

Running Head: GENERAL EDUCATION VERSUS RESOURCE ROOM

General Education Classrooms and Resource Rooms:
What is Taught and the Quality of Communication Between Teachers

A Master's Research Project Presented to
The Faculty of the College of Education
Ohio University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements of the Degree
Master of Education

By
Anne K. Arno, BSC

March, 2009

This Master's Project has been approved
For the Department of Teacher Education

Dianne M. Gut, Ph.D.

Associate Professor, Special Education

Ginger Weade, Ph.D.

Professor and Interim Chair of the Department of Teacher Education

Table of Contents

Introduction	5
Literature Review	6
Quality of Communication	6
Following IEP recommendations	7
Methodology	9
Means of Conducting Research	
Participants	
Procedure	
Instrument used for Research	
Results	12
Discussion and Implications for Practice	28
Conclusion	30
References	31
Appendix A	34

Abstract

This research was conducted to determine the relationship between what is taught in the general education content classrooms and special education resource rooms, as well as the quality of communication that exists between the teachers. A 13-item survey asked educators in grades K-6 to examine the relationships between what is being taught to all students in the general education content classrooms and what is being addressed in the resource rooms with students with special needs who work with an Intervention Specialist. The research also examined the quality of the communication that takes place between general education teachers and special education teachers regarding work to be completed by students with special needs, sharing each student's Individual Education Plan (IEP), and sharing of expectations. The majority of respondents reported they felt communication was adequate between general education teachers and intervention specialists. Many felt the lines of communication were generally open. A majority reported work completed by students with special needs was modified from general education content as much as it could be, and that if it was not, it was due to the level of competency of the student, and work was substituted by the intervention specialist. A few felt communication between general education teachers and intervention specialists about students was not sufficient and the lines of communication could be improved. Respondents provided suggestions to improve communication between general education teachers and special education teachers with regards to students with special needs.

Introduction

Soukup , Wehmeyer , Bashinski & Bovaird (2007) document that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires documentation of exactly how and to what extent a student with an Individual Education Plan (IEP) is involved in the general curriculum. Soukup et al., go onto say the 2004 IDEA amendments (Individuals With Disabilities Education Improvement Act, IDEA, 2004) broadened the 'access to the general education curriculum mandates.' "IDEA requires that the IEPs of all students receiving special education services show specific accommodations and curriculum modifications to ensure student involvement with and progress in the general education curriculum" (Soukup et al., p. 101). Crockett (2002) perfectly depicts this concept as follows:

Special education is, first and foremost, instruction focused on individual need. It is carefully planned. It is intensive, urgent, relentless, and goal directed. It is empirically supported practice, drawn from research. To provide special education means to set priorities and select carefully what needs to be taught. It means teaching something special and teaching it in a special way.... To provide special education means monitoring each student's progress and taking responsibility for changing instruction when the monitoring data indicate that sufficient progress is not being made. (p. 159)

"The IEP is the educational and legal key to serving all eligible students with disabilities" (Dragow, Yell, & Robinson, 2001, p. 359). Dragow, Yell & Robinson document that legal and appropriate IEPs are developed according to IDEA 1997 directives along with the specific needs of a student... an IEP must ensure a student "makes meaningful educational progress in his or her program of special education" (p. 359). The research set forth in this paper looked at how the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) of students with special needs are being observed by both

special education teachers and general education teachers. It analyzed whether a student with an IEP working in a resource room has his/her work modified appropriately so he/she is working on the same thing his/ her typically developing peers are working on as well. It examined the quality and kind of communication that exists between teachers who work with students with disabilities regarding the procedures in the IEPs and the expectations of the students. Finally, it asked educators what they think about the level of communication between general education teachers and special education teachers.

Literature Review

Quality of Communication

Everyone hopes their child will benefit from the exposure of effective teaching skills in grade school. O'Shea, Williams and Sattler (2001) very simply point out that:

Teacher effectiveness is fundamental to educational reform. Good teachers of children...demonstrate critical, decisive, intellectual work and caring/personal interactions. Effective teachers believe in diversity, meeting individual learner needs and interacting with others to support shared decision making...Effective teachers strengthen alliances with students, parents and peers, rather than achieve professional status by sequestering knowledge and insulating themselves for those they serve. (p. 147)

One of the biggest keys to effective teaching is possessing strong collaboration skills (O'Shea, Williams, & Sattler, 2001). In looking at the relationship between general education and special education teachers, research asserts over and over the importance of collaboration and the "development of collaborative structures and the implementation of inclusive education practices" (Hunt, Hirose-Hatae, Doering, Kaeasoff, & Goetz, 2000, p. 305). In study of general education teacher's concerns about inclusion, Snyder (1999) concluded that more

communication between special education, regular teachers, and the administration would be beneficial for success in working with students with special needs in inclusive settings. Snyder (1999) felt that in order for students to succeed in the classroom with a general education teacher, collaboration between all teachers and other personnel that work with the students is essential.

In looking at integrating students with disabilities into general education classrooms, Janney, Snell, Beers and Raynes (1995) found fostering good communication among all teachers involved was vital for success of the students. Janney and colleagues also concluded that general education teachers were used to working independently but as they realized the benefits of collaboration and shared decision making, they saw real educational change in the classroom the more they communicated with each other.

