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The Stories of Lou Brown  
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“We do the best with what we know.  
When we know more, we do better.”

Rhonda Miga, Partner in Policymaking, Albany, NY, 2002

These stories are based on actual experiences of professionals, parents, family members and persons with significant disabilities. Components have been embellished in attempts to produce desired communicative effects. Names and other potentially identifying phenomena have been changed to honor privacy and confidentiality. Thus, associations between names, persons and actual experiences are coincidental. The stories have been organized into three nonmutually exclusive clusters that pertain to important educational and related phenomena: integrated/inclusive schooling; instructional practices; and, vocational preparation. They are presented in an attempt to improve the embarrassing, wasteful unnecessary and debilitating vocational, social, domestic, recreation/leisure and other important post school outcomes experienced by far too many persons who receive Special Education and related services; to help analyze how we think, what we do and why we so act; to use humor, foibles and absurdities as communicative aids; and, to help new parents, family members, potential professionals and persons with significant intellectual and related disabilities see important parts of our past so they can avoid the mistakes we made. Finally, this paper was initially published in 2005. It was edited and updated in 2015.

Some citizens with disabilities who progressed through school systems receiving Special Education and related services are now enjoying productive and integrated

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post school lives. Some were functioning in jobs that paid at least minimum wages and employer provided benefits at the point of school exit. Some matriculated in post secondary education and training programs which resulted in real jobs in the real world. They live in apartments and family style homes with reasonable extra support and with no more than one other unrelated person who has disabilities. They enjoy reasonable social lives interacting with a wide array of family members and others who have and do not have disabilities and who are not paid to be with them. They travel to and from, and engage effectively in, a wide variety of integrated community environments and activities. Their parents and family members are pleased with the Special Education and related services they received. The professionals who provided them are justifiably proud of their important contributions to such worthy outcomes. If these persons with disabilities, their family members and the professionals who served them could relive the school experiences provided, they would strive for replications. We should all salute those who participated in the production of such successful schooling. These stories should not be of much interest to them.

Far too many citizens with disabilities who progressed through school systems receiving Special Education and related services are not enjoying integrated and productive post school lives. They did not function in real jobs in the real world for at least minimum wages and employer provided benefits when they exited school, nor do they now. The post secondary educational and training programs in which they matriculated did not result in the repertoires necessary to meet the minimally acceptable performance standards of the real world of work. Indeed, shortly after George W. Bush became president he convened a group of persons he respected and asked them to address the issue of excellence in Special Education. In 2001, after over one year of comprehensive study, this group reported that approximately 70% of all persons with disabilities in the United States between the ages of 18 and 64 were unemployed or grossly underemployed. In 2004, the President's Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities reported that 90% of adults in the United States so labeled were unemployed. In 2004, a task force established by Governor Bush of Florida reported that approximately 85% of all adult Floridians who were considered developmentally disabled, Autistic and/or had cerebral palsy were unemployed. Tragically, unemployment is only part of the story. Far too many adults with disabilities live with their aging parents or in group or nursing homes. They have social lives that are dominated by loneliness and persons who are paid to be with them. They function in depressingly circumscribed arrays of segregated

environments and activities. They are dependent upon and/or addicted to government administered tax dollars in relatively unsympathetic economic and political times. Their parents and family members are not pleased with the Special Education and related services they received. As one who provided some of those services for more than fifty years, I am not the least bit proud of my contributions to such terrible outcomes. If you are a student with disabilities, a parent or other family member or a service provider who is not interested in experiencing or producing post school lives that are segregated, overly dependent or otherwise constricted, these stories may be helpful.

When children are in school, professionals feel compelled to refer to them as levels, points on a continuum or spectrum - "mildly, moderately, severely, profoundly; grades and levels - "He is seventeen, but cannot do first grade Math;" and labels - Emotionally Disturbed, Mentally Retarded, Autistic, Learning Disabled. However, in post school life where you were placed on a spectrum, the level or label you were assigned, how well you could add and many other school important phenomena may not mean much if you are unemployed, lonely, overly dependent upon family members or taxpayers, producing children you cannot support, incarcerated or otherwise leading an unhappy and unproductive life. In short, the terrible outcomes of many of our educational policies and practices demand that we stop what we are doing. If we are to participate in the production of better outcomes, we must make substantial improvements in our values, goals, service delivery models, personnel preparation programs, curriculum development strategies, instructional practices and a wide array of other important phenomena.

