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WHEN DENVER IS NOT A COUNTRY, BUT A STATE:
STUDYING THE ENACTMENT OF FUNCTIONAL
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Emily Christine Bouck

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Doctoral

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WHEN DENVER IS NOT A COUNTRY, BUT A STATE: STUDYING THE
ENACTMENT OF FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM IN TWO RURAL
CATEGORICAL SECONDARY PROGRAMS

VOLUME I

By

Emily Christine Bouck

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
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For the degree of

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY

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ABSTRACT

WHEN DENVER IS NOT A COUNTRY, BUT A STATE: STUDYING THE ENACTMENT OF FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM IN TWO RURAL CATEGORICAL SECONDARY PROGRAMS.

By

Emily Christine Bouck

Despite limited representation in current research, self-contained special education programs that serve students with multiple disabilities (i.e. cross-categorical) remain a viable option for educating secondary students with disabilities, such as mental impairment, severe learning disabilities, emotional impairment, and Autism. Similarly, while a functional curriculum remains an important curricular option for students in these programs, as well as others, little current research has also been conducted in this area. This study combines these two underrepresented areas within the research-base for special education – self-contained cross-categorical programs and functional curriculum – for the purpose of understanding the enactment of functional curriculum and what factors impact that enactment. Throughout this study, enactment is defined as a multi-faceted idea that involves the social construction of curriculum with the realization that larger institutional factors such as policy, school, and community matter in addition to teacher and student variables. An expanded transactional view was taken, in which meaning was not only constructed between the curriculum, teacher, and student, but also larger levels such as policy/legislation, school, and community. Furthermore, all the factors were evaluated within their current situation as well as what their past histories

contribute to the enactment. The research occurred in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical special education programs in the state of Michigan. Classroom observations, artifact reviews, and interviews with teachers, students, and paraprofessionals formed the basis of the study of the enactment of functional curriculum. Overall the data revealed several themes related to the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs as well as illuminating the nature of the relationships between the various factors hypothesized (policy/legislation, community, school, teachers, students, and curriculum materials) and the enactment. The nature of the enactment of functional curriculum was revealed to occur in moment-to-moment interactions. Functional curriculum was also found to be relative, as in the “functional” part was “in the eye of the beholder”. The enactment of functional curriculum created a community within the programs and enabled affordances and opportunities for both students and teachers. The functional curriculum enacted was also found to be more than what met the eye, or in other words, the curriculum had to become everything to everyone. Tensions, particularly between being in special education and being in general education, were formed from the enactment of functional curriculum. The nature of the relationship between the factors hypothesized in theory to impact the enactment of functional curriculum indicated that they were influential. Specifically, the data revealed the following factors impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs: policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, paraprofessionals, students, and curriculum materials.

This is dedicated to my family:

My parents, Mary and Dave Bouck, who have supported, encouraged, and believed in me
throughout all of my education.

My husband Aman who went through this with me (literally and figuratively)

Thank you.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was an age of wisdom, it was an age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity...” (Dickens, 1859, p. 13). These words written over 100 years ago by Charles Dickens reflected the times in France. These same words can be used to refer to the current state of secondary special education. The field of education as a whole is in an era of increased accountability and rigor for both practice and in research. Hence, the pressure represents both the best of times in that there is a focus on student learning, outcomes, and students being educated by teachers with credentials in core academic areas, and yet it is the worst of times in that there is a tremendous increase in the amount of and time spent on assessment of students. It is also the age of wisdom as there is a focus on implementing interventions that have been found to be effective in educating secondary students with disabilities; yet, it is also the age of foolishness as there exists a general consensus that only quantitative research holds the answer to “best practice” and an assumption that all students will be reading by grade level by 2014.

Secondary special education, for students with primarily high incidence disabilities, faces a parody in today’s times. The vast majority of these students are expected to take general large-scale state assessments, which were designed for general education students (Kleinert & Thurlow, 2001; Ysseldyke, Olsen, & Thurlow, 1997). Yet, these students often have deficits in academic skills as well as social and behavior skills. Students with disabilities are expected to achieve better post-school outcomes (Kaye, 1997; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996; Sinclair, Christianson, Thurlow, & Evelo, 1994);

however, the field has no consensus as to a curriculum for this population – general education, functional, vocational, or other types (Bouck, 2004). Furthermore, little research is being conducted in secondary special education (Schumaker, Deshler, Bulgren, Davis, Lent, & Grossen, 2002).

Secondary special education faces three main challenges when considering the educational programming for this population: (1) little current research exists on secondary special education, particularly for students with certain disabilities (i.e. students that may be educated in self-contained, cross-categorical programs) (exceptions include transition – Devlieger, 1999; Zhang, 2000; inclusion – Mortweet, 1999; self-determination – Wehmeyer & Shalock, 2001) (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988; Schumaker, Deshler, Bulgren, Davis, Lenz, & Grossen, 2002); (2) little research exists about the curriculum for special education students at this level, including how it is selected and what key stakeholders believe students should learn at this level (e.g. Bouck, 2004); and (3) a shift away from a functional curriculum due to the era of accountability; yet without careful consideration of the value of functional curricula and post-school outcomes for students with disabilities (Branstad, Acosta, Bartlett, Berdine, Butterfield, Chambers, et al., 2002; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000).

While secondary special education itself has been the focus of limited research, even less research exists when one considers secondary students served in self-contained cross-categorical programs. Self-contained special education programs, particularly at the secondary level, appear out of fashion with today's emphasis on inclusive education and access to the general education curriculum. However in many schools this remains a

viable option for educating secondary students with multiple disabilities who may need such a placement to meet their needs and to provide the least restrictive environment.

Secondary special education clearly needs the field to increase its focus, to fill the research gap and to help practitioners meet the challenges of the times. The field has little consensus as to a curriculum for this population of students, and thus is not in agreement about what to do about the poor post-school outcomes that continue to plague students with disabilities (see Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005). Schultz (1994) argued that secondary special education students leave high school “woefully unprepared for adult responsibilities and challenges” (p. 20). Thus, a renewed emphasis is needed for secondary special education and its various service delivery options, such as self-contained, cross-categorical programs, as well as the curriculum that is enacted at this level and within these programs.

Little is known about curriculum for secondary special education students, particularly those served in cross-categorical and/or self-contained programs, or the type of curriculum students and their teachers believe would be most beneficial. In fact, curriculum is relatively unexamined in special education (Zigmond, as cited in O’Neil, 1988). Without a clearly articulated understanding of the range and type of curricular approaches used by practitioners, it will be difficult to adequately develop the research-validated practices now mandated by *No Child Left Behind* (2002), *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act* (2004) and supported by the President’s Commission on Education in Special Education and the National Research Council (Branstad, Acosta, Bartlett, Berdine, Butterfield, Chambers, et al., 2002; NRC, 2002). Hence, a need exists to understand curriculum and curricular components for secondary

students educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs (Epstein, Polloway, Patton, & Foley, 1989). If such knowledge did become available, research could advance to studying the relationship between curricular approaches and outcomes, such as employment status, wages, and independent living, with the ultimate goal of finding curricular approaches that yield the most beneficial outcomes for this population.

Curriculum is particularly an important area, as Bigge (1988) claimed "... curriculum is the essential organizing tool in any educational institution. Curriculum is that total content of instruction, an overall structure that provides continuing sequenced challenges, and meaningful learning that mediates the needs of both students and society" (p. 1). Yet, curriculum is under-researched, particularly in terms of examining how it exists in practice, as classroom observations are typically not conducted in classrooms where interventions are not being performed (Chávez-López, 2003; Freeman & Porter, 1989). While the importance of curriculum has been noted, it does not explicitly exist in special education, with few exceptions (see Brolin, 1997). Goldstein (as cited in Pugach & Warger, 1993) suggested that knowledge about curriculum is generally absent from the special education world. The majority of special education considers the Individual Education Plan (IEP) as the typical curriculum; however, the selection of curriculum within the IEPs can be quite idiosyncratic and lacking continuity not only between special education and general education, but also between sequential years in special education (Olson, 2004; Pugach & Warger). Bigge further emphasized, "When no appropriate overall curriculum serving as a framework or no recommended course of study with specific skills and concept objectives exists, special education students can experience fragmented programs" (p. 4).

Research that was conducted on curriculum and instructional environments for secondary students with mild mental impairment and learning disabilities found that there was no consensus about the curriculum for students with mild mental impairment, who were primarily served in self-contained settings (Bouck, 2004). In fact, the highest frequency of response was, at less than 25%, a special education curriculum. This was followed by a functional curriculum (19%). The lack of consensus among secondary special education teachers regarding curriculum utilization for this population suggests that teachers are confused over what to teach. However, little research has explored teachers' perspectives of what curriculum should be offered and why, as well as how curriculum becomes enacted at the secondary level for students with disabilities. In addition, the voices of students are also often neglected from these discussions.

In the past, the field utilized functional curricula for secondary students with disabilities (Garton, 1964; Klein, Pasch, & Frew, 1979). However, over the course of the last few decades, the use of this curriculum has dwindled in practice, and so has the research regarding functional curriculum. The shift away from a functional curriculum, defined by Clark (1991) as “instructional content that focuses on the concepts and skills needed by students in the areas of personal-social, daily living, and occupational adjustment”, can be seen through federal legislation such as *No Child Left Behind* and *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (1997, 2004), which mandated access to the general education curriculum and that students with disabilities be tested against state standards. Olson (2004) stated that teachers think the curriculum now focuses more on academics, to the detriment of functional and vocational skills. Teachers also indicated that the curriculum has become more demanding over the last several years (Olson). Teachers

may express preferences for functional curriculum; yet under NCLB most students with disabilities at the secondary level are required to perform at grade level and meet state standards (Olson; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000).

While the debate between a functional versus an academic curriculum for secondary students with disabilities appears to be endless, a key factor would be which curricular option is associated with higher student achievement and more successful post-school outcomes. Researchers and scholars have noted that the focus on post-school outcomes has not always been present. Rather for students, like those educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs, the emphasis has been on academic non-functional programs (Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996). Even during recent times when the focus has shifted to outcomes, it has not been the outcomes originally espoused by the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency (Turnbull III, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003), but rather for the purpose of passing state assessments. Smith and Puccini (1995) argued that “exposing students to longer periods of time to inappropriate curricula or teaching efforts does not result in improved educational performance or an improved likelihood of success as adults” (p. 279).

Before research on the relationship between curriculum enactment and post-school outcomes can be meaningful, an analysis is needed of the current functional curriculum options that exist, as well as how functional curriculum is being enacted in cross-categorical self-contained programs (a population that has received little attention and for whom a functional curriculum may be most important). Furthermore, understanding teachers’, as well as students’, position on the ideal curriculum for this

population is also important to consider as these players will determine its implementation and success.

The poor post-school outcomes that exist for secondary students with disabilities warrant the examination of curriculum for this population and particularly if and how a functional curriculum can be beneficial. Knowing how well secondary schools prepare students with disabilities for their life and work roles should be central to examining and utilizing curriculum (Eisenman, 2001; Rabren, Dunn, & Chambers, 2002); thus, the goal should be to enact curriculum that is most beneficial to students with disabilities after they graduate. Yet, before the field can advocate for enacting a curriculum that is most beneficial, research must be conducted to determine what the enactment of curriculum looks like in these classrooms.

Research Project

This research project involved a qualitative analysis of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural cross-categorical self-contained programs. Classroom observations, archival document reviews, and interviews were conducted in two secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs that were located within the same county in the state of Michigan. The research project focused on understanding the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum within these two programs as well as how predetermined factors impacted the enactment of functional curriculum. Factors such as policy and legislation, school/school district, community, teachers, students, and curriculum materials were examined as to their relationships with the enactment of functional curriculum in two secondary cross-categorical self-contained programs.

Research Questions

The overarching goal of this research project was to study the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs, where enactment was defined as a multi-faceted idea that involves the social construction of curriculum with realization that larger institutional factors, such as policy, school, and community matter in addition to teacher and student variables. Specifically, an expanded transactional view was taken, in which meaning was not only constructed between the curriculum, teacher, and student, but also larger levels such as policy/legislation, school, and community (see Figure 1). Furthermore, all the factors were evaluated within their current situation as well as what their past histories bring to the enactment.

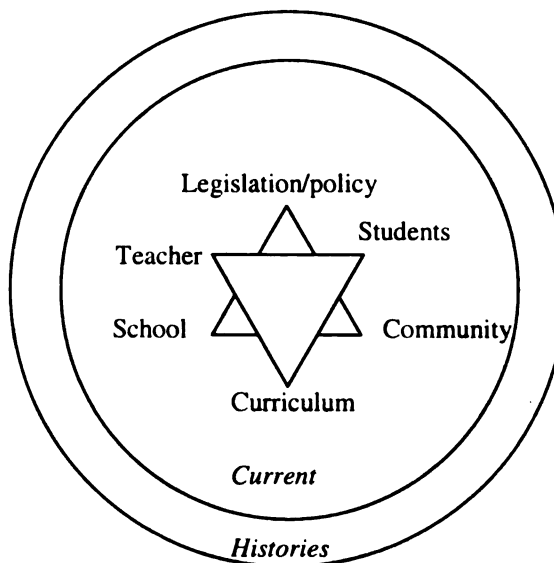


Figure 1: The proposed intersection and union of factors.

The enactment of functional curriculum in secondary special education classrooms was an important analysis to undertake as little current research exists on functional curriculum at the secondary level for students with cross-categorical disabilities (i.e. more high incidence disabilities), as well as the overarching less

emphasis on the enactment of curriculum that is found in education (Chávez-López, 2003). A functional curriculum was also an important curricular option to examine because previous research suggested that not only have teachers indicated that this is an option utilized at the secondary level, but also a desired one. In addition, research has shown that practitioners and parents have both expressed concern that a functional curriculum will be replaced by a more academically focused curriculum without a true consideration of the values and virtues of a functional approach to educating secondary students with disabilities (Bouck, 2004; Olson, 2004; Patton et al., 2000).

This research project attempted to answer the following questions:

1. What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary special education cross-categorical self-contained programs?
2. What is the nature of the impact of factors on the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
 - a. How do student factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs
 - b. How do institutional factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs
 - c. How do teacher factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs

- d. How do school factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
- e. How do community factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
- f. How do written curriculum factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?

Chapter 2

Literature Review

This chapter outlines several critical bodies of literature and research that impact this study, the enactment of functional curriculum within a secondary self-contained classroom for students with cross-categorical disabilities. This chapter synthesizes these literatures to illustrate the importance of this particular study at this particular time. The first part of the chapter begins with a brief discussion of the theoretical perspective guiding this research, sociocultural theory. It continues with conceptual frameworks, discussing literatures such as case study research and moving into curriculum. The literature on special education is reviewed, discussing the historical perspective, secondary special education in particular, the students and teachers who comprise secondary special education, and curriculum for secondary special education students. Next, self-contained special education classrooms as service delivery models are discussed, as is the counter to this perspective, inclusion. The chapter also focuses on functional curriculum, indicating its components and research to support its use. The literature review ends with a discussion of the perspectives of key stakeholders, focusing on teachers and students.

Sociocultural Theory

Sociocultural theory is generally attributed to Lev Vygotsky, who is considered the one founder of this perspective (Ratner, 1991; Vygotskaya, 1999). Sociocultural theory presumes that knowledge is constructed in the everyday activities that are common to a group of people as they interact among themselves and with the tools, artifacts, and other materials of their environments (Greeno, Collins, & Resnick, 1996). One of the

fundamental principles of sociocultural theory, as presented by Vygotsky, is that development cannot be understood solely by studying the individual, but also involves analyzing the social world in which the individual or student resides (Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). Vygotsky (1978) stipulated that development occurs twice, first on the social level and then the individual. Thus, the impact of culture on learning is central to the sociocultural perspective (Pressley & Roehrig, 2003).

Since Vygotsky's time, many other researchers and scholars have written about this perspective (see Cole & Engestrom, 1993; Collins, Brown, & Newman, 1989; Lave & Wenger, 1991). Key aspects of the sociocultural perspective that have been studied and discussed within the context of education include teaching within a student's zone of proximal development, the "scaffolding" of tasks for novices by more knowledgeable others, and use of dynamic assessment (Gindis, 1999; Stone, 1998). One of the most well-known concepts of this perspective is zone of proximal development, which suggests that students can perform more with assistance than independently and ideal learning occurs within students' zone – the space between what s/he can do independently and what s/he can do with assistance (Englert & Mariage, 2003).

The influence of sociocultural theory is evident in research, practice, and teacher education. The value of it can be noted through Tharp's view (1997),

The sociocultural approach is among the most significant contemporary themes in a wide range of intellectual disciplines worldwide, including philosophy, literacy and aesthetic criticism, theology, and social sciences. Along with cognitive science, it is a contender for the dominant paradigm in psychology and education. Because sociocultural theory is so basic to the study of development and educational issues, its consequences for teaching, schooling, and public policy are profound (p. 11).

Sociocultural theory is well suited to address the enactment of curriculum because of the definition of enactment that is used throughout this project. Enactment is defined as a transactional process, which is co-constructed by teachers and students; yet it is also influenced by each of these constituents' histories; the school and its philosophy, the communities in which the school, teachers, and students reside; and institutional factors, such as federal and state policies. Enactment, as defined and used throughout the study, demands a theoretical perspective that examines the role that social mediation plays through the employment of cultural artifacts like textbooks and other curriculum materials. Furthermore, sociocultural theory will illuminate the co-construction of the enactment and the role of the various actors (broadly defined to include legislation and community) play in the enactment of functional curriculum.

Case Study Research

“A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon, such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). As a methodology, case study attempts to understand “the complex interrelationships among all that exists” (Stake, 1995). It involves an examination of a bounded system, which is the case or multiple cases one chooses to study (Creswell, 1998). Each case study is bounded by both time and place as well as the actual case being explored (Creswell). Case study research is a form of qualitative research, focused on interpreting a particular phenomenon. Thus, case study methodology studies the particulars and complexities of a case as opposed to trying to generalize to a larger group, with a central focus of interpretation (Stake).

Qualitative case study research is just one form of qualitative research, and there are several different types of case studies within the qualitative tradition. Within the case study “family”, there are ethnographic case studies, historical case studies, and psychological case studies. Case study research methodology can also be parsed by its end product. Case studies can be descriptive, where a detailed account of the phenomenon is presented; interpretative, in which thick description is presented to either illuminate, support, or challenge previously held theoretical assumptions; and evaluative which focuses on judgments (Merriam, 1988).

Case study methodology was used in this study because the method fits the questions being asked (Merriam, 1988). It is an “ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena” (Merriam, p. 2), in which a case in education can be a class, program, teacher or another bounded educational phenomenon. A lack of previous research or exploration on a topic might warrant qualitative research, particularly a case study approach (Naumes & Naumes, 1999; Stake, 1995). Case studies are generally allowed to tell their own stories (Stake). Case studies typically consist of varying emphasis on data collection by observations, interviews, and document or archival reviews, in which triangulation among the data is sought to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake).

Curriculum

“How we define curriculum makes a difference in how we think about it and how we plan it” (Morrison, 1993, p. 84). While curriculum appears so influential on the education students receive, it is an area that needs additional and continued research – both in general education and special education (Flinders, 1996; Sands, Adams, & Stout,

1995). However, research cannot just examine the content aspect of curriculum, but must also focus on the enactment of the curriculum and the impact on students, parents, teachers, and school communities (Flinders). In reverse, research must also examine the impact of policy/legislation, school, community, and teacher variables on the enactment of curriculum.

Curriculum, in the literal sense means “running course”, which has been interpreted today to be a series of experiences or courses (Morrison, 1993). Definitions of curriculum have run from the broad (i.e. experiences) to the narrow (i.e. written documents). Morrison ultimately advocated for broader and more inclusive definitions of curriculum, that captured curriculum as the documents, values, plans, and even that which students do not have an opportunity to learn (i.e. the void or null curriculum).

Hence, little agreement exists among researchers or practitioners as to what constitutes curriculum (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). It can refer to long-lasting educational programs, materials used in classrooms (i.e. textbooks), and even experiences that students receive while in school (Nolet & McLaughlin). Others stipulated that curriculum “embodies the goals and expected outcomes of defining what students should know and how instructional resources should be invested” (McDonnell, Wilcox, & Hardman, 1991). And these definitions are just ones put forth in the realm of general education. Special education researchers have defined curriculum as the total school experience (Doll, 1989), what is learned in a “learning situation” (Kavale, 1990, p. 36), the what and creation of special programs (Pugach & Warger, 1993), and to some the Individual Education Plan (IEP) itself (Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995). While disagreement exists, it is understood that curriculum is complex and reflects plans and

activities that are to benefit students and help them achieve specific goals (Nolet & McLaughlin).

Easiest to understand is that “curriculum is the ‘what’ of schooling; it is the content that teachers teach and that students learn” (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 20). There is a fine line between instruction (strategies or methods employed by teachers to instruct and manage students) and curriculum (Nolet & McLaughlin). Because curriculum is the ‘what,’ it usually involves a domain, such as a subject matter focus. Cuban (1992) defined curriculum as “a series of planned events intended for students to learn particular knowledge, skills, and values and organized to be carried out by administrators and teachers” (p. 221).

The “what” and “how” of education have been in an endless debate. Recently the purpose of education has been framed by two extremes and the possible continuum between these two positions. The two positions represent that “education should train the mind” and “education should be relevant” (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, & Schmale 1991). The latter perspective has been influenced by capitalism and business. Cuban (2003) discussed how market driven ideologies have focused the purpose of education twice during the 20th century. In particular, the market driven ideologies focus on outcomes and that education should prepare students to be successful for employment, or in other words, to be employable, efficient, and effective workers (Cuban).

Curriculum, even the best curriculum, is not worth anything if it is not delivered correctly (Baldwin, 1976). One of the major problems is that teachers may not have been necessarily taught to use the curriculum or to successfully evaluate it for each student’s

individual needs (Baldwin). Hence, curriculum enactment depends in part on the training or professional development teachers have received to use it.

Others factors of schooling inherently impede the enactment of curriculum. Implementing, enacting or teaching a curriculum takes time. Given the multiple competing agendas that exist, a teacher's, administrator's, or school district's choice of curriculum will constrain utilizing certain curricula features or options. The amount of time allocated for different curricula reflects priorities of a teacher or district. Curriculum areas that are higher priorities get more time allocated for instruction, whereas curriculum areas of lower priorities have less allocated time (Nolet & McLaughlin). Even when a teacher or district allocates a certain amount of time for a curriculum, it does not mean that this will equal the amount of time students actually engage with the curriculum (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000).

The decision of what the curriculum should be can be as challenging as defining curriculum itself. Some argue that teachers should play a central role in decisions about curriculum (Monson & Monson, 1993). Monson and Monson suggested that certain questions must be considered when deciding the curriculum that will be implemented. One such question involves: "what is the central purpose of the school system?" (p. 20). Another question is "what are the learning outcomes that we are striving toward?" (p. 20). These ideas relate to an outcome-based education approach, made popular in the 1980s and 1990s.

"Outcome-Based Education means clearly focused and organizing everything in an educational system around what is essential for all students to be able to do successfully at the end of their learning experiences" (Spady, 1994b, p. 1). Outcomes-

based education was a controversial educational issue when it took form in the mid 1980s and early 1990s (Evans & King, 1994; O'Neil, 1994; Spady). Evans and King argued that outcomes-based education (OBE) had an intuitive appeal – teachers and schools could simply decide on the outcomes they wanted students to achieve and then teach and reteach until all students met those outcomes. Essentially the authors argued, OBE was an educational process that guaranteed all students an education... the same education (Evans & King). Despite that appeal, Evans and King suggested that research-based evidence for this educational approach was lacking.

One challenge with documenting research-based evidence for OBE was that it served as an umbrella term and encompassed several reforms (Evans & King, 1999). Many have associated mastery learning with OBE, despite the fact that OBE did not require this model (e.g. Students to attain mastery). Another challenge with OBE arose from deciding what outcomes to work towards (O'Neil, 1994). In particular, an area of dispute concerned whether there should be one set of outcomes that would fit the range of students – from college bound to vocational bound – or whether outcomes should be based on the future life goals of students (O'Neil). Assessment was also noted as a concern with OBE, as many suggested that education would need to move to a performance-based assessment system, as opposed to a standardized test system reliant on multiple-choice assessments, to accurately measure students' attainment of outcomes (O'Neil).

Spady (1994a) contended that while certain outcomes were agreed upon for students, deciding what the outcomes were and what should be expected of high school graduates was uncertain. Spady suggested that the outcomes of education should have

significance, in that they should have an impact on the long-term future of students. Ford, Davern, Meyer, Schnorr, Black, and Dempsey (1989) stated, “A minimal outcome of a student’s academic program should be the achievement of useful skills – skills that will allow the student to enjoy a greater degree of participation in an enjoyable life-style” (p. 90). There were stark supporters of OBE, arguing that “the questions ultimately get down to the fundamentals – what’s worth knowing and what’s the purpose of schooling” and “Outcome-based education gets to the heart of the matter” (O’Neil, 1994, p. 7).

Proponents of OBE stressed that it had the potential to address some of the problems facing schools and that it raised the rigor and appropriateness of requirements for students in America’s schools (O’Neil).

Written, Enacted, and Received Curriculum

To complicate, curriculum is not singular. Within any curriculum there exists the written, enacted, and received curriculum. The written curriculum, also referred to as the intended or official curriculum, “is the official or adopted curriculum often contained in state or district policy” (Cuban, 1992; Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 15). It represents what students are expected to learn (Cuban). The intended or written curriculum is usually reflected in a written, formal document, such as curriculum standards, frameworks, or guidelines that reflect what teachers are expected to teach (Porter & Smithson, 2001). The intended curriculum can be conceived at the federal, state, or even local level and reflects what policymakers at all levels (federal, state, and local) believe are the core values or knowledge to be learned. Chávez-López (2003) argued that typically the intended curriculum is the national curriculum. However since a national curriculum does not exist in the United States, the intended curriculum for many schools

relies on standards and state adoption policies. Yet, Reys (2001) suggested that the selection process of curriculum is largely reliant on the market.

The enacted curriculum, also known as the taught or implicit curriculum, “is the operationalization of the intended curriculum” (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 16). The taught curriculum reflects the decisions a teacher makes in implementing the written curriculum. The taught curriculum not only encompasses the lessons and activities, but also the teacher’s behaviors, groupings, management strategies, beliefs, and even comments (Nolet & McLaughlin). Cuban (1992) stated that the taught curriculum can include both informal and formal lessons that occur in classrooms. It is at this curriculum level that teachers’ beliefs begin to alter the curriculum (Cuban). Porter and Smithson (2001) considered enacted curriculum to be the content students engage with in the classroom, and where they say learning occurs.

Synder, Bolin, and Zumwalt (1992) expanded the definition of enacted curriculum to encompass a co-construction of educational experiences by the teacher and students. Synder and colleagues challenged that enacted curriculum is a transactional process where teachers and students interact, construct, and make meaning of the curriculum and educational experiences within context. However, their expanded definition still seems too narrowly defined. Enacted curriculum is a transactional process, which is co-constructed by teachers and students; yet it is also influenced by each of these constituents’ histories; the school and its philosophy, the communities in which the school, teachers, and students reside; and institutional factors, such as federal and state policies. The enacted curriculum is also impacted by curriculum guidelines and standards that frame its presentation (see Figure 2).

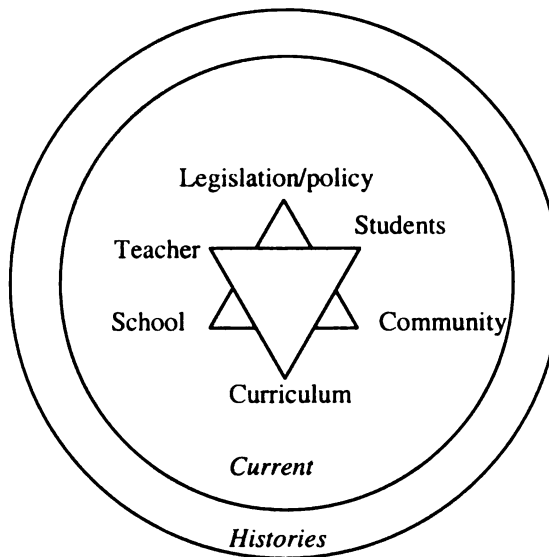


Figure 2: The proposed intersection and union of factors impacting the enactment of functional curriculum.

The received curriculum, or the learned curriculum, “is what students actually learn as a result of being in the classroom and interacting with the intended and taught curricula” (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000, p. 17). The learned curriculum is more than what is embodied by the written or enacted curriculum, but can reflect unintended consequences of the curriculum as well. The learned curriculum is typically determined by testing students (Cuban, 1992). However, Porter and Smithson stated the learned curriculum does not just reflect students’ proficiency on assessments, but other demonstrations of what students have learned or engaged in.

Changes in Curriculum

Cuban (1992) analyzed determinants of change in both the intended and taught curricula levels. Determinants of curricula change were divided into external and internal. Cuban stated that external factors include different theoretical and political movements, such as the Progressive Movement, Cold War and National Defense, and other legislative and legal decisions – federal laws and court cases. Other factors included influential

groups – publishers, foundations, and professional organizations – as well as influential individuals (i.e. Dewey). Influential factors were groups or individuals within the school system, such as students, principals, teachers, and superintendents. Cuban also discussed determinants of stability in the intended and taught curriculum. The external factors included: goals and functions of schooling, accrediting and testing agencies, and textbooks. The internal factors to promote stability or discourage change included: students, teachers, principals, school and classroom structures, and the historical curriculum.

The difficulty in getting education and key participants within education to change is noted by many scholars (see Elmore, 1996; Fullan, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1991). Some argued that change does occur in education (Elmore); yet few changes ever reach the core of education. It is suggested that most changes in the field of education are merely surface changes. Fullan argued that change is resented and that people (i.e. teachers) are conservative and work to maintain the status quo. In fact, Trent & Artiles (1995) stated that American schools have not really changed since their inception in the mid-nineteenth century.

Important changes in curriculum are marked by changing theoretical frameworks or paradigms. Education has gone from behaviorist principles, largely under the pretense of Direct Instruction, to the cognitive perspective, the constructivist, and finally sociocultural theory. However, shifts between paradigms have not always been a straight trajectory, and the predominant paradigms have not changed all of education.

Greeno, Collins, and Resnick (1996) discussed behaviorist, cognitive, and situative (i.e. sociocultural) perspectives and their relationship to practice and research.

The authors indicated that the behaviorist perspective dominated research in education for many decades until the cognitive perspective entered the education research arena in the 1970s. In the early 1990s, Greeno and colleagues stated that the situative perspective was in the early stages of development as a principle of studying education and its related topics. In addition to discussing the transition of perspectives affecting educational research and curriculum development, the authors also portrayed each principle. Greeno and colleagues indicated that a behaviorist perspective leans towards studying individuals and views learning as a process “in which associations and skills are acquired, and transfer occurs” (p. 16). The cognitive perspective involves studying the internal processes of individual activity (i.e. cognition) and learning occurs through “a constructive process of conceptual growth” (p. 16). The situative perspective focuses on studying the individual within a social group or system and learning is afforded and constrained by the social systems and its mediational tools.

While constructivism was not explicitly mentioned in Greeno, Collins, and Resnick’s depictions of the major theoretical frameworks guiding education, they included it as a branch of the cognitive perspective. The constructivist perspective, which espouses the belief that individuals learn by constructing new ideas or understanding based on their prior knowledge, is believed to have developed and/or used in education later than the strict cognitive perspective (Woodward, 2004). All these perspectives, behaviorism, cognitive, constructivism, and sociocultural, had or have important impact on education and its research, curriculum development, and teacher preparation.

Variables Impacting Curricula

Curriculum choice and enactment can be impacted by several variables, including federal policies, state standards, school factors, and teacher factors (Milner, 2003). Morrison (1993) discussed several influences on curriculum, from the context of the classroom (i.e. number of students in the classroom, time for each class) to the teacher him/herself (i.e. expectations, philosophy, and background), as well as the background and socioeconomic status of the students and schools and expectations held in the community. Morrison emphasized a sphere of influence on curriculum decision making, with an outside sphere of international influences to an inside sphere of the teacher him/herself. The inside of the sphere was lined with federal influences, state influences, district influences, professional organizations, and finally to the school level and the influence of school administrators and other teachers (Morrison). Morrison specifically listed 11 factors that he felt impacted curriculum. These included society, legislation/policy, the local school district, individual people, professional organizations, business/industry, foundations/agencies, teachers, textbooks, lobby groups/special interest groups, and testing. However, it is believed that these categories can be condensed into six, consisting of: institutional policies and legislation, textbooks/curriculum materials, school, community, teachers, and students. These six categories are referenced throughout the study.

Institutional policies and legislation. Federal policies impact curriculum enactment within special education, such as *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2002) and the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) (1997, 2004). *NCLB* is a relatively recent piece of federal legislation, brought forth by a bi-partisan Congress and the Bush Administration – focusing on accountability for all students and raising expectations and

standards. It was preceded by Goals 2000 and before that America 2000, which focused on raising achievement for students and emphasized standards for the core academic content areas (Shriner, Ysseldyke, & Thurlow, 1994). NCLB was essentially the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Schools Act; however, it steered education in a different direction (NCLB). It moved education from access to outcomes for all traditionally disenfranchised groups (i.e. students with disabilities, students from lower socioeconomic status, students from racial minorities, etc.) (Schrag, 2003).

NCLB is built upon four pillars: stronger accountability for results, more freedom for states and communities, encouraging proven educational methods, and more choices for parents (NCLB, n.d.). This has led to a more rigorous general education curriculum and a presumed push toward the general education curriculum for both students with and without disabilities. Under NCLB, teachers (general education and special education) are to be held accountable for students' progress on state standards, suggesting that curricula must reflect teaching to the standards, or teaching to the test (Karp, 2003; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000; Voke, 2002).

IDEA (2004) is the reauthorization of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act*, which was originally PL 94-142 (1975) and re-named in 2004 as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*. IDEA '04 is the government's attempt to align IDEA '97 with NCLB and is focused on greater accountability and having highly qualified special education teachers. IDEA 2004 has also been attributed to a focus on preparing students for further education, as opposed to the previous language in IDEA of employment and independent living (Wright, n.d.). IDEA 2004 continued to focus on key

elements of the original IDEA, including due process, free and appropriate public education, and procedural safeguards.

Beyond federal policies, Meier (1995) indicated that states impact curricula and its influence on students in terms of teacher certification processes and policies, special education funding policies, and support for professional development. Morrison (1993) discussed that states are intricately linked to the enactment of curriculum, as the primary responsibility for education lies with states, as opposed to the federal government.

Textbooks/curriculum materials. Morrison (1993) discussed the influence of textbooks on curriculum, stating that textbooks have a deterministic influence on curriculum enactment. Morrison was critical of textbooks indicating that they tend not to teach to the average or more able students, but rather to the lowest ability students in the classroom. Dyck and Pemberton (2002) claimed that textbooks represent a central feature of curricula and that this was especially true in higher grades.

School and community factors. Several types of school factors can influence or interact with the many facets of educational programming, particularly curricula. Schools can impact curriculum through both a district curriculum as well as the philosophies and organizing structures that are created (Milner, 2003). The school climate has been found to not only influence curriculum but also students' success with learning the enacted curriculum (Waldrip & Gidding, 1996). These aspects are manipulated by the school or school officials (i.e. administrators, teachers, and other educators). These individuals can shape the school philosophy, climate, and the organization structures, such as schedules and times of classes. Other school variables also impact curriculum, ones that are not

controllable, such as setting (rural, urban, and suburban) and size of the school (see Bouck, 2005a; Monk & Haller, 1993).

A study by Baer, Flexer, Beck, Amstutz, Hoffman, Brothers, and colleagues (2003) on transition and school factors found that special education students in rural schools had greater exposure to in-school jobs and other job experiences, particularly as compared to students in urban schools. Special education students from urban schools had fewer career or vocational-related experiences while in school and their educational programs focused more on general education academics. Special education students from suburban settings had more vocational experiences than both rural and urban, focused on jobs during high school, and had less emphasis on general education academics (Baer et al.). This data was supported by Hudson and Shafer (2002) who found that urban and suburban schools had more to offer in terms of vocational courses than rural schools. The researchers also concluded that when rural schools do offer vocational courses, they are the ones less likely to prepare students for the occupations that are expected to grow (Hudson & Shafer). The results by Baer and colleagues, and Hudson and Shafer, suggested that school location can impact the educational programming and the curriculum secondary special education students receive, particularly in terms of preparing them for post-school outcomes and success.

The importance of school location was corroborated by Bouck (2005a) who found that curriculum utilization and primary instructional environments for secondary students with mild mental impairment and learning disabilities differed among schools in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Low rates of vocational and technical programs for both students with mild mental impairment and learning disabilities existed across all three

types of schools. The statewide study of secondary special education teachers indicated that rural schools were more likely to offer the same curriculum to students with mild mental impairment and learning disabilities than urban or suburban schools (Bouck). Approximately 35% of teachers from rural schools reported that students with mild mental impairment receive the same curriculum as students with learning disabilities, in comparison to 15% of teachers in urban schools and 26.7% of teachers in suburban schools. In rural schools, teachers also reported that both types of students are placed in less restrictive environments, illustrated by lower rates of self-contained settings. Rural schools were more likely to have their students with mild mental impairment in resource room settings than urban or suburban schools, the location in which the largest percent of teachers indicated they serve students with learning disabilities (Bouck).

Monk and Haller (1993) illustrated the impact high school size and setting have on course offerings. While socioeconomic status played an important role in their findings, when controlling for that, the setting had significant effects. These researchers found that students from small schools were offered fewer educational opportunities than students in larger schools. The researchers concluded that clearly there was not equity in the offerings in curriculum and availability of courses (Monk & Haller). In terms of other courses, rural schools had less to offer; fewer elective classes, such as art and computers, as well as advanced placement offerings (Edington & Koehler, 1987). Furthermore, Stringfield and Teddlie (1991), in their analysis of rural schools' effectiveness, found that rural schools were more conservative in terms of education. The researchers concluded that while this conservatism sheltered rural schools from some of the negative effects of

educational “fads,” it also prevented them from participating in valuable movements in education (Stringfield & Teddlie).

Teacher factors. Teacher factors also shape how curriculum is enacted in classrooms (Milner, 2003). Remillard (1997) suggested that teachers play a more direct role than textbooks in shaping the enacted curriculum. Research has repeatedly validated the importance of teachers. Weiss, Pasley, Smith, Banilower, and Heck (2003) found that teachers’ beliefs, knowledge, and experiences were the most important factors that influenced the selection of instructional practices, followed by textbook choice. Porter and Smithson (2001) argued that teachers are the most important facet that impact curriculum because they make the final decisions about what gets taught, although little research has been conducted on what influences teachers. Milner suggested that teachers’ pedagogical approaches, their beliefs about course content, knowledge about the community in which students live, and their own personal experiences all influence the delivery of curriculum.

Remillard and Bryans (2003) suggested that it was more than just teachers’ beliefs that impacted the enactment, as their research revealed that teachers with similar beliefs enacted curriculum differently in the classroom. They found teachers’ beliefs about content, the teaching of the content, and curriculum choice impact engagement with curriculum materials and thus enactment. They proposed the following model of the relationship between enacted curriculum and teachers’ orientation to materials, which has been adapted to fit functional curriculum:

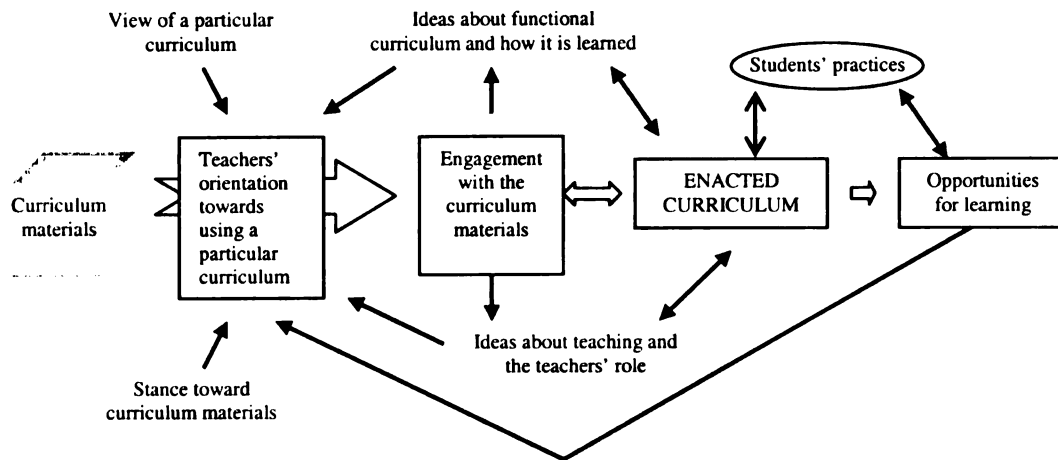


Figure 3: Model relationship between enacted curriculum and teachers' orientation to materials.

Little research has actually examined the relationship between teachers and textbooks, particularly teachers' actual use of them (Chávez-López, 2003). The standing presumption is that teachers follow textbooks closely; yet, empirical data is lacking to support this assumption as classrooms observations are typically not conducted in schools and classrooms where interventions are not performed (Chávez-López; Freeman & Porter, 1989). And yet textbooks are important, even if they hold less influence than teachers, as "textbooks determine the range of possible activities for the classroom, thus influencing greatly what teachers are likely to do even if they do not restrict what teachers can do (Chávez-López, p. 4).

Special Education

Policy, Institutional, and Legal Mandates

Education itself is greatly impacted by policy and legislation. The field of special education, a sub-section of education, is even more influenced by policy and legislation or legalization (Meyer, 1986; Neal & Kirp, 1986). Neal and Kirp argued that it was lawsuits, one form of legalization, that have brought about changes in education for

students with disabilities. Furthermore, the whole spirit of educating students with disabilities was created as a legalized action, causing some to say that special education is more about compliance with the letter of the law, rather than the spirit (Neal & Kirp).

Historical perspective. Individuals with disabilities have always been present in society (Kirk & Johnson, 1951; Polloway, Smith, Chamberlain, Denning, & Smith, 1999). Yet, it was legislation that federally mandated education for these students instead of leaving it up to state and local agencies to decide who received an education.

Education for All Handicapped Children Act was signed into law in 1975, commonly referred to as PL 94-142 (Beirne-Smith, Ittenbach, & Patton, 2002). This marked the first piece of federal legislation that mandated that students with disabilities be provided a free and appropriate public education. Students with disabilities could no longer be denied a public education because of their disability. Since its initial implementation in 1975, the law has been reauthorized five times – typically referred to as the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (Morse, 2000). The last reauthorization approved by Congress occurred in 2004, which renamed the law *Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act*.

The 1997 amendments, still the most up-to-date regulations impacting education in schools, re-emphasized the purpose of education – to prepare students for post-school success, such as employment and/or post-secondary education, and independent living (Benz, Lindstrom, & Latta, 1999; IDEA, 1997). The purpose of achieving better post-school outcomes for students with disabilities was accentuated due to the documentation for the negative outcomes of this population after exiting high school. Specifically, students with disabilities were found to be more likely to drop out of school,

underemployed or unemployed, not engaged in either positive work or post-secondary education, and in more trouble with the justice system (Wagner, D'Amico, Jacy, Butler-Natlin, Marder, & Cox, 1992; Wagner, Newman, D'Amico, Jay, Butler-Natlin, Marder, & Cox, 1991). Recent data reported that about 28% of students with disabilities leave high school with a diploma, about 30% attend a post-secondary education class after leaving high school, and about 70% have been employed since leaving high school, yet only 40% were actually working at the time the data was collected (Wagner, Newman, Cameto, Garza, & Levine, 2005).

The hallmark of special education under the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* (IDEA) has been free and appropriate public education (FAPE) and the recognition that free and appropriate is determined on an individual basis by a multidisciplinary team of professionals and parents (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). Another major focus of IDEA involved students being educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Rueda, Gallego, & Moll, 2000). While discussion of the least restrictive environment can be restricted to just a physical place, Rueda and colleagues argued against the narrow view of LRE as merely a physical location. Fuchs and Fuchs (1994) stated that the least restrictive environment involves two parts: the social interaction between students with disabilities and their non-disabled peers and receiving an appropriate education.

IDEA 1997 also stressed the need for students with disabilities to have access to the general education curriculum, furthering the emphasis of least restrictive environment to also include curriculum (Johnson, 2000). Within the emphasis on access to the general education curriculum lies the focus on increased accountability and testing, such as "high stakes testing" that has become common in many states (Johnson). While many see the

potential benefits of “high stakes testing” including accountability for the field and increased quality education, others have discussed the unintended negatives consequences (Johnson). They warned that these can include: more referrals to special education, a decrease in expectations or standards, a narrower curriculum, teaching to the tests, and using test scores to determine graduation or advancement to future grades (Johnson).

Current perspectives. As stated earlier, two major educational policies oversee special education, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) and *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB, 2002). As previously discussed, NCLB stresses greater accountability for students’ education and emphasizes outcomes. It also forced schools to include students with disabilities in state and local assessments (i.e. standardized tests), and stipulated that teachers be “highly qualified” to teach any and all students.

IDEA is now closely aligned with NCLB, following its reauthorization in 2004. The 2004 reauthorization of IDEA stipulated that a “highly qualified” special education teacher held the same meaning as a “highly qualified” general education teacher under NCLB; created a paperwork reduction demonstration program; failed to fully fund IDEA; removed short-term objectives from Individual Education Plans (IEPs); and addressed over-representation and disproportionality (CEC, 2004). The new IDEA also created flexibility in use of funds, such that up to 15% of its funds could be used for purposes not geared towards already identified special education students, as well as gave more “power” to school districts to expel special education students who have performed dangerous or inappropriate actions (CEC).

Secondary Special Education

Research has suggested that these are qualitative differences between secondary settings and elementary settings (Schumaker & Deshler, 1988). Secondary special education receives less research than elementary special education and less time devoted to this age range in preservice education (Bouck, 2005b; Schumaker, Deshler, Bulgren, Davis, Lenz, & Grossen, 2002). The literature suggested that secondary special education is not given a lot of consideration in practice either. McDonnell, Wilcox, and Hardman (1991) suggested that “schools try to operate secondary programs without ever specifying *what* it is they hope to achieve for students and *how* they will go about it” (p. 7). To create an effective secondary special education program, McDonnell and colleagues indicated that schools need to determine what outcomes they would like students who exit the program to achieve. Another consideration must be the program goals – to stipulate what teachers and other school personnel need to do to help students achieve the desired outcomes. And finally, the procedures must be made explicit about how to achieve program goals and student outcomes (McDonnell et al.).

Outcomes of secondary special education can vary depending on one’s perspective. Originally outcomes were narrowly defined as employment or participation in post-secondary special education (Pearman, Elliott, & Aborn, 2004; Will, 1984). However, Halpern (1985) expanded the notion of outcomes for special education students to include independent living and personal/social issues. Increasingly the idea of secondary special education outcomes has expanded further to include areas related to establishing and maintaining relationships (friendships and acquaintances), having the ability to utilize community supports as needed, finding and maintaining paid employment, and being independent and having autonomy in decisions and choices

(McDonnell, Wilcox, & Hardman, 1991). However, Turnbull III, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, and Park (2003) suggested that outcomes for special education should be the intended outcomes of IDEA: equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency.

Determining what secondary special education should be is difficult to discern. The Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development for Exceptional Individuals argued that "all students, including those with disabilities, should participate in secondary education programs that integrate academic and occupational curricula" (Eisenman, 2000, p. 105). Eisenman noted that this sentiment was featured in several secondary education reforms in the 1990s, such as the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Education Act (1990) and the School-to-Work Opportunities Act (1994). The integration of academic and occupational curricula gained support in special education as a result of concerns that the college-prep focused curriculum of many secondary schools held too narrow a focus and failed to meet the needs of all students with disabilities (Eisenman). Others cited the poor post-school outcomes that hallmark special education as reasons to advocate for an integrated approach to vocational and academic preparation (Eisenman).

In a literature review of comprehensive academic and occupational programs, Eisenman (2000) stated that some evidence exists as to the benefits of this approach in terms of academics, and particularly for lower achieving students. Some descriptive studies have also illustrated that an integrated approach to academic and occupational curricula may promote students' persistence, academic achievement, and postsecondary engagement (Eisenman).

Despite the research from Eiseman's (2000) review of the benefits from using an integrated academic and occupational curriculum, as well as other studies that have found programs or curricula associated with improved outcomes or achievement, practice does not necessarily reflect what research suggests. Baer, Flexer, Beck, Amstutz, Hoffman, Brothers, and colleagues (2003) stated, "in spite of the accumulation of nearly 20 years of research on postschool outcomes, local schools rarely use these data to drive their improvement effort" (p. 8). Baer and colleagues also suggested that despite the research that highlights the positive impact of community work experiences, functional curricula, and community-focused curricula, these features of education often do not make it into the classroom. And when they are implemented in education, they are often the first to be cut back when budget issues arise or school improvement occurs (Baer et al.; Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000; Blackorby & Wagner, 1996).

Despite the historical criticism of special education, particularly at the secondary level, as not being special (i.e. Dunn, 1968), others have argued that the heavy emphasis being placed on academics within programs for secondary students with disabilities should raise concern (Plue, 1984). Plue argued that the vocational education aspect is missing from educational programs for these students. Patton, Smith, Clark, Followay, Edgar, and Lee (1996) suggested that for secondary students with disabilities, who are most likely to be educated in self-contained programs, the educational program focus often is not on outcomes but on academic, non-functional programs. O'Neil (1994) supported a similar position, stating that students with high incidence disabilities often have difficulty keeping up with their classmates in academically-focused classes or programs. Shaw, Bricknerhoff, Kistler, and McGuire (1991) advocated that an evolution

of secondary special education programs is needed; to move from the goal of having students graduate from high school to preparing students for the skills needed in adult life.

While some (e.g. O'Neil, 1994; Plue, 1984; Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996) have advocated for more emphasis on vocational education, others have insisted that an addition of occupational focus is not the answer within the vocational education programs, such as School-to-Work. They contended that life skills instruction is missing (Schultz, 1994). Benz and Kochhar (1996) argued that too often students must choose between an academic focus and a functional life skills focus for their curriculum, rather than programs that integrate the two. Benz and Kocchar suggested that life skills and career development should form the foundation for school-to-work programs.

Despite opinions of researchers or practitioners, policy mandated that a discussion of secondary special education remains incomplete without a discussion of transition, originally represented as a federal initiative under the guise of "career education" (Halpern, 1985). Transition emerged as a federal initiative in 1984 and became mandated through IDEA in 1990 (Halpern; IDEA, 1990). Izzo and Lamb (2002) argued that transition services and then career development should be the focus of curricula in secondary education. Izzo and Lamb advocated that secondary special educators need to move beyond their traditional roles of ensuring that students gain their necessary credits to graduate to focusing more on development of students' self-determination and career development skills.

Research has validated the importance of quality transition program for students, particularly those with high incidence disabilities (Collet-Klingenberg, 1998). However, Collet-Klingenberg argued that many transition programs lack evidence-based research to validate their results or methods, despite their implementation with students. Despite the goals of transition, Collet-Klingenberg noted that these programs typically do not measure their impact in terms of post-school outcomes.

Secondary special education teachers. Recent research has suggested that secondary special education teachers are underprepared, both by their own admission and validation by other data (Bouck, 2005b; Kozleski, Mainzer, & Deshler, 2000). Smith, McLeskey, Tyler, and Saunders (2002) suggested that almost 40,000 special education teachers lack preparation for their positions. A recent report conducted by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) indicated that special education teachers feel dissatisfied with their teacher preparation (Kozleski et al.). Teachers in this report indicated that their caseload numbers were high; paperwork was excessive and required approximately one-half to one-and-a-half days of work a week; little time was spent doing what teachers entered the field to do, individualized instruction; collaboration with other special and general education professionals was allotted little time; and they often had few appropriate materials and appropriate professional development opportunities (Kozleski et al.)

In reviewing the preparation of pre-service teachers, O'Shea & O'Shea (1997) commented on the consistency across teacher preparation programs and the programs themselves across time. They implied that preservice programs failed to keep pace with the changing roles and functions of special education teachers, and were not leading the

movement. It appears that more preparation is being done on the job than during preservice education. O'Shea and O'Shea also noted that in many teacher education programs preservice teachers were prepared to only teach particular age groups, particular disabilities, and/or particular content areas.

The challenge with preservice preparation is highlighted by data from one state. The data from a recent study in Michigan revealed that just over half of secondary special education teachers who responded to a statewide survey had experience with secondary students in undergraduate teacher education preparation prior to entering the work force (Bouck, 2005b). These low levels of preparation, such as not having actual field experience with a variety of special education categories or in secondary settings, has been linked to research on burn-out and retention of special education teachers (Zabel & Zabel, 2001).

In addition to feeling unprepared, other problems plague the profession, particularly at the secondary level. These include: higher rates of feelings of alienation and isolation (Shoho & Katims, 1998; Shoho, Katims, & Meza, 1998); higher rates of attrition, low rates of retention, and personnel shortages for positions (Kozleski, Mainzer, & Deshler, 2000; O'Shea, Hammitte, & Mainzer, 2000; Stempien & Loeb, 2002); poor professional development opportunities (Barnson, 2002); and the need for the availability of more appropriate curriculum options (Bouck, 2004; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Sands, Adams, & Stout, 1995).

A shift in utilization of teachers was also noticed during the mid-1990s, which may result in increased pressure and attrition rates for special education teachers (i.e. cross-categorical programming). Wang, Reynolds, and Walberg (1994/5) suggested that

special education teachers were being increasingly employed in cross-categorical programs by over 100%. The cross-categorical classroom movement emerged from categorical programs, which served only one disability classification, and many in the field felt that they produced too few benefits. Researchers suggested that categorical programs offered too limited of a curricular focus (Wang et al.). The cross-categorical movement, designed to serve students from multiple disability categories together, aligned with special education law that stated students are to be provided programs and services based on needs, not disability label (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002).

Furthermore, the range of what teachers are asked to do may add pressure and increase burn-out. Sindelar, McCray, and Westling (1992) suggested that secondary special education teachers must be competent to teach a variety of skills, such as functional skills. They indicated that teachers must provide instruction in independence, transition to the community, and employment skills. Maloney (1994/5) expanded on that idea to suggest that secondary special education teachers teach students, in opposition to general education teachers who teach the curriculum.

