

**FINDING A WAY THROUGH THE MAZE**

**CRUCIAL TERMS USED IN EDUCATION  
PROVISION FOR CANADIANS WITH  
DISABILITIES**

**ANALYSIS OF RESPONSES TO  
CRUCIAL TERMS QUESTIONNAIRE**

The Crucial Terms Questionnaire (CTQ) was distributed across English Canada to organizations & individuals concerned with education of Canadians with disabilities this past spring. A French language of the CTQ is being distributed across French Canada.

Completed CTQ forms were returned by persons with disabilities, education systems, special education advocates, inclusive education advocates, teachers, parents, Ministries of Education, Faculties of Education, Community Colleges, and others.

The project, *Finding a Way Through the Maze: Crucial Terms Used in Education Provision for Canadians with Disabilities*, is designed to clarify meanings of terms used to describe the two present approaches to education of persons with disabilities in Canada, Special Education and Inclusive Education. It has become apparent that confusion exists in use of crucial terms used to describe these approaches. All concerned with education of Canadians with disabilities will benefit from clarity in terminology.

The Crucial Terms Project is a neutral project. Its aim is to clarify terminology. No part of the project is designed to advantage either approach, nor to compare them. Questionnaires were distributed widely to supporters of both approaches.

This report on CTQ analysis presents summaries of responses of those who completed the CTQ and returned it. Our thanks are extended to those project participants. The questionnaire attempted to deal with a complex issue. This meant it required considerable time and concentration of all those choosing to complete it; much more time and concentration that required by most questionnaires.

### **The Crucial Terms Questionnaire**

The CTQ was designed to investigate definitions Canadians hold for selected crucial terms. The investigation was to be in depth. Terms selected as crucial were

determined from among a large set of terms developed from a review of the Canadian literature on Special Education and Inclusive Education. A panel of 25 Canadians selected on the basis of expertise in education and disability indicated which terms they considered crucial. From the terms chosen, a final group of 24 terms were developed. This analysis is based on 20 of those terms. Responses to four terms, standardized assessment, teacher ownership, heterogenous grouping, and homogenous grouping, were excluded from analysis. Participants questionnaire to these items varied to such a degree that analysis was considered questionable.

To support in-depth analysis of the terms, each was examined through four levels of response.

- **Definition:** Permits the individual or organization to give the definition of each terms as it is understood by that organization or individual.
- **Meaning:** Asks the individual or organization to move beneath the surface level of the definition to its underlying meaning. What is implied in the definition regarding education of persons with disabilities in Canada?
- **Association:** Terms may be associated in the mind and action of the individual or organization with the Special Education or the Inclusive Education approach, or with both. This level asks each participant to indicate with which approach the term is associated.
- **Why:** This level requires each questionnaire participant to examine why the term is associated with one or other of the approaches, or both. What is there in the term and the approach designated that makes the association?

### **Use of the CTQ Analysis**

The CTQ analysis and accompanying scan of how crucial terms are used in Canadian literature dealing with education and disability have been prepared to support the third step in the Crucial Terms Project. Both reports will be used in six regional meetings as background to assist participants in refining definitions for each crucial term. Following further refining through blending and rationalizing the definitions emerging from the regional meetings, and English/French lexicon of recommended terms will be developed. This lexicon will be distributed to participating individuals and organizations, and others. It is hoped that the lexicon will be of value as a guide to terminology for those who make decisions with regard to education for Canadians with disabilities.

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## **ALTERNATE PLACEMENT**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Respondents closely associated the concept and practice of alternate placement of a student with disabilities with the special education model (92%). Lesser numbers associated the term with the inclusive education model (4%) or with both (4%).

#### **DEFINITION:**

A variety of definitions were offered by respondents. Most indicated that alternate placement was placement of a student with disabilities somewhere outside the regular classroom or school and away from the peer population. Various respondents noted that such placement could be in a special school, a resource room setting, or various types of special class settings.

- educational setting in a different location from that of the peer group
- placement in a program not part of the regular education system
- outside the neighbourhood school, class, or grade – a resource room
- placement outside the mainstream
- program designed by special educators with no mainstream students and separate learning
- the special education model. Students move to a special setting

The much smaller grouping focused their definitions on a view that alternate placement was selected on the basis of meeting needs of individual students with disabilities, with the intimation that such placement would provide greater academic success.

- placement allowing student to better achieve goals
- placement based on individual needs of students

A smaller number of respondents offered definitions which indicated that alternate settings were educational in nature.

- an educational setting different from the peer group
- another type of program, but still educational

A group of similar size indicated that alternate placements were other than those expected of age and/or grade.

- placement other than age grade
- other than placement expected for age or schooling

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

As anticipated in design of this questionnaire a significant number of respondents experienced difficulty shifting from defining alternate placement and moving to the deeper level of what meaning their definition had. No new information was obtained from such responses. However, other participants extended understanding of educators view of alternate placement by offering new aspects.

A group of respondents suggested that the meaning of being placed in an alternate setting away from the regular education system was that the program would be different in terms of curriculum or supports.

- requires program other than regular and different supports
- something entirely different
- special curriculum to meet needs

A group of approximately equal size referred to how the curriculum would be treated in an alternate placement. Whereas all referred to curriculum, what they saw as the curriculum of the alternate setting, and way curriculum was implemented, varied.

- same curriculum
- abandon academic expectations
- modified program with functional or behavioural focus

The largest group using the opportunity to comment on the meaning of placing students with disabilities in alternate settings, however, focused on why alternate placements were chosen. Most comments indicated that learners with disabilities were unable to meet the demands of the classroom curriculum or that teachers were unable to meet the needs of such students in the regular classroom setting.

- Not able to function in the regular classroom
- unable to achieve goals in regular classroom
- not wanted in regular classroom
- learner has needs the regular classroom cannot meet
- Student is viewed as academically weak or being behaviourally inappropriate and a special setting is required.

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Despite continued reference by some respondents to the view that alternate placement promised more success for students with disabilities, and comments describing aspects of alternate placements, half of respondents indicated in one way or another why they associated alternate placements with the special education model rather than with inclusion.

One group of respondents stated that alternate placement was not part of the inclusive model.

- Does not lend itself to inclusion, but to congregation of special students

- The term is not used in inclusive education
- Not part of the inclusive education model

A second group indicated that alternate placement was associated with special education by definition.

- Children are segregated by definition
- This is the special education model

Third, some respondents suggested that alternate placements were part of the special education model by default. For one reason or another, the regular education system had rejected students with disabilities as part of its responsibility.

- The regular system lacks time and resources
- The regular classroom does not wish to adapt or modify

Lastly, a small number introduced the term Least Restrictive Environment. The LRE concept suggests that students with disabilities should be placed in the environment which meets their needs best, and as far toward the regular classroom as possible. It is a term from United States' legislation and associated with on the special education model.

- Sometimes the LRE outside the regular system is appropriate
- LRE.
- Individualizing placement optimizes potential for success

While variety of opinion characterized the meaning of definitions of educational services for learners with disabilities, it seems that the great majority of participants viewed alternate placement as related to the special education model.

## **CASCADE/CONTINUUM OF SERVICES**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Respondents were split on whether the Cascade Model of alternate placements was associated more with the special education or with the inclusive education model. A slight majority viewed it as connected to inclusive education (52%). Some 40 % saw it as associated with the special education model. A lesser number (8%) suggested it was associated with both models of education for learners with disabilities.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Almost every respondent associating the Cascade Model with inclusive education defined it as an array or range of services.

