

**A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF SECONDARY INCLUSION CLASSROOMS:
INITIAL MEASURES OF INCLUSION, EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES,
AND PARTNERSHIPS**

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CERTIFICATION OF PROJECT WORK

We, the undersigned, certify that this project entitled *A Descriptive Study of Secondary Inclusion Classrooms: Measures of Inclusion, Evidence-Based Practices, and Partnerships by Andrew Szuba*, Candidate for the Degree of Master of Science in Education, Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Education, is acceptable in form and content and demonstrates a satisfactory knowledge of the field covered by this project.


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Abstract

Research indicates that there has been increased demand for inclusion services for students with special needs since the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) in 2004. Yet, much remains unknown about what actually goes on in inclusive settings and how highly effective environments differ from those in which pupils make minimal progress. This descriptive study collected data from three, teacher pairs (i.e., general and special educators) who taught in middle and high schools in a small rural school district in Western New York. Using a survey and focused interviews, data were collected regarding (a) the nature and extent of physical, academic, and interpersonal integration in their settings; (b) teacher use of evidence-based teaching practices; and (c) the development of collaborative partnerships to improve services for all students. Results indicated that students were integrated in varying ways academically, behaviorally, and interpersonally into inclusive settings; that general and special education teachers shared most instructional responsibilities and worked collaboratively to maximize student learning; and that technological advances have facilitated teacher communication and collaboration and improved pupil learning. Implications for future research and practice are discussed.

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Introduction

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004) required each state to educate children with disabilities in general education classrooms to the maximum extent possible. In an effort to satisfy this requirement, students were often placed in what became known as inclusive classrooms. Inclusive settings, when properly implemented, purportedly enabled students with and without disabilities to increase their academic understanding and improve their social interaction and teamwork skills. My personal teaching experiences confirmed how effective inclusion and co-teaching can improve classroom management, increase student engagement, and allow teachers to collaborate successfully to promote student-learning outcomes. In contemporary inclusive settings, teachers must be better prepared instructionally to accommodate the diverse range of skill levels in their classrooms (Maheady, 1998).

While inclusion has become the *preferred* instructional arrangement for students with special needs, much remains unknown about what specifically occurs in these settings to promote pupil academic progress and social acceptance? As such, this exploratory descriptive study was undertaken. The primary purpose was to interview a small group of mentor teachers nominated for their expertise in providing high quality inclusive services about the nature of their service delivery. More specifically, they were interviewed about (a) the nature and extent of physical, academic, and interpersonal integration in their settings; (b) their use of evidence-based teaching practices; and (c) the development of collaborative partnerships to improve services for all students. The intent was to develop some general parameters and criteria for highly effective inclusive settings. It was assumed that once these settings were identified they might be used to (a)

prepare pre-service candidates; (b) support in-service teachers; (c) conduct applied research; and (d) delineate critical roles and responsibilities for general and special educators in inclusive settings.

Literature Review

An illustrative literature review was conducted using online databases at SUNY Fredonia. Articles were selected based primarily on their relevance to research questions (i.e., general and special education teachers' understanding of inclusion, strategies used by teachers in inclusive settings, essential ingredients of effective inclusive practices, and barriers to implementation). Criteria were developed initially based on three big ideas proposed by Maheady, Magiera, Simmons, Marshall, Chen, Beier, and Loughlin (2013). First, inclusion was about *more* than access to a particular location (e.g., general education classrooms). Rather, there were *at least* three dimensions of inclusive programming (i.e., physical, academic, and social) relevant to practice and outcomes. While physical integration (i.e., percentage of time spent with normally developing peers) is fairly easy to measure and impact, it does not guarantee that students with special needs will succeed academically or be accepted socially in those settings. It was important, therefore, to identify *physically* inclusive placements where pupils with special needs (a) make adequate and continuous academic progress; and (b) have friends and peers who treat them appropriately. The second big idea was that teacher practice and pupil learning were the most important variables to study in inclusive settings and that evidence-based practices (EBPs) should be reflected as much as possible. While cognitive (e.g., thoughts, reasoning, and reflections), affective (e.g., beliefs, attitudes, and predispositions), and contextual (e.g., cooperating teacher and supervisor characteristics,

length and nature of placements, and types of settings and students) factors are important, their relationships to practice and learning have not been clearly articulated nor measured (e.g., Goe & Cogshall, 2007; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Furthermore, federal mandates (No Child Left Behind and Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) require teachers to use *evidence-based practices* (EBPs) in support of pupil learning whenever possible. The third big idea was that high quality inclusion cannot exist in isolation. Rather, it requires ongoing and productive partnerships among teachers, parents, support personnel, school leaders, and teacher educators.

Arguments in Favor and Against Inclusion

Although the placement of students with special needs in general education settings has become the preferred instructional arrangement, it is by no means a universally supported concept among general or special educators (Heward, 2010; Salend, 2006). Gravois, Rosenfield and Vail (1999) argued, for instance, that there are at least two opposing viewpoints around effective inclusion in school. One side suggests students with special needs *should be* placed in the least restrictive environment (LRE) because it is federally mandated by IDEIA. Others contest the utility of LRE if students with special needs are not making adequate academic progress or are not being accepted socially by age-appropriate peers. They suggested further that successful inclusion will require both cognitive and practice-based shifts among general and special education teachers. It is possible, therefore, that some teachers may be supportive of inclusion in theory, but are ill-equipped to provide highly effective inclusive practice. Others who do not support inclusive theory may resist requisite professional development. Gravois et al argued, however, that good professional collaboration can improve problem-solving,

enhance the effectiveness of selected instructional practices, and respond to normally occurring uncertainties.

Kohler-Evans (2005) maintained that some students pulled from general education classrooms were not benefitting from the instruction they received in those settings in the first place. She argued that general education teachers did not possess the knowledge or skills to effectively meet the needs of students with special needs. She noted further that placing two teachers in the same room (i.e., co-teaching) sometimes resulted in the experienced general education teachers feeling uncomfortable initially or even frustrated by special educators' expectations to teach key concepts in content area subjects. Kohler-Evans also highlighted the importance of common planning times, positive working relationships, common educational philosophies, and a shared sense of instructional responsibility.

In a related study, Glazzard (2011) used focus groups to identify some barriers to effective inclusive practice. The primary barrier appeared to be teacher attitudes. If teachers were not committed to inclusion principles, for example, then it would not be implemented successfully. Many general education teachers reported that they lacked training in effective inclusive practices or as one teacher put it training was "sink or swim" (Glazzard 2011). Finally, teachers also noted that parents can offer a significant amount of resistance particularly if they do not want their children integrated with students with special needs. By the same token, some parents of students with disabilities have argued against integrating their children into general education classrooms.

In contrast, Boon, Burke, Fore and Smith (2008) found that effective inclusive placements produced favorable academic gains for students with special needs. They noted that students with severe learning disabilities, for example, outperformed comparable peers in separate special education settings. They recommended that teachers should carefully consider all variables when developing inclusive placements for students with special needs. Similarly, Mastropieri and Scruggs (2011) identified multiple criteria for effective inclusive settings. Significant among these factors were (a) strong administrative support (e.g., sufficient resources and positive attitudes toward inclusion); (b) effective special education personnel who provide assistance in collaborative planning, adapting instruction, and coordinating classroom assistance with paraprofessionals; (c) shared instructional responsibilities; and (d) effective use of peer teaching arrangements (e.g., peer tutoring and cooperative learning). Peer assistance methods, in particular, provide opportunities for improving social and academic outcomes simultaneously for all children.