Secondary special education students. Secondary special education students can run the spectrum of disabilities, from learning disabilities to mental impairment and autism. However, for the purposes of this paper, students considered to have more high incidence disabilities (i.e. mild mental impairment, learning disabilities, emotional impairment, mild Autistic impairment or Asperger's Syndrome, or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) will be discussed. Reports have stated that three disability categories (mild mental impairment, learning disability, emotional impairment) comprise 75% to 90% of the students with disabilities in schools (Reynolds, 1990). The Twenty-

fifth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2003) stated that students with learning disabilities, mental retardation, emotional impairment, and special and language impairments accounted for 86.2% of all students with disabilities ages 6 to 21, in which students with speech and language impairments were considered to account for 18.6% of this population. These populations of students are also the ones most likely to be considered for cross-categorical programs or classes (Drew, Hardman, & Logan, 1996). Cross-categorical typically refers to programs or classes that are tailored to these three disabilities (mild mental impairment – MMI, learning disability – LD, and emotional impairment – EI) of students, with the philosophy that they have similar characteristics (Drew et al.).

While the main components comprising “high incidence” disabilities are clearly three different disabilities, some maintain that there is not enough differentiation in their education or even in their classification (Algozzine, Morsink, & Algozzine, 1988; Jenkins, Pious, & Peterson, 1988). Polloway, Patton, & Smith (1997) have even suggested that obvious overlap occurs in educational focus for students with mild mental impairment and learning disabilities, for those students with learning disabilities who do not plan on attending college or post-secondary training. Hence, the movement of cross-categorical programs emerged in the field of special education (Reynolds, 1990).

Reynolds (1990) suggested that cross-categorical, or mixed category classrooms are those that classify students in traditional ways, yet serve more than one disability in the same setting by the same teacher. The little research that has been done on cross-categorical programs have failed to indicate differences in effectiveness compared to categorical programs, although concerns existed about placing students with more severe

disabilities in the programs and question whether this type of classroom emerged as a way to save money (Dulle & Childs, 1985; Morsink, Smith-Davis, & Thomas, 1987; Sage & Fensom, 1985). Epstein and Cullinan (1983) summarized, “It is most unfortunate that, despite the intense and often persuasive advocacy of some of its proponents, there has been very little scientific study of the assumptions on which cross-categorical special education is based” (p. 306).

While some have argued that three classifications of disabilities considered high incidence (learning disabilities, mild mental impairment, and emotional impairment, as well as others that might fall into cross-categorical programs, such as mild Autistic impairment or Asperger’s Syndrome) are similar, others challenge the similarities of these disability categories and individuals (Lagone, 1990). Students with mild mental impairment are assumed to need curriculum that focuses on communication, social, daily living, and transition skills (Epstein, Polloway, Patton, & Foley, 1989). Students with learning disabilities are also thought to need explicit instruction in social skills, as it has been contended that social skills can not just be learned through the modeling of others (WETA-TV, 1994) Students with emotional impairment are considered to need more intensive and extensive behavior interventions (Executive Committee of the Council for Children with Behavior Disorders, 1989).

Curriculum for Special Education Students

Bigge (1988) outlined six approaches or options for special education curriculum. These included an identical curriculum, which uses general education curriculum and implements the same standards but with special services or accommodations; a parallel curriculum which also uses the general education curriculum but reduces the complexity;

a lower grade level curriculum; a practical academic curriculum, which utilizes different, although related curriculum through substituting skills to achieve the general curriculum; a life management curriculum (*functional*), which involves a unique curriculum; and other curriculum, which utilizes other components students may need knowledge in. If students with disabilities in cross-categorical self-contained programs are to achieve knowledge and skills that enable them to compete and function in the daily activities of society, the curriculum to best meet these goals appears to be the life management, or functional, curriculum (Bigge).

Sabornie and deBettencourt (1997) expanded curricular approach options originally categorized by Zigmond and Sansone (1986) for students with learning disabilities to include the other disabilities typically captured under the term high-incidence disabilities – students with emotional impairment and students with mild mental impairment. The following six options were highlighted: basic skills model, remedial instruction for basic skills; tutorial model, assistance with specific academic course content; compensatory model, modifications or alterations to tasks or requirements; vocational model, preparation for employment; functional skills model, a different curriculum that addresses one's ability to function in society and meet the demands of daily living; and learning strategies model, how to learn rather than what to learn.

Both Bigge's (1988) and Sabornie and deBettencourt's (1997) curriculum options offered different ways to classify secondary special education curriculum. However, both stipulated a functional or life management approach to educating secondary students with disabilities – models which require different curricula and are not limited to adaptations

or modifications. Researchers have advocated for a functional curriculum, largely as a result of poor post-school outcomes (Dever & Knapczyk, 1997; Edgar, 1987). Despite the advocacy, Halpern, Benz, and Lindstrom (1992) indicated that a remedial or basics skills approach remains the most utilized approach at the secondary level.

Regardless of the level of disability students have, the primary purpose of secondary educational programs is (or at least should be) to prepare each student to be as independent and self-sufficient as possible (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, & Schmalle, 1991). Hence, the curricula utilized in secondary special education programs should reflect this emphasis on independence and helping students to achieve the highest level of independence possible (Retish et al.). Stodden and Whelley (2004) argued that for individuals with disabilities their preparation in secondary school is a critical feature to their success in later education and/or employment.

Curriculum models for students with disabilities have undergone changes over the past two-to-three decades (McDonnell, Wilcox, & Hardman, 1991). Originally curriculum emphasized eliminating inappropriate behavior. The next shift focused on instruction using sequences, indicating that students should be taught based on their next step (i.e. a hierarchical skills and mastery learning approach). Another shift moved curriculum focus towards preparing students for their lives after school (McDonnell et al.). The outcomes considered important for students with disabilities (i.e. mild to moderate) included: productive employment, self-sufficiency and independence, life skills competence, and opportunity to participate successfully within the school and community (Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996).

Curriculum for secondary students with mild mental impairment, one aspect of the cross-categorical group of students educated in self-contained settings, has gone from a functional approach to a more academic or remediation-focused approach. Dunn (1973) wrote that four curricular approaches existed for students with mild mental impairment between the early 1900s until the 1970s. These four included: arts and crafts; rudimentary academics; mental health (focusing on happiness of students); and occupational education. Dunn, himself, argued that curriculum for students with mild mental impairment (which he referred to as mild general learning disabilities) should encompass four areas: basic readiness and practical academics development; communication, oral language, and cognitive development; socialization, family living, self-care, recreation, and personality development; and prevocational and vocational development, including housekeeping. These four areas were to be utilized at different amounts across a student's school trajectory, whereas preschool and elementary school focused more heavily on basic readiness and practical academic development, high school dealt primarily with prevocational and vocational development (Dunn).

Klein, Pasch, and Frew (1979) also analyzed past curriculum approaches for students in this population. They indicated that during the 1950s curriculum emphasized preparing educable (mildly) mentally retarded learners for life. Consistent with Klein and colleagues review, Kirk and Johnson (1951) identified eight purposes they felt should guide curriculum for students with mild mental impairment, which were later condensed into three broad categories: social competence, personal adequacy, and occupational competence (Kirk, 1972). Kirk and Johnson's original eight purposes included: getting along with peers, working to earn a living, developing "emotional security and

independence”, developing “habits of health and sanitations, learning the minimum of the core academic subjects, developing meaningful leisure and recreational activities, developing good home and family involvement skills, and becoming satisfactory members of a community” (p. 118).

Garton (1964) echoed similar views in the 1960s in her book, *Teaching the Educable Mentally Retarded: Practical Methods*. She stated that a teacher’s aim for a student who is educable (mildly) mentally retarded involved developing self-realization, social competence, economic efficiency, and civic responsibility. She suggested that a suitable curriculum for secondary students labeled educable mentally retarded would consider social experiences as being functional as well as stressing the importance of teaching transportation and communication units, particularly drawing upon their relevancy to employment. Garton emphasized that a major component to the high school curriculum for students considered educable mentally retarded was job preparation – filling out applications, discussing interviews, and also other essential life skills, such as working with a budget, understanding taxes, and unions. Garton’s practical approach was grounded in real life experiences and she recommended that teachers “think of everyday living and there is a field of study for the seniors of high school mentally retarded youth” (p. 65). Garton’s implicit and explicit focus on the curriculum as being relevant to preparation for life beyond high school, in terms of employment and life skills, still remains applicable and important today.

Ten to fifteen years after Garton’s book, the pendulum shifted as Klein, Pasch, & Frew (1979) addressed the state of curriculum for students with mild mental impairment in the late 1970s. The authors stated that the most pervasive practice in regards to

curriculum for this population involved a “watered-down” general education curriculum. During this same time, Kirk and Gallagher (1979) commented on curriculum for students with mild mental impairment, stating that it was similar to the curriculum of elementary programs. Klein and colleagues asserted that “the time has come to determine what to teach, systematically and to continue instructional sequence...” (p. 184). However, the time has passed, and the same problem still exists today.

The 1980s continued with a similar trend, as the main focus in secondary special education programs consisted of remediation. Despite repeated concerns about the efficacy of remediation programs and post-school outcomes, this approach has continued into the 1990s, and even today into the 2000s. It is highly questionable whether the field can continue with the process of remediating secondary students with disabilities, given the high possibility that they will never be fully “remediated.” (Kauffman, 1999). Research exists to illustrate the failure of remediation for students with more moderate disabilities (Polloway, Patton, Epstein, & Smith, 1989), and many scholars in the field have repeatedly questioned its effectiveness (Alley & Deshler, 1979; Deshler, Schumaker, Lenz, & Ellis, 1984; Edgar, 1987). Polloway and colleagues found that academic remediation or basic skills instruction often failed to generalize to either the general education classroom or post-school environments.

The pendulum swing towards a lack of secondary programming for students with “mild disabilities” (i.e. another term used to refer to high incidence disabilities) and placement of these students within the general education curriculum of core subject areas – social studies, science, math, and language arts – occurred after the legislation PL 94-142 (the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act*), which guaranteed special

education students the right to a free and appropriate public education (Martin, Martin, & Terman, 1996). General education as an instructional environment and curriculum was strengthened following recent federal legislation – the 1997 reauthorization of IDEA which mandated that students have access to the general education curriculum and then NCLB which strengthened the IDEA '97 mandate that students with disabilities be included in state and district assessments (IDEA, 1997; NCLB, 2002). Placement of students with disabilities in general education or even resource room classes has been the trend for the past two decades (Katsiyannis, Zhang, & Achwamety, 2000). School districts typically do not often have categorical programs anymore, instead they create cross-categorical classes and rely on resource rooms to meet the educational needs of secondary students with a variety of disabilities (Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000).

Zigmond (as cited in O'Neil, 1988) stated that debate rages over what students with “mild disabilities” (aka high incidence disabilities) should be taught. She suggested that curriculum for this population is an unexamined area of special education.

Stowitschek and Kelso (1989) commented that special education curriculum is a “bottom-up” development, meaning that teachers often create the curriculum they use in their classrooms. Curriculum for students with high incidence disabilities is a fuzzy area and research on this topic within special education is not a high priority (O'Neil). Some contend that the best option is to offer a variety of curricular options, such as a general education curriculum, functional curriculum, or a lower grade level curriculum (O'Neil). A recent study of one state, as to curricular utilization with two of the categories (i.e. mild mental impairment and learning disability) subsumed under “high incidence,” found different curricula choice depending on the disability (Bouck, 2004). For secondary

students with learning disabilities, the most utilized curriculum reported was a general education curriculum (70% of respondents). However, for students with mild mental impairment while there was no consensus, the most frequent response was a special education curriculum (23%), followed by a functional curriculum (19%).

O'Neil (1988) suggested that at the secondary level a functional curriculum is an appropriate curricular option. An academic curriculum in the later grades can pose challenges for special education students, particularly if they have not acquired all the necessary skills for success in the general education curriculum. Schumaker (as cited in O'Neil) stated that "the move towards a more content-oriented approach in high school is a difficult transition for many students to make" (p. 2). Semmel (as cited in O'Neil) agreed with the over-emphasis on academic skills for students with high incidence disabilities, at the expense of functional curricula. Semmel further argued that the increased focus on academics for this population has not resulted in better post-school outcomes. Semmel suggested the opposite, that the increased emphasis on academics was detrimental to post-school outcomes. This was supported by Wakefield (2004) who argued that students with special educational needs require "a more flexible, relevant, and differentiated secondary school curriculum", which occurs in challenging and relevant learning environments (p. 83). Schultz (1994) further highlighted the concern in the field of secondary education, stating that students, all students, leave high school "woefully unprepared for adult responsibilities and challenges" (p. 20). He suggested schools offer classes on life skills – skills that are assumed to be taught at home or that students just pick up naturally; yet apparently were not being learned.

Instructional Environments for Special Education Students

Self-contained settings... one option of instructional environments. Special education has a continuum of service delivery models, ranging from the general education setting (i.e. inclusion) to resource rooms, self-contained classes, and even hospital or homebound placements (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2002). Debate has ranged highly between self-contained settings and inclusion. Self-contained settings are typically defined as over 60%, or at least this majority, of a students' day is spent in a pull-out setting to receive special education instruction or other services (Flagle, 1999); or in other words, "designed for learners who can not benefit from enrollment in a regular class" (Lagone, 1990, p. 36).

Peck, Richarz, Peterson, Hayden, Mineur, and Wandschneider (1989) suggested that "segregated special education programs were not invented, nor have they ever been justified as a pedagogically superior arrangement for meeting the needs of children. Rather, they have historically represented a socially and politically acceptable response to pressures from parents and other advocates seeking access and services for traditionally disenfranchised groups of children" (p. 296). James Kauffman (personal communication, as cited in O'Neil, 1994/5) advocated on behalf of self-contained programs as a placement on the continuum of services, stating "trying to force everybody into the inclusion model promises to be just as coercive as trying to force everybody into the mold of special class or institution" (p. 8). Self-contained settings, as a service delivery option, have received a negative reputation as they have sometimes been used as a "dumping ground" (Lagone, 1990, p. 37). Yet, they offer an important option for students who may need more individualization, and specific objectives that are more tailored towards vocational education and life skills.

Self-contained settings have been investigated for their impact on both students and teachers. In particular, concern exists regarding the influence of self-contained settings on special education teachers' attrition rates. Banks and Necco (1990) indicated that service delivery models may influence the attrition of teachers. Metzke (1988) provided evidence to support the hypothesis, suggesting that teachers in cross categorical self-contained settings have high attrition rates (also see George, George, & Grosenick, 1992).

Research conducted in Michigan found that more teachers from self-contained settings than resource room settings left the profession and higher numbers are typically hired for self-contained settings (Parshall, 1993; Parshall & Nuttall, 1995). Research has also found that teaching in a self-contained classroom may be related to leaving the field because of the diverse array of student ability teachers face in these settings (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002). Many teachers reported feeling unprepared for the range of disabilities they encounter in cross-categorical self-contained programs (Nichols & Sosnowsky). While concern exists with respect to attrition with secondary special education teachers in self-contained settings, research has shown that a placement in a self-contained setting, versus a resource room setting or inclusion setting, has no impact on special education teachers feeling of alienation or isolation (Shoho & Katims, 1998; Shoho, Katims, & Meza, 1998).

In terms of students, placement in self-contained settings has been associated with the type of curriculum or the curricular components teachers focus on. Sands, Adams, and Stout (1995) found that students' time in a self-contained class was positively correlated with life, affective, and communication skills, and negatively correlated with a

focus on academic remediation. In reverse, time in a resource room was negatively correlated with instruction in life, vocational, and communication skills (Sand et al.).

Other research has blamed self-contained environments for the problems of special education students' poor post-school outcomes (Aune, 1991; Edgar, 1987). Guterman (1995) conducted research on students educated in pull-out settings. Students in the study indicated that they felt negative social consequences connected to being educated in pull-out education programming. They discussed being teased and that they did not share the information that they were in pull-out programs with their friends for fear of not being accepted. However, while the students discussed the negative social implications of being in a self-contained program, they did not advocate for inclusion. Instead they discussed self-contained classes, but without labels and making the curriculum more relevant, such as focusing on post-school activities (Guterman).

The relationship between self-contained settings and student stigma or alienation has also been discussed by Seidel and Vaughn (1991). Another concern with self-contained classrooms has been the lack of role models, particularly for behavior or social skills (Panacek & Dunlap, 2003). Research by Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch (1990) suggested that self-contained educational settings result in impoverished social opportunities, particularly for positive interactions. Although some research has noted social challenges with the pull-out placements, other research has supported that academic achievement is not less in pull-out settings (Carlberg & Kavale, 1980).

The United States Department of Education (2002) reported that most students with disabilities spend the majority of their school day in general education settings. However, previous research suggested that the general education curriculum at the

secondary level does not always serve the best interests of special education students (Benz & Kochhlar, 1996; Edgar & Polloway, 1994; Johnson, 2000; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000). In particular, important experiences tied to post-school success may be missing for these students, such as vocational, life, and independent living skills (Cobb, Lehman, Touchterman, & Bonnotti, 2000; Johnson; Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Anderson, 1995). As the general education curriculum moves towards higher academic standards and high stakes testing, students with disabilities at the secondary level may be even less likely to receive valuable non-academic opportunities to prepare them for post-school life (NCLB, 2002; Olson, 2004; Patton et al.).

Self-contained educational settings have frequently been contrasted with inclusive educational placements; however, the literature has been inconclusive. Logan and Keefe (1995) stated that the most interesting finding of their research in comparing inclusive and pull-out settings was that so few differences were actually found. Similarly, Fisher and Meyer (2002) were vague in the results as to the comparison of self-contained versus inclusive programs, “we found that participation in these inclusive programs was at least as good as, if not somewhat better, than self-contained placements” (p. 168).

Inclusion... the anti-self-contained setting. Inclusion has been a hotly debated topic, taking center-stage in the discussion of special education since the mid-1980s when Will (1986) wrote an article about the Regular Education Initiative (REI) (Burnette, 1996; Marsh & Craven, 2004). Since then inclusion, “the provision of services to students with disabilities, including those with severe impairments, in the neighborhood school, in age appropriate general education classes, with the necessary support services and supplementary aids (for the child and teacher) both to assure the child’s success –

academic, behavior, and social – and to prepare the child to participate as a full and contributing member of society” (Lipsky & Gartner, 1996, p. 7), has taken on many different meanings and understandings (i.e. full inclusion, partial inclusion, mainstreaming, and integration). Since its inception, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (IDEA) has clearly stipulated that students were to be educated in the least restrictive environment, and many have taken the least restrictive environment (LRE) to signify inclusion in the general education setting (Huefner, 2000; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994).

This hotly debated topic causes controversy on both sides. Opponents of inclusion have gone as far as to declare inclusion oppressive (Zera & Seitsinger, 2000). Zera and Seitsinger noted that inclusion can result in the denial of appropriate programs for students and as a result harm may actually occur to these students. Zigmond and Baker (1995) argued that special education has ceased to be “special.” They felt that special education, whether in a separate or included setting, needs to remember the basis of the founding of the field: students will need more resources, not fewer, and there remains a specific need to focus on students’ individual needs. Others (e.g. Carlberg & Kavale, 1980; Sindelar & Deno, 1978) concluded that students benefit from inclusion; that they make more progress in inclusive classrooms than pull-out classes, or at least no benefits were found for pull-out programs.

Within the debate of inclusion lies contrasting information as to the benefits, or lack thereof, for students with disabilities who participate in inclusive education. Lipsky and Gartner reported many positive benefits of inclusion for students. In their meta-analyses of the impact of educational setting on student achievement and social outcomes, Lipsky and Gartner (1996) found small to moderate beneficial effects for

participation in inclusive education. In addition, they noted that inclusion does not as rapidly widen the gap between special education students and general education students, as compared to pull-out programs.

Kirk (1996) noted that the benefits of inclusion not only affect special education students, but general education students as well. General education students in the inclusive classrooms were found to develop greater compassion and experienced greater academic growth than other classes. The special education students in Kirk's study all reached or exceeded their IEP goals as well as improved in their behavior. Hansen and Boody (1998) found that students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms rated the classroom environment at least as high if not higher than the non-disabled students in the classroom, suggesting that special education students and general education students perceived the classroom environment in reasonably similar ways.

Other researchers, however, have found negative effects of inclusion on special education students. Faught, Balleweg, Crow, and van den Pol (1983) found that special education students in general education classes (i.e. inclusive education) remain socially isolated. Their research supported that of previous researchers who found that children like to interact with peers similar to them. Margalit (1994), Stone and La Greca (1990), and Bryan (1976) found that students with high incidence disabilities who participated in inclusion felt more rejected, were ignored more, and had few friends. Gottlieb and Budoff (1972) studied specifically students with mental impairment and found that this group of students faced more rejection in general education classes than pull-out classes. Wilczenski (1993) reported that the greatest amount of hostility and anxiety from teachers over inclusion occurred for students with mild mental impairment. Vaughn,

Elbaum, and Schumm (1996) also found that students with high incidence disabilities had lower peer acceptance than average or high achieving peers.

Espin, Deno and Albayrak-Kaymak (1998) compared Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for students placed primarily in the resource room to those placed primarily in inclusive settings and found that students in resource programs were allotted more time for services and had more long-term goals written. Espin and colleagues suggested that teachers of students in pull-out programs tailor the education to students more than teachers in inclusive settings. Kauffman and Pullen (1996) indicated that being in a special education class (i.e. pull-out setting) may actually be less stigmatizing and detrimental to a students' self-concept than being in a general education class where one may constantly compare his/her ability and performance to that of his/her classmates and peers.

Marsh and Craven (2004) held a similar position as Kauffman and Pullen (1996). Marsh and Craven suggested that the Big Fish Little Pond Effect (BFLPE) Theory indicates that special education students (i.e. academically disadvantaged students) will have higher self-concepts when they are placed with other academically disadvantaged students than with peers of higher ability (i.e. general education students). Marsh and Craven advocated that in inclusive settings special education students would then compare their performance to non-disabled students, who are likely to perform better. Thus, students with disabilities would feel even less academically able based on this comparison. The BFLPE, drawing from the social comparison theory, supports that students with disabilities will have higher self-concepts in settings with less differences between peers, such as pull-out special education classes (Marsh & Craven).

The social comparison theory of BFLPE stands in contrast to the labeling theory, which proponents of inclusive education used to argue its merits (Marsh & Craven, 2004). Labeling theory advocates that educating special education students in pull-out special education classes results in lower self-concept and creates a stigmatization (Marsh & Craven). Labeling theory is also linked with the self-fulfilling prophecy, in which opponents of labeling state that students will become as their label implies. Despite that some are against labeling of students for educational purposes, there is little data against the use of labeling, if only because of the difficulty in researching the topic (Drew, Hardman, & Logan, 1996).

Parents of both special and general education students have also expressed concerns about inclusive education (Irmsher, 1996). Parents of special education students worry that inclusion will result in a loss in the range of services currently available to students and some question the appropriateness for certain students, such as those with emotional and behavioral disorders. Parents of general education students worry that teachers will devote more time to special education students, at the expense of their students' education (Irmsher).

Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, and Lee (1996) cautioned against full inclusion for another reason. They suggested that full inclusion often occurs without attention to certain students education needs, such as students with mild mental impairment. Patton and colleagues warned that without this attention, "the opportunity for individuals with mental retardation to acquire critical functional skills" is jeopardized (p. 81). Deshler and Schumaker (as cited in O'Neil, 1988) also warned against inclusion; however, they argued that general education teachers are not prepared for having these

students in their room and what that means for instruction. Schumaker and Deshler are quoted as saying,

The amount of time needed to teach the required number of complex skills [for learning disabled students to succeed in regular classrooms] exceeds the amount of time that might be allocated to such instruction in a secondary content classroom where the teacher is already under pressure to teach more curriculum content as national expectations are raised (as cited in O'Neil, p. 4).

Post-school Outcomes

Educators and educational systems are held accountable, or at least should be, for the postschool outcomes of former students (Wehmeyer, 1997). The myriad of research that reflects poor outcomes after exiting school led the field and society to question education for students with disabilities. As the field shifted towards more outcome-focused (i.e. outcomes-based education) and accountability-driven (i.e. NCLB) approaches, the negative and inadequate outcomes of students with disabilities became more highlighted, in their own right and in comparison to outcomes of non-disabled students (NCLB, 2002; Wehmeyer).

Edgar and Polloway (1994) summarized the post-school outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities as:

For students with mild disabilities, the postschool status outcomes for high school graduates indicate low employment rates, underemployment, low attendance at post-secondary educational programs, very poor rates of completion of postsecondary education programs, and generally a poorer adjustment to young adulthood than their peers without disabilities. The status for youth with mild disabilities who drop out is even worse (p. 441).

Benz and Kochhar (1996) indicated that special education students exiting secondary school are “unprepared for work, further learning, and responsible adulthood” (p. 33).

As highlighted by Edgar and Polloway (1994), as well as others (e.g. Benz & Kochhar, 1996), one main consideration in students' post-school outcomes was

employment. Participation in the labor force is low for individuals with disabilities, as researchers concluded the employment rate is about 30% with completion of high school (as cited in Johnson, Stodden, Emanuel, Luecking, & Mack, 2002; National Organization on Disability, 2001). Similar employment rates as those of Johnson and colleagues were reported in the Second Report of the Presidential Task Force on Employment of Adults with Disabilities (1999), which found that 75% of adults with disabilities were un-or-underemployed.

Blackorby and Wagner (1996) from the National Longitudinal Transition Study found a 57% employment rate for all students with disabilities three to five years after high school, but only a 35% rate for individuals with mental impairment. In 2003, the employment status of students with disabilities after high school increased to 70.4%, although when questioned if currently employed only 48.9% were (Cameto & Levine, 2005). Blackorby and Wagner found that certain characteristics correlated with employment, such as being male, Caucasian, and staying in school. Benz, Yovanoff, & Doren (1997) also found that certain characteristics were associated with employment, such as disability status and gender. From their study, males were more likely to be employed than females and individuals without disabilities were more likely to be employed than those with disabilities. Similar factors were found in the National Longitudinal Transition Study-2 (NLTS2), in which disability type, demographics, and experience were all related to employment (Cameto, 2005).

The median dropout rate for special education students is 26.71% (MacMillian, Widerman, Balow, Borhtwick-Dung, Hendrick, & Hemsley, 1992). In the mid-1990s, estimates for students with high incidence disabilities dropping out were around 50%

(Council for Exceptional Children, 1994). Recent research has indicated that only about 47.6% of older students with disabilities (i.e. those 14 years of age or older) exit high school with a “regular” diploma. About 41% of this population drop out of school (United States Department of Education, 2003). Halpern (1994) suggested that one reason for the high drop-out rate of special education students is failure of the field to provide these students with educational or instructional programs that are congruent with their interests, abilities, and levels of achievement.

Participation in post-secondary education is not high for individuals with disabilities (Neubert, Moon, & Grigal, 2004). This occurs despite research that indicates participation in post-secondary education improves one’s chance at meaningful employment (Getzel, Stodden, & Briel, 1999; Gilson, 1995; Zafft, Hart, & Zimbrich, 2004). Only 14.6% of students with any kind of disability, who received special education services in school, take courses from any post-secondary institutions (Blackorby & Wagner, 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1996). Nationally only 2.5% of students with mental impairment attend college (Kaye, 1997). Students with disabilities most likely to attend post-secondary education included students with learning disabilities, orthopedic impairments, and sensory impairments; students with mental retardation are the least likely to attend (Neubert, Moon, & Grigal).

Blackorby and Wagner also reported on independent living as an post-school outcome. From the National Longitudinal Transition Study, they found that about 13% of former special education students were living independently after two years, as compared to one-third of general education students. In the NLTS2, similar rates of independent living were found, suggesting that about 15% were living independently after two years

out of school (Wagner, 2003b). Sitlington and Frank (1990, 1993) and Wagner and colleagues (1991; 1992) both found that rates of independent living improved for students with disabilities the longer students were out of school.

Mithaug, Martin, Agran, and Rusch (1988) contended that special education students fail post high school because educators failed to prepare them for the adult world; they are not prepared to adapt to changes in the environment or shifting demands. In addition, special education students are often not prepared to be independent (Mithaug et al.). Martin and Marshall (1995) have noted that changes need to be made to the education for secondary students with disabilities. In particular, these authors stated, “unless we make changes in what we teach secondary students receiving special education services, they will ‘hit the mountain’” (p. 148). Martin and Marshall commented on the bleak future special education students face – under or unemployment, dropping out, low wages, and dependent living arrangements. Poor post-school outcomes warrant the examination of curriculum for secondary students with disabilities and particularly how a functional curriculum can be beneficial. Knowing how well secondary schools prepare students with disabilities for their life and work roles should be central to examining and utilizing curriculum (Eisenman, 2001; Rabren, Dunn, & Chambers, 2002).

Desired Outcomes

Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, and Lee (1996) summarized the desired outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities – employment, independence, life skills, and successful involvement in school and community. In terms of employment, the top desire is for competitive, paid employment, but also important is an activity or work that contributes to the individual’s quality of life. Self-sufficiency and independence

represent important outcomes for students with high incidence disabilities; the goal is to have self-determined young adults exiting high school. In terms of independence, independent living is a goal of post-school life for students with disabilities (Patton et al.).

Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, and Lee (1996) argued that life skills, or having competency in everyday activities, is another outcome that secondary programs should achieve for students with disabilities. The authors stressed that students need to be competent in community use, home and family activities, social and interpersonal skills, health and safety skills, use of leisure time, and successful citizenship. Despite that Patton and colleagues stated these should be outcomes of secondary programs, Clark, Field, Patton, Brolin, and Sitlington (1994) suggested that these will not be met through education in a traditional academics approach program. Patton and colleagues also indicated that students with disabilities should strive for successful involvement in community and school. While this suggests inclusion, the authors warn that this does not mean merely placing students in general education in which they are not socially integrated or do not participate.

Although many researchers cite other post-school outcomes as being important, employment is often considered one of the essential components of success. The emphasis on employment may be due in part to Wolfensberger (1972), who claimed:

There are few activities for adults in our culture which are more normative than work. It follows that for adults under mental disorder management, in or out of special residence, work can be a major means of normalization, and therefore should receive a prominent place in the management scheme (p.111).

Despite the goals that Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, and Lee (1996), as well as others, have for students with disabilities, they acknowledge the many challenges or obstacles to achieving successful outcomes. The challenges or obstacles included:

Limited job opportunities, poor general job skills, the skills demanded by an increasingly complex workplace, economic fluctuations and uncertainties, and possible financial disincentives for working related to loss of benefits (e.g., SSI, Medicaid) (p. 80).

Functional Curriculum

Functional curriculum reflects one option with which to educate students with disabilities (see Bigge, 1988; Sabornie & deBettencourt, 1997). Functional curricula have been developed from reflecting upon already existing curriculum and what occurs in the community (Schmalle & Retish, 1989). Functional curricula resulted from the belief that what was occurring in school failed to reflect the skills necessary for post-school success as well as that these skills did not generalize to community settings (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, Schmalle, 1991). Curricula were created to teach functional life skills, or in other words, the skills necessary to live, work, and have fun in an inclusive community (Brown, McLean, Hamre-Nietupski, Pumpian, Creto, & Gruenewald, 1979; Falvey, 1989; Snell & Browder, 1987). Snell (1997) implied that functional curricula were taught to help students acquire the adaptive skills that they did not possess and would not develop unless explicitly taught.

Components of a functional or life management curriculum supported in the literature include the functional applications of core subject areas (academics), vocational education, community access, daily living, financial, independent living, transportation, social/relationships, and self-determination (Patton, Cronin, & Jarrrels, 1997). Students with disabilities, who do not plan on attending post-secondary school, do not need to

focus on higher academics (e.g. mathematics – trigonometry, pre-calculus), but do need to understand functional academics (e.g. mathematics – money, time) (Patton, Cronin, & Bassett, 1997). In addition to functional academics, students with disabilities also need other skills of daily life. Despite that many teachers, administrators, and parents assume students in special education need no formal instruction in life skills, this is hardly an accurate representation (Cronin, 1996). Research has suggested that many of these students fail to learn the necessary skills without instruction, as they do not acquire them on their own or from parents and peers (Edgar, 1988; Halpern & Benz, 1987; Sitlington, Frank, & Carson, 1993; & Wagner, D'Amico, Jay, Butler-Natlin, Marder, & Cox, 1992; WETA-TV, 1994). These skills often need to be explicitly taught to students educated in cross-categorical, self-contained programs.

In recognition that students with disabilities are not well prepared for adult life, there has been a growing number of authors calling for implementation of a functional curriculum (Bouck, 2004b; Cronin, 1996; Dever & Knapczyk, 1997; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000). Unfortunately functional curriculum is an under-researched area in the field of secondary special education, both in terms of research-supported evidence as to the inclusion of its components as well as its impact on post-school outcomes. Many have wondered for whom a functional curriculum is appropriate, as some feel it is only appropriate for students with severe disabilities (Clark, 1994). However, a contingent researchers (e.g. Clark; Patton et al.) have argued that all students with disabilities need a functional curriculum, particularly at the secondary level. Billingsley and Alberston (1999) also suggested that special education students' quality of life is dependent on functional skills. Despite the little research, Cronin (1996) supported that all students

need life skills preparation, not just special education students and contended that the curriculum should include it across all content areas and throughout all school years (see Cronin & Patton, 1993).

Bigge, Stump, Spagna, and Silberman (1999) have stated that a general education curriculum fails to meet the needs of all students. In particular, these scholars have focused on life skills, including functional academics, daily and community living skills, and transition. They feel that certain students need exposure to functional academics, daily and community living skills, career and vocational education, home and family skills, leisure pursuits, community involvement opportunities, physical and emotional health skills, self-determination skills, social skills, and transition skills (Bigge, et al.). Knowlton (1998) advocated a similar position for curriculum for individuals with developmental disabilities – focusing on the outcomes of independence and a positive quality of life in a range of areas.

Support for a functional curriculum also arose from Polloway, Patton, Smith, and Roderique (1991) who suggested that a student's subsequent environments should determine his/her curricular approach. For students who are not likely to attend post-secondary education, Edgar and Polloway (1994) suggested that content curricula models were inappropriate. Instead models focusing on work and other adult role preparation should be utilized. Edgar and Polloway focused on the following components: vocational training, life skills, and apprenticeship/citizenship.

Smith and Puccini (1995) advocated that students need to be offered programs that focus on transition. They stated that "...exposing students to longer periods of time to inappropriate curricula or teaching efforts does not result in improved educational

performance or an improved likelihood of success as adults” (p. 279). Smith and Puccini further argued that too many students at the secondary level were not receiving a curriculum that prepared them for independent living or gave them the necessary skills to be successful after high school. They expressed that life skills instruction should be made available to all students with disabilities, as well as general education students who could also benefit from this mode of instruction. Smith and Puccini further stated, “students with disabilities should not be included in general education classes and settings and provided curricula that are not germane to their needs in developing independent living skills” (p. 281).

Historical Perspective

Functional curriculum is not a recent phenomenon. Its theory actually predates its peaks during the late 1970s-early 1980s. In 1938, the National Education Association produced a document that suggested a functional curriculum for students (Kolstoe, 1970). The suggested curriculum focused on the goals of: “(1) economic efficiency, (2) worthy home membership, (3) worthy citizenship, and (4) self-realization” (p. 27-28). Kolstoe indicated that the suggested functional curriculum was a spiral curriculum, such that at the various school levels different aspects of the curriculum were emphasized. For example, in the earlier years functional academics were stressed, whereas in high school, the focus became vocation.

The use of functional curricula in practice and its place in research has diminished from the 1970s to the 1990s. Nietupski, Hamre-Nietupski, Curtin, and Shrikanth (1997) discovered a decrease of 32% of articles that discussed functional skills between the mid-1970s and mid-1990s. Billingsley (1997) also noted a decrease in attention to functional

skills in articles cited by ERIC between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s (53% reduction). The reduction in attention in research and practice to functional skills (i.e. functional curricula) has been linked to the increased emphasis on inclusive education. Billingsley and Albertson (1999) indicated that an emphasis on inclusion increased the “marginalization, or absence” of attention to functional skills and functional curricula (p. 299). Billingsley and Albertson suggested that functional skills instruction or curriculum deserves a “renewed interest and attention” in research and in practice (p. 301).

Challenges to a Functional Curriculum

The majority of the time functional curriculum is defined in opposition to the “general education” or “general” curriculum (see Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). A functional curriculum is often viewed as an alternate curriculum, in reference to the general education curriculum (see Nolet & McLaughlin) and hence defined as deviant from the “norm” or accepted curriculum. Other criticisms of functional curricula, or more generically an alternative curriculum, are related to tracking (Edgar & Polloway, 1994). Concern exists that using alternative curriculum is a form of tracking and many scholars and practitioners have argued that tracking is bad, in addition to segregating primarily poor and minority students (see Dunn, 1968; Oakes, 1986). However, Edgar and Polloway argued that using an alternative curriculum was not tracking, as tracking would imply “a watered down version of the same curriculum” (p. 443). Alternative curricula reflect a different curricular option and hence teach a different curriculum. Edgar and Polloway suggested that the alternative curriculum may be “dumbed down” or it may even be better than the general education curriculum (p. 444).

Weaver, Landers, and Adams (1991) argued that the educational community often associates a functional curriculum with a “limited curriculum” (i.e. a limited set of skills) (p. 284). While this is not accurate, the authors contended that functional curricula are not often given a thorough or true consideration due to the misassumptions many carry about this curriculum option. Weaver and colleagues suggested that functional curricula embodies the principles of teachers asking themselves, “how, when, and where will my students use this knowledge in their lives, now and in the future?” (p. 285). Beck, Broers, Hogue, Shipstead, and Knowlton (1994) developed a similar notion when evaluating functional curriculum elements for students, “will I need it when I’m 21?” (p. 45). In fact, Weaver and associates likened functional curricula to Dewey’s (1937) concept of learning by doing.

Challenges to a functional curriculum have also arisen from the issue of placement – namely that a functional curriculum often occurs in a “segregated” setting, as opposed to the general education setting (Field, LeRoy, & Rivera, 1994). Field and colleagues noted that often to make a curriculum functional for students, it needed to be taught in a setting other than the general education setting. And while the research on inclusion is controversial and inconclusive, proponents of inclusion have a loud voice.

Evidence-based

Support for the use of a functional curriculum was found in outcome data collected from students whose education was guided by such a curriculum. Benz, Lindstrom, and Yovanoff (2000) studied the Youth Transition Program (YTP), which provided services for special education students in their last two years of high school and involved transition planning based on post-school goals and self-determination;

instruction in functional academics, vocational, independent living, and personal-social content areas; paid work experience; and follow-up services for two years on an as needed basis (Benz, Lindstrom, & Latta, 1999). Students in the YTP graduated at rates of 72%, and within that figure, the rates doubled for those who had two years in the program as opposed to one or less years (Benz et al., 2000). After graduation, 68% were engaged in productive work or some sort of postsecondary education.

The Youth Transition Program is now recognized as an exemplary school-to-work transition model by the U.S. Department of Education (Benz, Lindstrom, & Latta, 1999). Follow-up studies have found that students with disabilities who participated in YTP have better post-school outcomes than students who did participate in YTP. Average hourly wages, average weekly wages, maintenance of employment, and eligibility for rehabilitation services were all factors that the two groups have been compared on. Students from YTP have been found to have higher average hourly wages; higher average weekly wages; higher maintenance of employment; less likely to have lost their job because they quit, were laid off, or fired; and were more likely to be determined eligible for rehabilitation services (Benz et al.).

On a smaller scale, Miller (1994) found positive results after implementing a functional approach for adolescents with high incidence disabilities. Miller examined *On Your Own* curriculum – a functional curriculum for adolescents with “mild disabilities” geared towards skills in selecting a career, finding living arrangements, and budgeting. Miller found that after implementation of the curriculum, skipping class was reduced by 80% and referrals to the principal for reasons of non-compliance behavior was reduced by 72%.

Components of Functional Curricula

While many researchers and practitioners could offer varying descriptions of what comprise functional curriculum, the aspects advocated by Patton, Cronin, and Jarriels (1997) were accepted as the components of functional curriculum for this research project, with two additions. Thus, components of a functional or life management curriculum include the functional applications of core subject areas (academics), vocational education, community access, daily living, financial, independent living, transportation, social/relationships, and self-determination (Patton et al.). In addition, leisure and recreation and communication skills were added as components of a functional or life skills curriculum.

Functional academics. Functional academics involves teaching a modified academic curriculum that is based upon daily living or functional skills that students are believed to need to function in an inclusive community setting (Browder & Snell, 1993). Functional academics represent the skills that individuals will need to participate in daily life and to ensure a high quality of living (Westling & Fox, 2000). Functional academics are a part of a functional curriculum because they can add value to the students' participation in everyday activities (Browder & Snell).

Two or three different approaches exist to teaching functional academics, depending on one's view – a generalized approach and a specific approach or a generalized approach, specific/embedded approach, and an interdisciplinary approach (Bigge, Stump, Spagna, & Silberman, 1999; Ford, Schnorr, Meyer, Davern, Black, & Dempsey, 1989). A generalized approach involves teaching academic skills applicable across contexts, time, tasks, and people (Bigge et al.). A specific or embedded approach

involves, considering “the activities of daily living that are priorities for instruction and then target academics skills that are embedded within these activities”(Browder & Snell, 1993, p. 4). The interdisciplinary approach involves teaching academic skills within a life skills unit (Bigge et al.).

The substance of functional academics is typically presented as the basic three big ‘Rs’ – reading, writing, and arithmetic (Bigge, Stump, Spagna, & Silberman, 1999). However, functional academics is not a repackaged watered-down or slower-paced general education curriculum or curricular components; it remains a comprehensive curricular component focused on “practical academics skills and fundamental knowledge” (Bigge et al., p. 91). Aspects of functional academics usually include functional literacy (reading and writing) and functional mathematics, such as money, time management, and other important skills needed in daily life (Westling & Fox, 2000).

Functional literacy implies that a student has obtained a reading level of about fourth grade (Browder & Snell, 1993). To be functionally literate, one needs to be able to read materials that they may need to successfully complete their work, daily living, or leisure activities (Browder & Snell). Functional literacy is thought to involve sight words that students are most likely to encounter in printed material as well as survival words (Browder & Snell). In addition to reading, functional literacy also involves writing. To be functionally literate, students must be able to write their name or make a distinctive mark that they can use to sign documents or communicate with friends and family (Browder & Snell). Possessing functional math skills typically involves having skills for money, time management, and other aspects of number recognition, such as telephone numbers (Browder & Snell; Westling & Fox, 2000).

Wehmeyer, Sands, Knowlton, and Kozleski (2002) felt the most important functional academics skills were those that enhanced one's independence and quality of life. Thus they stressed personal finances, applied money concepts, applied time concepts, community mobility and access, household management, interacting with local government and community agencies, grooming and self-care, engagement in leisure activities, health and safety, and career and job preparation. The definition of Wehmeyer and colleagues of functional academics is broad and encompasses almost all areas typically within a functional curriculum. Within the more academic realm of these areas, Wehmeyer and associates stressed that students should be taught how to use a bank, pay for their own expenses, and manage a budget.

Vocational education. Vocational education defined officially as the “organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for paid or unpaid employment, or for additional preparation for a career requiring other than a baccalaureate or advanced degree” (Vocational Education Act, 1963, p. 55073; <http://www.dphilpotlaw.com/html/glossary.html>). Some argue that vocational education is the “dominant component of a comprehensive curriculum” for special education students at the secondary level (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, & Schmalle, 1991; Phelps & Hanley-Maxwell, 1997). Vocational education focuses on vocational assessment, exploration, and then specific job or vocation preparation (Retish et al.). Others (e.g. Salzberg, Lignugaris-Kraft, & McCuller, 1988) have noted that vocational competence is highly important for individuals with disabilities. Individuals with disabilities have been found to be more successful when they have more vocational competence (Salzberg, Lignugaris-Kraft, & McCuller).

The first phase of vocational education, the awareness stage, focuses on “preparing students for active participation in realistic vocational experiences that have been identified as being appropriate for their aptitude, skills, interests, values, and personality” (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, & Schmalle, 1991, p. 158). The second phase of vocational education typically involves exploration, such as analyzing vocational choices, instruction, and adjustment to work. The final phase, preparation, addresses helping student to obtain the necessary and specific skills that are marketable for employment (Retish et al.).

Vocational education infused within the general education curriculum has been considered a natural and logical option by some researchers and practitioners. However, others noted the challenges that exist with giving special education students a vocational education within the general education setting. Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, and Schmalle (1991) discussed that teachers often have concerns over this. In particular, teachers are concerned about meeting the IEPs mandates of the students, yet maintaining the rigor of the vocation. In addition, teachers felt constrained by the standards that business and industry place on some vocations that are represented in vocational education (Retish et al.).

Related to the idea of vocational education lies career-oriented schooling, which focuses on vocational and work experiences (Eisenman, 2001). Eisenman suggested that career-oriented schooling positively impacts student outcomes through its integration of curriculum and school experiences associated with beneficial post-school outcomes. Saunders, Stoney, and Weston (1997) defined career-oriented schooling as encapsulating four main objectives: providing career awareness, developing general work-related skills,

enhancing motivation for academic learning, and encouraging self planning for post-school outcomes.

Similarly, career education has held an important role in forming functional curricula. Career education in itself is not a curriculum, but as a program has been infused into many different curriculum models (Retish, Hitchings, Horvath, & Schmalle, 1991). Career education is related to vocational education; yet different. Career education differs from vocational education on the following components: “it interfaces education with work;” “it is a K-12+ effort that involves all possible school personnel;” “it is an infusion concept;” “it does not replace traditional education or subject matter;” “it conceptualizes career development occurring in stages;” “it requires a substantial experiential component;” “it focuses on the development of life skills, affective skills, and general employability skills;” and “it requires the school to work more closely with the family and community resources” (Brolin, 1997, p. 4-5). Career education helps to make students aware of more career options, the world of work, and how to make satisfying career choices (Razeghi, 1998).

Wehmeyer (1995) indicated that career education involves the multiple settings students interact with (i.e. community, home, school, and work) as well as their different roles (i.e. student, employee, consumer, citizen, and family member). He also noted that career education is a lifelong learning process. Research has documented that infusing career education into the general or special education curriculum can benefit special education students (Razeghi, 1998). Razeghi also argued that the integration of career education into secondary curriculum can help to prevent special education students from

dropping out of school. He suggested that education becomes more meaningful to secondary special education students through the use of career education (Razehi).

Vocational education, and actual job experience (in school job, job during school years, work-study, etc.), have been found in research to benefit special education students and are associated with more positive post-school outcomes (Baer, Flexer, Beck, Amstutz, Hoffman, Brothers, & colleagues, 2003; Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000). The research by Baer and colleagues found that student participation in either work study or vocational education doubled students' chances of full-time employment post-school. Gill (1988) also found that student enrollment in vocational education positively influenced students' post-school outcomes, such as employment. Not only did participation in vocational education increase a student's chance of gaining employment after graduation, but also positively impacted the type of employment one was able to obtain.

Harvey (2002) also found positive outcomes associated with involvement in vocational education. Harvey examined five post-school outcomes of individuals (employment rates, annual employment wage earnings, average weekly hours worked, job satisfaction, and post-secondary education participation rates) and compared the results based on whether the students had been involved with vocational education. He found that for every category except post-secondary education participation rates, students who had vocational education had better post-school outcomes. For example, 55% of students with a disability who participated in vocational education were employed while 46% with a disability who did not participate in vocational education were employed. Students who had vocational education earned an average of \$8,603 a

year while those without vocational education earned an average of \$6,873 a year.

Harvey concluded that participation in vocational education while in school creates an advantage for students within the labor market.

Daily living. Daily living, or life skills, refers to the life demands or roles that students will face after completing secondary school (Edgar & Polloway, 1994). Bigge, Stump, Spagna, and Silberman (1999) defined daily living skills as the “life skills that allow students to deal with current or future adult day-to-day demands and responsibilities” (p. 94). While generally individuals learn life skills incidentally, students with disabilities may not and hence need explicit instruction in the skills of daily living (also referred to as life skill or community and domestic skills) (Westling & Fox, 2000).

Daily living skills can also be considered similar to the domestic skills discussed by Snell and Browder (1987). They divided domestic skills into five basic categories: food preparation, personal maintenance, housekeeping, telephone use, and handling and preventing home accidents. They felt that food preparation was a critical area because it is a skill that enhances independent living. Personal maintenance was stressed as an area because of its impact on other facets of life, such as the role of personal appearance in securing employment as well as being accepted in the community (Snell & Browder).

Some have asserted that daily living skills are best taught in the community, in the natural setting in which the activities would occur (Westling & Fox, 2000). However, when actual instructional time in the community is not possible, simulations of community settings can occur. Westling and Fox discussed some natural community settings in which instruction in daily life skills have occurred. These included: grocery stores, restaurants, vending machines, public transportation. They also discussed

domestic activities which fall under the realm of daily living skills, including: preparing meals, performing household chores, and using the telephone (Westling & Fox).

Social/relationships. The social/relationship aspect of functional curricula embodies not only friendships or relationships, but also social skills. Social skills have been noted in the literature as important skills for all students, but especially special education students (Gumpel, 1994). Gumpel defined social skills as the manifestation of social competence, which is generally difficult to define but easy to perceive if someone has it or not (St. Peter, Ayres, Mayer, & Park-Lee, 1989). Social skills are critical, as St. Peter and colleagues stated, “Almost everything we do, it seems, involves either interacting with other persons or inhibiting interactions with other persons” (p. 171).

Schumaker and Hazel (1984) defined a social skill as:

Any cognitive function or overt behavior in which an individual engages while interacting with another person or persons. Cognitive functions include such capacities as empathizing with or understanding other person’s feelings, discriminating and making inferences about social cues, and predicting and evaluating consequences for social behaviors. Overt behaviors include the nonverbal (e.g. head nods, eye contact, facial expression) and verbal (e.g. what the person says) components of social performance (p. 422).

It is generally accepted that social skills are something that can be learned and that some people learn and apply these skills more quickly and readily than others (Hazel & Schumaker, 1988).

Adolescents with high incidence disabilities, such as mild mental impairment, learning disabilities, and emotional impairment have been recognized as having deficits in social skills (Hazel & Schumaker, 1988; WETA, 1994). Greenspan (1981) argued that particular disabilities have been historically defined based on a “quality of being ‘out of it’ interpersonally” (Greenspan, & Shoutlz, 1981, p. 25). Greenspan felt that inherent in

these disabilities was engagement in inappropriate social behavior or a lack of social awareness. Furthermore, some researchers have suggested that cognition may impact social performance, such as displaying appropriate social skills (Hazel & Schumaker). They suggested that certain cognitive skills may be necessary to evaluate and then select the most appropriate social skill for each given situation.

Research has also illuminated the connection between social skills and employment, particularly that employers place value on employees possessing appropriate social skills (Elksnin & Elksnin, 1991; Elksnin, Elksnin, & Sabornie, 1994; Greenspan & Shoultz, 1981; Siegel, Park, Gumpel, Ford, Tappe, & Gaylord Ross, 1990). The value of social skills and social competence has been echoed throughout research as a factor in job retention or conversely the loss of one's job (e.g. Salzberg, Lignugaris-Kraft, & McCuller, 1988). Salzberg and colleagues suggested that social competence is inseparable from productivity, indicating an even bigger need for addressing one's social competence in the workforce. The importance of social competence in the job market is strengthened, as social-vocational competence has also been conceptualized as a domain of vocational competence – in addition to job responsibility and task production competence (Salzberg et al.). Elksnin and colleagues (1994) suggested that insufficient job-related social skills among adolescents with disabilities are highly related to this group's high rate of job loss, unemployment, and underemployment.

In addition to possessing positive social skills, developing relationships, or more specifically friendships, is an important skill. Everyone needs friends and there is value in having friends that individuals can share activities with, talk, and express emotions (Westling & Fox, 2000). Halpern (1994) advocated that personal and social relationships

were perhaps the most important of the all the transition goals (i.e. employment/post-secondary education, independent living, etc.). Halpern suggested that the presence or absence of friends could not only impact an individual's own personal sense of well-being, but also influence his/her involvement in other activities, such as leisure, recreation, and even work.

While relationships and friendships are very important in life, it is an area that is not easy to place as a goal on an IEP (Strully & Strully, 1985). Individuals without disabilities cannot be mandated to be friends with individuals with a disability, hence strengthening the need for skills in building relationships and friendships. Strully and Strully suggested that it is the individuals that students make friendships with or develop relationships with that will help ensure their place and space within the community.

Independent living. Independent living skills can be considered in two ways – the strict definition of individuals with disabilities living independently in the community, such that they may have or share an apartment or house; or skills that decrease an individual's reliance or dependence on others (Vogelsberg, Williams, & Bellamy, 1982). The second definition involves skills such as daily living (i.e. self care), home management, food preparation, and access to community services (Kregel, Wehman, Seyfarth, & Marshall, 1986).

The stricter definition – living independently in the community in their own or shared residence – is in opposition to living with parents, family, or in residential living facilities. Many consider independent living an important area in post-school success and an area of emphasis for secondary education and transition (Bosch, 1994; Turnbull III, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park 2003). Bosch took a holistic approach to understanding

independent living for students with high incidence disabilities and stressed that the success of this outcome is dependent on other functional skills. Bosch indicated seven skills she considered to be intricately linked to independent living and generally encompassed under other functional or daily living skills: money management (i.e. functional mathematics or financial), food management, personal appearance and hygiene, basic health needs, housekeeping skills, emergency and safety skills (i.e. daily living skills), and transportation.

Gajar, Goodman, and McAfee (1993) noted similar skills needed for students with high incidence disabilities to successfully live independently. These researchers discussed essential skills such as being able to care for one's own personal needs, obtaining and maintaining a household, maintaining one's health, accepting sexual and family responsibilities, developing friendships, and having leisure pursuits or activities. Specifically, Gajar and associates stressed that living independently is more than just obtaining employment; it impacts a variety of skills which can be targeted with instruction and training. Gajar and colleagues advocated that these skills be included in secondary programming and curriculum.

Johnson (2000), commenting on the options that secondary curricula should include, stressed independent living skills programs. He indicated that these programs should help students learn the daily living skills needed to live independently in the community. Bosch (1994) discussed that the purpose of secondary programs is to enable students to be as independent as possible through learning in a safe and structured environment. Bosch noted that independent living programs can be varied in their

approach, such as being apartment-based, on a college campus, or in a large group home setting.

Community (access/skills). Snell and Browder (1987) examined domestic and community skills, citing them as including “all the competencies required to maintain one’s personal appearance and residence and to use the surrounding community” (p. 390). Under their general categories of domestic and community skills, presumed to be part of Cronin and Patton’s (1993) community access, lie the areas of self-care, personal health, housekeeping, clothing care, meal preparation, transporting (including walking), shopping, use of community facilities such as the laundromat, restaurant post office, doctors, and the bank. Many of these can also be considered related to daily living skills. Snell and Browder indicated that a large part of teaching and maintaining the various domestic and community skills needed to access and participate in the community involved self-management or self-regulation. They felt that students with disabilities needed instruction in the ways non-disabled peers manage their daily routines, such as making check-lists, scheduling activities, and evaluating the results of various actions or decisions.