- An array of services
- A spectrum of services from regular education to segregation
- A range of services selected from the cascade only. An alternate placemen

Almost every respondent associating the Cascade Model with special education defined it as an array or range of services.

- Ranges from inclusion to total segregation
- A variety of services ranging from one extreme to another
- A range of placements from full-time inclusion to segregation

Two respondents mentioned the term LRE directly or indirectly.

- Services from LRE and narrowing for fewer students
- Spectrum of services based on most inclusive environment

It appears that respondents in this study exhibited considerable confusion regarding the definition of Cascade/Continuum of Services and to which model it relates. This is an

interesting finding as the Cascade Model was developed to describe the alternate placements of the Special Education Model, and as almost every participant associated alternate placement with the Special Education Model.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

More than half of participants responding question indicated that a Cascade/Continuum of Services referred to a series of alternate placements to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Inserted in responses were statements suggesting that placement changed as students' needs were identified, that needs could be matched to services, that services related to success, and that quality of educational service remained stable across changing placements.

- The first choice is the regular classroom and the student is moved as needs are identified
- Providing for needs with various resources
- varying location and level dependent on individual needs
- Phases or steps looking at where students receive service
- Every student receives same quality of service, though they vary from student to student
- Students are placed along the continuum according to perceived needs

Other responses, while open to interpretation as referring to a range of placements, were somewhat diverse and vague. Additionally, a number of participants chose not to answer this question.

It would seem, however, that most respondents held clear understanding of what Cascade/Continuum of Services meant. It was seen as alternate placements ranging from the regular classroom to segregated settings based on perceived student needs.

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH MODELS**

Once again, a fair number of respondents echoed comments already offered under Definition. Unless new information focused on why the respondent associated Cascade/Continuum with special education or inclusive education, the response is not commented on here. If new information relevant to earlier questions regarding this term was involved, it was blended into earlier discussion.

The majority of responses dealing with why Cascade/Continuum was related to either special education or to inclusive education suggested that the Cascade/Continuum involved both special education and inclusive education components.

- The special education range of placements includes inclusion
- The individual student may reach potential in inclusive or special education approaches
- Inclusive and segregated services are available
- It identifies all approaches and services

A small number of respondents again raised the LRE concept.

- Program can be designed to focus on the most inclusive environment
- Students in most inclusive environment

Responses to the Cascade/Continuum of Services model coupled with the preceding discussion of alternate placements suggests significant confusion among many respondents regarding the meanings of the terms and how they interrelate.

## **COLLABORATION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Respondents viewed collaboration as connected to the inclusive education model (70%) far more often than to the special education model (4%). 26 % connected it to both.

#### **DEFINITION:**

The majority of respondents agreed that collaboration, in one way or another, means working with others toward a common goal, that of planning effective programs for students with disabilities.

- Team consultation prior to decision-making
- The group working toward a common goal.
- Colleagues working together to meet special needs
- Collective team planning by all key players
- Teachers seeing selves as a team working together to plan and enact a program for a special needs student

Included in this general agreement were sub-groups mentioning specific aspects of the collaborative concept. One such group noted the value of extending the collaborative approach beyond educators.

- Working with families, professionals, and volunteers to plan how to best include students in all ways
- Networking with a range of professionals and family members to plan and implement programs

Others saw potential for problem-solving around student needs through employment of the collaborative approach.

- Working as a team to meet special needs; includes problem-solving
- Problem-solving approach involving all involved with student's program

The few participants not as clear as the majority that collaboration means working with other toward a common goal, suggested or implied a working together process. The majority did not refer directly or indirectly to collaboration as an underlying aspect of inclusive practice.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Respondents did not move to the level of examining the underlying meaning of adopting a collaborative model with any decided strength. A number, however, added new information by noting what types of activities related to collaborative teaming.

- Plan together to solve problems, to prepare materials for the student's program
- Working to modify the program and exams and working with students and volunteers
- Letting others see and hear the information compiled

Still others introduced a variety of points which reached toward underlying meaning. Though not numerous, noting such responses may be of value.

- The whole is greater than the sum of the parts
- Bringing in others to do stuff you can't
- Each team member is free to have input and to contribute

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

As seems to be the pattern in response to questions there is a decided tendency for respondents to echo parts of their statement of definition of the term being considered. Nevertheless, each question provides scope for new information tapping deeper levels.

Such is the case for responses around why collaboration is seen as more associated with inclusive education than with special education.

A sizeable group of participants noted relationship between collaboration and inclusive education.

- Central to success of inclusive program
- True collaboration involves the parents; special education informs the parents
- Collaboration is essential in inclusion. It is not as critical in special education
- Inclusion is more a sharing and special education is top down

A second group emphasized that collaboration could be a valued aspect of both models.

More respondents made this point for collaboration than for terms discussed previously.

- Collaboration can be an operating principle in both
- Can be done successfully in either
- Can work in both, but most associated with inclusion

## **CONGREGATED CLASS**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Differences in opinion were apparent in responses. A sizeable number of participants did not indicate which model they may have seen as associated with congregated classes. A few of these simply indicated that it was an unfamiliar term. Of those responding, a majority indicated that congregated classes were associated with the special education model (71%), whereas 19 % and 9 % respectively chose the inclusive model or both. Such variance in response may be a rough measure of differences in understanding of the meaning of congregated class.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Most respondents associating a congregated class with the special education model also defined it as a segregated class attended by students with disabilities of similar needs and of similar age.

- Students with the same need educated in a central area
- A collection of students with special needs in one classroom
- A class of similar students in abilities, handicaps, and behaviours
- A segregated class of students with similar ability level

A number of respondents suggested that, though all were defined as special needs, the students in a congregated class might well not all share the same condition of needs.

- A class where students with varying disabilities are brought together
- A class of students with a variety of abilities

Other respondents elaborated on characteristics of congregated classes.

- Low PTR (pupil-teacher ratio), self-contained class serving students of a similar age
- Learners grouped according to physical, psychological, or intellectual needs in a segregated class

Still others introduced the idea of meeting specified criteria for a congregated class.

- Students meeting predetermined criteria
- A class based on criteria or identification of an exceptionality

Though differences in response, such as those noted, occurred, general agreement that a congregated class was the same as a special education class was apparent.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Discussion of the underlying meaning of congregated class did not reach further than those points used in defining the term for most participants. This was the case to a high degree. Little new information was developed from responses under meaning of congregated class.

Nevertheless, a variety of points worthy of mention were made. The reader may see some connection between several of these points.

- May be intended for individual support of needs
- A class with little family choice
- Cost effective but alienates
- Students grouped by arbitrary criteria and not with diverse peers
- Segregated from mainstream due to policy-makers belief that some students are more comfortable with others of similar needs

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Responses under this heading generated a variety of relevant responses. A number of responses noted that creating a special class did not fall under the inclusive education.

- For those who cannot be served in a homogenous class
- Students are not exposed to typically developing peers
- Exact opposite of inclusion
- Special educators and psychologists believe students with disabilities with access to specialized services will avoid falling through the cracks
- Assumes likeness due to shared disabilities and that needs can be met
- There are no special classes in inclusion

Others chose not to respond to this particular item, repeated information offered earlier, or gave tangential responses.

In sum, most respondents associated congregated classes with special education as they involved development of segregated classes of students with disabilities defined by needs, by conditions of challenge, and through meeting specific criteria. Evidence of other understandings came through in classifying congregated classes as part of the inclusive education model, or part of both models.

