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ABSTRACT

This paper addresses ethical issues in the inclusion of children with disabilities in general education programs and reports on interviews with 11 female elementary school teachers in four states. Interviews examined teachers' reflections on the moral aspects of four inclusionary scenarios and their bases, including those based on law and rights, those that are linear in nature, or those based upon relationships among students. A review of the literature considers both the ethical and comparative models of analysis, inclusion in the history of special education, and the purpose of education. The debate over inclusion is seen within the context of either a linear or relational ethical argument. Overall, teachers supported the concept of inclusion and tended to make ethical considerations in terms of relational structures. The teachers felt the purpose of education was the development of life skills or academic skills. There was consensus that inclusionary placements would be less than successful if a particularly disruptive or violent child or a child with extraordinary health needs were placed in the regular class. (Contains 55 references.) (DB)

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The Inclusion of Children with Disabilities into General Education Programs: An Ethical Analysis

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

A growing national debate has emerged from the efforts to develop educational opportunities for inclusion for children with disabilities. The most persistent question is how to structure inclusion programs. At another level there are specific concerns. A broad spectrum of professionals and parents agree that for children with special needs, placement in general education is appropriate (Denti, 1994a; Paushter, 1996; Sapon-Shevin, 1996; Will, 1986). There are others who argue that inclusion for all children is not appropriate (Kauffman, 1993; Shanker, 1994; Zigmond & Baker, 1996). There are special groups of parents who feel that the specific nature of the disability, deafness or autism, makes it inappropriate for their child to be placed in a general program (Autism Hotline, 1996; Cohen, L., 1996; Cohen, O., 1996; National Association of the Deaf Homepage, 1996; Peters, 1996, Rourke, R., 1996). For many people a continuum of services ranging from inclusion to a strict medical model is most appropriate. As this debate unfolds, there is the realization that through local effort or judicial mandate, children with disabilities are being increasingly included in general education programs.

Statement of the Problem

P.L. 94-142 calls for the education of children with special needs in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). Interpretation of what constitutes the Least Restrictive Environment has led to a debate about how best to include children with disabilities into regular education environments. The process of inclusion has created an environment in which educators have conflicting feelings about the various types of special

education placements. These placements frequently raise issues about the effect on regular education. The problem which this paper examines is to determine the ethical thinking process which regular education teachers use to consider the inclusion of children with disabilities into their programs.

Purpose of the Study

There is an underlying theoretical ethical base to the discussions about the nature and value of inclusionary efforts. There are educators who argue that strategic and separate placement of students with learning disabilities is a "moral obligation to students with LD, ..." (Zigmond & Baker, 1996). There are educators who argue that inclusion models represent the highest moral standard, "a model that prepares students for an inclusive integrated world" (Denti, 1994b, p. 20). Understanding the ethical construct of this argument about inclusion is important because, according to Noddings, "everything we do ... as teachers has moral overtones" (Noddings, 1984, p. 179).

Moral overtones in this study were the factors which underline the ethical statements, those types of statements which addressed the right or wrong of inclusionary placements. This study was based on interviews with regular education teachers. These teachers were asked to reflect on hypothetical scenarios of special education placements. The teachers spoke about the ethical implications of these placements. In making ethical considerations the teachers spoke about the history of special education, the purpose of education, and their feelings about recent inclusionary placements.

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were certain significant differences in the way teachers decided about inclusion. If there were differences then the

problem was to categorize those differences by considering those moral overtones. In order to address this problem it was necessary to examine the ethical considerations which underline the beliefs, to listen to and to record what Nash (1996) calls "the truth value of the claims [which are] made in the name of right and wrong ..."

Definition of Terms

For the purposes of this study the following terms will be used as described.

General Education/Regular Education are used interchangeably to describe an educational program in which the majority of the students are not receiving special help through the use of Individual Educational Plans.

Inclusion is the placement of a child with a disability into the general education program.

Individual Educational Plans (IEP) are plans which determine the nature and scope of a special education plan. The IEP is unique to each child and is prepared by a team which includes, but is not limited to, the regular teacher, the special education teacher, and administrator, and the parents.

A Pull-Out program is a program delivery in which children are taken from their classroom for special services or therapy.

A Resource Program is a program in which children with specific needs are addressed in a concentrated learning situation either in the classroom or in a special room for a part of the regular school day. The pull-out program can be the delivery model for the resource teacher.

A Special Day Class is a placement for children with disabilities. The class can be situated on a general education site or on the grounds of a special center.

Research Questions

1. When teachers are presented with inclusionary scenarios, what are the moral overtones upon which they base their reflections?

2. Are the moral overtones based upon law and rights, linear in nature, or are these overtones based upon the relationships between and among students?

Delimitations of the Study

Data were collected from eleven teachers in four states. The data collected may not reflect the views of all elementary school teachers. Further, only interviews with women teachers have been analyzed.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study will investigate the ethical arguments which are inherent to the debate over the inclusion of children with disabilities into regular education programs. The proponents of the inclusion of children with disabilities argue that there are compelling reasons to continue and to expand this policy (Baker, Wang, & Walberg, 1994; Barry, 1994; Corrigan, 1987; Denti, 1994b; Hollowood, Salisbury, Rainforth, & Palombaro, 1994; Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, & Schattman, 1993; Jorgensen, 1994; Vernon, 1987; Staub & Peck, 1994). There are also compelling arguments from those who argue instead for a continuum of special education services from medical models, to integrated models, to inclusion models (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a; 1994b, 1995; Kauffman, 1993; Kauffman, Lloyd, Baker, & Riedel, 1995; Shanker, 1994; Vernon, 1987; Zigmond, Jenkins, Fuchs, Deno, Fuchs, Baker, Jenkins, & Couthino, 1995). Within the literature, the argument over inclusion is composed of two basic areas. First, there is a general statement about the purpose of education. Second, there is an ethical component to the argument which is usually stated as, "it is (or is not) right that ..." The right in question is whether all special education students should be, or should not be, included in regular education classes.

There are two models of analysis which can be used to consider the debate over inclusion (Paul & Ward, 1976). There is an ethical model and a comparative model. The comparative model is grounded in a quantitative process which measures the progress of students who are taught within various classroom settings. The ethical model, utilizing a

more qualitative process, considers the rights of students and the obligations of the educational institutions. The ethical model provides a view into the emotional and moral content of the argument.