Snell and Browder (1987) subdivided community skills into two large categories: mobility in the community and use of the community. They felt that mobility in the community was an important skill for all individuals with special needs, not just individuals with visual impairments. Snell and Browder stressed that the goal for mobility is independence, whether the mobility included walking, taking public transportation, or special transportation. An individuals’ ability to use his/her community greatly impacts his/her independence. The more an individual can access and use his/her

community, the more independent s/he can become. Snell and Browder presented the goals for use of the community as encompassing traveling to and from work, securing community services, and using recreational facilities.

Billingsley & Albertson (1999) suggested that to effectively teach functional skills within a functional curriculum, some degree of focus on community-based instruction (i.e. instruction that occurs within the community setting and that inherently involves access to, and use of, the community) is required. Snell (1997) defined community based instruction as referring to “the practice of having school staff teach in the community rather than school locations the skills that are normally used there” (p. 91). The purpose of community-based instruction is to help students become more independent in the community and hopefully improve their chances for successful post-school outcomes. Bigge, Stump, Spagna, and Silberman (1999) argued that community involvement is an important part of preparing students for adult roles. They indicated that students develop community involvement skills by learning “to become members of their community by participating in community events and fulfilling their role as citizens” (p. 101). Community involvement encompasses both developing community awareness skills and citizenship skills (Bigge et al.).

Transportation. Transportation is a skill needed by everyone, as everyone needs to be able to travel within his/her community setting (Westling & Fox, 2000). Transportation can include walking, taking a bus, driving a car, or even transportation that extends beyond one’s community, such as flying in an airplane or taking a train (Westling & Fox). The goal for individuals with disabilities is independence in transportation – being able to use public transportation independently or independently

transport themselves within and to-and-from one's community (i.e. getting a driver's license and a car).

Gajar, Goodman, and McAfee (1993) argued that inadequate transportation skills disadvantages individuals with disabilities from accessing and maintaining employment. They argued that lack of skills is one reason that individuals with disabilities do not have jobs, and the challenge of acquiring satisfactory transportation skills is greater in rural or suburban areas. Furthermore, Gajar and colleagues stated that inadequate transportation skills also negatively impact other areas of life, aside from employment, such as community access and independent living. Gajar and colleagues noted the importance of programs that either teach students how to drive or teach them how to use public transportation. Furthermore, individuals with disabilities themselves have cited a lack of transportation skills as problematic and resulting in their dissatisfaction with their lives (Kregel, Wehman, Seyfarth, & Marshall, 1986).

Financial. A financial focus in functional curriculum models typically encompasses such areas as personal finances and applying money concepts to everyday life, such as making purchases, understanding change, and using a vending machine (Wehmeyer, Sands, Knowlton, & Kozleski, 2002). The personal finance component of functional curricula stress that individuals should have a bank and checking account and be able to use it, be able to keep a budget, use ATM machines, and deposit their own checks (Wehmeyer et al.). The financial aspects of functional curricula are typically absorbed in other areas of the curriculum, such as functional mathematics and daily living skills.

Self-determination. Self-determination has been increasingly recognized as an essential component of a functional curriculum, as well as transition in general (Patton, Cronin, & Jarrrels, 1997; Zhang, Katsiyannis, & Zhang, 2002). Wehmeyer (1992a) defined self-determination as,

“The attitudes and abilities required to act as the primary causal agent in one’s life and to make choices regarding one’s actions free from undue external influence or interference. It involves autonomy (acting according to one’s own priorities or principles), self-actualization (the full development of one’s unique talents and potentials), and self-regulation (cognitive or self-controlled mediation or one’s behavior)” (p. 305).

Self-determination originated out of work in psychology (see Deci & Ryan, 1985). It became incorporated into the field of special education with the emerging realization that individuals (students) with disabilities were not being given choices in the decisions of their daily life – living arrangements, financial aspects, work, etc. (Sands & Kozleski, 1994; Wehmeyer & Metzler, 1995). While literature suggests that over 60 curricula exist to teach self-determination skills, as well as numerous other resources, self-determination is not a single entity (Zhang, 2001). And while several curricula models exist, few of these have been experimentally evaluated (Eisenman, 2001).

Sands and Doll (1996) suggested that self-determination skills are encompassed by at least four capabilities – metacognition, self-perception, social problem solving, and decision-making. With increased attention on transition and self-determination skills, one wonders how much is self-determination being taught at the secondary level. In a study by Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Zhang (2002), over half of all teachers surveyed reported frequently engaging in the following behaviors with their students: “(a) linking goals set for self and daily decisions made, (b) determining steps to progress towards goals, and (c) requesting academic and social supports from teachers” (p. 165). However, less than half

the teachers surveyed reported frequently engaging in the following behaviors, suggestive that an increased emphasis needs to be paid towards self-determination: “(a) programmatic and course-related plans, (b) post-school plans, and (c) own schedules” (p. 165).

Wehmeyer (1997) identified 11 components of self-determined behavior, which was defined as “actions that are identified by specific essential characteristics: (1) the person acted autonomously, (2) the behavior(s) were self-regulated, (3) the person initiated and responded to the event(s) in a “psychologically empowered” manner, and (4) the person acted in a self-realizing manner” (p. 37). The 11 components included: choice making, decision making, problem solving, goal setting and attainment, self-observation skills, self-evaluation skills, self-reinforcement skills, internal locus of control, positive attributions of efficacy and outcome expectancy, self-awareness, and self-knowledge (Wehmeyer, 1996).

The value of problem-solving, often seen as an important part of being self-determined, has been discussed for students with disabilities (e.g. Alley & Deshler, 1979; Browning & Nave, 1993). Alley and Deshler highlighted the value of these skills:

The importance of secondary students acquiring good problem solving skills cannot be overemphasized. Not only are these skill demanded by the school curriculum, but they are required for successful adjustment to social and life situations during postschool years. To survive in our increasingly complex society, people need to be able to solve problems on an ongoing and independent basis (p. 218).

Gumpel, Tappe, and Araki (2000) found that students with disabilities had more difficulty solving social problems in vocational situations than either community or personal. These results support research by other scholars that the challenges of employment for students with disabilities largely stem from the social aspect of

vocational situations and being both aware of and able to problem-solve them (see Elksnin, Elksnin, & Sabornie, 1994; Siegel, Park, Gumpel, Ford, Tappe, & Gaylord-Ross 1990).

Self-determination as a holistic set of skills also has positive benefits for students. Greater self-determination skills are associated with greater self-sufficiency and self-reliance, which can impact better postschool outcomes (Wehmeyer, 1997). While there are educational benefits to the acquisition of self-determination skills, Wehmeyer suggested that the top reason for teaching self-determination is “that it is the right thing to do” (p. 56). Wehmeyer (1992b) also noted that adolescence is a critical time for teaching self-determination and hence self-determination education and skills should play an important role in secondary schools and transition. And yet, research by Agran, Snow, and Swaner (1999) found that while teachers felt that self-determination is an important curricular domain, less than half actually had any goals related to self-determination for their students on their IEPs. Furthermore, more than half of teachers responded that they did not discuss self-determination skills with their students (Agran et al.).

Martin and Marshall (1995) argued that self-determination skills were needed for secondary special education students because of failings in the system, specifically noting the lack of empowerment of the students the system is suppose to serve. The authors felt that Individuals Education Plans (IEP) led to the lack of self-determination skills in special education students. Students were only required to be at IEPs “when appropriate.” Martin and Marshall suggested that student-led IEPs be instituted in schools to further develop student control and decision-making power over their lives. Wehmeyer and Metzler (1995) hypothesized the overprotective and overly-structured home and

education environments contributed to individuals with disabilities feelings of having few choices and less control over their lives and decisions.

Zhang (2001) argued that despite the prominence and frequent attention given to self-determination skills and curriculum, few of the curricula materials have been empirically-validated. Zhang stated that over 50% lacked field-testing prior to implementation and only 11% were field-tested with reports supplied. Of these four, just one conducted an experimental research study with a treatment and a control group, allowing “reasonable causal inferences” (p. 123). While Zhang argued that many self-determination curricula lacked evidence-based research, he conducted research on one particular curriculum – *Next S.T.E.P.*, created by Halpern, Herr, Wolf, Doren, Johnson, and Lawson (1997). Zhang found that students who received the *Next S.T.E.P.* curriculum outperformed those who did not in comparisons of pre-test to post-test scores on a self-determination scale.

Leisure and recreation. While not considered by Patton, Cronin, & Jarrrels (1997) to be a component of a functional curriculum, others have included leisure and recreational skills (Ford, Davern, Meyer, Schnorr, Black, & Dempsey, 1989; Westling & Fox, 2000). Some researchers valued leisure and recreation because they felt that participation in these experiences can help students achieve other goals and outcomes, such as community access/involvement or friendships (Johnson, Aston-Shaeffer, & Bullock, 1997). Leisure is defined as “freedom from occupation; spare time, unoccupied time,” whereas recreation is defined as “refreshment from weariness; any pleasurable interest; amusement” (Westling & Fox, p. 360).

Leisure and recreation are important pieces in participating and functioning in post-school life. "Engaging in these activities is essential because it provides an opportunity to participate in an integrated world, to demonstrate age-appropriate skills and social behavior, and to make constructive use of free time" (Westling & Fox, 2000, p. 19). Recreation and leisure add value to anyone's life, including individuals with disabilities (Westling & Fox). Terman, Lerner, Stevenson, and Behrman (1996) concurred, stating individuals "who have strong recreational interest that can be shared with others are more likely to be integrated in a meaningful way in social settings" (p. 11)

Dattilo and Hoge (1999) studied the impact of a leisure program on youth with disabilities. They found that participation in leisure program resulted in an increased positive affect, when compared to students' typical classroom activities. Student participation was also positively associated with increased knowledge in how to participate in leisure activities. The researchers found that the students, parents, and teachers involved in the leisure program acknowledged the value in this program (Dattilo & Hoge).

Despite the reported importance and value of recreational and leisure activities, researchers have reported that adults with disabilities generally participate in these opportunities less than their peers without disabilities (i.e. Hoge & Dattilo, 1995). Some research has found that students with disabilities participate in more passive recreation activities, such as television watching (Aveno, 1987; Kregel, Wehman, Seyfarth, & Marshall, 1986). Despite this finding, research has found that students with disabilities have similar preferences for leisure or recreational activities as non-disabled peers, with most being unrelated to cognitive ability (Whorton, Morgan, & Nisbet, 1994).

Communication skills. Communication skills, while not always formally recognized as a central component of functional curricula, are also considered important as they are required on a daily basis (Mirenda & Smith-Lewis, 1989). Communication skills have been included in various commercially available functional curriculum models, such as *A Functional Curriculum for Teaching Students with Disabilities* (Bender, Valletutti, Baglin, & Hoffnung, 1996).

Stakeholder Perspectives

Concerns exist from teachers, parents, and students in regards to curriculum at the secondary level. Students in special education want challenging and relevant instruction and curriculum that would prepare them for life after high school (Guterman, 1995). Special education students have expressed frustration with traditional high school curriculum, as it fails to adequately prepare them to achieve their post-secondary goals (Benz, Lindstrom, & Yovanoff, 2000). These students desired to gain the functional skills necessary to succeed in the adult world, instead of receiving an education of meaningless facts and rote memorization (Benz et al.). Secondary special education teachers also identified a more appropriate curriculum as an intervention to improve their classrooms; an intervention second to only more preparation time or improved collaboration (Bouck, 2004a; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002). Parents have also expressed concerns regarding their child's special education curriculum (Love & Malian, 1997). While both parents and students tend to express satisfaction with students' achievement levels in reading, writing, and mathematics; they have concerns about the lack of acquisition of more functional life skills, such as the ability to use public transportation, live independently, and knowing how to access community services (Love & Malian; Olson, 2004).

Teachers

Teachers are important consumers, and producers, of curriculum. As a result, their perspectives of curriculum and other facets of educational programming are important and need to be considered, as research has found that teachers' beliefs greatly impact curriculum practices (Conley, 1991; Floden & Klinzing, 1990). As Cuban (1988) stated, "by their decisions and actions, teacher determine whether policy is implemented, transformed, or ignored", with respect to curriculum (p. 33).

Mithaug, Martin, Agran, and Rusch (1988) suggested that in particular special education teachers play a very important role in regards to curriculum enactment for their students.

Special education teachers and others... are in charge. They control the entire teaching learning environment, from setting classroom and student expectations for performance and determining what tasks the student will perform to allocation of time for each task, prescribing how it is to be performed, correcting work, providing immediate feedback, and then directing the student to the next step in the curriculum (p. 27).

Agran and colleagues (1999) implied that special education programs were developed on the model where teachers were given complete responsibility for making all major educational decisions for their students.

Teachers play a role in the education of students in other ways aside from curriculum and instructional decisions. Teachers also interact with parents and family members in the planning of a special education student's educational programming. Teacher-parent collaborations can be complementary or adversary in nature. Stineman, Morningstar, Bishop and Turnbull (1993) suggested that the assumptions and perceptions professionals (i.e. teachers) hold regarding families can negatively impact not only the family's participation in the educational planning process, but also the child's educational

attainments. Typically parents are perceived as not participating if they allow professionals to take control of the educational planning and resign themselves to just signing the form. Yet, parents are seen as difficult if they disagree with professionals or challenge any part of the educational programming (Stineman et al.).

While at times teachers may be mandated to teach a particular curriculum or instructional program, for the most part they have autonomy in deterring curricula and generally have feelings towards which curriculum is most appropriate or important. In a study of middle school special education teachers for students with disabilities in cross-categorical programs, Krom and Prater (1993) found that all but one of the teachers felt that the classes with a functional basis were the most important for their students, and the teachers advocated that functional and life skills should be taught earlier than high school. In the study, functional and life skills included pre-vocational education, functional academic skills, community-based instruction, daily living skills, and social skills. The teachers also reported that despite their preference, the students with disabilities that they served were mostly educated in academically-focused classes and struggled to keep up (Krom & Prater). Research by Sands, Adams, and Stout (1995) found that teachers would like to increase the amount of time they spend on teaching life skills, self-advocacy skills, and vocational/career skills, on in other words, a functional life skills curriculum. These teachers also wanted to decrease the amount of time they devoted to academic remediation and general education content areas (Sands et al.).

Teachers in a survey by Halpern, Benz, and Lindstrom (1992) also expressed concerns about their students' educational programming and post-school outcomes. One teacher summarized it as follows:

Graduating students on socially accepted “regular diplomas” is more of a destruction than a help – then they enter society with a piece of paper and no skills or real helpful knowledge. Mainstreaming looks good on paper but I question how much knowledge is being transmitted when my students receive D’s. Let’s not fool ourselves and mainstream students with questionable abilities without adequate resources. All we obtain are questionable goals and all we come out with are questionable successes (p. 112).

Students

The voices of students need to be studied and considered with respect to curriculum. This group has expressed dissatisfaction with their curricula, but are frequently overlooked. In most cases, students’ views are often not sought and hence not represented (Wagner, 1995/96). This fact seems contradictory given that students are the consumers of these services and their goals and perceptions of their needs affect the success of the curriculum enactment and achievement and post-school outcomes. Students, when given the opportunity, can serve as an important source of information. Mullinix (2001) stated “learners know what touches, engages, threatens, and bores them” (p. 176). Practitioners and researchers who have listened to and incorporated students’ input into their education report a positive impact, such as increased self-determination and positive attributions of efficacy (Hapner & Imel, 2002).

Nietupski and Hamre-Nietupski (1987) argued that students’ preference should play a role in his/her educational programming. On a larger scale, scholars have advocated that individuals with disabilities should be allowed to speak for themselves on issues that concern them (i.e. Edgerton & Bervovici, 1976; Luckasson & Ellis, 1983). Others (see Agran, Snow, & Swaner, 1999) argued that individuals should play a more important role in determining their educational programs, particularly if “the ultimate goal of education is to promote independence and competence of students and to provide

them with skills that will permit access and full participation across a variety of school and community settings” (p. 294).

In a study of individuals with disabilities’ feelings of importance of curricula components, vocational skills were rated the highest (Lovett & Harris, 1987). In fact, there was a significant difference between vocational skills and the other categories – personal, academic, and leisure. While vocational skills were the top priority of these individuals, social and personal skills were next – rated higher than academic or leisure skills. The authors suggested that their findings were consistent with earlier studies of individuals’ with disabilities’ preferences for educational components (see Bostwich & Foss, 1981; Gollay, Freedman, Wyngarraden, & Kurtz, 1978).

Summary of Literature Review

The literature review discussed the theoretical and conceptual framework guiding this project – sociocultural theory and qualitative case study methodology. It also discussed various aspects related to curriculum – intended, enacted, and received; factors impacting, and the theoretical underpinnings of curriculum. The literature review then focused on special education, including secondary special education curriculum, students, teachers, and self-contained service delivery model, which lend support for the study of functional curriculum in secondary special education cross-categorical self-contained classrooms. The poor postschool outcomes of special education students also support a functional curriculum model, or at least the increase of research on this model for students served primarily in cross-categorical self-contained programs.

The chapter then reviewed the literature on functional curriculum – what it is, components of its, and research and theory to support its use. Finally, as ascertaining the

perspectives of key stakeholders is crucial to this project of understanding the enactment of functional curriculum within self-contained secondary special education classes, literature on the voices of teachers and students was discussed.

Research Project

This project is a qualitative case study of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural cross-categorical self-contained special education programs. The focus was on the enactment of functional curriculum as well as how various factors (policy/legislation, school, community, teacher, student, and curriculum materials) impacted its enactment in these two programs (see Figure 4). In particular, this project defined the enactment of functional curriculum as a transactional process which is constructed by teachers, students, community, school, policy/legislation, and curriculum frameworks and standards. The current perspectives and the histories of these six areas intersect to influence the enactment of functional curriculum.

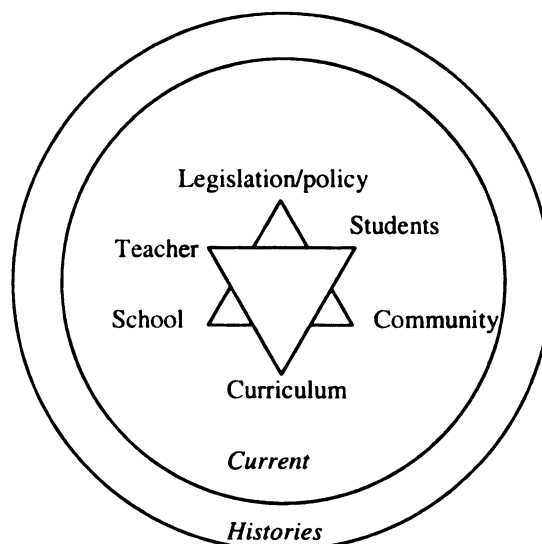


Figure 4: The proposed intersection and union of factors.

In essence, this project represented a conglomeration of under-research areas, combined to create the study of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs. The review of the literature strived to do the same, examine areas of secondary special education, self-contained cross-categorical programs, curriculum, and functional curriculum. The literature review highlighted the past and present theories, research, and scholarly writings. And while many things have changed in secondary special education, a quote from a mother of a student with special needs 20 years ago reminds us of the current dilemmas still facing this population.

I am very concerned about the present push for 'excellence' which is stressing increased pressure for college as being the ultimate goal after high school. I see it as a 'put down' to those who are either unable or do not want to go to college. As a result of increased academic requirements, the vocational type programs are being cut. These programs meet the needs of a lot of students who are not college bound. John Gardner said if a society respects the philosophers, but not the plumbers, then neither the philosophy nor the pipes will hold water" (Halpern, 1985, p. 484).

The research questions guiding this study were:

1. What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary special education cross-categorical self-contained programs?
2. What is the nature of the impact of factors on the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
 - a. How do student factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs

- b. How do institutional factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs
- c. How do teacher factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs
- d. How do school factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
- e. How do community factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?
- f. How do written curriculum factors impact the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs?

Chapter 3

Methodology

Methods

This project represented a multiple case study approach to research. An interpretative case study was undertaken in two different sites to understand the enactment of functional curriculum for secondary special education students in self-contained cross-categorical programs (Stake, 1995). The case study was descriptive, presenting a “thick” description of the two cases examined in regards to the nature of the enactment in the cross-categorical programs (Geertz, 1973). Additionally, a specific focus was placed on understanding the enactment of curriculum within those programs through interpreting the influence of the institutional (policy/legislation, school, community, and curriculum materials), teacher, and student factors.

Setting

Two high schools in the state of Michigan were utilized for this project (see Table 1). One school was a midsize school in a rural setting, called Harborville¹ (MHSAA, 2003). The school district had a headcount of 2,065 (Standard & Poor’s, 2004²). The high school itself had a headcount of 622. The school district had 14.5% of students across its four schools considered economically disadvantaged and receiving free-and-reduced lunch, whereas the high school itself had a 10.3% rate. The high school had a special education rate of 14.1%. The average operating expenditure per child in the district was \$7,073. The high school reported a 79.9% proficiency rate on the state reading test, 72% on the math, 64.5% on the English Language Arts, 65.3% on the writing, 75% on the

¹ Names of schools and individuals involved have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

² The 2004 data is the most recent data available from the Standard and Poor’s website.

science, and 41.1% on the social studies. Special education students in the high school scored between 33.3% (science) and 46.2% (reading) in terms of proficiency ratings on the state tests, excluding social studies (8.3%) (Standard & Poor's).

Table 1. School Site Variables: Harborville and River Bend

Variables	Harborville	River Bend
Class Size	B - midsize	B - midsize
Setting	Rural	Rural
District Headcount	2,065	2,506
School Headcount	622	807
District Economically Disadvantaged	14.5%	25.9%
School Economically Disadvantaged	10.3%	16.9%
District Special Education	16.3%	13.9%
School Special Education	14.2%	11.8%
District Average Operating Expenditure	\$7,073	\$7,396
District Graduation Rate	89%	90.4%
District MEAP Passing Rate	58.4%	53.7%
District Special Education MEAP Passing Rate	22.4%	30.2%
District % Caucasian	97.1%	96.3%
District % African-American	.8%	.5%
District % Hispanic	1.1%	2.5%
District % Asian-American	.3%	.6%
District % Native-American	.6%	.1%
Community Median Household Income	\$56,908	\$43,889
Community Unemployment Rate	6.4%	6.4%
Community Median Age	36	36
Community School-Age Population	23.1%	22.2%

The school was relatively racially and ethnically homogeneous. Ninety-seven percent (97.1%) of the students in the school district were Caucasian, .8% were black, 1.1% Hispanic, .3% Asian-American, and .6% Native Americans. The median household income in the district was \$56,908, which was about \$8,000 above the state average (\$48,296). The median age for the community was 36 years, 23.1% of the community

population was of school-age, and 16.6% of the adults in the community had a bachelor's degree (Standard & Poor's, 2004).

The second school was also mid-sized and located in a rural setting (MHSAA, 2003). In fact this school, River Bend, was located within the same county as the Harborville school district. Purposeful sampling was used to select schools within the same county that utilized a functional curriculum within a high school self-contained cross-categorical program. This was to minimize differences across schools, such as geographical location, resources (both were located within the same Intermediate School District), and socio-economic status of the community and students within the community. It was also hypothesized that the two communities would have similar profiles (see Table 1).

The district River Bend had a headcount of 2,506 (Standard & Poor's, 2004). The high school itself had a headcount of 807. The school district had 25.9% of students considered economically disadvantaged and receiving free-and-reduced lunch, whereas the high school has 16.9%. The school had a special education rate of 11.8% and the average operating expenditure per child in the district was \$7,396. River Bend High School had a proficiency rating on the state assessment of 84.7% for reading, 62.7% for math, 74.7% for English Language Arts, 52.2% for writing, 72.5% for science, and 29.3% for social studies. Special education students at the high school had proficiency ratings of between 16.7% (math and English Language Arts) and 27.8% (reading and science), excluding writing (0%) and social studies (11.1%).

River Bend was also a relatively racially and ethnically homogeneous school district. Slightly over 96% its students in the school district were Caucasian (96.3%), .5%

were black, 2.5% Hispanic, .6% Asian-American, and .1% Native Americans. The median household income in the district was \$48,561, which was slightly above the state average (\$48,296). The median age in the community was 37 years, 23.3% of the community population was of school-age, and 12.1% of the adults in the community held a bachelor's degree (Standard & Poor's, 2004).

Participants

Teachers. Two teachers, and their respective students in their cross-categorical self-contained classes, were participants in the study (see Tables 2 & 3). One teacher was the teacher in the school district called Harborville. This teacher, Katie Gibson³, had taught six years and all had been in the same district – Harborville. Katie had taught a self-contained cross-categorical program (which she referred to as a categorical⁴ program) to students in grades 9–12 for the last five years, originally starting at the school as a resource room teacher. She assumed the categorical program during its second year of conception after the original teacher left. Katie taught five classes in the categorical program and had a sixth hour conference period. Her classes, in order, were referred to as social studies, math, English/Language Arts, employability, and life skills.

The other teacher, Paula Click, taught at River Bend. She had taught for a total of 10 years, spread across two school districts, but both within the same county. She had been teaching at River Bend for 5 years and had started the high school categorical program. Previously she had taught in a resource room program in a smaller neighboring

³ All teachers, students, and parents are referred to by pseudonyms throughout the dissertation. Pseudonyms are used to protect the confidentiality of all participants involved.

⁴ The teachers and students at both sites referred to the programs as “categorical”, despite that these classrooms included a range of disability categories (i.e. learning disability, mild mental impairment, emotional impairment, autistic impairment, and otherwise health impaired). Hence the programs are referred to as categorical throughout this dissertation to support the language of the teachers and students.

school district. Paula, unlike Katie, was a non-traditional teacher education student, having returned to get her bachelor's degree in special education following 25 years of working in the business world. Paula had five "categorical" classes, one academic support class (for any special education students in the school), and one conference period. Her classes, in order, included life skills, history, academic support, math, practical business, and English/Language Arts.

Paula and Katie graduated with their undergraduate education degrees from the same small Midwestern state college, although were not there at the same time. While the teachers attended the same college, they had different field experiences in their undergraduate preparation. Katie had two different field experiences which occurred in high school settings. She had one student teaching opportunity in Harborville High School in their resource room program and then another in a nearby school district's high school categorical program. Paula, on the other hand, did not have any field experiences in a high school setting and never expected to be teaching high school. The highest grade of students she worked with in field experience was third grade and she primarily interned in resource room programs.

Table 2. Participant Teacher Variables: Katie and Paula

	Harborville – Katie Gibson	River Bend – Paula Click
Years teaching	6	10
Years teaching categorical	5	5
Years teaching at current school	6	5
Undergraduate Institution	Small Midwestern state college	Small Midwestern state college
Relevant field experiences in Bachelors' program	* High school resource room * High school categorical	* Only elementary experience * Resource room experience

Students. Katie had 16 students on her caseload, which included two students who received home-school services (one for medical reasons and the other for parental reasons following a behavior incident) (see Table 3). Due to student participation in the county vocational/technical institute, the largest class Katie had consisted of 11 students at one time. Katie had a range of students in terms of disability category and grade. Within her 14 students at school, three were seniors, four juniors, four sophomores, and three freshmen.

Of the 14 students in the program, seven chose (and had parental consent) for full participation in the study, which meant observations, interviews, and file reviews. Of these seven, one was a senior, two juniors, two sophomores, and two freshman. Three of the seven students who consented to participate were labeled as having a learning disability, two as having a cognitive impairment (mild), one as autistically impaired, and one as otherwise health impaired (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder). The average IQ across the students was 77.6 (or 78)⁵. One of Katie's students who participated was female, the other six were male. There were two students (brothers) for which consent to examine the CA-60 files or interviewing was not obtained.

Paula had eight students on her caseload, for which seven were granted parental consent to participate, and an additional eighth student participated who was in two of Paula's categorical classes. Paula's class sizes ranged from four students (life skills) to eight (English). Paula's caseload consisted of one senior, two juniors, and five freshman. For the purposes of the study, her participants involved one senior, three juniors, and four freshman. The average IQ of Paula's students was 68.5, which did not include two

⁵ Average IQ was calculated only across 6 of the 7 students. One student who was Autistic did not have comparable IQ scores, as he had only ever been tested using the Kauffman test.

students for whom comparable ability tests were not given. Two of Paula's participating students were female, the other six were male. There was one student for whom consent to examine the CA-60 files or interview was not obtained.

Table 3. *Participant Student Variables: Harborville and River Bend*

	Age	Gr.	Eth. ⁶	Disability	IQ ⁷	Math	Reading	Years in SpEd
<i>Harborville</i>								
Derek	16	10 th	C	LD/ADHD	93	83	75	Since K.
Flip	18	11 th	C	LD	66	76	74	Since PPI
Sara	18	11 th	C	CI (mild)	60	2.6 g.e.	2.3 g.e.	Since PPI
Adam	15	9 th	C	OHI/ADD	77	4.0 g.e.	3.4 g.e.	Since PPI
Jon	18	12 th	C	AI	100 ^k	N/A ⁸	N/A	Since PPI
Miguel	16	10 th	H	LD/SLI	84	3.4 g.e.	1.0 g.e.	Since K.
Doug	15	9 th	C	EMI	75	87	89	N/A
Mark ⁹								
Andy								
<i>River Bend</i>								
Alex	17	11 th	C	CI (mild)	59	3.6 g.e.	3.4 g.e.	Since PPI
Rick	14	9 th	C	LD	85	2.3 g.e.	4.0 g.e.	Since 1 st
Becky	16	9 th	C	EI/SLI	47	2.7 g.e.	5.0 g.e.	Since PPI
Jim	15	9 th	C	LD/SLI	90 ^k	N/A	2.8 g.e.	Since PPI
Holly	15	9 th	C	CI/EI	72	3.6 g.e.	4.5 g.e.	N/A
Stacy	17	11 th	C	CI (mild)	61	4.6 g.e.	2.9 g.e.	Since 1 st
Ellen	20	12 th	C	CI (mod.)	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Devon	18	11 th	M	EI/LD	87	6.1 g.e.	3.8. g.e.	Since 2 nd
Dave ¹⁰								

Procedure. The case study of the enactment of functional curriculum involved two high school programs which consisted of two teachers, four paraprofessionals, and a total of 18 students (15 with complete consent and assent for participation). The first

⁶ C = Caucasian, H = Hispanic, & M = Multi-racial

⁷ All IQs are from standard IQ tests given with a mean of 100 and a standard deviation of 15, except where indicated (superscript K), in which case the Kauffman assessment was used.

⁸ N/A refers to not applicable meaning that the information was not available in the student's record

⁹ Mark and Andy are brothers and their mother did not give permission for record review

¹⁰ Dave's parents also did not grant permission for record review

teacher and site was chosen because the researcher discovered that the teacher was an experienced teacher who was using a functional curriculum with her high school special education students in a cross-categorical self-contained setting. Furthermore, the school (i.e. Harborville) was in a more rural community, of interest to the researcher. The site was also in reasonable proximity to the university (about a thirty-minute drive) and the teacher was willing to work with the researcher and was interested in the research project.

The second site (i.e. River Bend) was chosen to create a multiple case study. A second site was gathered through purposeful sampling. It was located within the same county as the first school and had an experienced teacher who taught a functional curriculum to high school special education students in a cross-categorical self-contained program. She was also willing to work with the researcher and was located within relative proximity to the university (about 45 minutes distance).

After both sites were chosen, the researcher visited each teacher and discussed the research project in-depth with the teacher and presented it to her students. Consent was gathered from the teachers and administrators. Student assent was gathered from each student, and consent forms were sent home for parents to sign and return. Parental consent and student assent were gathered for the classroom observations, for interviews, archival document review (i.e. CA 60 file review) and for permission to video¹¹ and/or audiotape. If parents had any questions or concerns, the researcher was available to contact the parents to explain and offer any further clarification.

Data were collected through multiple means in an effort to triangulate (Stake, 1995). First, data was collected through classroom observations. Each site was observed

¹¹ Although video consent was sought, the researcher opted not to use video as a means of gathering data as many students had concerns and objections to appearing on video.

for an entire school day two days a week for three months. A total of 85 hours was spent at Harborville High School and 70 hours spent at River Bend High School. During the classroom observations, the researcher took field notes and observed the events within the classroom, focusing on the enactment of the curriculum. Decisions about what to observe and when were based on purposeful sampling (Patton, 1980), such that observations were selected to present the greatest opportunity to understand and gain insight into the case. For example, Fridays at River Bend were game or movie day. Thus, Friday was not selected as a consistent day to observe at River Bend High School. The researcher also worked with both teachers to avoid inservice days, exams, and other events.

In addition to classroom observation, document reviews were conducted in each classroom as well as students' files. Document reviews were conducted of each teacher's guides or editions of curricula models used and any modifications made. Teachers' lesson plans were also examined. Students' CA-60 files were analyzed. Data was gathered on students' IQ, achievement test scores (reading and mathematics), disability classification, years in special education, age, and other pertinent information.

Both teachers were interviewed several times as to the enactment of functional curriculum and the factors that impacted enactment of the curriculum as well as the moment-to-moment decisions they made in the classroom during the observations. Teachers were both formally interviewed (see Appendix A), in which a semi-structured interview protocol was followed, as well as informally interviewed in which the events of the day were followed-up on with questions. Formal interviews consisted of a focus on curriculum choice and understanding how curriculum became enacted as well as factors

influencing the curriculum (see Appendix A). Informal interviews occurred in the moment-to-moment, such as a clarification question during the teachers' conference or before or after school. The informal interviews posed as conversations.

In addition, students were also asked to participate in an interview on topics as to curriculum choices implemented in class and their ideal curriculum. Students were asked to respond to interviews regarding their high school experience, and curriculum (i.e. what they were learning in the program) (see Appendix B). The students were selected on a consensus basis of all students in the teachers' self-contained classrooms who received a functional curriculum and for whom consent was obtained.

Interviews for the students were completed during a time when the teacher and student deemed appropriate, which was usually during one of their class periods in the cross-categorical program in which they had completed their work. Student interviews took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete. All interviews – teachers and students – were audio-taped, provided that the appropriate consent and assent was obtained from individuals. The audio-taping was to ensure that the researcher accurately captured all the information the individual wished to divulge.

Instruments

The project utilized classroom observations, using field notes in the qualitative tradition, as well as interview protocols (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). In addition, classroom materials were also analyzed, such as textbooks, teachers' lesson plans, the school's curriculum guide, and students' CA-60 files. Teacher and student interview questionnaires were used. A paraprofessional interview protocol was also developed and used to supplement the primary interviews of teachers and students (see Appendix C).

The interview questionnaires were designed by the researcher with feedback from colleagues and adjusted as needed during the research project.

Teacher interview protocol. The formal, semi-structured teacher interview consisted of five sections and was 27 questions in length (see Appendix A). The first section, comprised of three questions, focused on teachers' background information, such as years teaching, teacher preparation experiences, and teaching philosophy. The second section, consisting of 11 questions, was on curriculum and asked what curriculum is implemented, how it was selected, who chooses it, and what it entails. The third section was five questions in length. It asked teachers about the factors that impacted curriculum, such as students, school variables, Intermediate School District, and policy.

The fourth section was four questions in length and asked teachers about classroom and school issues, such as graduation requirements and students' acceptance into the school by peers and teachers. The final section of the formal semi-structured teacher interview involved miscellaneous questions. These included student choice in schedules and the role of paraprofessionals. The formal teacher interviews each took approximately one hour and a half, in addition to the informal interviews throughout the observational period.

Student interview protocol. The formal, semi-structured student interview consisted of five sections and 13 questions (see Appendix B). The first section focused on background information on students, such as their gender, grade in school, and their current class schedule. The second section focused on students' high school experience, and asked them to tell about their high school experience and what they were learning in high school. The third section consisted of three questions. It asked students to state who

they believed chose what they learned in school, to respond yes or no if they were getting certain components of a functional curriculum in their current program, and what they would choose to learn if they could choose.

The fourth section of the student semi-structured formal interview consisted of two questions and addressed students' post-high school plans. One question asked them to state what they wanted to do after high school (i.e. employment) and the other asked them what they felt they were learning in school now that was preparing them for that position. The final section consisted of four questions and addressed student satisfaction. Students were asked to indicate on a five-point likert-like scale their satisfaction with their current curriculum and then their current curriculum in relation to their own described ideal curriculum and then a functional curriculum. The last question was very open-ended and asked if students had anything else they wanted to share about their high school experience or what they were learning in school.

Paraprofessional interview protocol. The paraprofessional interview protocol was nine questions in length, broken into three sections (see Appendix C). The first section focused on background information and the position of paraprofessional. The first question asked how many years they have worked in this position in general, at the high school, and then in the particular program they were currently working. The second question asked about responsibilities and the third question asked about paraprofessional's role within the curriculum in the program. The second section consisted of three questions focusing on paraprofessional's perspective of the curriculum and the program. The first question asked about the curriculum students received across the school day, the second asked the value of other programs students had an opportunity

to participate in, and the third focused on how to keep student's interest and engagement across the school day. The final section was on paraprofessional's perspectives of students in the larger school community. The first question asked about students' acceptance in the larger school community, the second focused on the hidden curriculum in the school, and the final question asked if students understand the school's hidden curriculum.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was that of a participant-observer. At the beginning, the researcher attempted to maintain more of an observer role. However, as observations continued the role shifted to more of that of a participant. At different times, the researcher had to assist with instructional activities and intervene for behavioral reasons. The participation was at times sought by the teacher or students. It was also unsolicited as times, but student safety or the lack of instructional assistance to a struggling student necessitated involvement.

The role along the participant-observer continuum was attempted to be structured based on the realities of the classroom and the constraints upon the teachers, actively trying to understand and respect their role within this collaborative research project (LeCompte, 1995). For the project, the researcher tried to set herself as different from the teachers as well so that she would not have that role attached to her for the purpose and ease of using focal students in interviews (Corsaro, 1985). The students knew the researchers as Ms. Bouck or Emily, depending on the program and the teacher's preference.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data were gathered during the research project through observations, interviews, and document reviews. All data (interviews, field notes, researcher reflection notes, and archival review notes) were read and re-read. Data was then divided into addressing the two overarching research questions: what is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum and what is the impact of pre-determined factors on the enactment of functional curriculum). The first question allowed the categories or themes to emerge from the data using grounded theory, while the second question regarding factors analyzed the data with a lens of pre-determined categories (policy/legislation, community, school, teachers, students, and curriculum materials).

The data was then parsed by patterns that emerged in the first research question and the pre-determined factors in the second research question. Data that supported or challenged the patterns or factors was color coded and/or highlighted in the hard-copy of the fieldnotes and then cut-and-pasted from the electronic version of the fieldnotes into a working document. The working document was labeled by emerging pattern names and the pre-determined factor labels.

Data analysis began by organizing the hard copy of the fieldnotes, researcher reflective notes, and interviews in chronological order by school site. The researcher then read each sites hard-copy fieldnotes notebook and jotted down patterns and any additional or deletions from the pre-determined themes. This process was repeated several times, both condensing (narrowing the categories) and expanding. Key and/or typical analytical vignettes were located within the data to support assertions being made.

Parsing the data by emerging patterns and factors occurred for each school site separately. After patterns and factors were developed for each site, comparisons were

made between the two sites. Overarching patterns were noted to cut across both field sites. These overarching patterns became the major themes for the results section. The large sub-themes under each major theme was then organized with the analytical vignettes as well as any negative case analysis. While both cases had the same overarching themes and factors, they differed across the sub-themes or patterns as well as the factors. Within the results section, both cases will be compared for their similarities as well as contrasted for their differences with respect to patterns and nuances of the factors that emerged from the data.

Triangulation was sought among the multiple data sources (i.e. observation fieldnotes, researcher reflective notes, teacher interviews, student interviews, paraprofessional interviews, and principal interviews). Observations formed the main source of fieldnotes and interviews were used to support or challenge what was observed in the classrooms. Archival or document reviews were also used to support, and challenge, the data from both observations and interviews.

Chapter 4

Results: Emergent Themes

The findings from the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural self-contained cross-categorical programs will be discussed in two major sections and divided into two chapters. The first part of the findings will be discussed in this chapter, chapter four, which highlights the results of the research question, what is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs? The second part of the findings will be highlighted in the next chapter, chapter five, and will present the results from the research question, what factors impact the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs? Overall the enactment of functional curriculum in these two cases revealed several interesting findings about enactment as well as highlighted factors that impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in self-contained cross-categorical programs.

The findings from the first major research question, what is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs, were parsed into five overarching themes that were present in each case. The first major theme indicated that the enactment of functional curriculum occurred in moment-to-moment interactions. Functional curriculum was also found to be relative, as in the “functional” part was “in the eye of the beholder”. The enactment of functional curriculum created a community within the programs and enabled affordances and opportunities for both students and teachers. The functional curriculum that was enacted was also found to be more than what met the eye, or in other words, the curriculum had to become everything to everyone. Tensions, particularly the tension for students between

being in special education and being in general education, were formed from the enactment of functional curriculum.

The findings based on the second research question, what factors impact the enactment of functional curriculum in rural, self-contained cross-categorical programs, revealed that the pre-determined categories of policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, and curriculum materials were influential to the enactment. The data also indicated that another factor affected enactment that was not hypothesized, paraprofessionals. The findings related to the impact of factors on the enactment of functional curriculum will be presented in depth in the next chapter.

While the enactment of functional curriculum in both secondary cross-categorical self-contained programs revealed similar themes, they were enacted in practice differently. This chapter will discuss the themes revealed from the data in both programs (Katie's program at Harborville High School and Paula's program at River Bend High School), while simultaneously comparing and contrasting the enactment in both cases. Comparisons across sites are organized in the presentation of the findings within the major themes.

While the data was presented throughout the results section, as well as in the discussion section, the operational definition of enacted curriculum for this project must be kept in mind. The enactment of curriculum, in this case functional curriculum, was defined as a multi-faceted process that involves the social construction of curriculum with realization that larger institutional factors, such as policy, school, and community matter in addition to teacher and student variables. Specifically, an expanded transactional view was taken, in which meaning was not only constructed among the curriculum, teachers,

and students, but also larger levels such as policy/legislation, school, and community; and considered the factors situated both within their present state as well as their histories.

Moment-To-Moment Enactment

The enactment of functional curriculum occurred within the moment-to-moment decisions in both programs. Both teachers had loose plans for their classes, which could be considered a version of a written curriculum, but the true enactment occurred within the moment. The relationship between the enacted curriculum and the written curriculum could take multiple forms. The written curriculum impacted the enacted curriculum, while at other times impeded the enacted curriculum.

In illuminating the relationship between the enacted and written curricula, the enacted curriculum often involved flexibility on the part of the teachers, students, and other individuals involved with the programs. This meant the teachers had to be flexible to what students brought into the classroom, to what other school personnel might ask of the teacher and/or students, and finally to their own changes and spontaneity. Students had to be flexible to changes the teachers and other school personnel made, as well as changes their own peers influenced. Thus, the enactment of curriculum in both programs was synonymous with flexibility and often brought to mind the famous paraphrased line from Robert Burn's poem *To a Mouse*, "the best laid plans of mice and men often go astray", or as Paula implied, one just never knew what would go on in the classroom.

The relationship between the enacted curriculum and flexibility was noted by the teachers as well. Paula continually used the word "flexible" or "flexibility" when discussing her program. On one such occasion, Paula's program was being visited by middle school students who would be joining the program next year. The job

coach/transition aide for the school district brought six middle school students who would be entering Paula's program next year and Paula had created activities to integrate her current students and the new students. She had arranged for a math bingo game, a tour of the building, and then a thank-you letter writing activity. However, shortly into the visit the high school principal stopped in and asked Paula if her class could clean the outside of the school (This was an activity that Paula had her students engaged in since she started the program and her students would often perform this service in exchange for a pizza party or individual pay which was dependent on their work). Paula then changed her plans and sent the incoming-students off with current students and an adult to clean outside the school like the principal requested; thus illustrating her and her students' flexibility as well as the flexibility of the enacted curriculum. At the conclusion Paula even commented to the researcher, "See, it's about being flexible" (Interview, March 28, 2005).

In another instance, Paula received a phone call from the office during eighth hour, the second to last hour of the school day. The office assistants (secretaries) asked Paula's class to stuff, fold, and address the parental updates for the school. Her class had already done this twice before during the school year, and Paula believed her students liked this, namely because, as they put it, they did not have to do work for the whole day. Thus, Paula's curriculum would be changed for the next day, and she stated, "so much for my lesson plans tomorrow" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005). This example, as well as the previous example, demonstrated the flexibility that resonated with the enactment of functional curriculum.

Katie also explicitly remarked on the flexibility of her program, stating “it is nice to have that flexibility.” Katie and her students repeatedly illustrated the flexibility that occurred with the enacted curriculum in her program, as depicted below.

It is first hour. Half the students have just returned from working out and/or weight-lifting in the gym. The other half were already in the room working on a geography worksheet. Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional who also helped with the work-out/weightlifting time, had returned with the students and went up to Katie. Marilyn is talking to Katie up at the front of the room. A student goes up to Katie and says, “Today is my mom’s birthday.” Katie makes no response, she is talking to Marilyn. Derek says “Today is my birthday. I’m one.” Again, no response. Marilyn is talking to Katie about her class stuffing the bags for the upcoming community 5K that Marilyn is helping to organize. Katie suggests that her fourth and fifth hour classes could stuff them. She says that in fourth hour the students operate the school store, but there are always a couple of students in here. Katie tells Marilyn that they will start with fourth hour and move up to first hour if they still have bags left to stuff. Derek then comes up to Katie and asks her for a worksheet. Katie acknowledges that she forgot to pass them out to the second group (Fieldnotes, January 11, 2005).

This vignette illustrated that the teacher, and essentially her students, had to be flexible about events, or people, that would alter the “written curriculum”. When Marilyn (the transition paraprofessional) asked if Katie’s class could stuff the bags for the five kilometer run/race (5K), she was essentially asking Katie and her students to be flexible and change what they had planned for the employability and life skills class for the next couple of days. In addition to requesting the curriculum to be flexible, Marilyn was sending a message that she viewed the curriculum as flexible. She did not ask any of the resource room teachers in the building, but focused on the self-contained program to be flexible to do an alternative activity over the next several days.

The previous example illustrated a situation in which a member of the program made a request that changed the enactment of the curriculum. However, other factors and personnel also mediated the flexibility that was so important in the enactment of

functional curriculum in the programs. For Katie's program, school events also necessitated flexibility, as depicted below.

It was the start of third hour, language arts class. All the students were in their seats, except for Miguel, who arrived late and was told that he needed to get to class sooner, which brought some laughs from other students. Katie says "ninth graders". A student reiterated "ninth-graders listen up." Katie started to pass out papers that had students' names by grade for Winter Homecoming voting for class representatives. After she passed out the papers to the ninth graders, she continued with the other grades (Fieldnotes, January 27, 2005).

The vignette highlights the flexibility, as it took fifteen minutes of class time to do the voting, in which none of the students in this class would be nominated. Thus, it was fifteen minutes before any instruction could begin, which was over a quarter of that day's class time. It was not until everyone had completed the Winter Homecoming representative voting that discussion about the novel they had been reading in language arts class could begin.

In addition to the flexibility that the enacted curriculum created, the written curriculum also impacted the enacted curriculum. There were times that the written curriculum served to impede or negatively impact the enactment of curriculum within both programs. Paula often wrote lesson plans on a week-to-week basis and, within certain classes, the plans typically involved using the book, answering questions, and then correcting them in class within her history and life management classes.

It was history class and Laura, the paraprofessional in the morning in Paula's classroom, had just finished reading the history lesson with the students. The students were all now to be working independently on answering the questions at the end of the chapter. Most of the students in the class were already finished with the questions and were sitting there, talking to each other quietly. Paula was up at her desk entering grades into the computer and Laura was sitting at a table in the middle of the room. Paula suggested to Laura to grade the questions so she could enter them into the grade system. Laura noted that Rick had not yet completed the questions and told him to hurry up so they [the class] could move on. Paula then looked up and asked Rick if he was done with the first page. When Rick replied

yes, Paula told him he could finish the second page in academic support class [a glorified study hall], and the class could then correct the first page so she could enter the grades into the computer (Fieldnotes, February 8, 2005).

This narrative vignette illustrated that at times the “plan” of the teacher negatively impacted the enacted curriculum. The focus of the class became following the teacher’s plan and getting the grades entered, which meant getting the work done, as opposed to focusing on the moment-to-moment and conducting a dynamic assessment to realize not all students were ready to move on.

Similarly in Katie’s classroom the written curriculum could also impede the enacted curriculum. This occurred one day when Katie was leaving the class after third hour and Brenda (the paraprofessional for the classroom) was substituting for the fourth hour and fifth hour class periods. Katie had left a worksheet for the fourth hour employability class. The worksheet focused on the candy sold at the school store, operated by the program, and essentially looked at profit margins. However, no instructions were written on the worksheet and the “written curriculum” left by Katie merely stipulated to have students complete the worksheet. The students struggled with how to do the worksheet, as did Brenda and even the researcher when she attempted to help students understand what was being asked of them. Thus, in this instance, the “written curriculum”, or essentially the lack thereof, impeded the enactment of functional curriculum within the program.

At times the absence of written curriculum impacted the enacted curriculum. The teachers did not always have written curricula that existed, which did benefit and support the flexibility of the teachers to embrace the enacted curriculum. However, it also caused

challenges to the enactment of the functional curriculum, as illustrated in the following vignette.

Katie was absent from class, following the death of her grandfather. Brenda, the program paraprofessional, was serving as the substitute teacher because she had a teaching degree. There was a substitute paraprofessional in the class for Brenda, as well as the paraprofessional assigned to work with the two students with autistic impairment. It was fourth hour, employability class, and the students had been presenting challenging behavior all day. The students were yelling at each other, talking back to the adults, and refusing to comply with requests that were made of them. Brenda was talking to the substitute paraprofessional, discussing why the students seemed so “out of control” that day. Brenda hypothesized that it might be the substitute in the classroom. She also hypothesized that it could be “Ms. Bouck observing, but they should be use to her by now.” Finally, Brenda suggested that the lack of “good lesson plans” was the main contributor to the challenging behavior (Fieldnotes, January 25, 2005).

As highlighted above, the absence of written curriculum could create challenges with the enactment of the curriculum and result in frustration by adults and students. As much as the students mentioned wanting “free time” and rebuking the activities of the classes, their behavior indicated that they also needed the structure curriculum could provide.

Paula’s program was not based on written curriculum throughout all of its classes, yet many of them involved actual textbooks. Textbooks provided structure for her and the class, as well as alleviated Paula’s concerns with not being creative enough to develop the curriculum herself. While most of her classes involved a textbook or written curriculum to some degree, two classes focused very little on written curriculum. These were practical business and academic support, which were in general without much structure. In addition, Friday was typically a game day in all of Paula’s classes.

While in theory the written curriculum is what students are expected to learn, such as the plan (Cuban, 1992), and the enacted curriculum is the operationalization of this plan or intention (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000), in practice it was not as neat or “clean-

cut.” As a result of the nature of both self-contained “categorical” programs, and the flexibility that appeared inherent within them, the enacted curriculum was not always the operationalization of the teacher’s intended curriculum. Too many factors influenced and impacted the enactment of curriculum. In neither program was it as simple as enactment being the teacher’s written curriculum coming to life. Instead students, other school personnel, community, school district, paraprofessionals, legislation and policy, and the actual curriculum material all interacted with the teacher and her plan (i.e. written curriculum).

“Eye of the Beholder”

Both teachers, Katie and Paula, stated that they used a functional curriculum in their programs; in fact that was the major criterion by which both teachers and their programs were accepted for inclusion in the research project. At the end of the study, Paula described her curriculum as “a mixture of academic and work-related” (Interview, March 15, 2005). When questioned if she would consider it “functional”, she stated “yes, but I’m trying to get away from that word.” Paula elaborated that functional curriculum was a buzz word and she preferred to stay away from “buzz words” in the field. Paula illuminated the functional nature of her enacted curriculum by stating that the spelling words she used in her language arts class were functional; in that they were words related to jobs or employment. She stated “I want students to read words and know what they are when they go for a job” (Interview, March 15, 2005).

Paula reinforced her ideas when discussing her program with the special education director of the district, “I struggle because I have them [students] for four years. Technically, they should be out of my room junior and senior years and placed in

jobs in the community or work sites. That would be ideal if there was money, and resources, and jobs” (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005). Paula, on a separate occasion, expressed, “I try to get them [her students] out of the building for two years.” Paula’s commitment to a “functional” or “mixture of academic and work-related” curriculum was further elaborated through her discussions of what she would like to add to her curriculum. She discussed wanting to take components from the home economics teacher’s courses, such as teaching her male students how to shave, her female students how to give themselves manicures, and teaching all of her students about proper clothing, as in the textiles and styles general education course. Paula also indicated that despite not calling her curriculum *functional* she tried to enact all the components theorized as comprising a functional curriculum; although she indicated that perhaps not all receive the same amount of time or privilege in her program (see Table 4).

Table 4: *Rank order of functional curriculum components in River Bend.*

#1	Functional academics
#2	Financial
#3	Vocational education
#4	Daily living
#5	Social/relationships
#6	Leisure/recreation

Katie also considered her curriculum functional. In addition to using the word functional, many of Katie’s statements reflected an orientation towards a functional curriculum. When discussing her curriculum, Katie made comments such as “Overall ranking of importance... concept of money and time. Math is the most important thing, then just basic reading so they can read job descriptions, applications, and directions” (Interview, June 14, 2005). While Katie’s comments focused on functional academics,

the outcomes she was striving for were for her students to function in society. However, it was not just to function in society, but to function successfully, such as with employment and independent living skills. Katie stated that she wanted her students to “function in society, not have society take care of them. They can all do something. It is finding that” (Interview, June 14, 2005).

Katie also acknowledged that her program, and hence curriculum, encompassed all the components of functional curriculum, as specified in the operationalization of functional curriculum in the study. This included: functional academics, self-determination, vocational education, daily living skills, social/relationship skills, independent living skills, community skills/access, financial skills, leisure and recreation, and communication skills. However, Katie acknowledged that the components were utilized to varying degrees, such that she discussed that her curriculum included leisure and recreation skills, but she did not do formal instruction in this area (see Table 5). Similarly, Katie continually mentioned communication skills when discussing the other components of a functional curriculum, illustrating the embedded nature of this component throughout the other aspects of her enactment of functional curriculum.

