THE ROLES OF ACHIEVEMENT, AGE AND SOCIAL STATUS IN STUDENTS' PREFERENCE FOR SERVICE DELIVERY

by

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B.A., Simon Fraser University, 1990

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

in the Faculty

of

Education

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 1996

ISBN 0-612-16854-9

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The Roles of Achievement, Age, and Social Status in Students' Preference for Service Delivery

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ABSTRACT

In this study 42 learning disabled (LD), 40 low achieving (LA) and 42 average and high achieving (A/HA) students in grades 2-7 were assessed regarding their preferences for extra assistance. Participants, (69 boys and 55 girls) attended schools with classroom, resource room or combination models of service delivery. Students completed sociograms and took part in interviews. Results of the interviews showed that when students were asked to rate service delivery models, LD and LA students preferred extra help in the resource room and A/HA students preferred extra help in the classroom. Older students preferred pull-out and younger students preferred pull-in extra help. The service model currently in place but not peer rated or self-rated social status was a determining factor in student preference for service delivery.

DEDICATION

I wish to thank my husband, Mike and my children, Jessica and Patrick for their patience and encouragement throughout my graduate experience. I also want to thank Lucy for her positive comments... rewrite after rewrite after rewrite.

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Introduction

Overview

In the past two decades a number of key events have influenced the way in which the education of disabled students has been viewed and the manner in which such services have been delivered.

In 1975, US Public Law 94-142 guaranteed all children with disabilities a free, appropriate education and as a result, publicly funded special education programs became commonplace. This law was based on five premises; free and appropriate education, protective due process rights, education in the least restrictive environment, individualized educational programming and parental involvement. In the 1980s the concepts of least restrictive environment and of individualized programming were challenged. Much debate focused on the "least restrictive" terminology. Until that time a continuum of alternative placements was mandated whereby students could receive individualized instruction. Critics of this approach wanted all students placed in regular schools and classrooms without categorizing for individual differences (Kauffman and Hallahan, 1995). Advocates for this full inclusion model deemed regular classrooms to mean the least restrictive environment. Some Canadian educators and parents of disabled students agreed with this position of general placement for all students and began pushing for similar changes to the Canadian

educational system.

Another important event influencing the direction of special education was the emergence of the Regular Education Initiative. The Regular Education Initiative (REI), began in a speech delivered by Madeleine Will in December of 1985 for the US Department of Education. Will's subsequent discussion paper (1986) identified several problems with special education. One problem identified was that students with special needs could be stigmatized as a result of segregation from their peers. Will argued that using a pull-out approach to take problem students out of the regular classroom, attributed the problem to the student and not the learning environment. Her proposal was to adapt the classroom environment to meet the learning needs of the student. The expertise of the special needs teacher could then be best used in the classroom with a pull-in model through a partnership with the regular education teacher.

The REI has been instrumental in forging current inclusionary practises. REI proponents claim that students are more alike one another than unalike and therefore should all be taught together. The term "least restrictive environment" has become a slogan identified with this position meaning that to the maximum extent possible, students with disabilities should be educated with children who are not handicapped. If students' needs can be met in the regular classroom, then they should be

mainstreamed with the general population in neighbourhood schools.

Major proponents of the inclusionary position are Stainback and Stainback (1984) who wrote that all students differ to varying degrees from one another along the same continuum of differences. These authors maintained that individual differences do not necessarily imply that students should be given different educational treatments and suggested that a dual system for students created an unnecessary and expensive need to classify students. Political and economic agendas of the 1980s saw this point of view as an opportunity to reduce education spending (Kauffman, 1989). As a result, mainstreaming has become normal practise in many North American schools.

In 1995, the B.C. Ministry of Education mandated full inclusion in the elementary schools of the province. The school act states that unless the educational needs of a handicapped student indicate that the student's educational program should be provided otherwise, a board shall provide that student with an educational program in classrooms where that student is integrated with other students who do not have handicaps. This mandate follows the fundamental thrust of the American Regular Education Initiative. The principle of inclusion adopted in British Columbia schools supports equitable access to learning by all students and the opportunity for all students to pursue their goals in all aspects of

their education.

The B.C. Ministry of Education guidelines state that the practise of inclusion transcends the idea of physical location, and incorporates basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction. The manual goes on to say that integration is one way to achieve inclusion, but does not preclude the appropriate use of resource rooms, self-contained classes, community-based training or other specialized settings (Special Education Services: A manual of policies procedures and guidelines 1995). Implementation of the Ministry mandate falls on the shoulders of individual school boards. What the school boards of the province deem "appropriate" use of resource rooms, self-contained classrooms etc. seems to vary from district to district and even from school to school depending on administrative philosophy and interpretation of the document. The best way to deliver service to the special needs students of the province remains unclear. A central aim of the present study is to address this issue and provide educators information on which sound decisions regarding service delivery can be based.

Research Evaluating Service Delivery Practises

Finding the best way to meet student needs necessitates an evaluation of current practises in service delivery. There is a slowly growing body of research on the effectiveness of inclusion or the mainstreaming of special education students. One way this

practise has been measured is in terms of student achievement outcomes. A major criticism of the resource room model has been the lack of student achievement associated with it, but the results of mainstreaming have been equally disappointing with students not showing significant improvement in either reading achievement (Gelzheizer, Meyers & Pruzek,1992; Jenkins & Leicester,1992; Zigmond & Baker,1994), or in academic skills as measured by standardized achievement tests (Zigmond & Baker,1990). In a review of seven studies that included full mainstreaming, pull-out resource help and full-time special class placement, Madden and Slavin (1983) found that the research favoured placement in regular classrooms supplemented by well designed resource programs. More recently, in a joint paper by Zigmond, et al. (1995), of three studies of general education settings with and without pull-in and pull-out assistance it was reported that for a significant proportion of students with learning disabilities, enhanced educational opportunities provided in the general education setting did not produce desired achievement outcomes.

The value of mainstreaming has also been evaluated in terms of social integration. Coie (1990) states that although academic achievement has an undeniably important impact on children's evaluations of their peers, children dislike individual peers not simply because they are deficient in these areas but because of the way they handle themselves within the peer group over issues

related to these and other aspects of social interaction. He goes on to write that if a child is disliked by a significant number of peers, group dynamics become more important and the child must work harder to overcome a negative reputation. As the child experiences rejection, feelings about the self change. The child becomes less socially secure and confident. Anticipation of future reactions by peers lead the child to make adjustments in social behaviour and may cause the child to overreact to some events or to refrain from responding to others.

Studies on the social status of learning disabled (LD) children have shown them to be the least popular and most rejected group of children within regular classrooms (Stone & La Greca,1990; Wiener,1987; Conderman,1995; Bryan & Bryan,1990). Vaughn & Hogan (1990) found that as early as two months after their first formal school experience and maintained six months later, kindergarten children later identified as learning disabled received lower peer acceptance ratings than their average achieving and high achieving classmates. In fact 60% of these students were identified as rejected and none were identified as popular. Fox (1989), concerned that many mainstreamed students were being rejected by non-handicapped students, looked at peer acceptance of learning disabled (LD) students in the regular classroom. She found that mainstreamed LD and non-LD students paired to do academic activities showed no difference in before and after ratings

of one another. Mainstreamed LD children and non-handicapped partners in a control group with no intervention liked each other less at the end of the school year than at the beginning. Non-paired students and students paired for academic work showed no increased liking of one another. An increase in liking came about when students were paired for a socially interactive activity involving mutual interest. The results of this study call into question the reasoning that mixing LD and non-LD children in an academic setting (e.g., the classroom) will lead to greater social acceptance of LD students.

McIntosh, Vaughn, and Zaragoza (1991) in a review of 22 social interventions for LD students found an overall lack of empirical evidence documenting increases in peer acceptance as a result of social skills interventions regardless of setting. Most of the 22 studies were of students enrolled either fulltime in resource room programs or part-time in resource programs with the remainder spent in regular class settings. Students involved in part-time resource room programs did, however, show greater intervention effects than did students from self-contained, full-time resource room settings. However, to conclude that part-time resource room settings are better than full-time settings would be premature. McIntosh, Vaughn, and Zarazoga caution that the students in full-time resource programs probably had more significant difficulties in both academic and social areas than did

students in part-time placement settings.

In summary, research on the social effects of mainstreamed versus resource room models indicates that mere placement in regular classrooms does not seem to result in greater peer acceptance of learning disabled students anymore than full-time resource room placement.