A number of different researchers have also highlighted the importance of co-teaching in the delivery of effective inclusive settings. For example, Gardizi, Graetz, Mastropieri, McDuffie, Norland and Scruggs (2005) conducted several long-term qualitative studies of co-teaching in social studies and science classes. They identified positive working relationships that build on participant strengths, common planning time, strong curricula and effective instructional skills, disability-specific teaching adaptations, and content area expertise as critical to successful co-teaching relationships. Teachers who were surveyed found that if they could work well together or held a sense of compatibility with one another, students would benefit. Gardizi et al noted further that

special education teachers felt more comfortable co-teaching in subject areas where both teachers had comparable levels of content mastery. On the down side, high stakes testing may have some adverse effects on teaching and learning in inclusive settings. Co-taught inclusive classes assigned lower priority to differentiated instruction and reportedly spent more time with direct, teacher-led pedagogical approaches.

Simmons and Magiera (2007) also examined the effects of co-teaching as an inclusive practice. They observed and interviewed co-teaching teams in three high schools in one school district and found that there were varying co-teaching definitions and procedures across the district. In some cases, general education teachers selected academic content while special education counterparts developed adapted instructional practices. Simmons and Magiera (2007) recommended soliciting co-teaching volunteers, keeping pairs together over significant time periods, providing adequate professional development, and establishing common planning time. Good co-teaching was based on the assumption of shared instructional roles and responsibilities.

Smith and Leonard (2005) also examined the critical role of collaboration in effective inclusion programs. They found that good communication and role clarification among general and special educators, school leaders, and other team members promote inclusive practice. In addition, they identified collegiality as essential as well as shared goals, cooperative decision-making, and common planning time together. Smith and Leonard (2005) also suggested that school leaders must ensure that students with special needs are not clustered in just a few classrooms for efficiency and that they are accepted widely into the entire school community.

More recently, McLeskey, Waldron and Redd (2012) argued that students in inclusive settings should work in small cooperative learning groups to promote academic and interpersonal outcomes. In their study, they had general and special education teachers switch roles while instructing. Both teachers circulated among students while teaching and focused their combined attention on all students, not just those with IEPs. Their instruction was integrated and collaboratively planned, delivered, and evaluated. McLeskey et al., recommended data-driven instruction for all students to maximize their learning potential.

In another inclusion-related study, Tamura and Terpstra (2007) described potential social benefits associated with inclusive placements. They conducted a study in which students with autism spectrum disorders were grouped with normally developing peers who modeled and recognized pro-social behaviors in an inclusive elementary school setting. They concluded that peer modeling was an effective method for teaching important interpersonal skills such as sharing, joining groups, and initiating and maintaining social interactions to students with autism spectrum disorders.

Ncube (2011) explored how peer collaboration might foster the teaching of academic and life skills to both special and general education students. Using mixed-ability groups and a deck of playing cards, students were given essential questions related directly to lesson objectives. Ncube found that mixed ability groups allowed higher achieving students to help their lower performing peers. Both high and low achieving students were able to self-examine and explain concepts to one another and general education students learned to accept individual differences. This study was noteworthy in

that it highlighted benefits that may accrue to normally developing pupils in inclusive settings.

Tomasik (2007) examined inclusion practice for high school students with multiple disabilities in another study. Two students with multiple disabilities enrolled in an 11th grade US History course were integrated academically through the use of technology and cooperative learning. Students made Power Point presentations, outlined major historical themes, and used images, songs, and electronic audio files to make choices on how they would design research. Normally developing students were also paired with students with special needs to cook food associated with historical time periods. Study outcomes showed social and academic benefits for students with and without special needs.

Examining the role of teacher education on pre-service teachers' perceptions of inclusion, Smith and Tyler (2011) found that many teachers felt unprepared to work effectively with students with special needs. They argued for embedding new curricular content into college programs, developing solutions through technology, and pooling educational resources. Smith and Tyler (2011) cautioned against the adoption and use of professional development curricula and pedagogical methods that have not had observable and measurable effects on students with special needs. A call that is consistent with contemporary movements toward around evidence-based practices (Cook, 2012; Cook & Cook, 2011; Detrich, Keyworth, & States, 2008).

Dingle, Falvey, Givner, and Haager (2004) also examined essential competencies for school leaders as well as general and special education teachers involved in inclusive practice. Using a survey, the researchers found that general educators described a sense

of fear when considering their abilities to teach in inclusive models while special educators were concerned that their traditional roles and responsibilities would be disrupted. In particular, special educators perceived a decreased need for complex assessments, designing and implementing IEPs, and promoting collaboration among school professionals including para-educators.

Finally, Holdheide and Reschly (2008) argued that general and special education teachers should be provided with sufficient content knowledge and specialized instructional strategies to meet the needs of *all* students in inclusive settings. They recommended the use of evidence-based practices, improving relationships with parents and families, and insuring that general and special education teachers *observe and practice* instructional strategies for use in inclusive settings.

Nature of Inclusive Educational Programming

Collectively, this illustrative review indicated that inclusion was the preferred although not universally accepted service delivery option for most students with special needs (Heward, 2010; Salend, 2006). While significant disagreements persist regarding the nature, implementation, and effectiveness of inclusion, the placement of students with special needs in general education classrooms has remained the most common teaching arrangement. The literature suggested as well that certain practices (e.g., co-teaching, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and strong administrative support) were essential for effective inclusive practice. In addition, teachers must use evidence-based and peer-assisted instructional strategies to improve academic and social outcomes for students with special needs and they must build collaborative relationships at all levels, (i.e., pupil, teacher, support personnel, and parent) to sustain student progress.

The literature suggested further that high quality inclusion involves much more than increased physical time in general education classrooms (Heward, 2010; Salend, 2006). While physical integration (i.e., percentage of time spent with normally developing peers) is fairly easy to measure and increase, it does not guarantee that students with special needs will succeed academically or be accepted socially in those settings. It is important, therefore, to identify physically inclusive placements where pupils with special needs (a) make adequate and continuous academic progress; and (b) have friends and peers who treat them appropriately. As such, it is important to assess the level of academic and social inclusion that is present in any academic setting. Another big idea was that teacher practice and pupil learning were the most important variables to study in inclusive settings. While cognitive, affective, and contextual factors are important, their relationships to practice and learning have not been clearly articulated or measured (Goe & Cogshall, 2007; Wilson, Floden, & Ferrini-Mundy, 2002). Furthermore, federal mandates (e.g., Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act, 2004; No Child Left Behind, 2001) require teachers to use evidence-based practices (EBPs) in support of pupil learning whenever possible. The third big idea was that high quality inclusion cannot exist in isolation. Rather, it requires ongoing and productive partnerships among teachers, parents, support personnel, school leaders, and teacher educators.

Three broad criteria were established, therefore, for identifying high quality inclusive placements. The criteria were used to assess inclusive settings in terms of the (a) extent of physical, academic, and social integration; (b) presence of evidence-based practices; and (c) nature of classroom- and school-based partnerships. Extent of

integration was assessed in terms of the percentage of time students with special needs spent in general education classrooms (i.e., physical), the amount and rate of academic progress they made within those placements (i.e., academic), and the extent to which they were socially accepted and treated appropriately by their normally-developing peers (i.e., social). Evidence-based practice were assessed in terms of teachers' (a) knowledge of and attitudes toward EBPs; and (b) use of EBPs in their own classroom settings (Cook, 2011; Detrich et al., 2008). The third criterion, partnerships, was examined qualitatively by analyzing the nature of collaborative relationships reported by practitioners. Partnership assessments included who participated (e.g., general, special, and remedial educators, support personnel, parents, school leaders, and/or other community members), as well as the nature of the partnerships themselves (e.g., co-teaching, peer coaching, collaborative consultation, decision-making teams and learning communities).