If you are a young person with disabilities, what kind of life would you like us to help you experience? If you are a parent of a child with disabilities, what are some of the opportunities you should strive to engender for your child? If you are a professional who wants to provide "state of the art services" or "promising practices," what values should guide you through tough decisions? What targets should you shoot for? How can you remain open to new and better ways? Some of the values, targets and practices considered important are outlined below.

Attend a home school - the school a student with disabilities would likely attend if she/he did not have a disability.

Function in naturally distributed regular/general education classrooms and classes.

Provide individually meaningful supplementary aids and services.

Utilize teaching styles that are appropriately matched to individual learning styles.

Prepare for success in the real world of work and other important aspects of integrated post school life.

Live in supported apartments or homes with no more than one other unrelated person with disabilities.

Enjoy a meaningful social life with a wide array of others who do and do not have disabilities and are not paid to be with you.

Function in the same array of environments, activities and contexts in which you would likely function if you did not have disabilities.

### Integrated/Inclusive Schooling.

Integrated schooling or school inclusion refers to students with disabilities functioning in regular/general education classrooms and classes in the schools they would attend if not disabled with individually appropriate supplementary aids and services, accommodations and modifications. In the vast majority of instances, inclusive or integrated is superior to segregated schooling. This judgment is predicated on the premises that segregation begets segregation and that integration begets integration. It is hard to argue that the best way to prepare students with disabilities to function effectively in a wide array of integrated post school environments, activities and contexts is to confine their educational careers to environments, activities and contexts that only include others with disabilities and persons who are paid to supervise them.

### The Boy on the Slab.

Does all mean all? Did the United States congress really mean that one? Should every child have a right to a tax supported education? Legally, such questions are moot. This was not always so. One year a student who was new to our district came to school attached to a slab. He had a halo brace fixed to his head and a stainless steel rod down his spine. He was strapped to a padded plywood platform with four wheels. His mother used a rope to pull him down the hall and into the principal's office. Many who witnessed this questioned whether we should allow such a child in public schools. The principal convened an emergency meeting of her leadership team. She, a pediatric neurologist, a university professor, a psychologist, two therapists, a school attorney, the Director of Nursing and the Director of Special Education deliberated and concluded as follows.

A slab class would be established. The consensus was that slabs and nonslabs could not function in the same classroom.

A teacher with a master's degree in slabs would be hired. We could not find one.

Surrounding school districts would be scoured for slabs. Not enough for a slab class were located nearby. However, state department of education personnel identified six school aged slabs in the state. Attempts to arrange for the daily use of helicopters to transport the dispersed six slabs to the slab class in Madison each school day were unsuccessful.

A group home for slabs was the obvious solution. Then an old bread truck with those big racks in the back that could accommodate six slabs could be purchased. Of course, "Independent Living" would be printed on it.

Then the six slabs could go from the slab home to the slab van to the slab class to the slab van to the slab home to the slab \_\_\_\_\_

Do environments affect quality of life? If you answer "No", you should not be in Education. If you answer "Yes", what environmental characteristics should we arrange? Educational environments should be rich, stimulating, colorful, varied and challenging. They should have good communication models; they should stimulate maximum engagement and facilitate the development of a wide array of social relationships. These characteristics cannot be produced in a slab class, a slab home or a slab van. Indeed, if you were on a slab, the last thing you would need or want would be to be next to five other persons on slabs all day.

### Homogeneous Grouping.

Did you ever visit a special school, a camp for persons with autism, a sheltered workshop, an eight bed group home on a Saturday night, a residential institution or another segregated setting? Did you become overwhelmed by the sounds, smells, amounts of stainless steel and ceramic tile, the absence of color, the shocking behaviors manifested by the persons with disabilities and those who were being paid to be with them? Did you wonder, "Who arranged this and why?" "Isn't this unnatural?" "Does it have to be this way?"

Consider the parent from California with a child with Prader Willi Syndrome. First she told me that several people told her that I was an “Advocate” Then she asked me if I knew anything about individuals with Prader Willi Syndrome. We talked extensively about our experiences with persons. Specifically, about their powerful urges to eat, obesity, food management problems, health risks and academic and social difficulties. In case she had not seen a Packer game on TV, I informed her that Wisconsin is quite probably the Prader Willi capital of the world. Then she asked me to help her establish a residential institution in the central part of the United States, Missouri or Kansas, for children who were ascribed that label. When I informed her that I would not help her, she became quite upset and asked why not. I told her that taking children away from mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends and relatives, violations of the natural proportion, homogeneous groupings, segregation, etc. rarely work to the benefit of persons with disabilities. I then described how I thought the institution would likely function.