Following IEP Recommendations

Heward (2003) supports the idea that there is a positive relationship between the amount of time children spend actively involved and responding to academic tasks and their achievement level. Sailor & Roger (2005) make reference to a Schoolwide Applications Model (SAM) that creates a sense of unity and a culture of belonging in the school and maintain that through team work and cooperation, a school-wide model of including students with disabilities in all classrooms can work. Supports that are within the school from every individual working there, can be brought together to enhance a student with an IEP to learn more efficiently (Sailor & Roger).

Fisher and Frey (2001) looked at students' with IEPs access to the core curriculum and found that a student can be successful as long as there is collaboration and effective communication between teams such as special education teachers and general education teachers

who utilize each others ideas and both follow accommodations and supports indicated in the IEP. Fisher and Frey also note that much more research can be done on students with disabilities and their access to their schools core curriculum.

Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, and Tindal (2007) noted that quite often the lack of knowledge a teacher has on how to administer accommodations written in a student's IEP will hinder success for a student. General education teachers need to make it a priority to familiarize themselves with an IEP of a student they have in their classroom because the more consistency in delivery of accommodations written in an IEP, the higher chance for a student's success (Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, & Tindal). The authors also concluded that if classroom teachers do not implement accommodations from IEPs on a regular basis, then the IEP is not serving its purpose. Their research also indicated that more training of the general education teacher as to how and when to implement the modifications must improve as well (Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, & Tindal, 2007). Crockett (2002) states that "the single most important goal of special education is finding and capitalizing on exceptional students' abilities" (p. 157).

Silva, Munk & Bursuck (2005) identified in their research that teachers will recognize grading issues and will make informal adaptations to the regular grading system for students. Grading adaptations can be modifications for students with IEPs and when implemented accurately and consistently by all teachers working with the student, they can make the grading process more meaningful for the student with a disability (Silva, Munk & Bursuck).

Peters (2007) study on the Education for All (EFA) is a historical analysis that examines 12 major international policy documents that deal with the education of children and youth with

disabilities and almost every program had inclusion as an aspect of its success. Collaboration and good communication are areas of focus that help programs succeed.

Findings from a recent study designed to examine the reading instruction and grouping practices provided for students with learning disabilities (LD) by special education teachers in resource room settings with grades 3-5 (Vaughn, Moody, & Schumm, 1998) indicated that individualized instruction was rarely provided. Teachers primarily implemented whole group reading instruction to groups of students ranging from 5 to 19 and little differentiated instruction or materials. This is the opposite of what should be occurring in the resource room when serving individual students. There is not a great deal of available research specific to programming and resource rooms.

Research reviewed thus far indicates that collaboration between general education teachers and special education teachers regarding IEPs and expectations of students is important to ensure a student's academic success. The research also suggests that the quality of communication could improve between these groups of teachers and that the perceived lack of effective communication creates confusion and oftentimes incorrect implementation of modification and accommodations for students. The following research supports results found in the existing literature.

Methodology

The purpose of this research was two-fold. First, it was designed to determine the relationship between what is taught in the general education content classrooms and special education resource rooms. Second, the research examined the quality of communication that

exists between teachers in general education content classrooms and special education resource rooms.

Means of Conducting Research

According to Magee, Straight and Schwartz (2001), using the Internet to conduct surveys electronically is becoming more and more common. Research has shown using electronic surveys with known populations can be quite useful (Magee, Straight, & Schwartz, 2001). Data gathered this way can be automatically entered into a database saving time and money and increasing accuracy with no potential mistakes made from re-entering the data when preparing to analyze it (Magee, Straight, & Schwartz). An electronic survey was used for this research.

Participants

The participants involved in this survey were teachers who worked with children with special needs in grades K-6. The research was conducted in rural southeast Ohio in four school districts. A total of eight elementary schools were surveyed with potential participants totaling approximately 150.

Procedure

School principals were contacted via telephone to explain the research to be conducted and the electronic format of the survey. Each school district had different procedures to follow to allow researchers to contact teachers. After going through each school's necessary protocol, an email was sent to the principals of each elementary school that contained the consent form and a link to the research survey. The principal then forwarded the consent form and survey to all staff members who worked with students with disabilities in their respective schools. Participants were given two weeks in which to complete the survey. Each principal was

contacted two subsequent times, once by telephone and once through email, requesting a resend of the consent form and research survey. Magee, Straight, and Schwartz (2001) state that repeated contacts with participants can increase response rates. In this particular research, the researcher had to rely on the principal's word that he/she would actually resend the information. Data was collected and stored electronically via LiveText, an online data collection tool frequently used for assessment purposes. LiveText contains a survey tool that allows the researcher to create and launch a survey that results in a link that can be pasted into an email. When a participant clicks on the link, he/she is directed to an online anonymous survey that once completed and submitted, allows for the aggregation of the data in a central location. The data can then be exported into Microsoft Excel for analysis. The only individuals with access to the raw data were the researcher and her advisor, helping to ensure confidentiality.