## **CURRICULUM ADAPTATION/ACCOMMODATION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

The majority of respondents placed curriculum adaptation/curriculum as firmly associated with the inclusive education model (80%). Lesser numbers suggested association with the special education model (8%) or with both (12%).

#### **DEFINITION:**

The majority of respondents defined curriculum adaptation/modification as working with the curriculum of the regular class and treating it in various ways to include learners with disabilities. Two primary themes emerged.

Firstly, ways are developed to support the student in accessing curriculum. Strategies include altering instructional pace, reducing amount to be learned at one time, using different materials, altering the form of the curricula, and providing more time for learning.

- Regular learning outcomes, adapted to meet student needs
- Adapting curriculum/environment or instruction to meet student learning needs
- Adapting programming or curriculum to meet individual needs
- Adaptation of curriculum – visual, scribe, small groups – in order to achieve Ministry outcomes
- Working from regular curriculum for all and fitting it to individual needs

Secondly, work from the regular curriculum, but alter the curriculum in some way to meet student needs. Examples offered included changing the curriculum, reducing content, and changing curricular expectations.

- Altering curriculum content to meet individual needs

- Following the regular curriculum, but adapting so child will be successful – accommodations, reduce content, alter form, more time
- Changing curriculum expectations so that student with disabilities can succeed
- Changing curriculum to meet student needs by different materials, pace, amount

Though ways of accessing the regular curriculum varied, general agreement was apparent that students with disabilities were not to follow a different curriculum. Most holding the view that working from the regular curriculum, but providing accommodations or adaptations, associated such a process with inclusion.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Many respondents followed the pattern of repeating information already offered under Definition. However, other respondents provided information probing below a surface definition to the meaning of adapting and accommodating curricula.

A primary theme was that whatever was done, was done to support the student with disability in completing curriculum-based work, to obtain course credit, or to participate in learning as did other students.

- The student still receives course credit
- Changes made to accommodate the student in meeting objectives of the curriculum
- Making modifications based on individual abilities to allow completion of work
- Allows all to participate in the mainstream curriculum

Other, more individual views regarding adaptation and accommodation were suggested.

Among these were that adaptations and accommodations were simply the right of students, and that the curriculum can be discarded if necessary.

- Simply accommodate as defined by human rights legislation
- The curriculum does not meet student needs, so it is thrown out

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Whereas a number of participants noted that adaptations and accommodations may be used in special education settings and, therefore, made an association between adaptation/accommodation and special education, there was greater agreement that adaptation/accommodation were associated with the inclusive education model.

Three areas of association were mentioned, two considerably less than the first.

Among these latter two was the idea that adaptations and accommodations were strength focused rather than deficit focused, and that learning styles were respected.

- Accommodations and adaptations consider environmental adjustments and provide valuable lessons for typical students
- These are based on the idea that all are unique and should be taught in that manner

The second minor theme focused on the idea that adaptations and accommodations allowed students with disabilities to remain in the mainstream, to be included.

- Allows students to remain with peers
- Allows students to participate in the curriculum and remain in the regular class

The greater theme was that of opportunity to participate in the general life of the classroom, that equal opportunity was available, that inclusion prepared one for future life, and that adaptations and accommodations considered all students equal.

- All students are considered equal in the learning environment
- Accommodations facilitate inclusion in special education and in life in general

- Adaptations and accommodations provide equal opportunity for students with disabilities
- They allow all to participate in the mainstream curricula.

## **FACILITATOR**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Responses to questions under Facilitator indicated that the great majority of respondents believed it to be a term associated with inclusive education (80%). A further 12 % believed a facilitator could relate to both inclusive education and special education, while 8 % viewed as primarily related to special education. Little confusion on where the term fit with regard to education of students with disabilities was apparent.

### **DEFINITION:**

Almost all respondents understood the general role a facilitator might fill in education, though most provided general responses. However, within this larger group was a sizeable number who held the view that a facilitator, in terms of students with disabilities, was a person who could support access to regular class, support inclusion, access curriculum resources, coordinate a student's program, and support progress toward goals. Little confusion existed regarding to which approach to education of students with disabilities a facilitator related. A sizeable group of respondents understood the responsibilities of such a person.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Clarity of view of what role a facilitator plays in education of students with disabilities was apparent when discussing meaning of this term. While, as usual, many respondents simply added to definition of a facilitator and that person's role, a significant group of others extended into meaning of the position.

- Someone who works on behalf of a child/family or advocacy group to help achieve identified goals

- Someone who assists in connecting student's needs with student's goals
- An individual working within the educational context and provides setting and direct support for learning.
- A person with the responsibility of coordinating a student's program of inclusion.  
May extend to a school wide responsibility
- Works to create a functional working group

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Again, many respondents took the opportunity under this question to reinforce previous discussion under definition and meaning. Others took the opportunity to extend into how the position related to inclusive education more than to special education.

Among the points made were that the position solely relates to inclusion, drives the inclusion program, make use of regular classroom resources to support inclusion, and fits into the collaborative model.

- It drives the movement of inclusion
- Facilitating environment is less intimidating, less intrusive. Allows for a blue print
- Required for inclusion due to variety of supports to be coordinated
- Allows student to fully participate in Ministry curriculum while remaining in the regular classroom
- Implies working with others so inclusion would be the better approach

## **FULL INCLUSION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

The group of respondents almost to a person associated the term Full Inclusion with the inclusive education model. 8 % associated it with the special education model.

#### **DEFINITION:**

The understanding of 9 of each 10 respondents that Full Inclusion related to the inclusive approach was underlined by definitions offered. Two general themes were developed.

One was that Full Inclusion meant that learners with disabilities were in regular classrooms on a routine basis, and that degree of need was not a placement factor.

- Students with disabilities receive support in the regular classroom for 100 % of the day
- All students are assigned to regular class placements regardless of their disabilities
- All students with their same age classmates all the time

The second theme was that physical presence in the regular classroom was complemented by participation in the activities of the classroom and the other students.

- Students have access to programs, services, and supports that maximize potential to achieve
- In the regular class and neighbourhood school; included in all aspects of school life
- Full participation
- Students with disabilities receive all programming with the peer group in the neighbourhood school

Respondents not making the specific points characterizing these two themes nevertheless left no doubt that Full Inclusion meant placement in the regular classroom.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Those respondents reaching beyond definition of Full Inclusion to underlying meaning added information of value. Aspects such as responsibility for programming residing in the regular classroom, participation in extra-curricular activities, working within the student's capacity, resisting social isolation, and benefits for all students were mentioned.

- Individual programming developed and carried out in the regular class
- In regular classroom, in neighbourhood school, in extracurricular, not withdrawn or stigmatized in any way
- Age appropriate class for the entire school day. Not necessarily doing the same work, but with the class
- Special needs students can serve as integral members of the greater community and interact with all people with a range of talents and strengths
- All students benefit from being together for education more than from being separated.

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSION**

A number of respondents noted why the practice of Full Inclusion is tied to the inclusive model of education in general. The belief that as family members all students should have equal access to regular classrooms was implied, and reinforced by the concept that everyone belongs. Tied to such beliefs were that of societal commitment to equitable treatment and the right of all to belong. Also noted was the distance between inclusive education and special education as educational services for learner with disabilities.

- All kids are family members and should be treated as such
- Inclusion is built on the philosophy that everyone belongs. Inclusion will look different for every student. We begin with the premise of belonging..
- It is impossible to achieve Full Inclusion in a segregated environment
- Because Full Inclusion demonstrates a societal commitment to welcoming everyone, and most importantly, will have a lifelong effect on typical learners
- Every human being has the right to live in and belong to a community
- Because Full Inclusion has no restrictions
- This is the inclusive model

The majority of respondents had no doubt regarding what Full Inclusion signifies. They offered clear definitions, explained the meaning underlying the definitions suggested, and stated why Full Inclusion fit within the inclusive education model.