Purpose of Study

The present study was designed, therefore, to collect descriptive information about the nature of teaching practice in a small sampling of P-12 inclusive secondary classrooms in Western New York. Data from this project contribute to the development of formal and replicable criteria for identifying *high quality* inclusive placements in P-12 schools. It is assumed that once these settings are identified they might be used to prepare pre-service candidates, support in-service teachers, conduct applied research, and identify critical roles and responsibilities for general and special educators in inclusive placements. More specially, the descriptive study will address the following questions (a) To what extent are students with special needs integrated physically, academically, and socially into inclusive settings? (b) What to general and special educators' know about

evidence-based teaching practices and to what extent do they report using them? (c) What factors do general and special educators identify as most important for successful inclusion in secondary classes

Method

Participants and Settings

Participants included five female and one male teacher; three general and three special educators from the same small, rural school district in Western New York. The district enrolled approximately 700 students with 97% identified as Caucasian, 2% multiracial, and 1% African-American. Almost half (48%) of district students were eligible for free or reduced lunch and average class size was between 15-17 students. Participants were recruited initially from a listing of *mentor teachers* who had worked collaboratively with Project RAISE-UP, a federally funded grant implemented through the College of Education at SUNY Fredonia. This grant was designed to delineate parameters of high quality inclusion and prepare pre-service teachers for working effectively in these settings. Study participants had worked collaboratively for varying lengths of time to provide inclusive services to students in their respective classrooms. At the discretion of the school leader, additional teachers were solicited for involvement in this descriptive study. Three teacher pairs, represented by pseudonyms, volunteered to participate and served as the primary informants during the investigation.

Teacher Pair #1. Alice and Deidre worked as co-teachers in the districts' middle school inclusion program. There were 16 students (10M, 6F) in their classroom who were enrolled as either 7th or 8th graders. Eleven students (69%) were identified as normally developing while five others had IEPs. No students were described as culturally and

linguistically diverse or gifted and talented and no one was receiving academic intervention services (AIS). Approximately half of the class was receiving free and reduced meals. Alice was a general education teacher who had been teaching for four years in the district. She held a degree in Middle Childhood Education grades 5-9 with a generalist teaching certification. Deidre earned her degree in special education and had been teaching for 10 years. Prior to teaching Deidre worked as a social work.

Teacher pair #2. Michael and Zena were co-teachers in a high school geometry and algebra class with 14 (9F, 5M), 9th and 10th grade students. Eleven students (78%) were described as normally developing 11th graders, while three were identified with learning disabilities, attention deficit hyperactivity disorders, and reading processing difficulties. Four students reportedly received academic intervention services (AIS) and half the class got free and reduced meals. No students were identified as either gifted and talented or culturally and linguistically diverse. Michael served as the general education respondent and had a degree in mathematics education grades 7-12. He had been teaching for four years overall and the past three years co-teaching with Zena. Zena was certified in special education and had been teaching for 13 years.

Teacher pair #3. Gayle and Stephanie co-taught in an inclusive high school Regents English class containing 23 students (12M, 11F). Twenty students (83%) were described as normally developing 11th graders while three others had special needs. The three students with IEPs were identified as learning disabled and behavior disordered and two other pupils had 504 plans. Six students were receiving AIS and over 80% got free and reduced meals. There were no culturally and linguistically diverse or gifted and talented students in the class. Gayle was the general education teacher with a degree in

English education grades 7-12. She had been teaching for five years in the district. Stephanie, her special education co-teacher, taught four years in this district and had prior teaching experience. They described their current teaching arrangement as, “a well-developed, co-taught class. Unfortunately, our placement will not be continuing into next year”.

Survey and Interview Measures and Outcomes

Descriptive data were collected using three primary measures (a) *The Physical, Academic, & Social Integration Scale for Inclusive Settings*; (b) *Validated Practices Survey* (Jones, 2009); and (c) *Teachers’ Roles and Responsibilities Scale*. Surveys were administered during brief (45 to 60 minute) structured interviews conducted in volunteers’ classrooms and questions surrounded teachers’ philosophy of inclusion, planning and collaboration practices, shared instructional roles and responsibilities, pupil progress monitoring processes, and family involvement.

The first measure, the *Physical, Academic, and Social Integration Scale for Inclusive Settings* was developed collaboratively by university faculty and classroom teachers during the 325T grant process (see Appendix A). (This form was adapted for purposes of this study). The original scale consisted of three parts and included 18 items that offered multiple-choice and open-ended response formats. Part I asked teachers to indicate the percentages of time that students with special needs spent in inclusive settings each day. Part II focused on the extent of academic integration in the classroom and included items regarding ongoing measures of pupil progress, homework performance, as well as active engagement and off-task behavior. The third and final part of the scale asked teachers about the extent to which students with special needs were

socially accepted into their classrooms. Specific items included (a) number of friendships; (b) overall acceptance levels; (c) how often they participate in extra-curricular activities; and (d) use of free and play time. The adapted survey was converted to a series of open-ended questions that asked teachers to comment on (a) philosophy of inclusion; (b) planning practices for inclusion; (c) student access to general education curriculum; (d) defined curricula, lesson planning and differentiated instruction; (e) academic monitoring; (f) classroom management; and (g) family involvement. Teacher responses were aggregated, analyzed, and described qualitatively for commonalities and differences across teachers, training, and inclusive teaching experiences.

The second measure, the *Validated Practices Survey*, was developed and used by Jones (2009) in a qualitative study with 10 beginning special education teachers (i.e., < 3 years of teaching experience) (see Appendix B). The survey asks teachers about their existing teaching practices, the processes they use to make instructional decisions, and their familiarity with six, evidence-based practices for students with special needs (i.e., direct instruction, peer-mediated learning, content enhancements, self-management, technology integration, and effective teaching behaviors). Using a 5-point Likert-type scale (1= None to 5 = Extensive), classroom teachers were asked to rate each statement in terms of their experience and opinion. Statements included (a) level of knowledge or skills in using the EBPs; (b) the degree of presence in their daily teaching; (c) difficulty in using the practices; (d) extent to which practice was covered in pre-service preparation; and (e) opportunities to use practices during pre-service training. The survey also provided space for any teacher open-ended responses in terms of their familiarity or use of direct instruction, peer-mediated learning, content enhancements, self-management,

technology integration, and effective teaching behaviors. To facilitate teacher understanding, the scale provided operational definitions and specific exemplars for all EBPs. Responses were aggregated at the teacher-pair level and analyzed for commonalities and differences in terms of awareness, training, and use of EBPs in their inclusive educational settings.

The third survey was the *Teacher Roles and Responsibilities Scale* developed by Maheady, Jabot, and Rey (2008) as part of the implementation of a new inclusive teacher preparation program. This scale was designed to (a) familiarize pre-service teachers with the *educational context* (i.e., school district, community, building, and classroom) in which educational services were provided to students with special needs; (b) acquaint teacher candidates with the *varied roles and responsibilities* assigned to special and general educators who serve students with special needs in these contexts, and (c) ask teacher candidates to *reflect and respond* to information gleaned from their analysis of existing service delivery practices. The survey was completed by teachers as part of the interview process and responses were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively and described in narrative form.

Experimental Design and Procedures

The present study used a brief survey and focused interview methodology with six mentor teachers from three different inclusive classrooms in a small rural school district in Western New York. Teachers were interviewed in pairs and individually by the primary investigator over a three-week time period. Given teachers' limited time, they were provided with copies of surveys and interview measures prior to scheduled interviews. The investigator began interview sessions with a brief overview of project

goals and then asked teacher pairs to complete the Validated Practices Survey as a team, with direction from the principal investigator. Next, teachers responded to open-ended questions taken from the adapted Physical, Academic, and Social Integration Scale. They were encouraged to provide their own insights and to contribute to one another's responses whenever appropriate. The principal investigator recorded teachers' oral responses in writing. Finally, teachers were asked to respond collaboratively to items on the Roles and Responsibilities Survey while the investigator wrote their responses. At the end of each interview session, teachers were thanked for their time and assistance. Interviews varied in length from 45 to 60 minutes.