Instrument

A 13-item survey was used to collect data for the research. Completion of a survey should have taken no less than five minutes and no more than 15 minutes, more or less depending on input. The questions were all in short answer format. See Appendix A for a copy of the survey.

Demographic questions addressed what position the individual held, what grade level of students they worked with and if they work in a general education classroom, resource room or another classroom. Four questions dealt specifically with IEPs. Three of the four asked such details as how many students have IEPs do they work with, if and when they receive copies of the IEPs, and whether or not they are invited to participate in IEP meetings. The final IEP question addressed whether or not students who go to resource rooms work on variations of the same work as peers in the general education classroom, modified per IEP goals. Four questions

addressed the quality of communication between general education teachers and special education teachers, asking about the ease of communication, what types of communication are used in their particular school they feel are beneficial or not beneficial, and if they feel better strategies could be implemented to improve communication. There was also a question that asked how long they have taught.

Data

After all data was collected it was downloaded and compiled in Microsoft Excel spreadsheet form from the electronic survey site. All 22 completed surveys were submitted and analyzed using Microsoft Excel. The data was grouped together as much as it could be based on similar characteristics. Descriptive statistics were calculated and all qualitative data was analyzed for common themes.

Results

This research was conducted to determine the relationship between what is taught in the general education content classrooms and special education resource rooms. It also examined teachers' perceptions of the quality of communication that exists between teachers in general education content classrooms and special education resource rooms.

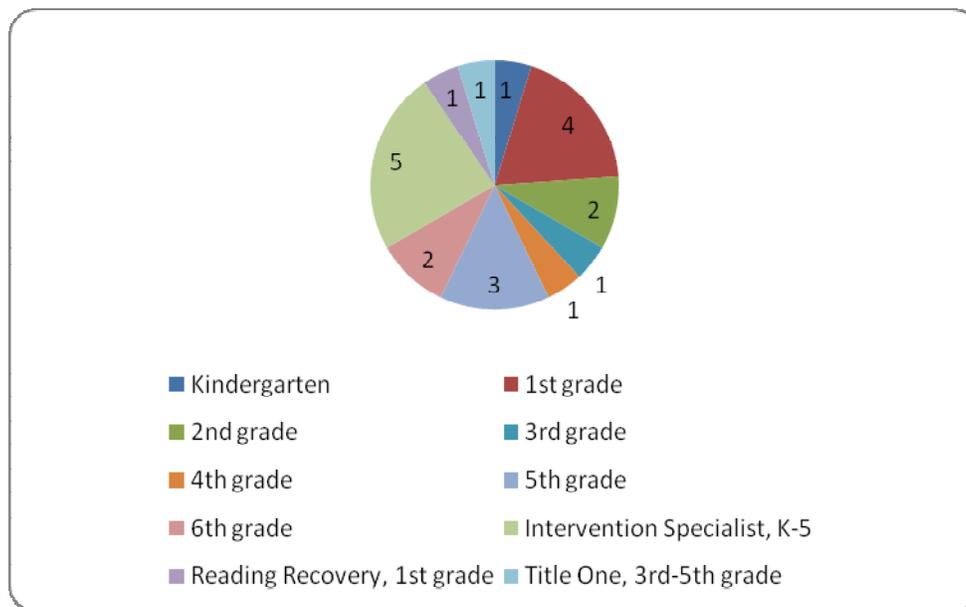
Out of the eight schools invited to take part in the survey, one school opted out. The principal of that particular school reported that they do not utilize resource rooms in the school, and therefore did not find the survey applied to them. This reduced the number of schools to seven. This lowered the number of possible participants by approximately 24. The total number of potential participants was reduced from approximately 150 to approximately 126. Of the 22 surveys returned it was determined that two were duplicates so one was thrown out. This

reduced the number of completed responses to 21. The response rate for the research was 16.6%.

Question number one inquired what position and grade level of students the individual worked with. See Figure 1. The majority of the respondents were intervention specialists, (n= 5; 23.8%). First grade was the next highest (n = 4; 19%). Next highest was fifth grade, (n = 3; 14.2%) . Second and sixth grade each had 2 participants (< 1% and Reading Recovery, Title One, Kindergarten, 3rd grade and 4th grade each had one respondent (< 0.5 %).

Figure 1.