While researchers have examined the achievement and social outcomes associated with different instructional models, few have examined student attitudes about these models. Many LD children are aware of how they compare with others, most obviously in areas such as academic achievement. It is probable that the stigma associated with low achievement is most apparent for LD students who are placed in mainstream settings (Vaughn and La Greca, 1988). While the poor social status of children with learning disabilities does not appear to be merely a function of low academic achievement (La Greca and Stone, 1990), both social status and achievement together may have an impact on student openness to intervention within the regular classroom setting. For this reason, student perceptions of extra or remedial assistance may be an important source of information for those making decisions about service delivery models.

Student Perceptions of Service Delivery

To date, little research has been conducted on student perceptions of different service delivery models. Jenkins and Heinen (1989) looked at 686 elementary special, remedial and regular education students' preferences for service delivery. It was found that when there was a clear student preference for service delivery model, it was for pull-out with a special needs teacher rather than pull-in. It was also found that students preferred help on classroom assignments from the regular classroom teacher rather than the specialist teacher.

In the same study, grade was shown to be a significant factor with more older students than younger selecting a pull-out service model than a pull-in service model. More non-LD than LD intermediate age students also expressed preference for pull-out. In reasons given for preference of pull-out service, avoiding embarrassment played a larger role for older than younger students. These results challenge the notion that children, generally, prefer to have specialists come to them rather than go to specialists. In general, older elementary students (Grade 5) preferred a pull-out delivery of specialist service while primary students preferred pull-in.

Although older elementary students apparently view pull-out as less embarrassing and stigmatizing than in-class services, when given the choice of receiving help from a specialist or from

their regular teacher, 57.4% of intermediate LD students in pull-out and 69% in pull-in preferred help from the regular teacher in the regular classroom. Percentages for primary students preferring help from their regular teacher were even larger at 71.7% and 81.4% respectively. Most students preferred to obtain additional help within the general education classroom from their classroom teachers who are familiar with them and their classroom curriculum. Based on these results, Jenkins and Heinen suggest that the majority of students would be inclined toward a total mainstreaming model or one with adaptations.

If students were embarrassed by specialist teacher help within the classroom, yet needed help, it seems possible that they would feel less distinct from the rest of the class by getting help from the regular teacher rather than the specialist teacher.

If students view pull-out assistance as less stigmatizing and embarassing than pull-in assistance (Jenkins and Heinen, 1989) it does not follow that they would prefer a total mainstream model. The question used to accumulate the data that precipitated this conclusion was: If you were having a lot of problems in your classroom reading lessons and needed extra help, would you rather: (a) get extra help from Mr./Ms. (the special reading teacher), or (b) get extra help from Mr./Ms. (the regular classroom teacher)? In the reasons given for preferring help from either teacher, only five special (LD) or remedial students gave answers

indicating they assumed it would be in a pull-out program (embarrassed to leave, like to stay with my class). It is possible some students believed that "in your classroom reading lessons" meant that the specialist teacher would be assisting them in their classroom with reading lessons. If, as stated earlier, intermediate students preferred pull-out to pull-in specialist help, it may not be that students prefer total mainstreaming as Jenkins and Heinen suggest. Rather, it may be that early adolescent students do not wish to be singled out from their peers in the regular classroom environment by the specialist teacher at a time when peer relationships are especially significant to them (Rogers, 1977).

Jenkins and Heinen (1989) theorize that students' perceptions of stigmatization are highly personal. In an earlier study, Jenkins and Heinen (1988, cited in Jenkins and Heinen,1989) found that students appeared equally receptive to new classmates regardless of service delivery. On the basis of this observation, they concluded that while students may view a particular service model as preferable for themselves they appear not to judge others by service delivery mode. An alternative explanation for this finding, however, is that students were responding to the "newness" of classmates and that over time service delivery may have taken on greater importance and begun to affect their judgements.

Conderman (1995) found that mainstreamed LD students in

6th and 7th grade received more negative and fewer positive votes than non-LD peers on a sociogram. In a1990 study of learning disabled students, La Greca and Stone found that the data on children's perceptions of their social acceptance parallel the findings from peer ratings. If self perceptions of social status ratings correlate with peer social status ratings, then it cannot be said that perceptions of stigmatization are highly personal as Jenkins and Heinen (1988) have suggested.

There is further evidence that supports the idea that achievement groups may differ from one another in matters of preference. Vaughn, Schumm, and Kouzekanani (1993) investigated students' perceptions regarding (1) adaptations made by teachers and (2) working with other students in same or mixed ability groups. This study used a sample of 179 students from elementary, middle school and high school. At each age level, students were categorized into LD, LA, and A/HA achievement groups. Among elementary school children (grades 1-5), the researchers found no achievement group differences in the perceptions students had of teachers who made adaptations to school work. All achievement groups preferred teachers who adapted schoolwork for differing achievement levels. Elementary LD children gave significantly higher ratings for working with different achievement groups than did either the LA or A/HA students. At the middle-school level, average and high achieving

(A/HA) students' ratings for working with different achievement group students in their groups were higher than the ratings of both the LA and LD students. At the high-school level, low achieving students ratings for same students in groups were significantly higher than both the LD or A/HA students. It was also found that older LDs differed from LA and A/HA peers in preferences for adaptations in tests, homework, groupings and in textbooks. If achievement groups at different age levels differ in adaptation preference and in student work group preference, it is possible and even likely that they will differ in other preferences, such as service delivery, as well.

While the Vaughn, Schumm, and Kouzekanani (1993) study dealt with student perceptions of teachers who adapt teaching materials, it did not deal with where students prefer to receive help. Among elementary school students there was no achievement group difference in preference for teacher adaptation, but there was a significant difference in ratings for working with different groups of peers within the class. The LD group expressed significantly higher ratings than LA and A/HA students for working with different students in groups rather than with the same students. It is possible that elementary level LA and A/HA peers showed less preference for working in mixed groups because they did not want to work with the learning disabled students. Since LA and LD students are both low achieving it is unclear whether the low

achievement of LD students accounts for this difference or if some other factor is involved.

Only one other study was found that related to student preference for service delivery. Vaughn and Bos (1987) looked at students' knowledge and perceptions of the resource room. This study, which included both LD and non-LD students, showed that elementary students had an accurate understanding of the resource room whether they attended these programs or received no extra assistance. These results are important to the present study because students who receive no specialist assistance were also asked about preference for service delivery. Based on Vaughn and Bos's results it was assumed that all students would be knowledgeable of the resource room, whether they received help there or not.

Vaughn and Bos (1987) found significant differences between primary and intermediate student age groups and primary and intermediate LD students. The sample included students from grades one to six with the group being divided into four subgroups. a) grade 1-3 LD and b) grade 1-3 non-LD, c) grade 4-6 LD, and d) grade 4-6 non-LD. Students were asked which room they would most like to spend time in outside of the regular class. Choices were the resource room, the reading room, the nurse's office and the counsellor's office. Seventy percent of intermediate LD students chose the resource room while only 30% of primary LD

chose the resource room. In fact 50% of primary students chose it last of the four choices. In response to the question,"What is special education?", "don't know" was the most frequently given response by both groups at the primary level. While some non-LD students responded "for kids not so smart", no LD students gave this response and three times as many intermediate students gave this response as primary students. These observations support the position that older students may be more aware of individual differences than younger students. If this is the case, older students may have clear preferences for a type of service delivery that does not distinguish them as overtly different from their peers.

As noted above, preferences for instructional practises (e.g.,service delivery models, classroom groupings) may be affected by more than student achievement. Although lack of academic achievement has been the single most identifiable trait of the learning disabled, more recently social status has become recognized as a serious problem associated with many LD students. The present study recognizes the need to look at students' social status as well as achievement when considering preference for service model delivery.

Research on sociometric status and peer acceptance has consistently shown that peer relationships are related to children's academic lives at school (Wentzel & Asher, 1995). They go on to

say given that students' identification with and conformity to peers increases dramatically during pre and early adolescence, it is likely that peer relationships would have a particularly strong relation to school adjustment during this period of development. Abundant evidence links problems in peer relationships to problems in school achievement and places unpopular children at risk for dropping out of high school (Parker & Asher,1987). Goodenow (1993) found that in general, middle school students who expected to do well in their classes felt they were liked and respected by classmates and teacher. LD children are frequently identifiable by their low achievement and social status. In light of the research findings, the regular classroom may not always be a positive learning environment for LD students.

Learning disabled children who are low in peer social status and are sensitive to their lack of academic achievement may need a continuum of instruction within educational settings. LD students are both academically and socially prone towards drop-out. Providing extra assistance within the regular classroom during the middle school years may place these students at increased risk for failure. By taking into account student preference for instructional programming we may be able to avoid at least one of the risk factors for drop-out.