To examine the ethical nature of this argument provides a researcher an opportunity to hear what Nash (1996) calls "the background beliefs" which underline individual ethical decision making. This ethical argument can be understood through a conversation between opponents and proponents of inclusion. Inclusion is defined as the placement of special education students into regular education classrooms regardless of the disabling condition (Shanker, 1994).

Both the comparative model and the ethical model comprise parts of a larger conversation in which inclusion is the focus. This larger conversation can be treated as an ethical analysis of a moral dilemma. The ethical analysis, built upon background beliefs, defines how a person makes moral decisions. "Every resolution to an ethical dilemma, I maintain, considers the act, the intention, the circumstances, the principles, the outcomes, the virtues, the narrative, the community, and the political structures" (Nash, 1996, p. 20). An ethical analysis transcends other rational models. An ethical analysis offers "guidelines for behavior" rather than "definite specifications for ethical decision-making" (Nash, 1996). By understanding these guidelines in respect to full inclusion, it can be argued, educators and policy makers might better understand the broader implications of inclusion.

An Ethical Analysis

This study will consider the moral overtones against which teachers make ethical decisions when presented with various inclusionary scenarios. One type of moral reasoning is based on experience. Ethical decisions are made within the context of the consequence

of the decision. The underlying argument for this type of ethical construct is that "everything depends on extrinsic circumstances" (Lebacqz, 1985, p. 20). In its utilitarian form, consequentialist ethical reasoning argues that "social policy ought to be determined by what produces the greatest good for the greatest number" (Strike & Soltis, 1985, p. 15).

A second type of ethical reasoning is based on universal precepts such as the Golden Rule (Strike & Soltis, 1985, p. 16). Decisions made within this context are not dependent on intuition, feelings, or consequences. Ethical considerations are based on "universal moral rules without exception" (Strike & Soltis, 1985, p. 16).

An analysis of ethical decisions within these two models tends to be analytical, linear, and legalistic in approach (Beauchamp & Childress, 1983; Keefer, 1993; Strike & Soltis, 1985). A significant consideration in these more formal types of ethical inquiry is given to the notion of rights. "Rights express morally valid demands on human conduct" (Beauchamp & Childress, 1983, p. 51). The implication is that ethical behavior is grounded in a set of laws which obligate people to behave in particular situations in certain ways. These types of ethical analysis tend to be formal and linear. Noddings (1984) identifies this linear approach as a more masculine process.

For the purpose of this paper, the final type of ethical analysis is based on the concept of the importance of the relationship between two, or more, people (Noddings, 1984). It is more intuitive and less structured (Lebacqz, 1985; Noddings, 1984). It is an ethic based on "caring." The nature of the decision, based on a caring relationship, is a more feminine approach (Noddings, 1984). This type of ethical decision making will use terms such as partnerships, solidarity, liberation, power, and paradox (Lebacqz, 1985).

To understand how teachers will frame an ethical consideration it is important

to understand the environment with which they make decisions. Inclusionary arguments are based within special education legislation which has grown during the past two decades. Also, teachers have definite ideas about the purpose of education. Finally, there is a body of literature which offers insights into how and why teachers might make take certain ethical positions. The following sections examine these background issues.

History of Special Education

Inclusion reflects a change in the service delivery of special education efforts. Until the nineteenth, in Western culture, there is no history of people with disabilities receiving any sustained, formal instruction. Throughout most of the twentieth century special classes, special schools, and residential training centers were developed for the purpose of educating students with disabilities (Schulz, Carpenter, & Turnbull, 1984).

In January, 1971 the Pennsylvania Association of Retarded Children (PARC) filed suit in a U.S. District Court against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The suit claimed that the commonwealth denied access to public education to "school-age mentally retarded children who could profit from such schooling" (Rippa, 1988). The U.S. District Court, in "October, 1971, [issued] an injunction, consent agreement, and order" which provided much of the rationale for early special education legislation (Rippa, 1988, p. 346-349). In 1975 the Congress passed PL 94-142, The Education for All Children Act. This law established regulations which guaranteed handicapped children a free and appropriate education (Rippa, 1988; Schulz, et al., 1984). PL 94-142 contains six principles. "These principles include zero reject, nondiscriminatory evaluation, individualized education, least restrictive environment, due process, and parental participation" (Schulz, et al., 1988, p. 9).

The aftermath of this legislation led to a process of dual education programs defined as either regular or special education. The key aspect of special education was a series of "pull-out" programs (Kubicek, 1994). In 1986, Madeline Will, an assistant secretary of education, argued for a "less fragmented" approach to special education. Her efforts have been termed the "Regular Education Initiative" (Kubicek, 1994; Will, 1986).

In the period between P.L. 94-142 and Will's argument for changes in service delivery, exclusionary and pull-out programs had been under increasing criticism (Zigmon, et al., 1995). Will's criticisms included the fragmentation of service delivery, administrative practices which led to poor accountability, stigmatization of students, and a battleground atmosphere between regular and special educators (Kubicek, 1994, p. 28; Will, 1986).

In the last decade several additional concepts and legislation have been added to the original special education initiatives. In 1990 the Congress passed the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA), P.L. 101-476 which re-affirmed P.L. 94-142. And there has been the interpretation of civil rights-types of legislation. Congress passed the Americans with Disabilities Act in 1990 which has had an effect on special education services. And Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 has been used as an argument for increasing and improving the type and levels of educational services for students with disabilities (Roberts & Mather, 1995).

During the last twenty-five years, through court rulings and government legislation, the notion of special education services for students with disabilities has become more comprehensive. These changes have led to a growing discussion about the placement of children with disabilities into regular education classrooms. On one hand there are those

who argue for a spectrum of services from special day classes to inclusion. And there are those who argue for the abolition of any exclusionary services.

The Purpose of Education

The purpose of education, within the classical western context, is defined across a continuum from idealistic to practical. The objectives of contemporary schooling prepare students "to function effectively in the world of work..., to realize personal fulfillment..., to emphasize the integration of listening, speaking, reading and writing..."(California State Board of Education, 1987, p. 2-3). What appears as a practical statement has its critics. "The unavoidable necessity of growing up and getting a job in the United States forces us all to become less than we could be: less free, less secure, in short less happy (Bowles & Gintis, 1976, p. 54). The classical philosophers believed that the purpose of education was a search for truth and wisdom, a search for goodness. Much of what the school does today is to prepare students to hold a job, especially at the secondary level (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Cross, 1979; Harris & Schutz, 1990; Maselow, 1995).