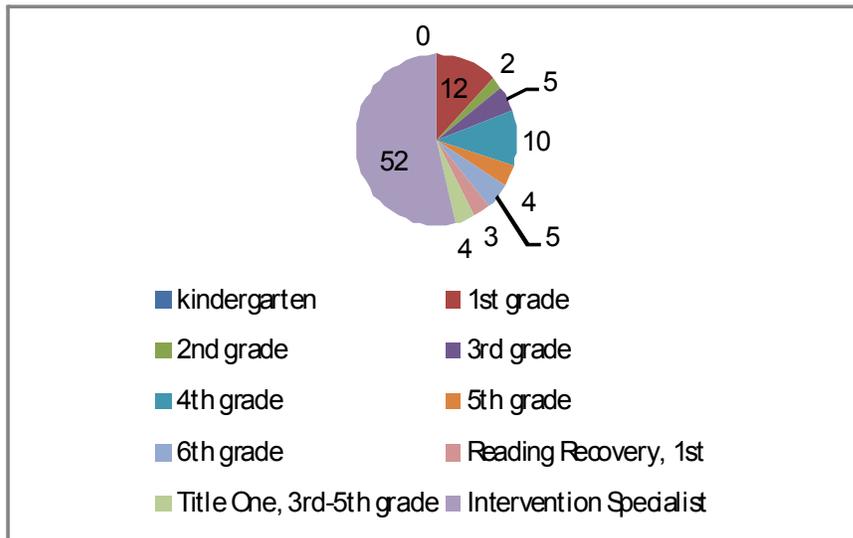
Teacher Classroom Breakdown



The next question asked how many students with IEPs each individual worked with. See Figure 2). This figure also contains a visual representation of the responses to question number three, “How many students with IEPs do you work with per year?”. Teachers reported working with a total of 97 students with IEPs. Intervention specialists made up the majority of 53% of individuals working with students who had IEPs.

Figure 2.

Number of students with IEPs per grade level or classroom (Reading Recovery, Intervention Specialist, Title One) and the number of students each teacher works with who have an IEP



The next three questions addressed teachers’ working situation. The first question asked what type of classroom each individual worked in (i.e., general education classroom, resource room, inclusion classroom). Second, “If you work with students who have an IEP, have you been provided with a copy of each student’s IEP? When did you receive it?”

Of the six participants who reported not receiving IEPs, five said they do have access to them. Sixty-one percent of the participants said they receive it before school or at the beginning of the year.

A third question asked, “Are you provided the opportunity to, and do you attend the IEP meetings of your students?” Ninety percent of the participants are invited to IEP meetings regarding their student while less than 1% (0.09%) report not getting an invitation to their students’ IEP meetings. One participant reported demanding to go to the IEP meetings. This

participant expressed extreme frustration over this reporting, “I DEMAND the opportunity and do attend. I was not automatically provided the opportunity.” Figure 3 provides IEP information by grade level.

Figure 3.

IEP Information by Grade

Grade/classroom	IEP received	When IEP was received	Are you invited to IEP meeting
Kindergarten	Yes	Before school year began	Yes
1 st General Education/ Inclusion	Yes	First week of school from Intervention Specialist	Yes
1 st General Education	No	Was told where IEPs were kept, retrieved them independently	Yes
1st General Education/ Inclusion	Yes	Before school year began	Yes
1 st General Education	Yes	Before school year began	Yes
2 nd General Education	Yes	First week of school	Yes
2 nd General Education	No	I can get to them if I need to	Yes
3 rd General Education	Yes	At the beginning of the year	Yes
4 th General Education	No, but I have received information from Intervention Specialist about students with IEPs		Yes
5 th General	No		Yes

Education 5 th General Education/	Sometimes	At the beginning of the year	No
5 th General Education/ Inclusion	I only have IEPs of students in my homeroom, I have to ask for others who are not in my homeroom	At the beginning of the year	I don't get invited, but I demand to attend
6 th General Education	Yes	First week of school	Yes
6 th General Education/ Inclusion	Receive some, not all	At the beginning of the year	Yes
Reading Recovery, 1 st grade/ Resource Room	No, but I can get them if I need them		Yes
Title One, 3 rd -5 th grade, Separate classroom	No, but got them from the office		Yes
Intervention Specialist, 4 th grade/ Resource Room	I have IEPs that I write		Yes
Intervention Specialist, K-3 rd grade/ Resource Room	Yes	At the beginning of the year	Yes
Intervention Specialist, No grade specified/ Resource Room	I have IEPs that I wrote at the end of last school year		Yes
Intervention Specialist, 2 nd grade/ Resource Room	Yes	At the beginning of the year	Yes
Intervention Specialist, 3 rd grade/ Resource Room	Yes	At the beginning of the year	Yes

The next question asked, "Are your students with special needs who go to the resource

room for additional assistance for a particular subject given the same assignment, modified per IEP goals, as their peers? Why or why not? In analyzing this data, huge inconsistencies were found within the responses. See Figure 4. Ideally, all students should be using modifications and accommodations per his/her IEP on a daily basis and not just for assessments. However, as the results show, very few report that accommodations are utilized everyday and that assignments are modified by the general education teacher, or the special education teacher. One third responded “Usually, as per the IEP,” 38% reported “always” modifying assignments, and 33% actually made specific reference to working on the same assignment with modifications. Less than ½ % reported not having any students who go to the resource room, and less than 1% reported not knowing what goes on in the resource room with their student.

The lack of consistency in responses supports research from Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, and Tindal (2007) that documented if classroom teachers do not implement accommodations from IEPs on a regular basis, it renders the IEP useless. Also Silva, Munk and Bursuck (2005) identified in their research that teachers will informally make adaptations to the regular grading system for students. Formal adaptations can be instituted.

Figure 4.

Do students who go to resource room receive same assignment as Gen. Ed. peers, only modified per IEP?

Grade	Do you have students Who go to Resource Room, if so, is work same as peers in Gen Ed and is it modified per IEP?
Kindergarten	usually modified assignments to reduce the stress of having to complete it and also to help the student feel more successful
1 st grade	The assignments are modified when appropriate.

