

Chapter 9

CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

It had been hoped that as a result of this study a clear statement could have been made concerning the factors/teaching excellence association and that this would have resulted in a listing of the professional development ingredients needed to ensure professional excellence. This would have provided guidance to the NSW DSE special education system, to NSW training institutions and to both current and aspiring NSW special educators. The results of this study do not lead to the making of such a statement. Whilst the study has produced findings of immediate value and has advanced knowledge in this area, it must be regarded as exploratory and indicates the need for further research.

This chapter will summarise the findings, firstly, in relation to the research subquestions and broad research question and, secondly, in relation to findings which are not directly related to these but are of importance. The chapter will then include a section on the implications of the findings. There will be a brief discussion of the strengths and difficulties of this study. The chapter will conclude with a statement of the indications for future research.

The findings

Summary of those findings which relate to the research subquestions

The findings vary in terms of the extent of association. They can be grouped in the following ways

Clear association with excellence

- Personal characteristics are associated with excellence in special education teaching.

Unclear association with excellence

The majority of analytic procedures support an association of the following factors with excellence but there is some discrepancy of findings, especially in relation to the primacy of the factors. Factors for which the association is not clear:

- teaching experience in special education;
- postgraduate training in special education.

Contradictory association with excellence

The following factor was tested through a statistical procedure applied to the data provided by each of the two groups of respondents. Results of the analysis using the appraisals of one group (teachers) were contradicted by that of the other (supervisors).

- age.

Weak association with excellence

There is no evidence of a strong association with excellence in terms of the following factors. There is evidence of some very weak association between excellence in teaching and the following factors:

- mentoring;
- inservice courses;
- association or group membership;
- professional reading.

No association with excellence:

No association was found to exist between excellence in teaching and the following factor:

- teaching experience, in mainstream education and/or special education prior to postgraduate training.

Findings which relate to the broad research question

Whilst there was clear association between only one factor, personal attributes or characteristics, the writer considers that further research is needed to confirm this and, if confirmed, to identify desirable specific attributes. This factor was participant-generated. The same degree of methodological rigour was not applied to this factor as was applied to the writer-generated factors. The difficulties in conducting research into the area of personal attributes were discussed in Chapter 2, The Review of the Literature.

Thus the writer is reluctant to say "Personal characteristics are associated with excellence in special education" although the evidence provided by this study is strongly supportive of this. This means that in answer to the broad research question "What factors are associated with excellence in special education teaching?" no factor can be stated with confidence. Either this study has failed to identify the factor or factors that are, in reality, associated with excellence or there is, in fact, not a single factor or set of factors that can be identified because such an association, on anything but an individual teacher scale, simply does not exist. This second alternative would mean that there is a large number of possible factors and that each special educator has his/her own unique combination of some of these so that generalisation across a number of special educators is impossible. This alternative has some support in the case study participants' stories of their professional development. Each had taken a unique development path although there were also commonalities.

If the question is stated in a negative form, "What factors are not associated with excellence?", the answer is "Teaching experience prior to postgraduate training is not associated with excellence". The initial reason

for conducting this study was to test the NSW DSE assumption that experience followed by specialist postgraduate training is preferable to this training without prior experience. This assumption was tested and found to be without basis. This is the situation as it applies in NSW today. Special education is a changing field. If the McRae recommendations (McRae, 1996) are implemented, there will be a large increase in the number of special educators working in supportive roles in mainstream classrooms. Prior mainstream experience may then be an advantage.

Findings not related to the research question

These findings were not directly sought for they do not relate to the research question but rather emerged as a result of the use of the NSW DSE draft discussion paper "Critical attributes for beginning special education teachers" and the analytic procedures, Rasch and factor analysis, used in relation to this. The findings have significance for practices in NSW, this being the setting for this study. They may also have relevance to other Australian state education systems as well as those universities that provide special educator teacher training.

These findings will now be summarised.

- The teachers' and their supervisors' different perspectives, as a result of their different roles, meant that their appraisals differed. Rasch analysis showed that some competencies, which the teachers considered they performed well, the supervisors considered they did not perform well. The reverse situation also occurred. Factor analysis showed that the teachers did not perceive a relationship between effective classroom teaching and behaviour management. A relationship with parents was considered to be important but it was more in the traditional style of teacher-as-expert with parents kept at some distance than of teacher and parent forming a real partnership.
- The content of the NSW DSE draft competency statement was shown to relate to the work of the special educator. This was the perception of both the teachers and the supervisors. This does not mean, however, that the statement includes all the competencies necessary for the role of a special educator but rather, that those it

does include are relevant. There was some agreement by the teachers and supervisors with the DSE factoring of the 22 competencies but there was also considerable disagreement. The supervisors and teachers did not entirely agree with each other and neither group agreed entirely with the DSE.