## **FUNCTIONAL/AUTHENTIC/DYNAMIC ASSESSMENT**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Responses to the above blended term for certain approaches to assessment in education of students with disabilities indicated a variety of positions with regard to whether they relate to special education, to inclusive education, or to both. That a larger than usual proportion of those returning completed questionnaires elected not to classify this term suggests a degree of unfamiliarity with it. Of those responding to the term, special education was elected by 23 %, inclusive education by 54 %, and both by 23 %. This spread supports the possibility of unfamiliarity and lack of certainty.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Only 1 in 10 were familiar with the technical meanings of the term. However, approximately half of respondents were able to provide general descriptions. A few respondents noted that these types of assessment do not rely on standardized tests, though such tests may be used in an overall assessment process.

- An informal testing process that includes non-standardized testing, observation, needed supports, and day to day assessment of work
- Includes getting a clear understanding of student level of performance using a variety of tools
- Assessment conducted in the student's natural environment
- Assessment used to identify general patterns of behaviour and abilities
- Assessment of what a student can do in real tasks of learning

Other responses gave highly generalized definitions of this term, did not respond, or stated that they had "No idea" of its meaning.

- No idea. But families are wary of assessment as it can lead to imposed placement
- Not sure I am qualified to comment

It appeared, both from the spread of associations and the fairly general, though often acceptably accurate, definitions suggested, that many were uncertain of both definition and its association with special education and/or inclusive education.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Responses around meaning of these types of assessment also suggested uncertainty.

Some participants chose not to suggest meaning. Many others repeated what they had said under definition. A number were able to move to a deeper level in suggesting that these types of assessment involve effort to understand what a learner with disability can do, rather than what comparative level of ability was present, that a wide range of skills and abilities were measured in real life situations, that such assessment led to program planning, and that these types of assessment are used in preference to, or to complement, standardized assessment.

- This implies that one tool will not work for all children. A variety is needed.
- Measuring a wide range of abilities that are more than academic. Tracking and charting emerging and progressing skills
- Determining what a student can do independently
- Rejection of standardized tests as employed under the psychometric model in favour of more informal and revealing assessment methods

### **WHY TERM IS MORE ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSION**

A majority of participants opted for inclusive education, but responses for this last area were variable. Most respondents seemed uncertain of why the approach relates to special

education, to inclusive education, or to both. A number of respondents did suggest that the types of assessment involved were focused on individual ability, ranged widely, related to instruction, and were process oriented.

- Strength based rather than deficit oriented
- Beginning point for instruction
- It works. It is characterized by continuous learning
- It deals more with process than labeling
- Focus is on program assessment and rejection of testing characteristic of traditional testing under the special education model.

## **INCLUSION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

The great majority of respondents (88%) indicated that Inclusion was associated with inclusive education. However, a few respondents saw Inclusion as related to special education.

#### **DEFINITION:**

A number of themes were apparent in responses to this questionnaire item. One, involving a group of some size, offered definitions of general nature which did not refer to education specifically, but to acceptance of persons with disability overall.

A group of similar size simply stated that Inclusion equated to Full Inclusion.

Still another small group suggested that Inclusion was a philosophy or movement. This may be an important point as it may be interpreted as suggesting that, while a valuable and positive philosophy, implementation may be a different thing.

This latter possibility may be supported by yet another group of modest size whose responses suggested that students could be included, but not necessarily in the regular classroom. Other environments away from the regular classroom might be considered as inclusive. This is suggestive of the LRE concept.

Lastly, a larger group equal in size to all those discussed above, defined Inclusion as an educational approach for all learners with disabilities which involves age-appropriate regular classrooms, neighbourhood schools, interaction with peers, and participation in classroom activities.

#### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

As is the tendency in questionnaires attempting to look deeply at certain beliefs and positions on a topic, overlapping comments occur. People say what they said before. Nevertheless, some participants add to information provided previously. Two definite understandings of underlying meaning of Inclusion developed from responses.

The first was that inclusion involved working with learners marginalized in education away from regular peers, regular classrooms and schools, seeing them as part of the larger community of learners, and benefiting through inclusion in regular classrooms.

- We all belong to a common humanity. Each of us needs to feel appreciated and understood. We all belong
- A child/person can function successfully as an individual in the same environment as his/her peers.

The second meaning derived was that inclusion was a value system not indicating a particular location within the school system, but including time in the regular classroom and time elsewhere. One respondent defined Inclusion as meaning the LRE.

- Same as Full Inclusion. No range of inclusion. Either students are or they aren't
- Same as Full Inclusion

It is apparent that, while it is understood that Inclusion refers to placement of students with disabilities in regular classrooms, significant differences of understanding of what actually happens in practice exists. Fundamental differences in definitions of Inclusion suggest that respondents approached the term and practice in sharply divergent manner.

#### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

## **INCLUSIVE PHILOSOPHY**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Respondents (85%) associated Inclusive Philosophy with inclusive education. A small group associated the term with both the inclusive and the special education models. Less than 5 % of respondents believed it to connect solely to the special education model.

### **DEFINITION:**

Responses to this item ranged from statements of practice and setting, relatively vague generalizations regarding inclusion, and statements dealing with higher level concepts of what Inclusive Philosophy might involve. A significant number of respondents offered statements which dealt with underlying aspects of Inclusive Philosophy. These statements spoke to development of community, belonging to that community in all ways, rights, need for a value system in education of students with disabilities, the essential sameness of all learners, and rejection of any system which separates learners from other learners.

- School reflects community. Everyone has the right to belong in their school community
- A value system. Strong belief in inclusion. Values guide everything we do and why we do it
- All students to be included based on equal opportunity
- Belief that everyone belongs in the community, and have a unique place in it
- Belief that all students will participate to the fullest extent in all aspects of neighbourhood school communities
- Belief that inclusion is best for all and can be put in place, coupled with rejection of any level of segregation

Responses of a smaller group suggested that Inclusive Philosophy meant bringing together students, but within limits when it came to putting the philosophy into play.

Wordings tempered statements of Inclusive Philosophy and were suggestive of the LRE.

- Belief that inclusion is good if not always the reality
- All students should be interacting together as much as it is in their best interests
- A belief in meeting the needs of children in the most inclusive setting possible

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

The same split in defining Inclusive Philosophy reoccurred when it came to stating underlying meanings of the term. Embedded with some frequency among responses repeating points made under definition were new points indicating a pan-system and pan-student view of inclusion.

- No one should be barred from an opportunity due to special needs
- That at all times students are to be provided support within the regular education setting
- A belief that full inclusion can happen and is happening. Should be more than a belief
- Move the service to wherever the student is; not move the student to the service
- All students in one educational setting together, regardless of diversity

Noted with less frequency, however, were statements accepting that there were limitations to how far Inclusive Philosophy could and should go in practice.

- This may include a regular classroom, or may involve a continuum that respects the child's needs

- To provide a program for a student that as much as possible ensures age appropriate settings
- Based on individual ability, the opportunity to participate should be available

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Clear statements of why Inclusive Philosophy connected more with inclusive education emerged. Among many contributions echoing previous comments were ones which made a direct connection. These pointed to closeness between Inclusive Philosophy belief and practice, and to distance between inclusive education and special education models.