For the purposes of this study it would be helpful to consider the goal of classical education as one in which the student is directed at reaching a higher good. The Platonic goal is virtue which is wisdom aligned with justice. The just citizen in Plato's society was essential because to be just supposes that the just person will never "consent to do injustice" (Plato, 1984, p. 259). This theme continues through early western Christian thought.

Education is the preparation for citizenship by the cultivation of what Maritain, a twentieth century theologian and philosopher, calls "the interior principle" (Maritain, 1985, p. 46). The interior principle is the development of the human person such that "the gravity

of the individual diminishes." The individual is educated in order to become part of the greater whole (Maritain, 1985, p. 46).

For Maritain, as with many of the classical western philosophers, Education is the vehicle which teaches "the person as a social unit" to participate in action toward "the common good as the end of the social whole" (Maritain, 1985, p. 48-50). To Maritain "the end of the society is the good of the community, of the social body." Within this context the same interior principles which guided a citizen of ancient Athens would guide the citizens of modern California. While these concepts may sound strange in the context of late twentieth century America, we shall see that they continue to have a profound impact on modern educational philosophy, especially within the context of special education.

Inclusion - The Debate

The arguments surrounding inclusion can be categorized within the context of these ethical models, either a linear argument or a relational argument. Finally, the underlying belief about the purpose of education can be viewed as classical, a search for the common good, or it can be individualized, the protection of personal rights.

In a study of three meta-analyses covering a fourteen year period, research indicated "that special needs students educated in regular classes do better academically and socially than comparable students in non-inclusive settings" although these effects are "not huge" (Baker, et al., 1994, p. 34). In a second study conducted on a multi-year inclusion effort, in a large school district in the state of Georgia, there were positive results (Logan, Diaz, Piperno, Rankin, MacFarland, & Bargamian, 1994, p. 42). "One of our earliest experiences with the inclusion of a child with severe disabilities convinced us of the merits

of inclusion as a way to motivate students and support authentic learning." Inclusion for this program also "developed empathy and compassion, qualities that will help them in school and in life" (Logan, et al., 1994).

In a third study conducted in Vermont with nineteen teachers, kindergarten through ninth grade, seventeen of the teachers considered their experience with inclusion to be "transformational." There was an attitudinal change by the teachers toward the children with disabilities. There were also improvements by the special education students in areas of socialization and "an increase level of social/emotional development, flexibility, and empathy" (Giangreco, et al., 1993, p. 367-369). A major theme which is carried through these studies is the emphasis on attitudinal changes and social/emotional development.

The Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1986) provided the impetus for the current trend toward the inclusion of students with disabilities into regular education classrooms. There have been recent court decisions which have accelerated the movement toward inclusion. In Oberti v. Clementon 1993, "the federal court upheld the right of children with disabilities to be educated in regular classrooms with their non-disabled peers" (Baker, et al., 1994, p. 34). Other court rulings have been modified by cost of services (McCarthy, 1993, p. 267-269). These cases generally rule for the child with the disabilities with a strong emphasis on the individual rights of the child.

The opponents of inclusion tend to argue for a continuum of services for children with disabilities. The most significant question is "what happens when a child whose disability has led to disruptive and even dangerous behavior must, as the law requires, remain in a class because a judge refuses to have the child removed?" (Shanker, 1994, p. 20).

Students with disabilities can be categorized as physically, emotionally, or behaviorally disabled. "Less than 1% of public school students are identified as having emotional or behavioral disorders, and the majority of these students are now served in separate classes or facilities (Kauffman, et al., 1995, p. 543). Additionally about 6% to 10% of all children may have emotional or behavioral problems which impede their learning. Most of these children will not receive services "until their problem becomes so extreme as to require residential treatment" (Kauffman, et al., 1995, p. 543).

Without long-term, sustained intervention strategies the problem of children with emotional and behavioral disabilities will intensify. Intervention requires training, services, and usually additional personnel. Regular education teachers are teaching in classrooms which exceed "the critical mass" which is most effective in dealing with children with the most severe emotional and behavioral problems. The critical mass, as determined by one research project, indicates a low student/staff ratio of 5:1 (Kauffman, et al., 1995).

While there has been an emphasis on the aspects of the inclusion of children with severe disabilities, the largest population of students in special education are classified as students with learning disabilities. The term was first introduced in 1963 (Bos & Vaughn, 1991). Learning disabilities cannot be the result of other disabling conditions, behavioral, physical, or emotional. The learning disability has to result in a discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability. The discrepancy has to be in one of seven areas: oral expression, listening, writing, reading skills, reading comprehension, and mathematical computation or reasoning (Bos & Vaughn, 1991; Lerner, 1989).

The guidelines for determining if a student is learning disabled are ambiguous and the number of students in this population has grown continuously. In the United States, in

1976-77, 797,212 students were classified as learning disabled. By 1991-92 this population had grown to 2,214,326 students (Zigmond, et al., 1995, p. 532). Fuchs & Fuchs (1994a) argue that as a result of at least three studies, these children, at times, are best served in special day classes and resource rooms.

Fuchs & Fuchs (1994a, 1994b) contend that a disabled student who does not benefit from placement in regular education is not being served within the mandates of the least restrictive environment policy. First, there must be an educational program appropriate to the child's needs. Second, the placement must be as close to being age appropriate as possible. By implication, these educators believe that inclusion does not always meet the intention of the least restrictive environment rules.

Other educators argue that all students with disabilities should be included in regular education programs. Denti (1994a) echoes Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) when he argues that educators have a responsibility to recognize that we must consider relationships within the context of caring. This educator argues that "if the disparity between power, justice, and care is reconciled between special and regular education, and interconnection is valued and pursued, students with disabilities will be *automatically* included." The proponents of inclusion argue for a broader definition of the school as a community. They tend to view education as more than a place to learn basic academic skills. The debate over inclusion, for them, is a defining piece of the American experience. "What is at stake (inclusion) is not just our special education programs, or even our educational system. What is at stake is our commitment as a democracy to educate all children to the best of their abilities and to teach them all to be responsible, caring citizens..." (Sapon-Shevin, 1996, p. 41).

Wang & Reynolds (1996) believe that by meeting the challenges within the educational community, all children can be educated within an inclusive system. These authors believe that "in our view the steady trend of progressive inclusion will and should continue, probably with some near-term acceleration" (Wang & Reynolds, 1996, p. 21).

