

ROLLING HILLS ELEMENTARY PROJECT SUCCEED

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the Education Program
California State University Channel Islands

In (Partial) Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts

by
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May 2007

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Preface

The research and writing of this study is jointly authored and submitted by two candidates for the Master of Arts in Education. The resulting thesis reflects a sustained and cohesive theme. The candidates were both teachers working in the same school with complementary interests of study, one a general educator and one an education specialist both believing that inquiry into practice could effect beneficial changes in the educational experiences of their students. Together the candidates initiated key ideas, developed the protocols and collected and analyzed data, and equally shared primary responsibility for researching current literature and for writing (see *Shared Responsibility*, p. 27).

In order to ensure equal participation to this conjointly authored work, at the onset of the project, the two researchers specified the extent and nature of each candidate's fifty percent contribution to the thesis. As each author wrote sections of the work, the other edited and added to the section. The thesis benefits from two lines of inquiry that together enriched the research, as well as from a close collaborative partnership which enabled triangulation of the data, a more analytic interpretation of the results and conversations which helped illuminate findings and conclusions in a way that individual efforts would not have allowed.

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Abstract

The research examined an intervention program and the implementation of reverse mainstreaming. *Project Succeed* was implemented at one elementary school site to meet the needs of all learners. General education first grade students were identified for intervention services and placed in the program according to need and ability. Part of the intervention program was reverse mainstreaming into the special education classroom requiring collaboration among general and special educators. First grade students went into the special day class for a portion of their day to receive either academic instruction or to act as peer models for the moderate to severe special education students. This study looks at how one school site implemented a model to meet the needs of all children.

CHAPTER I

Introduction and Statement of Problem

This action research study examines how an individual school site attempts to reorganize its existing intervention model to match the most qualified teachers with the least skilled students thereby utilizing existing resources. These resources include collaboration among general education and special education teachers, research-based interventions, mainstreaming, and certificated intervention teachers.

This study was a collaborative effort by a general education teacher and a special education teacher. Because this study had two distinct components, intervention for at-risk general education students and reverse mainstreaming into special education classrooms, each researcher focused on different issues in this study.

There are two major forces that influence the problem being researched in this study. First, schools and districts must deal with the laws and guidelines for providing educational services to special needs students. In Southern California, the number of children identified with special needs has increased dramatically over the years. As a result, general education and special education students are being educated alongside each other on public school campuses. The need for collaboration among staff members is imperative for the success of all students as well as for addressing the needs of various learners. The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA) mandates all students will receive a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Given that there is no clear guidance as to what constitutes an LRE, this has come to mean the general education classroom. For the moderate/severe special education students, the Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) typically contain language which specifies mainstreaming opportunities for those children.

Secondly, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the shift to standards-based instruction have altered teachers' focus from addressing student individual needs to a regimented instruction of whole groups of students. The focus has shifted to one of accountability and assessment. It has been extensively reported to one of the researchers (Reed) that parents want their special needs children educated as much and as often as possible in the general education setting. This tends to impact the learning of all of the students in the regular classroom. It also impacts the work of the teacher, bringing into question how a teacher can meet the needs of all students, those functioning above the grade level standards as well as those working below the standards.

With the increased emphasis on state standards, a greater number of students are being identified as At-Risk of not meeting the grade level benchmarks. Existing intervention programs identify only a small portion of the population to whom services are provided. Typically, the same students receive intervention services all throughout their elementary years. Once they have been identified as At Risk, past evidence shows that those students are given supplemental instruction from an intervention teacher. The school site budget often determines the length and number of the sessions, but a typical intervention model tends to be a pull-out program consisting of 30 minute sessions three to four times per week. Occasionally, students are re-assessed and exited out of the program. However, many students remain "stuck" in the system. This leaves little room for future identified students to receive intervention services. As reported by the teachers at Rolling Hills, standardized test scores, as well as school and district assessments, show little improvement in achievement for the At-Risk population of students.

The purpose of this study is to explore if a school site can better meet the needs of all students by implementing an intervention program that serves the neediest students and

employing a reverse mainstreaming model that provides interaction for special and general education students. Intervention teachers will work with students who are performing at grade level thereby freeing up the general education classroom teacher to work with a small group of students who have been identified through assessments as not meeting grade level benchmarks. Depending on the number of students identified as needing additional support, the special education teachers will either include a small group of identified students requiring the same skills being taught in the special education classroom or incorporate high achieving students as peer models in the special day class. This model serves the needs of the special education students by allowing them the interaction they need with typically developing peers. This gives rise to an important question: How can a school site meet the social and academic needs of all students in an effective and efficient manner?

State Mandates

With the passage of No Child Left Behind, schools are struggling to ensure that all students are meeting the state adopted content standards by 2013. The school site represented in this study, Rolling Hills Elementary, is typical of most schools in California. Much of the school site's budget money is being used to pay personnel to work with the at-risk students. In the primary grades, the focus is on beginning reading skills. In the upper grades, the focus is on increasing reading comprehension skills.

In the past, the Leadership Team at Rolling Hills focused on improving test scores. After analyzing data, the students targeted to receive in-school intervention were those working just below grade level. Teachers and administrators' reasoning was that those students would make enough improvement to boost test scores. The students working significantly below grade level were offered the option of receiving intervention in a before or after school setting. Alongside

this additional program, classroom teachers were expected to modify instruction in the regular classroom to meet the needs of those ‘neediest’ students. School staff and administration had noticed the same students remained in the intervention program year after year, yet those students showed very little growth. Teachers reported that at-risk students were being pulled out during other core instructional times to attend the intervention program. Not only were at-risk students falling behind in those core areas, but the constant disruption of students being pulled for intervention became a problem to the tempo of the entire classroom.

School Site Concerns

Because of the focus on improving student achievement for those identified as working below grade level, teachers were concerned that instruction was not being maximized for the on-grade level students. Similarly, the needs of the high-achieving students were not being fully met. Teachers felt these particular students needed to develop their leadership and social awareness skills. Additionally, the special education teachers must satisfy the language of the IEPs which states special needs children are to be mainstreamed into the general education classroom. The combination of these factors brought Rolling Hills to the realization that the intervention model it had in place was ineffective.

The Problem

This study examines how a specific school site attempts to meet the needs of all learners. Rolling Hills Elementary is a K-6 general education school serving approximately 550 general education students. Rolling Hills, however, is unique in that it has become a magnet school for special education in the district. Many of the IEPs for the children in the special day classes contain language which specifically states the number of minutes their child will be mainstreamed into the general education setting. Due to the high number of special needs

students at Rolling Hills, mainstreaming has become a logistical problem for all teachers involved. For the special education teacher, finding the time of the day that works and teachers who are receptive to receiving mainstreamed students, as well as providing adult support to assist the special education students is a challenge. The general education teacher is faced with accepting into the classroom another student who is not working to grade-level standards. Also, the general education teachers tend to have their own students with significant learning and behavior challenges who are not identified for special education services. Until recently, Rolling Hills had just two preschools, three special day classes and a resource program. Throughout the last six years, the numbers of special needs students has consistently risen. The elementary has developed a reputation as accepting all children.

In the past four years the school community has placed a high priority on systematic intervention and working with the low-achieving students. The leadership team devoted a substantial portion of the school budget to hiring two part-time certificated intervention teachers. This decision was a direct result of the kindergarten teachers extending their day from 11:35 am to 1:05 pm. Due to the extended day hours, the kindergarten teachers were no longer able to provide reading intervention to first and second grade students who were identified and assessed by their classroom teachers. Previously, the intervention teachers had worked with the lowest-achieving students, pulling them out of the regular classroom for supplemental instruction. Because of the financial aspect, the intervention teachers were hired to work in sessions, not continuously throughout the year. Students throughout the grades were grouped by ability and scheduled at different times than other classmates. This caused a disruption for both the students and the classroom teachers. For example, a specific teacher would have three students being pulled for the first half-hour session and then another four or five pulled for the second half-hour

session. A further design flaw was that students with challenging behaviors were grouped together. This was taxing for the intervention teacher who, because she had not developed a relationship with the students, ended up unable to deal with the behaviors.

The initial idea behind the intervention sessions was that teachers would have the opportunity to reassess students then rotate different students through the program. However, the same students were being seen repeatedly by the intervention teachers. Based upon data collection and lack of growth in student achievement, the Leadership team considered how student needs were being met and how the intervention program could be modified. This led to the current model of intervention being implemented at Rolling Hills designed and guided by the purpose of this study.

Definition of Terms

As several specific terms are central to and used throughout the study, they are defined for the reader.

At-Risk – Students not meeting essential grade level benchmarks or students being considered for retention.

Mainstreaming- special education students included in the general education classroom for a portion of the school day.

Reverse Mainstreaming – general education students going into special education classrooms for a portion of the school day for the purpose of peer-modeling or targeted instruction which is delivered by the special education teacher.

Intervention- targeted instruction administered to struggling students

Individualized Education Plan (IEP) - an educational plan drawn up by the IEP team for students identified with one or more of the qualifying disabilities for special education.

Limitations

This action research study took place at a suburban elementary school with a large population of special education students. The model, as it was designed, was implemented in several grade levels at the school site. Only the first grade intervention model was observed in its entirety. Student data was collected from identified at-risk students to be analyzed for the purpose of this study. That data included assessment results from 22 first grade students. Four general education teachers were included in this study, but only the three teachers who administered the intervention were interviewed. Because the first grade special education teacher was also a researcher in this study, it was decided by the researchers to focus on the second grade special education class for the reverse mainstreaming model. Some data was used from the first grade special education class, but only that which directly related to the grade level as a whole.

This research study took place over the course of one school year. The initial planning meeting occurred prior to the start of the school year. The intervention sessions occurred twice during the year. The first intervention session lasted only five weeks, and ended just before the Winter break. The second session began in January and lasted ten weeks. The additional teachers hired to assist with the intervention model were part-time, credentialed teachers.

CHAPTER II

Theoretical Framework

Literature Review

This literature review focuses on three topics, each of which is summarized in a separate section. The first section reviews literature relates to reverse mainstreaming and how models can be implemented at various levels. The second section reviews literature that describes effective collaboration models among general education and special education teachers. The third section focuses on research-based intervention and *Response to Intervention* literature.

Models of Reverse Mainstreaming

There are a myriad of learning styles and ability levels within a single classroom setting. Several issues surround educating the diverse populations found in many public schools. Awareness of the need to address the varying learners has grown over the past few years. The Individuals with Disabilities Act 1997 (IDEA) mandates that all students will receive a free and appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. Least Restrictive Environment is defined under Public Law 94-142 as the following:

“...to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including children in public or private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from regular education environments occur only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.”(1975, Sec. 612.5).