Related to students' preferences for service delivery are students' perceptions of peers that receive extra help. There has

been some investigation of peer perceptions of students that receive pull-out service delivery. Vaughn and Bos (1987) suggested that when given an open-ended question (e.g.,What is the resource room?), students tended not to associate the concepts of the resource room with less bright students. However, they queried how students would respond to a more direct question regarding characteristics of students in special education. (e.g.,What type of students attend the resource room?). This research will attempt, through the use of more direct questioning, to extend current knowledge of regular students' perceptions of those students receiving special education.

Age is another factor which may affect students' preference for service delivery. Vaughn, Shumm & Kouzekanani (1993) found between age and achievement group differences in preferences for teacher adaptations of curriculum. Vaughn, McIntosh, Schumm, Haager & Callwood (1993) in a study of 202 third through tenth grade students found in a peer rating scale of liking and knowing, that only LA students were less liked and less well known by peers. They pointed out that because the sample size had only 18 LD students, it was not possible for them to do an analysis of age differences. It seems possible that students' ratings of peers may differ between third and tenth grade. In fact, both the Jenkins and Heinen (1989) and Vaughn and Bos (1987) studies found significant differences in preferences for service delivery by age

group. Primary students as a group overwhelmingly preferred extra help within the regular classroom. Intermediate students as a group preferred pull-out service. This study will attempt to replicate the results of the previous two studies with the idea that consideration of student age may be a factor in determining service delivery preference.

Finally, there have been varied results when LD and LA students have been compared. Although Jenkins and Heinen (1989) found age distinctions and differences between LD and non-LD students, they did not distinguish between LD and LA students. These researchers combined the data accumulated from 101 LD and 236 LA students in their analysis of student preferences for service because they found that the LD and LA students responded similarly to questions. In contrast, Vaughn, Schumm, & Kouzekanani (1993) did find achievement group differences between LA and LD students in preferences for working with different students and for academic adaptation of tests, homework and textbooks. There may exist achievement group differences in service delivery preference and social status that were not considered in the Jenkins and Heinen study. It is the intent of this study to look once again at achievement group and age differences in service preference and in social status with special attention given to LA and LD differences that may exist.

In conclusion, at this particular time in history when service

delivery to special student populations is continually under attack for economic, political and social reasons, it is germane to consider the preferences of students themselves. For some of our student population, the least restrictive environment may not be the regular classroom. If educators are to provide service to students with varying abilities and disabilities with the goal of producing productive members of a society, then the individual child must be taken into account. While children may be more alike than different, we must not forget that the ways in which they are different may profoundly affect their progress in school and later life adjustment. Further investigation into peer status and preferred service delivery for at risk students will contribute to the slowly growing body of research on this and related topics.

Method

Participants

124 elementary school students participated in the study. Students were drawn from 13 schools and 34 classes in School District #41, Burnaby, B.C.. One group of sixty-three students was from grades two, three and four and a second group of sixty-one students was from grades six and seven. Sixty-nine of the participants were boys and fifty-five were girls. Elementary school age students were selected for two reasons. First, in a study that includes peer status, it is important that the sample groups know one another and spend most of their school day together. Junior high and high school students would be unlikely to attend all mainstreamed classes with the same group of peers. Second, previous studies that this study plans to replicate and extend were conducted with participants of elementary school age.

The two age groups.(one primary, one early adolescent), were chosen to study possible developmental differences in preference for type of service delivery. Each age group was comprised of comparable numbers of learning disabled, low achieving and average to high achieving students as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Numbers of Participants in Achievement and Age Groupings

	Grade 2-4	Grade 6-7
LD	20	22
LA	23	17
A/HA	20	22

Students with Learning Disabilities.

All LD subjects were assessed by a District #41 school psychologist and were determined to be severely learning disabled. All learning disabled subjects had previously been administered the WISC-R as part of the assessment procedure and had an IQ score at or above 85. While it is recognized that a grade two/three sample may have been a preferred primary group for studying of age differences in preference, it was extremely difficult to get a sample of students that had been identified as learning disabled in grade two. There is a reluctance on the part of British Columbia school districts to label students until there is some extended history of failure to achieve by the student.

Low Achievers.

Low achieving students were identified as those students not identified as learning disabled but who were receiving remedial assistance from a specialist teacher. Low achieving (LA) students

were identified based upon their scores from the Gates/MacGinitie reading tests or from reading scores on the Woodcock-Johnson-R Achievement test. Students with reading scores at or below the third stanine were considered low achieving.

Average and high achieving students.

Average and high achieving students were those students receiving no remedial assistance and identified by their teachers as achieving average or above average academic progress. All average and high achieving students were from the same classes as the learning disabled and low achieving students.

All students were mainstreamed for more than 50% of each school day in order to count them as valid class members.

Following consultations with principals, specialist teachers and classroom teachers, letters were sent home to parents of students in participating classes. Parents were advised of the full scope of the study and asked to return a signed form to the school indicating that their child was either allowed to participate in the study or was to be excluded. Consent forms were obtained from parents and guardians of all study participants prior to the study. A sample parent permission letter can be found in Appendix A.

Measures

Sociogram.

The study sample of 124 students and their classmates were administered a sociogram to be completed individually within the

regular classroom setting. Each participating student was given a class list of all students participating in the study with a rating scale after each name. Classes were given two practise statements to familiarize them with the format. Appendix B shows the format of the sociogram with five faces representing five choices. These choices ranged from a large smile meaning "like very much" to a large frown meaning "like not at all". A little smile meant "quite a bit", a little frown "not much" and a straight across mouth meant "so-so". After completing the sample questions, students were given two statements one at a time and asked to respond to the statements by marking the appropriate response for each peer. Scoring was based on a "1" for the lowest rating, (not at all), and a "5" for the highest rating (very much). The statements given the participants were:

1. I like to do work with this person in the classroom.
2. I like to play with this person at recess and after school.

A peer rating scale was used instead of a peer nomination scale to circumvent negative nominations which are part of the latter sociometric method and may be objectionable (Terry & Coie,1991). In addition, a peer rating scale involves rating all participating students instead of targeting a specific few. On the same 5 point scale, students were also asked to rate their own status within the classroom and at play. These statements were worded:

1. Other kids like to work with me at school.
2. Other kids like to play with me at recess and after school.

The two statements on the sociogram were intended to distinguish between academic and play social status. The self-rating was to assess the relationship between actual peer status and self-perceptions of social status. The sociogram was completed by a whole class in approximately fifteen minutes. Sample sociogram questionnaires can be found in Appendix B.

Interviews.

This phase of the study involved an individual interview in which the participants were asked questions concerning service delivery preference, knowledge of the resource room and the type of student that receives extra help. The interview involved only the 124 students designated from the participating classes. These questions can be found in Appendix C. Probe questions are included in smaller type. These were designed to assist those students who had difficulty understanding the main questions. Questions four and five have asterisks to indicate that students responded by pointing to one of five faces supplied as possible choices. These faces were identical to the faces students had already encountered in the classroom sociogram. Questions four and five had a rating scale of 1 to 5 identical to that used in the sociogram rating. Each interview required approximately five to ten minutes of individual student time.

Study Design

Dependent variables were peer rated academic social status and play social status, self-rated academic and play social status, resource room service rating, classroom service rating and service delivery preference. Independent variables were achievement group (LD, LA, A/HA), grade (2 to 4, & 6/7), gender, and current service delivery.

Interview Response Categories

Responses to interview questions 3 and 6 were categorized into one of six categories. Question 3 asked students to give reasons for their preference of one type of service delivery over another. Responses for a resource room preference and for a classroom preference were coded separately because given reasons tended to be different for each setting. Categories for question 3 responses to a resource room preference included that (a) it was quieter, (b) there was less distraction, (c) it was embarassing to have extra help in the classroom, (d) there was more teacher time in the resource room, (e) there were smaller groups and (f) other. Categories for question 3 responses to a classroom preference were (a) they could stay with their classmates, (b) it was embarassing to leave, (c) they didn't want to miss classwork, (d) no walking was involved in staying, (e) they liked to stay with their supplies and (f) other. Many students gave more than one reason for their preference. All reasons were coded as separate responses. The

total number of student responses is greater than 124 because three students preferred different service for different types of extra help. The number count for the categories can be found in Table 2.

Table 2

Resource Room Preference (n=85)

quieter	less distraction	embarassment	more teacher time	smaller grp.	other
38	22	31	7	9	23

Classroom Preference (n=42)

stay with peers	embarassed	miss classwork	no walking	handy supplies	other
13	6	11	5	7	9

Of the "other" reasons given by students that preferred extra help in the resource room, 6 cited it was more fun, 3 said the work was easier and 2 felt there was more physical space. No other "other" responses occured more than once. Of the "other" reasons given by students who preferred extra help in the classroom, 2 thought the classroom was more comfortable. No other "other" reason was given more than once.