The writer's perception, when examining the factor analysis of each group of participants, was that both the formatting and the wording of the elements and performance criteria led to some selective focussing and, possibly at times, to an inadequate appreciation of the thrust of a statement.

- The frequency analysis of the participants' Part A questionnaire responses provided some information which is not held by the NSW DSE. Of particular importance is the fact that more than a quarter of the teachers and supervisors planned to leave special education within three years. The majority of teacher respondents entered special education because of employment opportunities and a large number of supervisors did likewise. Despite this, almost all respondents were enjoying their special education teaching.

Implications of the findings

The findings of this study have policy and practice implications for the NSW DSE, for NSW universities which have special education teacher training programs and for association executives and journal editors. Departments of Education and universities in other Australian states, and even further afield, may also perceive relevance to their situations.

Implications for the NSW DSE

The most obvious implication for the DSE relates to their sponsorship of postgraduate training programs. The large expenditure on the cadetship program for experienced teachers and the comparatively small expenditure on the scholarship program for inexperienced teachers should be reconsidered.

Because of the evidence of a teaching excellence/personal attributes association, this should be further investigated and, if confirmed, more attention given to personal attributes in special education teacher recruitment.

There are strong indications that there is a need to address the teachers' lack of understanding of the good teaching/good behaviour nexus as well as their failure to appreciate the concept of working closely with parents in a partnership role.

Whilst there is evidence to support the inclusions of the draft competency statement, if it is to be further developed, attention should be paid to both its wording and formatting. Further fieldwork is indicated and this should be followed by factor analysis. However, because of the development in the writing of competency statements since 1994, it would be advisable for any DSE statement to conform with current thinking such as that shown in the National Competency Framework for Beginning Teaching (NPQTL, 1996a, 1996b). This study indicates that those responsible for their development should, at the same time, also consider their purpose. If one of their purposes is, as indicated in the National Framework, formative appraisal by a mentor and if this mentor is in a senior position there might be a divergence of thinking between the teacher and appraiser. The possibility of this divergence, resulting from the differing perspectives, should be considered.

Although the large majority of teachers and supervisors attended DSE inservice courses at least twice a year, the respondents' perception was that they contributed very little to their professional development. This finding indicates that the DSE should conduct a review of these special education courses.

Implications for universities

Universities offering postgraduate courses in special education should consider those findings that relate to student selection and postgraduate course content. The current university practice of enrolling students without prior teaching experience is supported. Most of the teachers participating in this study had completed postgraduate training in special education. There is evidence that they had insufficient understanding in

two areas: that good teaching and effective behaviour management are related; that there are benefits to a collaborative partnership with parents. The supervisors' appraisals of the teachers also indicates that there should be a greater university emphasis on their students' learning concerning program development and delivery.

Whilst the results of this study were contradictory in terms of postgraduate training being associated with teaching excellence, the weighting of the findings indicate no association, or no strong association, especially when compared with teaching experience. As a result, those responsible for postgraduate courses may wish to review course content in relation to the actual competencies needed in special education teaching.

Implications for association executives and journal editors

Despite the facts that most of the participants belonged to special education groups or associations and the large majority read journal articles, these factors received almost no credit in terms of their professional development. This raises the question of why so many special educators do continue to join associations and read articles. Most journals in special education are published by associations. The findings suggest that special education associations should review their purpose, membership and services to members.

Strengths and weaknesses of the study

This study has three particular strengths: it examined a field, in which there is almost no Australian research and little overseas research and thus provides a base for future research in an important area; it used a multimethod approach triangulating both within and between the quantitative and qualitative dimensions; it was extensive in its coverage of professional development factors.

The study also had some weaknesses. The most important of these concerned the sample of participants. The sample limitations were discussed in Chapter 1. Because of the need for an expert peer to be involved in the appraisals of the teachers, isolated teachers were not

accessed. It is not known, but it can be expected, that it was often the confident and competent teachers who volunteered to participate. This may have skewed the results.

A second weakness concerned the size of the questionnaires. It is the writer's perception, based on the fact that a few questionnaires were not fully completed, that some participants found them to be too long. In hindsight a small number of questions could have been omitted without limiting essential data.

A third weakness, which is probably better viewed as a dilemma, concerns the use of supervisor appraisal and self appraisal as the means of identifying the teachers' competence. It was assumed that excellence in teaching exists and can be identified. The appraisals of the two groups were very different. They each had their own professional perspective and this would have influenced their perceptions of the teachers. Had there been agreement between the groups, the results that depended on the appraisals (those that required teachers' and supervisors' case estimates) would have been clear and associations either established or not established.