- It drives the movement of inclusion
- Special education is not widely known for its inclusive philosophy; rather, it is known for its ideas around labeling and segregation
- Philosophy or thought that has at its centre an inclusive approach
- Starts with the expectation that all students will be in the regular classroom
- There is an acceptance that all students are the same while having differences

## INTEGRATION

### SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL

Responses to whether Integration is associated with the special education model or with the inclusive model indicated clear split in views. Connection with the inclusive education model was selected by 48 %. Connection with the special education model was made by 44 %. At the same time, only 8 % connected it with both.

#### DEFINITION:

A sizeable group of respondents, almost all seeing Integration as connected to the inclusion model, defined Integration as students with disabilities in regular classrooms. The idea of students being together and participating with others, and of structuring classrooms to include all students were noted.

- Encourages kids with special needs to participate more fully in a regular classroom
- Including students with age-appropriate peers in a regular class setting
- Including people with disabilities in mainstream classrooms
- Working and participating with people of varying ability levels forges strong communities. Integration would eliminate past practices of segregation, institutionalization, and places that amount to ghettos
- Schools operating classrooms with heterogeneous populations

A somewhat larger number, almost all seeing Integration as connected to the special education model, defined Integration as students with disabilities in regular classroom settings, but with limitations or conditions. Terms such as “function appropriately; as much as possible; sometimes graduated allowance; setting that is appropriate; partial

programs; specific purposes; and “full-time or part-time” signaled reservations on how far regular classroom placement would extend under the Integration concept.

- When a person functions appropriately in the environment with peers
- Support special needs students in regular settings, but their programs are still built in isolation from the regular classroom
- Include students as much as possible in regular classroom/school setting
- When students in segregated settings attend partial programs in regular settings
- Students with disabilities are accommodated in a school system. Placed in regular classrooms for specific purposes
- One of the options of the special education model in which full or part-time placement in the regular classroom is appropriate

This result signals difficulty in differentiation between placing students with disabilities permanently in regular classrooms and placing them in regular classrooms on a conditional basis.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Beyond those participants who repeated aspects of their definitions of Integration and those with vague and tangential responses, three types of responses emerged which deepened understanding of what Integration meant. The first, largest grouping, indicated that limitations were attached. Limitations were being in a regular classroom, but not part of the regular learning group; continuing to receive special education services outside the regular classroom, and Integration being seen as a special allowance.

A second large group suggested that Integration means inclusion. Direct references were made to inclusion. At other times, Integration was viewed as the end of special education. At still others Integration was seen as including all learners in the same classroom.

- Students are simply included with the group, but not taught as part of the group
- May have individualized, segregated or special programs components that are part of the pull-out program
- A child being placed for short periods of time with peers – but not true integration
- Tokenism. Although typical learners see students with disabilities, they learn that we should have them with us when it is convenient
- Students have home base which is not regular classroom setting and go to regular classroom for selected subjects
- Primarily a physical placement for the student for a specified period of time
- Based on present achievement student is placed in a regular classroom for some or all subjects

Lastly, a few respondents indicated Integration meant lack of concern with level of disability.

- The person does not require a special placement to have his/her needs met
- I. E: a 12 year old child with significant intellectual disability would be included in a grade 6 regular class
- Classes are not determined based on educational ability

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH MODELS**

Those respondents whose comments reflected why they viewed Integration as attached to special education or inclusion divided into two groups of almost equal size. One group,

which saw an association with special education, expressed belief that not all students benefited from regular classroom experience, that integration was a deficit-based approach, that students are integrated on a permission basis, that students moved back and forth from regular classroom to special education settings, and that Integration did not connote learning as part of a regular class.

- Deficit-based approach
- Promotes a “grace and favour” approach; charity approach; academic elitism; teaches that students with disabilities are incapable of learning and dangerously tells them that thinking this is ok – even kind – because students are with them sometimes
- Student does not necessarily play an active role in the classroom. May be allowed in, but isn’t part of the class
- The student need not be included in any lesson in terms of teaching outcomes – just presence
- One of a series of alternate placements based on achievement levels

The group which saw connection to inclusion focused on inclusion as a permanent placement.

- Emphasis is on placement with an age-appropriate group
- Part of the circle of inclusion
- Bring together what is needed for a student with disability to display talents and show growth
- Every individual possesses strengths to share and all students will grow and develop more effectively and completely in a community

- It is an inclusive approach
- Students are included rather than excluded.

These patterns of response suggest that the meaning of the term Integration is unclear to many participants. If half of respondents hold one view and half another view, the meaning of a term is certainly in question.

## **MAINSTREAM**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Participants, roughly equally, viewed the term Mainstream as connected to the inclusive education model (48%) or to the special education model (44%).

#### **DEFINITION:**

Two definite views emerged. One spoke of the Mainstream simply as one system attended by all students, without dividing them on any characteristic, such as ability.

- Part of a regular education program and set-up
- One system is provided and everyone has to fit in
- The regular society and regular education support and serve all members of the community
- Place where most members of the community can be found
- Students are educated in regular classrooms for all of their program

The second view defined the Mainstream as a setting in which students with disabilities were placed. A sense of separation, one able bodied and one disabled, came through.

- Special needs students participate in regular education
- Selective placement of exceptional students in regular classrooms
- Placing students with disabilities in the traditional system
- Integration. Regular traditional classes
- The placement of students with exceptionalities in the regular curriculum classes

Lastly, a small number of responses which did not form a cohesive grouping were offered. These dealt with concepts such as the Mainstream being an out-dated term, as

being analogous to the Least Restrictive Environment and integration, or suggestive of a two-tier education system.

This term definitely was one of confused understanding. It would appear that there were two visions. One regarded all students as one composite group. The other saw students as two groups, abled and disabled, all in the same setting.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Once again, two discretely separate meanings emerged. The larger group of participants indicated that the Mainstream was a setting for able bodied students into which students with disabilities were placed.

- Exclusionary in it's root in assuming that kids other than those receiving special education supports and services make up the Mainstream
- When students spend time in regular classes for music, PE, etc., they're in the Mainstream
- Divided class and privilege
- Student groupings determined by ability
- The general system for students making acceptable progress and separate from the special education group

The lesser group of respondents tended to regard the Mainstream as the full-time educational setting for all students.

- Regular education
- To be part of an age-appropriate regular class and to follow that class throughout school
- Everyone together in the classroom regardless of disability

- Students with exceptional needs are placed in regular class full-time

Members of the first group tended to define the Mainstream as connected to the special education model. Those in the second group tended to be individuals who associated the term Mainstream with the inclusive education model.

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH TERMS**

The groups apparent under the two preceding discussions either believed that students with disabilities were seen as being chosen from the special education population to be in the Mainstream or that all students belonged in the Mainstream setting. The slightly larger group's responses to the "Why?" question took the view of some students being selected from the group of special students for placement with a second larger group of regular students.

- Students are integrated into mainstream classes
- Not all children benefit from the regular class- the learning gap increases with age
- Although you would think that mainstreaming kids is positive, it exists because of the segregation mentality
- Students are selected on the basis of disability level

For the second group connection was made with inclusion on the basis of direct agreement with inclusion philosophy or some sense of all students being in and belonging in the Mainstream setting.

- Emphasis in on placement within the regular setting
- In an inclusive environment, there is only one stream
- Uses inclusive method
- All in the traditional setting

## **PEER TUTORS**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Peer Tutors was selected as associated with inclusive education by 77 % of respondents.