Question 6 asked students what type of student received extra help. Categories for question 6 responses were (a) students having difficulty with specific subjects such as reading, spelling or math, (b) students with behaviour problems, (c) students who

needed help concentrating or a quieter place to work, (d) students who had learning problems, (e)other, (f) students who were ESL (English as a second language), (g) gifted and talented students and (h) students who received speech and language help. Four responses fell within an "other" category and occurred no more than once. Categories (f),(g) and (h) were combined because they represented classmates who received specific out of classroom assistance other than resource assistance. The number counts for question 6 are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

What Type of Student Gets Extra Help? (n=124)

specific subject difficulty	behaviour problems	quieter place	learning problems	other	ESL,G.T., speech
69	14	2	56	4	14

Interrater Reliability

Reliability of the interview response codes was assessed by the use of a second rater who coded 25% of the interviews. Kappa was selected as an appropriate index of agreement as all coding categories involve nominal data (Hollenbeck, 1978). Kappa was chosen over percentage agreement because it is a superior approach to handling chance agreement and hence provides a

more conservative estimate of agreement than percentage agreement. Reliability coefficients were all well within the acceptable range. The Kappa value for question 3 responses was .96 and for question 6 responses it was .97.

Results

Table 4 presents the mean, standard deviation and range for both peer rated and self rated social status scores and for student resource room and classroom ratings. All dependent variables have a possible range of scores of 1 to 5. Preliminary analyses revealed no gender differences for any of these variables, therefore in all subsequent analyses boys and girls were combined.

Table 4

Mean, Standard Deviation and Range of Scores for Student Peer and Self-Rated Academic and Play Social Status, Resource Room and Classroom Ratings

	Mean	Standard Deviation	Range	
Peer Rated			min.	max.
academic	3.35	.82	1.2	5.0
play	3.2	.83	1.13	5.0
Self Rated				
academic	3.6	1.16	1	5
play	4.02	1.07	1	5
resource room	3.48	1.13	1	5
classroom	2.94	1.27	1	5

Note. n = 124.

Service Delivery Preference

Achievement group membership (LD, LA, A/HA) was hypothesized to affect service delivery preference. Specifically, it was expected that LD students would prefer pull-out service to pull-in service. These students would be sensitive to extra asistance within the classroom because it would draw extra attention to their lack of achievement. All achievement groups were asked to choose between pull-in and pull-out service and to rate both types of service on a five point scale. Asking students to rate both types of service delivery, in addition to stating service delivery preference, provided data that allowed finer analyses of differences between achievement groups. Asking students which type of service delivery, classroom or resource room, they preferred forced them to choose one type of service over the other. By using a rating scale, students were given a broader choice and were able to give positive, negative or neutral ratings for both service delivery models. Table 5 shows the differences in means between achievement groups when they were given a five point range of choice.

Table 5

Mean Numbers of Service Delivery Ratings by All Achievement Groups

Group	n	Service Delivery	
		Classroom	Resource room
LD	42	2.71 (1.35)	3.66 (1.12)
LA	40	2.88 (1.32)	3.73 (1.04)
A/HA	42	3.21 (1.09)	3.04 (1.13)

Note.

standard deviations are given in parentheses

To test the hypothesis that there would be achievement group differences and that LD students would prefer pull-out service delivery, a MANOVA was conducted analyzing service delivery preference ratings (pull-in and pull-out) by student achievement group (LD, LA, A/HA). Contrary to expectations, main effects were not found for achievement group. Main effects were found for service delivery ratings with the resource room rated significantly higher than the classroom, F (1,121)= 11.18, p<.001. A significant interaction was found for service delivery rating by achievement group, F (2,121)= 4.85, p<.01. Scheffe post hoc testing was conducted at a readjusted significance level of p<.03 to

account for the added risk of error associated with multiple tests. Results showed that LD and the LA students rated the resource room significantly higher ($p<.01$). than did the A/HA students. Classroom assistance ratings by student groups did not reveal any significant differences between the groups.

Age was a second factor hypothesized to have an effect on student preference for service delivery. Specifically, it was hypothesized that younger students would prefer pull-in assistance to pull-out assistance because of a less developed social awareness than older students. A MANOVA was performed examining service delivery ratings (pull-in. pull-out) by age (grade 2/3, grade 4, grade 6/7). Grade 4 was separated from the younger group in this analysis to allow for a greater age difference between the younger and older age groups. Significant main effects were found for service delivery ratings. $F(2,122)=4.07$, $p=.05$. The effect for age approached statistical significance $F(2,122)=2.84$, $p=.06$. No significant interaction was found between service delivery ratings and age. The near significance level for age bears noting for two reasons. First. as shown in Table 6, there is a definite trend for mean service delivery ratings to decrease with age.

Table 6

Mean Scores for Preference for Service Delivery Ratings by Age Group

Service Delivery Rating	Grade		
	2-3 (n=14)	4 (n=49)	6-7 (n=61)
classroom	3.57	3.0	2.73
resource room	3.64	3.47	3.44

Second, the small number of grade 2-3 students coupled with the near significant age effect were enough to prompt further investigation of the data. Therefore, Chi Square analysis was also performed to look at age differences in service delivery preferences. An initial test was conducted using the independent variable of grade (younger being grade 2-4 and older being grade 6-7) and service delivery preference (pull-in or pull-out assistance). Non-significant differences were found, $x2$ (1, N = 117) = 2.7, $p > .05$. A second chi analysis was performed excluding the grade fours and allowing for a larger age difference between the groups. Table 7 shows a chi square for service delivery preference (pull-in, pull-out) by grade (younger 2-3, older 6-7).

Table 7

Chi Square Analysis of Service Delivery Preference by Grade

Service Delivery Preference	Grade	
	2-3	6-7
pull-out	n= 5	n= 44
	8.3	40.7
pull-in	n=7	n= 15
	3.7	18.3

Chi square analysis of grade by service delivery preference using only grades two and three yielded a very small n for both pull-in and for pull-out service delivery. Because of the low numbers of younger students, Fisher's Exact Test was substituted. The Fisher's Test revealed a significant effect, Fisher's Test (1, N=71) = 4.98, $p<.05$, with older students showing a clear preference for pull-out.

Student Reasons for Service Preference

To further explore service delivery preferences by achievement group and age, the interview data were analyzed. Question 3 of the interview asked the students why they preferred one type of service delivery over the other. Table 8 shows reasons for resource room service delivery preference by achievement group, (LD, LA, A/HA),

and by age group. Row percentages do not add up to 100% because several students gave more than one reason for resource room preference.

Table 8

Student Reasons for Resource Room Preference by Achievement Group and Grade

	quiet, less distract	less embarassed	more teachertime	smaller group	other
			Grade 2-4		
LD n=16	13 (81%)	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	1 (6%)	6 (37%)
LA n=13	6 (46%)	3 (23%)	1 (8%)	2 (15%)	5 (38%)
A/HA n=11	6 (55%)	3 (27%)	0	0	5 (45%)
			Grade 6-7		
LD n=17	13 (76%)	7 (41%)	3 (18%)	0	2(12%)
LA n=15	10 (67%)	8 (53%)	1 (7%)	0	2 (13%)
A/HA n=13	12 (92%)	7 (54%)	1 (8%)	1 (8%)	0

Responses were grouped into five categories: (1) quiet and less distraction, (2) embarassment at receiving extra help within the classroom, (3) smaller groups, (4) more teacher time in the resource room, (5) other unrelated responses such as the resource room having nicer chairs, or more space, or it is more fun. Although the number of responses given by each student ranged from one to three, when broken down by grade levels and achievement groups the number of responses from each group at different grade levels is remarkably similar.

An exception to this is the grade 2-4 LD students who favoured the resource room over the classroom because it was quieter and had less distraction for them. 81% of the LD students cited quiet and less distraction as a reason for preferring the resource room over the classroom as compared to 46% of the LA students and 55% of the A/HA students. Older students as a group were more concerned about a quiet place to work with less distraction than were younger students. The younger students (19 to 27%) were less concerned about the embarassment of receiving extra help in the classroom than were older students who cited embarassment 41% to 54%. The citing of embarassment by all of the older student groups regardless of achievement suggests that embarassment at receiving extra assistance in the classroom is more likely a product of development than of whether the student is learning disabled, low-achieving or average achieving. Older

students were more likely to cite "quiet and less distraction" as a reason for preferring the resource room than were the younger students with the exception of the younger LD students. Younger students were more than twice as likely as older students to utter response other than those specifically categorized.

Fewer students overall preferred a classroom service delivery to a resource room service delivery. Table 9 shows a tally of student reasons for classroom service delivery preference broken down by achievement group (LD, LA, A/HA) and by grade.