All food would be under lock and key.

Food would be dispensed only by trained professionals.

Food talk by staff, inmates or visitors would not be allowed.

No food commercials or cooking shows on TV would be tolerated.

All food references would be removed from video discs, books and magazines.

Inmates could not visit stores that sell or display foods.

Inmates could not drive on roads that contained billboards with pictures of foods.

She agreed with my depiction and asked, “What is wrong with that?” I said, “That is a horrible way to raise children. Besides, who could you get to work under those conditions? “Then I thought, “What a great career opportunity for anorexics.” Segregation and homogeneous groupings force us to think and do that which we would otherwise view as terrible, inhumane, sadistic, harmful, inappropriate, intolerable or otherwise irrational. Can children with Prader Willi Syndrome be

educated effectively in chronological age appropriate classrooms and classes in home schools? Yes, and integrated schooling is better. What can be done in integrated schools classrooms and classes?

Explain the situation to classmates and relevant schoolmates.

Involve classmates and schoolmates in solution strategies.

Ration healthy food and dispense small amounts many times a day.

Build social relationships at school and arrange for them to be manifested during nonschool days and times in the absence of school personnel.

Anticipate problems and have humane solutions options ready.

Arrange for reasonable exercise.

Monitor weight at least weekly and be constantly vigilant.

Consider the counselor at a summer camp exclusively for children with autism who said to me, "Yes, all those movements look weird, but there is no mosquito problem at our camp." If I had my way, any professional who recommended that one person with Autism function within five hundred miles of another person so labeled would be required to live in a group home with six persons with Autism; sit at a table in a sheltered workshop with eleven persons with Autism; attend religious services specifically for persons with Autism; and, vacation only on the "Isle of Autism" as long as they live.

### The Regs and The Segs.

Regs are students with disabilities who attend their home schools - the same schools they would attend if they did not have disabilities. Segs are students with disabilities who attend segregated schools - schools attended only by students with disabilities. Should students with disabilities attend home or segregated schools? Should all parents be allowed to choose home or segregated schools? If some parents are given a choice, why should others be denied the same opportunity?

Assume some parents in a neighborhood want their children to attend a

segregated school (The Segs) and others want their children to attend their home schools (The Regs). Can both sets of parents have what they want? Yes. The Regs and the Segs can attend the same home school, but in two different tracks.

<u>Segregated Track</u>	<u>Regular Track</u>
Segregated bus to school	Integrated bus to school
Segregated play area	Integrated play area
Segregated classroom	Integrated classroom
Special toilet	Integrated toilet
Segregated recess	Integrated recess
Segregated lunch	Integrated lunch
Segregated Physical Ed	Integrated Physical Ed
Segregated Art & Music	Integrated Art & Music
Segregated Therapies	Integrated Therapies
Segregated bus home	Integrated bus home

Which track is more fun? Which track is more stimulating? Which track offers better preparation for integrated post school life? Manifestations of our values, policies and practices have important long term consequences for persons with disabilities and their families. We must consider preferred post school outcomes and the best ways to realize them. That which leads to integrated outcomes, we do. That which leads to segregated outcomes, we refrain from doing.

### The Boy with the Big Arm.

In the process of conducting an external evaluation of a segregated school, I visited a kindergarten class with the principal. Almost all the students therein manifested symptoms of Autism, Down syndrome, Cornelia de Lange syndrome and severe cerebral palsy. One student was notable because he had an extraordinarily large left arm and hand. I observed him swing his arm back and forth until he raised it high enough to reach the left handlebar of a tricycle. He then mounted the trike, rode it around the classroom, asked others to move out of his way and deftly avoided moving and stationary objects. I asked the principal why he was in the class. She said, "Isn't it obvious?" I said, "No, it is not." She said, "He cannot go to a regular school with an arm like that." I said, "Why not?" She said, "If he was your son, would you want him to be teased and ridiculed or to scare other children? What about high school? Would you want your daughter to date him?" Finally, she said, "What would you do with him Dr. Brown?"