According to federal law, then, all children should be educated in the same setting, meaning the general education classroom. The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act and the shift to standards-based instruction have altered teachers' focus from addressing student individual needs to a regimented instruction of whole groups of students. As the reauthorization of NCLB draws near, many organizations are looking to rewrite the law and add language to meet the needs of not

only students but also teachers. CTA, the California Teachers Association, wants to add language for the reauthorization, to require states to use more than one single assessment to gauge student achievement (www.cta.org). Because of NCLB and IDEA, the responsibility of educators to facilitate the academic growth of all students, including those with special needs, has become increasingly challenging, leading to the questions: How can educators meet the needs of all students? What can the general education teacher do to meet the special needs of children in her/his classroom when s/he also has students struggling to meet the benchmarks? Education has entered an era of high accountability. Teachers and school sites need to examine how they can pool their resources to best meet the needs of all children.

Frequently, parents of special education children want their children to be mainstreamed and integrated into the general education setting. As reported to the researchers, parents maintain that the more time their child spends around typically developing peers, the easier time their child will have picking up strong social and academic skills. Parents of special needs children tend to view mainstreaming, integration and inclusion as ways to “fix” their child. Guralnick, Connor and Hammond (1995) state that social interaction is a fundamental skill that children with special needs often lack. Providing regular opportunities for them to interact with non-handicapped peers is one way to help strengthen those skills. What isn’t recognized is that the special needs child often struggles with the idea of leaving his own classroom to go into another setting. The general education setting can be overwhelming to many special education students. These students are leaving the comfort level of a small class size and going into a situation with 20 or more students. The work is harder, the expectations are higher. According to Seltzer (2006), “Often these program serve as vehicles to further isolate the student with special needs”. Many times we see integration and inclusion failing for the special education students. How do

educators and parents fix this problem? One way is to incorporate the practice of reverse mainstreaming. For the purpose of this paper, mainstreaming and reverse mainstreaming will be discussed regarding moderate to severe populations, those students who spend their full academic day in the special day class.

The word mainstreaming is defined as "...an inclusive form of education in which students are taught in a comprehensive school system." (Bookrags.com). There is research that discusses the benefits of "typical" mainstreaming and the positive effects it has on children in both educational settings. Reverse mainstreaming, however, is also gaining attention. Teachers, especially special education teachers, are realizing the benefits of reverse mainstreaming. Reverse mainstreaming can be described as general education students spending a part of their day in the special education classroom. Typically developing peers come into the special education classroom under a variety of guises. Some come in for social skills interaction. They play games with their special education peers or read to them. In some situations, the general education children are coming into the special education class for enhanced or enriched instruction in the core curriculum. Whatever the reason, reverse mainstreaming seems to have some very positive effects on all children involved.

Special education for the moderate to severe populations tends to look the same throughout most school districts. According to Alper and Ryndak (2006), "Students with severe handicaps remain the most segregated groups in American schools." These children tend to have severe learning, emotional and behavioral needs that can best be met in a smaller, more structured class. To help these children adapt in society, they are offered time to be mainstreamed in the general education setting. The special needs child spends a certain amount of time in the general education setting so many days per week under the umbrella of

mainstreaming. Such limited amount of time does not assist the special needs child in developing relationships with non-handicapped peers. In effect, the typical form of mainstreaming sets up a false social setting for the special needs child. Specialists, teachers and parents want opportunities for their children to learn how to interact socially and emotionally with their peers. One way of fostering these types of relationships is to implement reverse mainstreaming.

While there are models out there that are implementing reverse mainstreaming, the Delaware School in Springfield, Missouri is one example where it is being successfully employed. This site started implementing reverse mainstreaming in 2001. In this model, general education students would come into the special education class during their recess time. Several of the students possessed a natural ability to interact with the program's autistic children. The teacher of the special education class assumed the star students were being sent in from the general education class, as they were so good with the special needs students (*cyc-online*). The general education students started talking to their special education peers in the hallways. Some of the typical peers kept coming in but were hesitant to interact with the children with autism. They continued coming back, however. The special education teacher watched as her children with autism modeled the actions and words of their peers when they weren't even in the classroom. This was a model that was teaching the special needs children how to act appropriately. These children were learning from the best role models they could get: their peers.

The Sunrise Children's Center in Amherst, New Hampshire is another example of a school that began implementing reverse mainstreaming. The program serves children ages three to six years both with handicaps and those considered to be typically developing. There are 55 children in the program. The philosophy of Sunrise is very simple to understand: all children are treated as equals; they are educated alongside each other; they are taught with the same

curriculum and resources. One unique aspect of the Sunrise program is that all children in the program are given IEPs. This is their attempt to equalize the education and services for all of the children attending Sunrise. The Sunrise program has seen positive benefits socially for all of the children involved. Initially, the teachers of the program had to teach the students to respond naturally to the special needs students when they behaved inappropriately. The general education children wanted to protect the feelings of the special needs children.

The Sunrise program consists of reverse mainstreaming up to kindergarten. However, they would like to see a reverse mainstreaming model implemented all the way up to high school. They do not have any special needs children leaving the program going into special day classes. All of their special education students are in general education classes with modifications (Bogin 2004).

Schoger (2006) conducted a case study on three special needs students who were educated alongside their general education peers for short periods of time in the special education classroom. The implemented program was called the *Reverse Inclusion Program* and was developed by the special education teacher. There was an obvious need for the special education children to develop socially appropriate relationships with their non-handicapped peers. By bringing the general education peers into the special education classroom, the teacher felt a more natural environment was created for her students to learn social skills. Guidelines were established as to which special education students would be included in the study, as well as which general education students would participate.

Collaboration

There is an enormous range in how “collaboration” is defined and interpreted in educational practices. This section of the literature review seeks to find an interpretation that will help

describe how general and special education teachers may effectively collaborate when implementing program to mainstreaming special needs students.

Definitions of Collaboration: Originally, collaboration was applicable to the medical professionals to ensure the best possible care for patients, and in business to improve overall effectiveness within an organization. One definition used in the mid 1990's stated, "A dynamic framework for educational efforts which endorses collegial, interdependent, and co-equal styles of interaction between at least two partners working jointly together to achieve common goals in a decision making process that is influenced by cultural and systemic factors" (Welch & Sheridan, 1995, p. 1, cited in Welch, Sheridan, Brett, Colton, & Mayhew, 1996, p. 255). This wordy definition was confusing. With the legal mandates of IDEA, the concept was refined to include those in the educational field. Friend and Cook (2003) examined the key elements necessary for collaboration, and focused on the skeletal characteristics. Their definition read, "interpersonal collaboration is a style for direct interaction between at least two co-equal parties voluntarily engaged in shared decision making as they work toward a common goal" (p. 5). Collaboration necessitates a style of interaction, which encompasses almost any activity that involves more than one person (Friend & Cook, 2003). Professionals may communicate at any time, anywhere about the critical issues involved in educating students. For example, consultation, co-teaching, teams, shared problem solving are areas where collaboration may occur (Mercado, 2004).

It is important to note that collaboration is not a service delivery option. The interaction is voluntary, requires parity among participants, is based on mutual goals, and depends on shared responsibility for participation and decision-making. According to Mercado's (2004) experience "what is significant about that collaboration was the safe supportive space we created to discuss

the challenges of engaging in participatory action research, and where we could assess and come to new understandings of our individual projects as a collective” (p. 108). This is further substantiated by the research of Welch, Sheridan, Brett, Colton, and Mayhew (1996) who emphasize collaboration as “...educators [who] believe that joint ownership of problems will ultimately benefit not only students but other educators and the school as well” (p. 225).

Collaboration among Colleagues: One area where collaboration is essential is that of mainstreaming. When students with special needs are placed in a general education classroom even for a limited amount of time, it is essential to have on-going communication with both the general education teacher and the case manager. Hines (1994) discusses stumbling blocks related to making mainstreaming work in the educational setting. She throws light on the role of special educators and how they fit in when children with special needs are included in the general education setting. Hines addresses three considerations when looking at implementing mainstreaming. One, teachers must have a clear understanding of their respective roles and must see their roles as meaningful and appropriate. Two, both general and special education teachers must share a willingness to participate in the mainstream model. And three, collaborating teachers must have common planning time in order for mainstreaming to be effective (p. 6). “The special education teachers can ... lead in such matters as child study, working with parents, and offering individualized, highly intensive instruction to students who have not been progressing well.” (Reynolds, 1989, p.10, as cited in, Fuchs D. & Fuchs L., 1994, p.298).

Models of Collaboration: Several administrators have begun to develop collaboration models in their own schools. Johnston (1994) established the *Collaborative Teaching Project*. It was established to “increase overall student achievement and attitude levels while providing teachers with broad professional skills in the delivery of instructional programs to groups of

children with a wide variety of instructional and personal needs” (p. 10). Johnston outlines the difficulties initially faced with the collaborative project which include grading, grouping, implementation of planning time, outlines for student outcomes, student benefits, as well as staff outcomes. The school wanted more communication between special and general education staff, as well as shared responsibility for the needs of special education children. Ongoing staff development and meetings were held to provide support for all educators. All staff members were involved in both formal and informal evaluations of the program (p.11).

Another model of collaboration has special education and general education teachers teaching the same class together. This ensures that the fully included child is receiving instruction to meet his/her needs throughout the day. Stimson and Richardson (1994) discuss how general and special education students are educated together in the same classroom. Teachers meet to plan and provide support for each other. The teachers share all teaching responsibilities for all students (p.40).

In order to make these models successful, the teachers involved have had extensive, on-going support in terms of professional development and administrative support. Stimson and Richardson (1994) also point out that inclusive education does not necessarily mean the abolishment of special education. It means regular and special educators work together to benefit all children (p. 40).

Benefits to Collaboration: There are many positive aspects to the collaborative process. Included in the potential benefits are: participants develop shared beliefs, attitudes and values; mutual trust and respect increases; a sense of community is created; a collaborative interpersonal style happens; and there are improved student outcomes. In relationship to developing positive personal relationships through respect and a sense of community, Welch, Sheridan, Brett,

Colton, and Mayhew, (1996) assert, “Collaboration between disciplines within education is useful for promoting a common language, knowledge base, and an understanding of the diverse and complex functions of schools and schooling” (p. 223). Bahamonde and Friend (1999) further affirm that through collaboration “teachers can form partnerships that give each member support that improves morale” (p. 16).

Barriers to Collaboration: In contrast, there are also potential barriers to collaboration. The first barrier relates to practical matters such as time, space and the sharing of resources. Time is a major hurdle, as frequently there is not enough time for professional conversations. Time must be carved into busy schedules, often at the discretion of the professionals involved. “Successful planning models ensure that all teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service personnel are included in the process.” (Roach, 1995, p. 298). How often does this occur? In most school sites, very rarely, which presents a huge gap in the collaborative process. Next, the sharing of space is problematic, especially in the case of the general education teachers when other service providers come into their classrooms. More so when inclusion is considered. What is often created is “...a nonreciprocal relationship between regular and special education (which) has touched off [debates] about the utility of the separate professional structures and philosophies that have developed in these two educational programs.” (Shulman & Doughty, 1995, p.293). Another issue arises in the sharing of resources. At many school sites, resources are so difficult to procure that teachers feel protective of the few resources they possess (Friend & Cook, 2003). Often school sites find it extremely difficult to facilitate the collaborative process due to these obstacles.