Teacher appraisal, in terms of who conducts it, how it is done and its purpose, is a sensitive issue. Whilst the approach used in this study is the one the NSW Teachers Federation considers to be the most acceptable to NSW teachers, this study has shown that acceptability to participants should not be the only criteria for method selection.

Indications for future research

One important result of this research is that it indicates several areas for future study. The study has explored a relatively new area, it has covered several aspects of this area and it has done so in a limited way in terms of both the setting and the sample. The following areas are suggested for future research.

- This type of study is complementary to the type of school culture study undertaken by Retallick et al. (NBEET, 1994). A combination of the two types would provide a more holistic picture of the special education teachers' professional development. There would

thus be two research questions: "In what kinds of environments are special educators' learning and professional growth optimised?"; "What are the factors internal to the special educator that best promote learning and professional growth?"

- This study now needs replication, both with a larger sample, including isolated special educators, and in other Australian states. A similar study conducted overseas would provide an interesting contrast. The parts played by postgraduate study, total teaching experience in special education and teachers' age needs particular attention. Efforts would need to be made to prevent any favouring of competent and confident teachers in the research sample. This could mean Departments of Education requiring participation rather than allowing this to be voluntary.
- An alternative to the above, or perhaps an addition to it, could be a longitudinal study of the type mentioned in Chapter 8. Such a study would look at the evolution of teaching excellence over some years and the interaction of factors as they emerge. It could be paired with a similar study involving mainstream teachers in order to determine if the evolution of excellence has a different path for the two cohorts of teachers.
- Further research into effective teacher appraisal methods is indicated. Australia has rejected the use of the behavioural approach of counting the incidence of pre-identified teacher behaviours. The alternative approaches rely on appraiser perceptions. Research is needed to develop ways of ensuring that this approach is reliable and meaningful.
- Further study is needed in the area of the desirable personal characteristics of special educators. Appropriate methodologies need to be developed.
- The responses of the participants in this study indicated a high attrition rate in this NSW sample. Further research is needed to uncover whether this is system-wide within NSW DSE and whether it is a national phenomenon. If this is the case, it would then be of benefit to study those factors associated with retention.

One of these factors might be mentoring during the first years of teaching.

All of the above research areas are also applicable to mainstream education.

Concluding statement

This thesis opened with the statement that in order to best serve the learning needs of students with disabilities it is essential that their teachers be excellent. The writer has striven to identify those factors which are associated with this excellence. However, a clear, definitive statement that can be embraced by the NSW DSE, universities and other interest groups has not been produced. Nevertheless, the study has produced a number of findings some of which have immediate application and many of which indicate the need for further research.

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Appendix 1: Teacher Questionnaire

The following should be noted when reading the Teacher Questionnaire:

- The Supervisor Questionnaire is not included in the Appendices because of its similarity to the Teacher Questionnaire. The very small differences are explained in Chapter 3.
- The two questionnaires were sent to the potential participants as small booklets of half A4 paper size. The following Teacher Questionnaire pages each contain the material that was printed on one page of the booklet.
- A teabag and a coffee bag were stapled to the front cover of each questionnaire.

Have a Cuppa on me !



Teacher Questionnaire

Please take time to relax, make a cuppa and fill in this questionnaire for me.

Robin Jones, Department of Learning, Development and Communication.
University of New England, Armidale NSW 2351

PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

This questionnaire is in three parts.

Part A Concerns background information about you.

Part B Concerns your assessment of your own teaching competencies.

Part C Allows you to comment more freely.

PLEASE ANSWER **ALL** QUESTIONS UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE.

Please tick the appropriate box or answer otherwise if requested.

PART A**Your current class or support situation**

1. In what category of exceptionality are you teaching ?

LD IM IO IS BD V
 H P L IR ESS EC

OTHER Please name _____

2. What age group are you teaching ?

3-5 yrs 5-8 8-12 12-16+ K-12

3. Where do you teach predominantly ?

Special School Mainstream School >1 School
 Support Centre Other Please name _____

4. How long have you taught your current category of class or support ?

< 1 yr 1-3 4-10 > 10

5. Do you usually enjoy your teaching in special education

NO

YES

Past teaching

6. How long have you taught in mainstream classes ?

Never < 2 yrs 2-5 6-10 > 10

7. Was all this teaching prior to your special education teaching ?
- NO
- YES

If NO please explain.