	At other times the special Ed teacher works at a pace that is appropriate for that child's needs. As a result, they are not always working on the same topic as the general Ed classroom because they may need extra time on topics or have the concept presented by different methods.
1 st grade	I do not have any students that go to another classroom.
1 st grade	Usually the assignment is modified to meet their IEP goals. It depends on the student and the assignment as I want them to try to do their best, but not be frustrated by the situation.
1 st grade	Sometimes they are different assignments. Adjustments are always made for those students
2 nd grade	Students will take tests with accommodations.
2 nd grade	We try for the same assignment, but most need some modification to an assignment. Second grade is easy to achieve the same schedule or assignment academically, but it usually the students' behavior that gets in the way.
3 rd grade	They follow the same reading and math series that our school uses, but I am not sure about the assignments. I'm not the one giving them the reading assignments. The students that I have with IEP's for math are given the same assignments with adaptations based on their IEP's and focusing on their learning goals.
4 th grade	Some of the same assignments, and only modified when necessary.
5 th grade	modified answers are required, like just short answer response instead of complete sentences
	They are given copies of the notes instead of copying from the board
5 th grade	My students who have IEPs go to the resource

	<p>room for full time language arts instruction. I do not know what they do in the resource room, so I am unaware of their assignments, goals, etc. I know that in math those students have completely different assignments. The intervention specialists choose not to use the same math series as the gen. ed. teachers.</p>
5 th grade	<p>Written assignment with questions or more detailed research is modified. During other years and aide has helped students with work assigned and there has been some inclusion.</p>
6 th grade	<p>If they are at the same grade level, they do receive the same (modified) assignment. If they are at a lower grade level, they receive a different (but similar) assignment.</p>
6 th grade	<p>Their assignments are modified per their IEP goals, if I feel that they are capable of the work it is not modified if it is something that is known to be difficult for them I modify.</p>
Reading Recovery 1sr grade	<p>Usually the assignment is modified to meet their IEP goals. It depends on the student and the assignment as I want them to try to do their best, but not be frustrated by the situation.</p>
Title One 3 rd -5 th	<p>Most lessons are modified from the "regular" classroom to include additional time, provided skills that are not necessarily at grade level but missing, and constantly monitoring progress</p>
Intervention Specialist 4 th grade	<p>I teach the resource room and they are the same topics but the reading/writing levels are modified.</p>
Intervention Specialist K-3	<p>Yes, almost always. We have a wonderful K-3 special Ed teacher who works well with all teachers.</p>
Intervention Specialist Not specified	<p>Modified- primarily by the classroom teachers. Modification is most often based on the student's limited ability to read.</p>
Intervention Specialist 2 nd grade	<p>My higher performing group (some have learning disabilities, one has Autism) does roughly the</p>

same things as their typically developing peers in the gen. ed. rooms. I make accommodations.

My lower group (some students with cognitive disabilities, PDD, one with Bi-polar disorder) is not given the same assignments. They are way lower than their typically developing peers. We do not follow the Scott Foresman series (reading or math) at all.

Intervention Specialist 3rd grade

I feel that most of the regular ed. teachers that I work with do their best to modify and adapt assignments and tests. Some students need more modifications than others.

Responses to the next two questions are reported together in Figure 5. The first asked participants if they felt general education teachers and special education teachers have a direct line of communication regarding the goals of a student with an IEP. The next asked what types of communication are used in their schools to communicate the goals for students with IEPs.

The majority of the respondents reported having communication regarding students' IEP goals. Only one teacher reported receiving no information at all. This same respondent said that it is difficult to get a hold of the special education teachers and does not appreciate the attitude of the special education teachers.

Communication strategies were reported as being mostly positive as well. The respondents who seem most pleased are the ones who reported having weekly grade level meetings where they can discuss the needs of students. The majority of the communication is reported to be informal in nature. IEP meetings and Intervention Assistance Team (IAT)

meetings were formal meetings that were mentioned.

Figure 5.

Communication Strategies

	What types of communication are used in your school to communicate the goals of students with IEPs?	What communications strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were beneficial? Why?
Kindergarten		
1st grade	Written communication in form of the IEP. There is also direct verbal communication.	Written communication in form of the IEP. There is also direct verbal communication
1st grade	Direct communication--we have the conversations in meetings.	Direct communication with evidence (i.e. student sample work)
1st grade	A copy of the IEP is given to teachers. We have a chance to speak with the special education teachers regularly and can when needed. Parents are also notified with anything about the IEP. If parents are unable to come to school, a home visit may take place.	I think home visits are extremely beneficial as we often don't truly know a child until we see where he/she lives and the conditions in which he/she lives.
1st grade 2nd grade	email, meetings Teacher dialogue, written notes	all were beneficial IEP meetings offer a chance for all parties to interact and work together to determine the needs of each individual student.
2nd grade	Yes, I am very lucky to work close with the primary special teacher.	A good relationship with the special teacher is the key. The above list provides us with time to communicate and make an educational plan.
3rd grade	Yes, I am usually asked what I feel some of the goals should be if an IEP is being written	discussing adaptations of goals we may feel need to be made throughout the year as