Successful Collaboration: One of the most critical components in creating a successful collaborative environment is the commitment of the administrator. Although there are

many dedicated teachers who are willing to collaborate with other professionals, it is virtually impossible for individual teachers to create the type of systemic change required to teach the diverse learners in today's inclusive classrooms. Substantial and long-term change begins with the vision of the school leader. As Salisbury and McGregor (2002), emphasize, "To achieve an inclusive culture focused on meeting the needs of all learners, it is important the school leaders make explicit the embedded values of diversity, membership, and collaboration in every aspect of their school's operation from purchasing textbooks and computers to the deployment of staff, to how decisions are made, to how professional development activities are structured" (p.272).

Once educators become comfortable with the terminology, understand the benefits of collaboration, and are given the appropriate time to effectively communicate with others at their school setting, great change can take place. It is essential for educators to recognize the need for collaboration to ensure the improved academic growth for all students. However, collaboration models differ greatly leaving no clear answer to the question, what types of collaboration presently being implemented in the elementary school setting between general education and special education teachers are most successful?

Early Reading Instruction and Intervention

Snow, Burns, and Griffin conclude in Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children that, "for most children, good classroom instruction using research based strategies, materials, and techniques constitutes an adequate measure to ensure the prevention of reading difficulties (1998). The instruction for students who do not fit the 'most children' category will be examined in this research. This review of literature focuses specifically on scientifically based researched reading interventions, and the key components that make them successful for early reading instruction. It will also examine the importance of ongoing assessment and

accountability to identify at-risk students as well as provide an instructional map for struggling students. High quality instruction, as it relates to the quality of teachers, will also be discussed in this review of the research.

Scientifically Based Researched Reading Interventions

Scientifically based research is defined by the U.S. Department of Education, as research that involves the application of rigorous, systematic and objective procedures to obtain reliable and valid knowledge relevant to education activities and programs. (U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, 2004) There are a number of scientifically based research intervention programs that address reading difficulties available through a number of publishers.

The National Research Council (NRC) Committee on Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) identified several topics that relate to early reading skills. These topics include: alphabets, which includes phonemic awareness instruction and phonics instruction; reading fluency, which includes sight word recognition; and reading comprehension. Beginning readers need a comprehensive approach to reading instruction. According to Torgeson in Preventing Early Reading Failure, “instruction for at-risk children must be more explicit than for other children. (2004) When the term explicit is used it relates to the fact that nothing should be left to chance. Teachers must help students make direct connections between the letter in print and the sounds in words, and teach relationships in a comprehensive fashion. (2004)

Shenfeld and Newman (2000), authors of the Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) program used in this study, contend that “beginning literacy is best taught through two distinct strands-one focusing on comprehension,

and the other focusing on decoding.” (p.21) The two strands need a different pace for instruction. Students can comprehend at a higher level than they can decode words, and often comprehension is generally grade level specific. Decoding on the other hand has a wider range of struggling learners, regardless of grade level. Shefelbine and Newman defend offering only decoding instruction in the SIPPS program rather than combining decoding with comprehension. They propose that “approaches that combine decoding and comprehension in one package shortchange students’ learning in both domains” (op. cit p. 5). Therefore, the SIPPS program focuses on concepts of print, phonemic awareness, phonics knowledge, and sight word recognition.

Ongoing Assessment and Accountability

In order to accurately identify students as at-risk, it is important to have a universal screening assessment in place to accurately assess students. “These screening assessments are administered individually, and not to be confused with group-administered standardized tests” (Torgeson, 2004). Assessments should be ongoing and administered several times a year (2004). McCook proposes in The RTI Guide: Developing and Implementing a Model in Your Schools that, “the primary purpose of universal screening is to determine which students need help” (2006). Because “these assessments are designed to measure specific skills a student has achieved” (p.15), it can be a tool to accurately group students by skill needs and ability.

McCook goes on to say that once a baseline set of data is established for a student, it is determined where a student is to begin in the intervention program and that performance assessments must be conducted periodically to monitor progress. This allows identification of dual discrepancy. “Dual discrepancy refers to how far a child is behind his classroom peers and addresses the rate of improvement the child is making “(p.20). Frequent

monitoring can also track the student's progress within the intervention program and determine if the student is responding to the instructional program.

High Quality Instruction

Allington and Walmsley in No Quick Fix stress that “of all the children who attend our schools, it is the children who find reading and writing difficult who need and benefit from high quality instruction” (1995). It is unfortunate that we do not always find expert teachers to administer instruction to our neediest students. In fact, instruction is often presented by instructional aides or part time teachers. Research shows that more often than not, “remedial students are being taught by those with the least expertise” (1995).

The U.S. Department of Education offers “compelling evidence that teachers are one of the most critical factors in how well students achieve” (U.S. Department of Education, 2004) “Students receiving instruction from effective teachers are out performing students receiving instruction from ineffective teacher in recent studies” (2004). NCLB now includes a provision that requires all teachers in core academic areas to be highly qualified by the end of the 2005-2006 school year. The neediest students often come from Title 1 schools, this same provision (NCBL, 2004) requires that teachers teaching in Title 1 schools be highly qualified immediately. To be considered highly qualified under NCLB, a teacher must meet minimum qualifications. Through this provision; however, states may set the criteria for highly qualified teachers according to the needs of that state.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

Situational Context

Rolling Hills Elementary is a K-6 general education school. It houses approximately 550 general education students. The school has 4 special day preschools, 6 special day classes grades K-6 and one resource program. The administration at Rolling Hills consists of a principal and assistant principal. The two administrators share the responsibilities of attending IEP meetings and contributing to decisions regarding placement of students. The site also has a psychologist on campus 3 days per week. There are also 3 full-time speech therapists, as well as another speech therapist who divides her time between Rolling Hills and West Bend Elementary. There are also three occupational therapists as well as an itinerant full inclusion specialist. The site also has an Adaptive PE specialist on site four days per week to work with the students receiving specialized academic instruction.

The Leadership Team at Rolling Hills Elementary identified a need to address the current intervention model being used at the school site. The researchers, working with the site administrators, asked for volunteers from the teaching staff to attend an intervention planning meeting. The researchers proposed a model that included reverse mainstreaming, direct instruction by the classroom teacher to the identified at-risk students and larger group instruction delivered by part-time certificated teachers. A direct result of the meeting was the creation of the action plan entitled *Project Succeed*.

Project Succeed Timeline

As a result of this plan, each grade level came up with a specific time where all students were involved in one of the following: intervention, extension or peer modeling. At a school-

wide staff development, all staff members met in grade levels to determine how they were going to structure their day to incorporate the new model. They were given a planning guide to complete at the end of the planning session. Grade levels were asked to write specific plans as to what each teacher, including the intervention support teachers, would be doing during their intervention time. The school-wide model was implemented October 2006 through March 2007. In addition, teachers were asked to list any intervention programs they were considering using.

Initial Assessment

By the end of September, each grade level was able to identify students working above and below grade level. They then assessed the below-grade level students using a variety of assessments, including the Systematic Instruction in Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) initial placement assessment. As a result of this assessment, teachers discussed which intervention level individual classroom teachers would serve.

Intervention Session 1

In October, classroom teachers were given release time to meet with the intervention teachers and the special education teachers to collaborate in order to determine scheduling and service delivery. The number of students as well as the targeted instruction was finalized. The site administration sent home a letter informing parents of the restructured in-school intervention model.

At the end October the first intervention program began and lasted for 6 weeks. At the end of the first session, teachers met again to discuss the results and collaborate regarding next steps. At this time, teachers were given a survey by the researchers. The survey asked teachers if they were using a research-based program or creating a program on their own. They were also asked to discuss their reasons for their decision. The survey also asked the teachers to respond to

the overall model, share any positives they experienced and any changes they recommended for the next session.

Intervention Session 2

Classroom teachers reassessed the at-risk students using the SIPPS Placement Assessment. Teachers met to discuss student progress. At that time, some adjustments were made with student grouping. In addition, one of the part time teachers resigned and a new teacher was hired in her place. The second session began in January 2007 and lasted ten weeks. At the end of the second session, teachers administered the final SIPPS Placement Assessment to determine the amount of growth each student made.

Assessment Instruments

After the initial Project Succeed meeting, teachers were asked to discuss the proposal with their grade level. Teachers were also asked to administer some type of assessment to determine literacy skill levels for their students. At the school-wide staff development meeting, each grade level was asked to fill out a planning form given by the principal to determine which students were going to be targeted for intervention and how they were planning to implement the model at their grade level.

Teacher Survey

After the first intervention session was completed, the participating first grade teachers were asked to fill out a survey identifying key elements of the intervention model they were using. The purpose behind using the survey was to collect information from the teachers in an anonymous, non-threatening manner. This survey asked teachers to rate their overall opinions of the model of intervention they chose using a rating scale of 1 to 5 with one being poor and 5 being great, with room for comments. They were then asked to reflect on something that went

particularly well, and something they would like to change for the next session. The next question addressed the issue of research-based intervention and whether they were using or not. If they responded that they were, they were asked which one, and if not, they were asked what they used instead. The survey was anonymous and left room for teachers to make comments regarding the intervention program. It included open-ended questions to encourage thoughtful responses expressed in teachers' own voices.

Teacher Observations

The researchers observed the general education teachers working with their targeted groups, the intervention group as well as the enrichment group. According to Yin(2003) , observations "...serve as another source of evidence in a case study." These observation sessions allowed the researchers to see first-hand what materials were being used and to get an understanding of how the sessions were being conducted. Both part-time certificated teachers were observed working with the larger on-grade level groups. Student data was collected from the identified at-risk students only. This data included the kindergarten Emerging Literacy Survey results broken down into subtests, pre and post SIPPS Placement assessments, and the Houghton Mifflin Beginning of the Year assessment.

Teacher Interviews

Once the intervention program was completed in March, the first grade teachers, as well as the participating special education teachers, were interviewed by the researchers regarding their experiences. According to the ERIC Development Team (1997), personal, or face-to-face interviews, allowed for the researchers to get in-depth responses from the participating teachers regarding their perceptions about the program. The interview sessions were recorded so the researchers could take the time afterwards to listen to the answers and determine if there were

any underlying themes to the teachers' responses. The leading questions for the interviews were designed to be reflective to lead to an open conversation.

Selection of Participants

Teachers: At the start of this study, all grades at Rolling Hills Elementary were invited to participate. Some teachers chose to participate in "Project Succeed" in which the administrator facilitated discussion around improving student achievement at Rolling Hills. The two researchers in this study presented a plan to implement an intervention / reverse mainstreaming model. Grade levels were then asked to collaborate and develop a plan of their own that would meet the needs of the at-risk students at the school site. Most grade levels developed a model similar to the one proposed by the researchers, with some modifications. It was the first grade teachers that were the most receptive to the exact model presented. Therefore, those were the teachers chosen for this study.