Fuchs & Fuchs (1994a, p. 21) contend "eliminating special education placements in the name of full inclusion will deprive many students with disabilities of an appropriate education." The alternative, which is offered by opponents of inclusion, is a continuum of services. "Based on our research, we cannot support elimination of a continuum of services for students with LD. Inclusion is a good thing; full inclusion may be too much of a good thing" (Zigmond & Baker, 1996, p. 33).

Placement along a continuum allows for children to be placed according to the severity of their condition, their appropriateness to the setting, and how they might affect the learning of the greater community. "We need to discard the ideology that inclusion in a regular classroom is the only appropriate placement for a disabled child and get back to the idea of a "continuum of placements," based on the nature and severity of the handicap" (Shanker, 1994).

Summary

The arguments for inclusion versus one for a continuum of special education services cover many groups, offer conflicting research results, and focus on various aspects of education --- legal, academic, social, philosophical, and political. Underlying these arguments is a basic moral dilemma. Zigmond & Baker (1996) argue that inclusion efforts, based on their research, did not provide many of the features of a good special education program. These researchers, supporting some type of a continuum of services, conclude

their study by stating "providing a venue and the resources for delivering this instruction is not only our moral obligation to students with LD, it is also our obligation under the law" (Zigmond & Baker, 1996, p. 33).

Proponents of inclusion also view this debate within a moral context, "...inclusion does not harm nondisabled children. Even more encouraging is the evidence of potential benefits of inclusion" (Staub & Peck, 1995, p. 39). To these educators inclusion represents a deeper movement within the American social fabric. "We suggest that including children with disabilities in regular public school classrooms ... is necessary to achieve change in the values and ethics underlying public education policy" (Staub & Peck, 1995, p. 39).

The underlying moral dilemma of inclusion has the elements for what Nash (1996) would consider a comprehensive ethical analysis. To continue this analysis of inclusion versus a continuum of services, it would be useful to hear how educators in regular education classrooms regard this issue. As a teacher takes sides, it will be informative to understand what they perceive to be the goal of education and how they phrase their argument. When the person constructs their ethical analysis, will they use a linear analysis or will they use a relational analysis based on the caring of one individual for another (Lebacqz, 1985; Noddings, 1984). The ensuing research considered these paradigms.

Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was developed to examine the moral overtones which regular education teachers use to argue for or against the inclusion of children with special needs into regular school classrooms.

Population

A sample of regular education teachers was selected non-randomly. The sampling was restricted to regular elementary teachers with whom I had some knowledge or contact. All of the teachers in the sample are women. The teachers included two from Connecticut, working in the same district; one from New Jersey, one from New York, and seven from the same school in a large city in California.

Research Design

The teachers were provided with four scenarios which were unique to special education placements. The scenarios had been developed by distilling actual case studies into four hypothetical cases. Attached to the scenarios was a cover letter (Appendix A) which describes the nature and the purpose of this study. The participants were asked to reflect on these scenarios.

A pilot study had been completed with one early primary teacher. This teacher taught in a large city in California. She has experience as a special education teacher and as a teacher in regular education. She was also a parent of two children with disabilities. The teacher was provided with the letter and the scenarios. Following are the four scenarios upon which this study will be based.

Scenario 1

Margaret is a fourth grader. She has been diagnosed with a Learning Disability by a clinical psychologist and a reading therapist who were selected by her parents. At the end of last year she was referred to a Student Study Team which recommended, with parent approval, a special education placement. An IEP was written in September. Her reading scores from the Woodcock indicate that her skills are at a First Grade level. Margaret is tall for her age. She is extremely shy. She does not have a large circle of friends, when compared with the other girls in her class. She is the oldest of three children. Her parents work in high-tech jobs. They are concerned with their daughter's progress. Mom is an ex-teacher and her expectations are that Margaret will be reading at, or near, grade-level by the end of the year. The parents have agreed to an IEP specifically for Reading. The major goals are: to increase word attack skills by two years or greater; to increase comprehension skills by 1 year to 18 months; and, to develop Margaret's Oral Reading skills by a minimum of two years. The parents have agreed to a modified reading curriculum but only if it is delivered by her regular classroom teacher, in the classroom, during the school day.

Scenario 2

Juan is a fourth grade student who transferred to our school from El Centro in the Imperial Valley. Juan has an IEP which was written at the end of last year. The IEP addressed the areas of Reading, Language Arts, and Math. Juan is bilingual and has been assigned to a bilingual classroom with a bilingual teacher. Juan is in a remedial pull-out program. He is taken out for 30 minute sessions of instruction in a Reading and Language Arts program in Spanish and in English. These are two separate special education programs. The Spanish pull-out class is conducted by a special day class (SDC) teacher. The English program is conducted in an RSP (Resource Specialist Program) room by the RSP teacher where Juan is one of four students. He attends a similar RSP class for his Remedial Math program. Juan is a non-reader in Spanish and English. Juan has been a continuous discipline problem in his regular classroom. Among the 32 other students, his teacher feels that he is one of the top three or four most severe problems. His parents do not come to school for conferences. The SDC teacher has taken forms which require signatures to Juan's home. His father is a day laborer and his mother cares for five children. Juan is the middle child. He and his family live in a one bedroom apartment in a transitional neighborhood.

Scenario 3

Khan is a fourth grade boy who is in a regular classroom but is in a special education pull-out program. Khan has deficits in all academic areas. He attends RSP classes for Reading, Language Arts, Math, and Behavior Intervention. He is taken out of his class four times a day at twenty minute intervals. His teacher says that he is too difficult to manage in a class with 35 students. She has requested a Special Day Class placement for Khan. Khan is the youngest of two children. Khan's father is a genetic scientist at Stanford University and his mother owns and operates a 7-11 store. His thirteen year old sister played soccer for a junior Olympic squad. On two occasions his parents have placed him in private and parochial schools and he was expelled. Khan's behavior is exhibited in outbursts toward the teacher. He will make personally insulting statements to her, tear up

work, and continuously speak out of turn. At other times he will day-dream and "appear to be in another world."

At the end of last year his parents took us to a Fair Hearing to prevent us from placing Khan in a Special Day Class. The judge ruled that Khan's behavior stemmed from his frustration at his inability to function at the same academic level as his peers. The judge ruled that a regular classroom with a limited remedial pull-out program was the least restrictive environment. The judge also ordered the school to follow the intent of Title 5 of the Special Education Code and ordered an implementation of a Positive Behavior Intervention Plan. The District is using a trained Behavior Intervention Case Manager. Suspension is not an acceptable intervention, even in an emergency.