Results

Participant responses are reported in the order that they were collected.

Validated Practices Scale. Data related to teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre's, responses on the Validated Practices Survey can be seen in Table 1. As depicted, Alice and Deidre provided exact independent ratings on 30% of items, were within one number 43% of the time, and provided ratings that differed by two points on the remaining 23% of items. The highest level of teacher agreement occurred around the knowledge, use, and preparation in peer-mediated learning (e.g., peer tutoring and modeling) while the biggest differences emerged about the understanding and use of self-management strategies. The highest level of knowledge or skill was reported for *content enhancements* which were also reported to have the highest degree of presence in Alice's teaching. Alice also indicated that she used both self-management and technology integration teaching extensively. Consistent with this finding was the fact that Alice also noted that content enhancements and self-management received the most extensive coverage and practice

opportunities during her pre-service preparation. Finally, Alice reported the least amount of preparation and usage in direct instruction and generally rated all EBPs as requiring little time to implement.

Deidre's responses differed somewhat from Alice's. First, she reported that she understood and used peer-mediated learning and self-management strategies least often, although still some of the time. Her pre-service preparation provided little coverage and practice opportunities in direct instruction, self-management, and effective teaching behaviors, while peer-mediated learning, content enhancements and technology integration received more extensive preparation. Deidre also reported that most EBPs were relatively easy to implement.

Data related to teacher pair #2, Michael and Zena, are presented in Table 2. As shown, the two teachers provided the same independent ratings on 30% of items, were within one number on 50% of responses, and differed by two or more numbers on four items (i.e., three regarding knowledge and use of peer-mediated learning and one on the use of self-management). Michael reported his highest knowledge and skill levels for direct instruction, content enhancements, peer-mediated learning and technology integration while Zena reported being most knowledgeable and skillful in direct instruction and technology integration. In terms of actual use, Michael rated "effective teaching behaviors" and technology integration as most extensive, while Zena reported using four EBPs extensively (i.e., she reportedly used peer-mediated learning and self-management less often). Michael reported that self-management and effective teaching behaviors were the most difficult practices to use, while Zena noted very little difficulty in using any of the EBPs. With regard to pre-service teacher preparation, both teachers

noted that they received the most coverage and teaching opportunities for the use of direct instruction. Interestingly, the largest reported difference in teacher responses came in their opportunities to cover and use peer-mediated learning in their pre-service preparation programs.

Responses for teacher pair #3 can be seen in Table 3. As depicted, Gayle and Stephanie provided the same ratings on half of their independent responses, 40% of their ratings were within one number and they differed by two or more numbers on just three items (i.e., pre-service coverage and use of effective teaching behaviors and difficulty in using technology integration). As such, these teachers provided the most similar ratings of the three pairs. Both teachers reported having extensive knowledge and skills in the use of all six EBPs; they also reported that these six practices were presented extensively in their current teaching; and they reported very little difficulty in implementing any of the practices (i.e., Gayle did report a bit more difficulty with using technology in the classroom). Both teachers also reported receiving extensive coverage and opportunities to use all six EBPs during their pre-service preparation.

Physical, Academic, and Social Integration Scale. Using an interview format, both teachers provided oral responses to investigator's questions regarding existing practices in their inclusive settings. Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre, reported that the severity of students' disabilities and existing support mechanisms were primary concerns when making placement decisions about their classroom. Traditional pre-referral, referral, team-meeting and collaborative decision-making was used in the placement process. Alice and Deidre described their working relationship as "team teaching" and they discussed their curriculum as evolving in response to common core learning standards.

They described their differentiated instruction as including (a) skill-appropriate reading materials; (b) additional vocabulary practice; (c) use of graphic organizers; (d) altering lesson pacing; and (e) “making adaptations based on materials”. Deidre the special educator reported that she spends the entire class period working collaboratively and that iPads are used widely to facilitate student learning. With regard to assessment and progress monitoring, both teachers reported that they (a) extended time limits; (b) read tests to pupils; (c) answered pupil questions about test items; and (d) altered some test formats (e.g., from recall to recognition level). Parents receive individual progress notes through the district’s Power School parent portal. Alice and Deidre also noted that while there was no School Wide Behavior Plan in place, they had clear and posted rules and shared enforcement responsibilities. With regard to family involvement, the two teachers reported that parents played active roles in the assessment and placement process, are given regular progress reports, and that students with disabilities are welcomed and involved in most if not all school-related social events.

Teacher pair #2, Michael and Zena also provided some qualitative descriptions of their inclusive high school mathematics classroom. Regarding philosophy, Michael reported that pupil behavior and academic skill levels were primary considerations in inclusive placements. In particular, he noted the potential adverse effects of disruptive classroom behavior. Both teachers also described their relationship as “team teaching”, noting that they were involved in the district’s Response to Intervention (RtI) program, and that they shared instructional responsibilities as much as possible. Differentiated instructional practices included constant movement in class to monitor individual pupil progress, small group instruction, and class projects. Like the first teacher pair, pupils in

Michael and Zena's class had iPads and they were allowed to take home. Instructional accommodations for assessment activities included (a) extended time limits; (b) reading tests to pupils; and (c) altering test formats. Parents receive regular progress monitoring notes, provide homework support, and have access to assessment materials via the Power School parent portal. Both teachers also reported that students with disabilities participated readily in extra-curricular school activities.

The third teacher pair, Gayle and Stephanie, also described their inclusive educational practices. They noted that inclusion teachers must be open to new and different instructional ideas and that they must be supportive of co-teaching. In addition, they noted that class size was an important variable to consider especially since they were currently doing inclusion in their largest class. Gayle and Stephanie noted that they debrief one another after teaching and offer suggestions for ways to enhance their lessons. They share a common planning period which helps greatly with instructional planning and delivery. The special educator, Stephanie, said that she provided both direct and indirect instructional assistance, participated in team teaching, provided test accommodations, and assisted with curriculum and behavior management. Both teachers noted that they used lots of mnemonic devices in their instruction to assist with understanding novels. Pupils also completed collaborative projects, used choice-boards, and played review games like bingo. Both teachers reported using similar assessment monitoring and accommodations (i.e., extended time limits and read test items to pupils), noted that pupils took iPads home with them, and use Dragon Naturally Speaking dictation software in class. Rules are posted and reviewed and students have individual handbooks regarding behavioral expectations. There is fairly regular contact with

families who participate in homework support and their children are welcome at all extra-curricular school events.

Teacher Roles and Responsibilities Scale. Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre, reported on their respective roles and responsibilities in their middle school inclusion classroom. They noted that there were five pupils with special needs in their classroom, three of whom receive free and reduced meals. They described their setting as a general education setting with “push in” teacher assistance. Alice and Deidre reported that they, “work very well together as a team; we take turns with students. Inclusion CAN work and co-teaching CAN work”. Both teachers reported that they collaborate in a number of ways including (a) exchanging emails and weekly notes; (b) seeking assistance when one or the other is unsure what to do; and (c) consulting on “pull out” service delivery as well. They felt that their ability to collaborate was greatly enhanced by common planning time. Regarding collaboration, Deidre reported that, “as a special educator, I make sure that we change our instructional approaches and differentiate our instruction as needed. We are very open-minded with each other and it is like we can finish each other’s sentences in terms of planning”. Alice and Deidre went on to describe their co-teaching activities as “interactive teaming”; an approach in which they take turns presenting and leading class discussions. In the final part of the survey, teachers were asked to indicate who has the primary responsibility for a variety of instructional and non-instructional activities in the class. In the case of assessment and instruction, the teachers reported that they share all 16 responsibilities equally. Most behavior management roles were also shared with both teachers verbally recognizing students who behave appropriately while redirecting or correcting those that don’t. With regard to IEP development and family involvement,

most responsibilities were shared, although the special educator took the lead on due process related activities. Other than iPad, the teachers reported that they did not use any other assistance technologies in class. Finally, both teachers reported that advocacy roles were shared and said that, “anything we need to do to assist them – anything we need to do to make them successful”.