Table 9

Student Reasons for Classroom Preference by Achievement Group and Grade

	stay with mates	less embarassed	miss classwork	my things are here	other
			Grade 2-4		
LD n=4	1 (25%)	0	1 (25%)	1 (25%)	2 (50%)
LA n=11	6 (55%)	0	4 (36%)	0	3 (27%)
A/HA n=9	3 (33%)	0	1 (11%)	3 (33%)	3 (33%)
			Grade 6-7		
LD n=6	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	2 (33%)	1 (17%)	2 (33%)
LA n=2	0	1 (50%)	0	0	1 (50%)
A/HA n=10	1 (10%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)

Percentages of reasons for classroom service delivery preference should be read with caution because of the small numbers of students overall in this group. 50% of the younger LA and A/HA students preferred the regular classroom for extra assistance. In contrast, only 20% of the younger LD students preferred pull-in to pull-out extra assistance. Of the older students, 50% of the A/HA students preferred in class assistance to resource room assistance. Only 27% of older LD students and 11% of older LA students preferred extra help in the regular classroom over the resource room.

No younger students cited embarassment in going to the resource room as a reason for preferring help in the classroom. It may be that they had never experienced resource room assistance and it did not occur to them as a reason. LA students most often cited not wanting to miss classwork and wanting to stay with classmates as reasons for preferring help in the classroom.

Of the younger students, the largest group preferring extra assistance in the classroom were the LA students. Of the older group preferring in class assistance, the LA students form the smallest number.

Jenkins and Heinen (1989) found that current service delivery affected student preference for service delivery with students tending to prefer the service that was currently being used in their classrooms. Table 10 shows the chi square analysis

conducted to test this hypothesis with service delivery preference contrasted with current service delivery.

Table 10

Chi Square Analysis of Service Delivery Preference by Current Service

Preference	Current Service			
	pull-out	pull-in	both	Total
pull-out	48.4%	.8	14.5	63.7
pull-in	14.5	2.4	13.7	30.6
both	1.6	1.6	2.4	5.6
Total	64.5	4.8	30.6	100%

Counts were made for three types of service; pull-in, pull-out and a combination of both services compared to counts for service preference; pull-in, pull-out and a combination of both services. This analysis revealed a significant chi square, $x2(4) = 20.1, p<.001$. Almost the identical number of students receiving pull-out service (64.4%) preferred pull-out service (63.7%). Only 4.8% of students received pull-in service exclusively, but 30.6% preferred pull-in service and while 30.6% of students received some combination of both pull-in and pull-out service, only 5.6% preferred a combined

service. More students that received pull-out or pull-in service or a combination of services preferred pull-out service delivery.

It was hypothesized that there would be a relationship between social status and service delivery preference with lower status students preferring pull-out assistance to pull-in assistance. To test this hypothesis two MANOVAs were performed examining academic and play social status by service delivery preference (pull-in, pull-out) and age (grade 2-4 and grade 6-7). These analyses are based on an n of 117. The 7 students not represented either had no service delivery preference (n=4), preferred pull-in assistance for some work and pull-out assistance for other work (n=2), or preferred the hallway (n=1). Table 11 shows the degrees of freedom and F scores for peer rated academic and play social status by service delivery preference (pull-in or pull-out) by grade (younger grade 2-4, older grade 6-7).

Table 11

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Peer Rated Social Status by Grade and Service Delivery Preference

		F	
		social status	
	df	academic	play
service delivery preference	1	2.73	.86
grade	1	3.43	6.45*
preference x grade	1	2.81	3.09

Note.
*$p < .05$.

For academic and play social status, no main effects were found for service delivery preference. Those students that preferred resource room service delivery did not have a significantly different social status rating from those students that preferred pull-in classroom service delivery. For play social status but not for academic social status, a significant main effect was found for grade, $F(1,113)=6.45$, $p<.05$. Older students had significantly lower play social status scores than younger students. No interaction was found between service delivery preference and grade for either peer rated academic or play social status.

Social Status

It was hypothesized that there would be social status differences between the three achievement groups with learning disabled (LD) having the lowest social status and average and high achieving students (A/HA) having the highest social status. Achievement groups were separated into two age groups to determine social status differences that may occur or change with development. A younger group consisted of students in grades 2 to 4. An older group consisted of students in grades 6 and 7.

To test achievement and age group differences in social status, two MANOVAs were performed, one examining academic social status scores and the other examining play social status scores. Degrees of freedom and F scores are presented in Table 12.

Table 12

Multivariate Analysis of Variance for Peer Rated Social Status by Grade and Achievement Group

		F	
		social status	
	df	academic	play
achievement group	2	10.22***	5.29**
grade	1	4.09*	6.21*
achievement x grade	2	1.75	2.77

Note.

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

For academic social status there was a significant main effect for achievement group, $F(2.118) = 10.22$, $p<.001$. LD students had the lowest academic social status, A/HA students had the highest academic social status and LA students were in between LD and A/HA students. Scheffe post hoc pairwise comparisons indicated that both LD and LA students were significantly different from A/HA students, but not from each other.

A significant main effect was found for age, $F(1,118) = 4.09$, $p<.05$. Younger students as a group had higher academic social status scores than older students.

The grade by achievement group interaction was non-significant, however, an interesting effect worth noting was the decrease in mean social status scores for LA students from younger to older grades. Both LD students' and A/HA students' mean academic social status scores remained relatively stable from younger to older grades. LA student mean academic social status scores decreased from lower to higher grades sufficiently to warrant a closer analysis of simple main effects. Results showed a significant decrease in LA academic social status from younger to older age groups. $F(1,118)= 6.20$, $p<.03$. Age group differences in academic social status were non-significant for the other two achievement groups.

For play social status a significant main effect was found for student achievement group membership, $F(2,118)= 5.29, p<.01$. Scheffe posthoc comparisons indicated that LD play social status was significantly less than the A/HA group. LA and LD, and LA and A/HA groups were not significantly different from each other for play social status.

For play social status there was also a significant main effect for age. $F(1,118)= 6.21$, $p<.05$. As was the case for academic social status, there was a significant decrease in social status from

younger to older grades.

No interaction between grade and achievement group for play social status was found. However, as was the case with academic social status, mean play social status scores for the LA students showed a decrease from lower to higher grades while LD and A/HA play social status scores remained stable. Closer investigation once again revealed a significant simple main effect for LA students from grade 2-4 to grade 6/7, $F(1,118)= 7.60$, $p<.01$. LD and A/HA student scores did not change significantly with age.

Social Status Correlations

Jenkins and Heinen (1988) surmised that LD students' feelings of stigmatization are "highly personal" or based on personal feelings of adequacy rather than actual peer feelings towards them. To test this suggestion, correlations of peer and self-rated academic and play social status within each student achievement group were examined. Table 13 shows the correlations for the entire sample and within each achievement group.

Table 13

Correlations Among Peer and Self Rated Academic and Play Social Status for the Entire Sample and Each Achievement Group

Social Status		2	3	4
		All Students (n = 124)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	.07	.84***	.21*
2. Self-rated academic		--	.11	.59***
3. Peer rated play			--	.26**
4. Self-rated play				--
		LD Students (n = 42)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	.13	.89***	.36*
2. Self-rated academic		--	.24	.56***
3. Peer rated play			--	.44**
4. Self-rated play				--
		LA Students (n = 40)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	-.10	.87***	-.02
2. Self-rated academic		--	-.08	.67***
3. Peer rated play			--	.03
4. Self-rated play				--
		A/HA Students (n = 42)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	.02	.72***	.22
2. Self-rated academic		--	.02	.45**
3. Peer rated play			--	.22
4. Self-rated play				-

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

When all achievement groups were analyzed together, peer rated academic social status was significantly related to peer rated play status, $r = .84$, $p < .001$. Self-rated academic social status was significantly related to self-rated play social status, $r = .56$, $p < .001$. Peer rated play social status was significantly related to self-rated play with social status, $r = .26$, $p < .01$. Peer rated academic social status was significantly related to self-rated play social status, $r = .21$, $p < .05$. But, peer rated academic social status was not related to self-rated academic social status.

When the sample was broken down by achievement group, within all three groups (LD, LA, A/HA), significant correlations between peer rated academic social status and peer rated play social status were found. All three achievement groups had significant correlations between self-rated academic social status and self-rated play social status. Only the LD students showed a significant correlation between peer rated play social status and self-rated play social status, $r = .44$, $p < .01$. Only the LD students showed a significant correlation between peer rated academic social status and self-rated play social status, $r = .36$, $p < .05$. No group showed a significant relationship between peer rated academic social status and self-rated academic social status.