8. Did you usually enjoy your mainstream teaching ?
- NO
- YES

9. How many years altogether have you taught in special education ?
- <1 yr 1-2 3-5 6-10 >10

10. In what categories of exceptionality have you taught in the past ?
- LD IM O IS BD V
- H P L IR ESS EC

OTHER Please name: _____

Future Plans

11. How much longer would you like to teach your current category of class or support situation ?

< 1 yr 1-3 4-10 > 10

12. How much longer would you like to teach in special education (this might be the same as your previous answer)?

< 1yr 1-3 4-10 > 10

13. When you leave special education teaching where do you plan to go ?

Retire

Mainstream

Promotion to non-teaching administration position

Leave school system for other employment

Other (please comment)

Reason for entering special education

14. Why did you enter special education ?

The following are listed as possible reasons. You may wish to number more than one. **If so please number them in a priority order.** Number 1 is your first priority. You might also wish to add a comment.

Numbers not ticks

Close relative with disability

Employment opportunity

By chance

Challenge

Other (please comment)

Training in special education

I am using "training" to cover all types of teacher preparation and inservicing both before and during special education teaching.

15. Have you completed postgraduate university or college special education training (in addition to basic mainstream qualification) of at least 1 year full-time study or part-time equivalent? This means a B.Ed (Special Education), a Grad Dip.Ed (Special Education) or equivalent, or higher special education studies.

NO

YES

16. If 'YES' to 15. how many years did you teach prior to your postgraduate special education tertiary study ?

Mainstream years

Special education years

17. If 'YES' to 15. how many years have you taught since your post-graduate special education tertiary study ?

< 1 yr 1-3 4-10 > 10 yrs

18. If 'No', to 15. are you at present enrolled in such training ?

NO

YES

19. Did you complete any special education studies in your basic teaching qualification ?

None 1 unit 2 units 3 units > 3 units

20. Was your basic teaching qualification such that it qualified you **fully** (recognised as such by DSE) as a special educator ?

NO

YES

If YES state qualification. _____

21. Have you attended a special education inservice course of **at least 8** weeks part-time duration e.g. Reading Recovery, Special Education School-based Course, course on severe intellectual disability, etc ?

NO

YES

If 'YES' please state the course. _____

22. In what categories does the Department of School Education regard you as **fully** qualified to teach?

LD IM IO IS BD V

H P L IR ESS EC

NONE

OTHER Please name: _____

23. In what categories do you regard yourself as **fully** qualified to teach ?

LD IM IO IS BD V

H P L IR ESS EC

NONE

OTHER Please name: _____

24. Have you had a mentor (someone who has taken active and regular responsibility for informally inservicing you and supporting your efforts to improve) in your special education teaching ?

NO

YES

OTHER please comment

25. Are you a member of an out -of -school special education association or group ?

NO

YES

26. Do you regularly read special education journal articles ?

NO

YES

27. Do you attend special education conferences and/or inservice courses at least twice per year ?

NO

YES

28. Which one of the following best describes you in terms of your highest qualification in special education ?

a formal university/college special education qualification of at least 1 year recognised by DSE as a special education qualification

Go to Q.29

completed a major DSE inservice course (Reading Recovery etc.)

Go to Q.30

series of own efforts - inservice, mentor, reading etc

Go to Q.31

29. What do you think were the most effective ways of training **you** to work in special education? Please rank the following ones **you** have experienced. Start with the number 1 for the most effective way. Please do not rank more than 5 items. You may rank fewer than this.

Please rank

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| 1 year postgraduate tertiary course in special education following 2 or more years experience in regular education | <input type="text"/> |
| 1 year postgraduate tertiary course in special education following 2 or more years experience in special education | <input type="text"/> |
| 1 year postgraduate tertiary course in special education without any prior teaching experience | <input type="text"/> |
| a mentor or mentors who assist you or have assisted you regularly | <input type="text"/> |
| undergraduate special education training which qualified you fully as a special educator | <input type="text"/> |
| informal discussions with a number of peers | <input type="text"/> |
| actual special education teaching experience over time | <input type="text"/> |
| a series of short inservice courses | <input type="text"/> |
| a major inservice course of some duration such as Reading Recovery, School-based Special Education Course etc | <input type="text"/> |
| reading journals and books | <input type="text"/> |
| out of school association, committee/group membership | <input type="text"/> |
| other. Please explain. | <input type="text"/> |

Now go to Q.32.

30. What do you think were the most effective ways of training **you** to work in special education? Please rank the following ones **you** have experienced. Start with the number 1 for the most effective way. Please do not rank more than 5 items. You may rank fewer than this.