Students: Students were selected based on assessment results. All students were given the Beginning of the Year Assessment from the core curriculum. However, teachers reported that the assessment did not give them enough information to accurately identify the strengths and weaknesses of the learners in their classrooms. They then went back and reviewed the End of the Year assessment from the Kindergarten Emerging Literacy Survey. This assessment is designed to identify areas of strength and weakness in pre-reading and early reading skills. The information gathered from the two assessments combined with classroom observation gave the first grade teachers a more accurate picture of the students in their classrooms. 22 students were identified who were considered to be at-risk for not meeting essential benchmarks in first grade. Students who were meeting or exceeding the standards were

also identified based upon the assessments. These students were from all of the first grade classes, not just from a single class.

The identified students were then assessed using the Systematic Instruction in Phoneme Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words (SIPPS) Placement Assessment. As a result of the assessment, two groups of students were identified by skill level. Of the two groups, one group was working significantly below grade level and it was decided that they would receive SIPPS intervention starting at the Beginning Level. The second set of participants came from a larger group of students working just below grade level. It was determined that this cohort would be split into two smaller groups. It was further decided that one of those groups would receive SIPPS intervention, but starting at a higher level than the first group, while the second group would **not** receive SIPPS intervention, but instead would receive additional practice in targeted skills based on need and as decided by the teacher.

Gaining Permission for Student Participation

Initially the researchers were unsure as to which students data would be collected from; therefore, on October 3, 2007 permission letters providing an overview of the project were sent to the families of all students in grades one through three. A large number of permission slips were returned immediately. A second letter was sent to families on January 9, 2007 to elicit responses. When the researchers finally determined they would only be analyzing data from the identified at-risk students, a third letter was sent on March 6, 2007 to the remaining families who had not returned permission slips. Parents were handed those letters by the classroom teacher during the Spring Parent-Teacher Conference. After several weeks, four students had not returned permission slips. The researchers then obtained verbal permission by phone.

Research-based Intervention Program

The reason the SIPPS program was chosen was that it has been implemented district wide and Rolling Hills already had several SIPPS kits at the site as well as teachers trained in its implementation. SIPPS is typical of the intervention models currently published by many companies. It addresses early reading skills. These skills include phonemic awareness, phonics, decoding, sight word recognition, and reading fluency. Although it does not address comprehension directly, it is inferred that these early reading skills will transfer into better comprehension as the child's skills develop. The program is designed to be systematically implemented for best results. Although this study used SIPPS, it can be assumed any of the current research-based intervention could be substituted.

Shared Responsibility by the Researchers

The initial plan of the model was developed collaboratively by the researchers. Together, the plan was presented to the staff at Rolling Hills Elementary during the initial Project Succeed meeting. Once it was determined that a substantial portion of the staff were willing to move ahead with the plan, the researchers identified a target group for the study. It was determined that the first grade general education team would be used because of their willingness to carry out the proposed model. It was then determined that the second grade special education class would be used in the reverse mainstreaming model rather than the first grade class since one of the researchers was the teacher of that group. While some of the first grade special education data will be used in this study, most of the reverse mainstreaming data comes from the second grade group.

Implementation of the model required several parent letters and permission slips to be passed out, returned and calculated. The researchers shared in the responsibility of collecting this data. Observations of the model being implemented were carried out by both researchers, but each researcher focused on her specific field and each ensured that interviews were conducted in the same manner. The review of the literature was separated into three sections. The special education teacher researched the reverse mainstreaming section, while the general education teacher researched the early reading intervention section. The section on collaboration was completed by both researchers.

Together the researchers analyzed and discussed the data collected. The general education teacher focused on the general education teachers' response to the model, whereas the special education teacher focused on the special education teachers' response to the model. Since the at-risk students' data of their response to intervention was a large piece of this work, both researchers participated in disaggregating the data collected. The researchers jointly contributed to the discussion and conclusions of this study.

CHAPTER IV

Findings and Discussion

The findings from this research study will combine quantitative data as well as qualitative data. Student data will be reported with the aide of tables. Only data from the identified at-risk students was used. The presentation of the tables is followed by a brief discussion of the findings. The data from the teachers is reported through a summary of the conversations during the interviews. Themes identified by the researchers guides these summaries. General education teachers were asked to respond to the newly implemented intervention model and how it compares to previous models used. Teachers were asked to discuss the positives and/or negatives of the implementation. They were also asked to reflect on student progress and how that relates to the intervention program used. Teachers were asked to comment on the degree of collaboration that took place and how it impacted the implementation of intervention model. Four distinct themes emerged from these conversations which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Special education teachers in the study were asked to respond to the reverse mainstreaming model, and how from their perspective it impacted the instructional program. Participants were asked if peer relationships between general education students and special education students extended beyond the classroom experience. Special education teachers also were asked to reflect on the collaboration that occurred between themselves and the general education teachers.

The researchers facilitated the successful implementation of a new intervention model at Rolling Hills Elementary. Each grade level's model was implemented according to the plans

developed during the initial collaboration model. For the purpose of this study, the researchers collected and analyzed data from the first grade identified at-risk students. Although many instruments were used in determining the findings for student progress, only the SIPPS pre and post assessment data will be highlighted here.

Five first grade teachers were included in this study, but only three administered the intervention. Only those three teachers were interviewed for the purpose of this study. The findings for the reverse mainstreaming model will be collected from both the first grade special education teacher and the second grade special education teacher. Both special education teachers attempted to implement the reverse mainstreaming model, but only one continued for the entirety of the study.

Progress Data for At-Risk Students

The researchers examined data from 22 first grade students identified at-risk for not meeting essential grade level benchmarks or at-risk for retention. These data can be summarized as follows:

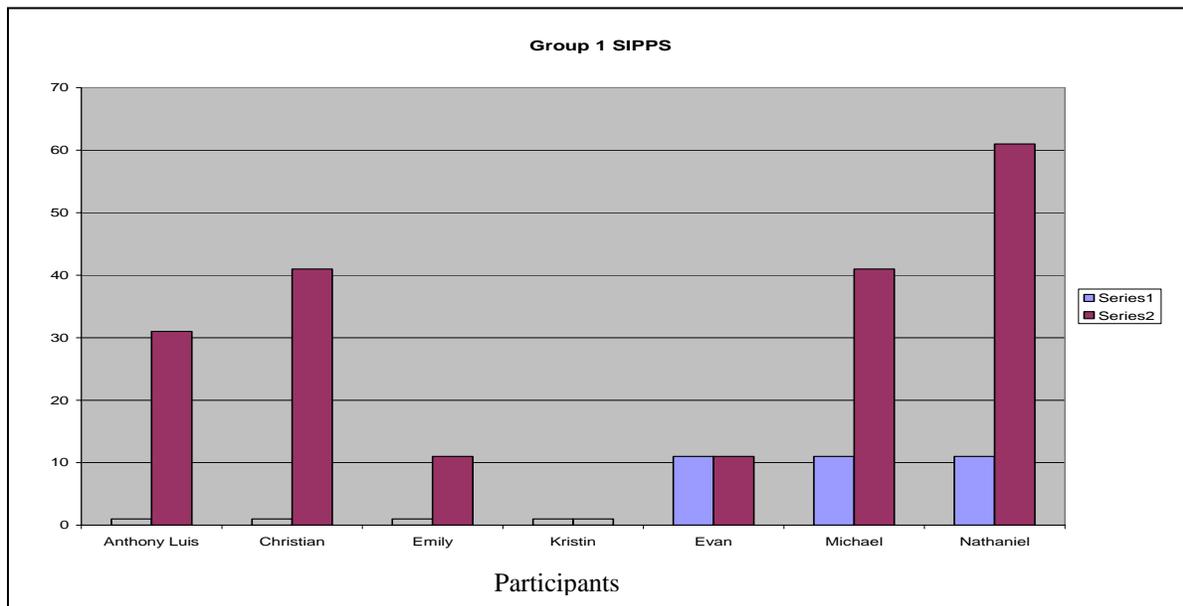
- Of the 22 students, more than 60 percent of them were identified at-risk in Kindergarten
- Two additional students were retained the previous year
- 80 percent of the identified students received before school intervention for a portion of the school year in addition to the in-school intervention
- More than 25 percent of the identified students were also English language learners; however, they receive no additional services for language instruction.
- All 22 students had a minimum of two areas on the Kindergarten Emerging Literacy Survey where they did not meet the grade level benchmarks.

Students were placed into three groups. The groups were based on the beginning of the year language arts assessment combined with the SIPPS initial placement assessment. One group of students was identified as significantly below grade level. Although the other two groups were much higher they were still working below grade level. Those two groups were relatively comparable to each other according to the students' assessments. The teacher working with the lowest group and a teacher working with one of the two higher groups chose to use the SIPPS intervention program, while the other teacher used her own methods of intervention.

Group One Results

The first group was composed of the lowest achieving students. All of these seven students were identified by their kindergarten teachers as being at-risk for not meeting essential benchmarks or at-risk for retention. Two of these students are English language learners. The method of intervention for this group of students was SIPPS Beginning Level, starting with Lesson 1. All of these students were invited to attend before-school intervention in addition to the in-school intervention. All but one student attended both sessions. Only two of the students showed no progress at all, while one student showed little progress. Four students showed significant progress with a minimum gain of forty points. (See figure 1)

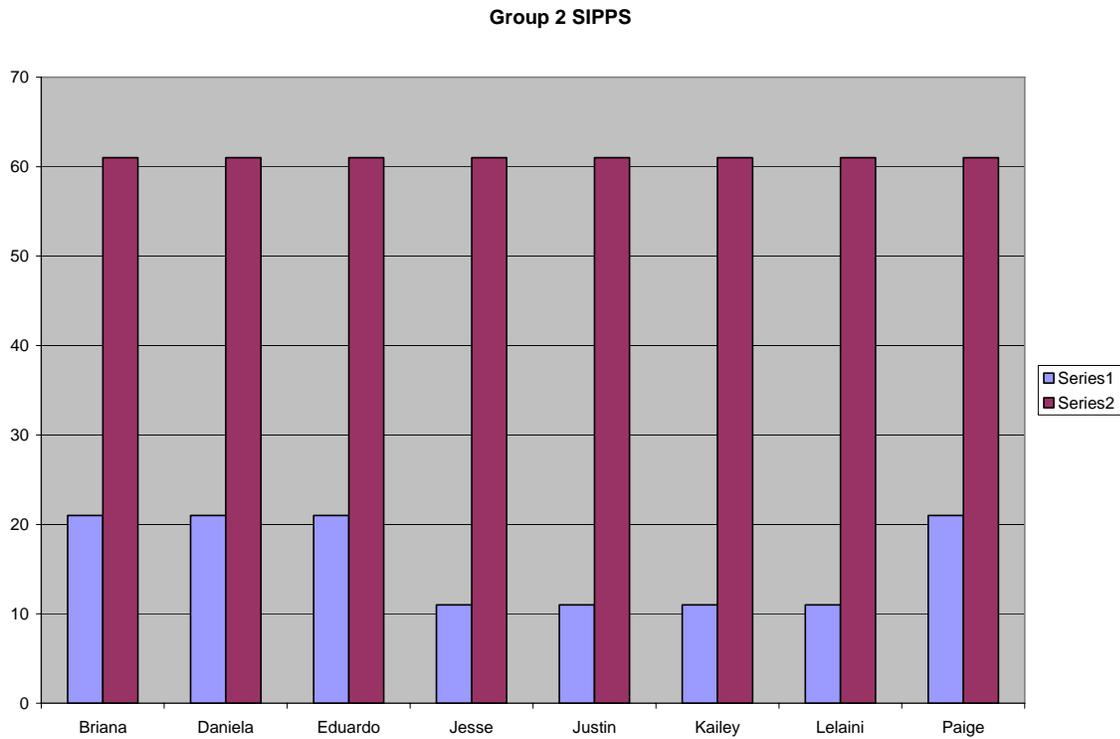
Figure 1: Pre and Post Assessment Data from Group 1 Using SIPPS