It was hypothesized that younger students would prefer pull-in assistance to pull-out assistance because of a less developed social awareness than that of older students. Table 14 shows the

correlations among peer rated and self rated academic and play social status scores within the two age groups (younger being grades 2,3,4 and older being grades 6,7).

Table 14

Intercorrelations Between Subscales for Younger and Older Students

Social Status		2	3	4
		Older Students (n = 61)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	.25*	.73***	.28*
2. Self-rated academic		--	.25*	.71***
3. Peer rated play			--	.35**
4. Self-rated play				--
		Younger Students (n = 63)		
1. Peer rated academic	--	-.07	.92***	.17
2. Self-rated academic		--	-.01	.49***
3. Peer rated play			--	.20
4. Self-rated play				--

*p<.05, **p<.01, ***p<.001.

For older students, peer rated academic social status was significantly related to self-rated academic social status, r = .25,

$p<.05$. Peer rated academic social status was also significantly related to peer rated play social status, $r= .73$, $p<.001$, and to self-rated play social status, $r= .27$, $p<.05$. Self-rated academic social status was significantly related to self-rated play social status, $r= .71$, $p<.001$ and to peer rated play social status, $r=.25$, $p<.05$. In addition, peer rated play social status was significantly related to self-rated play social status, $r= .35$, $p<.01$.

Among younger students peer rated and self-rated academic social status scores were not significantly related nor were peer rated and self-rated play social status scores significantly related. Younger students did have a significant relationship between peer rated academic social status and peer rated play social status, $r=.92$, $p<.001$, and between self-rated academic and play social status scores, $r=.49$, $p<.001$. These results support the notion that younger students have a less developed social awareness than older students.

Type of Student Receiving Help

Students' perceptions of peers receiving extra help was also investigated. Previous research has only indirectly questioned students regarding perceptions of resource room help (Vaughn & Bos, 1987). It was found that students tended not to associate the concept of extra help with the resource room. It was suggested by these researchers that a more direct questioning concerning the type of student receiving extra assistance might yield different

results than those previously obtained. Question 6 of the interview asked students specifically what type of student received extra help. Responses were grouped into 5 categories: (1) difficulty with specific subjects, (2) behaviour problems, (3) need a quieter place, (4) learning problems and (5) ESL, gifted and talented or speech and language assistance. Percentages do not add up to 100& because many students cited more than one response to the question. Table 15 shows tallies and percentages of responses for student achievement groups and for younger and older students.

Table 15

Responses Concerning the Type of Student that Receives Extra Help

	specific subject difficulty	behaviour problems	quieter place	learning problems	ESL/G&T speech
			Grade 2-4		
LD n=20	12 (60%)	2 (10%)	0	10 (50%)	0
LA n=23	15 (65%)	1 (4%)	0	4 (17%)	3(13%)
A/HA n=20	12 (60%)	0	1(4%)	10 (50%)	4(20%)
			Grade 6-7		
LD n=22	11 (50%)	1 (5%)	0	11 (50%)	0
LA n=17	10 (59%)	5 (29%)	1 (6%)	7 (41%)	1(6%)
A/HA n=22	9 (41%)	5 (23%)	0	14 (64%)	1(5%)

When younger students were asked about the type of student that receives extra help, 50% of the LD and 50% of the A/HA

students said that students who had a general difficulty learning got extra help. Only 17% of the younger LA students cited students who received extra help as having a general difficulty learning. Almost equal percentages of all younger students (LD (60%), LA (65%), A/HA (60%), said that those who needed extra help were having difficulty with a specific subject or skills areas. All older achievement groups held similar views of students receiving extra help for general learning difficulties and for problems with specific subject areas. Low achieving older students were more likely to cite general learning problems as a reason for receiving extra assistance than were younger low achieving students.

Older students were more likely to cite behaviour problems as a reason for receiving extra help than were younger students. Older LD students, however, were less likely than older LA or A/HA students to cite behaviour as a reason for receiving extra help.

Discussion

Service Delivery

It was hypothesized that achievement would affect students' preferences for service delivery. Analyses of the forced choice data showed that student achievement group membership made no real difference in students' preference for pull-in or for pull-out service delivery. However, the forced choice data yielded only an either/or preference response for pull-in or for pull-out service. The use of a 5 point rating scale for resource room and for classroom service delivery allowed for a broader range of choice and produced real between group differences that did not appear in the first set of data. In the case of resource room assistance, A/HA students rated the resource room lower than both the LA and LD students. While A/HA students may have an accurate perception of the resource room whether they attend classes there or not (Vaughn & Bos,1987), the results of this study indicate that they do not appear to feel very comfortable at the thought of personally getting help there. In fact, A/HA students' ratings of classroom assistance were not significantly different to the resource room ratings. It may be that they are uncomfortable about getting extra help at all. Learning disabled and low achieving students rated resource room assistance higher than assistance within the classroom and they rated the classroom lower than the A/HA group. These results suggest that familiarity may be the a key determinant of preference

for service delivery.

Age affected students' preference for service delivery. Older students overwhelmingly preferred extra help in a pull-out situation. While students in grades 2-4 were almost equally divided in preference for extra assistance inside or outside of the regular classroom, when the data were reanalyzed for grades 2-3 only, a real preference for a pull-in service delivery model was revealed. Ruble (1982) theorized that until the third or fourth grade children do not process the social information that would enable them to judge their performance relative to their classmates. Applying Ruble's theory to this study's results, suggests that children younger than grade four did not differentiate from one another on the basis of achievement and therefore did not experience the embarassment cited by older students. For older students, who are more keenly aware of academic differences and able to process social comparisons, extra help within the classroom may show them as being different from their peers at a time when they are hypersensitive to such differences. This could be why older students overwhelmingly preferred pull-out assistance to pull-in assistance.

One limitation of the present study was the small number of younger LD students that remained once the grade 4 students were omitted from the age grouping. If age plays a significant role in student preference and openness to certain types of instruction, it

is worthwhile to further explore these age differences and the ages at which they occur. Further, while this study supports previous research (Ruble,1982) in its findings of children making peer judgement distinctions around grade 3 or 4, there needs to be more comprehensive research in this area with a larger number of younger students.

Embarassment was clearly a reason for older students preferring one type of service delivery model over another but was not more keenly expressed by any one achievement group as percentages of embarassment responses by older students showed an almost equal distribution across achievement types. As found by Jenkins and Heinen (1989), while most students cited embarassment as a reason for preferring pull-out service, it also was cited as a reason for preferring pull-in service. Particularly for middle school students, if specialist help can be given in the regular classroom in an unintrusive way so that a student is not singled out it will likely be viewed positively by class members.

In regards to stigmatization because of service delivery model, the Jenkins and Heinen (1989) study concluded that older students' perceptions of stigmatization because of service delivery were extremely personal. Regular students appeared equally receptive to new LD classmates whether they received pull-in, pull-out or no assistance at all. This study concurs with the former study in that the students' preferences for service delivery did not

appear to be related to peer rated social status. However, the "personal" feelings of stigmatization, referred to by Jenkins and Heinen in their study were not, in the present study, related to personal feelings students had about their own academic or play social status. Service delivery preference was not significantly related to self-rated academic or play social status. Students' reasons for preferring one type of service delivery over another was not related to how popular or unpopular they think they may be. If neither peer or self-rated social status is related to service delivery preference, then it follows that the embarassment that the older students feel about one type of service delivery or another is related to something other than social status. The present study suggests that one reason for students' embarassment due to service delivery may be their age.

Another frequently cited reason by students for a pull-out preference was that the resource room was quieter and had fewer distractions from work. "Quieter and less distraction" was not a reason given for pull-in preference for service delivery. For most, but not all students, a quieter, less distractible place to work is a preferred and desired environment. The frequency of this response bears its mentioning because it may be that students have more understanding of their own academic needs than is generally acknowledged.

Preference Affected by Current Service Delivery Model

Jenkins and Heinen (1989), hypothesized that current service delivery affected students' choices for the type of service they preferred. These researchers' conclusions were supported in this study. Consistent with previous research, most students in this study expressed a preference for their current type of service delivery. Those students that received a combined service delivery of pull-in and pull-out assistance were evenly split in preference for pull-in or pull-out service.

When asked to rate the two services on a 5 point scale, LD and LA students rated the pull-out service higher than they rated pull-in service. Classroom service delivery ratings were not affected by student achievement group. LD, LA, and A/HA students receiving pull-in (classroom) assistance all rated it higher than student achievement groups receiving pull-out (resource room) assistance. Once again, it is possible that familiarity may be a major factor in preference. Since the LD and LA students have direct experience with extra assistance in the resource room while the A/HA students do not it seems likely they may rate it higher. In the case of pull-in assistance, where all three achievement groups have direct experience with the pull-in model it is likely all groups would prefer that model.