Teacher pair #2, Michael and Zena, described their high school inclusion classroom with 14 students, three of whom had special needs (i.e., learning disabilities, and reading processing deficits). Four other pupils received AIS and more than half got free and reduced meals. They also described their placement as general education with “push in” special education services. They noted that, “both teachers have extremely strong content knowledge, either one of them is comfortable leading the class in the absence of the other teacher. Students cannot tell the difference between the general and special education teacher and this is a fundamental aspect of successful collaboration in inclusive co-teaching environments”. In terms of collaborative activities, the two teachers noted that they communicate regularly via email and weekly notes and that when necessary they seek assistance from one another with instructional challenges. They noted that, “we are able to use texting as communication today, iPad communication, DropBox and emodo, we’re moving to a new online learning model called ‘My Big Campus’ which will make our collaboration even stronger. It’s important – the role technology plays in collaboration among teachers today”. Michael and Zena then described their co-teaching experiences as interactive teaming in which both teachers take turns presenting and leading classroom activities and share responsibilities equally. Like the first teaching pair, Michael and Zena reported that they shared most, if not all,

instructional responsibilities. These shared responsibilities were most evident in their assessment and instruction practices. Regarding behavior management, the teachers reported that they developed rules collaboratively, recognize students verbally for appropriate behavior, and arrange physical space and materials (e.g., seating patterns). Interestingly, the teachers noted that they do not review classroom rules and have not had to develop individualized behavior management plans. As expected, the special education teacher assumed primary responsibility for most IEP development activities, although both teachers reported participating in IEP meetings and working with parents formally and informally. Zena noted that she took primary responsibility for the actual writing of student IEPs. In terms of assistive technologies, the teachers said that they used dictation and electronic media software, as well as dry erase boards and highlighters often in their instruction. The interview concluded by the teachers commenting, “Whatever comes up – we’re there for our students any time of the day. We do our best to make ourselves available”.

Teacher pair #3, Gayle and Stephanie, described their roles and responsibilities in their 11th grade Regents English classroom. They had 23 total students, three of whom had IEPs and were classified as learning disabled. There were two other students who were on 504 plans, six who received AIS, and over 80% who got free and reduced meals. Like the other teacher pairs, Gayle and Stephanie described their class as providing “push in” special education services. They noted that, “we are a well-developed, co-taught class. Unfortunately, our placement will not be continuing into next year”. The general and special education teachers reported that they also exchanged emails and weekly notes and consulted one another when they had instructional challenges. They reported that, “we

are using text messaging, email, phone calls anytime, and in person common planning. Our common planning time makes class time must easier”. Like the other teachers, Gayle and Stephanie described their co-teaching experiences as interactive teaming. They commented that

We have fun! Students work on vocabulary with the special educator and the general educator usually leads transitions. But we each interject as needed. Both teachers have worked with special education students through the Regents. We work on using mnemonic devices with students –and if we see students are struggling, usually the special education teacher can say ‘think of it this way’ and come up with a different approach or viewpoint for students.

With regard to specific instructional responsibilities, both teachers noted that they shared most if not all instructional duties surrounding assessment and instruction. They supported students in non-classroom activities such as National Pi Day, high school football games, and the Special Olympics. Interestingly, the teachers reported that some students often refuse test accommodations at the high school level. In addition, the general education teacher assumed primary responsibility for using the class grade book and they both used Jigsaw and other cooperative learning strategies in their inclusive classroom. Both teachers also shared most classroom and behavior management related activities, although the general educator assumed primary responsibility for rule development and review and the arrangement of classroom space. In contrast, the special education teacher took primary responsibility for recording and charting pupil data and developing individual behavior management plans. It is important to note, however, that both teachers routinely circulated through the classroom and verbally recognized students

for appropriate behavior. Gayle and Stephanie also said that they shared most IEP and family-related activities. They participated in IEP meetings, reviewed the documents for instructional planning, and met with parents formally and informally. Once again, the special educator assumed primary responsibility for the actual writing of student IEPs. The special education teacher also noted that she used some assistive technology such as Dragon Naturally Speaking dictation software for students with writing issues, while both teachers reported using “low tech” assistive devices such as erasable highlighters, dry erase boards, pencil grips, and post it notes for summarizing longer text. Gayle and Stephanie also said that they shared advocacy roles for students with special needs and offered the following points in summary (a) listen to parents; (b) increase parent understanding by any means necessary; (c) make educational supervisors aware if IEPs must be amended; and (d) consider student study guides to support their success.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe the nature and types of educational services provided by a small group of secondary general and special education teachers who worked collaboratively in inclusive classrooms. More specifically, the investigator examined their teaching relationships, use of evidenced based practices, and partnership arrangement to meet the needs of all students in their secondary inclusive classrooms. Findings were mostly optimistic and provided an initial snapshot of what inclusion looks like in action; at least through the eyes of six general and special educators in a small rural school district in Western New York. Overall, teacher responses to survey and interview items highlighted the importance of common planning times, the efficacy of collaboration and co-teaching, and the need to present information in ways that do not

distinguish whom is in charge (i.e., general and special educators). Teachers suggested that if either general or special education teachers are apprehensive about co-teaching and/or inclusion, then they may view such teaching arrangements as less appealing. Teachers with limited co-teaching experience may have difficulty finding an appropriate balance in their instructional responsibilities. However, all respondents felt that these challenges can be mitigated by clear and consistent communication and administrative support.

Teacher responses to individual surveys also revealed some important information. For example, on the Validated Practices Survey all six teachers reported that they had some knowledge and skills in the use of the six EBPs. Teacher pair #3, Gayle and Stephanie, reported most familiarity while Alice and Deidre were least familiar with specific practices (e.g., peer-mediated learning). Teacher pair #3 also reported that they used these six practices extensively in their teaching practice while the other two pairs reported less use of direct instruction, peer-mediated learning, and self-management strategies. Since no direct observations were conducted it is difficult to say whether or not teachers actually used any of these practices. Jones (2009) found that while all teachers said that they used these EBPs regularly, none were observed actually doing so in their classrooms. For the most part, teachers reported that the majority of EBPs were relatively easy to use. Notable exceptions were Michael and Deidre who reported extensive difficulty in using peer-mediated learning and self-management and Gayle's use of technology integration. Finally, with regard to teacher preparation, Gayle and Stephanie reported receiving the most extensive training in the use of EBPs, followed by Michael and Zena, and Alice and Deidre. In general, all teacher pairs reported similar

preparation experiences. The biggest difference between pairs were found for Michael and Zena where the latter received more initial training in the use of selected EBPs.