Please rank

- | | |
|--|----------------------|
| a mentor or mentors who assist you or have assisted you regularly | <input type="text"/> |
| informal discussions with a number of peers | <input type="text"/> |
| actual special education teaching experience over time | <input type="text"/> |
| a series of short inservice courses | <input type="text"/> |
| a major inservice course of some duration such as Reading Recovery, School-based Special Education Course etc. | <input type="text"/> |
| reading journals and books | <input type="text"/> |
| out-of-school association/committee/group membership | <input type="text"/> |
| other. Please explain. | <input type="text"/> |

Now go to Q.32.

31. What do you think were the most effective ways of training **you** to work in special education? Please rank the following ones **you** have experienced. Start with the number 1 for the most effective way. Please do not rank more than 5 items. You may rank fewer than this.

Please rank

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| a mentor or mentors who assist you or have assisted you regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| informal discussions with a number of peers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| actual special education teaching experience over time | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a series of short inservice courses | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| reading journals and books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| out-of-school association/ committee/group membership | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| other. Please explain. _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> |

32. Your age group is ?
- 20 - 25 years 26 - 30 31 - 40 41 - 50 51 - 60+

33. Your gender is ?
- Male Female

PART B

This section requires you to assess your own teaching competencies. The competencies (Q.1-22) are from the NSW Department of School Education draft discussion paper "Critical attributes for beginning special education teachers". I have formatted it to suit a questionnaire.

Would you please grade yourself on each item in terms of how competent you perceive yourself to be? There are 22 competency questions and each has a set of describing statements which you should consider when assigning your grade. They all concern special education teaching but some are daily occurrences and some occur much less frequently depending on your area of special education. You should consider **what is appropriate to your current situation** and then grade yourself accordingly.

A five-point grading system which ranges from L (low) to H (high) is used. The number 1 is L (low) and the number 5 is H (high). Number 3 is adequate. **Please circle the appropriate number.**

DELIVERY AND ANALYSIS OF INSTRUCTION

1. **How well do you:**
- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| demonstrate an understanding of special needs, | L | | | | H | |
| service provision and the implications for | | <u>1</u> | <u>2</u> | <u>3</u> | <u>4</u> | <u>5</u> |
| classroom teaching? | | | | | | |
- Explain the concepts of impairment, disability and handicap.
 - Explain Departmental service provision for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders.
 - Explain special needs and the implications for classroom teaching, stressing similarities as well as differences.
 - Demonstrate a sound knowledge of medical and/or physical conditions and its effect on learning for students with a physical disability.
 - Demonstrate understanding of the range of teaching situations utilised in the delivery of special education.

2. **How well do you:**
apply the principles of normalisation (access to regular patterns of life) and integration in classroom practice? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Access the appropriate resources to facilitate placement of each student in the least restrictive social/educative environment.
 - Demonstrate in a verbal and written context the acceptance that children are children foremost, and that their disability must be secondary.
3. **How well do you:**
locate and access a range of support services and resources within the wider community? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Identify/use appropriate procedures to access Departmental and other resources.
 - Disseminate information from support services for use within the school community.
4. **How well do you:**
adapt curricula and apply Departmental policies with special consideration for students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Demonstrate knowledge of curricula and Departmental policies related to students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders.
 - Access appropriate curriculum documents which relate to students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders.
 - Implement current Departmental special education policies.
 - Adapt current curricula according to individual student's needs.

5. **How well do you:**
make special education decisions utilising L H
information from other support personnel? 1 2 3 4 5
- Demonstrate knowledge of types of data usually contained in reports from support personnel.
6. **How well do you:**
develop and utilise appropriate criterion-referenced L H
curriculum based techniques to assess students? 1 2 3 4 5
- Develop appropriate curriculum sequences either from the student's academic or life skills needs.
 - Identify, develop and utilise assessment tool(s) that directly relate to the identified curriculum sequences.
 - Utilise assessment outcomes to formulate teaching and learning programs.
7. **How well do you:**
identify learning outcomes and place them in L H
priority order to maximise student independence 1 2 3 4 5
in learning?
- Use assessment to identify long and short term learning outcomes.
 - Identify criteria by which learning outcomes will be placed in priority order (e.g. resources, student needs, current and next environment, acceptance by the community).
 - Place in order of priority long and short term learning outcomes in consultation with parents, the student and other interested agencies.