Students told Jenkins and Heinen (1989) that they preferred extra help from the classroom teacher as opposed to the specialist

teacher. The present study revealed that the specialist teacher in the classroom was favourably rated by students receiving that type of service delivery. In the past, one suggestion used to explain LD students' low peer status has been that they spend less time in the classroom and therefore are less well known (Vaughn, et al,1993). Similarly, the specialist teachers in the Jenkins and Heinen study may have been less favourably viewed in comparison to the regular teacher simply because of less exposure. To achieve greater student acceptance of specialist teachers in the classroom, more time may need to be spent by these teachers in getting to know and in assisting all students within that setting.

Social Status

Research into social behavioral differences between LA and LD students has suggested that they are not significantly different (Tur Kaspa & Bryan, 1995). Jenkins and Heinen (1989) combined interview responses from LD and LA students because they were similar. Consistent with previous research, (Conderman,1995, La Greca & Stone,1990) results of the social status analyses in this study confirmed that students with LD have the lowest academic social status of any of the three achievement groups. This low social status remained consistently low from grade two through grade seven for the learning disabled students. Average and high achieving students maintained a consistently high academic social status from younger to older grades. For LA students, however,

academic social status changed as students aged from being high and significantly different from LD students in the younger grades to being as low as the LD students in grades 6/7.

A possible explanation for this developmental shift could be that in the younger grades LA children have more predictable social skills than LD children who tend to display more impulsive behavior (Keogh & Sears, 1991). Also, in the younger grades there is less cognitive difference between all groups than is found in the older students. By the time LA students reach grade 6 or 7, the cognitive differences become greater than they were in the lower grades and these students may become generally less accepted by their peers both academically and outside of school. This lower peer acceptance would account for a drop in social status for the older LA students. Future research into the social status between achievement groups should consider possible age differences within achievement groups.

For LD and LA students, play social status repeated the academic social status results with the LD students remaining consistently low and the LA students moving from high social status in grades 2-4 to a low social status in grades 6/7. A/HA students showed a non-significant decrease in play social status means from younger to older students. The general lowering overall of play social status across achievement groups from grade two to grade seven suggests a trend for student play social status

to become somewhat lower as children age. It is possible that as children age common interest plays a larger and larger role in defining friendships and children become more selective in play choices. This would bring about an overall drop in play social status for the LA and A/HA groups with children being more selective in playmates. The LD group stands out as being the only group for which play social status remained consistent with age. LD students showed both a low play and a low academic social status across age groups from grade two to grade seven. These results seem to say that other children do not wish to work or to play with LD children at any of the grades two through seven.

The correlational analyses showed that for all achievement groups, peer rated academic social status had a high positive correlation with peer rated play social status. Students tended to rate peers similarly whether for academic or play social status. They also showed that for all achievement groups, self-rated academic social status had a high positive correlation with self-rated play social status. Students tended to believe that their social status was similar for both work and play situations; that peers were equally likely to want to work with them as play with them. Children, in general, do not seem to separate academic from play social status when self-rating or when rating peers.

The positive correlation between peer rated work and play social status and of self-rated work and play social status did not

extend to a positive correlation between peer and self rated social status. Of all achievement groups, only for LD students was there a significant positive correlation found between peer rated play social status and self-rated play social status. In addition, only LD students had a significant positive correlation between peer rated academic social status and self-rated play social status. LD students, more so than the other two groups, appear to have an accurate perception of their play social status. These findings are consistent with those of Garrett & Crump (1980) who found that LD children were more accurate than non-LD peers in estimating their social acceptance. One possible explanation for these findings is the consistency in peers ratings of LD students. From the beginning of school through grade seven, LD students are rated low in social status by their peers. It is likely that consistently low social status gives LD children a realistic view of their unpopularity with peers.

Although LD self-rated play social status scores correlated with peer rated play and academic social status scores, their self-rated academic social status scores did not correlate significantly with either peer rated academic or play social status scores. While it may be suggested that LD students are less aware of their academic problems than their social problems this seems unlikely because LD self-ratings of academic social status were even lower than their self-ratings of play social status. These lower ratings

suggest that LD students are acutely aware of their academic difficulties. Peers, however, rated LD students and other achievement groups similarly for both academic and play social status. It is possible that peer rated academic social status is largely dependent upon a student's play social status. It may be that students like to work with other students because they like to play (socialize) with them outside of class, and not necessarily because they are good students.

In regards to the LD students specifically, Coie (1990) suggested that the effects of rejection on self-esteem depend on there being some prolonged experience of rejection. The prolonged experience of social rejection that many LD students experience coupled with sustained academic failure may cause them to self-rate their academic social status even lower than their peers rated them.

Older students were more accurate judges of social status than the younger students as evidenced by the significant correlations between peer and self-rated social status for the older but not the younger students. Although both age groups rated academic and play social status similarly, older students in general were more accurate in judging how well peers like to work and play with them. Once again, LD students were the most accurate of all older students in predicting how well peers like to play with them.

Type of Student Receiving Extra Help

Student responses to the type of student receiving extra help were fairly similar with a few exceptions. All younger achievement groups held similar views of students receiving extra help because of specific subject difficulty (e.g.: reading). Fewer younger LA students saw students receiving extra assistance because of general learning problems. Older LA and A/HA students but not LD students seem to identify behaviour problems with students who receive extra help. Tanis Bryan (1991) states that younger LD students' school behaviour problems seem to relate to attentional deficits and older LD students are more likely to show predelinquent behaviour. LD students may be more conscious of their lack of achievement than of their behaviour difficulties. It seems likely that peers would be more aware of overt behavioural differences that often accompany learning disabilities than of existing learning difficulties. Younger students were less likely to cite behaviour as a reason for extra help.

Implications for Practice

Teachers should be sensitive to student preference for service delivery when planning service delivery models, but be aware that one type of service delivery model is not more or less stigmatizing than the other. Past experience may affect student preference. Embarassment at being helped with a pull-in or pull-out model may be due to fear of the unknown and/or a consequence of the

students' ages.

The most often cited reason by both age groups and all achievement groups for resource room pull-out service delivery preference was that it was quiet and less distracting than the regular classroom. With so many students listing "quiet and less distraction" as a reason for pull-out service, a model with a specialist teacher providing separate or small group instruction within the regular classroom may not provide optimum learning conditions.

Younger students, possibly because of less awareness of peer differences, prefer to be helped in the regular classroom and tend not to feel embarassment at not achieving as well as peers. Social status does not appear to have any real bearing on student preference for service delivery at any of the grades 2 through seven.

With preference for service largely affected by current service and the notion of stigmatization omitted from the decision making process of service delivery, what remains is the matching of service delivery to instruction. Some instruction may be more easily accomplished within the regular class and reach a greater number of students. On the basis of my data, an effective match involves attention to both student age and the form of service delivery to which they are accustomed.

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Appendix A

Re: Educational Research

Dear Parents,

I am a Burnaby school district teacher. I am completing my Masters Thesis at Simon Fraser University. My interest lies in the way learning assistance and resource teachers deliver service to students over and above regular classroom instruction by the classroom teacher. Specifically, I am interested in student opinions and preferences for this type of service.

My study involves a five minute interview with each student. The students will be asked about the type of service currently happening in their class, the type of service they would personally prefer, and the type of student who would require this service. In addition, there will be a whole class sociogram. Sociograms are frequently used by classroom teachers to determine seating preferences within classroom settings.

Please note that all participants will be anonymously represented in the study results and that the school they are from will also be anonymous. The interviews will be recorded on audio-cassettes to provide feedback for statistical measures during the data interpretation phase of the study. Upon completion of the study in August1996, these tapes will be erased. The sociogram forms will be shredded at this time as well.

After being introduced to the classes participating, I will describe the research and will make clear to them that if they do not wish to participate, they will be excused from the study. For those wishing not to participate, alternative arrangements will be made. Please discuss this letter with your child. Only those students with parental consent will be allowed to participate in the study.

To receive the results of this study, please address your requests to:

Marie de la Ronde, Faculty of Education, Graduate Programs, Simon Fraser University.

Should you have any complaints or concerns during or about this research, feel free to contact:

Dr. Robin Barrow
Dean of the Faculty of Education
Simon Fraser University
Burnaby, B.C., V5A 1S6

Thank you for your support in this research. I believe that this research will provide educators with useful information to better meet the individual needs of our students.