Group Two Results

The second group consisted of eight students. Again, all of these students were invited to attend the before-school intervention in addition to the in-school intervention. Only one student declined to attend the morning session. Two of the eight students were identified as English language learners. Only one of these students had been identified at-risk for not meeting essential benchmarks or at-risk for retention, and one student was retained the previous year. The method of intervention for this group was SIPPS Beginning Level, starting with Lesson 11. All students made significant progress in this group, with a gain of 30 or 40 points. (See *figure 2*)

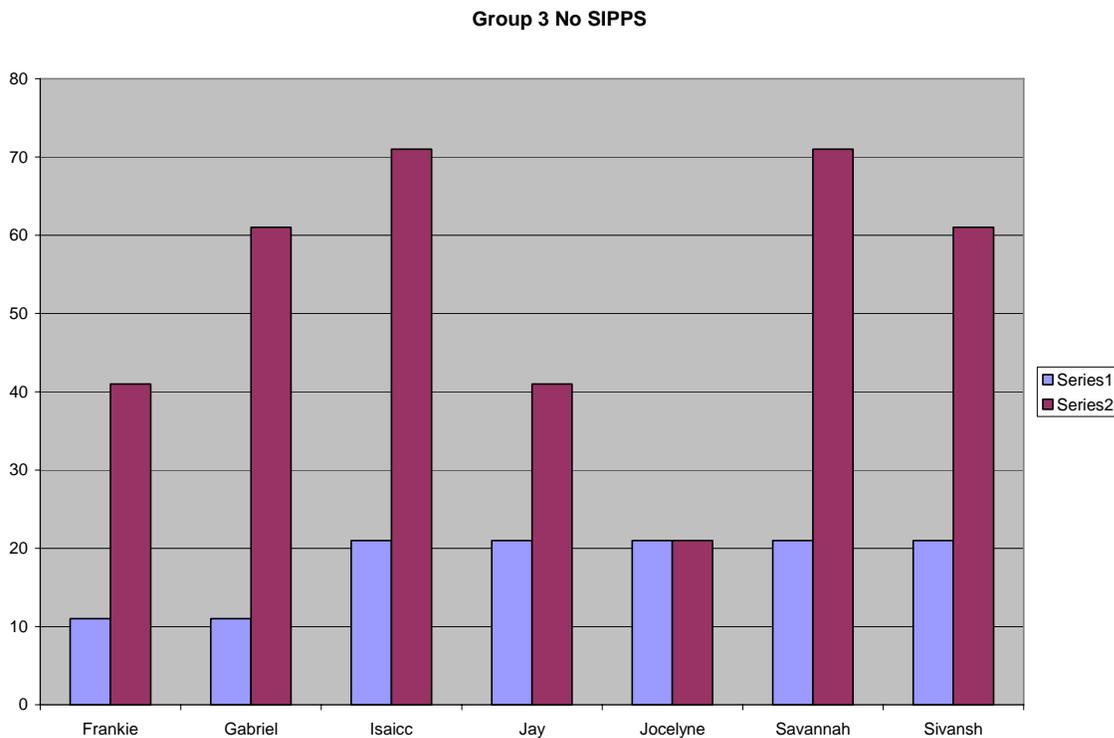
Figure 2: Pre and Post Assessment Data from Group 2 Using SIPPS



Group Three Results

The third group consisted of seven students. All of these students were invited to attend the before-school intervention as well; however, only four of the students chose to attend the morning session. Five of these students were identified at-risk for not meeting essential benchmarks or at-risk for retention at some point during the previous year, and one student was retained. Two of these students are English language learners. The teacher of this group of students chose not to use the SIPPS Intervention Program, but rather tried to differentiate the intervention to meet the individual needs of the group. All but one student showed improvement with a range of 20 to 40 points; however, the gains were inconsistent. Some students in this group made significant gains, more so than the SIPPS group; however, some students made no gain at all. (See *figure 3*)

Figure 3: Pre and Post Assessment Data from Group 3 Not Using SIPPS



Responses of the General Education Teachers to the Intervention Model

After interviewing the three general education first grade teachers, four distinct themes emerged. The first was the confirmation of the effectiveness of the SIPPS intervention program compared to intervention models used in the past. Second, the opportunity to collaborate greatly impacted the effectiveness of the model. Thirdly, teachers expressed a greater sense of responsibility for the success or failure of the at-risk students. Fourthly, it was reported that the consistency of the current model of the intervention program led to a more cohesive sense of student achievement among the grade level.

General Education Teachers Response to SIPPS

Prior to the implementation of this intervention model, the three first grade teachers had been trained in SIPPS instruction. Two of those teachers taught SIPPS during the before/after school intervention program for the past two years. The before/after school program targeted at-risk first graders and the groups met two to three times per week, depending on the teacher. Since attendance was voluntary on the part of the parents, the number of students who attended was limited and attendance was often sporadic. In addition, some of those students received SIPPS instruction during the in-school intervention administered by the part-time certificated teacher hired to work with that group of students. The teachers interviewed reported that they could not see any carry over into the classroom due to the SIPPS instruction as it was given in the past. However, with the consistency of the newly implemented model, these teachers were declared that they noticed a significant improvement with the students receiving SIPPS instruction in the regular classroom instruction. Ms. Moore remarked, “Wow, for the first time, I can see what the research has been telling us!”

Although the teachers related that the SIPPS program met their particular needs as a grade level, they also specified how it was the consistent, direct and explicit instruction that made the difference. Past implementation of SIPPS at Rolling Hills has been minimal. The intervention teachers that were administering the intervention gave feedback to the teachers only three times per year. The students were never reassessed using the initial placement assessment. “You can really see the difference this year” commented Mrs. Travis. “I am starting to notice carryover into the regular curriculum, they are blending better and they know so many more sight words than they did before.” “I used to think there was too much of a disparity between what is being taught in the regular curriculum to what the students were receiving in SIPPS. I did not think it would make that much of a difference.” said Ms. Moore.

General Education Teachers Response to the Collaboration

The topic of collaboration came up in all three interviews. Initially it was determined that the general education teachers, the special education teacher, and the part-time teachers would meet periodically to discuss the progress of the students. The administration actually scheduled two meetings with all the involved teachers; once at the beginning of the first session and the other just after the first session. Unfortunately, that was the only time the entire group got together. When they did meet, Ms. Parsons reported it was “good to have that time”, but it was not as productive as it could have been. When she was questioned further as to why she thought it was not productive, she replied “We don’t, or I don’t, have any rapport with them. Until that meeting I had never met them before.” Additionally, because the part-time teachers were employed hourly, there was no time built into their daily schedules to meet with the teachers or do any early planning. “Team building requires a little more rapport”, commented Ms. Parson.

The general education teachers looked at the two additional teachers in the same light as substitute teachers. The classroom teachers did the planning for them and left instructions at the beginning of the class session. Neither of the part-time teachers offered to take the teacher's guide to prepare for a lesson. This made the classroom teachers question how much planning went occurred the previous year when those intervention teachers were servicing the neediest students.

When one of the researchers pointed out that reverse mainstreaming had only lasted for the first session in first grade, there was some confusion as to what caused the reverse mainstreaming model to cease being implemented. Mrs. Travis offered that it was because they did not meet with the special education teacher after the initial meeting. "I don't know why we never invited the special education teacher to join our grade level planning meetings. I think it was just that during those meetings we did planning for everything, except intervention." All teachers agreed that if they had met at least one more time with the special education teacher, they could have made adjustments to the group to make the reverse mainstreaming plan more effective.

Since the classroom teachers were also busy with the rest of the curriculum and the expectations for the school site, they found little time to collaborate for intervention. To remedy this, they were able to build in some time during the instructional day to plan lessons for the on-grade level students that were to be taught by the part-time teachers. They used their Physical Education (PE) time. Since class-size reduction only restricts the number of teacher-to-student ratio in the core subjects, there was some flexibility in the number of teacher-to-student ratio for PE. Two teachers would take the entire grade level to the yard for organized PE instruction.

This would free up the two remaining classroom teachers to plan instruction for the part-time teachers.

General Education Teachers Responses to At-Risk Students in the Grade Level

In this line of inquiry teachers reported that they were more linked to the success and failure of their at-risk students. Because the previous model had the at-risk students leaving the classroom for their intervention sessions, the classroom teacher was unaware of the actual progress made by those students. The intervention teacher gave the classroom teacher progress reports at the end of each intervention session. However, this gave the classroom teacher only a glimpse of the actual progress. One teacher reported that the students in her current SIPPS group, who she labeled as the “lowest of the lows”, continued to be distracted in the regular classroom and tended to produce very little work. She reported that since she was meeting with this group four times a week and administering instruction at their level, she was able to see their strengths not only academically but also socially. Mrs. Travis said, “I would never have known that a few of my students could even attend in an academic setting if I did not see them each day in my small group. It is amazing how on task they can be when they are not overwhelmed by the curriculum.”

At the close of the second intervention session, the classroom teachers reported that because the students were making such significant progress with the intervention model they did not want to stop the intervention so early in the spring. The four first grade teachers got together and worked out a way to continue with the intervention until the end of the year. This required changes in the groups. Some students were exited from intervention while some groups were combined. Just as the teachers had used their PE time for planning, they continued to have two teachers take a large number of students out for PE. The two remaining teachers stayed behind

with small groups for intervention. Ms. Moore told us, “I am not ready to end it for these kids. I am really starting to see some progress, especially in the group I work with.”

The teachers also reported in the interviews that they felt a sense of relief about their at-risk students. Because first graders require so much attention during instructional time, small group instruction with at-risk students is often disrupted during the regular language arts block. “To find thirty minutes, four days in a row, with no interruption in the regular classroom to work with your low group is impossible. That is absolutely the beauty of this model”, commented Ms. Moore. Mrs. Travis also responded, “I would like to say I meet with my low group everyday, but that doesn’t always happen. If I do meet with that group everyday, then I feel guilty because I am not getting to all my groups everyday.” All of the teachers interviewed reported that this model relieved much of that stress.