8. **How well do you:**
utilise research based instructional strategies to
achieve learning outcomes? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Identify the appropriate skill at which to start instruction.
 - Identify teaching strategies which are age-appropriate and incorporate considerations of availability of teaching materials, the nature of the learning environment, and personnel to be involved.
 - Implement a range of instructional strategies to meet individual student needs.
 - use exposition, discussion, modelling
 - provide guided practice
 - provide independent practice in a range of differing environments
 - utilise feedback monitoring
 - reteach if necessary
 - Ensure sufficient allocated time for instruction and learning
 - Ensure sufficient academically engaged time.

9. **How well do you:**
use appropriate systematic monitoring to
evaluate programs for students with disabilities,
learning difficulties and behaviour disorders? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Define the specific parameters of behaviour to be measured.
 - Select, adapt and implement appropriate recording systems (eg. Antecedent-Behaviour-Consequence, event recording, anecdotal reporting, checklists).
 - Use data for on going evaluation of student performance and program effectiveness.
10. **How well do you:**
ensure the active involvement of parents/care
givers and students, as appropriate, in the design,
implementation and evaluation of programs? L H
1 2 3 4 5
- Describe the range of roles parents can take in the education of their children.
 - Describe ways in which parents can be motivated to initiate and maintain involvement in the education of their children.
 - Demonstrate effective negotiation skills with parents about their role in the educational planning, delivery and evaluation of programs.

11. **How well do you:**
use research based preventative strategies in L H
managing behaviour? 1 2 3 4 5
- Describe a range of classroom or school management strategies which promote behaviours which are compatible with learning.
 - Describe a variety of structured observational monitoring and recording systems which can be used to assess student behaviour.
 - Select programs appropriate to the student's needs with the aim of developing self management.
 - Describe a range of strategies which could be used to intervene when students display behaviour including:
 - aggressive acts towards self, others or school equipment.
 - poor on-task behaviour
 - inability to demonstrate age-appropriate social skills
 - withdrawn behaviour
 - Describe strategies which may be used to cope with behavioural emergencies
 - Describe possible whole-school approaches to behaviour management programs.

**WORKING AS A MEMBER OF A TEAM TO ENSURE DELIVERY OF
APPROPRIATE PROGRAMS**

12. **How well do you:**
demonstrate an understanding of the practices L H
underpinning collaboration? 1 2 3 4 5
- Explain different methods of working collaboratively with peers, parents, teachers aides, school executive and personnel from outside agencies.
 - Demonstrate how to utilise informal networking systems between colleagues, parents, etc.
13. **How well do you:**
demonstrate the skills and ability to work L H
in a team? 1 2 3 4 5
- Acknowledge and use the expertise and skills of both regular and special education staff.
 - Negotiate a variety of strategies for effective program implementation when working collaboratively.
 - Accommodate views of colleagues and describe strategies for working with people with differing educational philosophies and approaches.
 - Demonstrate effective communication and conflict resolution skills when working in a team.
 - Explain student needs and programs to the teacher's assistant and jointly establish efficient classroom routines.
 - Demonstrate skills in time management and organisation.

14. **How well do you:**
negotiate the special education role and team L H
responsibilities within the school? 1 2 3 4 5

- Identify and document agreed collaborative roles and responsibilities.

**PROMOTES AND SUPPORTS THE RIGHTS AND INTERESTS OF
 PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

15. **How well do you:**
actively promote the responsibility of all schools L H
and teachers to provide for the education of 1 2 3 4 5
students with disabilities, learning difficulties
and behaviour disorders?

- Actively promote the concept that the education of children with special needs is the responsibility of all schools and teachers.
- Identify the features of school organisation which both value and devalue the status of students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behavioural disorders in the mainstream context.
- Describe ways in which the status of people with disabilities can be enhanced through the education of students with disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders in the main stream context.

16. **How well do you:**
advocate for the provision of educational L H
programs from the earliest point of need? 1 2 3 4 5

- Identify issues concerned with the transition of students between different educational services.
- Describe strategies to use in the transition of students between different educational services.

17. **How well do you:**
ensure that parents and students are provided L H
with information and strategies to effect their 1 2 3 4 5
rights and those of their children?

- Access resources to give a basic understanding of DSE, other Government and non-Government organisations' policies and procedures.
- Teach students self advocacy skills.
- Provide contact names and numbers for parents and students to access objective advice and or support (eg. peak organisations, legal advice, advocacy).
- Identify issues of confidentiality in dealing with students, parents and agencies.
- Describe a range of age-appropriate socially acceptable behaviours required of students at school, home and in the community?

18. **How well do you:**
work to change the attitudes of schools and L H
the wider community towards the full acceptance 1 2 3 4 5
of people with special needs?