What I would have done then is different than what I would do now? I would have placed him in a regular kindergarten class in his home school. Then I would have played “He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother,” “We are the world, we are the children,” “I believe I can fly” and other warm and fuzzy songs continuously on the public address system. In addition, I would have required that randomly selected students without disabilities come to school, in wheelchairs, with their eyes covered, with their hearing blocked, etc. Finally, for one hour every afternoon before dismissal the entire school would be required to participate in enlightenment, sensitivity, diversity and tolerance experiences that included puppets with a wide array of disabilities.

What would I do now? Now I am older, angry, frustrated and running out of time. Now, if he was my son, I would cut off his big arm. Then I would tell everyone that he lost it helping his grandmother and sister escape from a shark attack. Then I would sit back and watch him get awards for courage. I would really enjoy hearing people call him an inspiration and a remarkable young man. I would smile when parents of other children referred to him as a role model and asked for his autograph. What would you do now if he were your son?

### The Loony Lady with a Lawyer

We had a great retarded school. Our staff loved it. We had lots of teams, parties and gossip. We thought our parents were happy with it. Each year brought new crops of parents and students with disabilities. Most new parents wanted what we liked to provide - segregation. However, a few of the heretical new parents started to talk about integration. One loony parent told us that their faith community, the parks, libraries and museums they used and the parties, concerts and picnics they attended were integrated. “Why should the only segregated experience of my child’s life be a public school?” We told her that she was typical of a parent in the “denial phase” and that she needed psychotherapy in order to progress to the “reality phase.” She wanted to know why her child could not go to a real school. We told her the therapies her child needed were at our segregated school and he had to be there to get them. We also told her that her child will be raped, ridiculed, left out and teased at a regular school. Then we told her that normal children were rotten. We pointed out that Sadaam Hussein, Fidel Castro and Osama Bin Laden attended regular schools. She said, “Lawyer.” In Special Education, there is nothing worse than a loony lady with a lawyer.

A hearing was scheduled. Thus, it was necessary for us to have a series of expensive hearing preparation meetings. The strategy we used to prepare was to

anticipate the points each side would make and the associated counterpoints. When the first expensive 3 hour meeting started, all 20 of us were convinced she was crazy. At the end of the first 3 hour expensive meeting, 16 were still convinced she was crazy, 2 were undecided and 2 thought she would make several important points. The second expensive 3 hour meeting ended in a 10 - 10 split. At the third expensive 3 hour meeting the group decided the child should go to a regular school.

Parents have forced us to scrutinize our values, policies and practices and thus see the benefits inherent in integrated educational settings and activities. In Special Education, more progress has accrued from the actions of loony ladies with good lawyers than from the expenditure of many millions of dollars on research. Changes are easy for those who work in computers, automobiles, chemistry, plumbing, plastics, etc. Changes are sooooooo hard for educators. In sum, if professionals are to grow, parents must water them.

#### Let Him Burn.

A child was born with significant physical disabilities. Shortly after his birth his mother joined a "parent group", which is another name for a gathering of loony ladies. She listened to stories about the experiences of the parents of children with disabilities who preceded her. When her child became five years old, she wheeled him four blocks to his home school, into the building, down the hall and to the front row of a kindergarten class. She then put a bag of paraphernalia beside his wheelchair and told the teacher she would pick him up at 11: 30. Then she dashed home, deactivated her phone, paced and prayed all would go well. The shocked kindergarten teacher called the Union and then the principal. The principal called the central office. At 11:30, the mother was greeted at the school by nineteen professionals in three piece suits. The professionals asked her to sign a document that would allow school personnel to assess her son. She told them he had already been assessed by competent persons and that he receives all needed therapies privately and took her child home. When they came the second day, she was told that in order for her son to receive Special Education and related services, she would have to consent to having him assessed. If found in need of Special Education and related services, he would be transported to a school that contained a "regional program" and placed in a Special Education classroom. Why? Because that was the school at which the presumably needed services were located. She said the following. First, all she wanted was for her son to function in

an integrated classroom in his home school. She did not think Special Education and related services were more important than that in his life at this time. She suggested that those expensive services could be offered other children who might need them more. Second, it appeared to her that all the services offered at the school that housed the regional program were portable and could easily be provided in his home school. Third, it was her legal right to refuse Special Education and related services. If school district personnel wanted him to attend another school so as to receive services they deemed appropriate, they should start the necessary legal process.