General Education Teachers Response to the Grade Level Unity

Overall, the teachers interviewed reported that this new intervention model gave them a sense of community within their grade level. They reported that they knew the students better, both academically and socially. Ms. Moore stated, “I feel really positive about this, and let me tell you why. As a grade level, we know more about the overall picture of the grade level, especially our at-risk kids. It is nice when more than one teacher knows about that kid.”

Not only did the teachers report that they were more unified, they also reported that the students had a greater sense of the importance of reading instruction. Ms. Parson expressed this: “... although my students are young, I think the kids get the underlying message that reading instruction is important. When everyone in the grade level is doing the same thing at the same time, it sends a strong message.”

Responses of the Special Education Teachers to the Reverse Mainstreaming Model

After interviewing both the first and second grade special education teachers, two themes became apparent regarding reverse mainstreaming. The first was that reverse mainstreaming is most effective when it is implemented for social interaction. The second theme was that planning time is needed for the special education teacher to make the model successful.

The second grade special education teacher took five second graders into her classroom three days per week for 30 minutes. During the interview, the teacher said that the planning component was difficult for her at first. Initially, she thought she had planned activities that were appropriate for all learners and that would take an equal amount of time for all students to complete. However, she soon realized that the general education students were completing their tasks much quicker than her special education students. She had to plan activities that were challenging enough for the general education second graders but not too difficult for her own students. There was also the concern that the activities she planned were not perceived as too “babyish or easy” by the general education students.

The special education teachers also had to be sure the general education peers were not being “mothers” to the special education students. “I wanted the second graders to treat my kids as they would their regular friends.” One special education teacher, Mrs. March, described that if she noticed that her students were annoying the general education students then she let the general education student respond in a typical fashion. Once the pattern and routine was established, however, the special education teacher said both groups of students began interacting more. She also noticed more social interaction on the playground between her students and the general education students. Mrs. March explained how she was pleased that her students knew the names of their general education peers and were comfortable enough to say

'hi' to them on the playground and at the lunch tables. Also, she noted that the general education peers were becoming more social with her students outside of the classroom.

Challenges Created by the Reverse Mainstreaming Model

One aspect that Mrs. March, felt was challenging about the reverse mainstreaming was the lack of collaboration between her and the second grade general education teachers. Other than a quick, "How are things going? Any problems with the students?" from the general education teachers, Mrs. March never had any formal collaboration time with the other teachers. During the interview, she stated it would have been helpful to be able to meet with and plan with the second grade teachers. She felt she would have had a better understanding of any specific academic or behavior concerns the general education teachers had regarding the students they sent into her class.

According to Mrs. March, reverse mainstreaming is effective and can meet the needs of the special education students. She sees it as being most effective, however, when done in a manner in which all teachers collaborate and work together and where the focus is on social interaction, not necessarily academics. Providing opportunities in an environment in which all of the students feel safe and comfortable is important. Even though the intervention program was completed in Spring, the special education teacher said she definitely wanted to continue to implement reverse mainstreaming for the rest of the school year.

The first grade special education teacher reported her belief that the difficulties she faced were tied directly to the way her reverse mainstreaming model was set up. The first grade special education teacher took in 6 first grade students, all considered to be high-achieving students. It was agreed that the purpose of reverse mainstreaming in her class would be to provide enrichment to the first grade students. The first grade teachers agreed that enrichment in phonics

instruction would meet the needs of the general education students while providing access to the core for the special education students. Once this model was put into place, however, it became very clear that it was not effective. The general education students were responding and participating to the instruction while the special education students were fidgeting in their seat, talking out of turn and getting out of their chairs. The teacher also noticed a lack of understanding on the part of the general education students as to why the special education students were behaving as they were. The focus in this class and model was on academics, not socialization. The special education teacher began to notice the discrepancy between the two groups of students was wide. Even though several of her students had beginning letter sound skills and could give beginning sounds to words, the curriculum was too difficult for her students. “I enjoyed having the general education students in my classroom, but I needed to develop activities to meet the needs of all of the kids.”

The special education teacher reported that the general education students enjoyed coming into the classroom, but that they perceived themselves as the care takers of the special education students. The general education students would talk to the special needs students in a mothering tone, as one would talk to a toddler. Unlike in the second grade model, there were no social connections being made between the general education and special education students. As with the second grade special education teacher, the first grade special education teacher had to plan activities that were challenging enough to engage the general education students but weren't too difficult for her special education students. This was very difficult to do in her model, as she had the high-achieving students coming into her class. The first grade teacher felt she needed more planning time with the general education teachers to know what skills they wanted their students to be focusing on while in her classroom.

While the program was in progress, there was no planning time or collaboration between the special education and general education teachers. The special education teacher did her best to meet the needs of all students but expressed she did not have an opportunity to speak up and say things needed to be changed. There was no set time for both general and special education teachers to meet together to discuss curriculum. The special education teacher was handed the phonics books and told which story the group would be working on for the week. There wasn't any guidance or support for the special education teacher in terms of what to specifically work on. There were brief chats and quick answers to questions at recess and lunch time. The special education teacher stressed she enjoyed having the general education students come into her classroom. She said she just needed to be able to adjust the purpose of the model.

CHAPTER V

Conclusions

Reverse Mainstreaming

Originally, the first grade team and the special education teacher agreed to implement reverse mainstreaming as part of the first grade model. The initial plan was that the higher achieving students were to come into the special education class for social interaction. After the initial collaboration meeting among the first grade team, it was decided that those high-end students would receive enrichment activities alongside the special education students. It was decided by the first grade general education teachers that their high-end students would receive enrichment in phonics instruction in the special day class. Ultimately, the special education teacher, as well as the special education students, became frustrated with this model. The discrepancy between the academic needs of the special education students and the general education students was too great to make this a successful model. Upon reflection, the researchers have concluded two alternate models would have better suited the needs of the situation.

Model One: Children with Social Needs

The first model, serving special education students in the moderate/severe range, would combine high achieving general education students with special education students in a peer modeling setting. During this time, the focus would be on social interaction rather than academics. Rolling Hills Elementary currently implements a Social Club to serve the social interaction needs of its special education students. This model incorporates fourth through sixth grade students and teaches them how to play games and be a friend to the special education

student. The general education teachers like this program, as it provides their high achieving students an opportunity to share their leadership skills. Both general education and special education teachers have seen an increase in social interaction during recess and lunch time among the Social Club members. In order to participate in the Social Club, the general education peers must be recommended by their teacher. Since the club is held during school hours, the parents have to give permission for their students to miss class time.

Currently in place at the school site are two other programs that focus strictly on social interaction. The Peer Assistance Learners (PALs) group is made up of students in grades three through six who want to volunteer time in one of the special education classes. The general education students commit to spending at least one recess time per week in the special education class doing any of the following activities: playing games with the special needs students, reading a book to them, completing a craft activity. For the younger general education students, the Junior PALs program was created three years ago. This program allows first and second grade students to spend at least one recess per week in the pre-school special education setting. The main focus of this program is to provide appropriate social models for the pre-school students.

All of the programs mentioned above have seen great success at Rolling Hills. Similarly, the focus of reverse mainstreaming is on social interaction and relations rather than on academic needs. The special education teachers have seen positive results from their students. They have noticed increased willingness to talk to their general education peers. Because the focus of these programs is on the social aspect, there is little need for collaboration between the special education and general education teachers.

Model Two: Children with Academic Needs

The second model would combine general education students whose academic skills cannot be met through the typical intervention model with special education students in the moderate/severe category functioning at the same academic level. The needs of these general education students more closely match the needs of the special education students. Therefore, differentiated instruction would be provided by the special education teacher for both general education and special education students. Last year, six first grade students came into the special education setting to receive instruction from the special education teacher in handwriting. Students in the special education classroom are working on goals according to their IEPs. Typically, these skills are directly linked the standards but are worked on at a modified level. For example, handwriting is a skill that students in both general education and special education classrooms need to work on. Often times, students in the lower grades struggle with fine motor skills. Because grade level standards are so rigorous, these students often lag behind. This would be an ideal situation where these general education students could be mainstreamed into the special education classroom to focus on improving fine motor skills. The special education teacher was trained in *Handwriting Without Tears*, and used this curriculum to teach all of the students together. This reverse mainstreaming model was implemented four days per week for thirty minutes each session. The special education students would ask their teacher when their friends would be coming into their room. The first grade teacher saw marked improvement in the writing skills of her students. Because of the nature of the instruction, the general education and special education students were at the same skill level. According to the teachers who implemented this model, this made the task a lot easier. Collaboration time was not formal, however, in this model. The general education teacher and special education teacher would talk

at recess and lunch time, as well as after school, on how the first grade students were progressing.

Collaboration

Throughout this study, it became evident that collaboration can greatly impact an academic program. Although the actual model of intervention was successful in this study, teachers were concerned about the limited collaboration with the additional teachers as well as between special education teachers and general education teachers. Because the focus of this study was on the at-risk students, and the classroom teachers were meeting regularly to discuss progress and next steps for those students, they did not follow the on-grade level students as closely as they would have liked.

Recommendations for Collaboration

Ongoing collaboration is essential. Without support from the administration and a commitment from the teachers, collaboration will be unsuccessful. A scheduled time for collaboration was shown to be necessary for success. Whether the collaboration time is daily, weekly, or monthly should be determined by the school site. A plan for discussion during the collaboration time is also important. The administrator or grade level leader can determine the topics for discussion and the means of accountability for this discussion. This could be as simple as keeping minutes from the meetings to be distributed to the collaborative team for future reference.

Early Reading Intervention

The SIPPS program was used for this study because it was the existing program used at the school site. Several instructional kits were available, and some of the teachers in this study had been trained in its implementation. Currently, there are many research based instructional

programs designed to target at-risk students for reading intervention. These programs focus on the same early reading skills as the SIPPS program: phonemic awareness, phonics (specifically blending of phonemes), and sight word recognition. Once these early skills are mastered, the focus shifts to reading comprehension strategies. Some programs combine the early skills with comprehension while others teach them individually. The evidence collected, leads the researchers to postulate that any program that delivers explicit, systematic, targeted instruction would have the same results as the SIPPS program did for the students in this study.

The Role of the Teacher

Scientifically based researched curriculum is only part of the success of this study. The delivery of instruction by the classroom teachers is what made the difference. The classroom teachers in this study are all considered highly qualified under NCLB. Educators know teaching is what makes the difference. Honig states in Reading the Right Way that, “teaching children to read is the key to subsequent educational success and should be the most important priority of elementary school. (1999)

Commitment of the School Site to the Intervention Program

The fact that a specific number of minutes each day were devoted to reading intervention, without interruption, played a key role in the success of the intervention in this study. A “no interruptions” approach is vital. The schoolwide commitment to an intervention model in this study added to its the success in terms of student achievement. Even though each grade level organized the intervention differently, the focus was the same. Each grade level established a set time each day when reading intervention was to occur. During the thirty minute sessions, every student in that grade level was receiving additional reading instruction, delivered at their

instructional level. As reported by Ms. Parson, “This sends a message to the grade level on the importance of reading instruction.”