Table 5: *Rank order of functional curriculum components in Harborville.*

#1	Functional academics
#2	Daily living
#3	Vocational education
#4	Communication
#5	Financial
#6	Social/relationships
#7	Leisure/recreation

However, as both teachers stated and believed that they used a functional curriculum, few commercially-available functional curriculum models were found to be

implemented in either program. Thus, the use of the term functional curriculum was relative, or in others words in the “eye of the beholder.” While Katie did own an older version of one commercially available functional curriculum model, *Life-Centered Career Education* (Brolin, 1997), it was not implemented in the classroom and in fact parts of it were literally spread throughout the room. Paula highlighted the lack of awareness of commercially-available functional curriculum models by stating that she had not heard of any of the ones the researcher listed off when informally interviewing her. The formal models she was familiar with focused on transition-related issues for students with learning disabilities. Furthermore, Paula continually reiterated that there were no research-based curricula available for “this level” of students, or in other words, categorical¹ programs. She felt frustrated over wanting to implement research-based curricula for her students in her program; yet not being able to find any that existed for students at “this level.”

In addition to the dissonance between the use of a written functional curriculum model and what was enacted in both programs, there was also a disconnect between the enactment of a functional curriculum and theory. For example, both programs were heavily academically-structured in nature; meaning that the majority of the classes were labeled with academic-based titles, such as one would find in a general education curriculum, as opposed to a functional curriculum. Katie’s classes included (presented in her classifications) social studies, math, English/language arts, employability and life skills (see Table 6). Thus, three of her five (a ratio of 3:2) were academically-structured in nature. Paula also had a three-to-two ratio of academically-oriented classes to more

¹ Both Paula and Katie, as well as their students, referred to their programs as “categorical”, despite that they served students from a variety of disability categories.

functionally-oriented classes in her program; having such classes as (in her words) life management, history, practical business, math, and English/language arts (see Table 7).

Table 6: *Classes at Harborville High School in Order and Relation to Functional Curriculum Components*

Katie's classes at Harborville High School	
Social Studies/ Weightlifting	· Functional Academics · Community Access · Leisure and Recreation
Math	· Functional Academics · Financial · Daily Living · Communication · Vocational Education
English/Language Arts	· Functional Academics
Employability	· Vocational Education · Social/Relationships · Communication · Financial
Life Skills	· Daily Living · Functional Academics
Conference Period	

Table 7: *Classes at River Bend High School in Order and Relation to Functional Curriculum Components*

Paula's classes at Harborville High School	
Conference Period	
Life Management	· Daily Living · Functional Academics · Financial · Social/Relationships
History	· Functional Academics
Academic Support	· Functional Academics
Practical Business	· Vocational Education · Financial
Math	· Functional Academics · Financial
English/Language Arts	· Functional Academics

However, it is not so much the name of the classes that supports the relativity of

the “functional” aspect in the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs, but what transpired within all classes. For example, in Katie’s social studies class the majority of the class period was actually spent working out in the school’s weight room by lifting weights and/or doing cardiovascular exercises. The decision to have the class spend time in the weight room exercising was decided upon by Katie, the classroom paraprofessional Brenda, and the school transition aide/job coach Marilyn, who was funded by the county Intermediate School District. These individuals felt it was important for the students to get exercise, as some of them did have weight issues, as well as release some of their energy. Marilyn believed it was a “sensory release” for the students. Yet, Katie felt conflicted over the growing amount of time devoted to working out, particularly as the year went on and when two-thirds of the class period became devoted to lifting-weights and cardio, leaving little time for actually learning any social studies content.

Thus, there was a disconnect over the functionality of working-out versus learning social studies, which was intended to be heavily focused on issues of geography. For example, Katie wanted the class to perform a research project on a state, such that each student would pick a state and conduct an inquiry-based project on that particular state. She had designed a rubric and specified what information students needed to find and what they would be held accountable for. However, tension ensued by both Brenda and Marilyn over this, particularly when the conversation turned to decreasing the amount of time spent in the work-out room. Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional, felt upset over losing time in the weight-room, which constituted the majority of her participation in the “categorical” classroom. She stated, “I believe these students should be learning

functional things”, reinforcing her belief that doing an inquiry-based project on a state was not functional, but working out was (Fieldnotes, February 3, 2005). Marilyn also thought that the weight-room activity provided a space for the students to be successful in something and suggested that they were much more on-task and productive in that type of environment than in a classroom setting with book-work and/or paper-and-pencil work.

Brenda was equally upset about cutting the amount of weight-room/work-out time, but for different reasons; she used the time to work out herself. Brenda also questioned if Katie remembered what it was like in the classroom before they began working out and how much worse the student behavior was. Thus, for Brenda, the work-out was a chance for the students to de-stress, and possibly re-group, from their home-life situations before entering the classroom and school-day for five more hours of “work.” However, Katie did believe that learning the states was functional to her students’ success after-school. To her, their ability to understand what was a city, a state, and a country was important for their integration into society and for them to be accepted. And her concern over their knowledge of the differences between what was a country, a state, and a city was reinforced with an earlier attempted inquiry-based research project on a country in the social studies class. Students were asked to pick a country that they would like to research for their social studies project. Derek, a sophomore in Katie’s class, responded in the following way when Katie asked what country he would like to study, “Denver.” Flip, a junior in the class, responded to Derek, “Denver isn’t a country stupid, it is a state” (February 10, 2005). Thus, Katie’s concern over her students’ general world knowledge was confirmed and supported her desire to enact projects exploring countries, states, and cities into her “functional” curriculum.

Other examples of the relativeness of “functional” curriculum occurred in both Katie’s and Paula’s classrooms. Paula used many “textbooks” in the classes with her enacted mix “of academic and work-related” curriculum. In fact, she had a set of textbooks for her life management, history, math, and language arts classes; however, the math textbooks and language arts textbooks were seldom used. The life management and history textbooks were used almost on a daily basis. On most days the students would read through a chapter, or part of a chapter, in each of these two classes and answer questions (i.e. those provided in the text). Students would occasionally respond orally to the questions, but most often worked independently writing answers to the questions with little or no discussion. Answering questions out of the book constituted much of the academic portion of Paula’s “functional curriculum”. To her, knowing important people, events, and dates of history was considered functional for the success of her students. Similarly, having her students be successful spellers was also functional to her. Every week her students had to learn about twenty spelling words and were tested on those at the end of the week.

The relativeness of functional curriculum was also illustrated in Katie’s other classes, such as math. Katie taught a math class every year, and mathematics as a subject could be very functionally-orientated. The enactment of mathematics in Katie’s program was more functional than others. For example, at one point the students in Katie’s program were working on banking skills. In this math program, students learned how to write deposit slips, write checks, record all their banking transactions, and balance their checking accounts. This functionally-oriented mathematics curriculum stood in contrast to other times when math was taught, such as when students were working on long

division, and doing it by hand. This raised the question of whether doing long division by hand was not only functional, but also important to students' post-school success. These two math activities further illustrated that conflict over functionality did not just exist among teachers or even classes, but also within one teacher's class. Thus, the relativity of specific curricular choices in math was questioned as to their functionality, illustrating the connection to enactment.

While both teachers stated that they used a functional curriculum, the use of the term "functional" was relative. Students in both programs did not always see the enacted curriculum as relevant or functional to their lives, even though their teachers felt the content was functional for them. For example, a large part of Paula's program involved work-based experiences. Paula described her curriculum as being a "a mixture of academic and work-related" activity, and observations of her program tended to confirm that there was an attempt to balance academic and work-related activity in the classroom. Paula's program relied on work-experiences primarily within the school, as the school was not conveniently located to the small community and local businesses. Part of the work-based experiences in the school included a practical business class in which students worked in the school store or helped to clean and organize it (i.e. take care of it). Another part of work-based experiences in the school involved spontaneously cleaning the school. During the school day, Paula might suggest that the students clean the school or the school principal might suggest that the students clean outside the school. This cleaning activity would then become the class activity and curriculum for that part of the day.

Paula tried to explain to her students the functional, or work-based, nature of cleaning up the inside or outside of the school, such as picking up trash. Paula related the students' work at the school to an actual job and tried to encourage them to think about future employment and the skills they were learning, as illustrated below.

Does anyone see people taking trash out or washing window at McDonalds? The boss tells these people to do it and they get paid to do this. Why don't we get paid to do this? So, I think we should get paid. Mr. O'Brien [high school principal] says I can pay you with a pizza party, or with cash, real cash. It depends on how well you do, to pay you. In years past, Stacy and Alex have gotten cash. If you get that, I pay everyone based on the kind of job they did. Not everyone gets paid the same and not everyone knows how much each other got paid. Because in real life you don't know how much each other gets paid. Because it is our business. I try to train you and teach you about stuff like that (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2005).

While Paula felt this was very important and "functional", not all of her students agreed. One student, Rick, summarized the opposing perspective best, "she [Mrs. Click] just does things the janitor is suppose to do. We don't come here to do that. We come here to learn I thought" (Interview, March 15, 2005). This was Rick's response privately to the researcher in response to Paula (Mrs. Click) having students sweep the school hallways. Rick did not feel that learning to sweep the hallways was functional, at least not for him. Even when other students did not resent these work-based experiences as part of their curriculum, the lack of resentment stemmed more from appreciation over not doing "book-work" than that of performing an activity that would prepare them for employment and daily living after they graduated.

Furthermore, evidence of the disconnect between students and teachers over functional curriculum arose from students' responses to interview questions that asked them what they would want to learn, if they got to choose. Students did not necessarily state that they wanted to learn more functional classes or skills, but some spoke of

general education academic courses. In Paula's class, Rick's response to what he would choose to learn if he got the choice was, "Math is my favorite class. I would learn biology." After prompting by the researcher, "Algebra?" Rick replied, "Yeah, I would learn algebra. I always wanted to learn that" (Interview, March 15, 2005). Some of Katie's students responded in similar ways. One student, Sara, implied that she wanted more general education classes to prepare her for life after school. She stated, "When you are in categorical, you do not get to do as much" (Interview, January 17, 2005). Sara mentioned such classes as algebra and biology, specifically saying she wanted to do dissection. In her words, these classes did "more interesting stuff." Adam, another student in Katie's program, spoke of his desire to have more academically-focused classes, such as chemistry, computers, and foreign language. He stated, "I'm going to be in special education my whole life, only four years left. I can't learn anything if I have the same classes for five hours. Maybe if I had other classes, like third hour [language arts class]" (Interview, February 4, 2005).

However, not all students in the two programs interviewed spoke of increased academically-based classes as their ideal curriculum; others spoke of vocational-based classes. This group wanted to increase their number of electives, which had a vocational aspect, or their time in a vocational center, such as the county-wide technology and vocation institute. For example, Alex in Paula's program would take more computer classes if he had his choice, as he stated that he might want a job in computers, as well as auto class and being a teaching assistant for the gym teacher who was also the football and wrestling varsity coach (this was Alex's other career option, to be a sports manager for a college football or wrestling team). Another student from Paula's program, Becky,

said she would like more art classes in high school as she wanted to be an artist after she graduated, and stated that she was not given an art class her first year in high school. Flip, from Katie's program, decided he would design his whole program around his vocational program at the county institute (auto) because he wanted to be a mechanic.

While the student data was confounded by students' difficulty in understanding all the words and meanings of the various functional curriculum components in the interviews, despite the researcher's best explanations, there was still discrepancy between what the teachers noted as the components of a functional curriculum in their programs and what students acknowledged. For example, both Katie and Paula responded that all the functional curriculum components asked about were enacted in their respective programs, which included: functional academics, vocational education, self-determination, daily living skills, social/relationship skills, independent living skills, community skills/access, financial skills, leisure and recreation, and communication skills. However, students disagreed both on the representation of these components within the enacted curriculum as well as their importance. Many students remarked that certain components were not needed because they already knew how to do that or were already taught that. Paula commented that she included the social/relationship skills aspect and knew she should do more, but it was difficult because "students think they already know this" (Interview, March 15, 2005). Student responses showed their differing perspectives on what should be, and what was, enacted in their curriculum. Alex, a junior in Paula's program, responded that self-determination skills were not included and stated that he did that himself. Similar responses were given by Katie's students, such as Flip stating that "I know how to do that one" in response to daily living skills, and "I could

probably do that one on my own” when asked about independent living skills (Interview, February 4, 2005). Derek responded in similar manners, indicating “No, I just do it” in reaction to self-determination skills and “No, I teach myself” regarding social/relationship skills (Interview, February 4, 2005).

Sara, a junior in Katie’s program, expressed doubt that certain aspects were included in the enactment of her curriculum; however, she did not question their value. Sara responded that very little social skills were included, and she felt there was an absence of both independent living skills and transportation skills. While Katie felt she included these components, it may be that they were too embedded (something she tried to do) for Sara to understand or “see” their direct application. Flip, a junior in Katie’s program, also noted an absence of self-determination skills, which Katie had stated she did in conjunction with Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional. Katie stated that “this population needs it [self-determination] so much. Part of it is trying to get them to understand what their disability is” (Interview, January 27, 2005). Perhaps students’ suspected absence of this component was related to their resistance to understand and discuss their disability; or it could be that this component really was absent.

Rick, a freshman in Paula’s program, was reluctant to state that many of the components of functional curriculum were enacted in his curriculum. He responded no to the majority of them, and quickly followed up with “I already knew that.” However Rick was reluctant to be in Paula’s program, as he stated that his other school was further ahead and he had already done this stuff. He commented, “Basically Mrs. Click’s stuff I have already done at a different school. They have a better system over there” (Interview, March 15, 2005). Rick was resistant to partake in many of the classroom activities, which

may have been clouding his understanding of the embedded nature of the components in Paula's program, as Paula discussed modeling certain components as opposed to directly teaching them or doing a lesson on them.

Functional curriculum was in the "eye of the beholder" in both programs when examining the different actors. Students and teachers did not always agree on what functional curriculum components were enacted as well as which ones should be enacted. Teachers also held their own value of functional curriculum components and namely what was functional. Thus, what the teachers considered as functional was not necessarily aligned with theory or formal curriculum models.

"Where Everyone Knows Your Name..."

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs created a sense of community within the programs. While community was enacted in both programs during the enactment of curriculum, it was not necessarily enacted the same way in both programs nor was the same type of community formed. Furthermore, while the creation of the communities was constructed through the deliberate and purposeful decisions of the teachers, it was also constructed through the unintentional and inherent features of the program.

One feature that contributed to community was the fact that the majority of students in both programs spent almost all of their school day within the self-contained cross-categorical programs. Thus, spending about five of the six hours of a school day together created a sense of community, in that students shared experiences. In addition to having shared experiences within the program, the majority of students in each program had minimal acceptance in the larger school community. Hence, their social or peer

community was more likely to be limited to students within their programs, or at least in special education.

Students' lack of acceptance within the larger school community at Harborville High School was supported by Brenda, the primary paraprofessional in Katie's program. Brenda commented that not everyone was accepted equally in the high school; that it depended on the student's characteristics. While Brenda was able to identify a few of the students who were more widely accepted into the larger school community, the majority were limited to friendships within their programs, or at least restricted to the special education community. Katie confirmed that few of her students were accepted within the larger school community. In response to questioning about her students' acceptance, Katie stated, "sometimes really good and sometimes they are just that special education group". Katie went on to illuminate that there was "always a few in my class that just naturally stick out more and take the beating; some just naturally stick out more and take the heat" meaning that some students were picked on and teased more and therefore were less accepted (Interview, June 14, 2005). Thus, for many, the program contained their social network and friendship as well as their educational programming.

While friendships did develop outside of Katie's program or special education, there was an air of caution, although not always by the student. For example, Katie's fourth hour employability class worked in the school store and her students became regular workers during particular lunch periods. Some general education students would converse with Katie's students. One student in particular got frequent attention and was often referred to by his peers by one of his nicknames. He would receive a friendly hand slap/shake, and discuss plans to possibly get together with these classmates. However,

most of these “friendships” or acquaintances appeared to stem primarily from his participation on the junior varsity boys basketball team. Evidence that these might be better characterized as “pseudo” friendships involved the frequent practices of general education peers who short-changing him money, even though he provided them candy. He was even observed taking less than a dollar in coins and giving a young man with whom he frequently conversed \$1.50 in candy. Students were also observed to make subtle comments about the students in the store, such as one time when two customers were at the store window. One boy had been conversing with one of Katie’s students, discussing plans for the evening and possibly meeting up at a mutual acquaintance’s house and the other entered laughing about something. As the second customer continued to laugh, the first turned towards him and off-handedly remarked, “hey man, you should be working in there [school store] too.”

Similar acceptance, or lack thereof, was found with the students in Paula’s program. While Paula indicated that she felt her students were accepted by peers, observations revealed otherwise. Specifically, Paula’s response to questions of her students’ acceptance by peers was, “I think so, because River Bend started the categorical program in elementary and made its way to the high school, so students were together earlier. They have been with the same peer groups” (Interview, March 15, 2005). However, classroom observations showed that Paula’s students did not like to leave the classroom after they entered it. During the change of class time, Paula had to force her students to leave the classroom and instruct them to walk around “the block”, meaning to walk around the hallway, make eye contact, and say hello to peers. Essentially, Paula was trying to force her students to interact with general education peers, the same ones she

claimed accepted her students. Another example of contradictions in Paula's belief that her students were accepted by peers came from the actions of one of her students. She asked one student to take back Sabrina's (the afternoon classroom paraprofessional) and her lunch trays to the cafeteria. The student agreed to do it, but then requested to wait a little bit, as other students were changing classes. The student did not want to be out in the halls with everyone else, returning lunch trays.

In Katie's program, the enactment of curriculum served to develop a community through the creation of roles for students, through enabling students to serve as more knowledgeable others to each other, and through the celebration of rituals. Katie constructed different rituals within the enacted curriculum for her students to engage in, which strengthened the community of her program. One such ritual was the celebration of birthdays. When a student had a birthday Katie and the class would bake a cake for the student, which also served to support functional curriculum (i.e. measuring, food preparation). The other students in the class would also make birthday cards for the student with a birthday, sing happy birthday, and share cake. Thus, this ritual served to unite the class as a community and created a shared experience.

In Paula's program, the creation of community was less impacted by rituals. Rather, the sense of community was influenced more by spontaneous sharing; the spontaneous sharing of stories, celebrations, and depictions of friendship. Special education students are rarely producers of information; they are mostly consumers (Englert & Mariage, 1996). However, the sharing of stories enables students to shift from consumers to producers of information. And, in Paula's class, the sharing of stories was one means of creating and demonstrating community. Furthermore, the enactment of the

curriculum in her program created a space for not only the development of community, but specifically for the sharing of stories.

It is third hour, history. The students had just finished reading something on Mark Twain that Paula got off the internet from a teacher lesson plan website. The paraprofessional Laura read it to the students. The students are working on the questions that went with the short story. While they are writing, Jim shares a story about the book *Polar Express*, “Mrs. Click, guess what?” Jim then shares that his dad told him that the mom of the author of the *Polar Express* lived at an “old people’s home”, and it was the “old people’s home” where his aunt worked. Jim went on to say that the author’s mother had given her an autographed book of the *Polar Express*. Paula expressed excitement and said that was cool (Fieldnotes, February 7, 2005).

In the previous vignette, Jim’s role was transformed from a consumer of information to that of a producer of information. Personal narratives are one key way that students can position themselves into the role of a producer, whatever the information might be that they are producing (Englert & Mariage, 1996). Such was the case one day when the student in Paula’s room who was on the junior varsity wrestling team shared a story of not making his weight class and having to wrestle at a higher weight class than normal. He shared that he won three out of his five matches, and then other students in Paula’s class clapped for him. A student shared this story not only to contribute to the community, but to receive positive feedback from the community.

In addition to the students sharing stories in the development of community, the enactment of functional curriculum involved Paula’s active sharing of stories.

Observations and Paula’s own words illustrated the value she placed on the sharing of her stories in the classroom setting in terms of the development of community between peers and herself, as well as helping students with the functional aspects of the curriculum.

Paula implied that she felt the sharing of her stories was one of the most important aspects of the enactment of her curriculum in terms of preparing her students for post-

school success. She said that she based her assessment of her stories on what previous students have come back and said, stating students gained from “listening to what life is like outside of school and finding out it is true” (Interview, February 28, 2005). Paula went on to comment that this is one aspect missing from general education curriculum, “In general education, there is not talk about life out there. It is important to talk about experiences and let them [students] know it will be okay” (Interview, February 28, 2005). Hence, Paula felt her stories were beneficial to students and this sentiment was reflected in the curriculum enactment in her program.

Throughout the observations many instances of story telling were witnessed. Paula told stories to her students about different things, ranging from drugs and alcohol use to a sense of determination and her father’s pride. Paula even noted her own story sharing habit to the students, telling them “I have to tell you a story. You know how I am always telling you stories” (Fieldnotes, January 20, 2005). Some of the stories Paula told were to illuminate an aspect of the curriculum that students were reading or discussing in a class. For example, when the class was reading and discussing a chapter on alcohol and drugs in life management class, Paula discussed her own experiences, illuminating her drinking habits as a legal adult, her childhood of living with an alcoholic father, dealing with her alcoholic sister, and finally what prescription drugs she took to raise students awareness that many of them “consumed drugs.” However, other stories were to share parts of Paula’s personal life, such as the story of her childhood in which she was determined to walk across a fence and her father’s pride that she could do it even though she knocked over her neighbor’s garbage cans, or when Paula told her students that she was going to sing the National Anthem at the high school basketball game that evening

with her choir, or when her husband cut himself while dressing a rabbit and that the Center for Disease Control (CDC) monitored him.

Katie shared stories as well with her students, which served to share personal details of her life to strengthen connections with her students or illuminate some aspect of the curriculum. For example, during math when they were learning about budgets, Katie told stories of her own budget and how she was a saver and her husband a spender. She discussed working through college and making sure she had paychecks in her savings account in case something happened. She spent about 15 minutes one class period discussing her college budget, particularly focused on her allotment for food and discussed the cost of specific items. She said that she easily spent about \$20 per week on food, thus she felt that the \$100 per month food allotment in the budget they were working on in math class was a reasonable estimate. Katie's story about food shopping led the way for students to share similar stories along this line, such as about mom and dad going grocery shopping and how much their bills were.

On the other hand, Katie also shared stories about her family on a personal level, such as about her daughter or her parents. When her father was in the hospital, Katie shared information with the class or when "milk" was mentioned one day in class, she talked about how her daughter didn't like it and she would only drink it if it was chocolate milk. Similarly, Katie spent time talking about winter and the lack of sunlight and how that affected people's emotions, such as herself. She discussed that the lack of sunlight could lead to people feeling more depressed. This comment then spawned into a discussion of the previous day's snow day and that she spent her time pulling her daughter around outside on a sled. The function of these stories was evident in her

students' responses to them, as they shared back. Students either related their parents food spending or their like/dislike for milk and what kind. Katie's students listened and responded to her stories with their own, thus fostering a sense of community with the classroom.

While students in Katie's program also shared stories, and the sharing of stories enabled them to transform from consumers to producers, the dynamics of the classroom prevented much whole group sharing. Katie's program was a mix of students across all four grade levels and with dynamic personalities. Several students often did not get along with each other, to the point of verbal episodes in the class and around school, but the students in conflict with each other were not always consistent. Cliques had formed within the program, thus leading to the development of roles for students, some not positive. For example, the subdivision of the larger community into smaller, somewhat permeable groups created roles of marginalized, leader, scapegoat, as well as being "in" and "out" (accepted, not accepted) within the program.

Adam, a student in Katie's program, was frequently scapegoated and marginalized within the class, and this occurred by both peers and adults. Adam had a habit of chewing on pencils, and occasionally eating them. Adam was teased for this by other students and it was typically drawn attention to by others, making it public that someone had chewed a pencil, pen, or colored pencil and everyone looking at Adam or loudly announcing it to the class when he was in the process of chewing. It was presumed either of these was done to embarrass Adam. Adam himself acknowledged that the others in the class made fun of him and were not nice to him. While he did not have the language for his role, he clearly expressed that he felt left out, "there is like only two in

the class who don't pick on me, and they don't talk to me" (Interview, February 4, 2005).

The following vignette illustrates an example in which Adam was scapegoated and essentially belittled both by a peer and an adult, the classroom paraprofessional.

It was between first and second hour, between social studies and math class in Katie's room. Most of the students were standing between the special education rooms that surrounded Katie's room. Flip returned with boxes for Marilyn, boxes that were to be used to store the stuffed bags for the community 5K into the backroom. Brenda, the classroom paraprofessional, was still in the room when Flip returned. Flip commented to Brenda, "I take it that Adam doesn't know his locker combination." Brenda, Mrs. Buckland, responded, "Its not that we haven't told him." Brenda, walking back into the backroom with Flip and the boxes, asked, "why does he [Adam] have his stuff back here." Flip replied, "yes, his coat and stuff." Brenda exclaimed, "that sneak," and went out into the hallway to call Adam back into the classroom (Fieldnotes, January 11, 2005).

What is missing from the vignette is the context that Adam continually struggled with getting his locker open. It wasn't merely memorizing his combination that caused him challenges, which he was able to do, but the manual dexterity to actually complete it and the ability to be precise enough to keep every number dead-on. Hence, Adam put his stuff in the backroom as a way to avoid having to deal with his locker and essentially the embarrassment that came with that struggle in the hallway in front of even more peers.

At times the roles created by the community of peers (i.e. students) were assumed by the adults in the program, particularly the paraprofessionals. This led the adults to treat students as if they were in the roles assigned by the "majority" or the "in-control" group of the class. Derek, a sophomore in Katie's program, was frequently made fun of by classmates and generally not accepted, although he did also tend to instigate problems in the classroom with others. Adam, a freshman, also experienced frequent put-downs and a role that was outside of the main group of the program, one that illustrated his lack of acceptance by the majority of his peers in the program. However, there were times when

students' attitudes towards other peers were also manifested by the paraprofessionals, illustrating an acceptance or tolerance of behavior as well as the roles assigned to students "on the out", as illustrated below in the following vignette.

It is second hour. Katie, Brenda, and the six students in math class are in the cafeteria doing the inventory for the school store, a Monday routine. The students are following their usual activities, grabbing a kind of candy from the store, bringing it out to a table and counting it. Students are located at two different tables in the cafeteria. Adam has finished suckers. Ms. Buckland tells him to get a new box, as the old box for storing suckers is broken, and then starts to organize the suckers. Adam attempts to punch 140 into a calculator, the number of suckers he counted. Ms. Buckland tells him he is not adding anything to that number then there is no need to put it into a calculator. As Adam goes to tell Katie (Mrs. Gibson) the number, Doug states, "He is gay. He doesn't know anything." Mrs. Buckland makes a face and comments about Adam not bringing back the suckers when he goes to tell Mrs. Gibson the count; however, she makes no response to Doug for his remark. Derek is counting out loud at another table the number of candy bars. Ms. Buckland tells him to stop. Derek then uses a calculator and is punching in words into the calculator, such as hell, and is talking to no one in particular. Ms. Buckland tells him to put it down and to not talk about it. Doug turns to Ms. Buckland, "Does he make you mad about counting out loud?" Ms. Buckland responds, "I just try to ignore him" (Fieldnotes, January 14, 2005).

The teacher, in addition to the paraprofessionals, was influential within the community and their positive or negative treatment of students was significant in conveying the appropriate roles, treatment and attitude towards students, especially those who were outcasted.

While at many times the community that evolved from the enactment of curriculum created these roles, students were also in the position to create their own roles. One student, Anthony was primarily a selective mute, speaking very little and then only to a select few. Because Anthony chose to be a selective mute, he also chose to be marginalized within the community. Anthony was not asked to participate with the other students in activities, nor were conversations initiated to him or by him. In fact, his lack of participation within the community was noted by another student, Adam, who was

discussing his own position and lack of friends within the classroom community. Adam commented that his one real friend Anthony would not talk to him in the class. However, Anthony rarely chose to talk to anyone; hence his comment illustrated the marginalization of particular students within the community.

Beyond negative roles, the enactment of curriculum within Katie's program created space for the development of positive roles within the community. Students would position themselves, or be positioned, as a leader. While not necessarily a sought after position in the classroom, certain students wanted the respect and deferment that they believed accompanied the role of a leader. For example, one day in class Doug was making bad decisions, such that he was arguing with the teacher, swearing, refusing to do work, and getting on the computer after being told it was not time. By fifth hour, the other students appeared frustrated by Doug's disruptions to the class, specifically when Doug got back on the computer after being instructed not to. This actually prompted another student to say, "man, why do you keep making bad decisions" (Fieldnotes, May 6, 2005).

In other instances, teachers helped to nudge students into this role, such as the time Paula asked Alex to help Holly during her first few times working in the school store. Paula asked Alex to be a leader and set an example for Holly as well as serve in a supervisor role. In another situation in Katie's class, Miguel was complimented for his leadership when he told Doug where the class was at in the novel they were reading in Language Arts class. Katie's response to Miguel was, "way to show leadership Miguel" (Fieldnotes, January 13, 2005).

In addition to the roles discussed, the role of more knowledgeable other was also developed for students. The enactment of curriculum enabled students to both assume this role themselves as well as teachers to create opportunities in which students would see themselves in a new role, and possibly move from the periphery in the community to the center. For example, the transition aide Marilyn created work experiences for the students in Katie's program. One such small group work experience occurred at the local grocery/hardware/video store. Marilyn took students in groups of three to work at the store pricing items and checking inventory. In addition to this activity being both vocational and functional, it also created opportunities for students to serve as a "more knowledgeable other" to a peer, as illustrated in the following vignette.

It is second hour, math class, and Marilyn is collecting three of Katie's students to take to the local grocery/hardware/video store to work. She loads Doug, Derek, and another student into her van and drives them to *Ted's* (the local store) where they are going to be working on inventory within the hardware part of the store. When they arrive Marilyn asks Derek, a sophomore who did this work at *Ted's* last year, to oversee Doug, a freshman and who is "working" at *Ted's* for the first time. Marilyn asks Derek to work with Doug and make sure he understands what he needs to do (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005).

While this situation is subtle, it illustrated Marilyn working to create an opportunity for Derek to define himself in a new way, to see himself as a more knowledgeable other and essentially secure an apprenticeship for Doug to learn this vocational skill.

The role of more knowledgeable other was constructed in more academic situations as well, enabling students to feel good about themselves in ways that schools traditionally define success. The following vignette illustrates Brenda, Katie's classroom paraprofessional, helping to position Sara into the role of a more knowledgeable other through using Sara's skills to assist a peer within the class in an area he struggled in.

It is fourth hour, employability class. Students have entered and are taking their seats. Mark got out his book that he checked out of the school library during third hour, *Jurassic Park*. Mark asked Brenda, "Do you want to help me read this?" Mrs. Buckland (Brenda) then asked if Mark was talking to her. Mark replied that he could just go talk to the media specialist, Mr. Fisher. Brenda responded by saying, "I thought you were talking to Sara because she is such a good reader." Sara then offered to read the book with Mark. Mark accepted and Sara started to read the first chapter. She sat down at Mark's table and they took turns reading. Sara helped Mark with the words he didn't know when it was his turn to read (Fieldnotes, February 10, 2005).

As demonstrated above, adults in the program tried to create opportunities for students to be more knowledgeable others in the classroom as well, and being a more knowledgeable other was not constrained to an academic situation, as depicted in the following vignette.

Adam walked back into the classroom from the backroom. He had been back there doing his sensory, which consisted of pulling on an elastic rubber band and other forms of stretches. The conversation in the math class then turned to what Adam was doing back there. Katie explained it was Adam's business and he could share if wanted to. Dan asked Adam if he would show them what he does back there. Again, Katie told Adam that he only had to show the class if he wanted to. Adam walked to the back wall near the backroom. He demonstrated the wall push-ups that he does during his sensory. Adam then demonstrated wall glides, which was another sensory activity. Katie then asked Adam to show the class (the other four students in math class) his stretchy band that he has for sensory. Adam went into the backroom and retrieved his stretchy band. He returned to the room and demonstrated what he does with the stretchy band. He then let his other four classmates try (Fieldnotes, February 4, 2005).

This narrative vignette illustrated the space that was created for Adam to serve as a more knowledgeable other in a classroom setting, in which he usually was regulated to the role of a scapegoat, and picked on or teased by classmates. Thus Adam, in conjunction with Katie, was positioned to be a more knowledgeable to his peers and essentially moved his participation from periphery to more of the center, at least for that period of time.

The opportunity to serve as a more knowledgeable other, as a result of the enactment of functional curriculum, also occurred in Paula's classroom. Students were

able to position themselves in new roles; that of a more knowledgeable other, and did so independently or with the assistance of their teacher. In Paula's class, multiple students got to serve in the role of a more knowledgeable other. Students who were normally being helped got an opportunity to help others, shifting the roles of "novice" and "expert" to allow each student opportunities to showcase their unique skills.

It is seventh hour, math class. The students have entered and taken their seats. Those who have their calendars out received a ticket. Paula found the rest of the classes' calendars on her desk and this prompted Rick to ask if they get to have ticket as well. Paula tells the class that the answers are on the overhead and students are to check their own answers. She instructs them to turn to page one. Becky leans over to Ellen and tells her to turn to page one. Becky helps her turn the page. Ellen is then called on to answer the next question in the round-robin answering format (Fieldnotes, February 8, 2005).

The interesting dynamic of this vignette is that usually Becky was in the role of receiving help, being one of the "slower" students in the class, as indicated by Paula.

However there were generally fewer opportunities to serve as a more knowledgeable other in Paula's room, as compared to Katie's program. The opportunities enacted for a student to be a more knowledgeable other in Paula's program were short in duration, such as Rick helping Jim with a word when he was reading out loud in class or Holly helping Jim with a date during a calendar activity in math class. Work in Paula's room was highly individual and students usually worked independently on the same materials. If help was needed, Paula was most likely close by and could provide it. With generally fewer students in a class and less behavior challenges in any one class period, Paula and/or her paraprofessionals were usually available to help students with their work. Paula's program was also less tolerant of noise and conversations, which also served to limit students' more knowledgeable other opportunities.

The development of community that occurred within the enacted curriculum environment in Paula's program was reminiscent of a family. Students were often aware of each other's strengths and weaknesses. At times they stuck up for each other or supported each other, while at other times they made fun of classmates, and finally were able to have fun with each other. The students were aware of each others' challenges both in and out of school, and at times tried to problem-solve as a group or at least recognize the challenges their peer had and support them. In the following vignette, the students in Paula's program were trying to help a classmate problem-solve his challenges in gym, and then extended the conversation to the other students and making good decisions.

It is the start of second hour, life management class. The students have all come in, except one whom Paula points out is over ten minutes late. Becky and Jim have just returned from the school kitchen where they were checking on the glass jars that were run through the dishwasher for the school store. Holly and Paula had just finished having a private conversation about hygiene. The last student, Dave, arrived and was upset at something that happened in gym. Dave shared that someone broke into his gym locker, took out his stuff, and spread it out all over the locker room. Because Dave was still upset, Paula suggested that he go into the high school office and talk to the principal or assistant principal. He went begrudgingly, concerned over being a tattletale on one end, and that the office will be doing nothing about it. Paula then discussed with her students what would be a more appropriate response or choice than retaliation, as Dave claimed, "I'm serious... If I find out who it is...". Paula pointed out that he could have retaliated, but he made another choice, to talk to an adult. Jim chimed in, talking to Holly, "what if I threw this book at you?" Holly responded, "I would throw it back." Paula suggested turning the other cheek and ignoring it. Paula told her students that the other person will stop the behavior if you just ignore it (January 20, 2005).

In another instance of family-like behavior, Holly was sticking up for Becky, whom was often scapegoated and marginalized within Paula's classroom.

It was the start of third hour, history, and the bell had just rung. Laura [the morning paraprofessional] had just returned and was talking to Paula about what was covered last week when Paula was out with the flu. Jim, Holly, Dave, and Rick were in the classroom, and Devon just entered. The three boys were moving Becky's stuff around, first Jim moved it to the front of the room away from him.

Dave and Rick moved it back to where Jim was sitting. There was laughter and kidding among the three boys. Rick and Dave were joking to Jim that Becky liked him. Holly spoke up, "Give it up guys. Becky hardly has any friends. Be nice to her." The boys continued to laugh and move Becky's books. Holly again spoke up, "I just said be nice to her. Don't freak out if she sits by you." Jim responded, "shut up" (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005).

The students in Paula's program often made references to previous shared years of schooling, as many were freshman and had been together in elementary and middle school. While students were not always nice to each other, as evident from the boys' behavior in the previous vignette, there was a sense of camaraderie and solidarity that they have things in common, had been through things before together, and would likely weather more together in the future.

The enactment of community in Katie's program between peers, and between peers and adults, was also reminiscent of a family. Many of her students were friends, but friendship changed frequently; they fought and teased each other as well as helped each other out. They also knew each others' strengths and weaknesses. Part of the enactment of community within Katie's program was being able to share with each other, even if it is hurtful. For example, students in Katie's programs frequently made comments about one particular student's hygiene, going as far as to publicly decree, "I can't sit by Brett". Comments were also made publicly about other students in the class as well, about their peculiarities, such as Adam's eating or chewing on pencils or Derek's weight or his loudness of talking.

The students in Katie's program tried at times to use the development of community to help each other make good decisions, such as one student asking Doug why he was making bad decisions, after a rather trying day of repeated bad decisions (i.e. choosing not to do what was requested of him, swearing, arguing, and breaking rules

about pop and candy). Another time a student suggested to a classmate to just work in the school store without fighting when he did not want to work. Thus, the students tried to get each other to make good decisions within the community, essentially serving in positive roles. Yet, this was not always the case, as evident from negative comments to each other about hygiene, weight, and tiresome “mother jokes.”

Thus, while community was developed within the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs, it was not always positive. While the development of community evokes positive images, community can have negative implications as well, such as the very issues discussed in both programs – students teasing, marginalizing, and exploiting each others’ weaknesses. While the enactment of community within both programs resulted in a friendship base and friends for certain students for whom other peer options were limited, it also resulted in the role of scapegoat or in marginalization.

Besides the negative roles that were constructed within the communities created by both “categorical” programs, another negative implication was the lack of positive peer role models at times. While some students did step up at times and choose to be a positive role model for others in his/her class, such as the student in Katie’s program questioning Doug about his bad decisions or Holly raising the attention of the boys in Paula’s class as to the way they were treating Becky, this was not necessarily consistent. Paula acknowledged that this area, social/relationship skills, was an area that she could improve in her program, stating “I should, but I try to use it in modeling as it happens” (Interview, February 28, 2005). She stated that she tried to teach friendships but not a lot on actual social skills, or in other words, the skills needed to enact a positive community and be positive role models to another student. Paula was also reluctant to spend time

teaching this, despite her noted need for it, because “students think they already know this” (Interview, February 28, 2005).

Katie also commented on this aspect of the program, stating that she is going to try to “bleed out” some of her students into general education classes next year. She indicated that it was not so much for the academics they would receive in general education, as they would only be accountable for a few notes, but the social aspect. Katie stated that she wanted her students to see “this is how most kids are in the classroom”, indicating that she wanted them to notice that general education students were not continually talking back to the teacher or egging on other students. Furthermore, Katie’s concern over the social situation in her classroom was noted in her discussion of the enactment of the social/relationship skills component of a functional curriculum. She stated, “A point I try to stress is that they will go through life and not care for everyone or like to work with them, but they still have to do it” (Interview, June 14, 2005). Katie indicated that the social/relationships aspect of her program was something that she hoped would improve. She really felt her students could benefit from having more focus on this component and implied that the involvement of personnel more trained in this area, such as a school social worker, would benefit her students and the community they enact in the program.

The enactment of functional curriculum also resulted in community development among staff, aside from just among students; however, it was typically contained to within the program or special education. While community was developed within both programs between staff, it mainly resided there, among the staff. Both Katie and Paula did not eat lunch with other staff members at their respective schools, aside from program

staff or other special education staff. Both ate lunches in their rooms or that of a special education colleague's, as opposed to their respective staff lounges. Community was enacted with staff, but at a limited level. Similar to the students they taught, the teachers themselves seemed to build community around a small group of members who were affiliated with the special education program.

The community between staff was evident through the collaborative nature of the adults and the support they provided to each other. Both Katie and Paula referred to the paraprofessionals in their rooms in ways that highlighted their advanced status within the classroom community. For example, Paula told Laura "you are one of us", and Brenda frequently ate lunch with Katie and two other special education teachers at Harborville High School, something none of the other paraprofessionals in the school did, at least not on a regular basis. Also, Brenda acted as a substitute teacher for Katie when she had meetings, workshops, or took a sick day.

Similarly, Katie often supported the decisions the paraprofessionals in her room made in terms of curriculum or classroom activities. For example, when Whitney (a paraprofessional assigned to two boys in Katie's program) created an activity with the newspaper one day in language arts class when Katie was out of the classroom, instead of reverting back to the written lesson plans she had developed, Katie continued with the activity when she returned, completing what Whitney had started with the students. Similarly Katie supported Brenda's (the classroom paraprofessional) attempts at structuring during free time in classes, as illustrated in the following narrative vignette.

It is fourth hour employability class, the time between the two lunch periods so all the students are in the classroom. Most of the students are working on a crossword puzzle, but a few are finishing work from earlier classes, such as social studies. Doug has finished his crossword and has asked to go on the computer. He

calls Adam over to see the new background he put on the computer. Another student turns in his worksheet to Katie. He also asks to get on the computer. Katie tells him he can if everything is done. Both boys start to play computer games on the computers. Mrs. Buckland (Brenda) asks if both boys have completed the Channel 1 quiz from this morning's first hour class period. When they respond no, she instructs them that they need to do that first, before they play games. Katie responds, "Way to provide structure back there Mrs. Buckland" (Fieldnotes, January 17, 2005).

The other adults of the programs saw themselves as a community or a team as well. Marilyn [the transition paraprofessional in Harborville], in response to a student questioning the community-based instruction activity that Marilyn had arranged in an assisted living facility in town, stated, "I haven't steered you wrong... we haven't steered you wrong as a team" (February 10, 2005). Some decisions in Katie's program were the result of group decision-making involving Katie, Marilyn, Brenda, and Whitney. For example, taking students to the weightroom was a group decision, as was the negotiation of the amount of time devoted to social studies content.

Paula's program also had a sense of community among the adults, although it was hampered by the lack of consistent paraprofessional support throughout the day as well as the slightly different roles played by both the paraprofessionals and the transition aide/job coach. Paula still relied on these individuals to support her program and some decisions were made jointly. For example, Paula involved Laura at a meeting on Alex one morning with herself and the school psychologist as she felt it was important for Laura to be there since she worked with Alex in the general education classes. Paula even commented that she asked Laura to attend to lend insight into these components of Alex's educational programming, as Laura had more experience. A sense of community among the adults in the program was evident at other times as well. Paula often shared news of the morning with her afternoon paraprofessional (Sabrina) and news of the previous afternoon with

her morning paraprofessional (Laura), keeping them up-to-date about students, classroom happenings, and even more confidential information.

However, like any community, there were positive and negative attributes among the adults which mirrored those among the students. Community members agreed and disagreed with the actions and statements of each other. This occurred with the adults as well, particularly in Harborville. There were situations in which Katie did not agree with things Brenda did, Katie did things that Brenda did not agree with, and Whitney did things that both disagreed with. Sometimes their disagreements were subtle and more nonverbal, and other times they were quite overt. For example, one day when Brenda was leading a lesson in language arts class on the novel *Tuck Everlasting*, she made an off-handed comment that she would not make the students memorize all the same vocabulary words, like some English teachers in this school. Katie did not say anything at the time, but later apologized to the researcher privately for Brenda's comments and behavior.

Similarly, Brenda made several negative remarks, in words and intonation, about Whitney, both in front of other adults and students, suggesting that they might not have the best working relationship. For example, one day when Brenda was subbing for Katie, a student asked where Mrs. Wolf (Whitney) was. Brenda responded, in a snotty voice, "I don't know." The student then asked if she had left, to which Brenda replied, "Probably" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005). Brenda also expressed frustration with Katie at times, once commenting on the lack of lesson plans left. She did this not only in front of a substitute paraprofessional, but also in front of Katie's students.

In summary, the enactment of curriculum in both programs created a sense of community, for students and adults. And while the community enabled many positive

attributes for students, it was not without its negative implications, such as a lack of positive social role models and negative role associations. However, the community did generate friendships for the students in both programs, provided them opportunities to take on positive roles within a classroom setting, and allowed them to serve as more knowledgeable others to their peers.

More Than Meets The Eye...

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs was “more than met the eye”. The enactment of functional curriculum in Katie’s and Paula’s programs created opportunities and affordances that were beyond the surface appearance. A large aspect of being “more than meets the eye” is that the enactment of functional curriculum had to be everything, and to everyone. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) coined the term *shopping mall high school* in the 1980s, and stated that high schools represent a unique place, as “no other social institution has the task of serving such matured diversity at the same time and in the same place” (p. 2). Within their *shopping mall high schools*, they discussed different aspects of curriculum, namely horizontal, vertical, extra-curricular, and service curricula.

The nature of the categorical programs and the enactment of functional curriculum in both these programs involved having to be all... having to be the horizontal curriculum, vertical curriculum, extra-curriculum, and service curriculum. However, instead of being the specialty shops within the *shopping mall high school*, which Powell and colleagues (1985) proclaimed special education classes were, both categorical programs were more like “one stop shopping centers”. Thus, both Katie’s and Paula’s program through the enactment of functional curriculum were more like the Meijers,

Super Walmarts, Super Targets, or Super K-Marts of today. They were everything curriculum-wise to every student who entered.

Horizontal curriculum. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) described horizontal curriculum as a surface of what was available (i.e. the variety of subjects offered). In both categorical programs, a variety of subjects were offered; and remarkable similarity existed between the two programs over the courses taught. Both Katie and Paula's programs had a social studies class, math class, language arts class, employability/practical business class, and life skills/life management class. As a result of most students in both programs spending the majority of their school day in these classrooms, both "categorical" programs had to cover a wide variety of subjects. This is in contradiction to the resource-room programs in each school, in which teachers or programs were more specialized and covered fewer content areas. Both Katie and Paula; however, had to be versed in a variety of subjects, academic and functional.

Paula herself commented on the horizontal nature of the curriculum embodied in the program. Paula discussed the three year rotation she used with her curriculum areas, thus covering more than just the five content areas represented in the written curriculum the year of the observation. Paula stated that she taught English and math every year, but the other subjects were rotated; teaching such areas as geography, history, life management, personal management, health, and advocacy.

Interesting to note was that while Paula and her students spoke of different courses, had material for a variety of subjects, and changed periods in accordance with the school schedule, certain aspects of the institution failed to reflect the horizontal curriculum that was enacted in Paula's program. Despite Paula needing to create

graduation requirements for the students in her program, and obtaining approval of the “written curriculum” for each course, in some respects the school still displayed Paula’s program as just that – a program devoid of a range of subjects. This was demonstrated in River Bend High School course requirement book that students used to select courses. Paula stated it best when explaining to her students why they would not find their history, math, language arts, or life skills classes within the book, “My classes are in here, but it just says categorical program” (Fieldnotes, February 22, 2005). Students registering for Paula’s class could not register for the geography, math, practical business, or other classes they took as part of their graduation requirements in Paula’s program but merely registered for “categorical” classes per the school handbook.

Katie’s program kept the same core classes every year, titled as social studies, math, language arts, employability, and life skills; however, the content varied across the years. For example, while the class might be called social studies, with the focus rotated across the years, Katie would teach geography, American history, Michigan history, etc. Similarly, Katie used novels each year within her language arts class. She had purchased classroom sets of various novels, enough to rotate across years, such that even a student with four years of language arts within Katie’s program would not be exposed to the same novel. As for math, Katie said that she tended to rotate the curriculum every one-and-a-half to two years because her students tended to need refreshment on the concepts after that amount of time.

Vertical curriculum. In addition to the horizontal curriculum, both programs also had to encompass the vertical curriculum as well. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) considered the vertical curriculum to be the range in difficulty within a particular subject.

The vertical curriculum was evident within both categorical programs, as historically the field of special education was built upon individualization and accommodating materials to help students access the content. However, that was only in theory. While aspects of vertical curriculum were observed in both programs, one could question the amount of individualization that occurred within the cross-categorical self-contained programs.

Utilizing, and having others validate the use of, the vertical curriculum was very important to Paula and her program. Paula discussed that the curriculum she worked to enact in her program was individualized, illuminating that it was chosen based on who she had in her class; thus stressing the “individualized” nature of it. One such place that Paula discussed individualization was with spelling words. Paula stated that she individualized spelling words in private, so not to embarrass students in front of their peers. Observations of the classroom illuminated Paula’s sentiments. One Monday while observing in Paula’s language arts class, Paula called up three of her seven students and asked them about the spelling words she had just gave them. She asked each one if the words were too hard. For one student, Rick, she indicated that the words were mostly in alphabetical order and asked him if the words were too hard to spell. Rick responded with, “maybe for the test” (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005).

However, it was interesting that while Paula discussed wanting to individualize her class, and wanting validation that the researcher observed individualization occurring, Paula made comments and actions to the contrary, as illustrated in the following narrative vignette.

It is third hour, history. The students are working on worksheets. Paula is at her desk on the phone, and Laura is helping students with the worksheets. When Paula gets off the phone, she asks Laura how Rick is doing. Laura glances back at Rick’s table and reports that he is still on the first worksheet (all the other students

are on the second worksheet). Laura moves back to work with Rick. Another student tries to turn in his worksheet, to which Paula told him to wait, “we are going to go over it in a little bit.” Paula gave the class two more minutes and then asked Becky how far she is. Becky responded that she is done. Paula told the class that they are going to correct the first page. Laura asked Jim to read the first question and give an answer. The students are called on to give answers in a round-robin fashion until the first page is corrected. Paula told the students the worksheet was worth 18 points, to put the number they got correct out of 18 points on the top, and hand in the worksheet. Paula then told Rick that he needed to finish his second worksheet in his academic support class because everyone else had finished their worksheet and Paula wanted to enter the grades into the computer (Fieldnotes, February 22, 2005).

In the previous vignette, Paula did not want to wait for a student, but wanted all the class to be at the same level or at the same place, an action against the very individualization she professed.

Despite Paula’s comments of doing individualization, her actions and statements revealed otherwise, as previously discussed and in other examples. Not only did Paula not want to fall behind her lesson plans, she also did not want groups of students to fall behind either. Thus, when a significant number of students were out, the class did alternative activities, rather than what was originally planned. Therefore, students would not fall behind and all students could be close to each other in terms of where they were at in the coursework. For example, one day three of the freshmen were gone on a community-based instruction activity, and since those three were in all of Paula’s classes, alternative activities were developed. In language arts class, students played survival bingo, instead of reading their *Action* magazine or working on the spelling words. Paula’s own words also supported her position to avoid individualization to some extent, “most special education teachers probably feel this way, but I don’t know. They would rather do whole group instruction instead of individualization. It’s easier” (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005).

Paula also spoke of using covert individualization, such that students would not know some students were doing slightly different work. Paula implied that she did not want to embarrass students. The covert individualization was specifically discussed in reference to spelling words. Paula stated that she gave Rick and Stacy easier words, but the other students were not aware. She tried to meet students where they were academically with regard to spelling words. Attempts at individualization also occurred in the practical business course where Paula would assign activities to students based on her assessments of their abilities and what they were capable of doing. Thus, one day when the class was making signs to advertise a sale in the school store. Holly did most of the signs, as Paula commented that she had the best penmanship.

Katie also spoke of her desire to individualize the curriculum to the needs of her students. This was noted when she expressed appreciation for the flexibility of her program and the freedom that was granted to her to enact her own curriculum and construct her own program. Katie stated that she wanted the ability to “get more individual with the kids and their needs” (Interview, January 27, 2005). Katie was very focused on addressing the needs of her students, at an individual level. She stated that driving her enactment of curriculum was hitting the different needs of her students. She spoke to the varying abilities and capabilities of students, suggesting that sometimes the focus needed to be more academic and at other times more social or more functional. Katie also spoke of wanting more assistance, so that she could do more individualization. She expressed frustration with working with her students with basic reading as they had varying levels of reading ability, which made it difficult to effectively help them all.

Katie felt that more adult assistance with reading would enable her to work in smaller ratios, like one-to-two, and thus individualize reading instruction more appropriately.

Katie's program also involved providing different levels of difficulty within different subjects. It involved differential responsiveness, with both curriculum and classroom management. A wide range of ability was found within Katie's program; thus making individualization and differential responsiveness a necessity. For example, students ranged in ability from being able to properly compose a sentence with minimal spelling assistance to not being able to compose readable letters (i.e. difficulty with letter formation). Thus, for one or two students individualization involved adults writing some of their "written response" items on worksheets or classroom activities, as in using a scribe. A similar situation occurred in Katie's math class. The math class consisted of five students, with ranging ability. The majority of the students were able to do two-digit multiplication and two-digit division without a calculator. However, one student still struggled with telling time and forming numbers. Thus, he was pulled aside during math time and worked one-on-one with an aide on telling time. Seldom did the other four students comment on this individualization, only at times when they did not want to do their work and were trying any rationale to avoid it, such as "how come Mark doesn't have to do the banking worksheets?"

The differential responsiveness, or in other words the "vertical curriculum" in Katie's program, had negative as well as positive attributes. On the positive side, it enabled students to work at their level. Thus if one student needed to work on telling time, as opposed to working at where the other students were (long division by hand), the "vertical curriculum" had that differential responsiveness of individualization built in. On

the other hand, the “vertical curriculum” also created situations in which certain students got special privileges, particularly when applied to classroom and/or behavior management. For example, Miguel frequently tried to assume special privileges or be awarded special privileges, under the guise of “helping to keep him in school,” as Miguel was a 17 year old sophomore who had several run-ins with the law and wanted to go to adult education (yet was previously unsuccessful in his attempt as there was a lack of special education support in adult education). Miguel would work on other class work during a different subject, such as work on his general education science class during his “categorical” language arts class. He also was allowed to violate classroom rules, such as drinking pop in class, eating food in class, and leaving an activity prior to its completion. Whitney, a paraprofessional from the Intermediate School District assigned to two boys in the classroom with autistic impairment, said that special concessions were made for Miguel to help keep him in school. Miguel himself multiple times remarked that “those rules don’t apply to me.”

Paula’s program also had aspects of special privileges that were enacted under the guise of “vertical curriculum”, differential responsiveness, or individualization. Becky, a freshman, and Ellen, a senior, were frequently given concessions that were not made to other students; concessions that appeared to go beyond just that Paula took a nurturing stance because, in her view, these two students had the lowest ability in her program. Becky got frequent individualized attention, particularly during Paula’s academic support class. Throughout the course of the observations, Paula was observed to work independently with Becky on accelerated reader (i.e. independent reading of novels) for almost the entire class period, despite the other five students in the classroom that might

also have needed assistance with their coursework. Together, during the observation period, Paula and Becky finished two young adolescent novels.