Some interesting findings also emerged from teachers' responses to the *Physical, Academic, and Social Integration Scale*. All teacher pairs described their teaching placements as general education with push in service delivery; a model that has been used extensively in secondary inclusion settings (Heward, 2010; Salend, 2006; Washburn-Moses, 2005). Similarly, they all described their co-teaching relationships as *interactive teaming* an approach in which both teachers take turns leading instructional activities. All six teachers also noted a range of ways to differentiate instruction at the secondary level. Significant among their common strategies were (a) using skill-appropriate learning materials; (b) content enhancements (e.g., graphic organizers, guided notes, and mnemonic devices); and (c) technology integration. One striking commonality across classrooms was that all students had access to their own iPads which they were also able to take home. The six teachers also used similar progress monitoring strategies that included Power School grade book and regular reports to families and common test accommodations (e.g., extended time limits, oral presentation of items, and altered formats). One additional consistent finding was the importance of common planning times for the teacher pairs. Similar findings were reported elsewhere in the educational literature (e.g., Ingersoll & Strong, 2011; Merton, Flowers, Anhara, & Caskey, 2010). The absence of common planning time would make effective communication and instructional delivery more challenging. Finally, it was important to note that all six teachers reported that their students with special needs were generally well-accepted and that they participated readily in extra-curricular activities.

The *Teacher Roles and Responsibilities Scale* also provided some useful information on participants' inclusive secondary settings. The teachers said that they collaborated in a number of different ways and that new technologies (e.g., text messaging, drop-boxes, and emodo) have made it much easier for them to communicate. Once again, they stressed the importance of common planning time and the need to make instructional delivery as seamless as possible. Interestingly, all six teachers reportedly shared most instructional responsibilities. This is an important outcome because prior research has shown confusion over teachers' instructional roles in inclusive settings (e. g., Riggs & Mueller, 2001; Unok-Marks, Schrader, & Levine, 1999). Another important outcome was that both teacher pairs at the high school level stressed the importance of all teachers having solid content knowledge. This was particularly true in the delivery of math and English Regents instruction.

There also appears to be some important implications from the present investigation. First, there is some indication that evidence-based practices were being used in inclusive settings. While these findings were based only on verbal report they do suggest that some EBPs may be filtering down to the classroom level. Future research should include direct observations to augment teachers' verbal report regarding their use of EBPs. Second, the present findings indicate that general and special education teachers can work effectively at the secondary level to deliver high quality general education content, even Regents level, to students with special needs. This is encouraging because years ago no one would have thought such coordinated service delivery was even possible (Heward, 2010; Salend, 2006; Washburn-Moses, 2005). Third, current results suggest that technological advances may be helpful not only for improving pupil learning

but also for facilitating teacher communication and collaboration (e.g., Buysse & Wesley, 2006; Odom, 2008). The ability to communicate regularly reportedly fostered teachers' collaborative relationships and their ability to deliver seamless instruction. Finally, there was some indication that students with special needs were accepted socially into their inclusive settings. Peer relationships are so important, particularly among adolescents, that it was good to see these youngsters being included both in class and after school.

While the present findings are generally encouraging concerning the state of the art in inclusive service delivery at the secondary level in Western New York, there are some notable limitations to the study that must be considered. First, the study was conducted with only three teacher-pairs who were all from the same school district and at the secondary level. As such, generalization of findings to other school districts, teacher pairs, and to the elementary and early childhood levels is not warranted at this time. Similarly, caution must be used in extending findings to other parts of New York State. The original plan was to use multiple districts and a larger number of inclusion teams at both the elementary and secondary levels. Unfortunately, only three teacher pairs volunteered to participate. Future empirical investigations should use larger and more representative samples. A second limitation was that all data were collected using *indirect* assessment methods (i.e., surveys and interviews). Since verbal reports are not usually consistent with overt behavior, caution should be used in extrapolating to teachers' actual instructional performance. Future research, therefore, should include direct observations to supplement teacher verbal reports (Jones, 2009).

Third, the investigator adapted some portions of the *Physical, Academic, and Social Integration Scale* for purposes of this study. As such, it is unclear how information

derived from that particular scale aligns with the original version. Researchers might conduct a comparable investigation using both versions so that commonalities and differences can be derived. Finally, the present investigation collected only brief samples of what general and special education teachers do during a typical school day in their inclusive classrooms. While this study provided new information about *some* things that they do instructionally, it would be inappropriate to assume that these findings are reflective of their overall teaching practice.

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Table 1. Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre, responses to the Validated Practices Survey.

Evidence-Based Practices	Level of knowledge or skill in use	Degree of presence in teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of coverage in pre-service training	Opportunities to apply the practice in pre-service training
Direct Instruction	4/4	2/4	2/2	2/3	3/4
Peer-Mediated Learning	3/3	3/3	2/3	4/4	4/4
Content Enhancements	5/4	5/4	1/2	5/4	5/4
Self-Management	5/3	5/3	1/3	5/3	5/3
Technology Integration	4/4	5/4	3/2	2/4	2/4
Effective Teaching Behaviors	4/4	4/4	1/2	4/3	4/3

1 = None to 5 = Extensive

Table 2. Teacher pair #2, Michael and Zena, responses to the Validated Practices Survey.

Evidence-Based Practices	Level of knowledge or skill in use	Degree of presence in teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of coverage in pre-service training	Opportunities to apply the practice in pre-service training
Direct Instruction	5/5	4/4	2/1	5/5	5/5
Peer-Mediated Learning	5/4	2/3	3/1	2/4	1/4
Content Enhancements	5/4	3/4	3/2	3/4	3/4
Self-Management	4/4	3/3	4/1	4/4	3/4
Technology Integration	5/5	5/4	2/2	3/4	3/4
Effective Teaching Behaviors	4/4	5/4	4/2	3/4	3/4

1 = None to 5 = Extensive

Table 3. Teacher pair #3, Gayle and Stephanie, responses to the Validated Practices Survey.

Evidence-Based Practices	Level of knowledge or skill in use	Degree of presence in teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of coverage in pre-service training	Opportunities to apply the practice in pre-service training
Direct Instruction	5/5	5/5	1/1	5/5	4/5
Peer-Mediated Learning	5/5	5/5	1/1	4/5	4/5
Content Enhancements	5/5	5/5	1/1	4/5	4/5
Self-Management	5/5	5/4	1/1	4/4	5/5
Technology Integration	4/5	4/5	3/1	5/4	4/4
Effective Teaching Behaviors	5/4	5/4	1/2	5/3	5/3

1 = None to 5 = Extensive

Appendix A

The Physical, Academic, & Social Integration Scale for Inclusive Settings

1) Philosophy of Inclusion

What should be considered in including a student with disabilities in a general education classroom?

Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre, reported that the severity of students' disabilities and existing support mechanisms are primary concerns when making placement decisions.

Teacher pair #2, regarding philosophy, Michael reported that pupil behavior and academic skill levels were primary considerations in inclusive placements. In particular, he noted the potential adverse effects of disruptive classroom behavior.

Teacher pair #3, Gayle and Stephanie, also described their inclusive educational practices. They noted that inclusion teachers must be open to new and different instructional ideas and that they must be supportive of co-teaching. In addition, they noted that class size was also an important variable to consider since they were currently doing inclusion in their largest class.

How do you and the general education teacher collaborate regarding classroom instruction and management?

In Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre described their working relationship as "team teaching" and they discussed their curriculum as evolving in response to common core learning standards.

Both teachers in Teacher pair #2, Michael and Zena also described their relationship as "team teaching", noting that they were involved in the district's Response

to Intervention (RtI) program, and that they shared instructional responsibilities as much as possible.

In Teacher pair #3, Gayle and Stephanie noted that they debrief one another after teaching and offer suggestions for ways to enhance their lessons. They share a common planning period which helps greatly with instructional planning and delivery.

How many students with special needs are included in the classroom for 60% or more of the school day?

What procedure is followed in developing an IEP?

2) Planning for Inclusion

Who is involved in the Response-to-Intervention, pre-referral, referral, IEP development and review process?

When do you have access to your students' IEP's?