Scenario 4

Rameel is a fourth grade student who has been assigned to a Special Day Class. The classroom is situated in a portable building on a lot behind the school and next to the playground. Rameel lives in a foster home with six other foster children. His guardians relate that he was a drug baby and had a very low birth weight. He was in intensive care for the first three months and exhibited signs of classical infant withdrawal. He was assigned to an SDC placement during the second grade. He had and continues to have serious behavior problems. When frustrated he will become assaultive. He must be closely monitored in all-school settings such as lunch, recess, and busing. His IEP includes a detailed positive behavior intervention plan, with specific emergency behavior plans to address incidents of assault, self-inflicted injury, or emotional outbursts. The academic sections of his IEP address the areas of Math, Reading, Language Arts, and Speech. A speech therapist works with him in the classroom twice a week, in thirty minute sessions. Rameel has a short attention span. A video cartoon, children's movie, or computer game will engage him for not more than five minute intervals with up to thirty minute episodes of inattentiveness. Rameel's academic performance is at approximately a first grade level, using the Brigance as an informal measuring tool.

The Pilot Study

To start the interview I asked the teacher biographical questions and queried if she had done any preparation for the interview. She had developed several "mind maps" to guide her through the process. I restated the guidelines; a fifteen to twenty minute interview based on her reflections of the scenarios.

The total time for this interview was twenty minutes. I stopped the process at that point so that I would be consistent with the other participants. I found that this teacher used about ten minutes to restate the facts in each scenario. I categorized her responses within

the structure of an ethical analysis as described in the review of the literature. Ethically, her concept of a moral right was based on the relationship of the children to their peers. She was more relational than linear or legalistic. "We should do what is best for the child not necessarily what is right with the laws." She spoke in terms of the child's self-esteem and his need to "fit in." Finally, this teacher perceived the purpose of education as a process for learning "life skills, social skills, academic skills, all of the skills necessary to have a happy, healthy, and productive life."

Data Collection

The teachers' reflections were transcribed in a notebook using common ethnographic techniques (Spradley, 1979). These field notes were the sole source of data collection for this study. Following the interview I typed the key concepts into a computer file. As the data was entered into the file I placed a check next to the field notes to identify that the material had been entered. The instructions and the background material which were the basis for the interview came from the package with the introductory letter and the four scenarios.

Data Analysis

"Analysis of any kind involves a way of thinking. It refers to the systematic examination of something to determine its parts, the relationships among parts, and their relationship to the whole" (Spradley, 1979, p. 92). The systematic categorizing of the research data fell into three distinct parts; first, the type of ethical argument which was made, linear or relational; second, the purpose of education; and third, beliefs about inclusionary placements.

Spradley (1979) encourages researchers to understand that the "informant" (the person being interviewed) brings an organized system of looking at their culture. Spradley argues that the culture of the informant can be understood from the symbols which are used to explain a cultural phenomenon, in this case the scenarios. By organizing the cultural symbols we can develop an ethnographic analysis of an interview or a series of interviews.

Developing Spradley's model of analysis allowed for the data to be placed into the following scheme or taxonomy:

1. The device which was the notebook;
2. The interviews with the teachers;
3. The Domain Analysis which was the process of sorting the data.

The teachers responses began with an analysis of the scenarios. While I had explained that this study was intended to be an analysis of ethical decision making, the teachers moved from reflections on the scenarios to their thoughts on the purpose of education and then to their thoughts on inclusionary practices. This format of response provided the grounding for the ethical analysis.

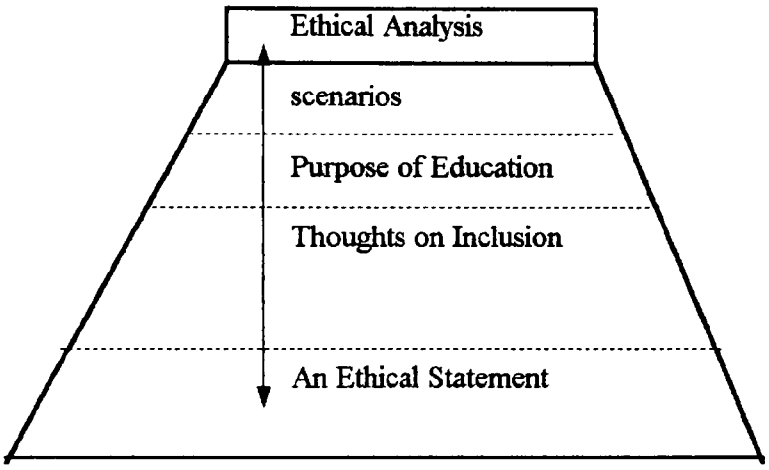

Figure 1

Figure 1 offers a graphical display of how the teachers statements about ethical or moral aspects of inclusion became a part of the ethical analysis. In order for them to describe an ethical concept, the teachers moved from the scenarios, to their belief in the purpose of education, to their beliefs about inclusionary situations. Moral considerations, for these teachers, were made within the broader context of their professional experiences.

This was a qualitative study and was limited by the use of the four scenarios as a basis for categorizing the teachers' responses. It was also limited by the use of women, no men were interviewed, who were regular education elementary school teachers. Future studies could be conducted by using other segments of the educational community, either with specific groups or across sections of these groups.

Significance of the Study

The importance of this study was that it provided an analysis of the format in which special education reform has been considered. The importance of this study was further strengthened by the examination of the voice in which the discussion was spoken. This

study provided an opportunity to consider the types of ethical reasoning which have been used to consider inclusionary placements; linear or relational. It can be argued that moral reasoning can best be understood when we understand that, how an ethical dilemma is resolved is as important as the resolution (Nash, 1996). And, finally by listening to the truths in the various arguments, and by suspending our disbelief, we are better able to discover the truth within this ethical dilemma.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

In this chapter the data obtained from the interviews are presented. The data are presented in terms of overviews of specific areas which were discussed. The purpose of this study was to examine the underlying ethical dilemma which is found in discussions about the full inclusion of children with special needs into regular education programs.

The responses are organized within several discrete areas. The first level of analysis concerns the responses to the placement of particular children in each of the four scenarios. The next level of analysis concerns what these teachers had to say about the purpose of education and what they had to say about full inclusion. These areas of discussion provide the moral overtones (Noddings, 1984) and background beliefs (Nash, 1996) within which this ethical analysis occurred.