Peer Tutors was selected as associated with special education or both special education and inclusive education by 12 % of respondents in each case.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Definitions of Peer Tutors divided into the majority of participants in one group and a second group of approximately 1/3 the size.

The first group gave general definitions of Peer Tutors which did not specify that Peer Tutors supported peers with disabilities. It may be that such was assumed. Definitions ranged from simple statements such as “Students helping students” to others which contained reference to special areas of support or type of support, but still to a non-specified group.

- Students of relatable ages and needs supporting one another in an area of perceived expertise
- Peer students who support students to achieve goals within their program
- Using peers to support learning of all students
- Student volunteers who help out other students in class
- Students who work together to help each other

The smaller group specified that support focused on peers with disabilities.

- Students volunteer to assist students with disabilities
- Peers who generally excel can be inspirational to those who struggle
- Students volunteer time to work with students of lesser ability

- A system of student collaboration in regular classrooms where students help other students based on what one knows

There was no confusion in responses of participants regarding the fact that Peer Tutors supported other students in their learning. A number of responses specified that Peer Tutors function focused on peers with disabilities.

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Two response groupings of approximately the same size, and one group of one respondent with a particular point to make, emerged in analysis of meanings offered for definitions of Peer Tutors.

One large group made the generic point that Peer Tutors are engaged in support of peers and that such support was aimed at success in the classroom. In accord with the manner in which some respondents defined the term Peer Tutors, members of this group did not specify whether the Peer Tutor support was aimed at students with disabilities.

- One student taking the lead in a subject such as math tutors other students rather than being dependent on teacher intervention
- Students helping students with course work
- Peers helping peers access the curriculum
- Peers helping each other to develop opportunities for successful learning

A second large group also made the point that Peer Tutors supported the classroom work of peers, but explained what Peer Tutors brought to the task beyond simple support.

Noted were adaptation of learning materials, effectiveness, encouragement, role modeling, validation, and enjoyment.

- Regular student adapts material for a student with disabilities

- Relationships develop role modeling
- Entrusting students to impart/gain knowledge from each other giving all a valid role
- Approach encourages teamwork and enhances communication skills, community building, and life long social skills
- All can learn from each other. Learning can be enjoyable

One respondent suggested that Peer Tutors were employed in support of peers with disabilities due to lack of sufficient other resources in the regular classroom.

- Inadequate resources have been provided so students are used inappropriately

#### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

Many respondents simply repeated comments made earlier for definition or meaning of Peer Tutors. However, two themes emerged that connected Peer Tutors to the inclusive education model or noted some type of connection to the special education model.

Connections to the inclusive education model suggested Peer Tutors related better to their peers, that peer tutoring was a natural strategy, that it built self esteem, independence, and interaction, and that all students learned about diversity.

- Kids sometimes connect better than adults
- Enhances communication of students and meets disability related needs
- Moves away from stigmatizing adult intervention model. Promotes community and positive relationships. A natural way of learning
- Sharing and giving break down barriers that otherwise exist
- Using Peer tutors educates both parties on diversity. Professionals are not always needed

- Emphasizes increased participation and interaction by fellow learners

Those making connections to the special education model suggested that Peer Tutors would be used in both inclusive education and special education settings and that special education teachers acted as guides to tutoring.

- Teacher would have made this adaptation in the special education room
- Applies to both settings in different ways
- Peer Tutors are part of all programs
- Successful strategy under both approaches

## **REMEDICATION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Questionnaire participants related Remediation as associated with the special education model by a decided margin (84%). Much lesser percentages of respondents associated Remediation with either the inclusive education model (8%) or with both models (8%).

#### **DEFINITION:**

A single, definite theme for defining Remediation emerged from analysis of definitions offered by respondents. Remediation is viewed as instruction designed to focus on re-teaching some aspect of learning not yet mastered by students with disabilities. Terms such as “re-teach; deficits; catch up; difficulty; fixing” and “wrong” characterized definitions.

- Instruction offered to a learner deficient in a skill or subject
- Re-teach a concept that has not yet been mastered
- Refers to deficits in a learner’s learning
- Catching up. Intense focused teaching/learning designed to catch up students
- Help to catch up or extra help to learn
- Fixing a learning problem
- Correcting something that’s wrong

#### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Three areas of meaning for the term Remediation were suggested by groups of respondents. The first and largest was that which Remediation aimed at acquisition of a skill or skills which challenge a student with disability.

- Implies working on skills that have not been mastered, but are needed for success in school
- Students' learning needs are assessed, areas of need indicated, and programs developed to address specific skill acquisition
- Giving short term help to learn a particular skill or concept
- To teach/learn a skill over again

A second, smaller group suggested Remediation meant working with students with disabilities to permit them to “catch up” to their non-disabled peers, to “drill” in instruction, to fix a “fault”, or to correct something that is “wrong”. An interesting aspect of most of these terms is that the problem is seen to be with the student.

- “Fixing” the student weakness in a particular area
- An act or process of correcting a fault
- To focus on what is wrong

The third grouping focused on relationships of Remediation to the regular classroom in various ways, often to need to be taught outside the regular classroom.

- Presumption is that the person cannot exist in a mainstream classroom
- Support could be individual instruction in special class, resource room, or learning centre
- Students need special help outside regular classroom to address weakness

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Three themes also emerged from analysis when it came to making connection between Remediation and special education. The first theme was that the learning of students with disabilities could be addressed most effectively beyond the regular classroom in some

type of special education setting where remediation could be delivered by special education teachers.

- Implies that this is a fix to student problems that can only occur in a pull-out situation
- Assumption that pull-out resources would help bring skills up to average level
- Often children who require remediation continue to require remediation through schooling. Often not in regular classroom
- Remediation is done often outside regular classroom setting with resource personnel
- It can lead to some exclusion
- Based on belief that students need specialist instruction and a curriculum different from the regular curriculum to fix faults. This service is best offered outside the regular classroom

Following this theme was one which focused the difficulty as residing within the student. Once again terms such as “deficit” and “something in need of repair” appeared. Such a view assumes special education to be a deficit-focused enterprise.

- Deficit-based
- If the program were appropriate, there would be no need for remediation. Change the program and stop blaming the student
- Considers student with disabilities to have the fault
- The term in and of itself focuses on what is wrong

The final theme made a connection between Remediation and special education directly, or indirectly through mention of the inclusive model.

- Historical term invoking image of special education
- Definitely the opposite of inclusion
- The goal of special education

## **RESOURCE ROOM**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

A small majority of participants considered the term Resource Room to connect primarily with the special education model (56%). However, a significant minority related it to the inclusive education model (32%) and a few respondents to both (12%).

#### **DEFINITION:**

A sizeable majority of questionnaire respondents, when asked to define Resource Room, responded that it was a segregated location outside the regular classroom, where resources and instruction could be accessed, and where specialized instructors work with students with disabilities.

- Segregated area within school where specialized teacher supports students
- A classroom or room where a resource teacher is based out of. Individual or group of students receive support
- An area outside the regular classroom that provides assistance to students
- An alternate physical setting where external assistance is provided, not only academic but social

Three small groups of respondents suggested definitions which included aspects of the foregoing definition, but also had additional meanings. One was that a Resource Room was a resource space for school staff and others.

- Designated space in the school for materials, staff/group meetings
- Room from which staff, parents, and students can access resources without barriers

A second small group suggestion was that students with disabilities did not have choice about whether they went to a Resource Room setting. One respondent stated that a Resource Room was similar to a detention room.