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Application



<i>Completed by IRB:</i>	
IRB PROJECT #:	
<input type="checkbox"/>	Exempt/Expedited Review: _____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Full Review: _____

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (I.R.B)

APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

Directions: Please complete Sections I - IV. If you have any questions, contact the Coordinator for Research and Sponsored Programs, **Amanda Quintero (805) 437-3285**. **Location:** Professional Bldg- 2nd Floor/ Office# 233, Camarillo, CA. 93012. **In all cases, no research may proceed on or off campus unless approved by the IRB.**

Submission Instructions: Email an electronic copy of the completed IRB Application, proposal and attachments to amanda.quintero@csuci.edu in the following format:

1. **IRB Application should be saved as:** *First letter of first name, and last name of Principal Investigator (student) (Example, aquintero)*
2. **Email subject heading:** *IRB Application*
3. **Attachments:** *Include all attachments*
4. **Interoffice mail or hand deliver:** *2 copies and 1 original IRB Application and Proposal*
5. **DO NOT SUBMIT IN PDF FORMAT**

All IRB Applications and proposals must be submitted 10 working days before the next IRB meeting date. This application and its attachments (Protocol) will be returned without review if this form is not **COMPLETE**. **An IRB Application is incomplete without the signature of the Principal Investigator and Program Chair/Administrator on page 3.** **Before research starts the PI must take the PI Certification Training and present proof to ORSP.**

SECTION I: Type of Research (Refer to Attached Appendix I) CLICK ON CHECK BOX

- Category 1 Research: Exempt/Expedited Review Category 2 Research: Full Review

SECTION II:

1. Name of Principal Investigator (Student):	Phone:	Email:
Regina Reed, Theresa Garner	5770309	reed4home@hotmail.com

2. Responsible Supervising Faculty Member:	Phone:	E-mail:
Dr. Marilyn Buchanan	4378579	merilynbuchanan@csuci.edu

3. Program Affiliation:		
Principal Leadership Cohort		
5. Amount of Award: \$	6. <input type="checkbox"/> Internal Funding or <input type="checkbox"/> External Funding	

7. Title of Project:	Project Start Date:	
	October 2006	May 2007

8. Investigator is (CLICK ON CHECK BOX): Faculty Staff Graduate Student Undergraduate

9. This application is for (PLEASE SELECT FROM LIST BY CLICKING ON TEXT): New Project

10. Age Range of Subjects: 5-11 and 24-50+

11. Type of subject: Adult Non-student Minor CSUCI Student
 Other (describe):

12. Subjects (CLICK ON CHECK BOX): Normal Volunteer In-patient Out-patient Mentally retarded
 Mentally disabled Pregnant women & fetuses Individual with limited civil freedom

13. Estimated # of Subjects/participants: 90 # of Treatment Subjects (If Applicable):
 # of Control Subjects (If Applicable):

APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

SECTION III:

DIRECTIONS: Please check the appropriate response for questions 14 to 17. Please be brief and concise in your responses to each of these questions. Failure to respond to any questions will cause significant delays.

14. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Will subjects receive payment or extra credit point compensation for participation? If yes, detail amount, form, and conditions of award.
---	--

Explanation:

15. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Will access to subjects be gained through cooperating institution? If yes, indicate cooperating institution and attach copy of approval letter from that institution. (e.g. Copy of institution's IRB approval, copy of approval letter from school board, etc.)
---	---

Explanation: See attached letter from site administrator.

16. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Does this project involve investigator(s) at another institution? If yes, identify investigator(s) and institution and attach copy of agreement to cooperate.
---	--

Explanation:

17. <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No	Will the subjects be deceived, misled, or have information about the project withheld? If so, identify the information involved, justify the deception, and describe the debriefing plan if there is one.
---	--

Explanation:

DIRECTIONS: In a total of no more than four pages, please answer the questions 18-23. Please be brief and concise in your responses to each of these questions. Failure to respond to any questions will cause significant delays.

Research Protocol Description (Please attached surveys and instruments to the IRB Application):

18. Describe the objectives and significance of the proposed research below.

In Southern California, the number of children with special needs has increased dramatically over the years. As a result, general education and special education students are being educated along side each other on public school campuses. For the moderate/severe students, Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) typically contain language which specifies mainstreaming opportunities for those children. Parents want their special needs children educated as much and as often as possible in the general education setting. This tends to impact the learning of all of the students in the regular classroom. This research hopes to inform the question: How does the teacher meet the needs

of all children, those functioning above the grade level standards as well as those working below the standards?

19. Describe methods for selecting subjects and assuring that their participation is voluntary. Attach a copy of the consent form that will be used. If no consent form will be used, explain the procedures used to ensure that participation is voluntary. (See attached: sample/standard consent form and guide)

The participants in this study included the general education, intervention and special education teachers. All students involved in the study (general and special ed grades 1-3) were given a letter explaining the project. The letter asked for parental permission for the students to be included in observational data collection and analysis. Anonymity for all students was ensured. Participants were selected from Garden Grove Elementary in the Simi Valley Unified School District. Parent letters were sent home with students in October 2006 and January 2007. Participating general education teachers handed parents a third letter in March 2007 for those students for which permission had not been given. For those students who did not return the third letter, phone calls were made to those parents and permission to use student data was granted.

20. Describe the details of the procedures that relate to the subject's participation below. Attach copies of all questionnaires or test instruments. Additionally, (NOT IN LIEU OF) attach a copy of the technical portion of the grant application if this project is part of a sponsored funding request.

Planning worksheet that general education teachers completed before the first session was used. (See attached) After completion of Session 1, teachers were given a survey asking what worked, what didn't work. (See attached) Teachers interviews were conducted in an open ended fashion. (see attached form with lead questions for interviews)

Students were administered the SIPPS Placement Assessment at the beginning of the first session and again at the end of the second session. (see attached)

21. Describe below the methods that will be used to ensure the confidentiality of all subjects' identities and the stored data (include how data will be handled after research is completed). Confidentiality of data is required.

Permission was granted for data to be included in this study for 22 first grade students. First names were used in the findings and the last names were erased from all documents. Data will be given to the site principal to be stored in a locked file cabinet at the school site for the duration of the students enrollment in elementary school.

22. Describe below the risks to the subjects and precautions that will be taken to minimize the risks to the subjects. Risk goes beyond physical risk and includes risks to the subject's dignity and self-respect, as well as psychological, emotional, employment, legal, and/or behavioral risk. (Note: There is always minimal risk (s) associated with a project.)

The risk that can be envisaged is that participants feel threatened and defensive about their practices if students' achievement levels do not increase. The researchers will assure participants that their practice is not being scrutinised or critiqued but that the range of approaches to teaching special needs students placed in regular classrooms is being investigated. If teachers do not feel efficacious and that their self-esteem is in question, they will be assured that the findings are intended to create a support system that increases the sense of effectiveness and success.

23. Describe below the benefits of the project to science and/or society. Also describe benefits to the subject, if any exist. The IRB must have sufficient information to make a determination that the benefits outweigh the risks of the project.

Currently, none of the schools surveyed have a school-wide plan for release time for collaboration. The first step needs to be informing the teachers and administrators of the benefits of structured collaboration time, developing a willingness to be active participants, as well as provide funds for the necessary implementation. This information will be used to further develop a framework for a collaborative model to be used at any elementary school site. School A currently has plans to look at implementing a development plan that includes reverse mainstreaming and an in-

school intervention program that incorporates the participation of both general education and special education teachers. The first steps in the development of the plan will be to meet with the administration and interested teachers before school begins. A timeline and budget will be presented to School A's Leadership Team.

For schools B, C and D discussions regarding collaborative models will begin in the fall. However, due to the numerous district changes currently in place, implementation will not take place until the following school year.

APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF RESEARCH INVOLVING HUMAN SUBJECTS

SECTION IV – ASSURANCES

This protocol review form has been completed and typed. I am familiar with the ethical and legal guidelines and regulations (i.e. The Belmont Report, The Code of Federal Regulations Title 45 Part 46, and CSUCI's Policy) and will adhere to them. Should material changes in procedure involving human subjects become advisable, I will submit them to the IRB for review prior to initiating the change. I understand that I am to notify the IRB when the project is completed. Furthermore, if any problems involving human subjects occur, I will immediately notify the IRB. I understand that IRB review must be conducted annually and that continuation of the project beyond one year requires resubmission and review.

_____/_____
Principal Investigator (Student) / Date

_____/_____
Supervising Faculty Member / Date

End of Application – THIS SECTION MUST BE COMPLETED FOR IRB REVIEW.

Appendix B

Project Succeed Planning Form

Appendix C

October 3, 2006 Administrator's Letter to Parents

Appendix C

Dear Parents,

Garden Grove will be starting its intervention program the week of October 9th. There will be a five week session through mid November and will continue starting in mid January for a 10 week session. We have hired two credentialed teachers to assist grade levels 1st-6th in language arts. Students will be working with teachers within their grade level based on academic needs and overall progress. Grade levels will be working to assure that students who need extra support are receiving it. Students who are working at grade level will have time to perfect their skills while students who need to be challenged academically will have enrichment opportunities as well.

A new component of this year's intervention program is reverse mainstreaming. This component sets aside time when general education students will go into some of our Special Day Classes and work with our special needs students.

General education students become eligible for this program when they demonstrate high academic achievement and positive social behavior. They will have an opportunity to come to a SDC class to be a peer model during part of their language arts time, approximately 30 minutes in length. Studies have shown that when students are given an opportunity to "teach" what they know, it reinforces and solidifies the concepts they have learned.

We are very excited to begin the reverse mainstreaming program as a part of our larger intervention program. The staff feels it will be a great learning experience, for both the general education and special education student population. All students should gain a better understanding in regards to academics and social scenarios through reverse mainstreaming.

Thank you for your continued support

Appendix D

October 3, 2006 Researchers' Letter to Parents and Permission Slip

Appendix D

October 3, 2006

Dear Parents,

Welcome back to a new school year. We hope it is a very productive and enjoyable year for everyone.

This school year, Theresa Garner and I will be working together on a research project for our thesis. For those of you new to the school, Theresa is a former first grade teacher who now works at the district office as Teacher on Special Assignment for Language Arts and Social Studies. I am a primary Special Day Class teacher in Room 1. Theresa and I are both taking classes to earn our Master's Degree in Educational Leadership through CSUCI. Our thesis will be action research and will involve both general education and special education students at Garden Grove.

Research shows that students having trouble in subject areas learn better from their classroom teacher. We want to provide opportunities for these children to work in uninterrupted small groups in their classrooms. We also want to support our grade level learners by providing instruction to extend their reading strategies and critical thinking.