The final area of analysis addressed the ethical context in which these eleven teachers considered the process of inclusion. Prior to the interviews the teachers were provided with a cover letter and a copy of the four scenarios. My questions tended to focus on the moral implications of this process. The interviews therefore were skewed toward the right and wrong and toward the rights of one student versus the rights of the other children. These are the issues upon which the ethical considerations are developed.

Results

Twenty teachers were considered for participation in this survey including 15 women and five men. Of this population 11 women in 4 states responded through the interview process. The time for the interviews was from 20 minutes to 30 minutes. All of the teachers are elementary school teachers teaching in regular education programs.

Responses were collected in a notebook and were the basis for the data. The data are tabulated in interview format with the insertion of charts where appropriate.

The Scenarios

The teachers were provided with four scenarios of special education placement. The teachers' initial responses were to their impressions of theses placements.

Margaret

Of the four scenarios Margaret was one which the teachers seemed to have the most common understanding. Margaret is shy, reading below grade level, and the oldest of three children. Her parents appear to dictate her learning program and as one of the respondents theorized, "they probably run the poor child's life." Another teacher observed that "this is a classic case of parent denial."

Five of the respondents believe that through an intensive remedial program Margaret will be working at grade level. All of the teachers indicated that an inclusionary placement for Margaret was an appropriate placement.

Juan

Eight of the teachers responded with varying degrees of criticism to Juan's program. These teachers believed that there was too much time spent out of the regular classroom. One of the teachers responded that Juan might be better served with a special placement. She said that "he has a very severe LH (Learning Handicap) problem plus he speaks Spanish. It might be better for him to spend some time, at least initially, in an SDC placement (Special Day Class). Or put him in a regular class, with a small class size, and use a limited RSP (Resource Specialist) pullout program."

One of the teachers from Connecticut said that she could see a student like Juan assigned to a regular classroom. "They should limit his time out of the classroom. He needs to build up a trust with the teacher."

Khan

All of the teachers felt that Khan was a "spoiled child with spoiled parents." Ten of the teachers felt that suspension for Khan would be appropriate if his disruptions "became totally distracting." All of the teachers responded that Khan's program had "way too many distractions."

A teacher in California felt that "small group instruction, because of peer exposure" is the most effective placement. She felt that Khan needed to "listen and see interactions of his peers. He needs to recognize from the peer perspective what is acceptable and unacceptable behavior." All of the teachers felt that inclusion was appropriate for Khan with a modified special education program.

Rameel

10 of the 11 teachers felt that inclusion for Rameel was not an appropriate placement. The key difficulty when considering Rameel, for all of the teachers, was expressed by the teacher from New Jersey. "We have no experience or training in dealing with drug babies."

A teacher from California considered children with substance problems to be "one of our biggest problems." This teacher said " drug and alcohol babies have serious processing problems. Their academic and social needs are extremely demanding. We need to address these problems differently, and these are serious problems. Along with the social

problems there is the issue of language processing. And the behavior issue comes along with this."

When asked how she would structure a program for children like Rameel, she responded, " they need a program with a smaller class size, a smaller setting. Focus on life skills and partial inclusion is very important. Why? Because these children can learn by example. Peer structures are critical."

Purpose of Education

Because of the changes in Special Education policy over the past twenty years, the definition of the purpose of education is debatable. An outcome of the interviews, which were the foundation of this study, was the various interpretations of what is the purpose of education. In general, concerning students in special education, the discussions addressed two areas; academic skills and life skills.

The teacher from New York, with a student with special needs in her class, was emphatic that "school is for learning, specifically for learning academic skills." She explained that "my program is an academic program. For example, I teach ancient history at grade level but the [special education student] has a modified program. Everyone knows that she is different. You can't pretend they're normal when everyone knows that they are not [normal]."

She continued, "it is important for her to be in class with the regular students. There is a positive interaction among my students. But education for regular education students is academically based but for many special needs kids they have to learn how to live. For my student, it is important for her to learn life skills in case her mother dies, or

when her mother dies. You know, Life Skills is taught in the afternoon and that is an incentive for her. But when she's with the regular class her program needs to be modified." A teacher from California added, "children in special education need to learn basic living skills like transportation and food preparation."

One of the teachers from Connecticut had a different interpretation about the purpose of education, especially as applied to children in special education programs. She asserted that, "academics are life skills." This sentiment was the same as one of the teachers from California when she said, "these (academic skills) are life skills past and present. Curriculum is important. The general concepts are important Another teacher said, "you don't give up on the basic, elementary academics. Life skills are secondary to academic skills. The more the child knows about the world the better."

The teacher from New Jersey offered this summation, "there are academic skills and life skills. If you have an integrated academic program you should be providing an academic program which is the foundation for life skills."

Inclusion

A teacher from California began her discussion by saying, "As far as the idea of inclusion, well, I feel comfortable with it. I've seen it work with good, well-trained aides, especially in Language Arts, Reading, and Writing." A second teacher said that from her experience, "there are mixed feelings but many of the teachers see this (inclusion) as a wonderful opportunity." She explained that inclusion "provided an environment in which the special ed kids could learn from their peers. It's a natural thing."

A teacher in Connecticut said that "with proper supports inclusion will work. You need a continuum of services." A teacher in California observed " Inclusion can be a great

opportunity. But I think that these districts are dismantling special education to save money. Once the supports are gone, and they are gone in a year or two, then the regular ed teacher is on her own."

While all of the teachers recognized that inclusion, to some extent, was a positive concept, the issue of finances and staff support became a recurring theme. The teacher from New York said, "money is the underlying factor for inclusion programs." A teacher from Connecticut said of the students in special education, "they need small group placements. But that's expensive."

These teachers spoke of special education placements in terms of a continuum of services. The teachers spoke of placement in terms of individual children. "Each child requires individual considerations, whether it's a special ed kid or a regular ed kid." The teachers were quite specific about the type of students who would cause a problem in their classroom.

A teacher from Connecticut felt that, "inclusion with young children, when the child is disruptive, is unfair. It takes away from the other children who also really need a lot of attention." A teacher in California voiced a similar sentiment, "inclusion, with really difficult kids with behavior and emotional problems, doesn't work. It hurts learning. The teacher has a class to teach." The teacher from New York said that "the AFT (American Federation of Teachers) supports some inclusion efforts but the AFT position is that a disruptive student does not belong in a regular class."