	<p>after I have had the student for a year. I don't usually have input on students goals that are just entering 3rd grade because the IEP was written the spring before, and I hadn't worked with the student yet. I trust that the 2nd grade teachers have developed appropriate goals for third grade.</p>	<p>situations arise (allows goals to be adjusted if needed before renewal and makes goals better aligned with students needs than trying to remember it all at the end of the year when IEP is being written again) progress of goals is assessed by spec. Ed. teacher or myself and sent to parents each quarter (parent/school communication of progress helps us to encourage student to continue to make progress on learning goals at school and home)</p>
4th grade	<p>Being present for IEP meeting with the parent. I am given a list of modifications that are needed for each student.</p>	<p>The reg. ed. teachers get a copy of the IEP and we discuss students whenever needed.</p>
5th grade	<p>talk with special teacher informally</p>	<p>she helps students with their work and we talk about the assignments</p>
5th grade	<p>In my school, no communication is used at all regarding IEP goals.</p>	<p>I have tried email, asking to meet after school, checking before school... I've tried written and verbal communication. I honestly believe no strategies were beneficial because of the attitude of the special education teachers at this elementary school.</p>
5th grade	<p>Grade level meetings and meetings with the Intervention specialist.</p>	<p>The grade level meetings are most beneficial. Through discussion of what is going on we can reinforce the goals of the Intervention specialist and report directly how the strategies are working. Issues that come up can be dealt with quickly.</p>
6th grade	<p>verbal and written</p>	<p>In my opinion, all communication regarding how to better assist these students is beneficial.</p>

6th grade

This is my first year at this school but so far the communication has been verbal.

Any communication is good communication.

Yes, our spec. ed. teachers work mostly inside the classroom along side the classroom teacher. We don't have total mainstreaming but mainstream when possible. nothing formal that I know off

Not sure

The reg. ed. teachers get a copy of the IEP and we discuss students whenever needed.

IAT meetings, grade level meetings

The reg. ed. teachers get a copy of the IEP and we discuss students whenever needed.

We have grade level meetings each week. This makes it easier to keep up with specific students. We also have an Intervention Assistance Team that meets with the school psychologist, parents, and teachers. This team helps create goals, plans of action, etc.

We have grade level meetings each week. This makes it easier to keep up with specific students. We also have an Intervention Assistance Team that meets with the school psychologist, parents, and teachers. This team helps create goals, plans of action, etc.

Conferences in the hall, quick moments at lunch, an occasional meeting, discussions after school.

One thing that I haven't done- which was beneficial when I worked at the high school and middle school levels- is to provide teachers with an opportunity to look at IEPs and to write summaries of strengths and weaknesses (and quirks) of each student.

There,

However, I was a straight inclusion teacher with much less responsibility for direct instruction of curriculum.

I give the gen. ed. teachers copies of their students' IEPs at the beginning of the year.

?

I'm a little unclear on this question. Do you mean with parents? At the IEP meetings we discuss these.

The next two questions are reported together in Figure 6. The first asked, “What communications strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were beneficial? Why? The second asked, “What communication strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were NOT beneficial? Why?”

There were several question marks as responses, or statements indicating that respondents did not understand the question. It is possible the question could have been worded better, or maybe towards the end of the survey, motivation was decreased and respondents were less willing to write out extended answers.

There were some suggestions of maintaining a good relationship with the other teachers or team members, which is supported in earlier research regarding teamwork and collaboration. Suggestions for common planning periods in which to discuss issues were also mentioned. A few respondents repeatedly reported grade level meetings as being helpful.

Figure 6.

Beneficial Communication Strategies

Grade	What communications strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were beneficial? Why?	What communication strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were NOT beneficial? Why?
Kindergarten	newsletters, notes home, phone calls home	
1 st grade	Written communication in form of the IEP. There is also	Written communication in form of the IEP. There is also

1 st grade	direct verbal communication. Direct communication with evidence (i.e. student sample clear work)	direct verbal communication. Email--it tends to not always be clear
1 st grade	???	???
1 st grade	all were beneficial	not sure what else is out there
2 nd grade	IEP meetings offer a chance for all parties to interact and work together to determine the needs of each individual student.	Collaborative planning, meetings with parents and special education teachers. These suggestions do not occur because of time restraints.
2 nd grade	A good relationship with the special teacher is the key. The above list provides us with time to communicate and make an educational plan.	Time is always a problem during the day to day life of school. Setting up time blocks to discuss students is the key.
3 rd grade	progress of goals is assessed by spec. Ed teacher or myself and sent to parents each quarter (parent/school communication of progress helps us to encourage student to continue to make progress on learning goals at school and home)	I can't think of any or we would probably start using them!
4 th grade	NA.	Common planning time for the classroom teacher and the intervention specialist. This can not be arranged due to teacher cuts and the need to serve another grade level that takes time away from planning.
5 th grade	she helps students with their work and we talk about the assignments	written exchange of IEP no one has bothered to give them to us
5 th grade	In another school, a common planning period was useful. Then teachers could establish	we should be allowed to go to IEP meetings but not scheduled at a time we can go I think a common planning period with a set time established for communication