(to the Special Educator)

What service do you provide to students in the general education setting?

How would you describe your role in the general education classroom?

3) Access to General Education Curriculum: Universal Design for Learning

Are you familiar with UDL?

How do you implement this approach?

What are the three levels of the district RTI model?

4) Do you have a defined curriculum for each grade level and subject you teach?

Curricula for each teacher pair is determined by the New York State curriculum guide and/or by the common core learning standards.

5) Do you submit lesson plans?

All teacher pairs submit lesson plans when they are going to be observed by an administrator.

6) Is the goal of each lesson identified?

7) Access to General Education Curriculum: Differentiated Instruction

How do you differentiate instruction?

In Teacher pair #1, they described their differentiated instruction as including (a) skill-appropriate reading materials; (b) additional vocabulary practice; (c) use of graphic organizers; (d) altering lesson pacing; and (e) “making adaptations based on materials.”

In Teacher Pair #2, differentiated instructional practices included constant movement in class with individual progress monitoring, some small group instruction, and class projects. In Teacher pair #3, both teachers noted that they used lots of mnemonic devices in their instruction to assist with understanding novels. Pupils also completed collaborative project, used choice-boards, and played review games like bingo. All teacher pairs described themselves as interactive team teachers.

Special Educator:

How many students with special needs are in the classrooms you serve?

How much time do you spend in each general education classroom?

What assistive technology is available?

General and Special Educator:

Monitoring and Assessment:

How are test accommodations made?

How do parents receive feedback on test performance?

Do students with disabilities receive the same tests (format, content, amount) as other students in the general education classroom?

Teacher pairs 1 and 2, with regard to assessment and progress monitoring, teachers reported that they (a) extended time limits; (b) read tests to pupils; (c) answered pupil questions about test items; and (d) altered some test formats (e.g., from recall to recognition level). Parents receive individual progress notes through the district’s Power School parent portal. In all Teacher pairs, parents receive regular progress monitoring

notes, provide homework support, and have access to assessment materials via the Power School parent portal.

In Teacher pair #3, The special educator, Stephanie, said that she provided both direct and indirect instructional assistance, participated in team teaching, provided test accommodations and assisted with curriculum and behavior management. In each teacher pair, the co-teacher spends all of their time in the general education classroom.

Behavior Management:

**Is there a school-wide Positive Behavior System?
Are the school rules posted in your classrooms?
Do you use data to develop or revise behavior plans?**

Family Involvement:

**How are families involved in the following?
Awareness of disability/strengths/weaknesses:
RTI Planning:
Pre-Referral:
IEP Development:
CSE Meetings:
Homework Support:
How would you accommodate diverse families?
Do families have access to assistive technology?
How are students with special needs included in school social events?
How are students involved in their Individualized Educational Plan?**

In Teacher pair #1, Alice and Deidre noted that while there was no School Wide Behavior Plan in place, they had clear and posted rules and shared enforcement responsibilities. With regard to family involvement, the two teachers reported that parents played active roles in the assessment and placement process, are given regular progress reports, and that students with disabilities are welcomed and involved in most school-related social events.

In Teacher pair #2, parents receive regular progress monitoring notes, provide homework support, and have access to assessment materials via the Power School parent portal. Both teachers also reported that students with disabilities also participate readily in extra-curricular school activities.

Teacher pair #3 noted that pupils took iPads home with them, and use Dragon Naturally Speaking dictation software in class. Rules are posted and reviewed and students have individual handbooks regarding behavioral expectations. There is fairly regular contact with families who participate in homework support and their children are welcome at all extra-curricular school events.

Appendix B Validated Practices Questionnaire

Directions: On the following pages are the descriptions of several practices, which have been validated by research for students with high incidence disabilities. Following each description, are five descriptors, which require you to rate the statement based on your experience and opinion. Please choose and circle only one answer for each question. The rating scale is as follows:

1=None, 2= Minimal, 3=Some, 4=Great, 5=Extensive

Practice and apply the Description	Level of knowledge or skills in using the practice service	Degree of presence of this practice in your teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of Opportunities coverage of the practice in pre-service training training	to practice in pre-
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Direct Instruction

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

Direct instruction is a systematic method that can be used to teach, practice, and reinforce specific skills. Lessons are well-organized and structured with instruction usually involving teacher-directed discussion, readings, and classroom activities. Direct instruction requires that teachers: establish specific instructional objectives; provide an anticipatory set discussing what the students will be doing/learning and why, linking the new information to that which the student is already familiar; present information to be learned in small steps while maintaining a brisk pace, use examples and illustrations as well as encourage active involvement and responding; ask questions to check for understanding; provide teacher guided practice followed by independent practice opportunities; utilize feedback, re-teaching and reinforcement to increase student learning. May also be referred to as:

- Explicit teaching
- Explicit instruction

- Mastery Teaching

Peer Mediated Learning 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
 Students work together fulfilling assigned roles to increase the skills or achievement of a specific member or members of the team or group. Peer mediated learning can encompass academic and/or social goals. Examples include:

- Peer tutoring
- Peer Assisted Learning
- Cooperative Learning

Validated Practices Questionnaire-Page 2

Rating Scale: 1=None, 2= Minimal, 3=Some, 4=Great, 5=Extensive

Practice and apply the Description	Level of knowledge or skills in using the practice service	Degree of presence of this practice in your teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of coverage of the practice in pre-service training training	to practice in pre-
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Content Enhancements 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5
 Content enhancements can be described as techniques that enable the teacher to help students identify, organize, comprehend and retain important information. Such strategies help students learn by making abstract information more concrete, connecting new knowledge with familiar knowledge, highlighting relationships and organizational structures within the information to be presented,

and drawing the unmotivated learner's attention to the information. Content enhancements involve transforming content into learner-friendly format and presenting it in memorable ways. May include:

- Advance organizers-oral statements or activities provided at the beginning of the lesson to assist students in developing a framework for understanding the essential information which will be presented or explored (e.g. vocabulary words, KWL, timelines, semantic maps, key words, note-taking guides, etc)
- Concept organizers-visual depiction of the relationship between concepts, terms, or information (e.g. diagrams, webs, etc)
- Strategies/Strategy instruction-ways to learn and study (e.g. Reciprocal teaching, metacognition, test-taking, etc.)
- Mnemonic devices- ways to help students remember academic and behavioral tasks/information. Mnemonic devices can include keywords, pictures, symbolic representations, first-letter mnemonics, or pegwords (e.g. COPS, ROY G. BIV, My Very Educated Mother Just Served Us Nine Pizzas, etc.)

Self-Management

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

Self-management techniques can be described collectively as a systematic process used to teach students with disabilities to manage their own behavior; students learn to take responsibility for their own learning and actions. Self-management techniques are employed to increase independence in students while allowing the teacher to spend greater amounts of time engaged in teaching tasks as opposed to intervening with challenging behavior. Includes:

- Self-monitoring
- Self-evaluation
- Self-reinforcement

Validate Practices Questionnaire-Page 3

Rating Scale: 1=None, 2= Minimal, 3=Some, 4=Great, 5=Extensive

Practice Opportunities and apply the Description	Level of knowledge or skills in using the practice service	Degree of presence of this practice in your teaching	Difficulty in using this practice	Extent of coverage of the practice in pre-service training	to practice in pre-
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Technology Integration 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 3 4 5

Incorporating technological tools and applications into the learning environment to enhance learning, provide access to information, or make the learning process more efficient. May include:

- Lesson Presentation/Computer-assisted instruction (CAI)
- Drill and practice
- Tutorials
- Educational games
- Simulations
- Productivity Tools (e.g. word processing, database, spreadsheet, etc.)
- Communication Tools (e.g. email, IM, communication devices, text to speech, etc.)
- Organizational Tools (e.g. hand-helds, PDAs, etc.)
- Other Tools (e.g. video cameras, spell checkers, calculators, etc.)