Behavioral concessions, or behavioral components of the vertical curriculum, were also found in Paula's program. Ellen had a lot more freedom in the class that went beyond what could be attributed to her being a senior. Ellen told, rather than asked, to use the bathroom or get a drink, while others typically had to ask. Behavior that went against the five rules in Paula's class typically prompted Paula to mention the Responsible Thinking Room, however, it was tolerated by Ellen. Paula also had overt indications of the special privileges for Ellen, hugging her when she came into class and making comments such as, "I just love her" (Fieldnotes, January 20, 2005).

Adults, as well as students, were made aware of the vertical curriculum in both programs. For some it was not anything to be embarrassed about, nor was it demeaning to be working at a different level, it was just a fact of life. This was indicated in certain students' actions and words, as depicted below.

It is second hour. Ms. Buckland has asked the students to work on their division packets, and to do so by hand not with calculators. Adam has questioned why Mark isn't doing division. Brenda responded, "Because he is at a different level mathematically than you are. We are all at different math levels. You can do this [division packet], he can't." Mark followed up with his own statement, "I can't do this, that is what she said." He then asked Mrs. Buckland to work on time with him (Fieldnotes, February 10, 2005).

Mark's acceptance of the vertical curriculum was evident at other times as well. One day Flip entered English class to see a version of bingo out. He asked if they were going to play bingo. Mark replied no, that he did it in math because he cannot tell time. Hence, not only did Mark have an understanding of the vertical curriculum, but also his own capabilities.

Students in Paula's program expressed less awareness of the vertical curriculum, or individualization. While it may have been that her students were not as flippant about it, such as Mike from Katie's program, it was more likely that Paula disguised her individualization attempts and this created less overt awareness among her students. Hence, Paula's students did not make many comments about the vertical curriculum in her program. The few remarks or questions that did arise from her students resulted mostly from the special privileges or concessions proponent of the vertical curriculum. For example, on the day the eighth graders advancing to Paula's program came to visit, Paula's classes cleaned the outside of the school. Paula made all her students participate, except for Ellen, a senior who happened to be dressed up that day. She let Ellen stay in the room and play cards, in contrast to Rick who said he did not want to clean and was told to go to the Responsible Thinking Room. The special privilege for Ellen provoked questions as to the "vertical curriculum." Paula responded that Ellen was dressed up, plus she was a senior so she had done a lot of cleaning so she was excused. Similar questions were raised as to why Holly was always the one sent on errands, such as making copies or delivering messages.

Service curriculum. In addition to the "vertical" and "horizontal" curricula that both cross-categorical self-contained programs had to be during their enactment of functional curriculum, they also had to encompass service or emotional curriculum. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) considered this aspect of curriculum to address the emotional or social needs that students might have that were academically or educationally relevant.

While both programs were observed to address “service curriculum” in their enactment, both teachers felt constrained to do so and that this was an area lacking not only in their program, but in the whole school as well. Katie and Paula both expressed that there was a lack of capability to serve students in terms of the emotional aspect, and particularly cited students with emotional impairment. Katie implied that her program had to take responsibility for more of the service curriculum as this aspect was lacking for her students. She discussed that the school social worker who served Harborville High School was inconsistent, mentioning that students were not even getting the half-hour of service every week or every other that was written into their IEP; and hence her students did not get their much needed access to social work service. What was missing from other sources had to be made up elsewhere, which left the “categorical” program.

Demonstrations of the service curriculum as part of the enactment of the functional curriculum were observed in Katie’s program. The enactment of the service curriculum embedded within the functional curriculum was observed through the subtle dynamics of an adult in the program simply talking to a student and discussing everyday, small issues that were bothering him/her in the moment, to the more in-depth dynamics of discussing personal issues of larger significance. The following vignette illustrates the subtle enactment of the service curriculum in which a student is talking to an adult in the program about everyday issues.

It is second hour and students in Katie’ program are in the cafeteria doing inventory for the school store. Each student is to pull out an item of candy and count how much they have of it in store to sell to determine what might need to be purchased. Students are scattered among three tables in the cafeteria that are near the closet from which the school store operates. Doug is sitting next to Mrs. Buckland, the classroom aide. He is talking to her about his problems with Adam and Derek. Doug is telling Brenda that Adam doesn’t keep his hands to himself and that Derek is sticking out his tongue and making comments to him. Brenda is

listening and commenting in return to Doug about ways to address these problems (Fieldnotes, January 10, 2005).

Because the categorical programs had to be everything, adults in the program had to take responsibility for helping students to work through their problems, even if they appeared to be minor, such as another student simply getting on their nerves. However, adults in the program also helped students work through problems that stemmed from home and challenges they faced with parents, siblings, guardians, and the like, as the following vignette illustrates.

It is towards the beginning of first hour. Half the students have gone to the work-out/weight room with Marilyn and Brenda, the others remain in the classroom with Katie working on a geography worksheet. Mark enters the classroom with a scowl on his face. Katie doesn't know that Mark has entered and is talking to Miguel about making good use of his time and working on his general education science work. Katie then reminds Flip to sit in his assigned seat, as opposed to moving back to Miguel's table. It is then that Katie notices that Mark has come into class. Katie goes over to talk to him, commenting that he still looks pretty sleepy. Mark says that he is mad at his mom, that he wanted to stay home today and take care of his brother who was not feeling well, but mom would not let him. Mark starts to cry and Katie put her hand on his shoulder and rubs, talking quietly to him and saying that she will give him a moment (Fieldnotes, February 3, 2005).

The emphasis on service curriculum was also giving students alternative ways to deal with their challenges in life and cope better with things that upset them. Katie spent a good deal of time addressing the emotional needs of her students, checking in with them, particularly around their friendship or lack thereof in the classroom and around the school. For example, one day during second hour math class, Katie sat down beside Doug and told him that she was going to do some multiplication and division flashcards with him. However before she began, she asked if Doug's day was going better, to which he replied "yes". Katie asked if Derek, another student in her class, was pushing his buttons or someone else. When Doug replied that Derek was talking and turning around to bother

him [Derek sat in front of Doug in the classes' assigned seats], Katie suggested that he needed to find nicer ways to talk to him and tell him to turn around as opposed to yelling.

A service curriculum was also part of the enactment of functional curriculum in Paula's program. The service curriculum took many forms, from addressing hygiene with students to exploring choices students were making that were not reflective of good decisions or asking a student to "step out into her 'office'" for a private meeting that was emotionally or behaviorally orientated in content, as opposed to academically-based.

For example, one day in life management class, Paula spent class time discussing a particular student's bad decision, examining his choice to get suspended for fighting with another student. Paula and the class discussed ways to express anger without using one's fists. Paula told her students, "I don't just want you to read the words on a page, but I want you to be able to put it into practice. I would like you to learn how to do things differently and in a better manner" (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005). While Paula tried to enact the service curriculum in the class because the curriculum within the program needed to be all by necessity, having to be all presented a challenge as she, like other teachers, was not trained to "deliver" service curriculum. In this particular situation, Paula had trouble actively listening to her student and making an attempt to understand his perspective. Instead she focused on what he needed to do differently, from her perspective. For example, when the student told Paula, "I got hit in the head three times before I threw it back." Paula responded by stating, "Maybe you egg them on with your mouth. We all need to think about what we do to influence other people. We all do." Similarly, in response to Jim's comment that others were trying to get the student

suspended, Paula replied by saying, “I know some of them and that is not the way they are” (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005).

In another situation, Paula was discussing not retaliating against other people with her students in life management class. After one student shared that peers in gym class broke into his locker, Paula discussed that he could have retaliated, but he made a better decision to talk to an adult. Paula continued this conversation with her other students after he left to talk to the assistant principal. Jim joined in the conversation asking Holly, “what if I threw this book at you?”, to which Holly replied, “I would throw it back.” Paula explained “turning the other cheek” and “ignoring the behavior.” Holly said she is not able to ignore other people’s behavior, she has been taught to do things back and questioned if Paula knew that about her. Paula’s response was to question what Holly knew about her. Paula elaborated saying, “that I believe in you” (Fieldnotes, January 20, 2005).

Thus, while this vignette illustrated Paula’s attempt to be all and enact all in her program, including service, it also highlighted an important point – something had to give. Paula’s program could not be all, nor could Paula provide all to her students. Paula, or any teacher, cannot be trained to provide everything and when something had to give it was usually the service curriculum both in terms of what got enacted and what teachers were trained to provide. This also was true for Katie as well. With 16 students on her caseload, up to 11 students in a class, Katie could not provide the service curriculum to her students as frequently, explicitly, and as consistently as she would have liked.

Extracurricular curriculum. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) included extracurricular curriculum within their discussion of the *shopping mall high school*. They

defined the extracurricular aspect of curriculum as involving nonacademic components, such as sports or vocational activities. Despite the fact that neither program in the study was involved in Special Olympics, a relatively common extracurricular activity for students with cognitive or mental impairment, both programs had opportunities for their students to participate in extracurricular activities. Furthermore the opportunities for students to engage in extracurricular activities were not limited to general school experiences, such as sports, but special experiences were created within the enactment of functional curriculum in each program. Thus, in some respects, the enactment of functional curriculum resulted in the programs developing their own extracurricular curriculum.

Katie was a very involved teacher. She was not a 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. teacher, but a teacher who was very involved with her students' lives. One example of the extracurricular curriculum within the enactment of functional curriculum was the opportunity for the class to participate in the community 5K. Katie had volunteered to use school store money to pay for the registration of any student in the program to participate in the community 5K. She also had volunteered to walk it with them, despite being over six months pregnant. On the day of the event, Katie picked up all the students who registered to participate in the community 5K and transported them to and from the race. This experience was an extracurricular opportunity for these students; to participate in a sporting event, to receive recognition for their participation, and essentially to be included in a community activity. In addition, participating in the 5K also supported the enactment of functional curriculum as it represented instruction and application in the recreational and leisure component of functional curriculum.

Given Powell, Farrar, and Cohen's (1983) definition of the extracurricular curriculum, the vocational-based opportunities enacted within the programs were extracurricular. However, vocational-based opportunities at Harborville High School went beyond the employability class in the program within the enactment of functional curriculum. It also involved vocational activities located in various community businesses, such as the local "all-in-one-store" (grocery, video, and hardware) and a community assisted living home for the elderly. Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional/job coach, organized opportunities for students in small groups to gain vocational experience. In these two settings, students had an opportunity to work under a supervisor, stock items, clean, and interact with members of the community. The students in Katie's program also had volunteered to paint the community buildings that were in need, which enabled life skills activities that were difficult to enact within a classroom setting, as well as reinforced classroom skills in true application "exercises".

Participation in these vocational opportunities was beneficial for students and enabled them to position themselves into new roles. Being outside of the academic classroom "space" functioned in some sense as a release for students. It presented an opportunity for students to define themselves differently than how they were typically defined at school, impaired or in some way deficient in the academic sense. Thus, vocational experiences provided "spaces" for students to see themselves not only as competent, but also as a place to demonstrate being a more knowledgeable other. These experiences also provided spaces for the students to be viewed by others as competent and knowledgeable, as these opportunities were based less on academic capacity.

Extracurricular curriculum as part of the enacted curriculum was also important in Paula's program. Paula discussed that she previously used to employ more extracurricular activities within her curriculum, yet stopped last year because of the particular students she had, most of whom were no longer in her program. Paula discussed that in previous years she and her students had participated in once-a-month evenings out on the town, where they would go to restaurants, movies, the mall and other places. She did this in part to expose her students to new opportunities, experiences that were not necessarily available in the average school day or in her students' average home life. These experiences served to extend the students' education and enact elements of functional curriculum beyond what one can truly teach in a classroom setting, such as recreation/leisure skills, community access, and social skills. While the small classroom that housed Paula's program restricted the application of most functional life skills she wished to teach in the program, she and her students had enacted their own classroom within the community during their evenings out.

However, Paula did not have her students participating in these evening activities the year of the study, stating that she had been frustrated by many of the previous year's students, many of whom had moved on to other programs or districts. Paula discussed that she should reinstate the evenings out, yet probably would not before the end of the school year. Instead Paula did other things with her students which were less in-depth, and simultaneously less influential in teaching her students about the very functional life skill components she lamented could not be enacted in the classroom and with the resources she was provided. For example one morning after discussing the importance of eating breakfast in the life management class, and having learned that none of the four

students in that class had eaten breakfast that morning, Paula took them to McDonalds to eat. This is actually how Paula stated that she would prefer to run her program, to have the opportunity to do spontaneous “educational” activities with her student as they arose, without the constraints of permission slips, planning ahead, or changing class periods. At times, Paula truly liked to enact the curriculum on a moment-to-moment basis.

The extracurricular component of the enactment of functional curriculum in Paula’s “categorical” program occurred throughout the school day and encompassed “the little things”, as Paula said. The little things were very important to Paula in terms of helping her students ascertain the functional life skills, or mix of academic and work skills that she felt were necessary for them to be successful post-school. One such “little thing” was walking around the block during the changing of class periods. The block was merely that, a block of classrooms within the school that was surrounded by four hallways. Paula’s room was in the middle of one of the blocks in the school and she frequently requested that her students walk around the block once during the changing of class, as most of her students did not leave her classroom once they entered for the day. When her students were to be walking around the block, they were to focus on social skills, such as looking people in the eye and saying hello. This activity was most often met with some disgruntlement, as her students preferred to stay inside the classroom during the changing of periods, as most of them never changed physical classrooms.

Paula’s students had opportunities to participate in vocational extracurricular opportunities as well. Besides the school store and Paula’s practical business course, which involved stocking and cleaning the store, the job coach hired through the Intermediate School District, in conjunction with a resource room teacher at River Bend

High School, had created a program for freshman to experience different work opportunities in the community. While it was only open to special education freshmen, it attempted to take this group into community settings and experience different job opportunities, such as at Wal-Mart and the nearby recycling center. These opportunities created a “space” for Paula’s students to position themselves in new roles, as they explored vocational activities.

Besides the freshman community-based instruction opportunities run by others through a grant from a local education group, Paula’s program included a written work-based experience curriculum component. When Paula created her program five years ago, in her written curriculum she stated that her students needed to complete two credits of work-experience as a graduation requirement. During the year of observation she finalized her curriculum, including graduation requirements, for adoption by the district curriculum committee. As part of the changes, the number of work-based credits was raised to three, although Paula had wanted four. Thus, opportunities were created around the school for students to gain work-based experience. One of these opportunities involved working in the school store that Paula managed, along with the home economics teacher. Paula placed students as early as their freshman year in the store during the lunch hour to work, typically “supervised” by a general education student who was hired and paid to work (most of Paula’s students were not paid but worked for credit) and occasionally monitored by the school’s transition aide/job coach.

Besides the school store, Paula worked with other personnel at the school to get her students work-based experiences; however, those primarily involved custodial service. Work-experience as a custodian was one of the few opportunities that were

available for Paula's students in terms of gaining skills for possible opportunities post-school within River Bend High School. Because most of the work-based experiences, which were mandated for Paula's students by the graduation requirements she created, were limited to the high school setting, students' actual post-school work could not be represented. Students had little choice to fulfill their work-experience credits aside from working in the school store and working as a custodial aide; unless, a student's family was willing to assist with transportation and possibly a work location.

Katie also had students involved in job placements, although to a lesser extent. It was not a requirement of her program that students participate in a work-based experience, although this was not discouraged and was especially encouraged for particular students. Marilyn (the transition paraprofessional) was influential in helping Katie's students who had interest in a work-based experience while in school find access to vocational opportunities in the work force they wanted. Some students were involved with vocational opportunities located within the school or school district. For example, Katie had one student who was involved with the school custodian, which was a possible eventual job interest of his. Sara, a junior, was involved with the categorical special education program at the elementary (just across a small field from the high school), as she has expressed interest in possibly working with children as a future career. Other students from Katie's program, with the assistance of Marilyn, found vocational opportunities away from the school with the potential for employment after they graduated. Jon, for example, worked two days a week for one hour a day at a local pizza shop in which he folded pizza boxes. Another student gained experience at a center, in a nearby larger town, that provided work opportunities to individuals with disabilities. Both

of these students had parents or guardians who provided transportation, thus enabling their work experiences.

The extracurricular components of the enacted curriculum of each program provided many opportunities to Katie's and Paula's students. It fostered opportunities to teach and learn functional skills that were difficult to address within the four walls of a classroom. They also allowed positionings for students through the extra-curricular curriculum component. Here students came to see themselves as athletes, workers, and community activists.

The hidden, unintended, and missing curriculum. Beyond the vertical, horizontal, service, and extracurricular curricula, there were also the hidden, unintended, and missing curriculum components. As McCutcheon stated, "By curriculum, I mean what students have the opportunity to learn in school through both the hidden and overt curriculum, and what they do not have the opportunity to learn because certain matters were not included in the curriculum" (as cited in Morrison, 1993, p. 84). Thus, the enactment of curriculum included not just what was apparent (i.e. socially constructed and blatantly enacted), but also what was hidden; not just what was intended, but also what was unintended or what was missing.

Paula spoke of what she felt was missing from the enactment of her curriculum. While she did speak of resources and facilities to teach aspects of functional curriculum she felt were missing, such as laundry facilities and kitchen facilities, she primarily spoke of institutional constraints from the school or school district. Paula discussed that the primary aspect missing from her curriculum was "opportunities." Paula stated that the master schedule of the school took precedent, meaning that scheduling her students

and/or their educational needs took a backseat to the concerns of the entire school. Paula appeared to imply that in an ideal system the enactment of curriculum in the school would allow her “categorical” students to be above the scheduling of the other students so their needs to succeed post-school could be met.

In addition to the challenges with scheduling, Paula also noted other aspects that she felt were missing from the curriculum. Paula repeatedly discussed that opportunities to enact a functional curriculum were missing from her curriculum because of the location of the school. Paula lamented that River Bend High School was located outside of town in the already rural community location. River Bend High School was not located in the heart of any of the communities it served, which included four small neighboring communities. The location of River Bend High School impacted the ability for Paula’s students to have work experiences in the community or for Paula to truly use community-based instruction within her program. As a result of its location, students in Paula’s program could not transport themselves, or be transported, to a work experience and return to school in one class period. Furthermore Paula and the students could not walk to any community-based instruction opportunities because of the location and, due to budgetary concerns, accessing a bus or a van was frequently not possible. Thus, the true enactment of functional curriculum as Paula thought appropriate was not possible given her classroom size, school location, and the resources within both the school and the district.

The final component Paula discussed as being missing from the curriculum for her program and students was freedom, freedom to structure her day. Paula discussed not wanting to be confined to hours or class periods, suggesting that for her program this was

not an appropriate fit. Paula was jealous of a county program (Transition Central, an after high school opportunity) run by the Intermediate School District for students who met its criteria. This program could plan for the whole day, and activities and opportunities did not have to consider if students would miss other classes or be concerned about returning for a specific period. Paula wanted the freedom to do spontaneous trips to see and experience things that she felt her students would benefit from. “It sounds like a small thing, but it’s a big thing to me,” were words she used to describe her feelings about the freedom she desired for her program and how the very nature of her program defied following strict class period schedules (Interview, March 15, 2005). And yet, while Paula discussed that her program defied hourly schedules, she parsed her program into neatly organized class periods, even distinguishing between the classes herself. For example, one day in history class she had her students participate in what would be the math activity for math class – estimating the number of candy hearts in a bucket as a Valentine’s Day activity. After her history class had finished estimating both the total number and individual colors, Paula thanked them for helping out *her math class*, which seemed like an odd statement since the vast majority of students in her history class were also in her math class (i.e. every one in history was in math except for one student).

Katie also spoke of what was missing from her curriculum, although to a lesser extent than Paula. Katie talked more about the assistance and actual curriculum materials to assist her with educating her students. Katie stated, “things to help them with reading. More assistance to help with reading, so help is more like a one-to-two ratio” (Interview, January 27, 2005). Katie talked about the discrepancy of her students in terms of reading ability. She indicated that she had five who were fair readers, but that the rest were pretty

low. Thus, she felt that more help with reading would benefit her program, as she indicated that this was one of her most challenging areas aside from behavioral issues.

In addition to her focus on improving her students' reading by adding things or people to help, Katie discussed the social aspects, including social skills, making friends, and dating. She was concerned that she might be putting this off to someone else but questioned the involvement of the school social worker and suggested meaningful connections between the school social worker and students were missing. Katie felt that her students could benefit from actually having a school social worker with them in the class on a day-to-day basis to support the students and help them work through their family issues, which she felt were quite abundant and possibility impacting her students' education.

Finally, Katie felt that better transportation was missing from her program and could improve her curriculum. She mentioned available transportation as something missing and offered suggestions, like owning a larger van or access to dial-a-ride in the community. Katie felt that the lack of transportation fostered other missing aspects, such as assisting her students with daily life activities of scheduling haircuts and making dentist appointments. She felt that increased access to the community, such as community-based instruction, was also missing and impacted by the lack of transportation. Katie said she was trying to improve this aspect of her curriculum.

In addition to what both teachers felt was missing from their curriculum, students also had opinions, whether they explicitly or implicitly revealed them. One aspect missing that was evident from students' statements, but absent from their direct words, was self-determination and empowerment. While both Katie and Paula indicated that the

enactment of functional curricula included self-determination, students' statements as to their role in curriculum choice indicated otherwise. Of the twelve students interviewed, five spontaneously said that their teacher, either Katie or Paula, was responsible for choosing the curriculum [what they learned] and three more indicated their teacher was responsible when prompted. However, only one student spontaneously responded that s/he played a role in selecting the curriculum s/he received, and only four others felt they had a say when prompted. Hence, students indicated that they did not feel they have much say or influence in their curriculum, and therefore a potential need exists to increase the self-determination or empowerment focus in their curriculum, as students tended not to see that having a voice was important. The missing aspect of empowerment or determination was evident in a student's statement when asked why he was not taking Spanish, a course he expressed interest in, "why not take Spanish... I never really asked if I could take it" (Interview, February 10, 2005).

Another aspect missing from both Katie's and Paula's curriculum enactment, from the perspectives of students, was a focus on helping students consider appropriate career choices as well as securing apprenticeship opportunities in related fields. While some students interviewed did not yet know what they wanted to do after school – a freshman, sophomore, and junior – others named careers that would ultimately involve additional training, such as a computer technician/specialist, teacher, cop, and woodworker. Two students even discussed going to college after high school; unfortunately they could not give any steps on how to get from where they were now to college. Only one of the 12 students interviewed was involved in an apprenticeship within their ideal or chosen career path. Derek, a sophomore in Katie's program,

indicated cooking as one of his three career choices and was enrolled in the county vocational program for foods the year of the study. Unfortunately, due to Derek's behavior choices, he was not allowed back at the county vocational program and hence would not be continuing on this track in an official school setting. Other students, if given work experiences, were placed in convenient opportunities, such as working with the school custodian.

Katie's program involved both hidden and unintended curriculum. Interestingly large aspects of the unintended curriculum were related to the paraprofessionals and their role within the classroom and program. The unintended curriculum within the enactment of functional curriculum in Katie's program could best be summarized as "do as I say... not I as I do" and incorporated primarily what the paraprofessionals in the class did and said.

While Katie's program involved basic rules and attempted to reflect the general school rules, she made concessions for her students. For example, pop was not to be in the carpeted parts of the school (i.e. all classrooms), only in cafeteria of the school. This was a school rule. Katie; however, allowed her students to bring the pop into her classroom, although they were not to drink it in class. Two unintended messages were sent with the pop issue. One was that Katie's categorical students were above the rules of the whole school. The other unintended message involved that one of the paraprofessionals continually had pop in class and drank it in front of the students. Students in Katie's program even commented that Whitney (Mrs. Wolf) could have pop and they could not. They made subtle comments, such as "No pop in class" or directly questioning, "Why can Mrs. Wolf have pop if we can't?," indicating they saw the

hypocrisy. Thus, the message became, “do as I say, not as I do.” A similar thing occurred with food. Repeatedly students were told they were not to eat in class, such as their breakfast. They were allowed to eat in class only when the whole class was eating as part of a class activity. However, the same paraprofessional, Whitney, ate peanut butter and apples every morning. Similarly, when substitute paraprofessionals were in the class they too were observed to eat snacks during class time. Nothing was observed to be done or said, thus students internalized a message of “do as I say, not as I do.”

Unintended curriculum was found in Paula’s program as well. While the unintended curriculum in Paula’s program was less along the lines of “do as I say... not as I do,” students still obtained messages from the actions of critical adults in the room, such as Paula, or Sabrina and Laura (the classroom paraprofessionals). One such unintended curricular aspect was the message that one did not always have to do one’s work, as answers will be given. This was particularly the case with Sabrina when she was working with Paula’s students on their general education courses, such as during academic support class. For example, one day Sabrina was helping Alex and another student in Paula’s academic support class on Parenting, a general education class. Sabrina was just giving the answers to the students, telling them what to write on the worksheets. The few answers that were completed independently by the students were being erased to write down what Sabrina said. There was no discussion of what the answer would be, but rather blatant statements of what it was by the adult.

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs was multi-faceted. It involved horizontal, vertical, service, and extra-curricular components. The enactment furthermore involved the hidden/unintended/missing curricular components. And while

all these various components were evident in both Katie's and Paula's program, they were enacted differently.

"Grass is Always Greener..."

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs created tensions, particularly for students and teachers. The tension that the enactment of curriculum created involved a pull between the "categorical" classroom and general education classes; students were torn between these two "places and spaces." Essentially, the students felt the grass was always greener wherever they were not, whether that be general education or special education. Katie summarized the situation in a comment she made to her students one morning when some were complaining of activities that occurred in her class that they could not participate in because they were in a different class at that hour, "Sometimes it doesn't pay to be out of this class. You guys want to be out so bad, but good things happen in here" (Fieldnotes, January 27, 2005).

Across multiple students in Katie's program was the feeling of concern of being in special education; yet, not wanting to do the work in the general education classes. Students in Katie's program did not want to engage with the work required in general education classes. It was a constant tension between some of them expressing that they did not want to be in the "categorical" program and not wanting to do the work in the general education program, particularly as Katie's "categorical" program did not require a lot of work and almost never any homework. Their tension could be seen in students' comments regarding Katie's program, expressing "it is a crazy class", "I feel like I am in first grade", and suggesting that there were "weirdos" in the class and concern over being associated with them. These stood in contrast to their comments such as, "I don't do book

work”, refusing to actually do written work in their general education classes, or selecting an ideal curriculum based on classes that would require no homework.

Despite some students’ adamant statements that they have general education classes, they had difficulty staying in them. Of Katie’s five students enrolled in a computer applications electives course, three were willingly pulled out by paraprofessionals to do the work in special education classrooms. These students did not want to go to the general education class, although one repeatedly commented that he did not belong in the “categorical” program and wanted general education classes. Another student, Adam, who was not pulled out but assisted by a paraprofessional in the computer classroom, repeatedly begged to be allowed back to Katie’s class to work. He also talked about wanting to be out of special education and how the students in Katie’s class teased him. Miguel also refused to go to his general education human anatomy course and instead spent the hour working on the course content with Brenda, the classroom paraprofessional, in Katie’s classroom. Thus, while students wanted out of Katie’s program and special education, they also simultaneously wanted to be in.

The students presented conflicting signals because they felt confused about what they wanted, general education or special education. For instance, Katie had wanted her students to go into the general education freshman human anatomy class for sex education or human reproduction. Her requests were ignored by the general education teachers until she finally got the opportunity to bring her students in the second semester of the year during her fifth hour life skills class. Katie’s students presented mixed emotions over this situation. On the one hand, Katie’s students made comments to adults about not embarrassing them in the general education class and felt concern over some of

their peers from the program embarrassing them as well. The students wanted to appear as “general education students” and blend in. Yet, Katie’s students did not want to intermingle with the general education students once in the classroom and when given the opportunity to work in the general education classroom or Katie’s special education classroom on assignments and assessments, they choose the special education room. Despite the initial appeal of being in a general education classroom, this created a vulnerable situation which was anxiety provoking. While there was appeal in being like everyone else and having the chance to mask their disability status, placement in the actual classroom evoked trepidation and fear among the students.

This tension between being in the “categorical” program and general education classes could be seen within Paula’s program as well. Devon, a student who spent minimal time in Paula’s room, may have expressed it best. Devon flat out said that he did not want to be in Paula’s classes, but he minded it less because the work was easier. The tension was reflected in similar comments from some of Paula’s other students. Her students also expressed feeling like, and being treated like, young students (i.e. kindergarteners). In fact, Alex once stated during a language arts class “we are not in kindergarten” (Fieldnotes, January 20, 2005). While the students expressed some negative feelings towards being in general education settings, and avoided interaction with their general education peers by not walking around the “block” between classes, some also had some awareness of the stigmatization that can exist with special education status.

While Paula denied that the students were aware of their “special education status”, observations revealed otherwise. For example, when one student was requested to

run an errand to return Paula's and Sabrina's (the afternoon paraprofessional) lunch trays during the changing of classes times, he asked to wait awhile, referring to it as "embarrassing to go now." Similarly, Rick expressed hesitation with particular class activities that implied he felt embarrassed to be part of the class and engage in those activities. Rick expressed dislike about class activities that involved cleaning up the school (i.e. sweeping the hallways) and picking up trash from outside, stating that he did not come to school to do the janitor's work, but rather he was there to learn. While Rick was willing to engage in academic work, he resisted vocational or work-based activities, which he felt were beneath him.

In addition to Paula stating that the students did not care, or were not aware of their categorical special education placement, and offered support by stating that they did not notice if they used math books that specifically referred to elementary grades, she also stated that her students were accepted by their peers. Paula felt that because the students went to the same elementary school as their peers, per one categorical program in the district which was housed at one local elementary school, they were accepted. However, observations did not reveal that the students had many friends outside of special education, let alone the "categorical" classroom. Moreover, the special education students were not involved in many activities at the school. Male and female students within Paula's program were teased in general education classes, sometimes to the point of provoking a fight between one of Paula's students and multiple general education students.

Another inherent tension was that the self-contained "categorical" program was perceived by students as a safe environment in comparison to inclusion in general

education classes. Katie's program was a safe place to make mistakes and let one's disability and weaknesses be apparent, as illustrated in the following vignette.

It is first hour, social studies. The students are working on a worksheet, finishing up their geography unit. Katie had discussed with the class their up-coming country project and has asked students to think about what countries they might like to research. Katie reminds students that tomorrow they are to write down three countries they might want to research, and then she will let them know what country they are researching. Derek, who sits in front of Katie's desk, piped up. "I want to do Denver". Flip responded back, "Denver isn't a country stupid, it is a state." Katie waited a moment and then replied, "Actually Denver is a city" (Fieldnotes, February 11, 2005).

The above vignette highlighted that the "categorical" program and curriculum enacted in it involved the enactment of a safe place for students. Derek felt safe to publicly state that Denver was a country, despite being wrong. Similarly, Flip also felt he was in a safe place to retort that Denver was not a country but a state, another wrong statement that was publicly made. The enactment of curriculum in the program created could create conditions such that students were less embarrassed by their remarks and were more willing to take intellectual risks.

Similarly, other comments made by various students in the room reflected their orientation to the safe place that the program, and hence curriculum, provided. It was a safe place for students to say "I don't know" both literally and figuratively and seek help. For example, it was a safe environment for one student to say "I can't tell time", for another to suggest that a quotient "is a kind of horse", and a different student to comment that they could not make a particular recipe in school because it has alcohol when the recipe called for barley, which she mistook as Baileys.

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs created a type of freedom besides a safe place to make mistakes; it also created freedom from some

constraints of the institution. The categorical program, and its curriculum, created freedom in one's schedule, such that students were privy to less requirements and more options for electives. Katie's students took electives as freshman, which were typically not allowed until the upper grades because they had more freedom in their schedules as a result of fewer "required" courses. They were also allowed to have certain electives count as meeting the requirement of core courses, such as a health/nutrition course counting towards a science credit and a personal finance course towards a math credit. Similarly, Katie's students had more freedom to take classes they wanted, as some parents knew if it was written into the IEP it was law. Thus, Jon's mother had him removed from almost all classes that involved homework during the second semester of his senior year, and had him primarily enrolled in elective classes that did not have much work for him.

Students in Katie's program also got special concessions in that they were allowed to go to the county vocational center for programs as a sophomore, whereas general education students could not go until their junior and senior years. Katie acknowledged the concessions for her students, yet in ways felt that they were justified. She shared her concerns about even having alternative activities for some of her students, beyond her classroom, electives, and the county vocational center. Katie expressed concern that the county vocational center was too difficult for her lowest students, which was confirmed by the fact that only two of Katie's students were being invited back to the county vocational center for the next year after sending five students the year of the study. The three that were not asked back were unable to handle the work requirements of the courses, yet also struggled in Katie's classes (i.e. academically, socially, motivationally). Katie felt conflicted over how to educate these students and felt that

there needed to be something else, an alternative that would let these students have hands-on activities, and still meet their academic, cognitive, and behavioral needs.

In addition, there was a certain amount of freedom granted in terms of following school rules, meaning that the students in Katie's program received some leniency within the classroom. There was a school rule against having pop on the carpeted areas of the school, which included all the classrooms (i.e. any place but the cafeteria). However Katie, and the enacted curriculum, permitted the students to supersede this rule and bring pop into the classroom, although they were not suppose to actually drink it.

Freedom extended beyond the classroom for students in the "categorical" program, to work and work experiences. Special education students at Harborville were granted more freedom than general education students when it came to work-release from school, per the principal's and school's rules. Marilyn discussed the rules of work-release with Katie's students one day during math class. Marilyn told the class that general education students could not be placed in work-release unless the work was career-related. However, she said that it was different for special education students because they had an IEP, which is a contract. Marilyn clarified by saying that as long as work-release was written into a student's IEP, then they did not need to worry. As long as the work-release experience was safe, educational, and productive, special education student could participate, if it was written into their IEP.

Paula's categorical program also created a freedom for her students, freedom that would not necessarily be granted in general education classes, thus supporting the tension between the two service delivery options. Freedom enacted in Paula's program involved leniency in the rules. For example, cell phones were not allowed to be in class, yet

Paula's students had their cell phones in class, showed her, but little action was taken. Similarly, certain students of Paula's had the freedom to enter class after the bell rang or to leave to get a drink or use the bathroom with simply a notification that they were doing so; things that most likely would not be allowed in general education classes.

Paula actually granted many of these freedoms to her students despite awareness of school rules. For example, at the start of the semester in Paula's academic support class she spent a length of time discussing her rules and expectations. One such rule was that students were to have their daily planners and that they needed those for passes to leave the classroom to go anywhere. Around this time the school was also cracking down on students being out in the halls. The office sent around a memo reminding teachers that students needed a pass to be out of the rooms, which was to be written in their planners, as well as provided teachers with a list of students who were to have limited passes. Shortly after that Paula let Alex leave the class without a pass or his student planner, which was not an isolated incident for him. Alex acted as if he had, and Paula granted, status of being above the "rules"; thus depicting his and others' freedom enacted through their participation in the program. Paula's students also had increased flexibility with work experiences, as Paula felt this was an important element to her program and embedded it within graduation requirements for her program.

Students in both programs felt conflicted over their instructional environments, such as being in general education or special education classes. Students in Harborville indicated that they wanted to be in general education classes, or at least out of Katie's program (i.e. special education), but once in general education they did not want to do the work, nor did they like their freedom constricted. Similarly, in Paula's program the

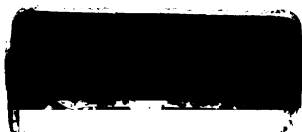
students felt conflict over something as simple as homework, commenting that they do not get homework [like other students] but then not doing it once it was assigned. Hence, for both Katie's and Paula's students the grass was greener on the other side... whichever "side" they were on.

Summary of nature of enacted functional curriculum

Overall, the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum was found to occur in the moment (see Appendix D for a summary table of themes per program). Given that the teachers relied little on formal functional curriculum models, it is not surprising that the enactment took precedent and occurred in the moment. The enactment of functional curriculum was not the same in both programs; however, its functionality was relative in both programs. What was functional to Katie in terms of a "functional curriculum" was not necessarily functional to Paula, and vice versa. Hence, while both indicated they enacted a "functional curriculum," they were not enacting the same thing. While negative implications did occur in the enactment of functional curriculum, the enactment created a community within each program. While the communities that developed in both Katie's and Paula's programs struggled, they provided students with a community, a peer group, and a place to feel safe.

Despite that both teachers indicated they enacted a functional curriculum, the phrase does not begin to describe what was enacted. The enacted curriculum had to be more than just functional; it had to be everything to everyone that entered. Thus, the enactment of functional curriculum was more than what met the eye. Finally, the enactment of functional curriculum created many tensions. There was a continual tension around being in special education versus general education and vice versa. Despite what

students verbally indicated about wanting one placement over another, their actions and behaviors revealed different wants and needs.



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**WHEN DENVER IS NOT A COUNTRY, BUT A STATE: STUDYING THE
ENACTMENT OF FUNCTIONAL CURRICULUM IN TWO RURAL
CATEGORICAL SECONDARY PROGRAMS**

VOLUME II

By

Emily Christine Bouck

A DISSERTATION

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of**

DOCTORATE OF PHILOSOPHY

Counseling, Educational Psychology, and Special Education

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Chapter 5

Results: Analyzing Factors

The results of the second major research question of the study, what factors impact the enactment of functional curriculum in rural, self-contained cross-categorical programs, are presented in this chapter. The findings revealed that the pre-determined categories of policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, and curriculum materials were influential to the enactment. The data also indicated that another factor affected enactment that was not hypothesized, namely paraprofessionals.

While the enactment of functional curriculum in both secondary cross-categorical self-contained programs revealed that identical factors were influential, they were enacted in practice differently and had differing levels of impact. This chapter will discuss the influence of the seven factors revealed from the data in both programs (Katie's program at Harborville High School and Paula's program at River Bend High School), while simultaneously comparing and contrasting the enactment in both cases. Comparisons across sites are organized in the presentation of the findings within the major factor categorizations (i.e. policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, curriculum materials, and paraprofessionals).

Factors impacting the enactment of functional curriculum

Morrison (1993) suggested eleven factors that were influential in impacting the enactment of curriculum, namely society, legislation/policy, local school district, individual people, professional organizations, business/industry, foundations/agencies, teacher, textbooks, lobby groups/special interest groups, and testing. However, for the purposes of the study of the enactment of functional curriculum, these categories were

logically condensed into groups consisting of policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, curriculum materials, and then later paraprofessionals/other support personnel was added.

The original six factors were hypothesized to impact the enactment of functional curriculum in self-contained cross-categorical secondary special education programs, and the data supported that hypothesis. The hypothesized influential factors were found to effect the enactment in both programs examined. Furthermore, these factors were found to be influential both in their present time and their histories, as illustrated in the diagram below (see Figure 5).

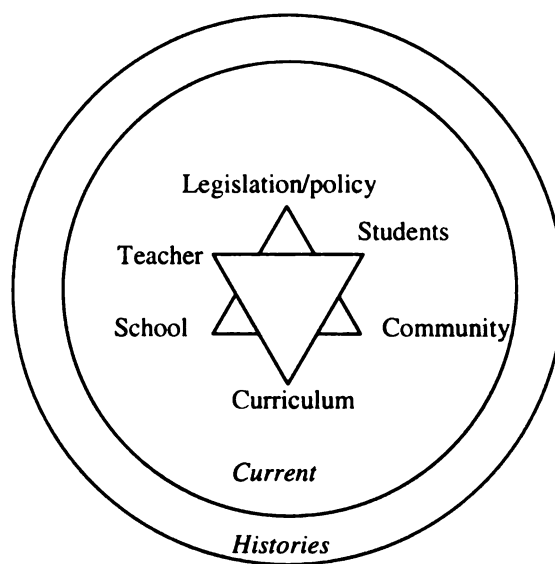


Figure 5: The proposed intersection and union of factors.

Policy/legislation factor. Policy and legislation were found to impact both programs. Major federal education legislation was discussed in reference to these two programs and the curriculum that was enacted within them. One of the starkest pieces of evidence as to the impact of policy/legislation was found in regards to assessments of students. *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) (2002) mandated that all students participate in

state-wide assessments, which included previously excluded special education students. While the *Individuals with Disabilities Act* of 1997 stipulated that special education students were to participate in general large-scale state assessments and alternate assessments were to be devised for students with more severe disabilities, it was not until the passing of NCLB that special education students really participated. Hence at the time of the study, students of appropriate age/grade in both programs were taking (or at least suppose to be taking) a state assessment.

In Michigan, students take the Michigan Education Assessment Program, known as the MEAP. Students in both Paula's and Katie's program qualified for an alternate assessment, which was to be called the MI-ACCESS Phase 2.1 Functional Independence. However, at the time of the study this test was in prototype form and the state had substituted selected sections of the BRIGANCE in its place. The rarity of Michigan's alternate assessment program was that alternate assessments were created for students who were mildly cognitively impaired or who functioned as such, in opposition to most other states in which alternate assessments were only created for students with more severe impairments (see Alper & Mills, 2001; Kleinert & Thurlow, 2001; Ysseldyke & Olsen 1999). Thus, all eleventh graders in both programs took the MI-ACCESS Phase 2.1 as opposed to the MEAP test, which was taken by grade/age-appropriate special education students in resource room programs.

Both teachers commented that their program planning would consider their students' participation in state assessments, thus influencing the enactment of functional curriculum. Katie commented on needing to reconsider what she was teaching as basic knowledge of mathematics because fractions and graphs/charts appeared on the trial

version of the MI-ACCESS Phase 2.1, which her students prototyped in addition to the BRIGANCE. Hence, she considered adding these areas to her math curriculum, which currently did not focus on fractions. Specifically, Katie stated that MI-Access Phase 2.1 was “a lot more in-depth than the functional stuff I teach.”

However, Katie felt some frustration towards the policymakers and the state department of education. She stated that, “we tried to state the importance of what we do in the classrooms at the meetings” (Interview, January 27, 2005). Katie was referring to her work with the state committee on creating the MI-Access materials for the department of education. She implied that the state devalued the functional nature of classrooms like hers, or in other words functional curriculum. While Katie indicated that the idea of assessment was fine, she was focused on what she felt her students needed to leave school with.

Similarly, Paula commented on the impact of state assessments on her curriculum. She replied, “Oh yes... it is one of those things driving what I do” in response to a question about the role of alternate assessments on her curriculum (Interview, March 15, 2005). However, while Paula commented that the test her students would be required to take was one factor driving the enactment of functional curriculum in her program, she admitted to not aligning her curriculum with the AUEN (Addressing the Unique Educational Needs of Special Education Students) (Frey, Burke, Jakwerth, Lynch, & Sumpter, 1999), which essentially served as alternate state standards for students in the different functional areas for the alternate assessments, such as functional independence, supported independence, or participation independence. Paula admitted to having a copy of the AUEN functional independence “somewhere”, but not to taking the time to align

her curriculum to those standards, which were to reflect what would be tested on the MI-ACCESS Phase 2.1 Functional Independence (the test appropriate for the overwhelming majority of her students). Thus, there was inconsistency in her statements. Similarly Katie stated that she used the AUEN and noted that it provided guidelines and benchmarks. However, Katie also said that she did not own her own copy of AUEN.

In addition to Paula not aligning her program curriculum to the alternative state standards, she also commented that she felt the MI-ACCESS Phase 2.1, the phase specifically designed for students with mild cognitive impairment, might not be appropriate for her students and expressed that it might be too hard. She stated “They can’t take the BRIGANCE” [the substitute for the Phase 2.1 assessment] (Paula had only one student who was identified as being lower functioning than mild cognitive impairment and she was a senior graduating that year and thus exempt from the testing). Earlier in the observation period Paula noted that she had two juniors, thus two students that would qualify for testing this year. At that time, Paula mentioned that she might wait to test them both the following year or to see if she could get parts of the MI-ACCESS Supported Independence (the alternate assessment for students with moderate cognitive impairment, formerly trainable mentally impaired in the state of Michigan), as she was concerned that the Phase 2.1 version might be too difficult. However, Paula was made to give the test to her two juniors and ended up having to hurry to get it done at the last minute because of her original plans to skip it until next year. Thus, while Paula talked about the importance and the impact of the alternate assessment, her actions revealed otherwise, in addition to a lack of knowledge about the testing legislation.

Paula's focus on the MI-ACCESS and how it would impact her program and her students was evident during observations, as depicted in the following vignette of her dialogue with the special education director of her district.

"With changes going on with MI-ACCESS, we need to go through and make sure we are catching those issues. Is this going to stay with us, even though the MEAP is going?... Sure, just a lot of work not to do it. They have gone through a lot of work to get it going. Can't imagine not doing it. It was a big investment... Are we testing now? The window is the end of February and all of March. I thought I got six weeks" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005).

In addition to the impact of testing mandated by the major federal education policies, other tenets of these pieces of legislation were influential. A major tenet of the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* involved the least restrictive environment, which many have incorrectly interpreted to be the general education setting. Both programs operated like self-contained settings, meaning that the vast majority of students spent over sixty percent of their school day in the self-contained classroom and the focus was not on supporting students in their general education classes, but teaching an alternative content (Flagle, 1999). However, the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* of 1997 mandated that students have access to the general education curriculum, which was demonstrated in both programs, although primarily through electives.

Students in both Paula's and Katie's programs had access to the general education curriculum, although primarily through elective courses. Paula actually incorporated general school electives as part of the requirements for graduation for her students, namely a parenting class and a foods class, both taught by the "home economics" teacher. Similarly, her students also participated in other elective classes, such as gym, computer applications, and woods and metals. Paula felt that her students were accepted by the

general education teachers; however, bearing in mind that they were in no core content areas, just electives.

Students in Katie's program were also placed in general education programs, but primarily for electives as well, not counting the vocational/technical program run through the county that several students participated in for half the day. Katie's students generally participated in such electives as gym, computer applications, and art-based classes like ceramics and drawing. While students were enrolled in certain electives and worked within the curriculum, their physical presence in the general education classes did not happen. For example, Katie had five students enrolled in a computer applications course, a general education electives course. Of the five, three never attended the class, rather they were pulled out by a paraprofessional to work on the material in a special education classroom. Another was assisted by a paraprofessional in the computer classroom, but frequently asked to be allowed to work on the material in Katie's classroom, while the fifth one was a senior repeating the course for the second time, out of choice. Thus, while computer class was a general education course, most of the students were actually educated in the special education classroom. Discussions were being held with the general education computer teacher, the principal, and the special education staff to offer a special education only computer class, which would be at a slower pace and would allow the special education students to receive instruction from a teacher certified in computers, as opposed to paraprofessionals who primarily supplied the instruction.

The tension over access to general education classes was noted within Katie's program by her, the students, and paraprofessionals in the room. Brenda, the classroom paraprofessional, discussed her frustration that students were not put into more general

education classes, saying “that is what the law states.” Yet, at other times Brenda expressed frustration when one of the students from Katie’s program was placed into a general education class but without support, or more aptly direct support from the self-contained program (i.e. meaning herself being in the room with the student as a support). Brenda also discussed that the students themselves felt tension over being in the general education settings, commenting that “more could be in general education, but this is a comfort zone.... A lot dread coming to school” and for students who did leave for other classes second hour that “by third hour they can’t wait to get back in here” (Interview, February 24, 2005). Thus, the inherent tensions of the policy and law of *access to the general education curriculum* and *least restrictive environment* were captured in these statements and suggest that the policies were impacting the enactment of curriculum, both for the positive or negative.

Community factor. Community was also an influential impact on the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. One of the biggest influences of the community factor on the enactment was the location of the community, and hence the school. The geographical location of both communities, namely being in rural locations, impacted the functional curriculum for both programs. Being in a rural area made transportation more difficult and finding jobs for work experience of greater scarcity, while simultaneously creating more opportunities in other situations, such as extracurricular school activities.

Teacher interviews as well as observations illustrated the impact of the rural location of both communities, and thus both schools. One of the major issues with the location of the community was the lack of public transportation, particularly as it created opportunities for students to seek work-based experiences outside of the school. The lack

of public transportation that occurred within both small communities meant that the vast majority of the work-based opportunities that students had in both programs, except for those experiences created by the job coaches/transition paraprofessionals in community shops and stores, were limited to the school.

Despite the transportation issues, multiple opportunities for both programs in regards to community-based instruction illustrated the tolerance and acceptance of the programs and students within each community. Katie's program was involved in two extended community-based instruction work experiences within the town of Harborville, one at the local grocery/hardware/video store and the other at a small assistive living home, in addition to their volunteer community work such as painting buildings for the city parks and recreation department. Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional job coach, organized the community-based instruction opportunities for the students. She discussed using a barter system to arrange community-based instructional experiences for the students in Katie's program. She said that knowing her personally and shopping in the stores or using the facilities was helpful in getting community businesses to agree to community-based instruction opportunities for the students. Thus, the fact that the community was rural and smaller was influential in securing the community-based instruction opportunities, despite the options limited by transportation and number of businesses. Community businesses and organizations felt a connection to the personnel of the program, and hence were more willing to let the students obtain work-based experience at their locations because they personally knew the adults. Essentially, the sense of community within the town of Harborville impacted the enactment of functional curriculum.

Students in Paula's program also had work-based experiences within the community; however, they had to extend "community" to include towns outside of the school district. River Bend was more rurally located than Harborville and the school district was actually composed of several small towns that consolidated to form a school district. Students in Paula's program had work-based experiences primarily tied to the school, but the freshman in Paula's program participated in a school-wide special education program that was grant funded, which provided them monthly work-based experiences within surrounding community businesses, such as at a Wal-Mart and a local recycling center. The acceptance of community businesses and organizations enabled the community-based instructional opportunities and thus impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in Paula's program.

The impact of the community was also evident in the opportunities that were presented to students. The smaller size of both communities inevitably created smaller schools. The smaller schools then enabled students in both programs to have more opportunities, such as participation on sports teams within the school. Students in both programs participated in sporting activities at the high school level. One student in Paula's program participated on the junior varsity wrestling team, while in Katie's program one student was on the junior varsity basketball team, one on the girl's track team, one on the boy's track team, and others discussed trying out for football the following year. If either program was located in a larger community, and hence a larger school, these opportunities might not be available for students in self-contained cross-categorical programs; more students in a school can result in less opportunity for any one student to participate in school activities.

The community in which the schools, and programs, were located impacted the enactment of curriculum. Whether it was the size, location, or acceptance of the individuals in the community, the community variable was influential for the positive or the negative. The teachers themselves were very aware of this factor's impact on the enactment of curriculum in their programs, commenting many times about transportation and location. In some respects there was also an awareness of the acceptance of their students. Katie commented that she was aware that a stereotype would always follow them, stating "stereotypes will always be there. These kids will always be that special education kid."

School and school district factor. In addition to community factors, school and school district factors impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. One of the major school factors involved the location of the school within the community. One influence was related to work-based experiences. Both schools, in addition to being in rural communities, were situated in parts of their communities that were away from the business districts; hence walking to work-based opportunities for students was unrealistic. Similarly, the location of the school made it difficult for one to drive students, or students to drive themselves, to a work-based experience and still return within the time frame of one class period. Hence, the location of both schools impacted teachers' and students' ability to fully enact work-based experiences out of school within the programs. Thus, most work-based experiences for the majority of students in both programs occurred within the physical confines of the schools, such as working at both programs' school stores or being an apprentice to the janitor or custodian.

In addition to the impact on work-based experiences, the location of the schools also impacted other facets of the enactment of functional curriculum within the programs. In River Bend the location of the school influenced the curriculum materials Paula felt she could implement in the program. For example, she could not use curriculum that she had created and used at her previous school, which was conveniently located in the center of its town. Paula spoke fondly of a history of the town project she did in her previous school, which involved students walking around the cemetery and learning about the community. Paula enjoyed this curriculum unit and felt disappointed that the location of the River Bend High School negatively affected her being able to reproduce it in River Bend. Specifically, she cited that the school was not within walking distance to community facilities, as it was not centrally located, as well as that multiple small communities fed into the high school, in contrast to her previous school district.

While the high school in Harborville was similarly removed from the central business district of the community, work-experiences were less of a concern. Students in Katie's program had few work-based experiences outside of operating the school store. Rather, work-experiences were considered to be obtained through the community-based instructional opportunities arranged by Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional/job coach, or through their vocational-based programs at the county vocational-technical program. Other aspects of the functional curriculum were situated within the location of the high school and accommodated for. For example, students in Katie's program spent time in school weightlifting as part of their curriculum. They also had fieldtrips, which extended beyond the town, such as visiting a mall or shopping center to learn about its business.

In addition to the location of the school as being influential to the enactment of the functional curriculum, the physical location of the classroom was also important. The physical location of the classroom impacted students' behavior, particularly between classes and thus impacted the enactment of curriculum. Katie's classroom was located in the last hallway of a three hallway school. Departmentalization was attempted in the hallways, such that in Katie's hallway were all the other special education classrooms, in addition to the foreign language department, and then the math department. Thus, immediately around Katie's classroom were other special education classrooms, and more significantly most of the other peers that the students in Katie's program were friends with.

In contrast, Paula's program was surrounded by core content classes and across from the bathrooms. It was not surrounded by other special education classes, but rather remained on its own. The isolatedness of this classroom in terms of other special education classrooms can be explained by the composition of Paula's classroom, two small offices combined to make a classroom. The impact of the physical location of the classroom was evident in the fuss that Paula's students made when the bell rang and she asked them to walk around "the block." Her students preferred to stay within the classroom during their four minute break between classes, rather than to go out in the hallway. Paula had to instruct them every few classes to "walk around the block", which was a signal to walk around the block of classrooms, look peers in the eyes, and say hello. The resistance of Paula's students to go out in the hallway stood in contrast to Katie's students who practically bolted out the door when the bell rang and frequently stood around the door a few minutes before the bell would ring. While Katie's students

enjoyed being in the hallway, they stood relatively close to the classroom door and within the confines of the special education classrooms.

Beyond the impact of the physical location of the program classroom, the actual features of the classroom were also influential. In fact, the physical features of classroom were extremely influential as to the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Katie's program was housed in a specially designed classroom (see Appendix E). When the school added on its third hallway three years ago, Katie's program was moved from a very small room to a room that was specifically designed with her program in mind. In addition to its large space, the classroom had two backrooms with one designed for students who may have physical impairments, as there was a toilet, sink and space for wheelchair access. Similarly, either of these backrooms could serve as a time-out room if needed for students. Perhaps the most important aspect of the program was the kitchen that was built into the classroom. The classroom was equipped with a refrigerator, a stove and oven, and a sink. In addition, Katie had purchased other important kitchen necessities, such as a complete set of dishes, a Kitchenaid, a griddle, and a microwave. Having a kitchen in the classroom enabled Katie and her students to enact several daily living skills within the confines of the classroom. Thus, the enactment of the curriculum could include cooking.