	one day a week to communicate and collaborate. This was beneficial because it was a given part of the schedule.	between gen. Ed and special Ed teachers would be more beneficial. I also think an hour set aside by the administration, during which we are provided subs would be great. Possibly a form that is sent back and forth between each other could be useful. None of these things are being used because there is a general distrust between the teachers and no one cares to establish communication. In the end, the students are the ones to suffer!
5 th grade	The grade level meetings are most beneficial. Through discussion of what is going on we can reinforce the goals of the Intervention specialist and report directly how the strategies are working. Issues that come up can be dealt with quickly.	Anything written without a clarifying discussion. No communication so the classroom teacher has little or no input or feedback as to goals needed to be stressed.
6 th grade	n/a	n/a
6 th grade	Any communication is good communication.	none
Reading Recovery, 1 st grade Title One, 3 rd – 5 th grade	Not sure what you mean. IAT meetings, grade level meetings	? ???What are some communication strategies?
Intervention Specialist K-3	We do not know anything about children coming to the next grade level until there is a problem. It would be helpful to have some information on children with special needs at the beginning of the school year and not waiting until a problem arises.	We do not know anything about children coming to the next grade level until there is a problem. It would be helpful to have some information on children with special needs at the beginning of the school year and not waiting until a problem arises.
Intervention Specialist 4 th grade	No answer	No answer
Intervention Specialist 2 nd grade	?	?
Intervention Specialist No specified grade	Much of my communication is anecdotal but I don't find it	See no. 10. My strategies this year have been very limited

<p>Intervention Specialist 3rd grade</p>	<p>non-useful.</p> <p>I am not sure I understand the question. As far as communication, I make phone calls to confer with parents if something on an IEP is changing. If they agree, I then send home an amendment which is signed and added to the IEP. I talk to teachers on a daily basis and use the student's agenda as a way of communicating as well.</p>	<p>due to the size of my class (18) and very limited mainstreaming.</p> <p>Think we use many communication strategies. I do not know of any that are not being used.</p>
---	--	--

The final question asked, “How long have you been teaching/working in your current position?” Findings are reported in Figure 7. In creating the survey, the researcher believed this question was going to provide a huge distinction between what was perceived in the classroom by teachers who have been in the position longer, than by those who had only been in the classroom a shorter time. The researcher’s hypothesis proved to be wrong. There was no significance either way based on years in the classroom. There was no real correlation between any earlier question and length of time on the job. Four participants had been in their position for one year or less. Eight participants had been teaching 2-10 years. Five reported teaching fro 10-20 years, and four participants had taught for more than 20 years.

Figure 7.

Years Teaching

Grade	How long have you been teaching/working in your current position
Kindergarten	14 years

1 st grade	2 years
1 st grade	3 months
1 st grade	19 years
1 st grade	15 days
2 nd grade	5 years
2 ⁿ grade	23 years
3 rd grade	8 years
4 th grade	18 years
5 th grade	32 years
5 th grade	1 year
5 th grade	29 years
6 th grade	2 months
6 th grade	1 year
Reading Recovery, 1 st grade	8 years
Title One, 3 rd -5 th	3 years
Intervention Specialist, K-3	2 years
Intervention Specialist, 2 nd grade	2 years
Intervention Specialist, 4 th grade	21 years
Intervention Specialist, no grade specified	19 years
Intervention Specialist, 3 rd grade	8 years

Discussion and Implications for Practice

Findings from this study support research found in the existing literature. Many respondents reported developing good working relationships that help the collaboration process.

The findings from this study confirm Fisher and Frey's (2001) research with students with IEPs that a student can be successful as long as there is collaboration and effective communication between teams such as special education teachers and general education teachers who utilize each others' ideas and both follow accommodations and supports indicated in the IEP.

It makes sense if administration would arrange some time where team members who work with students in special education could get together and share information and techniques that are helpful. As was stated earlier and corroborated here, Ketterlin-Geller, Alonzo, Braun-Monegan, and Tindal (2007) reported general education teachers need to make it a priority to familiarize themselves with an IEP of a student they have in their classroom because the more consistency in delivery of accommodations written in an IEP, the higher chance for a student's success. It would be recommended for teachers to get together to go over the IEP accommodations and supports. It was illuminated in this study's findings that there is inconsistency among the respondents on what and when certain supports or modifications should be used.

There was not a lot of research to be found in the existing literature about resource rooms. However, it was clearly demonstrated in this research that there is a disconnect between what goes on in the resource room and general education classroom. The general education teacher should be aware of what is being taught in resource rooms. Each student is a part of both classrooms; he/she is not the "property" of one or the other depending on which subject is being taught.

The findings from this research did not provide too many surprises. If this study were to be done again, the researcher would modify the methods somewhat. Systematic quantitative questions along with open-ended ones would have been easier to generate some trends in beliefs

or understanding from the respondents. Additional face to face communication in the form of interviews would enhance the findings as well, likely resulting in more honest or forthright answers for some responses that appeared to be repeated.