- Contribute to developing constructive attitudes towards inclusion.
- Actively promote and be involved in integration through provision of opportunities for all students to access all school activities.
- Use appropriate terminology and avoid reinforcing inappropriate stereotypes.

19. **How well do you:**
provide support to parents and community? L H
1 2 3 4 5

- Describe the strategies by which a teacher can offer support to parents, care givers and siblings, and the times at which different strategies are appropriate.
- Describe the limitations in the teacher support role and situations in which the teacher should refer to appropriate support services.

20. **How well do you:**
demonstrate and apply knowledge of child L H
protection issues relating to students with 1 2 3 4 5
disabilities, learning difficulties and behaviour disorders?

- Demonstrate knowledge of legal and DSE requirements with regard to child protection.
- Identify and describe procedures for notification.
- Demonstrate how to access and adapt strategies and programs to teach protective behaviours.

**MANAGES RESOURCES TO SUPPORT THE EDUCATION OF STUDENTS WITH
 DISABILITIES, LEARNING DIFFICULTIES AND BEHAVIOUR DISORDERS**

21. **How well do you:**
demonstrate efficient resource management? L H
1 2 3 4 5

- Identify current resourcing needs from Individual Education and or Transition plans.
- Monitor resource usage.
- Access community settings to support the student's program.

22. **How well do you:**
utilise efficient reporting procedures? L H
1 2 3 4 5

- Establish reporting procedures to give a clear indication of student progress.
- Use reports to facilitate movement and or communication between classes, school sites and post school settings.

Overall Assessment

23. How well do you perform overall as a special educator? L H
1 2 3 4 5

24. If you did not assess yourself as '4' or '5' in most competency questions what do you think would most assist you to reach those categories?

25. If you did assess yourself as '4' or '5' in most of the above competency questions list what you consider to have been the major contributors towards this.

Part C

1. What teacher factors do you think best contribute to excellence in special education teaching?
You may wish to consider aspects of training and teaching experience but please do not feel restricted to these.

Please now consider completion of the Consent to Visit form.

CONSENT TO VISIT

This form should be filled in by special education teachers who:

1. if selected, are willing to participate in Stage 2 of this research which involves a visit by Mrs Robin Jones for the purpose of interviewing you informally and observing some teaching.

The visit will be over a period of 2 to 3 days.
The interview will be audio-taped.

AND

2. have the agreement of your principal and supervisor to such a visit, to be arranged to suit you in the first half of 1995.

AND

3. expect to be in the same school and teaching situation next year.

PLEASE NOTE that the visit will be arranged to suit you and your school. I will fit in unobtrusively with everything that is going on in the class or support situation. All information will be kept strictly confidential and any publication resulting from this study will not disclose names of individuals or schools.

I give my consent to Mrs Rob n Jones to visit me at my school, early in 1995, at a time convenient to me, for the purpose of carrying out Stage 2 of her research study into the factors which are associated with excellence in special education teaching. I realise that the informal interview will be audio-taped.

My principal and supervisor agree to this visit.

Name: _____

Class/Support: _____

School phone number _____

Fax number: _____

School: _____

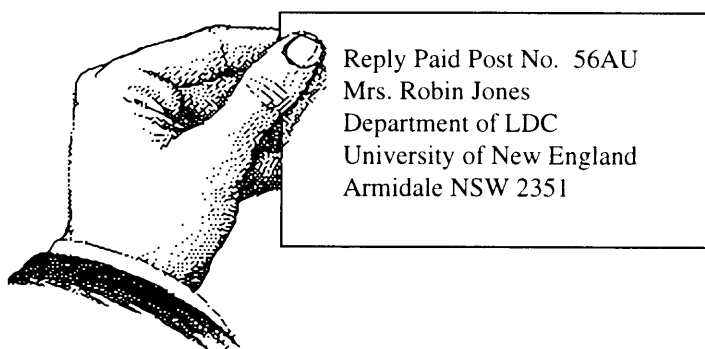
School address: _____

Signed _____

Date: _____

Please tick if you would like a summary of the research findings.

Please place this form in the reply paid envelope provided, seal and post to



Thank you for your help.