- Room students go to or are taken to when no longer convenient to teacher to have them in the regular classroom
- A classroom where extra help is given by educational assistants or special education teachers. No student choice

Lastly, a similarly sized group was of the belief that the purpose of the Resource Room was to assist regular classroom learning.

- Support service staffed by a group of professionals and teacher associates to help students learn strategies for success in the regular/mainstream environment
- A room for special students to receive instruction in various subjects to assist regular class learning

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

The majority of responses under this heading repeated points and did not move to the level of underlying meaning. When mentioned, underlying meaning was focused on two ideas. The most common meaning suggested was that Resource Rooms were separate from the regular classroom. A small number of these participants implied that the Resource Room functioned in unspecified manner as a special education class.

- Students go to a separate room for part of their day
- Pull-out class for academic subjects
- Tutorials and skills development delivered in a room separate from the regular classroom

- Can mean special class or room
- Pulling kids out for instruction

A second, smaller group gave responses which suggested that teachers used attendance in a Resource Room as a strategy to send a problem elsewhere.

- Students must accommodate regular class rather than it accommodating them
- Teacher can't cope so students sent out to another room for respite – Student fault

A single respondent suggested that the meaning of a Resource Room depended on the purpose underlying establishment of a Resource Room.

- Depends on whether instruction is supportive of regular curriculum or is focused on special curriculum/drill. The purpose of the Resource Room changes.

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH MODELS**

The majority of respondents delving beneath points developed in previous discussion to explain why Resource Room was a term related to both models focused on the fact that a Resource Room called for students to be removed from the regular classroom and, in so doing, created disconnection from the regular classroom. Added to this was the view that a Resource Room was not part of the inclusive education model, and that no need would exist for a Resource Room if the regular class program met needs of all students.

- The Resource Room was a special education model
- Creates disconnect from the overall classroom community
- Sets a small group apart from their peers
- A place to send students having difficulty in the regular classroom
- Takes a student away from the regular classroom
- Usually not used in inclusive manner

## **RESOURCE TEACHER**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

A slight majority (52 %) of participants indicated that the term Resource Teacher was associated with the special education model. A further 36 % connected it to the inclusive education model, while the final 12 % made an association with both.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Definitions for the term Resource Teacher broke down into a number of modest sized groups. These groups were differentiated by whether a Resource Teacher acted as a support to regular classroom teachers and students with disabilities, as a resource who supported teachers only, as a resource for students with disabilities, or as a teacher who works in a resource room. At times, parents were added to those whom Resource Teachers support.

#### Supports both Teachers and Students

- A specialized, skilled person whose training and background enables her/him to support a broad range of student and teacher needs
- A teacher who gives help to students, staff, and parents.
- A specially designated and trained teacher in special education that provides support for students and teachers. Part of a collaborative team

#### Supports Teachers Only

- Someone who provides additional assistance and guidance to classroom teachers
- A specialist who acts as consultant to teachers; provides materials, methods, a model

- Ideally a designated teacher who offers resources and strategies for classroom teachers

#### Supports Students Only

- A person who delivers special programming to students who need remedial support
- A qualified teacher that provides additional instruction to individuals and small groups as required
- A teacher with specialized teaching skills to help exceptional struggling learners

#### Works in a Resource Room

- The teacher who works in a resource room
- A teacher assigned to instruct in a resource room. Mostly a special education teacher
- A qualified teacher who runs a resource room

#### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Most respondents under this heading did not move beyond the surface level points made in defining the term Resource Teacher. However, a number looked beneath the surface level and mentioned aspects of underlying meanings of the term.

A group of respondents commented on the types of services a Resource Teacher could provide teachers, students with disabilities, or parents.

- This teacher may provide in-service, co-teaching, and/or pull-out support
- A resource teacher has a wide range of strategies and materials that might be helpful to teachers, parents, and students

- Resource teachers have a wealth of ideas about how to adapt the regular curriculum and assist teachers

A second group focused on the fact that some Resource Teachers work beyond the regular class setting in segregated environments.

- Pull-out, isolated therapy
- A teacher or educational assistant trained in special education who helps higher needs students in a special setting exclusively
- In reality the SERTS (Special Education Resource Teachers) don't involve themselves much in the teaching strategies of a regular classroom and seem to focus on segregated classrooms

A third and final group focused on Resource Teachers whose role it was to offer services to those named above in support of an integrated or inclusive program in a school.

- A resource teacher will be available and have necessary materials and skills for inside and outside the regular classroom
- The prime facilitator of special education services and inclusive education in a school
- Some resource teachers possess the skill and knowledge to teach special students in settings beyond the segregated classroom

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED WITH BOTH MODELS**

A diversity of opinion was apparent in why the term Resource Teacher connected to special education, inclusive education, or both. A sizeable number of respondents perceived direct relationship between the term and each of these choices.

The most common connection was made between Resource Teachers and the special education model.

- Part of the special education approach
- Does not use inclusive approach in curriculum delivery
- Denotes special learning area
- Such teachers are mostly used to offer a non-standard special education curriculum

A close second was those who believed that there was direct connection between the term and the inclusive education model.

- The resource teacher is a better way to support students in an integrated class
- Usually works in the regular class
- A resource teacher works in an inclusive environment

Lastly, a group of respondents offered reasons why a Resource Teacher could connect with both.

- Both. Teacher should be able to facilitate access at many levels
- A resource teacher can work in either setting
- A resource teacher is not exclusive to either approach

## SEGREGATION

### SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL

The great majority of respondents found connection between the term Segregation and the special education model (89%).

#### DEFINITION:

A large group of respondents stated that the term Segregation could be defined as dividing students, as moving students with disabilities to a setting separate from the regular classroom.

- Students with disabilities are taught in a class with other students with disabilities, but no typical students
- Separate programs, schools
- Having students with disabilities work outside a regular class setting
- Education apart from the regular classroom for students with disabilities

Two small groups of respondents went beyond this to emphasize why Segregation was undertaken. One of these groups indicated that Segregation was needs based.

- When a person is removed from society to an artificial environment for the needs of the person to be met

The second small group indicated the basis on which students with disabilities were segregated.

- When individuals are divided according to a special set of criteria
- Separating groups based on ability, race, or other characteristic
- Labels the student and takes him out of the mainstream

## **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Participants encountered considerable difficulty moving to the underlying meaning of the term Segregation. The majority of those who did move to this level commented on less positive aspects of Segregation.

- Having to struggle to fit in and have what everyone else has. Being an outsider, different, no sense of belonging
- Students socialize and communicate only with people with similar disabilities
- Little regard for healthy school communities. Instead shows need to pursue convenience and academic elitism

## **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION MODEL**

A large number of respondents appeared to have little difficulty in indicating why the term Segregation connected to the special education model. They simply stated, in various ways, that separating typical students and students with disabilities is a basic special education strategy.

- If its a special class, it must be special education
- The old special ed model
- The special education approach is to group students with disabilities away from the mainstream
- Basis of the special education model

A few respondents chose to explain why Segregation was connected to the special education model by making the point that Segregation was the opposite of inclusive education.

- Does not exist in inclusion

- Opposite to inclusive approach
- Antithesis of inclusion

## **SPECIAL CLASS**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Connection of Special Class to the inclusive education model, the special education model drew a high level of agreement from participants in this study. The special education model was selected by 92 % of the group.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Though general agreement was reached that Special Class connected to the special education model, definitions varied to a degree. Three themes developed, two major and one minor. The first major theme defined a Special Class as a class apart from regular education settings, a segregated setting attended by students with disabilities. The definitions offered were straightforward and simple.