In the field of special education, there is ample research discussing the benefits of having typically developing peers interact with the special needs children in the setting most comfortable to the special needs child, the special day class. To enhance this opportunity at Garden Grove, we will be implementing the concept of Reverse Mainstreaming in our special day classes. Parents of special education children can be assured that each IEP will be followed by the special education teacher and that students will still participate in the general education classroom if it is stated in the IEP.

We have found that our special education and general education students benefit from various opportunities to interact in the classroom. Therefore, Theresa and I, along with a group of Garden Grove teachers and Mrs. Curtis, have developed an educational plan that will include all students. This plan will allow for the general education classroom teacher to meet with a small group of students for intervention; an additional certificated teacher to provide an extension to the curriculum for those students meeting grade-level standards; and an opportunity for students exceeding the standards to work as peer models and tutors for our special education students.

As a requirement for our thesis, we will have to collect and analyze data to show whether the plan is successful or not. The data collected will not contain any identifying information about any of the students. Also, all information about the plan and the participants included in the paper will be totally anonymous. This paper may be published in the future for other educators to read and use as a learning tool. The final project will be turned in to faculty at CSUCI for review and grading. Due to the fact that this is a university paper and we will be collecting and analyzing

data, we are required to get permission from the parents of the students whose data will be included in the project.

Those students who will be asked to be peer models /tutors will need additional parental permission as they will be spending time outside of their regular classrooms. If your child is chosen, a letter will be sent home for you to read, sign and return.

Thank you for your consideration and participation!

Sincerely,



Regina Reed

Release for Participation in Research Project

_____ Yes, I give permission for my child to be a part of the research project for Theresa Garner and Regina Reed. I understand the information collected on my child will remain anonymous and will be used for the purpose of the paper.

_____ No, I would not like my child to a part of the research project at this time.

Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____

Appendix E

October 4, 2006 Reverse Mainstreaming Letter to Parents

Appendix E

October 4, 2006

Dear Parents,

Your child has been chosen to participate in our Reverse Mainstreaming program at Garden Grove Elementary. As was explained in the earlier letter that was sent home, this plan is part of the thesis project for Theresa Garner and Regina Reed. The teachers at Garden Grove would like to implement Reverse Mainstreaming as a way to promote more interaction with all children as well as meet the diverse learning needs of all students. During the thirty minute block when peer tutors will leave the general education classroom and join the special education classroom, their entire grade level will be involved in some type of intervention or extension program. This is an opportunity for your child to share his/her learning strengths with the special needs students in the same grade level. While your child is in the special education classroom as a peer tutor, instruction will be based on the core curriculum. We feel this is an exciting and positive new program at Garden Grove. We look forward to your child's participation.

_____ Student name _____ Teacher name

_____ Yes, I give permission for my child to participate as a peer tutor.

_____ No, would not like my child to participate at this time.

_____ Parent signature

Appendix F

November 20, 2006 General Education Teacher Survey

Appendix F

November 20, 2006 Teachers,

As you know Regina Reed and Theresa Garner are working on a Masters Thesis together. We appreciate all that you are doing to help us gather data for our project. Upon the completion of the first five weeks of intervention, can you take a moment to provide us with some feedback?

1. Rate your overall feeling toward your grade level intervention model.

5	4	3	2	1
Great	Good	Average	Fair	Poor

Comments:

2. Is there something that you thought worked particularly well?

3. Is there something that you would like to change for next time?

4. Did your grade level use a research-based intervention program for your at-risk students?

5. If yes, which program did you use?

6. If no, what did you use instead?

Appendix G

January 9, 2007 Parent Letter and Permission Slip

Appendix G

January 9, 2007

Dear Parents,

In October, Theresa Garner and I sent home a letter explaining our thesis project we are working on this year. This project includes the intervention instruction and reverse mainstreaming models the school implemented in the fall. We are in the process of collecting and analyzing the data. In order to calculate and use the data collected, we are required to gain parental permission. Many parents returned the forms in October granting us permission to include their child in the data collection. However, we would like to get permission from as many parents as possible. If you agree to let us include your child's data in the thesis project, please return the bottom portion of the letter to your child's teacher by Monday, January 23. Please remember that all information we gather will remain completely anonymous.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call school.

Thank you,

Regina Reed & Theresa Garner

Release for Participation in Research Project

_____ Yes, I give permission for my child to be a part of the research project for Theresa Garner and Regina Reed. I understand the information collected on my child will remain anonymous and will be used for the sole purpose of the paper.

_____ No, I would not like my child to be part of the research project at this time.

Student Name _____ Room Number _____

Parent Signature _____

Appendix H

March 6, 2007 Parent Letter and Permission Slip

Appendix H

March 6, 2007

To The Parents of

In the past few months, you received two letters regarding a thesis project by Regina Reed and Theresa Garner for California State University, Channel Islands. This project includes the intervention instruction and reverse mainstreaming models the school implemented in the fall. We are in the process of collecting and analyzing the data. In order to calculate and use the data collected, we are required to gain parental permission. Many parents returned the forms already, granting us permission to include their child in the data collection. However, we would like to get permission from as many parents as possible. If you agree to let us include your child's data in the thesis project, please return the bottom portion of the letter to your child's teacher. Please remember that all information we gather will remain completely anonymous.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call school.

Thank you,

Regina Reed & Theresa Garner

Release for Participation in Research Project

_____ Yes, I give permission for my child to be a part of the research project for Theresa Garner and Regina Reed. I understand the information collected on my child will remain anonymous and will be used for the sole purpose of the paper.

_____ No, I would not like my child to be part of the research project at this time.

Student Name _____ Room Number

Parent Signature

Appendix I

Teacher Interview Questions

Appendix I

Teacher Interview Questions

1. What are your overall feelings about the new model of intervention?
2. What are you noticing about the students receiving intervention?
3. How does that compare to last year?
4. Do you feel you had enough time to collaborate with the other teachers at your grade level?
5. How did you feel about the intervention you used with your group of students?
6. Did the student groups change at any time during the process?
7. If yes, what determined the change?
8. What were the students' feelings regarding intervention this year?

Appendix J

Administrator Acknowledgement Letter

Appendix J

Teacher Interview Questions

9. What are your overall feelings about the new model of intervention?
10. What are you noticing about the students receiving intervention?
11. How does that compare to last year?
12. Do you feel you had enough time to collaborate with the other teachers at your grade level?
13. How did you feel about the intervention you used with your group of students?
14. Did the student groups change at any time during the process?
15. If yes, what determined the change?
16. What were the students' feelings regarding intervention this year?

Appendix K

SIPPS Placement Assessment

Section A (Kindergarten and grade 1: Assessing the material in Beginning Level Lessons 1-10)**Phonics**

"Tell me the sound of each letter":

s _ n _ t _ m

Number right ____ /4 Pass (3-4 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

"I want to see how well you can read these words without any help."

I _ see _ the _ you _ can _ me _ and _ we _

Number right ____ /8 Pass 17-8 right) or Not Pass

_ If the student passes both phonics and sight words, continue the assessment.

If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words, place her in Beginning Level lesson 1.

Section B (Kindergarten and grade 1: assessing the material in Beginning Level lessons 11–20)**Phonics**

sat _ if _ man _ fit _ ran _ in _ mat _ sit _ rat _ fan _

Number right ____ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

on _ is _ yes _ are _ no _

Number right ____ /5 Pass (4-5 right) or Not Pass

_ If the student passes both phonics and sight words, continue the assessment.

If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words, place him in Beginning Level lesson 11.

Section C (Kindergarten and grade 1: assessing the material in Beginning Level lessons 21–30)**Phonics**

cut _ rub _ him _ my _ sock _ mad _ fun _ kick _ fat _ hot _

Number right ____ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

he _ get _ under _ to _ was _ go _ down _ saw _ where _ here _

Number right ____ /10 Pass (6-10 right) or Not Pass

_ If the student passes both phonics and sight words, place her in Beginning Level lesson 31.

_ If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words, place her in Beginning Level lesson 21.

Section D (All grades: assessing the material in Beginning Level lessons 3'7-5 5'/Extension prerequisite lessons)

Phonics

math ___ shells ___ quick ___ sing ___ much ___ rocks ___ catch ___ judge ___ when ___ hopping ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-W right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

from ___ were ___ many ___ call ___ for ___ does ___ your ___ told ___ there ___ other ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

___ If the student passes both phonics and sight words, continue the assessment.

___ If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words:

___ K-1: Place him in Beginning Level lesson 41.

___ 2-3: Place him in Extension Level prerequisite lesson 1.

___ 4+: Place him in Challenge Level lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass phonics, include single-syllable phonics beginning in lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass sight words, include sight-word instruction.

Section E (All grades: assessing the material Extension Level lessons 1-15)

Phonics

planes ___ smelling ___ these ___ brave ___ slide ___

closed ___ stone ___ shining ___ cute ___ hummed ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

very ___ want ___ full ___ walk ___ find ___ would ___ give ___ any ___ move ___ their ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

___ If the student passes both phonics and sight words, continue the assessment.

___ If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words:

___ K-3: Place her in Extension Level lesson 1.

___ 4+: Place her in Challenge Level lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass phonics, include single-syllable phonics beginning in lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass sight words, include sight-word instruction.

Section F (All grades: assessing the material in Extension Level lessons 16-25)

Phonics

sleeps ___ reaching ___ fern ___ trains ___ stirring ___

floated ___ strayed ___ north ___ smart ___ clowns ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

water ___ again ___ great ___ who ___ because ___

answer ___ should ___ only ___ women ___ toward ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

___ If the student passes, continue the assessment.

___ If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words:

___ K-3: Place him in Extension Level lesson 16.

___ 4+: Place him in Challenge Level lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass phonics, include single-syllable phonics beginning in lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass sight words, include sight-word instruction.

SIPPS Assessment

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Section G (All grades: assessing the material in Extension Level lessons 26–40)

Phonics

boots ___ chewed ___ small ___ bright ___ flies ___

round ___ pointed ___ fault ___ crawling ___ prices ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

Sight Words (three-second limit per word)

beautiful ___ Mr. ___ whole ___ busy ___ guess ___

shoe ___ half ___ brought ___ heard ___ group ___

Number right ___ /10 Pass (8-10 right) or Not Pass

___ If the student passes, continue the assessment.

___ If the student does not pass both phonics and sight words:

___ K~3: Place her in Extension Level lesson 26.

___ 4+: Place her in Challenge Level lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass phonics, include single-syllable phonics beginning in lesson 1.

___ If the student did not pass sight words, include sight-word instruction.

Section H (Assessing Challenge Level, polysyllabic words)

dinner ___ punish ___ moment ___ contest ___ staticm_

crocodile ___ relative ___ volcano ___ decorate ___ difficult_

fantastic ___ umbrella ___ calendar ___ tomato ___ eraser

education ___ unhappiness ___ transportation ___ communicate ___ experiment_

Number right ___ /20 Pass (16-20 right) or Not Pass

___ If the student passes this section, the student may not need Challenge Level.

___ If the student does not pass this section, place him in Challenge Level lesson 1.