When she brought her son to the school the fourth day, she was greeted by the principal and a marshal from the fire department. She was informed that her child could no longer attend the school. When she asked why not, she was told that it was because in the fire drill the day before they could not get him out of the building in the required time. "Let him burn" was her response. She also said that she and her husband would release school officials from all responsibilities in case of a fire. We asked, "What kind of a mother are you. Have you ever been reported for child abuse? How could you be so callous?"

She said that members of her parent group informed her that school officials would try to pull the "fire trick" on her and that she should gather preemptive information. Specifically, parent group members told her to go to the fire station that served the school and request records of all fires. She did so and determined that the school was over fifty years old and that a fire therein had never been reported. She then said that she would take her chances and asked if there was anything else they wanted to discuss. School officials decided not to pursue a placement change. Rather, to provide all needed services in the regular kindergarten classroom and in other parts of the school. An assessment process was then initiated.

First we place a child in an integrated classroom or classes in a home school. Then we provide individually appropriate and professionally responsible supplementary aids and services. Only after we do at least those can we consider alternative placements. We cannot deprive students with disabilities of opportunities to grow up with brothers, sisters, friends and neighbors. Further, most of the best teachers on the planet function in regular/general education classrooms and classes. We cannot deprive students with disabilities of opportunities to learn from them either.

### Changing School Placements.

A woman called and asked if I would help her. She explained that she was single and did not have much money. Her daughter, who has Autism, was picked up at her apartment at around 7 AM each school day and transported to a kindergarten classroom at a school far away from her neighborhood. When her daughter returned to her apartment around 4 PM, she would dash to the window that overlooked the commons area and watch children play. While watching, she would laugh, jump up and down and clap her hands. Her mother interpreted these actions as indications that her daughter wanted to play with her neighbors. However, she reasoned that the other children did not know her and she did not know them. Without common experiences and frequent contacts over extended periods of time, unwanted difficulties would be experienced. She asked if I would go to the school attended by the children in the neighborhood and ask the principal if her daughter could attend the first grade there during the next school year. She said she was afraid to do so. I met with the principal and explained the situation. He listened attentively, reiterated the basics to ensure he understood exactly what was being requested and asked that I return for an answer in two weeks. I had little doubt that he would honor the request. Why? Because he wore a "WWJD" pin on the lapel of his suit.

Two weeks later he informed me, "The staff had several heated discussions of the associated precedents and issues and all involved voted no. Thus, that child cannot come to our school next year." I said, "You must not have any Jews working at this school. I cannot imagine that after three thousand years of exclusion, persecution, pogroms and the holocaust any Jew would vote no." He looked surprised at what I said. I then said, "You must not have any African Americans working here. I cannot imagine that after being blocked at school house doors for centuries, any black person would vote no." He became sort of tense. I then said, "You must not have any Christians working here. By the way, is that a "What would Jesus do" pin on the lapel of your suit?" He immediately covered the pin with his hand and indignantly said, "That is not relevant here." Finally, I said, "You must not have any women working here. I cannot imagine a woman-----." He asked me to leave. I was forced to tell the mother that if she wanted to change the school placement, she would have to sue the school district. Further, her child would stay at the nonhome school until all administrative and legal procedures were completed - "the stay put rule". She was disappointed and hurt, but did not know how and could not afford to appeal the decision and possibly sue the district. Assume the child attended her home school and functioned in an

integrated classroom and the school district wanted to change her placement. If the parents did not agree to a placement change, the school district would have to appeal the decision to a higher authority and possibly sue the district. The child would stay in the current placement until all administrative and legal procedures were completed. It is extremely important that parents become aware of “The Stay Put Rule” before their children are removed from integrated classrooms and classes in their home schools.

I once agreed to be an expert witness on behalf of a group of students with a wide array of disabilities and their family members in a class action law suit in a large city. One of my responsibilities was to interview a mother and her son, Darin, with Asperger Syndrome. He often manifested his disability by making noises and speaking aloud when not spoken to. In effect, manifesting these actions allowed professionals to declare him eligible for Special Education and individually appropriate supplementary aids and services. He was a talented pianist and composer of music who had earned admission to a local “high school for the arts.” One of his classes was cotaught by a regular and a Special Education teacher. One day the Special Education teacher asked the class to vote whether or not Darin should be allowed to remain. The class voted that he should be removed. Darin told me he was shocked, extremely hurt and embarrassed. For a long time, he refused to go to any school. Eventually he reentered, but was placed in a small room in a school administration building. No other students were in attendance. He received all of his instruction from a paraprofessional. Music was not included in his curriculum.