Paula's classroom was significantly different. As previously stated, it was two small offices combined together, such that it could house enough tables for her current students, some bookcases, a teacher's desk, and a computer desk (see Appendix F). Paula's classroom did not have kitchen or laundry facilities, over which she lamented. Paula discussed that she "would love to have the physical room that home ec does," and

emphasized its laundry and kitchen spaces (Interview, March 15, 2005). Paula noted that she could use the facilities of the home economics room, but she had not had the opportunity yet as well as that she felt that it belonged to the home economics teacher, “it was her domain.” The importance Paula placed on having resources which were currently missing in her program was evident from her discussion of her ideal curriculum for this program. Paula described her ideal program as the following,

I would have to have a lot of equipment. The setting would take place in a mixture of reading center with couches and proper lighting, technology center where each student has access to user-friendly computers, and living center like a home economic room. Just like home would be and a shop, where we would be using hammers, nails, and wood. All in one place, we would have sewing machines, craft centers. That would be the setting and I could take it from there. Access to the community as well with good transportation. And a job liaison to help me. I would teach what they need to know here. And I would say onsite learning lab, like school store (Interview, March 14, 2005).

As evident from Paula’s ideal curriculum, resources that were currently missing in her small classroom were extremely important to her in terms of enacting a functional curriculum, and hence the current enactment in her program was missing important elements.

Other teachers and staff impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs, namely in how students participated in curriculum and activities outside of their self-contained cross-categorical classroom. For example, Katie commented that she had asked the freshman human anatomy teachers every semester to let her know when they were going to be doing human reproduction, so she could bring her students in, and every semester the human anatomy teachers forgot to tell her. Whether deliberately or accidental, actions of the other teachers still impacted the enactment of curriculum for

Katie's students. Staff members served to exclude the participation of most of Katie's students in human reproduction or sex education while in high school.

In Paula's program other teachers impacted the enactment of curriculum in her program for particular students. While Paula stated that the teachers at River Bend High School were accepting of her students, she implied that they were very skeptical at first, indicating reluctance to have her students in their classes. She went on to say that in the past five years, only two of her students had ever been questioned by other teachers at River Bend if they belonged in her program. However, the teachers Paula referred to taught elective classes, such as physical education and home economics. They were also teachers Paula's students were required to take as part of the graduation requirements for her program. These general education teachers were impacting the enactment of functional curriculum for particular students of Paula's because they were not, or were not merely, questioning if these students were appropriate for her program, but if they really wanted these students in their classes.

The school philosophy also impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in each program. The school philosophy helped to drive the philosophy of the program, and essentially supported the focus of the program. Paula's interpretation of her school's philosophy aligned with the focus of self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs in theory, to prepare students for post-school success. Paula described the school philosophy as "to make life-long learners out of these kids and have them participating in the community" (Interview, March 15, 2005). While Paula indicated that her school philosophy was supportive of her own philosophy, observations and actions by the school indicated some inconsistencies.

Katie was also able to articulate her school's philosophy. According to Katie, the school philosophy involved a focus on "safety and the importance to learn something new each day and to strive to better yourself everyday" (Interview, June 14, 2005). Interestingly this resonated with Paula's articulation of her school's philosophy, "to be lifelong learners." Katie also illuminated another aspect, or lack thereof, of her school district's philosophy. Namely, Katie expressed concern over her district's lack of commitment to special education meetings across school buildings or levels. She felt that this resulted in a problem of flow for curriculum and difficulty with transition for the students. Specifically, Katie felt that unity was missing which had a negative impact on coherence, coordination, and alignment of curriculum and student programming.

Beyond location and explicit philosophy, implicit philosophies of the programs within the school were also influential. The office often asked Paula's program to do things that were not asked of other classes in the school. The office asked Paula's students to do office work, such as stuffing and addressing envelopes to send information to parents. For example, one day the office called and asked if Paula's students could fold, stuff, and address envelopes for the next day as they needed to go out. While Paula agreed to the request, her distress was also noted in her comment, "so much for my lesson plans tomorrow" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005). In another instance, the principal stopped by Paula's classroom and asked if her students could clean the outside of the school that very day. Paula and her students had previously cleaned the outside during the spring time and had been rewarded with a pizza party; yet, little notice was given or consideration to what students were suppose to be learning that day. Paula felt that there was some educational value to this activity in terms of work experience. And while she

designed it so students had a supervisor and were rewarded for hard work, she still felt trapped into doing it when asked by the principal. In her words, “how could I say no to the principal, my boss?” (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2005).

Paula’s understanding of this aspect of the enactment of curriculum in her program was made clear when a student questioned the request and she clarified for her students why they would take time out of their school day to clean the school.

Why we do it is that we have pride in our school. Second reason is that it helps our school look nice and helps our custodians. And in this class, like Mrs. Murphy’s class [middle school cross-categorical program teacher] we have more freedom. When the principal asks us to do something, he looks for someone in the school who can get the job done (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2005).

Paula continued to explain to her students why her class was chosen and agreed to pick-up trash outside of the school.

We stop what we are doing and go do that. You might think golly the other kids don’t do this. But it gets hot in the school and they are sitting there doing their homework. And if you find money, you get to keep it (Fieldnotes, March 28, 2005).

While the office personnel did not ask Katie’s students to engage in work around the school, other school personnel did have Katie’s program halt plans for the day and participate in non-classroom work. Marilyn, the transition paraprofessional/job coach for the school, asked Katie’s students to stuff registration bags for a community 5K run/walk she was helping to organize. Marilyn requested, and Katie accepted, that her students would take time from classroom activities to stuff the bags with running information and free objects, such as a food clip and toothbrush. Katie set aside time in her fourth and fifth hours and indicated that if there was still a lot to do, her students could start in first hour and continue throughout the class periods until they were all done.

The school/school district was also influential in terms of the enactment of functional curriculum through the influence of board policy and graduation requirements. In River Bend, the school board needed to approve the curriculum that was used in programs or classes. During the time of observations, Paula was in the process of getting her curriculum approved by the school board and curriculum committee. She had to present her graduation requirements and the curriculum materials to the curriculum committee of the school district. The presentation and approval was truly more of “going through the motions” than an influential component to enactment. Despite the fact that Paula needed the curriculum of her categorical program approved, the school listed her classes as just “categorical program”. In the school handbook, the courses of Paula’s program were not broken down, such as history, practical business, life management, and others. Rather, students just had to register for the categorical program and then classes were assigned by Paula’s rotation schedule, what the oldest students needed, and what fit into the school schedule; thus illustrating the value the school placed on Paula’s program and the actual curriculum that occurred within her classes.

At Harborville High School, Katie’s program did not have separate graduation requirements. The majority of students in Katie’s program followed the typical high school diploma requirements. Katie indicated that this meant four years of language arts and at least two years of math (but she usually tried to have her students take three or four years of math). However, Katie did mention that her students had leniency in terms of meeting graduation requirements. For example, students in Katie’s program were allowed to take the health/nutrition course offered from the family/consumer sciences instructor, which was an elective for general education students, and have it count as a science

requirement. Similarly, students in Katie's program were able to take a personal finance class from the same instructor and have it count as a math credit, despite that students in Katie's program also received personal finance from Katie's math class.

School policies, also reflective of the school's philosophy, impacted the enactment of Paula's program. River Bend High School had implemented Responsible Thinking Room (RTR), which is based on Ed Ford's Responsible Thinking Process (see <http://www.responsiblethinking.com>), which found its roots in Perceptual Control Theory, created by William Power (see <http://www.responsiblethinking.com/simple.htm>; Power, 1973). The principles focused on displaying the rules, and when students violated the rules, staff were to ask them to state the rules and have them choose between following the rules or going to RTR. RTR functioned similarly to a time-out or in-school suspension room. Students stayed in RTR and did not return to the program until they wrote a plan and discussed it with their teacher. RTR influenced the enactment of curriculum in Paula's room. Essentially few behavior challenges or discipline issues were handled within the classroom, rather students were sent to RTR. Students could be sent for an hour, or for an entire day, as evident in the following vignettes.

It is ninth hour language arts. Paula says she has an announcement. Dave falls out of his chair and swears. Paula says she did not hear that. Alex says he worked with Dave's dad during first hour. Dave says he works with his dad every day after school [Dave's dad was the high school custodian]. Dave throws a pencil toward Alex, it goes by his face. Paula asks Dave what the rules are. Dave says he just threw a pencil at Alex's stomach. Paula asks Dave what happens if you break the rules. Dave responds "go to RTR." Paula then asks him what he is going to do to change his behavior, to which Dave replies "not throw things in class." Paula tells him she will consider this a warning (Fieldnotes, January 20, 2005).

In the previous vignette, Paula used RTR as a classroom management technique and followed "its proper procedure." While this brief situation distracted the class from

its activities at hand, it did not have as negative impact on the enactment of curriculum as it could, particularly for individual students, in comparison to when a student actually went to RTR as depicted in the following vignette.

It is third hour history class. Paula has handed out some stories that the class is going to read, instead of reading out of the textbook. She instructs the class that they are going to read with each other with everyone reading a paragraph. Paula tells the class to follow Laura, the classroom paraprofessional. Heather starts to read the story about Mark Twain. When she finishes, Laura calls on Devon to read. Devon says he does not want to read anymore. Paula tells Devon that Laura has asked him to do something. Devon starts to mumble. Paula asked Devon what the rules are, to which he replied "you might as well just send me to RTR because I am not going to read." Paula asks Devon what the rules are again. Devon says they are on the wall, and responds with "follow directions." Devon repeats "might as well send me to RTR." Paula says okay and writes a slip. Devon responds "thank you very much" as he takes the slip and leaves. He does not reappear for the rest of the hour (Fieldnotes, February 8, 2005).

The RTR program was not used at Harborville High School, and thus discipline or behavioral issues were addressed in the classroom with teachers and paraprofessional or through the office with the principal or assistant principal. Katie's classroom management plan was based on a carding system. Students were "carded" for particular behaviors, such as swearing, repeated refusal to follow directions, and pop or food in class. There were six levels to the system with points attached. When students got to the fourth level, a note was sent home to parents explaining the student's choices for the day. On the fifth level parents were called and the sixth level evoked a meeting with parents and the principal. The following vignettes illustrate the enactment of the card system in Katie's program.

It is second hour math class. Katie is telling the class personal stories about her work experience, as they are discussing time cards, punching in, budgets, and other math concepts related to working on living on one's own. Katie then steps into the hallway to talk to a previous student. Derek makes a comment to Adam about saying hello to his girlfriend, who is out in the hallway [a previous student in the class whose parents decided to home school for the rest of the school year].

Andy tells Derek to “shut up” and the boys argue back and forth about who asked whom out, who said no, and if it was a joke. Doug tries to join in the conversation. Derek tells him to “shut up.” Mrs. Buckland (the paraprofessional) tells Derek three times to stop, but Derek continues. Mrs. Buckland tells Derek that he needs to card himself. Doug continues to talk to Derek, and Derek responds. Finally Doug moves and Mrs. Buckland cards Derek, meaning she moves his card from green (the first level) to red (the second level) (Fieldnotes, February 11, 2005).

The different offenses that would get students carded were listed in the classroom at the front of the room, such as having to be repeatedly asked to follow directions, swearing, and being disrespectful.

The carding system worked to various degrees, depending on the student and the situation. In the previous vignette Derek never flipped his own card, which was typically the case, nor did it deter his behavior. The following vignette depicts another example of the use of the card system in Katie’s program.

It is the start of fifth hour life skills class. Katie has her students stuffing bags for Marilyn and the upcoming community 5K. Marilyn, Katie, and Brenda are all present in the room. Mark says “sucks” in response to stuffing bags and Marilyn talks to him about not using that word and warns him if he uses that word again he will have to sit down in the chair. Mark continues not to work very well, just throwing the papers he is suppose to be stuffing into the bags. Marilyn talks to him about being respectful. Marilyn then asks if he could do it nicely. Mark responds “no”. Marilyn [in a loud voice] states “stop, stop, stop.” The assembly line of students stuffing bags stops. Marilyn tells Mark to card himself and take a time-out. She states that she does not like his attitude. Mark is directed by Marilyn to the time-out area at the front of the room and his card is flipped. Mark moves back to his seat, smiling at Miguel as he moves back. Katie tells him to work on his social studies now. Doug starts to tease Mark, who responds with “shut up.” Katie tells Mark to stop and repeats, “stop it right now.” Mark is moved again to the table at the front of the room (Fieldnotes, February 13, 2005).

The card level system represented an appearance of classroom management, despite its somewhat limited effectiveness with the students from time-to-time.

Teacher factor. In both self-contained cross-categorical programs teacher factors impacted the enactment of functional curriculum. While this seems intuitive given it is

usually teachers who are responsible for implementing curriculum in classrooms, it is the various aspects of “teachers” that affected the enactment of functional curriculum that is worth discussing. Teachers were influential in terms of their histories and their current positions, including teacher preparation, beliefs and philosophies, expectations, ways they positioned themselves in the classroom and the school, and finally in their absence.

Teachers’ histories, especially their pre-service preparation, was influential in terms of the enactment of functional curriculum. While both teachers coincidentally attended the same mid-size teacher preparation university in Michigan, they had different teacher preparation experiences. They attended the university about four years apart; however, the differences were based more on their own focus than the time frame that they were at the university. Katie focused her preparation on secondary education, with a plan to teach at the high school level. Her field experiences occurred in high school programs, both resource and categorical. She also took a long term subbing position at a nearby high school in a categorical program after she graduated before she started her position at Harborville High School.

Paula, returning to get her bachelor’s degree in education following 25 years in the business world, planned on working in an elementary special education resource room program and her pre-service teacher preparation field experiences all consisted of placements in elementary general education and resource room classrooms. However, she ended up working in a high school resource room in another district in the same county for her first job. She took a high school position because it was offered, not because she had intended to teach high school students. While Paula referred to her high schoolers as, “not scary... same needs, just taller,” she did seem to sometimes struggle with the

realization that they were in fact in high school with adolescent issues, needs, and desires for activities (Interview, March 15, 2005). Paula's teacher preparation field experiences consisted of three placements in elementary classrooms, including both general education and resource room.

Both teachers' histories had an impact on the enactment of functional curriculum in their programs. Katie brought a perspective of wanting to work in high school special education classes, while Paula's original focus was on elementary. Paula's elementary background filtered into the classroom. She had a tendency to enact more traditional "elementary activities" and treat her students in a younger fashion. For example, on Valentine's Day she brought in a Valentine's Day cake, Valentine's Day presents (pencils with a note written on a heart), and had her students engage in Valentine's Day activities, including estimation of the number of confectionist hearts and a Valentine's Day word search. Paula herself was at least somewhat aware of the inappropriateness of all this, indicating that she had not used this activity since she worked in an elementary field placement.

As a result of Katie's history with categorical programs she was able to bring ideas into the class regarding the enactment of functional curriculum. Katie's previous experience was beneficial when she was given a classroom and a program with one set of materials. As Katie said, she was told "Here's the room and the books" as she was shown the *Life Centered Career Education* curriculum model that had been purchased. Her previous experiences gave her ideas and strategies.

Besides teacher preparation experience with high school special education programs, Katie also had experience with "categorical" special education programs at the

high school level. Paula did not have experience with “categorical” programs, and hence was less prepared for her transition from a resource room program to a cross-categorical self-contained program. Even five years later, she admitted still struggling with this type of service delivery model. Paula frequently felt frustrated with a lack of research-based curriculum and with the ability levels of the students. Katie, on the other hand, appeared very comfortable with the service delivery model she taught in. While she did not have a concrete written curriculum, she was not as concerned as Paula about having a research-based curriculum. While Katie had ideas about what she wanted her students to be learning, she was open to other colleague’s suggestions. For example, Katie added a weightlifting component to her social studies class per the urging of Marilyn (the transition paraprofessional).

Teachers’ beliefs and philosophies, both explicit and implicit, were also influential on the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Paula had trouble identifying her personal philosophy. At first, she focused on just wanting to stay away from key phrases and catch words. Later she stated her philosophy as, “I want to present reality to them... and them to me” (Fieldnotes, February 22, 2005). However, Paula did not clarify what she meant by reality or how she saw herself or her students presenting it. At a later date, Paula re-explained her philosophy, saying she had thought more about it. Paula stated that her philosophy was simple, “to help students reach their goals and make decisions” (March 15, 2005). She indicated that this philosophy was the reason she bought a particular poster on her wall, and gestured to the poster, which read “Your teacher’s goal is simple. To help you reach yours.”

Katie also had difficulty identifying her teaching philosophy; at first joking that “it would change day-by-day” (Interview, June 14, 2005). Later, upon reflection, Katie articulated that her philosophy could be encapsulated as “to give students an opportunity to find something they can relate to and to teach them the basics of respect. Having respect for others is probably one of the most important things for me” (Interview, June 14, 2005). While Katie indicated this was her philosophy, her implicit philosophy involved a strong devotion to preparing students to be employable and have success post-school in terms of employment and independent living. For example, Katie indicated that cooking was one of the most important curricular components for students, along with budgeting and basic reading for job applications, descriptions, and directions. Katie even stated, at a different time, that she hoped her students would be working and be independent in terms of life skills.

Teachers’ beliefs were not always as straight-forward as their direct statements. Many of the teachers’ beliefs were implicit and revealed through their actions and comments in conversation, as opposed to direct statements in interviews when asked to define their philosophy. Both teachers held the belief that their “categorical” program was different from the resource room programs offered at their schools. Paula frequently discussed not utilizing parts of her curriculum that she implemented in her previous position as a resource room teacher at a high school, indicative of her belief structure of the differences between these two programs.

Paula discussed her thesis for the master’s degree, which was based on transition for students with learning disabilities. Based on her research, she felt *The Transition Curriculum* was great for students with learning disabilities, yet expressed that it did not,

and would not, work for a “categorical” program. Paula explained that it was mostly worksheets. She also commented that the curriculum focused on getting guest speakers, which was hard for only four students. Similarly, Paula’s perceived difference between her current “categorical” program and her previous resource room program as well as current resource room programs at her school was evident in her discussion of *Seven Highly Effective Habits for Teenagers*. A student in Paula’s academic support class stated that she was reading it in her resource room program. Paula told her class that she used to teach this book in her previous job [to students with learning disabilities], but it was not appropriate here. She indicated that it was too bad because she had curriculum on it.

Katie also held a belief that her “categorical” program was different from the resource room program, although expressed these thoughts in more implicit ways. For example, Katie commented that high school students should be able to advocate for themselves. She felt that by high school the responsibility for advocating should fall on students, and teachers should not need to remind them about turning in assignments or nag them to take responsibility. However, Katie did mention that was especially true for students who were going to college, subtly implying that it was not quite as pertinent for her students. Katie also expressed the difference between her students and students in the resource room programs when she discussed responsibilities in the general education classes. Katie indicated that she would be putting more of her students out in general education courses the following school year, but that it was mainly for social purposes and they would be held accountable for only taking a few notes. This stood in contrast to the resource room students for whom general education classes were for social reasons, but primarily to provide them with the academic content that they were accountable for.

Other special education teachers at Harborville High School commented on the differences between Katie's program and the resource room programs in the school. A large difference noted was that students in the resource room programs participated in general education classes. They were included in all general education classes except for study skills and possibly one pull-out resource room math class, which were taught in a resource room. Katie's students in contrast were rarely included in general education classes, aside from electives. The teachers commented that students coming from the middle school "categorical" program would be unprepared to be in a high school resource room, particularly at Harborville High School with its emphasis on inclusive classes.

Paula and Katie both acknowledged differences between categorical and resource room programs at their schools, which served to reinforce their belief structures and ultimately impacted the enactment of functional curriculum. One obvious indication in both schools that the "categorical" program was viewed as different from the resource room programs was that school personnel asked the "categorical" classes to do things that were not asked of other classes, such as projects or activities that essentially put their "curriculum" on hold. This reverberated the belief that the "categorical" program curriculum was less important than the resource room or general education curricula. While not specifically stated by the teachers, they may have internalized this belief as they continued to accept jobs or activities from various school personnel that deterred them from enacting the written curriculum.

Katie held a belief of the co-construction of the enactment of functional curriculum between her and her students. She saw a reciprocal relationship of teaching and learning between herself and them. This was evident from a conversation that Katie

had with her students in which she commented that she learns from them. Jon (a senior in her program) replied, “You’re not suppose to be learning stuff from us, you’re the teacher. We are suppose to be learning stuff from you” (Fieldnotes, January 7, 2005). Katie responded, “No, that’s not correct. As the teacher, I hope you learn a lot from me, but I learn things from you everyday” (Fieldnotes, January 7, 2005). Katie went on to illuminate in a joking manner that it was not always the most positive of things she learned from them, such as phonetic spelling of words, but she was nonetheless learning.

While Paula did not specifically state that she learned from her students in the same manner as Katie, she did imply that she not only learned from her students but that they informed her role in the enactment of functional curriculum, thus illustrating a position towards the co-construction of functional curriculum in Paula’s program. The role of Paula’s students in the co-construction of the enactment of functional curriculum was apparent in Paula’s comment that she continued to tell stories of her life and that her former students returned to express appreciation for “listening to what life is like outside of school and finding out it is true” (Interview, February 22, 2005). Paula said she not only continued to tell her stories to her students based on what previous students have told her, but also chose functional curriculum components to enact based on them. She stated, “this is based on what past students have come back and said” when questioned what components of functional curriculum she enacts that she felt were the most beneficial to students. Students sharing stories, in addition to Paula sharing stories, was another means by which Paula supported the co-construction of the enactment with her students, as she encouraged students to share stories.

In addition to beliefs, teachers' expectations of their students and the program were important. Paula, for one, exhibited quite low expectations of some of her students throughout the observations, both in the comments she made and in tasks she gave them. Paula made comments about her students as being, "really low functioning" and implying that some would not live independently on their own, but live in some kind of institution when the time arose. Similarly, she indicated that she felt all her students would qualify for one of two after-high school programs organized for the county school districts through the Intermediate School District, which were designed for those who were lower functioning and in need of additional life skills for a greater chance at post-school success. This perspective suggested that Paula doubted that any of her students would have the life or functional skills to succeed post-school after her program. Paula had also expressed doubt about her students' ability to perform on the alternate assessment for the state's general large scale assessment, an alternate assessment designed for students with mild cognitive impairment. She feared it would be too difficult for her students, who were primarily categorized as mild mentally impaired and learning disabled.

Paula's differential expectations of her students were also evident in the tasks she assigned them and the educational programs she helped to establish for them. For example Paula made comments that Becky, a freshman in her program, would not be going into any general education classes, as Paula feared that she could not handle it. She was also concerned that Becky was not getting anything from her program at River Bend High School and suggested to the family that Becky would be better served at the country center-based program. However, Becky was tested to have a reading ability at a fifth grade level, the highest recorded of any of Paula's students in the research project.

Paula's low expectations of Becky were evident also in what she asked her to do for her classes. Paula would not let Becky work in their school store, and during the Practical Business class she would most frequently assign Becky to cleaning the windows and straightening the merchandise of the store, as opposed to more cognitively demanding tasks.

These low expectations of Becky were in contrast to Paula's differential treatment of other students in her program. For example, Holly was frequently asked to make copies and run errands for Paula. If Paula needed something done at the office or something delivered to the Responsible Thinking Room, Holly was sent. Despite that Holly and Becky were the same grade, Paula had higher expectations, trust, and feelings of competence in Holly than Becky and some others. Similarly, while there was a practical business course devoted to maintaining the store, Paula did not always bring all the students in the practical business class to the store with her. She was most apt to bring Jim and Holly to the store, and even when she brought everyone Holly and Jim were given the most demanding tasks, such as cleaning the cappuccino machine or working with the money.

Katie also had expectations of her students which influenced the enactment of her curriculum. Katie expected her students to have respect for her, each other, and other adults in the program and to consider her program as preparation for their post-school life, such as employment. Katie tried frequently to connect applications in the classroom to real-world experience. Her main concern for her students involved them advocating for themselves. She did not want them to be taken advantage of by others nor did she want

them to be taken care of by society; she wanted her students to be able to function in society.

Katie expected most of her students to seek employment after they graduated, so this became a focus of the program and thus the enactment of curriculum. She discussed that her program focused on getting students out into the community and allowing them to see job opportunities and helping them to figure out what they might like to do. She commented that “they can all do something. It is just finding that,” and discussed her concern over the depleting job market for individuals like her students, noting that grocery stores no longer need workers to take care of pop cans or individuals whose job it was to just bag the groceries. She expected that the vast majority of her students could hold down jobs, stating “... maybe a little different, but all can work at something.”

While Katie held expectations that her students could be successful in life, and expected them to have respect and work hard in her classroom to prepare them for their post-school life, she was also realistic. Katie recognized that to be successful some of her students would need to break away from their families, whether because already at 15 they were the ones that were holding together the family and bailing them out when they got into trouble or because their families were holding them back from becoming independent out of fear of the student leaving home. She also knew that her students would always carry a label with them, even when they went out into the work-force, commenting “stereotypes will always be there. These kids will always be that special education kid” (Interview, June 14, 2005).

The teachers from these two programs were both highly influential in the enactment of functional curriculum because they both created their programs. Paula

created the “categorical” at River Bend High School, which was really a cross-categorical program but referred to as “categorical.” Paula started at River Bend High School five years before this study, the year the program was started at the high school. She was given relative freedom over the curriculum. Hence, Paula was not only able to choose the classes that were to be included in her program, but also the content that would go into those classes. Paula indicated that when she started the program, she did not have experience with categorical students and did not know what curriculum materials to start with. She stated, “For the first four years, I used mostly purchased stuff because curriculum that is published for this level is written more for resource room higher functioning... Watering down was... well, it was easier to go out and get my own stuff” (Interview, March 15, 2005).

Katie also helped to create the “categorical” program at Harborville High School. In fact, she stated that it was basically she who chose the curriculum, although she had to fit it into the different state benchmarks and guides. She assumed the role of teacher of the cross-categorical classroom at Harborville High School the year after it was started. The first teacher only stayed one year. Katie moved from a resource room position at Harborville High School to the “categorical” classroom for its second year of inception and her second year of teaching. Hence, Katie crafted the “categorical” classroom to be as she would like. She chose the classes she would teach, the content that she would have, and the starting of the school store.

Katie stated that she had a lot of freedom in her program to select the curriculum for her program. When she first started, she was told “here is the room and the books.” The book referred to the *Life Centered Career Education* (Brolin, 1997) curriculum

model that Katie inherited when she took over the categorical room. This was the sole curriculum model purchased for the program. The lack of available curriculum models within the program, and Katie's autonomy with the curriculum, prompted her to start the school store. The school store then not only created a curriculum to help students learn functional skills, but also generated money for Katie to purchase other curriculum materials.

Teachers' absence was also prominent in the enactment of functional curriculum, meaning that teachers' presence or lack thereof impacted the curriculum. For one, parts of the written curriculum could not always be enacted when the teacher was not present. For example, one day when Katie had to go to an Intermediate School District special education inservice in the afternoon, Brenda (the classroom paraprofessional) was left as the substitute teacher of the class. Katie had left an assignment for Brenda to have the students work on that involved exploring profit margins based on what was sold at the school store. However, Katie did not have instructions written on the sheet and neither the students, Brenda, nor the researcher, could understand exactly what was being asked of them. Hence, the worksheet did not get completed and the written curriculum was not enacted in Katie's absence.

Katie's presence was important; however, she was absent frequently during the period of observations, though it was usually only for a class period or two. Katie had Individual Education Plan meetings, behavioral plan meetings, inservice meetings at the county Intermediate School District office as well as situations in her personal life, such as the death of her grandfather and her own health problems. Katie's absence did impact the enactment. In her hourly or half-day absences, the "curriculum" would become board

games or movies, thus detracting from the usual functional and academic nature of the curriculum.

The enactment of curriculum in Paula's classroom was also impacted when she was absent. Just prior to the start of data collection, Paula had been absent from her classroom due to a surgery. She returned just shortly before the data collection in her program began and hence her reactions to the program and the enacted curriculum in her absence were noted. For example, on the first day of observations in Paula's room she commented on the students not completing what she had left for them to do with the substitute teacher.

It is the beginning of Paula's seventh hour math period. Paula instructs her students to get out their calendar packets to correct them. As the students get out their materials, Paula calls Heather out into her "office" [the hallway]. When Paula returns she asks the students to open their workbooks to the last page they stopped at and indicates they are going to correct some. The students tell her that they have a lot left. Paula comments that the sub told her that all the students had turned in the calendar workbooks and that they were all done. Paula decides to let the students have some time to work in class. She starts to help the students with their work on the calendars. Paula pauses and states again that the substitute teacher had told her that all the students were totally done with the calendar workbooks. She stated that the students still had a lot to do. Paula has the students continue to work (Fieldnotes, January 18, 2005).

This vignette illustrates that the enacted curriculum was impacted by Paula's absence.

Not only did the students not get the work done they were suppose to, and one can speculate what they were doing with their time instead, but it also influenced what Paula did in her math class for the next several days. In fact, Paula's students worked on the calendar worksheets for another week until they had finished them. A similar situation occurred when Paula was absent for four days one week during the course of data collection. She returned to find out that the students had only done Tuesday's work and not Wednesday's or Thursday's in their life management course.

Paraprofessional factor. While not a factor originally hypothesized as being influential on the enactment of functional curriculum in either rural self-contained cross-categorical secondary special education program, the impact of paraprofessionals was found. In fact, paraprofessionals were found to be very influential on the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. However, they appeared to have slightly more impact in Katie's program at Harborville High School.

Paraprofessionals in both programs had interesting roles, which were continually renegotiated between the themselves and the teacher. The cross-categorical program at Harborville had two paraprofessionals. One was assigned to the classroom, Brenda Buckland, while the other was a paraprofessional (Whitney Wolf) assigned through the Intermediate School District to work with two boys in the program who were Autistically Impaired. While Brenda was the "classroom aide", it was her first time working in the high school and in Katie's program; previously she had been assigned to the elementary self-contained program and as a Title One reading aide. Whitney, in contrast, had worked with the program for the last three years, serving the same two boys; yet was not always in the classroom because she also served the two boys in their general education classes.

Katie, Brenda, and Whitney co-constructed their positions through their discourse and actions in and outside of the classroom. The paraprofessionals themselves were confused as to their role, as were the students, and this confusion impacted the enactment of curriculum within the classroom. At times the paraprofessionals acted as teachers, as they created activities and implemented curriculum. However at other times their roles were more of an "aide," such as making photocopies and doing support activities. Their own confusion over their role was evident in their discourse. Brenda made comments that

she had a lack of power in the classroom and the school, stating, “I am just a parapro” (Fieldnotes, February 25, 2005). She expressed that she felt this lack of power because she was not making decisions and she did not agree with decisions made in the classroom. For example, Brenda was assigned to work with three students in computers class during sixth hour. Brenda resented her assignment, despite wanting the hour of work. She felt she would be more beneficial to students by working one-on-one with some of them to teach them to read, as this was her specialty.

The paraprofessionals in Paula’s program also experienced some confusion over their role. There were two paraprofessionals assigned to Paula’s program, but at separate times. Laura worked in the program in the morning and went to a different position in the afternoon, when Sabrina came in. The paraprofessionals in Paula’s program were assigned to work in her classroom, assist students in general education classes, and assist with secretarial duties, such as making photocopies and typing things for Paula. In fact, one day when Laura was gone in the morning and Paula needed some stencils cut she remarked how difficult it was as she was not use to doing this work. The confusion related to their role was aided by Paula, as she once told Laura, “You are a teacher. You are another teacher... you are one of us.”

The paraprofessionals that were involved with the two programs brought both benefits and challenges to the programs in which they worked. Or, in other words, the paraprofessionals both positively and negatively impacted the enactment of functional curriculum within the programs. At times the paraprofessionals engaged in behavior that resulted in benefits to the enactment, noted by a student at Harborville with his comment “we need more parapros” (when all were tied up helping other students). However, at

other times, the paraprofessionals actually made choices in their actions and comments that negatively impacted the curriculum enactment.

Whitney and Brenda positively impacted the enactment of curriculum in Harborville as they assisted in the construction of curriculum within the program. Their construction, or co-construction, of the curriculum within the classroom occurred both when Katie was present and when she was absent.

It is third hour. Katie is not in the class. She is at an IEP, which started during 1st hour. The students have entered and the bell has rung. The students are sitting and standing around talking. Brenda and Whitney are standing around as well. Katie has not left anything for lesson plans for third hour as she thought she would be back from the IEP. Whitney speaks up. She tells the students to get a newspaper, pick an article, read it, write at least four sentences on it, and be prepared to read what they wrote in front of the class. The students grab a newspaper and start to work (Fieldnotes, February 14, 2005).

In the previous narrative vignette, Whitney constructed the curriculum during a time when Katie was absent and no curriculum was pre-arranged. When Katie returned to the class from the IEP meeting, she supported the curriculum enacted by Whitney. She entered the classroom, saw the instructions on the white board and told the students they needed to be prepared to share their article with the class. Thus, in this situation, Katie supported the enactment of the curriculum by Whitney in the classroom. Brenda also created curriculum for the students. For example, one day she gave a student an assignment when he refused to do the work he was assigned. Brenda told the student to write a whole paper on what he did yesterday, including what he did and who he was with. While this example involves a single student, at other times Brenda enacted curriculum for the whole class, or groups of students, such as when she chose the novel for language arts class and led the class period while they read the book.

However, not all influence from the paraprofessionals in Katie's program was positive. In fact, some impact was actually negative. At times, Brenda or Whitney would demonstrate a great deal of power and construct curriculum that was not appropriate or was against what Katie wanted. There were also instances in which the paraprofessionals gave students misleading, incorrect, or biased information when constructing or assisting in the construction of the curriculum, such as depicted below.

It is the very beginning of first hour in Katie's class. Students are watching Channel 1, a news television for schools. The program on Channel 1 is about President Bush's appointment for the Attorney General, Alberto Gonzales. The program was discussing his controversial appointment, per allegations over the allowance of torture of prisoners. When the program went to commercial Brenda, the classroom paraprofessional, wrote on the board a question for the students to contemplate, "Should we allow torture of terrorists?" After Channel 1 was over, Brenda pushed for students to discuss the question. She went into an explanation of the Geneva Convention and rules of war. The students then discussed these topics. They voiced their opinions on war and terrorists. Brenda then started talking that the Geneva Convention does not apply to terrorists. It appeared as if she was leading students to see that it was okay to torture terrorists. Whitney interjected stating that she thought that the Geneva Convention did apply to terrorists. Katie concurred, saying that she thought anyone captured was a prisoner of war, regardless of who they were, and hence were included under the treaty. Brenda then started to discuss what Iraq insurgents were doing to Americans, stating that they were beheading Americans and had no respect for life. Derek spoke up with a point, saying that it would not be okay to torture terrorists as we would not want them to do this to us. Derek then stated, "We get mad when we are beheaded then why is it okay for us to torture them?" Katie then commented that Derek made a good point, saying that two wrongs do not make a right (Fieldnotes, January 7, 2005).

In the previous vignette, Brenda was leading students to see that torture was acceptable, and even argued against their opinions that were contrary to her own. She was letting her opinion bias the students and inhibited them from forming their own, a possible negative impact of the influence of paraprofessionals.

Brenda also gave erroneous information at other times. For instance, one day in Katie's life skills course the students were reading an article from a *Current Science*

magazine. The article was discussing food made from blood that a Russian meat processing company was trying to develop to prevent waste (i.e. blood). The students were making faces and stating that it would be gross to eat food made from parts of blood, such as the chocolate pudding the article showed. At the end of the discussion, Brenda made a comment that food from blood may be gross to us because it is a cultural thing and that other cultures and countries already make food from blood. Brenda then went on to suggest that countries such as India and China already put blood into their foods, which is not factual or correct information and also positioned students to have negative opinions of other countries and cultures.

While the paraprofessionals in Paula's program influenced the enactment of functional curriculum, it was in different ways. The differential impact of the paraprofessionals in the programs was more likely related to their different roles. The paraprofessionals in Paula's program were assigned primarily to students, to be with them in general education classes and then when not in the general education classes to help students in Paula's room. Paula stated their role as, "to be the students' aide in general education classes, but when in my room, it is to help the students in here" (Interview, March 15, 2005). She even indicated that they were to be the "eyes and ears to the students."

Paraprofessionals in Katie's program were assigned to different roles than those in Paula's and even different than from each other. Brenda, the classroom paraprofessional, was assigned to the classroom, whereas Whitney was assigned to work with two boys in Katie's program with Autism exclusively and supported them both in Katie's program and general education classes. Brenda described her role as to "see how

things are presented and listen to how the students voice their concerns. Then I try to smooth things out.”

Laura and Sabrina, the paraprofessionals in Paula’s room, did see themselves as important in the classrooms, and thus impacting the enactment of curriculum. Sabrina made comments such as, “I know *we* tell them to study, they won’t” in reaction to the spelling tests in language arts class, indicating her perspective of her role in the program (Fieldnotes, February 8, 2005). Paula reinforced the impact of paraprofessional by keeping them updated on activities in the class, such as one day when Paula was telling Sabrina the language arts activities for the week, “we are just going to read them [spelling words]. That’s all I am going to do. That should be more structure than the way I was doing it.” Sabrina responded, “It keeps them busy,” suggesting that she felt keeping students busy was a responsibility of the curriculum and herself (Fieldnotes, February 8, 2005).

The paraprofessionals in Paula’s program were also responsible for leading instruction at times in Paula’s class, similar to Katie’s. However, Laura or Sabrina leading the class occurred less because Paula was not there, but more to enable her to do other things such as grading or talking with a student. For example, one day during language arts class Paula needed to take Heather out into the hallway, her “office”, to talk to her about her behavior choices. She asked Sabrina to read an article in the *Action* magazine with students. Sabrina started the article and then called on students to read. Similarly, Laura frequently led instruction in history class even when Paula was present in the room. Paula would typically tell Laura what she wanted and Laura would enact the curriculum. Paula was comfortable with this, much more than having the

paraprofessionals do secretary-like tasks. This was indicative from Paula's comments, "I am uncomfortable giving them [paraprofessionals] things to copy. Laura is the only aide I have ever had to do that. They are paraeducators. I want them to take my lesson and help me work it out" (Fieldnotes, February 15, 2005).

Students factor. Besides teachers, students were extremely influential as to the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Students were influential on many levels, including: their disability classification, their histories, their capabilities, and their needs. The impact of the students themselves was commented on by the teachers. Paula stated, "Everything I do [in my program] is driven by them [the students]" (Interview, February 22, 2005). She discussed that she designed her program to meet the needs of her students, to give them what they needed to be prepared for life after high school.

Katie also felt her students impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in her program. Katie stated that they impacted the curriculum enactment "tremendously." She alluded to her students of four years ago, describing them as happy, go with the flow, enjoyed new things, and putting forth effort. She contrasted this group to her current students, who she discussed as having motivational, behavioral, and self-esteem issues. And according to Katie, "When you have behavior problems and self-esteem issues, it impacts it [curriculum enactment]. It absorbs more of your time" (Interview, June 14, 2005).

Students' histories impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Students' histories included both their personal or family histories and their school histories. Students' school histories in both programs were largely tied to being in special education. Students may have been in general education classes in elementary

school, but they were placed in cross-categorical programs by middle school; and their experiences in middle school impacted their experiences in high school, and hence the enactment of curriculum.

Both Katie and her students discussed problems with the cross-categorical middle school program in Harborville. Katie mentioned that students were asked to do so little in the program in the middle school; thus, when they came to her in high school they had no motivation. Motivation, because of her students' school histories, became one of the largest impediments to the positive enactment of functional curriculum in her program. Besides Katie noting the challenges with the middle school program and its impact on her own program, her students also discussed their frustration with their middle school educational opportunities. Adam, a ninth grader who just came from the middle school program, stated that "high school is better than middle school, they are more opportunities" (Interview, February 4, 2005). And while Adam felt being in this program at the high school was better than middle school, it was at the high school where he was teased both in and outside of the classroom and had few friends. Sara, a junior in Katie's program, echoed similar sentiments, saying that middle school did not help her at all. Sara stated that all they did was play games and she was not happy nor did she learn anything.

Brenda, the paraprofessional in the program, also supported the challenges students faced with the middle school program and their impact on the high school program. Brenda stated, "Forget that they are ruining these kids during the middle school year. The kids hate school over there because they don't do anything" (Interview, February 24, 2005). Other teachers at Harborville High School also noted the difficulty

with the middle school categorical teacher and the influence on Katie's program. They confirmed their knowledge that students did very little in the program and were unprepared for high school when they entered.

Paula also felt frustration over her students' middle school years, and the impact of the middle school program from which her students came on her own cross-categorical program. While the students in her program were not as negative towards their middle school years as the students in Harborville, Paula was upset. Paula's frustration with the middle school program existed with the teacher. Paula discussed feeling frustrated that once she selected curriculum materials, particularly textbooks, the middle school teacher then selected the same textbooks for some of her courses. Hence, Paula felt that this would negatively affect her curriculum and program as students would be forced to possibly learn the same material twice. Paula also felt frustrated with the middle school teacher as she refused to meet with the "categorical" teachers in the district to discuss a K-12 curriculum for their programs. Paula also felt this negatively influenced the enactment of curriculum in her program, as well as the success of her program.

Besides students' school histories, their personal histories were also important. Many students in both programs came from less than ideal home situations. Their personal histories made the service curriculum aspect of both program essential and resulted in a focus on more than just academics, or in the case of these programs, more than just functional curriculum. Many of the students came from single parent homes, or lived with individuals other than their biological parents, such as other family members or foster care homes. The majority of their lives were chaotic, and school was a place to escape their chaotic lives. Their lives influenced the enactment, as certain aspects of

curriculum became less important, and helping students address the challenges in their lives took precedent. For example, Paula had her office and RTR for students to go to calm down, whereas Katie's classroom had two backrooms that could serve as time-out rooms for students to unwind.

Katie commented on the impact of her students' personal histories and how that affected both the future outlook of her students as well as her enacted curriculum. Katie discussed how some of her students could be really successful if they were able to break away from their families, but that was difficult for them. She indicated that some students were the glue that held their families together and that they might forever need to come back and "bail them out", while others were held back from independence out of their parents fear that the student might then leave them. Katie implied that she incorporated this knowledge into her curriculum and that it was evident in her focus on independent living skills, budgeting, and daily living skills, such as cooking. She talked about how she tried to do cooking in her class and to teach her students a variety of things, such as how to make basic meals like macaroni and cheese as well as more nutritious meals with a variety of different kinds of food. In addition to her focus on helping her students to develop more independent living skills, knowing that some of them were not receiving this at home, Katie also felt that her students would benefit greatly from having a school social worker in the classroom with them on a daily basis. Katie expressed that her students had a lot of family issues that needed resolving and the assistance a school social worker could provide an important part of curriculum enactment she wished she could have.

Students' disabilities, or more aptly certification or level of functioning, impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Both Paula and Katie spoke of the functioning level of their students, with regards to academic abilities and skills, particularly reading. Paula indicated that her current students were at higher levels than her past students, that her previous students had lower reading abilities and were generally lower in cognitive ability. Katie, however, commented on the opposite. She felt her current students were at a lower ability level than her previous groups, and also that their behavior was worse. Katie stated that, "when you have more behavior problems and self-esteem issues, it impact it [curriculum enactment]. It absorbs more of your time."

Students' certification or evaluations of their abilities, both academically and behaviorally, resulted in their placement in "categorical" programs. However, the reasons they were placed into these programs also became a reason why curriculum enactment was limited. As Paula discussed, there was little curriculum materials available for her population of students. She stated that, "Most stuff is designed for learning disabilities", and made comments to the effect, "If I was going to teach students with learning disabilities, I would do that, but they aren't going into health care positions" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005). Paula frequently felt that the materials she used in her previous position as a resource room teacher were not appropriate for her program now and the students she had. She indicated that her students were too low, meaning too low functioning, and thus the materials were not appropriate. Yet, she felt constrained with such few appropriate instructional materials available.

Students themselves were somewhat aware that their disabilities impacted their enactment of curriculum. Some of the students in the programs felt limited in course

offerings because they were in special education, because of their disability. Katie's students in particular expressed frustration because they felt their disability prevented them from being able to take certain classes, such as biology. Sara expressed a strong desire to take biology, especially noting that she wanted to participate in dissection, but that she could not. Adam also indicated that he felt his disability limited him. He discussed not wanting to be in certain classes of Katie's, but wanting to be out in general education classes more because of the stigma that existed with being "special education."

Curriculum materials factor. The curriculum materials used, or not used, by both programs impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. Neither program employed an "official" functional curriculum model, meaning that neither implemented a commercially-available functional curriculum model, but created their curriculum through piece-meal. Thus, "piece-mealing" by both teachers resulted in positive and negative implications.

As a result of both Katie's and Paula's "piece-mealing," their functional curriculum consisted of some purchased materials, some borrowed materials, and some created materials. They owned books, photocopied from other material, when they did not have enough for their students or did not own, or the used materials from the Internet. The motto for the curriculum materials was to use whatever was available and "be flexible," according to the teachers and researcher observations.

Paula discussed why the curriculum materials in her program were "piece-mealed." She discussed the lack of materials that were available, particularly research-based curriculum materials for her "categorical" or cross-categorical program. She indicated that the special education director at her district encouraged the use of research-

based materials, which she explored and could not find any for the population she taught. Paula lamented over the curriculum materials for students with learning disabilities, or in other words, students in resource room programs, “Most stuff is designed for students with learning disabilities. Their reading levels [her students] are low, as low as 2.3, but generally between 3 and 4” (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005). Paula was frustrated with the “available” curricula because she felt their reading levels were too above those of her students, which averaged between a third and fourth grade level.

To compensate for a “lack of formal curriculum”, Paula felt she needed to create her own; to “be creative” in her words. Yet, Paula reiterated that she was not creative. Hence, Paula felt somewhat trapped. She wanted curriculum materials to achieve her goal of providing a mixture of academic and work-related curriculum, but felt there were not commercially-available curricula to meet her needs, nor did she feel “creative” enough to devise her own. Interestingly, while Paula continually discussed her lack of creativity, she mentioned that she had created her own curriculum, one that was loosely based on a commercially-available model, when she was working on her master’s degree.

Katie did not create much of her own materials, but did create a curriculum through piece-meal using resources or materials available. Many of her materials were photocopies – photocopies of workbooks, novels, and other materials. Katie illuminated why much of her actual materials were photocopies, particularly for social studies and math. She explained that photocopies were used because she did not have many resources to secure curriculum materials. Katie said her program was given \$800 when it was started and had not received any additional funding. To purchase additional material, Katie used money made from the school store that her program operated during lunches

as part of a class. From this money, she purchased kitchen materials, including appliances and ingredients, novels for language arts class, workbooks for social studies and other materials for projects.

Katie referred to her curriculum enactment in terms “taking different things and piecing them together” (Interview, January 27, 2005). She repeatedly acknowledged a lack of formal curriculum models from when she inherited the “categorical” room one year after it was created. Katie stated that she was given the *Life Centered Career Education* (Brolin, 1997) curriculum model and was essentially shown the room and told “Here is the room and the books.” She indicated that because of the lack of formal curriculum materials when she started, her room became a dumping ground for all special education resource materials. She said that she hated “to get rid of anything in case a student can use it. Something may connect with a student.” Katie talked about the varying abilities of students in her room and that she thought a range of curricular materials would be helpful because students come in at different levels and have different interests.

The lack of a “formal” curriculum model used in Katie’s program was noted by the paraprofessional Brenda, with a hint of frustration. When questioned about the curricula in Katie’s program, she responded “I don’t understand what the curriculum is up here” (Interview, February 24, 2005). Brenda went on to illuminate that in the elementary schools, her previous aid positions, the curriculum was sequential and progressive, and therefore “everyone knew what was expected and what to expect” (Interview, February 24, 2005). She contrasted this to Katie’s program, commenting that she had “never seen anything” and that she does “not know where to go” in terms of helping the students and moving them forward.

Conclusion of Impact of Factors

It was hypothesized that many factors would impact the enactment of curriculum in rural, secondary, self-contained, cross-categorical programs, including: policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, and curriculum materials (see Appendix G for a summary table of factors per program). All of these factors were found to impact the curriculum enactment across both programs. However, it was found that another factor was very influential on the enactment, a component of special education programs that is frequently absent from general education program, especially at the high school level – paraprofessionals (see Figure 6). The impact of these factors along with the other themes from the two programs will be further discussed in the following chapter.

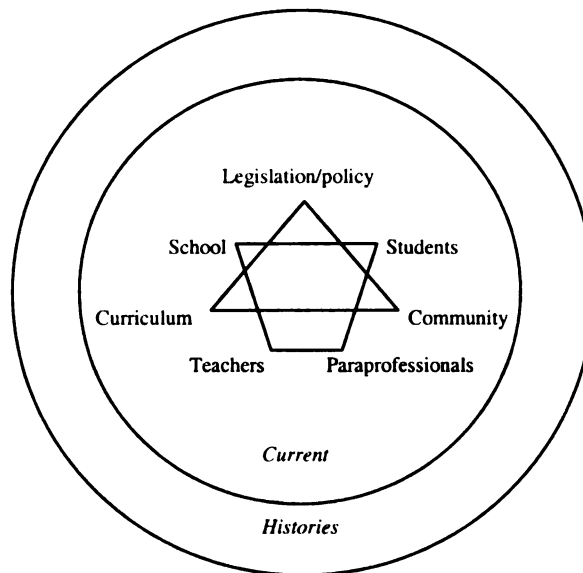


Figure 6: The resultant intersection and union of factors impacting the enactment of functional curriculum.

Chapter 6

Discussion, Implications, Limitations, and Future Directions

This chapter will start by presenting a summary of the study that was completed. Next, it presents a discussion of the results highlighted in the previous two chapters as well as the implications of these results for practice, research, teacher preparation, and policy. The discussion and implications sections will cut across the multiple themes that emerged from the data. The chapter will end by discussing the limitations of this study and suggest possible avenues for future research.

Summary

This research project was the study of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical special education programs in the state of Michigan. For the purposes of this research, enactment was defined as a multifaceted idea that involves the social construction of curriculum with realization that larger institutional factors, such as policy, school, and community matter in addition to teacher and student variables. Specifically, an expanded transactional view was taken in which meaning was not only constructed between the curriculum, teacher, paraprofessional, and student, but also larger levels such as policy/legislation, school, community and curriculum materials.

The project consisted of two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs, two special education teachers, and 18 special education students across the two programs (15 with complete participation). Classroom observations were completed in each program. Teacher and student interviews occurred, as well as interviews of other key adults or school personnel (i.e. paraprofessionals). Artifact reviews of curriculum

materials and student work were also conducted. Triangulation of themes was sought across the data and data collection mediums.

The data revealed several themes about the enactment of functional curriculum in the two programs. First, the enactment of functional curriculum occurred in moment-to-moment interactions. Functional curriculum was also found to be relative, as in the functional part was “in the eye of the beholder”. The enactment of functional curriculum created a community within the programs and enabled affordances and opportunities for both students and teachers. The enacted functional curriculum had to be everything and to everyone; thus, the enacted curriculum was “more than meets the eye.” Tensions, particularly between being in special education and being in general education, developed within the enactment of functional curriculum. The data also supported the hypothesis regarding the enactment and influential factors. Specifically, the data revealed the following factors impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs: policy/legislation, community, school/school district, teachers, students, and curriculum materials, as well as paraprofessionals. The results further suggested that it was the intersection and union of these seven factors that impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs, and the current status as well as the history of these factors were important.

Discussion

The major research questions framing this study included: (1) What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary special education cross-categorical self-contained programs?, and (2) What is the nature of the impact of factors on the enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained

secondary special education programs, when factors were defined as students, teachers, policy/legislation, community, school/school district, and curriculum materials?

Themes

The nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in the two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs emerged from the themes that cut across the two sites. Specifically, the five themes that emerged, which illustrated the nature of the enactment, included: (1) enactment occurred in the moment, (2) functional curriculum was in the eye of the beholder, meaning that the functional aspect of it was relative, (3) enactment created a community, such that “everyone knows your name”, (4) enactment generated opportunities and affordances that were more than meets the eye, and (5) enactment created tensions between general education and special education, in that the grass was always greener on the other side. While these themes were similar for both programs, the enactment differed across them.

In the moment. Functional curriculum in both programs was enacted in the moment. This meant that teachers, as well as students and other personnel associated with the program, had to be flexible. Both Katie and Paula often used this language themselves to describe their program and those within it. In fact, they even implied that being flexible was inherent within the program – a cross-categorical, self-contained secondary program. The flexible nature of the enactment of functional curriculum was met with both resistance and appreciation. There was resentment expressed in teachers’ comments, such as “so much for my lesson plans tomorrow.” However, there was a general appreciation of the flexibility, such as when Katie commented, “It is nice to have that

flexibility” and Paula even stated that in her ideal curriculum she would have even more flexibility.

The flexibility of the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs with these two teachers had positive and negative implications. While the flexible nature enabled the moment-to-moment interactions and dynamic assessments to occur, it also positioned the programs to alter their written curriculum to meet the demands of school personnel when there were jobs that needed to be done. This positioning of both programs was illustrated in the narrative vignettes depicted in the previous two chapters. Paula’s program was often asked to alter its curriculum on a day’s, or even an hour’s, notice and to perform tasks such as cleaning or stuffing envelopes, jobs generally outside of the everyday school activities of a “typical” high school student. Similarly, Katie’s program was asked to adjust their curriculum to help Marilyn (the transition paraprofessional) and the community, essentially having students stuff bags for a fundraising race – a task which Marilyn asked only Katie’s students to perform.

While one could suggest that these altered enacted curricular tasks were vocational in nature and could be used to teach students both vocational and social skills, as discussed by the teachers, this flexibility across the programs should also be analyzed at a deeper level – a level of meaning. One needs to consider the messages being sent to students, teachers, other school personnel, and parents when these “categorical” (aka cross-categorical) programs are asked to perform tasks that the requester would not ask of other classes or programs at the high schools, such as general education or resource room. One possibility is that these activities started as fillers within the curriculum when the teachers were first starting and needed activities to fill a void, and these activities have

just stayed as part of the programs since their inception. Another possibility is that school personnel did not see as much value in the curriculum in the “categorical” program and assumed that changing the curriculum would not be as difficult or as damaging to students’ academic achievement or success on state tests. This raises the question of valuing one type of learning over another and suggests that perhaps “book learning” was more important than “practical learning,” or even that the education of students in these two “categorical” programs was not as important as the education of other students in the schools.