Effective Teaching Behaviors

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

1 2 3 4 5

Specific teacher characteristics and behaviors linked to increased student achievement and learning. Effective teaching behaviors can be divided into five areas: the teacher as a person, the teacher as classroom manager and organizer, organizing for instruction, implementing instruction, and monitoring student progress and potential. Examples of effective teaching behavior include: thorough preparation, quality lesson delivery, consistent classroom management, techniques to promote high levels of student engagement, the use of questioning strategies, and provision for practice and assessment.

Appendix C

Teacher Roles and Responsibilities Scale

Part I. Demographic Information: The Educational Context

(Information for this section can be derived from visiting the New York State School Report Card and completing the contextual factors table).

- A. School District** _____
- B. School Building** _____
- C. Grade Level (s)** _____
- D. General Education Teacher** _____
- E. Special Education Teacher** _____
- F. Class Size** _____
- G. Gender** _____
- Male** **Female**

H. Number of adults present in setting _____

I. Students (Please identify the number and types of students that are currently enrolled in the classroom where you are completing this project).

Normally Developing Students _____

Pupils with Special Needs _____

(If available, please note the specific type of disabilities that students possess, (e.g., learning disability, serious emotional disturbance) _____

Students with 504 plans	_____	Receives Academic Intervention Services	_____
Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students	_____	Other (please explain)	_____
Gifted and Talented	_____		
Students receiving free/reduced lunches	_____		

Part II. Type of Educational Placement

Please check the type of educational placement that best describes the setting where you are completing this project.

a. _____ General education classroom with few or no supportive services

Student(s) with special needs is educated in general education classroom with few or no supportive services. General education teacher has the primary responsibility for designing and teaching the instructional program. The instructional program is adapted to the needs of the student (e.g., assistive devices or alternative learning strategies).

b. _____ General education classroom with collaboration teacher assistance (push in service delivery)

Student(s) with special needs is educated in the general education classroom and the general education teacher has primary responsibility for designing and teaching lessons. However, the general education teacher also receives collaborative services from other professionals (e.g., special educator, speech and language pathologists, and physical and occupational therapist) and support staff (e.g., teaching assistants, volunteers, personal aide, etc.) (i.e., *push in* services).

c. _____ General education classroom with resource room assistance (pull out service delivery)

Student(s) with disabilities is educated in both the general education classroom and in a separate location (i.e., resource room). The special education teacher provides direct instructional services in this separate room (i.e., *pull out* services) that might include note-taking, study skills, social skills training, etc.

d. _____ *Special education placement with part time in general education classroom.*

Student(s) with disabilities is educated primarily in a separate special education classroom (i.e., more than 50% of the time) in the same building. Student(s) also attends general education classes for some academic instruction and socialization.

e. _____ *Other (e.g., Academic Intervention Services (AIS), alternative educational placement, ESL)*

Comments on unique aspects of your placement _____

Part III. Nature of Collaboration and Co-Teaching Present in Placements

Different models of collaboration and co-teaching are used to meet the needs of diverse learners within a single classroom setting. If you are completing this project in a classroom where there is collaboration and/or co-teaching taking place, please complete the following information.

A. *Collaboration Activities*

Collaboration exists when two or more individuals (e.g., general and special education teachers, paraprofessionals, parents, etc.) work together to decide on instructional strategies for students with special needs. These meetings can be formal or informal and be verbal or in writing. The key is effective communication! Please check and describe any specific collaborative activities which are currently occurring within the setting where you are completing this project.

1. _____ general and special education teachers exchange emails or weekly notes regarding pupil performance or progress, upcoming assignments, or instructional strategies.
2. _____ general education teacher asks for specific input from special educators for how to deal with academic or behavior problems.

3. _____ special education teacher checks in with general education teacher to determine how to structure and coordinate his/her lesson in pull-out placement (e.g., resource room).
4. _____ general and special education teachers share a common planning time or period
5. _____ there does not appear to be any formal or informal collaboration regarding the instructional programming for students with special needs

Comments on unique aspects of collaboration _____

B. Co-teaching Activities

During co-teaching, **two (2)** teachers are present in the classroom during the *same* instructional period. There are several different ways that co-teaching can be carried out. Check the option that best represents how co-teaching occurs in the setting where you are completing this project.

1. _____ ***Interactive teaming (team teaching)***; teachers take turns presenting and leading classroom activities and share responsibilities equally.
2. _____ ***One teach, one drift***; one teacher assumes more responsibility for delivering instruction, and the other teacher assists individual students.
3. _____ ***One teach, one observes***; one teacher assume more responsibility for delivering instruction, the other observes individual students to improve decision-making.
4. _____ ***Station teaching***; smaller groups of students move through several independent work stations and teachers monitor different students or stations.
5. _____ ***Parallel teaching***; class is divided into two or more skill or ability groups, and each teacher leads one group.

6. _____ **Alternative teaching;** one teacher (usually general educator) leads the larger group, while the other teacher (usually special educator) provides additional practice or strategies for students who require additional support.
7. _____ **Other co-teaching arrangement:** please describe any other co-teaching relationships that exist in your existing placement.

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8. _____ **No Co-teaching:** no co-teaching normally occurs in this particular setting

Comments on unique aspects of co-teaching: _____

Part IV. Roles and responsibilities of General and Special Educators

General and special educators play many roles and assume numerous responsibilities when serving students with special needs in inclusive educational settings. This section highlights many of these diverse roles. Please look at the list of professional responsibilities below and identify *who* has primarily responsibility for these tasks. You might not have just one answer. For example, if the responsibilities are shared by general and special educators, then mark both individuals.

<i>Assessment and Instruction</i>				
<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Administer standardized tests (not NYS assessments)				
Score standardized tests				
Score tests and papers in class				
Assign grades to student work				
Set learning goals and instructional objectives for the class				

Plans lessons				
Introduces new concepts and skills				

<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Supports students in a non-classroom setting				
Modifies and adapts curriculum materials				
Modifies and adapts instructional activities				
Carries out lesson plans				
Implements test modifications				
Works with individual students or small groups				
Plans or develops instructional materials				

Evaluates student performance and progress				
Records attendance and maintains other records				
Sets up and maintains learning centers				

Behavior Management Responsibilities

<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Records and charts data on pupil behavior				
Develops classroom rules				
Reviews classroom rules				
Recognizes students verbally for appropriate behavior				
Re-directs students when they behave				

inappropriately				
Develops behavior management plans				
Arranges physical space and materials in classroom				

IEP Development and Family Involvement

<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Participates in IEP development				
Schedules IEP meetings				
Attends/participates in IEP meetings				
Writes IEP				
Meets with parents formally or informally				
Reviews IEP when				

planning instruction				
Attends/participates in a due process hearing				

<i>Use of Assistive Instructional Technologies</i>				
<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Uses “high tech” assistive devices (e.g., talking word processors, talking calculators, auto-summarize, scan pens)				
Uses “low tech” assistive devices (e.g., post it notes for summarizing longer text, erasable highlighters, dry erase boards, pencil grips, picture cards, canes)				

<i>Advocacy Roles</i>				
<i>Roles and Responsibilities</i>	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>	<i>Teaching Assistant</i>	<i>Comments</i>
Comments on needs of students with special needs during instructional planning				
Speaks in support of accommodating individual differences at faculty meetings, professional development sessions, etc.				
Works with parents and advocacy groups to advance needs of students with disabilities				

Please comment on any other roles or responsibilities that are assumed by school personnel in meeting the needs of students with disabilities:

