stands for thoughts expressed through words and combination of words. We find that we can only teach reading to a child when the child really understands the concepts for which the words stand. The deaf child does not have these concepts because of his lack of communication with others in his environment.

All of these matters related to communication are what constitutes the educational handicap of deaf children. For the child to have an opportunity to overcome these handicaps, he requires a teacher who has had long formal preparation including a practicum experience in ways to teach the meaning of words, phrases and ideas to children with whom he cannot communicate by merely talking

to them. In addition to this basic knowledge of the English language, the teacher of the deaf must try to teach a deaf child how to speak, how to best utilize his residual hearing, and how to understand through various forms of receptive communication. In addition to this, in spite of this major communication handicap, it is essential to teach content material to the deaf child. The typical classroom teacher of hearing children who has not had this special preparation cannot teach this deaf child very much. Supportive help by a speech therapist, or a teacher of the deaf providing relatively few hours per week to each deaf child, will not overcome the deaf child's handicap. Deaf children need more hours per week of education than that provided the typical hearing child, and this education must be provided by teachers who have had the long and complex preparation to do the job.

Socialization, the opportunity to work with others, to compete on fairly even terms, and to achieve recognition when appropriate, is an important factor in any child's training or education. The deaf child who can never be elected to class office and conduct a meeting in a group of hearing people, the pupil who cannot participate on the athletic teams because of the communication barrier between himself and the coach and between himself and his teammates, the deaf child who is not really included in social situations such as parties and dating because of the communication handicap, is in a very restrictive environment. For him the least restrictive environment is being with other children and adults where communication is not such a handicap and where the socializing activities can easily take place.

Following is a description of a goal to be achieved when a child is in a regular class: "When a child is in the educational mainstream, he is accepted as a member of a regular class. In theory, he is accepted because he is acquiring

the skills that every child must master to become a full contributing member of society".¹ The deaf child with a communication barrier does not fit this description.

A part of the implementation of Public Law 94-142 requires the individualization of plans to meet each child's specific and unique needs. A policy which mandates that the interpretation of "least restrictive environment" is one where a child must first be placed in a regular classroom with supplementary help, is contradictory to the philosophy requiring the individual treatment of each child on the basis of his individual needs.

Current legislation on both the state and federal level emphasize freedom of choice of both student and parents. The parents of deaf children who are truly aware of the major handicap their child faces and deaf students themselves as they grow older, generally demand an educational program where such children will have the opportunity to be taught by teachers who have been appropriately prepared to work with individuals who have this major handicap.

All of this means that the "least restrictive environment" for the pre-lingually deaf child is one in which this child is taught by teachers who are appropriately prepared, in which the child has the opportunities to learn how to communicate both expressively and receptively, in which the child has the opportunity to learn content material as expected of all children in the public school system, is in a situation where he has the opportunity for socialization which must be carried on with children and adults with whom he can communicate. To meet these needs, the least restrictive environment for that child is generally in a special class or in a special school designed to bring these out.

¹ Jenkins, J.R. & Mayhall, "Development and Evaluation of a Resource Teacher Program", Exceptional Children, Vol. 43, No. 1, September 1976, pp. 21 - 29.