

Title: Inclusion of Students with Multiple Disabilities:
Qualitative Case Studies in Elementary School

Author: John B. Machella

Dissertation Chairman: Dr. Robert E. Millward

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy Kaufman
Dr. Susan Glor-Scheib

This study focused on the inclusion program of three students with multiple disabilities. The purpose was to examine each program's academic and social learning outcomes and how the staff implemented each student's individualized education program. Observations and interviews were conducted with teachers, building principals, support staff, and parents. In addition, documents were reviewed to better understand the student's program in their respective schools. Although the schools did not have a full inclusion model, the schools definitely exhibited classroom-based models. The three children in this study were initially considered for placement in more restrictive educational settings, but because the IEP teams met and discussed each student's needs, they decided upon placement in their neighborhood schools. Each program was constructed to meet specific needs using a combination of regular and special education activities with support from instructional aides. There were mixed findings related to the process for inclusion that revealed student achievement of learning outcomes in some classes and limited success in other classes. Some teachers in these schools made instructional adaptations and curricular modifications to support inclusion, while other teachers lacked understanding of how to adapt and modify themes of training needs and collaboration for inclusion emerged in all programs. These results may assist educators in understanding the complexities of inclusion of students with multiple disabilities and the need for both academic and social learning outcomes.