Conclusions

It is important for all teachers and staff to be fully aware of all of components and requirements of a student's IEP. The benefits of consistency of delivery of services to a student will only lead to success. Research reiterates time and again the importance of collaboration and effective communication. Just as we all want that in our own personal lives to feel more secure, so too should it be practiced in our professional lives for the same reasons.

References

- Crockett, J. B. (2002). Special education's role in preparing responsive leaders for inclusive schools. *Remedial and Special Education, 23*(3), 157+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000777176>
- Drasgow, E., Yell, M. L., & Robinson, T. R. (2001). Developing legally correct and educationally appropriate IEPs. *Remedial and Special Education, 22*(6), 359+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001991864>
- Fisher, D., & Frey, N. (2001). Access to the core curriculum. *Remedial and Special Education, 22*(3), 148. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001012286>
- Gelzheiser, L. M., Meyers, J., Slesinski, C., Douglas, C., & Lewis, L. (1997). Patterns in general education teachers' integration practices. *Exceptionality, 7*(4), 207-228. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=95866983>
- Heward, W. L. (2003). Ten faulty notions about teaching and learning that hinder the effectiveness of special education. *Journal of Special Education, 36*(4), 186+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000626982>
- Hunt, P., Hirose-Hatae, A., Doering, K., Karasoff, P., & Goetz, L. (2000). "Community is what I think everyone is talking about. *Remedial and Special Education, 21*(5), 305. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001094889>

- Janney, R. E., Snell, M. E., Beers, M. K., & Raynes, M. (1995). Integrating students with moderate and severe disabilities into general education classes. *Exceptional Children*, 61(5), 425+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000277380>
- Ketterlin-Geller, L. R., Alonzo, J., Braun-Monegan, J., & Tindal, G. (2007). Recommendations for accommodations: Implications of (in)consistency. *Remedial and Special Education*, 28(4), 194+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5022964018>
- Klingner, J. K., & Vaughn, S. (1999). Students' Perceptions of Instruction in Inclusion Classrooms: Implications for Students with Learning Disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 66(1), 23. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001307620>
- Klingner, J. K., & Vaughn, S. (2002). The changing roles and responsibilities of an LD specialist. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 25(1), 19+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000714810>
- Magee, C. G., Straight, R. L., & Schwartz, L. (2001). Conducting web-based surveys: Keys to success. *The Public Manager*, 30(2), 47. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5000872539>
- Moody, S. W., Vaughn, S., Hughes, M. T., & Fischer, M. (2000). Reading instruction in the resource room: Set up for failure. *Exceptional Children*, 66(3), 305. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001205325>
- O'Shea, D. J., Williams, A. L., & Sattler, R. O. (1999). Collaboration across special education

- and general education: Preservice teachers' views. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 50(2), 147. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001899361>
- Peters, S. J. (2007). "Education for All?" A historical analysis of international inclusive education policy and individuals with disabilities. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies*, 18(2), 98+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5023123554>
- Sailor, W., & Roger, B. (2005). Rethinking inclusion: Schoolwide applications. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 86(7), 503. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5009316703>
- Schumm, J. S., & Vaughn, S. (1992). Planning for mainstreamed special education students: Perceptions of general classroom teachers. *Exceptionality*, 3(2), 81-98. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=96391451>
- Silva, M., Munk, D. D., & Bursuck, W. D. (2005). Grading adaptations for students with disabilities. *Intervention in School & Clinic*, 41(2), 87+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5011731168>
- Snyder, R. F. (1999). Inclusion: A qualitative study of inservice general education teachers' attitudes and concerns. *Education*, 120(1), 173. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database: <http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5001773144>
- Soukup, J. H., Wehmeyer, M. L., Bashinski, S. M., & Bovaird, J. A. (2007). Classroom variables and access to the general curriculum for students with disabilities. *Exceptional Children*, 74(1), 101+. Retrieved March 23, 2009, from Questia database:
<http://www.questia.com/PM.qst?a=o&d=5023419711>

Appendix A

Masters Research Project Survey

Investigating the Relationship between what is taught in the General Education Content

Classrooms and the Resource Room

1. What is your position and what grade level of students do you work with? (i.e., general educator, inclusion teacher, intervention specialist, paraprofessional, etc.)
2. Do you work directly with students with special needs who have an IEP? In what capacity?
3. Approximately how many students with IEPs do you work with per year?
4. Do you work in a general education classroom? Resource room? Inclusion classroom? Please describe.
5. If you work with students who have an IEP, have you been provided with a copy of each student's IEP? When did you receive it?

6. Are you provided the opportunity to, and do you attend the IEP meetings of students in your classroom who have IEPs?

7. Are students with special needs who go to the resource room for additional assistance for a particular subject given the same assignment, modified per IEP goals, as their peers? Why or why not?

8. Do you feel like general education teachers and special education teachers have a direct line of communication regarding the goals of a student with an IEP? Please explain your answer.

9. What types of communication are used in your school to communicate the goals of students with IEPs?

10. What communications strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were beneficial? Why?

11. What communication strategies have you used/been a part of that you thought were NOT beneficial? Why?

12. What communication strategies do you think would be most beneficial that you DO NOT yet use? Why are they not being used?

13. How long have you been teaching?