Code _____

APPENDIX 2

RASCH STATISTICS

Teacher Scale: Thurstonian threshold parameters

Item No	Thurstonian thresholds			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
1	-2.75	-1.24	.24	2.54
2	-2.59	-1.12	-.48	1.21
3	-2.47	-.87	.82	2.34
4		-2.03	.24	2.24
5	-2.75	-1.20	.04	2.19
6	-2.72	-1.38	.38	2.02
7		-2.28	-.11	2.04
8	-2.53	-1.54	.06	2.23
9	2.47	-.91	.97	2.56
10	-1.44	-.77	.53	2.16
11	1.03	.45	.32	.38
12		-1.41	.54	2.46
13		-1.75	.07	1.94
14	.75	.50	.33	.33
15	.59	.39	.30	.31
16		.41	.30	.35
17	.64	.47	.32	.35
18		.44	.32	.33
19	-2.30	-1.13	.76	2.65
20	-1.69	-.40	.98	3.09
21	-2.38	-1.00	.69	2.52
22		-2.28	.37	2.69

Supervisor Scale: Thurstonian threshold parameters

Item No	Thurstonian thresholds			
	Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
1	-2.72	-1.00	.21	2.01
2	-3.22	-1.64	-.12	2.04
3	-1.91	-.63	.96	2.28
4	-1.56	-.83	.17	2.12
5	-2.13	-.90	.65	2.20
6	-1.66	-.71	.99	2.55
7	-2.28	-1.20	.55	2.06
8	-2.03	-.56	.83	2.45
9	-1.72	-.50	.86	2.78
10	-2.22	-.60	.67	2.16
11	-1.94	-.31	1.19	3.00
12	-2.28	-.41	.80	2.35
13	-2.50	-.51	.55	1.77
14	-2.00	-.36	.98	2.76
15	-3.13	-.60	.74	2.61
16	-3.06	-.56	.85	1.97
17	-3.03	-.88	.96	2.50
18	-2.28	-.43	.69	2.46
19	-2.66	-.95	.69	2.49
20	-3.13	-.63	.99	2.31
21	-2.94	-1.19	.72	2.39
22		-1.47	.27	2.41

Teacher Scale Delta and Tau Parameters

Item No	Delta	Step 1 Tau	Step 2 Tau	Step 3 Tau	Step 4 Tau
1	-0.3	-2.22	-0.96	0.42	2.76
2	-0.76	-1.58	0.05	-0.2	1.83
3	-0.04	-2.21	-0.9	0.94	2.17
4	0.14	-2.08	0.13	1.95	99
5	-0.44	-2.13	-0.71	0.31	2.52
6	-0.42	-2.01	-1.1	0.88	2.23
7	-0.12	-2.06	0.03	2.03	99
8	-0.44	-1.57	-1.36	0.48	2.54
9	0.04	-2.28	-1.05	1.03	2.3
10	0.13	-0.92	-1.33	0.38	1.87
11	-0.09	-2.92	-0.79	1.12	2.6
12	0.52	-1.8	0.01	1.8	99
13	0.05	-1.59	-0.2	1.79	99
14	-0.02	-2.07	-1.15	0.88	2.34
15	0.09	-1.76	-0.63	0.31	2.09
16	0.44	-1.43	0.1	1.53	99
17	0.1	-1.54	-1.44	0.81	2.28
18	0.38	-1.53	-0.12	1.76	99
19	0	-1.96	-1.34	0.81	2.49
20	0.5	-1.92	0.94	0.37	2.49
21	-0.04	-2.06	-1.07	0.72	2.42
22	0.27	-2.47	0.14	2.33	99

Supervisor Scale: Delta and Tau Parameters

Item No	Delta	Step 1 Tau	Step 2 Tau	Step 3 Tau	Step 4 Tau
1	-0.38	-2.17	-0.51	0.46	2.23
2	-0.74	-2.3	-0.9	0.54	2.66
3	0.18	-1.79	-0.94	0.91	1.82
4	-0.02	-1	-1.04	0	2.05
5	-0.05	-1.79	-0.98	0.74	2.03
6	0.29	-1.5	-1.33	0.79	2.04
7	-0.21	-1.7	-1.21	0.86	2.06
8	0.17	-1.99	-0.74	0.64	2.08
9	0.36	-1.78	-0.95	0.43	2.3
10	0	-2.05	-0.54	0.65	1.94
11	0.48	-2.24	-0.79	0.66	2.36
12	0.12	-2.28	-0.39	0.62	2.05
13	-0.17	-2.21	-0.15	0.71	1.65
14	0.35	-2.18	-0.65	0.55	2.28
15	-0.09	-2.97	-0.31	0.7	2.58
16	-0.2	-2.78	-0.21	1.18	1.81
17	-0.12	-2.82	-0.73	1.15	2.4
18	0.11	-2.25	-0.38	0.43	2.21
19	-0.1	-2.38	-0.85	0.79	2.44
20	-0.12	-2.92	-0.42	1.22	2.13
21	-0.26	-2.5	-1	1.04	2.46
22	0.41	-1.68	-0.21	1.89	99