- A segregated class where students with disabilities are taught
- Segregated class
- Not used now, but in the past a special class setup was for a specific category of students with disabilities
- A congregated class

The second set of definitions contained information similar to that above, but added more. These definitions generally indicated a purpose for a Special Class. Within these definitions were the points that a Special Class was developed to meet student needs, and/or that criteria for entrance into the class must be met.

- A class designed to target a specific population of students, or a class designed to target special needs of students

- A small class placement for a specific set of exceptional groups with a special set of goals and curriculum
- The same as a congregated class. A class grouping of students apart from other students and defined by disability

The minor theme struck a different note. Though few in number, the definitions offered the view that there were concerns related to Special Classes.

- A bunch of students that are being taught incorrectly are put together so they can be more effectively taught incorrectly
- A place that teaches students to be different

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Examination of responses focused on possible underlying meaning of the term Special Class resulted in two lines of thought. And, as has been the case for all overall responses for Meaning and Why Sections of the Crucial Terms Questionnaire, a number of respondents simply repeated information already offered under Definition.

One line of thought extended past the idea that a Special Class was designed to meet the needs of students with disabilities. Extension went in two directions. The first dealt with why it was necessary to establish Special Classes for students with disabilities; i. e. more effective teaching, special learning outcomes, and to develop ability to function in society.

- Students require extremely specialized training/programs before they can function in society
- Students are grouped together to meet very special learning outcomes

- Belief that students with disabilities are taught most effectively when grouped with like others

The second line of thought focused on what might be taught in a Special Class.

- An example would be a class structured to teach life skills
- Like ability groupings needing specific equipment, programming, or learning opportunities

Opposite to this “values” line of thought was another which drew out the idea that Special Classes made students already viewed as different, even more different.

- Students are taught something different in a different environment
- Special needs students miss opportunities to interact with a variety of individuals who can introduce a range of talents, ideas, and peer support

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION MODEL**

One major and one minor pattern of response were offered as reasons why a Special Class connected more to the special education model than to the inclusive education model. The major pattern spoke to a symbiotic relationship between a Special Class and special education; a tight and recognized relationship.

- Most often the skill base of the teacher can accommodate all students’ learning styles
- Special classes are delivered to respond to special needs based on a segregated approach
- Special classes evolved from special education
- The special education approach to education segregates individuals in this manner
- A special class is an option within the special education model

The minor pattern centered on the point that a Special Class by nature was not inclusive.

- There are no special classes in inclusive settings
- There is no inclusion

## **SPECIAL EDUCATION**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Interestingly, not all respondents connected the term Special Education primarily to the special education model. Whereas some 68 % did so, 20 % connected it to the inclusive education model and 12 % to both models.

#### **DEFINITION:**

As might be anticipated from the range of connections made, there was variety in the definitions of Special Education put forward.

A significant number of respondents simply pointed out that a natural relationship existed between Special Education and the special education model. Points made included that the special education model is a direct response to the needs of students with disabilities and that a range of services/supports were involved.

- Old definition for special students with significant needs
- Education for students who are not regular students, but are special in some way
- A continuum of services for students with identified learning needs
- Programs and resources provided for students with special needs

A second set of definitions referred to the fact that Special Education differed from regular education. A number of these pointed to ways in which the two differed.

- Having children outside regular settings
- Learning programs that differ from the regular curriculum
- A parallel and unnecessary system of education that labels and limits students with disabilities
- Education of those who not do fit an artificial norm

A third, and more general, type of definition appeared to attempt to defend or explain Special Education.

- Programs and services that are provided in a safe environment that cherishes and celebrates the uniqueness of each individual
- Changes required to help children with special needs to be successful
- Individualized programming to meet individual needs

### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Responses extending to underlying meaning of Special Education brought out two concepts. The first was that one underlying meaning was that the differences perceived by educators and other decision-makers required a special service staffed by specialist teachers.

- Trained educators who work with students identified in various Ministry categories
- Educators have resources and vocabulary to understand differences amongst learners
- Modified or accommodated curriculum individually designed to meet needs of students with exceptionalities

The second group of responses to underlying meaning of Special Education focused on effect of Special Education on learners categorized as disabled.

- Learning programs that differ from the regular curriculum
- Learn different things. Not the same as everyone else
- Means that most fundamental learning among all students – the ability to be creative, adaptable, and open – is lost

- Educating students in a different way because they are different
- A system parallel to the regular education system based on the belief that students with disabilities are often so different from others that they cannot be educated together

### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION MODEL**

Efforts to indicate why the term Special Education connected to either or both of the general approaches to education of students with disabilities brought out three discussions from groupings of varying size. The first oriented on the idea that Special Education meant separating typical students and students with disabilities.

- The implication is that a different program development and delivery system is required
- Special education does not start with the premise that these students are the same
- Identifies a different approach to teaching and learning than that in regular education
- A parallel system with the belief that students with disabilities need and benefit from separation in terms of location, curriculum, and resources

The second discussion related to how Special Education can be related to the inclusive education model or to both models.

- All children can benefit from a continuum of services. Inclusion should not simply imply location
- Can be delivered successfully in either inclusive or alternate model
- Really both approaches, but more special education related as inclusion grows

A final discussion offered by a few respondents adopted the strategy of defining the term Special Education by what it was not seen to be; that is, to compare it with inclusive education.

- It is not inclusive by design
- Non-inclusive

## **SPECIAL SCHOOL**

### **SPECIAL EDUCATION OR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION MODEL**

Few respondents connected the term Special School to the inclusive education model or to both models. The vast majority of respondents (91 %) made the connection with the special education model.

#### **DEFINITION:**

Two types of definition were suggested for the term Special School. One was quite broad and could be applied to any special school. There was no direct mention of students with disabilities.

- A school designed with a specific focus
- A school designed for students that fit a criterion
- A school devoted to a particular specialization

The second type of definition designated that the focus of a Special School was, in the present context, a school to educate students with disabilities.

- A school that has different programming for learning needs
- A place for people with developmental disabilities, when educators did not know better or differently
- A school dedicated to special learning needs with teaching and non-teaching staff trained to deliver a specialized program.

#### **MEANING OF DEFINITION**

Two discussions of underlying meaning of the definitions suggested emerged from responses. The first brought out the categories of students with disabilities who might attend a Special School, or why students with disabilities needed a Special School.

- May be a school for the deaf
- A different building, location, people who are labeled, segregated environment
- A school designed to meet students' needs (deaf, blind, autistic)
- A separate school for students based on perceived academic ability

The second, and lesser, discussion of meaning once again reached toward understanding of society's view of students with disabilities and ramifications of that view for those concerned and how they could be identified.

- Special schools mean that as a society we don't believe there is value in reciprocal learning, social relationships with peers
- Ultimate example of belief that students with disabilities must be educated together due to differences from regular students

#### **WHY TERM IS ASSOCIATED MORE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION MODEL**

Discussion of why most participants see Special School as related to special education fell into two areas. The first is that a Special School is part of the special education model and/or involved meeting the needs of students with disabilities in a special setting.

- Least Restrictive Environment. Most appropriate location is not always a regular school
- Educators realize that special needs students feel insecure and fall between the cracks when included in the mainstream
- Special schools provide education to a specific set of individuals; usually based on ability and fits special education approach
- Promotes the idea that to best meet needs a segregated or special school is needed

The second area of the overall discussion focused on the fact that a Special School, by nature was outside the regular education system and part of the special education continuum.

- Separate from the regular system
- Non-inclusive
- Opposite of mainstreaming