Marie de la Ronde

----------please return this section to the school a.s.a.p.----------

I _____ allow my child_____
to take part in the educational research conducted by Marie de la Ronde. I understand that my child may be involved in an individual interview as well as take part in a sociogram which will be administered to the whole class. This information was described in a letter sent to me in March, 1996.

I understand that his/her participation is voluntary and that his/her name will not be used in the reporting of the results. I also note that all interview sessions will be recorded on audio-cassettes. but that these cassettes will be erased at the completion of the research in August 1996.

Signed:_____

Dated:_____

---------- OR ----------

I _____ wish my child_____
excluded from this research project.

Signed:_____

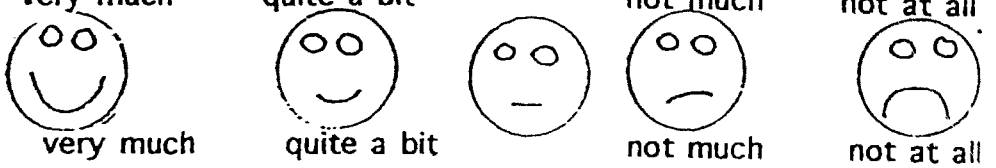
Dated: _____

Name_____ Teacher_____

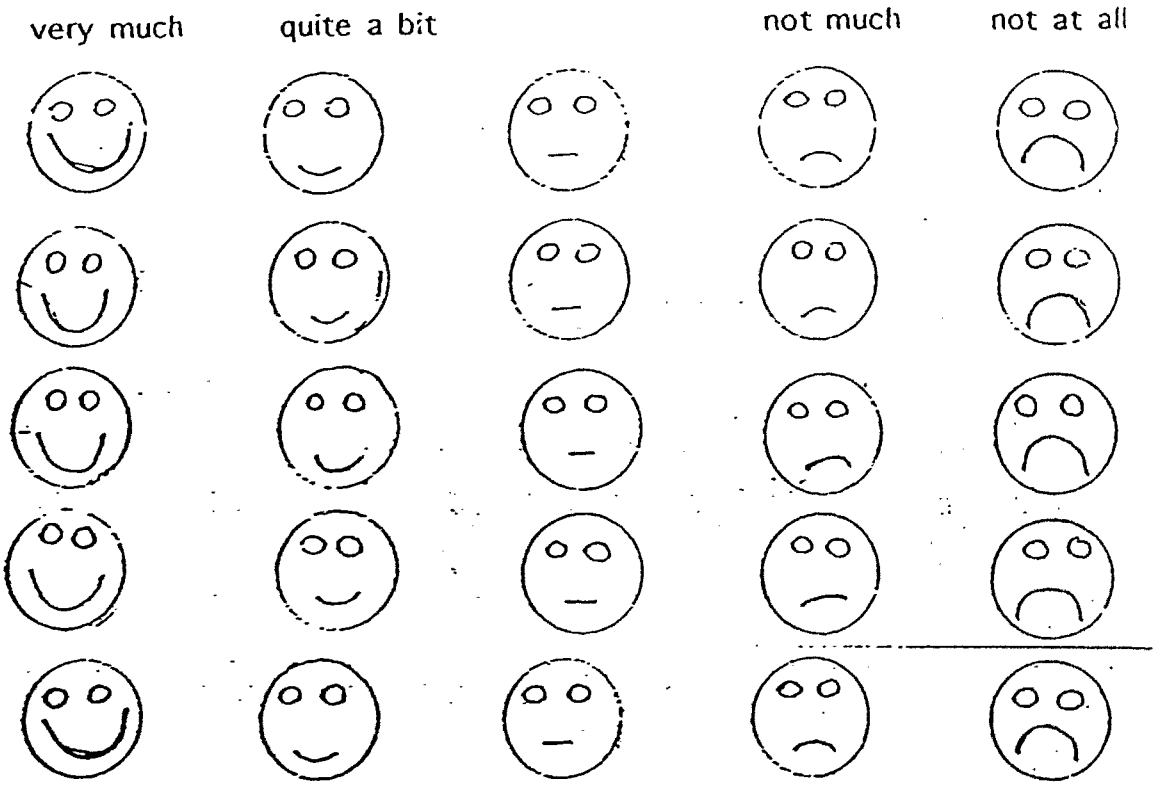
Sample questions:

I like spinach.

I like to watch TV.



I like to work with this person in the classroom.



Other kids like to work with me at school.

Name_____ ____ Teacher_____

Sample questions:

I like spinach.

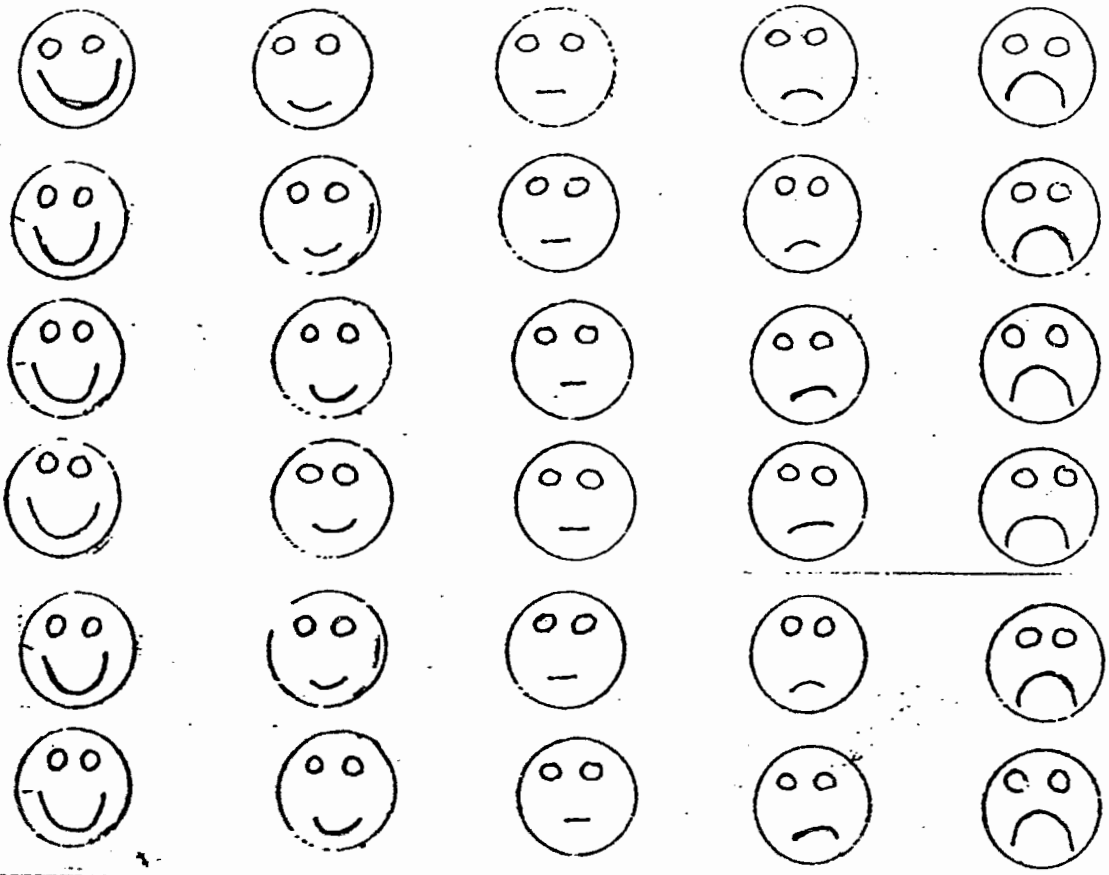
very much quite a bit not much not at all

I like to watch TV.

very much quite a bit not much not at all

I like to play with this person at recess and after school.

very much quite a bit not much not at all



Other kids like to play with me at recess and after school.

Appendix C

INTERVIEW

Students will be removed from the classroom one at a time and brought to a separate room with the researcher. After introductions, and a brief explanation of the process, the student will encounter in the interview, the student will be asked the following questions. Prompts are given in brackets.

1. Where do you or your classmates get extra help from Mrs./ Mr. _____? (Is there a special room you work in?)
2. Where do you prefer to get extra help from Mrs./ Mr. _____? **or** Where would you prefer to get extra help from Mrs./ Mr. _____ if you needed it? (Where are you most comfortable getting help from Mrs./ Mr _____?)
3. Why would you prefer to receive extra help in the _____ room rather than the _____ room?

*4. How would/ do you feel about going to the resource room for extra help if you need it?

*5. How would you feel about Mrs./ Mr. _____ coming to help you in your classroom with your work if you needed it?

6. What type of student gets extra help?

* Note: Students are shown five faces that represent choices of "like very much" to "like not at all" identical to the choices they had for the class sociogram and asked to point to the face that represents their response.