An area of concern for six of the teachers was in the area of personal hygiene. One teacher believed that "toileting, or incontinence, has to be humiliating for the student and also for the rest of the class." A teacher from California argued that, "you can't have a kid

with toileting needs managed by the regular ed teacher. The classroom teacher has a whole class and you can't take her away from other kids (to change diapers)." Another teacher expressed that "some of these children are incontinent. I'm not going to clean up messes."

A teacher from California made a statement which can be used to summarize the concerns about inclusionary placements. " Sometimes I think that the notion of inclusion is a band aid to make society feel better ... when you have a child with serious mental retardation, an eight year old with a three year old mentality, that's a big problem. When there are serious problems, disruptive problems, then you need to rethink the placement. Inclusion is a good thing but not for all these kids and not all of the time."

All of the teachers offered scenarios in which they felt inclusion could be successful. "Inclusion works best with a small class size. Teachers need to be trained. We need continuous support," argued a teacher from California. Another teacher said that, "inclusion is not for all students but there should be some for every student. This has to be done on an individual basis, case by case. You need to understand the severity of the case. And, you need trained personnel."

A teacher from California and both teachers from Connecticut voiced this type of suggestion. "You have to address learning styles, modify the programs. But you should do this for every child. If you don't understand that you have to teach every child as an individual then you really aren't going to teach any child."

Ethics

For the purposes of this study, Public Education is the unifying concept for these teachers. The teachers spoke in terms of Special Education and Regular Education and while the two processes are different there wasn't a definitive line drawn between the two

systems. As an example, the IEP (Individual Educational Plan) is a specific way to determine that a student is in special education. In the eleven interviews, only one of the teachers made a direct reference to the IEP. With these teachers, once a child enters their class, it can be assumed, the teacher sees all students as their students.

Inclusion is a process which joins the two educational processes. The teachers who participated in this study expressed their vision of inclusion along a continuum. All of the teachers recognized the importance of inclusion. Their exceptions to this process were in the areas of serious behavioral disorders , such as violence, and with health problems, such as frequent incontinence.

The underlying thought which connected these discussions, a common thread, was the ethical implication of inclusion. This implication can be viewed most easily by examining what the teachers considered right or wrong. And, significant to this study is how they framed that ethical argument. They used either a linear argument to frame their discussion or they used a relational argument. In all instances there was no clear line which separated their ethical arguments. However, it can be demonstrated in this section that these teachers had a strong tendency to use relational arguments to frame their notions of right and wrong.

In general terms the linear arguments were based in terms of legal and contractual considerations. The teacher who used the AFT as a basis for her argument was grounded in the precise language of a union contract. The teacher specifically referred to the provisions of her bargaining agreement when considering who was going to change a student's soiled clothing.

Other linear arguments about issues around inclusion discussed the financing of

special education. These arguments were based on linear considerations which went from general financing to the staffing of regular classrooms with students with special needs. This type of reasoning also applied, to some extent, when the teachers considered disruptive children. A child who was violent did not belong in the regular classroom, not necessarily because of intrinsic relational considerations, but because through some linear thought process, the child was a danger to everyone in the room. These were the only areas in which the teachers used linear and legal arguments; the masculine style of ethics to which Noddings (1984) makes reference.

It is in the relational style of ethical consideration to which these teachers continued to make their most profound arguments. They were relational not linear, based in caring not law, empathetic and not judgmental. One teacher said, "you can't take away from the rest of the class and you need to weigh the needs of the child. You need to understand how these children relate to one another when you consider educational placements."

The teacher from New Jersey suggested that "you partner a regular child with a needy child. The children learn to be compassionate and thankful. Self-esteem works both ways here. It is very important for the peer mentors." The teacher from New York said that, "handicap awareness is an important learning tool." A teacher from California argued that "inclusion is a wonderful experience for the regular ed child. It is something that will be helpful throughout their lives, for both students really." The teacher from New Jersey offered that "you know there was a child who unfortunately died. But she was so endearing to the other kids. She was very physically disabled. We had to make special accommodations. But it worked because everyone worked at it. They all cared for each other."

One of the teachers from Connecticut felt that, "children have to learn empathy, understanding, and acceptance. Inclusionary processes encourage these traits." She added that, "it's difficult to learn in large groups. All children benefit from small group placements especially children with special needs."

A teacher from California argued that inclusion is important because "it's important to the community. We teach community survival. Who cares if they can do long division. Can they function together in society? That's the larger question. Inclusion efforts are important because they address the larger issue of how the children relate to each other." To some extent these arguments reflect Maritain's discussion of the development of "the interior principle" (Maritian, 1985).

A teacher from Connecticut said that with successful teaching " you let all the children take more risks. You learn to care, to trust. Interaction is the most important factor in successful inclusion." For all of the teachers the strength of inclusion is grounded in what the students bring to the program. The teachers spoke in terms of "empathy, understanding, sharing, and caring." Some of these words were used at times by all of the teachers to frame their moral arguments. The most common themes for teaching these traits came from the use of small group instruction and cooperative learning groups.

All of the teachers have had exposure to inclusionary placements. Except for the most egregious cases, there was a common support for inclusion. The support was not based on a linear, legalistic, discursive, or a masculine ethical approach. Their ethical arguments were based in concepts of nurturing, caring, relational factors; the feminine approach to the ethics of inclusion. To summarize the ethical base upon which these teachers developed their programs I will close this chapter with a quote from one of the

teachers from Connecticut. I believe that the other ten teachers would feel that this is the essence of their feelings. She says, " in Education the teacher is the key. The placement is important but ... in Special ed or Regular ed, once the child is in my class, they are entitled to the best education which I can offer. If I didn't feel that way, I would stop teaching. The classroom is important. Our children need to be comfortable in class. Comfortable with the teacher. Comfortable with each other. Like I said, each child is unique. And trust is important. It takes time to build that relationship. Once it's there the child can learn. In the end, though, everything else depends upon a loving structure which is built upon fairness and supportiveness. That's how it all works. That's what makes good citizens. That's why I teach."

Chapter 5

Discussion and Summary

Discussion

Teachers in regular education programs, based on the results of this study, recognize the importance of inclusion. The teachers who participated in this study, in responding to the four scenarios of inclusionary placement, analyzed each scenario and then discussed the purposes of education, the concept of inclusion, and the ethical and moral implications of inclusionary placements.