While school personnel, and even the teachers themselves, may have been suggesting that the written curriculum in categorical programs was not as important as the curriculum in other classes or programs, this is not to imply that these activities did not have practical value or did not add anything to the education of students as they were enacted as curricula. Similar to other classes or programs, the enactment of these activities should be examined for their teachable moments. It would seem that providing teachers with more notice and letting them build these activities into their curriculum would better serve students, teachers, and school personnel. These activities could then truly become teachable moments with emphasis on enacting the functional elements, such as embedded vocational and social skills, and to do so in a more systematic and deliberate manner.

Throughout the data a tension between the flexibility within the programs and structure was found. While it is important to understand that the enacted curriculum was more than the “written curriculum”, it is also necessary to realize the value that “written curriculum” can add, such as providing structure and an opportunity to not always be

“inherently” flexible. Enactment in the moment enabled the teachers to meet and address what students brought in, such as turning a fight into a discussion (and lesson) on social skills, or an incident of disrespect into an opportunity to discuss behavior in the work environment. However, the lack of a “written curriculum” in both programs raises concerns on another level. As Katie and Paula had no formal (i.e. commercially available) functional curriculum model to serve as a written curriculum, they pieced-together this portion together. Perhaps having a formal written functional curriculum would have still allowed for the moment-to-moment interaction yet without the impediment of the written curriculum on the enactment of functional components. While both Katie and Paula stated that the curriculum they enacted was functional, without a functional curriculum model one had to question if the functionality was based upon their perception than any external curriculum standard.

In the eye of the beholder. As alluded to, a theme across both programs was that the functionality of the enacted curriculum in both Katie’s and Paula’s program came into question when considering different agents’ perspectives, and thus crafting the question if “functional” was in the eye of the beholder. In the everyday world, functional can mean “designed or developed from the point of view of use” (www.m-w.com). However, the meaning making of the members in each program in terms of the “use” of various facets of the enacted functional curriculum differed. What was functional to students was not necessarily what the teachers tried to enact, and similarly what the teachers believed was functional was not necessarily what the students wanted to enact.

While both teachers believed the curriculum they tried to enact was functional, there was also subtle resistance to calling it “functional”. This resistance, and what the

teachers actually referred to their curriculum as, acquires meaning when one considers Morrison's (1993) point that, "how we define curriculum makes a difference in how we think about it and how we plan it." Both teachers were quick to highlight the academic part of their functional curriculum programs. Paula preferred to call her program a "mix of academic and work-related" and Katie repeatedly stressed the importance of math concepts, such as time and money, and reading, such as job descriptions, applications, and directions. While both teachers attempted to enact a functional curriculum, their language reflected a slight hesitation, which may have been spawned by the current political climate that stressed academic achievement and academic rigor. Despite the value both teachers saw in work-related experiences and daily living skills, there was also an awareness that these skills were not supported in policy.

Beyond just what the teachers referred to their curriculum, there was also a variety of what was considered functional in the enactment, further illustrating the relativity of the term "functional". For example, Paula stated that an element of her functional curriculum involved spelling words that were functional, and stated that they were functional because they focused on jobs and employment. However, this was not always the case. Spelling words used by Paula were observed to focus on phonetics, such as those illustrating soft and hard c's (e.g. ceiling, cereal, canoe, cape, etc.). In another instance, Katie felt that her math program was very functional or practical in nature and was observed to have units on banking, budgeting, and work-related pay. However, she also had a unit on long division and had students do some long division by hand.

At times, students and teachers had a disconnect over the enacted functional curriculum. In other words, what was functional to students was not necessarily what the

teachers tried to enact, and similarly what the teachers believed was functional was not necessarily what the students wanted to enact. While the teachers tried to enact a curriculum centered around work/job experiences and academics, some students in both programs wanted a heavier focus on academics and specifically academics that differed from ones within their self-contained “categorical” programs. For example, there were students in both programs who wanted to learn things in the general education classroom such as algebra or biology; topics that were not conducive to what the teachers viewed as functional and thus were not enacted. Yet, students expressed that they felt these courses were important to their success. In contrast, there were also students from both programs who wanted even more emphasis on the vocational or work-based portion of the functional curriculum. However neither Katie nor Paula were ready, or able, to abandon some of the more academically-stringent portions of their enacted functional curriculum, such as long division or phonetically-based spelling words, to incorporate more vocational emphasis.

The enacted functional curriculum in these two programs held different meanings across and within teachers and students. It also differed from theory or written functional curriculum models. Neither teacher utilized a formal commercially available functional curriculum model. Thus, while they attempted to enact the various components of a functional curriculum in theory, it was that – an attempt. There were no clear-cut explanations given for why a formal functional curriculum model was not enacted. It may have been that both programs had a lack of resources, as Katie discussed that her program was only given \$800 start-up money from the school district and never given more. However in Paula’s case, during the time of the study, she was in the process of getting

her curriculum adopted by the district curriculum committee. She had just bought new American History textbooks and was selecting a new Health textbook as well. Clearly, Paula had more financial resources available to her program from the district. It might also have been that the teachers had a lack of awareness of commercially-available functional curriculum models, as Paula stated that she did not know of any of the functional curriculum models that the researcher shared during an interview. However, the piece-meal approach to enacting a functional curriculum might also have been a reaction to the focus on research-based practice required by federal policies and legislation. Paula repeatedly emphasized the need to use research-based curriculum models in her district and expressed frustration that she could not find any for her population. Finally, it may be that the commercially available functional curriculum models the teachers were aware of did not mix well with their own personal philosophies of teaching, learning, and what should constitute the curriculum for this population. Katie and Paula might have preferred the autonomy of creating the curriculum and not being constrained by a written curriculum.

The enacted functional curriculum in each program could also be analyzed with respect to whether “enough” of certain components were included or taught. For example one might question whether either Katie or Paula allotted sufficient time to the components of self-determination or social/relationship skills. Katie and Paula both spoke of social/relationship skills as an area that was being slighted in their programs. Katie discussed that in her ideal curriculum she would have a school social worker within her program to help her students address their issues, which may have been impacting their relationship skills. Paula also devoted class time throughout the day to addressing issues

related to social/relationship skills. However both teachers did question the enactment of social/relationship skills in their programs. Insufficient emphasis of social skills is important, whether the lack comes from teacher controlled factors or other personnel impacting the enactment of this component. Halpern (1985) stated that personal/social relationship skills were perhaps the most important of all transition goals, in terms of students' success post-school. Halpern indicated that personal/relationship skills impact all facets of life and that they held greater value than employment, post-secondary education, and independent living skills.

Similarly, while both teachers felt that self-determination was important, what was observed did not always mesh with this belief. Teachers were able to verbalize the perceived value of self-determination as a construct and expressed that they tried to include aspects of it in their daily instruction. Yet, classroom observation and interview data did not support that self-determination was a focus of daily instruction. In fact, the data in this study support the findings of Zhang, Katsiyannis, and Zhang (2002), who found that secondary special education teachers did not pay enough attention to self-determination. Despite that teachers in that study felt they were doing it, aspects were being overlooked, such as an emphasis on post-school plans, course selection, and programmatic decisions (Zhang et al.). Paralleling the lack of any commercially available functional curriculum being used to inform teaching, there was no evident that either teacher employed a formal, commercially-available self-determination curriculum model as a stand-alone curriculum or as embedded within a functional curriculum model.

Students' comments also lent support to suggest that a greater emphasis on self-determination was needed in both programs. For example, Miguel, in Katie's program,

indicated to the researcher that he had interest in taking a Spanish course, but confessed that he had never asked to take it. This implies that Miguel was unaware of his need to advocate for himself and that he may have had difficulty accessing a problem-solving framework and/or disposition that is central to self-determined individuals. There were also instances in the programs when students tried to express themselves and demonstrate that they felt self-determined, only to be essentially “shot-down” by the teacher or other adult. Such was the situation with Rick when he expressed that he did not want to clean inside or outside of the school and did not feel it was appropriate for a class activity. Rick advocated for himself to Paula and ended up being sent to the Responsible Thinking Room (RTR) as a consequence for challenging authority. Furthermore, from student interviews, students’ implicit expression of a lack of impact on the curriculum indicated that greater attention and focus may need to be given to self-determination skills in these programs.

This theme raises several significant issues for the field of special education and the nature of “what counts” as functional curriculum, namely what is functional in terms of functional curriculum? Who does, and who should, define what functional curriculum is and is not? And furthermore, how does the functionality within a functional curriculum relate to students’ post-school success? Within education, a functional curriculum has been defined as curricula created to teach the functional life skills, or in other words, the skills necessary to live, work, and have fun in an inclusive community (Brown, McLean, Hamre-Nietupski, Pumpian, Creto, & Gruenewald, 1979; Falvey, 1989; Snell & Browder, 1987). Patton, Cronin, and Jarriels (1997) defined the components of a functional curriculum to include the functional applications of core subject areas (academics),

vocational education, community access, daily living, financial, independent living, transportation, social/relationships, and self-determination. This categorization does not include several elements that other models have included as important functional skills, including leisure and recreation skills and communication skills. Both teachers in this study made mention of the importance of these two areas in terms of their own enactment. The data in this study indicate that there continues to be a great deal of confusion about what constitutes functional curricula, the commercial availability of functional curriculum, the viability of functional curriculum in impacting outcomes for students with disabilities, and its role in secondary education for students with disabilities in light of steep challenges put forth in federal policy around accessing general education curriculum and Least Restrictive Environment.

Where everybody knows your name. The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs invoked a sense of community in both positive and negative ways. The enactment of community within self-contained categorical secondary classrooms created strong positionings that had both positive and negative consequences for participants in the classroom. As is the case with the development of any learning community, the members are always impacted by many variables. The development of a community within the enactment of a functional curriculum in both programs resulted from students' lack of options, their shared experiences, and the stories they told and were told. The community developed, in part, because many of the students had a lack of options in terms of forming a community elsewhere. Many students were marginalized within the general education classes and school, and even those that did belong to school groups were seldom fully embraced into these temporary communities. The majority of the

students spent most of their school day in the programs and were with the same peers year-after-year. This may have inadvertently served to limit their social options, as many students began to feel comfortable with one another and did not see the need to seek outside communities or peers. The sheer lack of options or time to meet other peers, as they had few general education classes, also had a role within the community development.

The students in both programs had shared experiences. Many of the students in both Katie's and Paula's programs spent the majority of their school day within the self-contained cross-categorical program. This created a set of shared experiences, whether the students wanted it to or not. There were few outsiders allowed in the programs, so the events and activities that took place were shared just among the students and adults that were involved in the program. Thus, a set of shared experiences developed, which the students could reflect on, talk about, and use to unite and form friendships. Beyond the shared experiences, the students also told stories to help build community, although it most likely was unintentional. When the students shared their stories they were making themselves vulnerable, and hence trusting their peers. This trust helped to develop a sense of community as the shared stories became part of the set of shared experiences of all class members.

Thus, the enactment in both Katie's and Paula's programs created a sense of community, but a community where some students felt an inherent tension in both wanting to gain membership in other communities (e.g., general education), but also desiring the comfort and safety of the categorical program. A metaphor for this tension students felt was that of a revolving door, where students were able to go around and

around, but being conflicted about where to get off. Students keep going around and around, wanting to be in general education classes, but struggling once in and not doing the work, or dismissing their classmates in their special education programs as possible friends only to find that these were some of the few friendship that were available. Students temporarily stepped out of the revolving door to enter into classes outside of their “categorical” program, only to want to rush back in, as indicated in Brenda’s (Harborville’s classroom paraprofessional) comment about the students not being able to wait to get back in after they had left for one hour. The students appeared to be stuck, wanting a place where they could belong, fit in, and not stand out, but finding this most available in the segregated “categorical” program. The students did “stick out” in general education, and as Katie stated, carried the unmistakable stigma of being in special education. Thus, while the students were searching for a place and a sense of belonging in the larger school community (i.e. general education), they had evoked their own community within the “categorical” programs. Essentially the “categorical” program served as a safe community and embraced the space embodied within the lyrics of the song “*Where Everybody Knows Your Name*”:

You wanna be where you can see, our troubles are all the same.
You wanna be where everybody knows
Your name.
You wanna go where people know, people are all the same,
You wanna go where everybody knows your name (Portnoy & Angelo, 1981)

While the enactment of community in both programs did create a place where everyone knew your name, it was not always positive as not everyone was glad you came. There were challenges in terms of relationships within both self-contained “categorical” programs. While a community was enacted, one had to question if the type

of community was positive or desired. The students were not always nice to each other in the programs, and in fact could be found to bully, intimidate, and abuse one another both emotionally and physically. As highlighted in chapter four, the students made comments to each other, such as publicly remarking on someone's hygiene ("you stink" or "I can't sit by him [because he smells]"), one's weight ("you're fat"), and even trying not to sit by particular students for no apparent reason. Similarly, another negative aspect of the development of community was the creation of roles, such as marginalized and scapegoated, and the positioning of student in both programs into these roles by their peers and even adults.

One concern that arose from the enactment of community within these two programs involved positive role models. While at times the students tried to serve as positive role models for one another and perhaps telling others to stop their impolite or mean behavior, at other times the peer pressure was too great or the leaders felt the same way towards an individual and there was no positive student role model(s) to demonstrate social skills and relationship skills. Another concern was that the students actually seemed to feed off each others' behavior, which causes one to question the value of self-contained cross-categorical programs. Beyond having few positive role models, students actually fed off one another's inappropriate behavior, creating a domino effect within the classroom. The students also enacted a survival of the fittest mode. As many of these students were picked on, ignored, or marginalized in general education settings, they often retaliated on classmates who were not as strong (physically or mentally) or who were "less cool". Thus, the students tended to "prey" on their weaker classmates in terms

of being mean. These concerns highlight a larger question and debate that involves the benefits and constraints of pull-out programs versus inclusive programs.

Beyond positive peer role models, both programs raised another issue – the impact of adult role models, especially with the increase in the number of paraprofessionals that are being asked to serve in these classrooms. Teachers and other adults in the programs, such as paraprofessionals, could serve as positive, or negative, role models. While the overwhelming majority of time Katie and Paula served as positive role models, examples were found in the observations in which the paraprofessionals within the programs, particularly Katie’s program, modeled behavior that was not always positive or appropriate. An example from Katie’s program occurred when Brenda made comments about Adam to another student in Katie’s program, stating that he was a “sneak”, thus modeling a lack of acceptance of Adam. Another situation of modeling happened when Brenda made negative comments about Whitney (the other paraprofessional in Katie’s program) in front of the students. Thus these programs, particularly Katie’s, had to address both the lack of positive peer role models as well as the lack of positive adult role models in terms of paraprofessionals.

The negative influence of paraprofessionals in the programs raises an interesting discussion. Paraprofessionals work with many special education students in a variety of contexts, such as supporting students in inclusive classes, supporting teachers and students in pull-out classes, and working with medically fragile students (Johnson, Lasater, & Fitzgerald, 1997). However, the majority of these individuals have not received formal education in teaching or even working with students, let alone students with exceptional needs (Johnson et al.). While NCLB requires that all new

paraprofessionals meet state standards, such as having an associate's degree and passing a state or local academic assessment, and all current paraprofessionals were to have met these requirements by January 2006, not all paraprofessionals in this study had met the requirements (NCLB, 2001; Trautman, 2004).

Despite that paraprofessionals, or paraeducators, may work extensively with a student or several students, they may have limited background knowledge or understanding of these students and their challenges and strengths (Johnson, Lasater, & Fitzgerald, 1997). Given the intensity with which some paraprofessionals work with students, it is highly likely these individuals serve as important mediators in their schooling and have a strong impact on students. Thus, negative modeling by paraprofessionals within these self-contained programs could potentially have significant impact on students. It is expected that paraprofessionals will act as professionals when they are hired; yet, clearly that was not the case. Paraprofessionals are placed in special education classrooms to assist the teacher and provide support to students, not become another individual that teachers need to monitor.

While negative implications did arise from the development of community within the enactment of functional curriculum in each program, positive influences occurred as well. One influence was the creation of positive roles, particularly that of a more knowledgeable other. The development of the small community within each program allowed multiple students to serve as more knowledgeable others, and in multiple ways, such as academic, vocational, or social. The teachers and other adults worked to help students be positioned to serve as more knowledgeable others where they could showcase

their skills or strengths in ways that benefited others. Thus, an effort was made to reframe students' and staffs' thinking toward strengths and positive qualities.

These instances of more knowledgeable others occurred both in Katie's program and Paula's. For example, Brenda (the classroom paraprofessional in Harborville) helped to position Sara in the role of more knowledgeable other when she suggested that Sara read with Mike, who was a struggling reader, commenting on Sara's strength in reading. Another example from Katie's program occurred when Marilyn (the transition paraprofessional) tried to position Derek in the role of more knowledgeable other while at a community-based instruction work site, suggesting that he help "apprentice" Doug into the job. In Paula's program there were examples of the positioning of students as more knowledgeable others with respect to vocation, such as Paula suggesting Alex help "apprentice" Holly in working in the school store during her first days on the job. Similarly, it was not uncommon to see students serve as knowledgeable others and voluntarily step in to help assist another student in academic tasks.

Beyond the positive and negative implications of the development of community with each program, this theme also raises the larger issue of inclusive versus pull-out education, a controversial subject and debate within the field of education. The current literature on inclusive education is equivocal. Data from this study indicated that students were not widely or generally accepted within the larger school community from either program. Yet, will this group of students ever be fully accepted within the larger school community? The data from this study did not address whether students' lack of acceptance in the larger community was associated with being in special education (particularly in self-contained "categorical" programs) or as a result of these students

being in segregated programs throughout their middle school and high school careers, resulting in limited opportunities to interact with their general education peers. The data also does not address if the lack of acceptance was something inherent within these programs or if it was something specific with these particular students, or even if the size of the school was a factor. There are only speculations, but the study does point to the limited acceptance of these students and demands that continued research to explore the limited acceptance with relation to inclusive versus pull-out educational programming.

More than meets the eye. The two self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs in this study were more than what meets the eye. They had to be more... more of everything to everyone who entered. Unlike other programs or classes, Katie's and Paula's programs were not limited to learning a specific academic content. The teachers, and the programs, had to extend their repertoire of skills to be more than just academically-oriented, or even functionally-oriented in this case.

Twenty years ago Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) coined the term *shopping mall high schools* to refer to American high schools. Within their *shopping mall high schools* they found that schools were organized as a variety of "specialty shops", with one of these specialty shops being special education. However, as this study has demonstrated, this metaphor may underdetermine the complexity of curriculum in self-contained categorical programs. The findings of this study suggest that these two programs are not specialty shops focused on one or two areas, but one-stop shopping centers. These programs, taught by Katie and Paula, had to meet an incredibly diverse set of students and curriculum demands.

Paula and Katie, in conjunction with the various other factors, had to co-construct programs that would provide the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum that every student in their program needed, on an individual level. While both teachers made a valiant effort to provide all these curricular areas to each of their students, the demands made effective programming in every area difficult to achieve. Both teachers were aware of the areas that were under-utilized when they tried to be the one-stop shopping centers that they felt they had to be. Both Katie and Paula indicated that they could not provide the service curriculum as they would have liked and felt this was an area lacking in their programs (and the whole school). Katie indicated that greater assistance from a school social worker would benefit this portion of her program and improve the enactment of service curriculum within her functional curriculum. Paula also cited service as a problem, particularly for her students with emotional impairment.

In addition to wanting to strengthen their service curriculum, both teachers felt as though it was difficult for them to provide as much individualized instruction, or vertical curriculum, as they would like or expected. While Paula wanted to portray that she enacted a responsive vertical curriculum for her students, her actions and comments revealed otherwise. There were incidences in which Paula did not want to wait for an individual student before moving on with the lesson and hence told him/her that they would need to finish it in their academic support class because the class needed to move forward. Paula also commented that most special education teachers would probably want to do group instruction over individualization because it was easier. While Katie tried to individualize, or provide a responsive vertical curriculum, she also felt constrained. She particularly highlighted this shortcoming in regards to reading. She

indicated that the range of reading was so vast in her program that it made it difficult to provide individual instruction and meet students where they were in terms of their reading ability.

Beyond what the two teachers wanted to strengthen, their programs did include a component not normally found within a high school class – extracurricular opportunities for community members to share experiences with one another. Both Katie's and Paula's programs involved an extracurricular component within the enactment of functional curriculum. The extracurricular curriculum served various functions. It further enacted components of functional curriculum that would not, nor could not necessarily, be enacted within the four walls of the classroom, such as community access, leisure and recreation, and real-life application of social skills. It also served to define students differently, both by others and how they viewed themselves. Within these extracurricular aspects, students could see themselves differently and assume positions that were not available within the classroom, such as a more knowledgeable other, a worker, a leader.

Particularly important with the extracurricular aspect was the emphasis on vocation – vocational classes and vocational activities within the community. Students who did not excel within the academic portion of the enacted curriculum often found a place within the vocational component. It allowed them to demonstrate their strengths, be a more knowledgeable other as well as a leader. However, while the importance of vocational classes was noted in the study for this population of students, concern also existed for structured or formal vocational opportunities for students of these programs to participate in. Katie noted that many of her students struggled in the vocational programs at the county vocational center, indicating that they could not keep up in these non-

special education supported classes. Paula had few students attending the community vocational center, and the one student who did attend was placed within the only special education supported vocational program offered (Foods).

Concerns of Katie and Paula with respect to their students' access to formal vocational programs are consistent with national data from the Second National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2) (www.nlts2.org). Data from the NLTS2 indicated that between the first National Longitudinal Study conducted in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s and the early 2000s, students with disabilities enrolled in vocational courses dropped seven percent, which was correlated to an increase in academic courses for students with disabilities (Wagner, 2003a). The NLTS2 also found that a lower percentage of high school students with disabilities were enrolling in occupationally specific vocational classes as compared to their general education peers (52.2% vs. 64.2%); and also that more general education high school students were taking any type of vocational courses than high school students with disabilities (79.5% vs. 61.2%) (Wagner).

Additional concern arises over the access and participation in formal vocational programming of students with special needs, like those in Katie's or Paula's programs, when compared to the general category of students with disabilities. Today's formal vocational courses and programs appear designed to serve general education students, and are not necessarily tailored for supporting special education students, as seen in the county vocational center that Katie's and Paula's students attended. Cameto and Wagner (2003) found that more than 85% of special education students have the same vocational experiences as their general education peers when considering curriculum, instructional

materials, instructional grouping, and classroom activities. For students in self-contained cross-categorical programs who may be several grade levels behind in reading, as well as have challenges with social skills, the lack of individualization or differentiation can be problematic. Even though students with mental impairment and Autism have lower percentages of the same experience in vocational programs, the frequency is still in the 60s and 70s for these areas. It may be that students, like those that Katie and Paula educate, are being “phased out” of formal vocational classes and programs and left to have vocational opportunities that can be offered within their self-contained programs.

Due to the location of the schools and the nature of the communities, as well as the limitations of formal vocational opportunities for these students, many vocational opportunities had to occur in the schools themselves. Vocational opportunities within the two high schools were limited, primarily to working in the school store run by the programs or working with a janitor or custodian at the high school. Given that Paula required her students to have vocational (i.e. work-experience) credits, and Katie tried to encourage it, the messages that may have been sent to students about occupational expectations and possibilities need to be considered. What messages did students internalize when their choices for vocational experience were primarily limited to working in the school store (retail) or working with the janitor?

While the answer to the previous question was not addressed within this research, it necessitates a discussion of whether resources and other factors beyond students’ control (i.e. school location) may serve to limit their expectations of themselves and what they can achieve post-school. Data from the study does suggest that perhaps these students were not internalizing these messages, as many had aspirations beyond the

limited vocational experiences they were exposed to, such as attending college or being a computer technician.

The enacted curriculum in both programs was more than just what was present, it also included what was not there – the missing, unintended, and hidden curricula. Katie and Paula had things they felt were missing from their respective programs, and they overlapped on two large areas – resources and opportunities. Both Katie and Paula felt that there were resources missing that impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in their programs. While Katie had more resources to enact a wider variety of functional curriculum components in her classroom (i.e. a kitchen), she still felt resources were missing, particularly with respect to helping her students with social/relationship skills. Paula, on the other hand, wanted what Katie had and more. She wanted a kitchen as well as craft and vocational/work areas.

The two teachers were also in agreement that lacking from their programs were sufficient opportunities, heavily influenced by their location with respect to the school and community and the subsequent lack of transportation. Katie and Paula felt they could do more, that their programs could do more, if they had transportation to places outside of the school. Improved transportation and linkages to outside agencies would present opportunities to students, such as helping them navigate the community, make appointments for themselves, and expose them to more vocational experiences. For both teachers, opportunities to enact a functional curriculum and subsequently help students' post-school aspirations were hampered by factors beyond their control, namely location, transportation, and resources.

Beyond the various aspects of curriculum that were enacted in Katie's and Paula's program, the data also revealed that who was in the program affected what the curriculum was and how it was enacted. The students had a significant impact on the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curricula at Harborville and River Bend. Thus, the enactment of functional curriculum itself would differ from year to year depending on the students. Paula highlighted this when she stated that she had stopped outside extracurricular evening activities with her students during the previous year due to some of the particular students in her program. Paula indicated that she should start these opportunities back up again, as the students who she did not want to take with her on excursions were no longer in her program. Thus students themselves, whether they were aware or not, were highly influential on the enactment of functional curriculum.

Along similar lines as the secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs being everything to everyone, teachers also had to be everything as they had to provide everything to all the students. The teachers were responsible for providing the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum to all their students. Despite this charge, the teachers could not provide everything to everyone and possess all the knowledge and skills necessary to educate students in each of the curriculum areas. Instead of expecting teachers to provide everything to everyone, these secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs should involve interagency and multidisciplinary collaboration. Teachers should work with other professionals inside and outside of the school to be able to provide the various facets of functional curriculum and the curriculum needed by the students educated in self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs. Providing students with high quality basic skills instruction, access to a rigorous general education

curriculum, functional curriculum, and vocational education demands a coordination of services beyond what a single teacher can provide.

Grass is always greener on the other side. “The grass is always greener” referred to students feeling conflicted over being in special education versus general education and vice versa when the situations arose. At times, students wanted to be like everyone else and be in general education classes, but they also had spent many years in special education. Their time in special education was marked with differing privileges and expectations, which impacted their ability to be in general education classes and follow both its rules and expectations. Essentially this situation created one with no easy solutions, where students desired to be in general education, yet wanted the privileges and expectations they were afforded in special education classrooms.

While some students in both programs expressed a desire to be in general education courses, once in these classrooms their behavior reflected a “grass is always greener on the other side” perspective. Students in both Katie’s and Paula’s programs would discuss wanting to be in general education classes, sometimes suggesting that the work in their “categorical” classes was too easy, and a few even named actual courses they wanted, such as biology or algebra. However, students from these programs who were in general education classes typically did not do the work and struggled not to fail. They did not want to work as hard as needed for the course and had become accustomed to little or no homework.

The previous discussion suggests that the students in the special education categorical programs wanted to “have their cake and eat it too.” “Having their cake and eating it to” implies that the students wanted to be in general education classes but really

wanted them to function like “categorical” classes, in that they would not have homework and would have freedom, such as leaving the class. A deeper interpretation of the data encourages the examination of the Big Fish Little Pond theory (Marsh & Craven, 2004). This theory, derived from social comparison theories, suggests that when students in Katie’s and Paula’s programs compared themselves to peers they would feel better about themselves in the “categorical” program than in general education classes. In the “categorical” program, peers would either be at similar levels or below the student doing the comparison, thus there would be someone “lower” than them in a skill or curriculum area. However, when comparing themselves in the general education classes, the students from Katie’s and Paula’s rooms would most likely feel less academically able. Students’ lack of effort in the general education setting might have been their way of “saving face.” By not doing the work or putting forth effort, the students could then blame their lack of effort on their “failures” as opposed to their ability.

Examples of students in both programs not putting forth sufficient effort in general education classes, mostly aside from electives but also including them, were numerous. Katie had sent several students to the Intermediate School District vocational center during the year that this study took place, including three sophomores, even though sophomores were typically not allowed to attend. Of the three sophomores who attended, none were allowed back the next year as juniors. Two, who were in non-special education supported vocational programs, due to their interest, were not allowed back because they were failing the programs and did not do the book work. Derek, the third one who was in a special education supported vocational program, was not allowed back due to behavioral issues.

Other students from Katie's program at Harborville High School refused to do the work in their general education courses as well. Miguel would frequently not do the work for his general education human anatomy class. He eventually chose not to attend class but rather do the work in Katie's classroom, where he completed more work than when he was in the general education classroom, according to the teacher. In another example, Adam would refuse to work within his general education computer class, despite his interest and ability with computers and computer applications. Adam would directly state that he would not work, even with a paraprofessional assigned to him, unless he was allowed to work in Katie's class (which was not granted). His general education computer teacher validated the lack of work Adam completed, frequently finding him off-task and playing computer games, rather than working on the required word processing software.

Similar situations occurred in Paula's program as well. For example, Laura (a paraprofessional at River Bend) commented on Alex's occasional behavioral challenges in general education classes. She stated that at times he would refuse to do his work in these classes even when he had an aide assigned to assist him. Problems with participation by Paula's students occurred in gym class as well. Over the course of a couple of weeks both Holly and Becky had refused to participate in gym and were in danger of failing. The issue of gym class was not unique to Paula's class, but occurred in Katie's program as well, even with those students who specifically chose to have gym as an elective. Miguel, for example, was taking gym and towards the end of the year had refused to go. A deal was struck with the gym teacher that he would pass without having to participate if he showed up, dressed, and did not mouth off.

Despite what the students said about general education classes and their “categorical” program, their actions and behaviors revealed that they actually felt safer in the “categorical” program and completed more work. These data, along with other instances from both programs, raise questions about the appropriateness of not only a general education curriculum but an inclusive placement. The students themselves sent signals that they preferred being in the pull-out (i.e. “categorical”) program. Many of them tried to come to Katie’s classroom during their general education classes. During the study, it was observed that both Adam and Miguel left their general education classes (e.g., computer, human anatomy, gym) and tried to go to the cross-categorical classroom. Students in Paula’s program often did not want to leave her program, once entering it for the day. They were content not to “walk around the block” during break time like she asked them to do, but rather to stay in her classroom.

Questioning students’ placement in general education classes to receive the general education curricula is also necessary when one considers these students’ zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1978). The zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to Vygotsky’s theory that optimal learning occurs within a child’s zone of proximal development, which is the difference between what s/he can do independently and what s/he can do with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. Students placed in the general education classes from Katie’s program were often without the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. Despite that these classes had a classroom teacher, they also had up to and over 30 students in a class, making the needs of the majority of students outweigh the unique needs often posed by students with disabilities. Thus, one could question if students’ refusal to go to class or other displays of inappropriate behavior in

general education classes were their way of communicating that they were in over their head and without a life jacket. Perhaps educators need to look deeper into the meanings of these behaviors and explore the possibility that students were communicating that they did not want to be general education classes and learn to respect their wishes.

While the level at which the students could do things independently varied across students, as both programs were heterogeneous, it was still at a lower level than their general education. The academic struggles of these students can be found in their own statements and class work. For example, Derek and Flip's dialogue when discussing the country project for Katie's social studies class gave a glimpse of where the students were independently. Derek had made the comment that he wanted to study Denver as his country, to which Flip responded, "Denver isn't a country stupid, it is a state." These common misconceptions or misunderstandings were not isolated incidents in Katie's program but occurred frequently across her classes. The students struggled with understanding how to find a monthly income when given a yearly income, how to tell time, and how to form a written response to a question.

The level of students' academic struggles was not restricted to Katie's program. Paula taught a calendar unit in her math class, which at first consideration might seem below her students' ZPD, but students were found to struggle at times with the content. The students had to seek out more knowledgeable others to assist them with the calendar, suggesting that learning was occurring and this was an activity within their ZPD. Working on a calendar unit, and receiving help from teachers and adults, is different than the mathematical content in "typical" general education math classes. While it is not to suggest that the students in both programs could not gain social benefits from

participating in general education classes, their learning and academic benefits are questionable given the data on students' ZPD and their own attitude towards general education classes and curricula.

The data and particularly this theme have elicited many points regarding the education of students in general education and special education classes with respect to this population. Clearly, there are benefits and disadvantages to education within both places. As alluded to earlier, the lack of positive role models may be a significant disadvantage to self-contained cross-categorical programs. Yet, data from this study also indicated that students felt safer in these programs and were more likely to be working within their ZPD and completing more work. While there are no easy answers and it is not as cut-and-dry as some may make it seem, perhaps the answer, or at least the right direction, lies in listening to students – listening to both their words and their behavior. Students' perspectives regarding their education need to be sought out, heard, and respected. Inclusion, or lack thereof, cannot only continue to be a debate among scholars and researchers, but must also reflect the needs of students – what is best for each individual student.

Factors

The nature of the impact of factors on the potential enactment of a functional curriculum in two cross-categorical self-contained secondary special education programs, when factors were operationally defined as students, teachers, policy/legislation, community, school/school district, and curriculum materials, were mutually constitutive processes. It was the co-construction and melding of the different factors that created the enacted curriculum. It was not one factor, or even all factors working singularly, but the

union and intersection of the different factors that enacted the functional curriculum in both programs, for better or worse. For example, both Katie and Paula would likely have enacted different versions of a functional curriculum if other factors had been different. However, given that the enactment was the result of the various factors at play, what was observed was the result. Most likely both Katie and Paula would have spent their time differently and involved more components if not impacted by policy and legislation that stressed academics and achieving on the alternate assessments that, as Katie implied, failed to fully recognize the value of daily living skills. They were also affected by the school, both in terms of its location, size, resources, the actual students they had, and their own as well as their school's philosophy.

The resources, or lack thereof, enabled or limited the enactment of particular functional curriculum components. Katie, for example, had access to a kitchen within her classroom, which enabled her to enact components of daily living skills such as cooking and cleaning. Paula, however, did not have these resources and hence was limited in terms of enacting these components. This was a regret of Paula's and she wished for more space and resources within her ideal classroom. In addition, the particular students both Katie and Paula had in their classrooms influenced enactment, thus indicating that enactment would look different year-to-year, based on the composition of students and their needs and strengths.

Policy/legislation. Policy was influential as to the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs. Particularly important were the recent major educational legislation, such as *The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)* and *No Child Left Behind (NCLB)*. Both teachers commented on the alternate

assessments their students needed to take following the implementation, or reauthorization, of both laws. While the mandatory inclusion of special education students in high stakes testing is a relatively new phenomenon, it had already impacted the enactment of functional curriculum in these two programs. Both Katie and Paula mentioned its role in changing what they were teaching, and implying that it was helping to drive what they did in terms of curriculum.

Katie suggested that she might need to adjust her math curriculum following her students' experience with taking the state of Michigan's alternate assessment. She stated that the state's alternate assessment for this population contained math that she did not cover in her curriculum, such as fractions and graphing. Paula also implied that the laws were very important in what she did in her program, commenting that they helped drive the curriculum. While this may seem minute, in the larger picture it illustrates professionals in the field of special education teaching to the test, and an alternate assessment at that. The data suggest that tests are now beginning to drive special education, particularly when considering the enactment of curriculum within its programs.

While there was an awareness of the impact of policy and/or legislation, both teachers had a lack of complete knowledge of the policies, legislation, or their consequences. For example, Paula had mistaken ideas regarding the legislation, particularly with regards to alternate assessments. She felt that she could still choose not to give the alternate assessment to her students or could give them the level at which she thought they had the best chance of passing, as opposed to the level that the state of Michigan indicated was appropriate. Both teachers also did not take full advantage of the

resources available to them. Neither Paula nor Katie utilized the publication *Addressing the Unique Educational Needs* (AUEN) (Frey, Burke, Jakwerth, Lynch, Sumpter, 1999), a guide published by the state of Michigan which served as state standards to the alternate assessments. Despite that both teachers said they had heard of this guide, neither had worked to align their curriculum to it or used it as a reference. In fact, Katie did not even own a copy.

Beyond alternate assessments, the impact of policy/legislation existed with respect to some basic tenets of special education, such as the least restrictive environment. The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (1997) stipulated that students with disabilities should be educated in the least restrictive environment; yet, this study illustrated that the field must continue to challenge what is meant by “least restrictive environment”, especially as it relates to the environment that is most appropriate to meeting a student’s needs. The data in this study add to the mix of results and thoughts. Conventional wisdom suggests that the least restrictive environment is the environment that holds the least restrictions for students with disabilities, which many presume to be the general education classroom. However, data from this study indicated that being in the general education classroom did place restrictions on students. It restricted their participation, their access to learning at their level (i.e. within their ZPD), and their feelings of safety within all educational placements, which has been previously discussed. This study raised questions and challenged the conventional wisdom regarding inclusion and the least restrictive environment for students with disabilities.

Policy was also influential throughout these two programs and the enactment of functional curriculum as it served as a positioning agent. With the privileging of

academics, the overarching policy discourse was at odds with the theory of functional curriculum. Furthermore, the policy framework facilitated construction of and positioning of a more skills-based approach to curricular decisions than a cognitive apprenticeship approach.

Community. The community size and location, and closely related to its school size and location, were influential in terms of the enacted curriculum. The size (i.e. small) and location (i.e. rural) of both the community and the school impacted the activities students could participate in and hence the enactment of functional curriculum. For example, as both schools were located in small communities, few opportunities were available to students in the way of community-based instruction and work experiences. While these did occur in both programs, it was not to the full extent that either teacher wanted as choices were limited. A large factor within the size and location of the community was transportation, as there was no public transportation in either community. Thus, all transportation for community-based instruction or work experience had to be through walking, school buses/vans, teachers/paraprofessionals' cars, or parents. This served to significantly limit options. The end result was less rich community-based instructional activities and fewer work experiences outside of the school building.

The ability of students to have work opportunities out of school in the community was also dependent on the willingness of businesses, not just the limited transportation that existed. The willingness of businesses was also related to the rural location of the communities and their small sizes. As Marilyn (Harborville transition paraprofessional) discussed, businesses were more willing to let Katie's students do community-based instruction or have work experiences there because they knew her and she did business

with them. In addition, Marilyn explained there was also a barter system in place – she helped the businesses out, such as organizing a community 5K, and they would provide community-based instruction opportunities, such as painting the Parks and Recreation buildings.

Paula also had ties to her school's community which created opportunities for her students, such as visiting a maple syrup farm. Thus, while “location, location, location” and size were important to the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs, it was not always negative, such as the limited transportation and thus reduced community-based instruction and other outside school activities. The smallness and ruralness of the communities also provided opportunities because the community knew the staff and students.

School and school district. In addition to the previously mentioned effect of the size and location of the school, students' acceptance within the larger school context also mattered. Overall, few of Katie's or Paula's students were easily or largely accepted in their school communities. While Paula acted naïve to the lack of her students' integration into the school community, Katie was well aware. She commented that they would always carry the association of being a special education student, even when they left school. Students' acceptance, or lack thereof, within the larger school community involved both adults (i.e. their acceptance of inclusive classes) and peers.

While some students in both Katie's and Paula's programs were in inclusive classes, these were primarily limited to electives, such as gym, computers, and family/consumer sciences (i.e. parenting). Despite that Katie and Paula commented on their students' acceptance within general education, observations revealed otherwise.

Paula herself commented that over the years some of the elective teachers had told her that a few of her students did not belong in her program; however, they might also have been implying that they did not want these students in their classes. Paula required all her students to take particular electives and these students in question demonstrated behavioral challenges. Evidence from Katie's program also raised questions to the acceptance of her students in general education classes. Many of Katie's students wanted to return, and actually did, to her room when they were in inclusive classes. While it might be that they felt more comfortable in Katie's room, they might also have been reacting to a lack of acceptance they felt in the inclusive class by teachers and peers. Some of Katie's students even stated that their teachers were mean to them or picked on them.

As for the students' acceptance within the larger school community by their peers, teacher comments and observations were not always congruent. While Katie acknowledged that many of her students struggled to be accepted by their general education peers, Paula felt that her students were accepted. Paula based this on the fact that her students were educated in cross-categorical programs at the local River Bend schools, and thus they would have gotten to know their peers since they would have been in school with some of them since elementary school. Paula seemed not to consider the repeated altercations between a student of hers and other general education students, or that her students preferred to be in her room during the changing of classes instead of out in the hallways. Thus, true acceptance in the larger school community by adults and peers can be questioned.

Another influence of the school factor on the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs was the actual classroom itself – its location, size, and resources. One large difference with regards to the enactment of functional curriculum in Paula’s program and Katie’s program, aside from the different teachers and students, involved classroom resources. Katie had a larger room, backrooms for student use, and a kitchen. The classroom was also suppose to have had a washer and dryer, but somehow those had gotten “lost.” However, Paula did not have any of these. She had a small classroom, no backrooms, and no kitchen. The lack of a kitchen made enacting some daily living skills difficult, such as cooking and cleaning. While Katie had more classroom-related resources, both teachers felt that they could use more resources, suggesting those would improve the functional curriculum. This prompts one to wonder what the enactment of functional curriculum would look like in schools or districts that had more resources and the role of school resources with enactment in terms of post-school success.

The philosophy of the school was also associated with the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs. However, it was not the explicit philosophy that appeared to matter as much as the implicit philosophy that was constructed through how the classroom was perceived by other stakeholders. The influential implicit philosophy of River Bend was illustrated through the activities that Paula’s program, and only Paula’s program, were asked to do, such as cleaning the inside and outside of the school and stuffing envelopes for the office. The implicit message in these activities was that the curriculum enacted in Paula’s program was not as important as the curriculum enacted in other programs or classes. The encouragement of these activities, while having the potential to some functional skills, still raises the question as to the value of the education

that the students in Paula's program were receiving as well as the purpose of their education. While school administrators or office personnel were not asking Katie's students to engage in similar activities, the fact that other school personnel (i.e. the transition paraprofessional) used members of the class to perform non-school related tasks (e.g., stuffing envelopes for a community 5K race) may suggest diminished expectations and raises similar questions. Why does it appear that curriculum in these self-contained categorical programs is less valued than in the general education setting?

Teachers. The two teachers in the study were highly influential in terms of the enactment of functional curriculum within their respective programs. The impact of the teachers is not surprising given the value of special education teachers and their role with curriculum, as indicated by Mithaug, Martin, Agran, and Rusch (1988),

Special education teachers... are in charge. They control the entire teaching learning environment, from setting classroom and student expectations for performance and determining what tasks the student will perform to allocation of time for each task, prescribing how it is to be performed, correcting work, providing immediate feedback, and then directing the next step in the curriculum (p. 27).

Katie and Paula believed in enacting a functional curriculum within their program, despite hesitations to use the terminology, and did so within their self-contained cross-categorical programs to the best of their abilities. Katie and Paula indicated they had the freedom and relative autonomy to implement a curriculum; both had made a conscious choice to attempt to enact a functional curriculum. Hence, in a way, the teachers were the main impetus behind the enactment of functional curriculum, although the particular students they had influenced the choices they made in terms of implementation. Katie and Paula stressed the importance of students in driving what curriculum was enacted though

the actual implementation of curriculum often differed from what their students implied they wanted.

While Katie and Paula had similarities, one difference was in their teacher preparation. While both teachers attended the same teacher preparation program around the same time, their focus was different. Katie focused on secondary special education, wanting to work in a high school, and had experiences during her preservice years that supported this goal. Paula, on the other hand, planned to work in elementary special education and prepared for such a position in her preservice teaching experiences (i.e. classes and field placements). Yet, she took her first job in secondary special education and had taught at this level exclusively. Previous research has indicated that many secondary special education teachers enter the field without experience in secondary special education and this needs to be examined with respect to curriculum enactment and students' school and post-school successes (see Bouck, 2004a; 2005b).

Bouck (2005b) found that just over half of secondary special education teachers had practical experience in secondary schools prior to obtaining a job in that area. In addition, less than 70% of secondary special education teachers had a course on secondary special education before entering the work force (Bouck). Beyond just the lack of experience in secondary education that many secondary special education teachers had during their teacher preparation years, research has also shown that not all teachers are receiving instruction in multiple disabilities, which can pose potential challenges for teachers of cross-categorical programs. For example, Bouck determined that less than two-thirds of secondary special education teachers had coursework that addressed both students with learning disabilities and mild mental impairment, and less than half had

field experience with both populations. It is highly probable that teacher preparation impacts curriculum enactment as well as other school experiences for secondary special education students. More research is needed to explore this influence and understand if it affects post-school outcomes.

Beyond their teacher preparation, the values of each teacher were influential as to the enactment of functional curriculum. From observations and interviews, it was apparent that both teachers valued getting their students access to work experiences and preparing them for post-school success. Neither Katie nor Paula worked to enact a functional curriculum because they had to. They saw value in helping their students with vocational skills and daily living skills, as well as the academics they were constrained to enact. Thus, their ideologies largely affected the enactment. While Katie's and Paula's enacted versions of functional curriculum might differ from theory, each other, and what they ideally wanted, they still attempted to invoke such a curriculum, recognizing the importance of getting students access to work experience and helping them become more independent.

Because both teachers in the study basically created the written curriculum that they tried to enact in their programs, questions arise regarding the characteristics of the teachers with respect to the enacted curriculum. For example, would the enactment of functional curriculum *look different* if one was examining a teacher's classroom who was teaching an already established program and/or curriculum model? Would the enacted curriculum be different if the teachers were in other geographical areas or in institutions that differed, such as larger or smaller schools or more urban or suburban settings? While the data to these questions is not addressed in this study, it raises interesting questions

and contemplation about further influences on the enactment of functional curriculum in self-contained cross-categorical programs.

Paraprofessionals. While paraprofessionals did not have as large of a role within the enactment of functional curriculum as teachers or students, they were still influential and valuable within the classroom and this co-construction. Paraprofessionals added benefits and limitations to the two programs and the enactment of functional curriculum. One challenge with the role of paraprofessionals, in terms of the enacted curriculum, involved just that – their role. There was confusion over paraprofessionals' roles. At times they were treated, and given privileges, as a teacher and at times that of a secretary or assistant. Thus, role confusion existed for the paraprofessionals themselves, as well as for the teachers and students.

Confusion over their role is not surprising given the multitude of titles that paraprofessionals can be called, including: paraeducator, teacher aide, instructional assistant, educational assistant, therapy assistant, transition trainer, job coach, and home visitor (French, 1999; Pickett & Gerlach, 1997). In the literature, a paraprofessional has been defined as “a person who works in a school in an instructional capacity alongside school professionals and is supervised by the certificated or licensed professionals who hold ultimate responsibility for the student and programmatic outcomes” (French, p. 65). The multiple titles, which suggest variations in roles and responsibilities, as well as the definition itself, support the existence of confusion over what a paraprofessional in a pull-out setting is suppose to be doing and how they are to work with teachers, whom are often their supervisors (i.e. the licensed professionals).

One major contention when discussing paraprofessionals and their impact on the enactment of curriculum involves the fact that they are often instructing or teaching some of the most vulnerable students. Research has suggested that some paraprofessionals spend almost 50% of their time providing individual instruction to students without a teacher present (Ashbaker & Morgan, 2001). Furthermore, some students have been found to receive as much of 80% of their instruction from a paraprofessional, rather than a certified teacher (Ashbaker & Morgan). Thus, the students who may be most in need of a teacher's assistance are furthest away, being educated by paraprofessionals – individuals who may not have a college degree and potentially little training in teaching or working with children.

While previously paraprofessionals have had little training, policy has impacted their qualifications. *No Child Left Behind* stated that newly hired paraprofessionals must meet a standard of having demonstrated their ability through a state or local academic assessment, have had at least two years of education in an institution of higher education, and have obtained an associate's degree or higher (NCLB, 2001; Trautman, 2004). Previously hired paraprofessionals were given until January 2006 to comply with these requirements. NLCB has also defined what should be the roles and responsibilities of paraprofessionals, and indicated they should be expected to perform one-on-one tutoring; assist with classroom management; provide instructional assistance and support in a variety of contexts, under the supervision of a teacher, and act as translators (NCLB; Trautman).

Initially paraprofessionals were not hypothesized as a factor influencing the enactment of functional curriculum. As the study progressed, it became evident that

paraprofessionals played an influential role in enactment. It is likely that the role of paraprofessionals was not acknowledged because the limited literature regarding factors impacting the enacted curriculum came from general education, in which paraprofessionals play less of a role if present at all. The impact of these adults on the enactment of functional curriculum was underestimated until the data was analyzed, and their affect was evident. Thus, the enactment of curriculum in special education may be different from that in general education, with one factor relating to the other main adults in the scenario – paraprofessionals.

Students. As noted by the teachers and supported by observations, the students were very influential in terms of the enacted functional curriculum. The students themselves – their disabilities, histories, functioning – impacted the enactment of functional curriculum. Both Katie and Paula commented on the differences between their current group of students and previous years, suggesting that they were “higher” or “lower” or that their interests and motivation differed. The teachers related these comments to their impact on how much and what components of functional curriculum were implemented. For example, Katie mentioned that her current group of students had less interest in cooking, so they did not do it as much because the students complained and generally seemed not to get much out of the experience. Paula felt her current students were higher functioning and had more skills than in previous years and contemplated adding some different (and new) things to her program, such as the whole class reading a chapter book during language arts class.

Beyond students’ impact based on others’ perspectives, the students in the study also influenced the enactment through their personal and school histories. The students’

previous experiences in cross-categorical programs further supported questioning the role of self-contained cross-categorical programs. In particular, the students in Katie's program had negative experiences in their middle school self-contained cross-categorical program as evident from their own words and those of others. This negative experience contributed to much of their lack of motivation and disinterest in school. However, as previously discussed, the students also wanted to be in these programs, as evident from the avoidance behavior in general education classes and the safety and security that these programs provided, particularly for their self-esteem and self-concept.

Students' personal histories highlight a larger question, one that was neither addressed nor answered in this project. The relationship between students' personal histories and success in school must be questioned and better understood. Not only did the students in these programs bring with them the trauma of their lives, but they also had to contend with being held back by their families, whether because they were the ones that held the family together or because the family feared them becoming too independent. How can educators help students in such situations be successful? Perhaps the answer lies in greater individualization or use of the vertical curriculum. By addressing students' individual needs in terms of the functional curriculum, whether that be learning to cook, becoming an advocate for oneself, or getting more assistance to handle social skills, teachers may be able to better help students work beyond their personal histories while simultaneously addressing the needs of their school histories and disabilities.

While students impacted the enactment of functional curriculum at many points and in many ways, the clearest may be in the comparisons teachers made between their

current group of students and years past. The comparisons highlighted the influence of students, in terms of their disabilities and functioning and how that impacted not only what the teacher did but the enactment of the curriculum itself. The year-to-year differences of students was very important and holds even greater meaning when considering that every year the enactment will be different as the composition of students in each program would change yearly. Thus, not only do teachers of self-contained cross-categorical have to teach everything to everyone, but they also have to be prepared for everything and everyone to change on a yearly basis.

Curriculum materials. Overall the lack of formal curriculum materials utilized, and at times the lack of a comprehensive curriculum, suggests that perhaps a comprehensive, flexible, balanced functional curriculum heuristic needs to be developed for this population within these programs – secondary, self-contained, cross-categorical. The words of one of the paraprofessionals working in one of these programs summarized it best when it came to the enacted curriculum, “I don’t understand what the curriculum is...”.

A proposed balanced, yet flexible, functional curriculum heuristic would include utilization of different theories of learning and different pedagogical approaches (i.e. skills, cognitive apprenticeship, modeling, social mediation direct instruction, etc.). It would be a heuristic that attempted to balance the various components of a functional curriculum (e.g. functional academics, community access, daily living skills, financial, transportation, leisure and recreation, communication, self-determination, social skills, vocational education, independent living skills) as well as (1) balance direct skills instruction and cognitive apprenticeships in more complex academic, social, and

vocational activities, (2) ensure that students were not only consumers of knowledge, but have frequent opportunities to engage in learning activities that emphasized producing knowledge (e.g., inquiry, apprenticeship, performances), and (3) provide uniquely tailored and individualized instruction along with extensive opportunities for being members of collaborative learning communities (e.g., partners, small groups, research teams, whole class) where there are frequent opportunities for accessing distributive learning among community members.

A balanced approach to functional curriculum would resemble a balanced literacy approach; however, instead of moving on a continuum from kindergarten through twelfth grade and shifting emphasis from “learning to read” to “reading to learn” (see Duke, Bennett-Armistead, & Roberts, 2003; McCartney, 2004; National Center to Improve the Tools of Education, 1996), the shift in emphasis would occur with “learning to function” (i.e. performance) to “functioning to learn” (i.e. cognitive apprenticeship) (see Figure 7). The balanced approach would also distribute expertise across multiple individuals and activities, to essentially avoid self-contained cross-categorical teachers having to be the sole or primary provider of educational services.

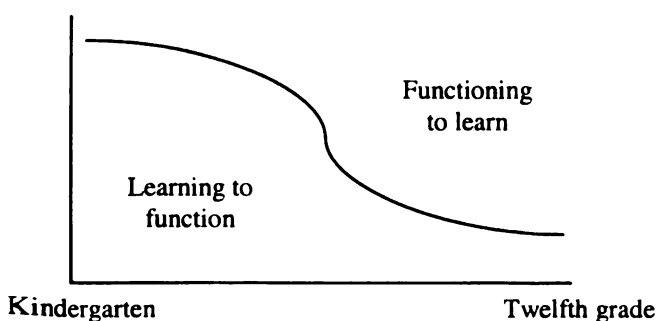


Figure 7: A balanced functional curriculum heuristic.

However, while a balanced functional curriculum heuristic is suggested, it must be flexible. This means that it must be flexible enough to address the various factors, such as community and students. The data illustrated the influential nature of community (i.e. location and size) in terms of enactment and a balanced functional curriculum heuristic must be flexible to work within the confines and limitations of various community variables. Furthermore, as students are influential with regards to the enacted functional curriculum, a balanced functional curriculum heuristic must be fluid enough to address what students bring and how the composition of students will impact the enactment as well as curricular decision-making.

While a balanced functional curriculum is needed in the field, it is not enough. Beyond the creation of a coherent, comprehensive, balanced functional curriculum, the field must also support the other subsystems, such as leadership, teaching, data collection, and organizational (see Mariage & Patriaca, 2005). Although an evidence-based functional curriculum does not currently exist, the field should strive for this and work to achieve it through research and data collection. The goal of developing a curriculum model should include developing one that is data-driven and essentially evidence-based. In addition to a coherent curriculum, targeted professional development is also needed for teachers in terms of functional curriculum. Teachers cannot be expected to teach an evidence-based program without pedagogical professional development. Similarly, data must be collected regarding the use of a functional curriculum in these programs and then used to inform practice. For example, if data reveals that students are not being successful on self-determination, then teachers need to increase this aspect of their program, and perhaps even need targeted professional development on how to teach this component.

