

Title: A Case Study of Effective Staff Development
Practices in a Small Pennsylvania Junior-Senior
High School with Inclusive Practices

Author: Susan M. Sibert

Dissertation Chairman: Dr. Robert E. Millward

Dissertation Committee Members: Dr. Cathy C. Kaufman
Dr. Wenfan Yan

Secondary school teachers, both regular and special educators, as well as teacher aides in public schools need training to implement inclusion practices so that special education students can be educated, as is their right, to the fullest extent possible together with their same aged peers.

This case study identified effective staff development practices and challenges over a three-year period for administrators, teachers, and aides in a small junior-senior high school which implemented a full inclusion program.

Administrators, teachers, and aides participated in in-depth interviews about their experiences and perceptions of planning or receiving extensive staff development and working in a full inclusion program in the various content departments of a small secondary school. Artifacts from a three-year period when a state grant was awarded for teacher training for inclusion were reviewed and compared to the

results of in-depth interviews with administrator, teachers and aides.

Findings indicate that for training to be effective it must be derived from the expressed needs of teachers and aides and it must be supported by administration. Even under ideal training conditions, however, with proper leadership resources and supports, some teachers continued to report they were not prepared to accept special education students in regular classrooms. Human emotion, change, confidence level, role confusion, and teacher collaboration time were identified as issues contributing to these findings.

The results of this study may serve as a framework for educational leaders coordinating staff development for both special and regular teachers and aides in schools implementing inclusion models.