The significance of the results of this study was determined by the fact that these were women elementary education teachers who tended to make ethical considerations in terms of relational structures. This significance was underlined by the fact that only one of the teachers made reference to the IEP when discussing special education placements. This had significance since it emphasizes the notion that the teacher is responsible for the education of all of the students in her class. Once an inclusionary placement is made, the teacher, in most instances, began the process of assimilating the new student into her program. While a legal document, the IEP, determined the type of special education for a child with a disability, the teachers in this study had a primary concern of offering a program which developed positive and caring relationships among all of their students. This type of occurrence was consistent with other research findings such as Giangreco et al. (1993) and Logan et al. (1994).

The purpose of this study was to determine if there were significant differences in the ways teachers decide about inclusion. In order to understand how the teachers arrived

at ethical positions, it was necessary to understand their feelings about the purpose of education and their feelings about inclusion.

The purpose of education, in relation to this conversation, was based in the development of life skills or academic skills. The majority of the teachers considered academic programs to be fundamental to their teaching. They also viewed academic development as the basis for the successful development of life skills. Academic skills can be taught successfully through a modified program, using small group instruction, and cooperative learning groups.

There was a consensus among these teachers that inclusionary placements would be less than successful if a particularly disruptive or violent child was placed in their class. They also had reservations about the inclusionary placement of children with extraordinary health needs, such as incontinence.

The ethical decisions which were made within the context of this discussion tended to be based in relational considerations consistent with theories developed by Gilligan (1982), Lebacqz (1985), and Noddings (1984). The teachers' moral arguments were less linear and more relational and nurturing. It was important for these teachers that the students in their classroom be protected from the most outlandish behavior if only because the equilibrium of the room would be unbalanced. In all of the discussions there was a sense of gentleness which emerged when they discussed the climate of their classrooms.

These teachers spoke in terms of caring and empathy. Learning, to these teachers, is a process of developing academic skills which will provide the foundation for the successful development of life skills. Life skills, at their basic level, helps the person to live successfully in the larger community. Success in life, as I heard these teachers, is the ability

to contribute to the greater good of their community. Children learned this in their classrooms within an environment constructed by their teachers. Referring to the teacher from Connecticut, she said that everything in her class "depends on a loving structure." Each of the teachers, when discussing the environment of their classroom, projected the need for safety, respect, and caring. The ethical arguments were made more in terms of non-linear, relational considerations. Linear considerations based on rights and laws were heard less frequently.

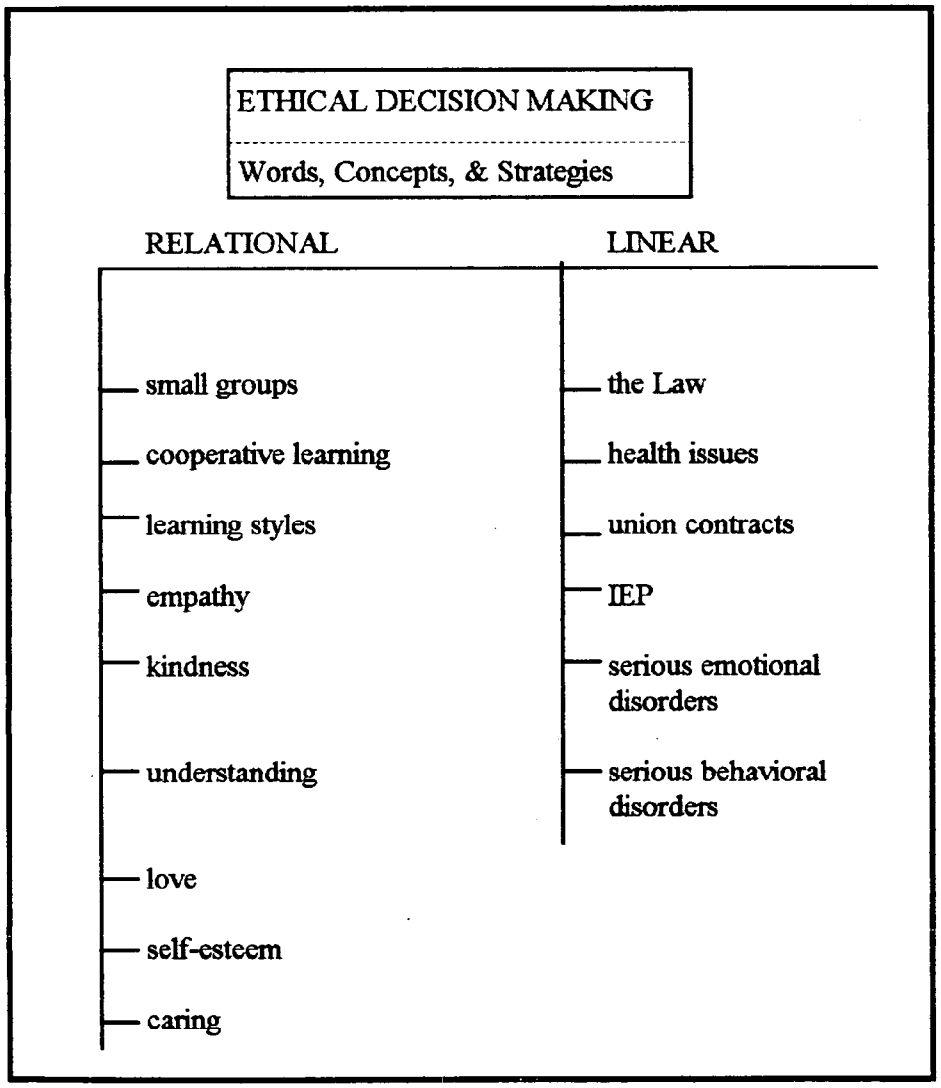

Figure 2

Figure 2 offers a display of the types of words, concepts, or strategies to which the teachers referred when structuring their ethical thoughts. The phrases in this diagram offer a representational format of linear or relational thoughts.

Summary

The data obtained from this study indicates that additional research could be obtained. Additional data could be collected from other segments of the educational community which are affected by inclusionary placements. A comparative study could be conducted using the responses of men who are teaching elementary school. High school teachers might provide the basis for a study of moral and ethical decision making. Several of the teachers in this study referred to the difficulty of inclusionary placements at the high school level, especially in a state like New York where all students are required to take state-wide regents exams. A more general concern was the willingness of secondary teachers to modify their programs for children with special needs. A similar study could be conducted with administrators in the regular education programs and those in the special education community. A comparative study could be constructed for special education teachers. In summary, there are several other populations which could provide valuable insights concerning the ethical considerations of inclusionary placements.

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