Leadership must also support the use of a functional curriculum. Without leadership supporting the use of functional curriculum, teachers will struggle with implementation and schools will not be recultured. Finally, resources must be provided. A comprehensive, coherent balanced functional curriculum cannot be achieved with resources, such as funding (Mariage & Patriaca).

Not surprisingly the curriculum materials/models used within the study, or not be used, impacted the enactment of functional curriculum. In this case it was generally an absence, as neither Katie or Paula used formal commercially-available functional curriculum models, but rather piece-mealed various approaches and materials together. This question of why has many plausible answers, but perhaps the most salient is because there is no alternative. There does not exist a formal, commercially available functional curriculum model for this population, particularly one that is research-based. Paula commented and lamented many times on failing to find a research-based curriculum model for this population of students. This hypothesis would coincide with Reys (2001), who indicated that curriculum selection (e.g. textbooks) was largely reliant on the market. Of course, other answers are tied to resources, money, and meeting state standards (i.e. passing the state's alternate assessments), but ultimately it boiled down to what exists is not appropriate and what is appropriate does not exist. Thus, there is a need to create an appropriate, balanced, flexible functional curriculum heuristic for this population, a point echoed in previous research.

Research by Bouck (2004b) and Conderman and Katsiyannis (2002) have found that secondary special education teachers report a more appropriate curriculum as an important element to improving practice. In the study by Bouck, secondary special

education teachers ranked a more appropriate curriculum as the second most needed feature to improve the quality of secondary special education. Secondary special education teachers in the Conderman and Katsiyannis study felt that a more appropriate curriculum held the most promise for improving practice in the field. These studies, along with the current research, indicate a need to explore and develop an appropriate functional curriculum for students who are likely to be educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs.

Implications

The results and discussion of this study illustrated the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs as well as what factors impacted the enactment in the two programs. While the results are interesting in-and-of themselves, they also hold implications for practice, research, policy, teacher preparation, and professional development (see Appendices H, I, J, K, L for tables on implications per themes and factors).

Practice

One implication for practice that arose from the data is the need to value education and the curriculum that occurs in self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs. The feeling that the field must value the education that students are intended to receive and teachers are intending to implement arose from the “inherent” flexibility that was observed in both programs. Both teachers and their programs were flexible to changes in the “written curriculum.” While the flexibility allowed for moment-to-moment assessments and adjustments to the curriculum to meet the needs of the students,

it also sent a subtle message that the curriculum enacted for these students was not as important as the curriculum in others classes, such as physics, algebra, or world history.

In practice, teachers and other educators should be sensitive and aware that while activities may arise which provide skill development for these students, their curriculum should be valued like any other class. Why do these programs and these teachers and students need to alter their curriculum to accommodate the needs and desires of other school personnel? Why are, or why should, “categorical” programs be *inherently* flexible? In practice, educators must emphasize that the written curriculum for students in these programs is important and is not as flexible as many hope and perceive it to be. The implication is not that flexibility is negative or that moment-to-moment enactment should be avoided, as teachers’ ability to have flexibility within their programs and perform dynamic assessments is important. Yet, curriculum in these programs must be valued. Curriculum is written or intended for a reason, usually because it is perceived to be within the best interest of students for whom it was intended. Without a written curriculum and accompanying pedagogical principles, it is impossible to actualize an evidence-based curriculum that could be linked to post-secondary outcomes. Written curriculum must be considered within the enactment.

This research also has implications for practice in terms of the relationship between assessment and curriculum. The data suggested that in both programs the state-mandated tests designed for this population in Michigan were beginning to drive the curriculum. Both teachers in the study commented that they needed to adjust or modify their curriculum to reflect what was being asked on the state’s alternate assessment for their students. Thus, special education has crossed over into the debate that has typically

surrounded general education, teaching to the test. The field, at all levels – teachers, researchers, policy-makers, etc. – must consider the intended and unintended consequences of this policy on teaching and learning.

Teachers, and other educators, must evaluate the curriculum that is being enacted. While these two teachers enacted a “functional curriculum”, scholars and researchers in the field have indicated that often the educational focus for this population is academic, non-functional programs rather than outcomes (Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996). This is unlikely to change as these students are now to be included in state and local assessments, and few states have alternate assessments for this population – students educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs, such as students with mild mental impairment, learning disability, emotional impairment, Autism, and ADHD.

The push towards an even more academically-focused curriculum (see Olson, 2004) for many secondary students with significant cognitive and/or learning disabilities may not reflect extensive research and key stakeholders’ perspectives. Recent research has indicated that practitioners want a more appropriate curriculum for this population of students (see Bouck, 2004b; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002). Parents have also expressed that they desire a functionally-based curriculum for their students and many have advocated that they want their child to be independent (see DeFur, Todd-Allen, & Getzel, 2001; Hamre-Nietupski, 1993; Hamre-Nietupski, Nietupski, & Strathe, 1992). Furthermore, while the current era emphasizes outcomes, as prescribed by Patton and colleagues, it is not the outcomes that are relevant to students’ success in life after high school, such as equality of opportunity, full participation, independent living, and economic self-sufficiency (see Turnbull III, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003).

The findings of this study, as well as current data by the NLTS2 (see <http://www.nlts2.org/>), highlight the need to create alternative or special education-friendly formal vocational programs and/or classes. Student in both Katie's and Paula's program had limited opportunities to access formal vocational classes, and when they did they were often not successful because there was no support in place (i.e. the program/classes were not special education supported). Given the NLTS2 data that indicates that over 85% of special education students have the same experiences as their general education peers in vocational programs in areas such as curriculum, instructional materials, instructional grouping, and classroom activities, it is not surprising that students like those that Katie and Paula educate do not succeed (Cameto & Wagner, 2003). Schools and county/regional/state programs that offer alternative or special education supported vocational programs or classes need to be developed, and this initiative needs to come from the practitioners – the ones with the experience and everyday knowledge of working with these students. Students with disabilities need access to formal vocational experiences while in high school, to help encourage them to stay in school as well as find employment after they graduate.

The unimpressive post-school outcomes for students with disabilities should also suggest that vocational education for this population needs to be examined and re-evaluated, not cut (see Committee on Education and the Workforce, 2005; Council for Exceptional Children, n.d.). Harvey (2002) found that for every post-school outcome he measured, aside from post-secondary education, students with vocational education had better outcomes. Students with vocational education had higher rates of employment and higher wages. Data supports the need for vocational education and suggests that perhaps

vocational education needs to be more accommodating to and inclusive of special education students. Furthermore practitioners, in conjunction with researchers, businesses, and other personnel in the field (i.e. rehabilitation counselors), need to find more creative ways to bring vocational education experiences to students in smaller and more rural schools and communities.

Beyond implications for curriculum, practitioners, and those that impact practice, need to listen more to the students that they educate. Students' perspectives need to be sought, encouraged, and valued in terms of education. While students were interviewed regarding their perspectives in the research project, this must be translated to practice. In this study teachers tried to involve students in decisions but at a superficial level, such as asking them which of the two or three elective choices they would like. This is in contrast to listening to and responding to students' opinions of wanting more general education classes, academic courses within the program, more daily living classes, or more vocational courses. Students are valuable sources in terms of understanding what they want in a curriculum and what they are interested and motivated to learn. Furthermore, encouraging students to voice perspectives can help build their self-determination and focus on those skills. While the field should not just work to enact curriculum that students are interested in or motivated to learn, it should be a consideration and a factor in terms of what gets enacted. Students can add more to the enactment if those in the field, across all levels (i.e. practice, policy, higher education), start respecting their voice. And the field must listen to both students' words and behavior.

This research project highlighted the need to *listen* to students beyond their words, and to understand what was being communicated with their behavior. The

students in the study sent several messages with their behavior, often indicating that the general education classroom was not where they wanted to be. This was evident from their skipping general education cases and returning to the self-contained cross-categorical programs. They also communicated these messages through their behavior in the general education classes and their comments about wanting to return to their self-contained cross-categorical classrooms. Students' perspectives should be respected and taken into consideration when discussing issues directly related to their educational programming and post-school outcomes, such as inclusion and issues of vocational education or work-based experiences.

An implication for practice also arose in terms of the importance of interagency or multidisciplinary collaboration. Despite that the data suggested teachers had to be everything, as they had to provide the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum, it is not possible for any teacher to be knowledgeable in every area. In practice, teachers must work collaboratively with other professionals inside and outside the school to fulfill the needs of students educated in these secondary self-contained, cross-categorical programs. Hence, these programs with their various and multi-faceted needs are rich sources to promote interagency and multidisciplinary collaboration.

This study also has implications for practice in terms of pushing educators – teachers, paraprofessionals, and administrators – to expand what learning encompasses and where learning can occur. Learning can occur, and should for this population with respect to a functional curriculum, outside of the four walls of a classroom. Practitioners must embrace the idea that a true functional curriculum cannot occur solely within a classroom; it must extend out into the community. Enactment of functional curriculum

should be occurring in the community, in business and work opportunities, in places of recreation and leisure, and other locations that support everyday activities and daily living skills.

To truly enact a functional curriculum, what learning is and where it happens must be challenged. Such a shift in focus might benefit from understanding learning from other theoretical orientations, such as sociocultural theory, with its focus on the role of socially mediated learning in socially situated, cultural activities. For example, the metaphor of “cognitive apprenticeship” as a guide to working side-by-side with apprentices provides us with a way to capture the contextual variables that impact learning outcomes (e.g., discourse, tools, strategies, and other mediational means). Increasingly, it will be necessary to understand the role that performance plays in leading development (Gee, 2005). Rather than viewing learning as an accretion of skills that culminate in functional understanding, this perspective suggests that much learning actually occurs when “performance” precedes “competence” (Gee). This necessitates that students are placed in authentic contexts and are able to assume increasing responsibility for performance. It is in this sense that where learning occurs for secondary students must expand to include the places and spaces where students can learn as they work, act independent, socialize, and handle adult responsibilities, rather than mastering all the skills of independence before being able to use them.

Finally, and along a similar line, an implication from the data arose with regards to the tension illuminated in these two programs: schools as preparation for life versus the idea of performance before competence. The “model” that was largely utilized by these two programs involves school as preparation for life, or in other words, that students have to

gain a certain amount of skills in the various functional curriculum areas before they can perform them (i.e. competence before performance). And while a few exceptions did exist (e.g. Marilyn taking the students to do community-based work activities in a hardware store and a nursing home), in general neither program embraced Gee's idea of performance before competence (2005). Practice needs to expand what counts as functional curriculum and embrace greater use of cognitive apprenticeships. As discussed earlier, a balanced, flexible functional curriculum heuristic that involves both "learning to function" and "functioning to learn" throughout one's school career but with greater emphasis at different times (see Figure 7) would be beneficial. The enactment of a comprehensive, balanced, flexible curriculum focused across a school career would also help to enact the vertical coherence lacking in both these programs throughout a student's time in school. Ideally practice should be looking not only to create coherence for grades

Research

One implication for research involves the need to systematically examine the benefits and/or disadvantages of pull-out and inclusive education programs for this population. The previous research is equivocal and even data within this study suggest mixed conclusions and recommendations. For one, the data from this study indicated that students wanted to be in pull-out programs, despite their statements otherwise, because they felt safe. Students also completed more work in their self-contained cross-categorical programs because it presented less of a threat to their self-worth and self-esteem than in inclusive programs. However, there were few positive role models in either self-contained cross-categorical program and behavioral challenges created domino

effects as students fed off each other's inappropriate behavior, which remains a disadvantage to pull-out programs.

Beyond just self-contained programs, additional research is needed on cross-categorical programs. While some research has compared cross-categorical programs to categorical programs, with little difference found, overall a dearth exists. While special education programs are becoming increasingly more heterogeneous (i.e. cross-categorical), there has been very little scientific study of the assumptions on which cross-categorical special education is based (Epstein & Cullinan, 1983). This comment is not to suggest that either a cross-categorical or a categorical program is more appropriate, but merely that deliberate, conscientious decisions need to be made regarding instructional environments as well as curriculum for students with disabilities, and that these decisions should have some research base.

Research is also needed to examine appropriate curricula for secondary special education students, particularly those educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs. The lack of use of formal curriculum models in this study, in conjunction with the words of the teachers themselves (i.e. there are not research-based curricula available for these students) and previous research (e.g. Bouck, 2004b, 2005a; Conderman & Katsiyannis, 2002) suggest that a more appropriate curriculum is needed. And research is needed to investigate its use and affect on students' post-school outcomes. Appropriate curriculum needs to be validated by research in terms of its positive impact on students' success both in school (i.e. state assessments, progress towards IEP goals, advancements in studies) and after school (i.e. outcomes such as employment, independent living, and access to community supports and resources). The field of education is now in an era of

evidence-based interventions, and students in this population deserve no less – a research-based curriculum appropriate for their needs in school and their post-school goals.

From this study, examination of functional curriculum in or outside of cross-categorical programs needs to be increased. The lack of research on functional curriculum has left teachers, researchers, and teacher educators without support to advocate for this curricular option. If research existed to illustrate a positive correlation between a functional curriculum and successful post-school outcomes, teachers would have support for their use of this curriculum model. They would also avoid the dominant focus on academics and its drive and impact on the current enactment of functional curriculum in today's classroom. Both teachers in this study were hesitant to call their enacted curriculum functional and were quick to highlight its academic side, something that most likely exists within the current culture of academic achievement and NCLB, rather than on a variety of other important outcomes, such as independent living, daily life skills, and successful involvement in the community (Patton, Smith, Clark, Polloway, Edgar, & Lee, 1996).

Beyond just analyzing functional curriculum, researchers in institutions of higher education need to work towards creating a commercially available functional curriculum heuristic that is designed for secondary students who may be educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs. The developed curriculum heuristic should be created in conjunction with teachers, students, parents, and other school personnel who impact its enactment. The data also suggested that a functional curriculum heuristic needs not only to be appropriate and comprehensive, but also balanced and flexible (see Figure 7).

The functional curriculum heuristic should also be research-based. The functional curriculum components that are embedded within the heuristic should be based on research, which focuses on student success in school and post-school. Therefore, researchers need to understand the relationship between the various components (i.e. daily living skills, vocational educational, social skills, etc.) and students' success in school (i.e. with peers, assessments) and post-school (i.e. employment, independent living, life satisfaction). The functional curriculum heuristic as a whole should also be research-based and, as previously discussed, researchers should examine if its use is associated with positive school experiences as well as post-school outcomes.

Researchers in the field also need to increase the scope of examining and representing students' and parents' perspectives and voices in research. While this project attempted to capture and reflect students' perspectives of the enactment of functional curriculum, it could have gone further, as most research should. Researchers need to develop better ways to capture students' perspectives, particularly students who may struggle with traditional interview and/or survey methods. Research also needs to increase its attention to parents' perspectives. While this study did not attempt to ascertain parents' perspectives, input from parents would have strengthened the study. Research in special education in general needs to pay greater attention to the voices of the key stakeholders, namely teachers, students, parents, and even advocates.

Policy

One implication for policy is that ideologies, such as what is meant by the least restrictive environment and whether inclusion is the best alternative for educating students with disabilities, must continue to be examined. Policy cannot be a "one size fits

all” model, but must account for variation and individual preferences. Thus, policy must allow for individualization and differential responsiveness. While no one could deny that the ideal goal for humanity is to have an inclusive society, inclusive practices in schools in terms of classes and student placement may not be the most beneficial to every student. Policymakers and others (i.e. researchers, practitioners) must consider that for some students inclusive practices may be more detrimental than good. Students in both Harborville and River Bend High Schools gave signals that inclusive classes were not the most appropriate for them through their words and behaviors. Policy must consider these students and *their* needs. The same is true for the least restrictive environment. The least restrictive environment is not a universal placement, but individualized, or at least it should be.

Policymakers must consider what this research has illuminated regarding the impact of policy and legislation on the enactment of curriculum. The data from this study indicated that federal education policies were impacting the enactment of functional curriculum in both programs studied. Particularly interesting was the impact of the alternate state assessment that was given to students in the two programs. Both teachers made comments about having to alter their curriculum to meet the assessments, or in others words, “to teach to the test” (Barton, 1999). Bond (2004) stated that a criticism of high-stakes tests was that they often led to teaching to the test. While teaching to the test is a relatively new phenomenon in special education, as it was not until recently that special education students were included in state and local assessments, it carries much caution and concern (see Kleinert & Thurlow, 2001; Turner, Baldwin, Kleinert, & Kearns, 2000).

A concern with the new required state testing is that special education students are often chided as the ones at fault when schools do not make Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) under *No Child Left Behind* (see Nealis, 2003; Starr, 2005). Special education teachers might be under increased pressure to teach their students the test to increase their chances of success. Furthermore, teaching to the test has been cited as negatively impacting students' education. Peha (2005) stated that teaching to the test resulted in less teaching to students and that a focus on the test resulted in less real learning. These two consequences of "teaching to the test", and essentially high stakes testing itself, have negative connotations for students educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs. If teachers like Katie and Paula feel pressure to have their students do well on the alternate assessments and alter their curriculum to focus more on teaching to the test, one has to question what will be cut regarding the enactment of curriculum as the data indicated that the teachers had to teach everything to everyone. Perhaps the students will have less focus on functional skills, such as daily living and social skills as their alternate assessment focuses on mathematics, literacy, and vocational skills. Students educated in these programs are likely to benefit from increased levels of authentic activity within and outside of school. Hence, unless high stake assessments are expansive enough to capture many of the performative experiences students should engage in, there is a risk of further narrowing what counts as valued learning to information found on paper and pencil tests. Therefore, policymakers and others need to examine policies for their intended and unintended consequences for students educated in these programs and change policy that is not in students' best interest.

Another implication for policy, albeit at the local policy level, relates to the need to reculture schools. As presented in the results and discussion sections, the education and/or curriculum occurring in these programs were not being valued. In fact the education these students received was devalued, as school personnel placed tasks such as cleaning and stuffing envelopes or bags before the intended curriculum. A reculturing of schools and school philosophies should occur to better position the importance of special education and specifically the self-contained cross-categorical programs. Barth (2002) stated that “culture building requires the will to transform the elements of school culture into forces that support rather than subvert the school’s purpose” (p. 8). Thus, the will must exist not only with the special education teachers and personnel, which appeared lacking, but also other school personnel (i.e. principal, teachers, parents, etc.) to change the elements occurring with the self-contained cross-categorical programs that fail to align with each school’s explicit philosophy (i.e. lifelong learners).

In addition to reculturing the school with respect to valuing the education and curriculum occurring in the self-contained cross-categorical programs, the need to reculture also exists in terms of the social elements, or in other words, the creation of a “school community.” As evident from the data, a school community that included the students in this study did not appear to exist. The focal students in this study were marginalized, scapegoated, taken advantage of, or otherwise neglected in the larger school community. The field must focus on reculturing schools to value the variety of learners that enter their doors and to create a community in which everyone learns (at his/her level); everyone supports the learning of others (at their individual level); adults and students care about, assist, encourage, and work together both in times of celebration

and need (Barth, 2002). Students who are educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs have just as much right to learn, get support from others for their learning, and have both adults and other students who do care about them, will assist them, encourage them, and will work with them, as opposed to being “put-down” or neglected. Policy needs to look beyond special education to the larger educational system and focus on creating the normative conditions in schools that value all learners and learning.

Teacher Preparation

One implication from this study in terms of teacher preparation is the continued need to better educate and train preservice special education teachers for secondary education. Many teacher candidates will teach secondary special education at one time or another, whether they plan to or not. Teacher education programs must work to help prospective teachers understand and know how to work with secondary special education students. Teacher preparation institutions need to increase their coursework offered, or what pre-service teachers are required to take in secondary special education, as well as those that cut across multiple disabilities. It is no longer realistic to believe that teachers will be teaching to only one disability category. Preservice teachers need to be prepared to both work across age ranges (i.e. secondary as well as elementary) and disabilities.

Teacher preparation programs should also educate preservice teachers in multiple curricular approaches, including functional curriculum. Both Katie and Paula piecemealed the functional curriculum in their programs and had limited awareness of functional curriculum models or options. Perhaps if functional curriculum had been presented during their preservice experiences Katie and Paula would have expressed more knowledge about functional curriculum and been more apt to utilize a formal

functional curriculum model. This is not to suggest that formal functional curricula models are superior, as this project and previous research have indicated (see Bouck, 2004b) a more appropriate functional curriculum needs to be developed. However, perhaps greater exposure in teacher preparation programs would have resulted in less piece-mealing, more cohesion in the enactment, and greater coverage of components that appeared to be missing or slighted, such as self-determination or social skills.

Along similar lines, from this data, institutions of higher education must also work with teacher candidates to be everything to everyone, although still question this notion. Teachers of self-contained cross-categorical programs need preparation to provide the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum as well as to strive for vertical coherence. Vertical coherence should be sought not only at the secondary level, but across students' K-12 school careers.

Beyond improved teacher preparation programs in terms of secondary, cross-categorical disabilities, and curriculum, institutions also need to discuss dispositions with preservice candidates, which move beyond a focus on knowledge and performance as educators. One such disposition that needs increased attention in preparing secondary special education teachers involves self-determination. Teachers who leave teacher preparation programs should be prepared to help students have agency, as well as recognize the epistemological approach needed to prepare students with opportunities to explore and demonstrate self-determination, as it requires shifts in one's beliefs regarding power and control. Just as educators want students to have more than knowledge and be able to perform their abilities, institutions of higher education must require this in their

teacher preparation programs. Teacher preparation programs must help preservice teachers consider dispositions.

Another disposition for teachers to be exposed to during their preservice years involves the use and role of cognitive apprenticeships in education and particularly special education. Teacher candidates should gain exposure to and understand the notion of “performance before competence” (Gee, 2005) and what it can mean for students like those educated in secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs, who may struggle the most with generalizability and transfer of concepts and skills to other environments.

Professional Development

Beyond teacher preparation, the results of the study also hold implications for professional development. The teachers in this study had to be everything to everyone who entered. They also taught multiple core content areas as well as functional areas (i.e. life skills, practical business). Given that both Katie and Paula provided instruction in mathematics, social studies, and language arts, it seems intuitive that professional development is needed in these areas, as well as professional development on the functional areas and other issues related to secondary special education. However, when the teachers received professional development, it was more likely to be focused on a school issues or a topic of relevance to the county, such as Autism. Neither teacher received subject specific professional development during the course of the study.

The potential lack of professional development in academic content areas, functional content areas, and perhaps even the service and extracurricular components of the enacted curriculum is supported by previous work of the author. In a survey of teachers in the state of Michigan, Bouck (2004b) found that only 27% reported having

content-area specific professional development within the last year. In contrast, 73% reported having professional development on transition, 59% for positive behavior supports, 51% for law and legislative issues, 41% for career preparation, and 32% on a specific disability. Despite that the respondents generally considered their professional development experiences useful, the highest ratings for ineffective professional development was for content areas. Given that teachers like Katie and Paula provide instruction for a variety of curricular areas, the field needs to improve professional development opportunities, particularly when considering academic content areas.

At a broader level, professional development must also occur across the school. Results from the research indicate that students from these programs were marginalized, scapegoated, and otherwise not accepted in the larger school community, and that this was occurring with peers and adults. This suggests that perhaps these schools, as well as others, need to be recultured – recultured to accept a variety of learners and the challenges and strengths they bring to a school and a classroom. However, reculturing requires a systematic approach, and involves more than just a focus on special education, but at a school-wide, if not district and/or community-wide, perspective. Perhaps these two schools, as well as schools in general, would benefit from professional development focused on systematic change and creating a more accepting school culture.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. These limitations include the cases selected, including the particular two cases selected; the location of the cases; and the bounding of the data collection. Limitations were also present in how and what data was gathered. Overall the limitations highlight that the results of this qualitative study are pertinent to

these two cases, and thus generalizability is limited. While hypotheses and projections can be made regarding other rural, self-contained cross-categorical programs, extrapolations beyond the cases should be made with caution.

One overarching limitation of the study regarding the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs involved the cases. For example, the study was limited to only two programs. In addition, these two programs were both located in rural areas, and hence the results focus on the data from the two rural programs specifically selected in the study.

Beyond the data being limited to the two cases, another limitation involves that the two cases were observed for a bounded period of time. While it is possible that the enactment of functional curriculum differed or deviated from the themes during the times not observed by the researcher, it is considered unlikely as the data became saturated. However, the cases were not observed for exactly the same amount of time. More hours of observation were recorded at Harborville High School in Katie's program than at River Bend High School in Paula's room. This resulted from the teacher at River Bend High School getting sick, the school having snow days, and students being gone on field trips. However, the data at both schools became saturated.

A limitation also occurred as the researcher was the only one who conducted the observations. While the researcher followed the qualitative tradition, attempted to gather objective data and analyze it with a neutral lens, with qualitative research the researcher is always present. Despite that the data "went through" the researcher's mind, the researcher attempted to objectively study the cases and was not focused on passing judgment, but on understanding (Bodgan & Biklen, 2003, p. 33). Throughout the

research, the researcher tried to acknowledge and account for any bias that arose. She did attempt to guard against this through detailed fieldnotes that included reflections on her objectivity.

In addition, limitations arose in the data collection. One limitation was that not every student in both programs returned completed and approved parental consent forms, and/or gave student assent themselves. Several of the students in Katie's program either did not return the parental consent forms or else their parents indicated that they did not want their son or daughter to participate. In Paula's program, one student did not return his parental consent and thus was not included in the study. The limited parental consent forms in Katie's program meant that data could not be collected on those students, and thus enactment of functional curriculum in her programs was left to be understood by only those students for whom consent was granted. Little is known regarding the students for whom consent was not obtained, in terms of their personal and school data as well as their perspective of the enactment of functional curriculum. Despite that the consent forms in Katie's class were sent home twice with students and mailed home once, several did not return the form.

Finally, a limitation existed with the student interviews. While student interviews were conducted on every student for whom consent was obtained, some students had difficulty understanding the questions. Even when students did appear to understand the questions, they limited their responses to a few words rather than expanding their thoughts even when prompted by the researcher. The students also wanted to appear knowledgeable throughout the interview. When questioned if certain functional curriculum components were included in their classroom, instead of responding yes or no

many students would reply “I already know that” or “I taught that to myself”. Even when repeatedly prompted, the students would continue to state that they already knew that information or that they had learned it by themselves or outside of school. Thus, data from these questions were cautiously considered.

Future Directions

Research needs to continue to examine not only the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs, but other types of programs as well. The field needs to better understand what is occurring curriculum-wise in its service-delivery options as well as what factors are impacting the enactment. Future research should examine the enactment of functional curriculum in urban as well as suburban self-contained cross-categorical programs. It should also examine the enactment with other types of service delivery models, such as resource rooms and general education classes, if applicable. This study was limited to functional curriculum models that were “piece-mealed” by the teachers, as opposed to a formal commercially available functional curriculum. Research needs to be undertaken to understand the enactment of commercially available functional curricula as well.

Along similar lines, exploring the enactment with different teacher characteristics could also shed light on understanding enactment. In particular, questioning teachers more in-depth about their teacher preparation experiences would provide important information. The role of teacher preparation on the enactment was under-explored in this study, and additional research is needed regarding the impact of preservice education and experience on inservice actions and decisions.

Other future research directions include exploring what should be a functional curriculum. In particular the questions raised from this study, such as what should be a functional curriculum; what does it entail; who should define it; and what impact do the components included have on students' post-school success, should be investigated. Research needs to specifically examine the role of various components identified with functional curriculum and their impact on students' school and post-school success. Components should be studied in both isolation and in conjunction with one another to better parse what components are effective in helping students succeed and reach goals and which ones are not. These quasi-experimental, correlational, and qualitative research studies would assist in the construction of an effective and efficient formal functional curriculum model.

Future research should also continue to examine student perspectives and reflect their voices and opinions regarding their education. While student interviews were cited as a limitation in this study, researchers need to continue to explore how best to interview these students and to reflect their voices and opinions in research. In addition, the perspective of parents needs to be added to the research, not only on the enactment of functional curriculum but also regarding special education in general. While parents were not interviewed in this study, it is an area that should be further researched. Parents also impact the enactment of functional curriculum. While in this study parents were grouped together under the heading of "community", examination of the influence of parents as a separate category is needed.

As this study held implications for inclusive education versus educating students in pull-out programs and illuminated that many students actually preferred their self-

contained cross-categorical programs, performed more work in these programs, and felt more secure, continued research is needed on inclusive versus pull-out settings for students with disabilities. The current research is equivocal. Despite the current political climate of inclusive education, research must continue to examine the different instructional environment options for students with disabilities. The data from this study indicated that the pull-out setting created a community for students, provided them with curricular experiences they most likely would not have received elsewhere (i.e. vocational and service), and provided them a space to position themselves in different roles, such as leader and more knowledgeable other. While current policy leans away from pull-out educational settings, research must not. Research should continue to explore the academic and social ramifications of inclusive and pull-out educational settings for students with disabilities, particularly secondary students. Ideally this research would involve quasi-experimental, correlational, and qualitative methodology.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TEACHER INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for Secondary Special Education Students Interview of Classroom Teachers about curriculum

Background Information

1. How many years have you been teaching:
 - a. In special education?
 - b. In your district?
 - c. In your current position?
2. What was your teacher preparation like?
 - a. What did it focus on?
 - b. What kind of field experiences did you have?
3. What is your teaching philosophy?

Curriculum

4. Who chooses the curriculum to implement for secondary special education students at your school?
5. What type of curriculum do you believe is implemented in your classroom?

6. How did this curriculum get selected for implementation?

Prompts: Were you able to select the curriculum?

If you weren't, did another teacher, an administrator, or curriculum director select it?

Did you review teachers' manuals?

7. What type of functional curriculum do you use?

Prompts: Do you use a store-bought name or self-created or combination?

8. What components, units, or lessons of a functional curriculum do you implement?

Prompts: Do you use functional academics?

Self-determination?

Vocational education?

Daily living skills?

Social/relationship skills?

Independent living skills?

Community skills/access?

Financial skills?

Leisure recreation?

Communication skills?

9. Why and how do you choose particular units, modules, or lessons?

10. What components/units/modules of the curriculum that you implement do you feel are most beneficial for your students in terms of their post-school success?
11. How long have you taught using the same structure to your curriculum?
12. How much store bought curriculum is utilized in your program?
- a. What kinds?
13. Is the curriculum rotated across years (for example if students spend 4 years in your class do they get the same material or is it rotated?)?
14. If you could create an ideal curriculum for secondary special education students in self-contained settings, what components would it entail?
15. In your opinion, what is missing from the students' curriculum?

Factors

16. How much does who you have in class impact your curriculum use?
17. Do your students take MI-Access or the MEAP?
- a. How does it impact your curriculum?
- b. Do you use the AUEN Functional curriculum?
18. What is your school's (school district's) philosophy?
- a. How does that impact your curriculum?

19. What impact does the ISD have on your curriculum?

Classroom/School Information

20. How do you decide who is in what class? (i.e. who is in your class and who is in another special education class or inclusion class?)

21. How do you work it so students get all their “core classes” credit?

22. How open are the other teachers in the school to inclusion?

23. What is the acceptance of students in the school community?

24. What is your goal for your students when they leave you each year?

Miscellaneous

25. How much choice do students have in their schedules?

26. What is the primary mode of instruction?

a. Do you differentiate across students?

27. What is the role of the paraprofessionals?

APPENDIX B: STUDENT INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for Secondary Students in Self-Contained Classrooms Interview of Students

Thank you for taking the time to complete this interview. Your responses are very important and your input is valued. Please remember that you don't have to answer any question you don't want to and can stop at any time.

Demographics: Background Information on Student

1. What is your gender: ___ Male ___ Female
2. What grade are you in at school: ___ 9th ___ 10th ___ 11th ___ 12th
3. What is your schedule at school now?

High School Experience (in general)

4. Tell me about your high school experience.
5. Tell me what you learn in high school.

Curriculum: Current and Ideal

6. Who do you believe chooses the curriculum (*what you learn in your classes*) for you?

Prompts: *Do you think your teacher chooses it?*

The principal?

Another administrator or teacher?

Do you think that you get a say?

7. On the following list, please say yes or no if you are receiving (getting) this at school now. [If you are not sure of what one means, please ask the interviewer and it will be explained.]

	<u>Yes/No</u>		<u>Comments</u>
Regular academics (math, science, language arts, social studies)	Y	N	
Functional Academics (math, science, language arts, social studies)	Y	N	
Electives (gym, computers, art, drama, etc.)	Y	N	
Learning strategies (teaching how to learn)	Y	N	
Remedial skills	Y	N	
Career and employability skills	Y	N	
Social Skills	Y	N	
Vocational education	Y	N	
Community access	Y	N	
Daily living skills	Y	N	
Financial skills (money, banking, etc.)	Y	N	
Independent living skills	Y	N	
Transportation skills	Y	N	
Social/relationships skills	Y	N	
Self-determination skills	Y	N	
Advocacy skills	Y	N	
Transition (transition skills)	Y	N	
Leisure and recreation skills	Y	N	
Other: _____	Y	N	
Other: _____	Y	N	

8. If you could create an ideal curriculum for yourself, what would it be?

Prompts: *If you could choose what you wanted to learn in schools (in your classes) that would most help you, what would you choose to learn?*

Post-High School

9. What do you want to do after high school?

- a. How do you think what you are learning is helping you reach that goal?

Consumer Satisfaction

The following questions are based on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Please circle the number that corresponds to your satisfaction level.

10. How satisfied are you with what you currently get at school in your classes?

1 2 3 4 5

11. How satisfied are you with what you currently get in school compared to what you described you would want or like to get?

1 2 3 4 5

12. Anything else you want to tell me about high school or what you are learning?

APPENDIX C: PARAPROFESSIONAL INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for Secondary Students in Self-Contained Classrooms Interview of Paraprofessionals

Demographics: Background Information on Position

1. How many years have you been: a paraprofessional _____
In this school district _____
In the high school _____
At your current position _____

2. Can you please describe your responsibilities to me.

3. What is your role with the curriculum?

Perspective on Curriculum and Program

4. In your view, describe the curriculum the students receive across their school day.

5. In your opinion, what is the value of other programs that the student are involved in (such as Heartlands or other classes – i.e. inclusions)?

6. What do you think keeps the students' interest? How are they kept engaged in school?

Perspective on Students' Around the School

7. What is the acceptance of students within the school community?

8. What is the hidden curriculum at this high school?

9. Do the students get (understand) the hidden curriculum?

APPENDIX D: THEME TABLE PER PROGRAM

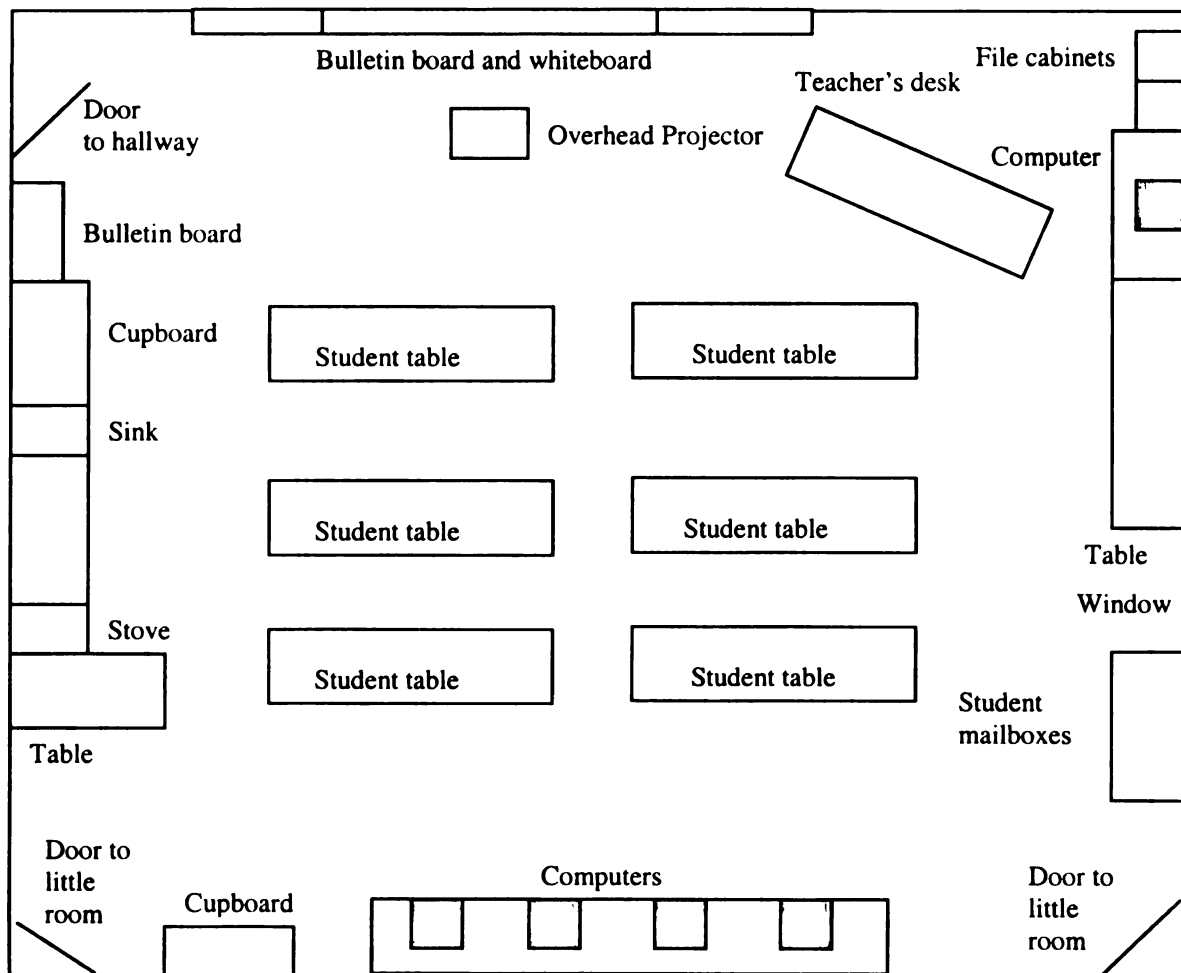
Summary of data/results within each case across themes

Theme	Katie's program (Harborville)	Paula's program (River Bend)
Moment-to-moment enactment	· Altered curriculum when requested by school personnel (i.e. changed plans when asked to stuff race bags by transition paraprofessional) · Change <i>enacted curriculum</i> when <i>written curriculum</i> did not work (i.e. when Katie was gone and Brenda was substituting and no directions were left)	· Described program as flexible · Altered curriculum when requested with little notice (i.e. class cleaned outside school when asked by principal and stuffed envelopes for office)
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	· Initially said used functional curriculum, but described it later in other words (focus on functional academics; larger ratio of academic to other courses) · Indicated used all operationally defined components of functional curriculum, but observations suggested otherwise (some areas missing or under-addressed). Students did not agree with this and suggested areas that were missing · Little to no use of formal, commercially-available functional curriculum models · At times, focused math class on long division by hand · Disconnect between what students saw as "functional" and what teacher saw (some students wanted more academics, some more vocational)	· Initially said used functional curriculum, but later described it as "a mixture of academic and work related" (larger ratio of academic to other courses) · Teacher discussed focus on vocational and work-related and supported through observations · Little-to-no use of formal, commercially available functional curriculum models · Focus on textbook work and memorizing facts in history course · Disconnect between what students saw as "functional" and what teacher saw (some students did not see cleaning inside/outside of school as "functional") · Students did not agree with all components teacher indicated she utilized
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	· Students were largely educated together in same room for majority of day · Students had a set of shared experiences (largely stemming from their shared time) · Students had minimal acceptance in larger school community · Celebration of rituals (i.e. birthdays) · Creation of roles (particularly more knowledgeable other; as well as positive – leader – and negative – scapegoat, etc.) · Limited sharing of stories among students and teacher [sharing moved students from consumers to producers of information] · Taking responsibility for each other (i.e. serving in a leadership role to	· Students were largely educated together in same room for majority of day · Students had a set of shared experiences (largely stemming from their shared time) · school community · Students were leery about interacting with general education peers (avoidance of "walking around the block") · Sharing of stories among students and teacher (i.e. spontaneous sharing) [sharing moved students from consumers to producers of information]

	encourage good decisions by classmates or assist with their apprenticeship)	
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	· <i>Horizontal curriculum</i>: Variety of subjects offered (many academic); same core courses each year · <i>Vertical curriculum</i>: discussed wanting to individualize but felt constrained because large range of abilities in students and lack of sufficient assistance; individualization was observed particularly with language arts class and math (some students worked on areas that they struggled in); differential behavioral consequences/concessions · <i>Service curriculum</i>: Felt lacking in school (i.e. not strong school social worker) and had to do more; worked on coping with small issues (i.e. annoying peers) and larger family issues · <i>Extracurricular curriculum</i>: Katie paid for students to participate in community 5K and walked with them; she and her staff set up community-based instruction opportunities, work experiences for students, and started school store to give experience (i.e. vocational opportunities)	· <i>Horizontal curriculum</i>: Variety of subjects offered (many academic); rotated courses across the years; lack of acceptance of programs – courses not identified per name but just program (categorical) · <i>Vertical curriculum</i>: stated curriculum was individualized (reduced spelling words for particular students); yet made comments that individualization was, not many teachers probably did it, and struggled to wait for students who worked at a slower pace than her planning; differential behavioral consequences/concessions · <i>Service curriculum</i>: Felt lacking in school, particularly for students with emotional impairments (i.e. teacher and her program were not equipped to address); used students experiences to draw upon lessons and help students make good decisions · <i>Extracurricular curriculum</i>: Paula set up school store and mandated work credit to give students vocational opportunities; used to have a 1/month evening out activity with students (enactment expands past 4 walls)
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	· Students confused about wanting to be in special education (i.e. pull-out) and wanting to be in general education (i.e. inclusive) [like revolving door] · Students said wanted general educational classes, but then refused to go, skipped the classes, returned from them, or would not work once in them · When whole class had opportunity to go into general education class, students did not interact with general education peers and would choose to work back in pull-out classrooms · Student stated wanted to be in general education because treated younger and there was a stigma · Pull-out program was a safe environment – safe to make mistakes · Pull-out program also created opportunities for students that students in general education did not always have (go to vocational center as sophomores, have work release)	· Some students expressed that liked being in pull-out because work was easier · Some students liked being in pull-out program and resisted inclusive efforts, even in the hallway · Students felt like treated younger in pull-out classes · Some students aware of stigma that accompanied being in self-contained program and/or special education · Students has some special freedom for being in pull-out program

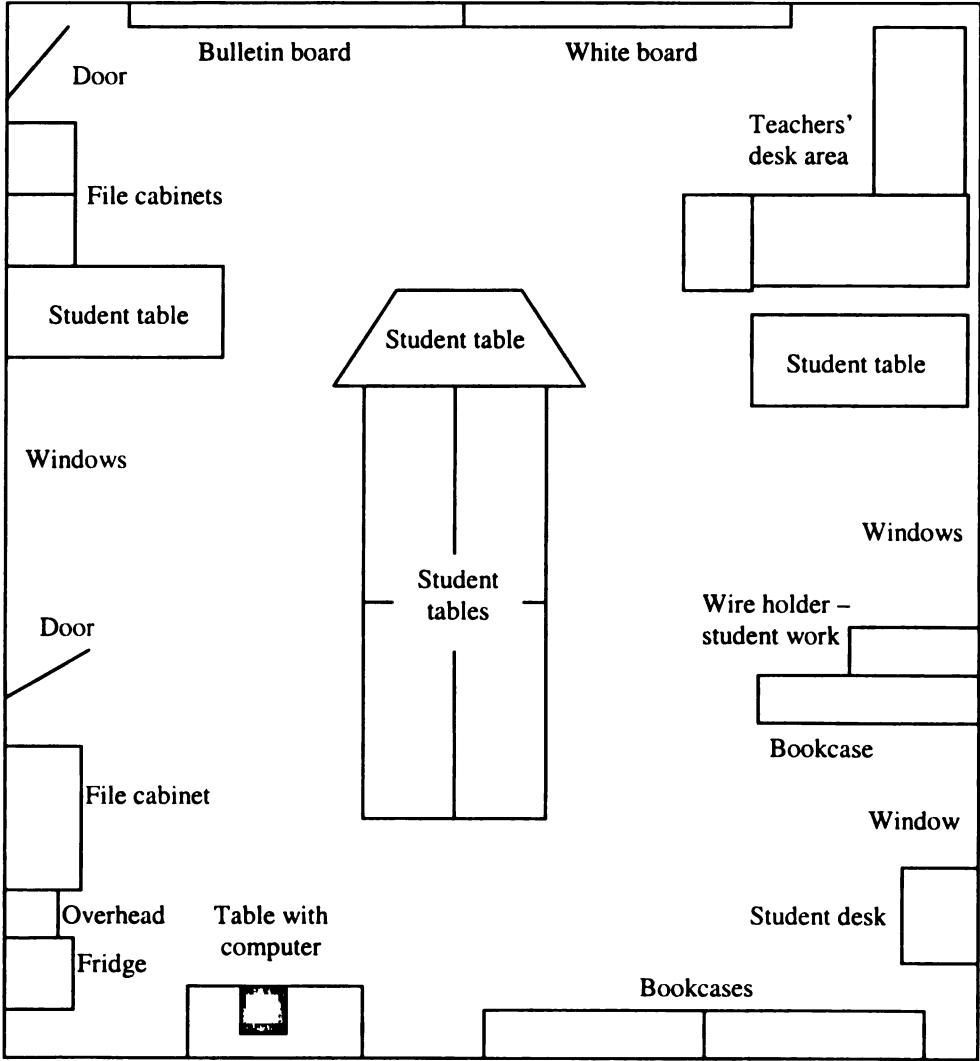
APPENDIX E: HARBORVILLE CLASSROOM DIAGRAM

Harborville Classroom Diagram



APPENDIX F: RIVER BEND CLASSROOM DIAGRAM

River Bend Classroom Diagram



APPENDIX G: FACTOR TABLE PER PROGRAM

Summary of data/results within each case across factors

Factor	Katie's program (Harborville)	Paula's program (River Bend)
Policy/legislation	· Teacher commented reconsidering math curriculum because content on alternate assessment for students that she did not cover in functional math class · Teacher felt that state did not value functional aspects of these types of programs · Students had access to LRE, but primarily through electives	· Teacher commented that state tests were driving her curriculum enactment · Had copy of state alternate standards aligned with state alternate assessment for her population of students · Teacher did not believe her students could take the state mandated alternate assessment for her students (tried to postpone or change tests) · Students had access to LRE, but primarily through electives
Community	· Rural location of community and school (less able to get community-based instructional and works-site places as well as transportation to get students to sites) [lack of public transportation] · Greater tolerance in community to let students do CBI and work at businesses · Barter system between school personnel and businesses for CBI and work sites · Smaller communities led to smaller schools, so students had more opportunities (like being on sports teams)	· Rural location of community and school (less able to get community-based instructional and works-site places as well as transportation to get students to sites) [lack of public transportation] · Greater tolerance in community to let students do CBI and work at businesses · Smaller communities led to smaller schools, so students had more opportunities (like being on sports teams)
School	· Less work experience opportunities outside of school because of location and transportation limitations; yet work experiences in school limited to school stores, being an aide, or working with the custodian · Physical location of the classroom – more remote and surrounded by other special education classrooms · Classroom designed for program (large size, 2 backrooms, built in kitchen) · Other teachers resisted programs entry into content area courses for brief period of time · Implicit philosophy of some school personnel (not stopped by key school officials, but also not endorsed) that pull-out program was not as valued, thus could stop what was doing and stuff bags · No official graduate	· Less work experience opportunities outside of school because of location and transportation limitations; yet work experiences in school limited to school stores, being an aide, or working with the custodian · Classroom located around core general education content classes · Classroom was two offices put together (small without many extras – room for tables, chairs, computer, bookshelves) · Some resistance by other teachers to have students in their classes if they presented behavioral challenges · Implicit school philosophy that pull-out program was not as valued, thus could stop what was doing and clean inside/outside of school or stuff envelopes · Teacher created curriculum and graduation requirements for program

	requirements/curriculum · Behavioral policy (address in room or send to office)	· Behavioral policy – Responsible Thinking Room
Teacher	· Teacher histories – focused teacher preparation on cross-categorical, self-contained at secondary level (brought experience from courses and field placements/student teaching) · Explicit and implicit philosophy: Explicit suggests devotion to preparation students to be employable and successful post-school; Implicit suggests self-contained cross categorical program was different from resource room (not do same curriculum, not same students) · Belief – co-construct curriculum with students (learn from students) · Expect her students to be successful post-school and be employed · Differential expectations of students · Relative autonomy with curriculum · Basically started program at school · Presence of teacher important – more got enacted when there	· Teacher histories – focused teacher preparation on elementary resource room (treated students younger) · Explicit and implicit philosophy: Explicit suggests focus on helping students make decisions and reach goals; Implicit suggests self-contained cross categorical program was different from resource room (not do same curriculum, not same students) · Belief – co-construct curriculum with students (incorporated student feedback into curriculum) · Typically low expectations of students (low assessment of ability and skills); differential expectations of students · Relative autonomy with curriculum · Basically started program at school · Presence of teacher important – more got enacted when there
Paraprofessionals	· Roles – confusion between that of a secretary and that of a teacher (asked to make photocopies, but ask to lead and develop lessons) · Paraprofessionals brought benefits and challenges: Benefits – worked one-on-one students stepped, stepped in with behavioral challenges, assisted students with work, and enacted curriculum; Challenges – provided misleading or incorrect or prejudicial information to students, spoke negatively of teacher and other adults, openly hostile to some students	· Roles – confusion between that of a secretary and that of a teacher (asked to make photocopies, but ask to lead and develop lessons) · Paraprofessionals freed up teacher to grade work or meet with students (i.e. when taught lesson)
Students	· Who students were (composition) mattered · Compared current students with previous years and discussed being higher or lower functioning and what that meant to curriculum (i.e. less cooking) · School histories – students were not asked to do anything in middle school program · Challenging personal histories that had to be addressed	· Who students were (composition) mattered · Compared current students with previous years and discussed being higher or lower functioning and what that meant to curriculum (i.e. possibly doing a novel)
Curriculum materials	· Did not use formal, commercially available functional curriculum model · Piece-mealed curriculum · Piece-mealed because no money to buy new curriculum (\$800 start-up,	· Did not use formal, commercially available functional curriculum model · Piece-mealed curriculum · Piece-mealed because no research-based curriculum and most designed

	never more; used school store money to supplement)	for students with learning disabilities
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APPENDIX H: PRACTICE IMPLICATIONS PER THEME AND FACTOR

Summary of Implications (Practice) and Themes

Theme	Implications - Practice
Moment-to-moment enactment	· Value the curriculum and other educational programming occurring in secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs, especially those that utilize a functional curriculum (seen as important as other curriculum and programming) · Question why the curriculum in these programs is devalued and advocate for its value and place
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	· Value the voice of students – their actions and their words
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	· Need to create special education friendly/supported vocational educational opportunities · Unimpressive post-school outcomes suggest need to explore appropriate vocational opportunities · Expand sense that learning can occur outside of the four walls of the classroom · School as preparation for life versus vs. performance before competence
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	
Factors	
Policy/Legislation	· Question if secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs should focus on teaching to the test · The move towards an academic nature through the policy that focuses on academic achievement and testing further distances to the focus on functional skills and functional curriculum
Community	· Expand sense that learning can occur outside of the four walls of the classroom (embrace an apprenticeship)
School	
Teachers	
Paraprofessionals	
Students	· Value the voice of students – their actions and their words
Curriculum Materials	· Need a more appropriate functional curriculum that is researched based · Need a comprehensive, balanced, flexible functional curriculum heuristic (more from “learning to function” to “functioning to learn”)

APPENDIX I: RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS PER THEME AND FACTOR

Summary of Implications (Research) and Themes

Theme	Implications - Research
Moment-to-moment enactment	
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	· Few positive peer role models in the programs
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	· Systemically evaluate inclusive vs. pull-out educational programming for secondary students educated in self-contained, cross-categorical programs
Factors	
Policy/Legislation	
Community	
School	
Teachers	
Paraprofessionals	
Students	· Develop a more appropriate, and better resulting way, to interview students educated in secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs
Curriculum Materials	· Examine appropriate functional curricula models for secondary students educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs · Investigate relationship between curricula and students' post-school outcomes · Develop research-based functional curriculum heuristics (comprehensive, balanced, flexible functional curriculum heuristic) [components also researched-based]

APPENDIX J: POLICY IMPLICATIONS PER THEME AND FACTOR

Summary of Implications (Policy) and Themes

Theme	Implications - Policy
Moment-to-moment enactment	
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	· Reculture schools to create a community (place where students are accepted, cared about, and feel supported)
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	· Understand the ideologies behind inclusive programs and least restrictive environments
Factors	
Policy/Legislation	· Understand the relationship between alternate assessments and the education of students in secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs · Shift in focus from functional to academics to align with assessments
Community	· Reculturing of communities
School	· Reculturing of schools (value curriculum in secondary, self-contained, cross-categorical programs)
Teachers	
Paraprofessionals	
Students	· Create programs that are supportive of students and provide a place where they are cared about and supported
Curriculum Materials	

APPENDIX K: TEACHER PREPARATION IMPLICATIONS PER THEME AND FACTOR

Summary of Implications (Teacher Preparation) and Themes

Theme	Implications – Teacher Preparation
Moment-to-moment enactment	
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	· Prepare teachers to educate the students with the horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	
Factors	
Policy/Legislation	
Community	
School	
Teachers	· Teacher preparation programs need to offer teachers coursework and field placements that address secondary special education, particularly when special education teachers may have the possibility of teaching secondary special education · Provide teacher candidates with dispositions to help students have agency and self-determination
Paraprofessionals	
Students	· Prepare teachers to have agency, to help students have self-determination and agency · Provide opportunities for students to have cognitive apprenticeships
Curriculum Materials	· Teacher education students should be educated in multiple curricular approaches, including functional curriculum · Teacher preparation on curriculum may result in less piece-mealing and more cohesion

APPENDIX L: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS PER THEME AND FACTOR

Summary of Implications (Professional Development) and Themes

Theme	Implications – Professional Development
Moment-to-moment enactment	
Eye of the beholder (the relativity of <i>functional</i> curriculum)	
Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)	
More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)	· Provide professional development on horizontal, vertical, service, and extracurricular curriculum
Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out educational settings)	
Factors	
Policy/Legislation	
Community	· Reculture schools
School	· Reculture schools
Teachers	· Need professional development experiences in the content areas, including functional curriculum
Paraprofessionals	
Students	
Curriculum Materials	· Need professional development experiences in the content areas, including functional curriculum

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