What is the place of voting in determining placements for students with disabilities? Is democracy better than autocracy? Some laws, rules, regulations, traditions, values, principles, best practices, etc. should transcend decisions by a majority and/or by an autocrat.

### Integrated Recess.

During retarded recess Sally would go immediately to a particular swing and stay on it until it was time to return to her Special Education classroom. One September we decided that we would no longer have “retarded recess.” We set a date when students with and without disabilities would enjoy recesses during the same times and in the same spaces. In the process of preparing for integrated recess, someone asked what we were going to do when Sally did not get off the

swing. We were quite sure that schoolmates without IEP's would expect her to share it; that some would say, "Hey, you don't own that swing;" that some would ask recess monitors if they could have a turn; etc. We had a meeting and considered the following.

Maybe we should call in that guy from California. He would allow ten swings and then slap her face hard.

Maybe we should call in that fellow from Rhode Island. He would allow her to swing for two minutes. Then he would squirt ammonia in her face.

Maybe we should call that in fellow from Ohio. He would put an electrified helmet on her. If she did not get off the swing in a timely manner, he would shock her remotely.

Maybe we should requisition a water boarding kit.

The day to start integrated recess arrived. We still had not decided on a plan, but it did not matter. Sally did not go near the swings. She went to the group of schoolmates without disabilities that was jumping rope and indicated she wanted to participate. This was a shock to us as rope jumping was not an option in retarded recess. We listed the reasons why we wanted integrated recess. One of the most important was so students with and without disabilities could learn to play together in activities of their choice. We decided to see if we could arrange for her to jump rope with her schoolmates. I was a Professor of Education at the University of Wisconsin for many years. A major responsibility was to train Special Education teachers. Until this incident I had never trained a Special Education teacher for integrated rope jumping. I gathered a stopwatch, a hand counter and a clipboard that were left over from a disbanded "Autistic class" and went to the recess area to learn about rope jumping. I studied lateral dominance, body part positions and movements, the number of rope revolutions per minute, etc. Once, when I was counting the number of rope revolutions per minute, I had an upsetting thought. "If the Dean comes by and asks me what I am doing, what am I going to say?" What if I said, "I am counting the number of times per minute normal children turn a jump rope, I want tenure and a raise." Subsequently, we took Sally to the gym and taught her how to position her body, how to use her wrist properly and the rate range per minute within which she should turn the rope. When she acquired these skills, she and the activity were transferred to the playground during integrated recess. Her teacher took one end

of the rope, Sally took the other and they started turning. Her schoolmates without disabilities were encouraged to start jumping. They did. After several successful minutes, the teacher asked a jump mate to take her place turning with Sally. He did. All was well until someone said "Cool it" to Sally and her turning partner. In the language of the playground this meant stop turning the rope. Her turning partner did so. Unfortunately, Sally had yet to acquire the verbal language of the playground so she kept turning. Her classmates again said "Cool it." She looked lost and undecided as to what to do. We felt terrible. Why? Because we had confined her educational career to segregated Special Education vans and classes, retarded recess and isolated lunch, Art, Phys Ed and Music. In our "special" settings when we wanted someone to act a certain way we said, "Sally, look at me. Are you ready? Stop." The problem is that no one but Special Education professionals in segregated settings communicates to others like that.

Some say first we must figure out how to integrate students with disabilities and then do it. We say you cannot figure out how to integrate students with disabilities until you allow them to function in integrated settings, activities and contexts and then figure out how to make it work. The more time persons with disabilities spend in segregated settings, the less likely it is they will function successfully in integrated settings. When students are segregated, so are the professionals who interact with them. A wide array of experienced professionals must be provided with the attitudes, values and skills needed to integrate students with disabilities. That is, even if you worked with students with disabilities for a long time in segregated settings and activities, you should not assume that you are prepared to function effectively in integrated settings. Can children with and without disabilities learn to relax and play together? Of course.

### Integrated Swimming.

In the past, students with certain kinds or degrees of disabilities could go to the circus, but only on Saturday afternoon. They were not allowed to go with their schoolmates without disabilities on Wednesday. They could ride the pontoon boat down the river, but only with others with disabilities on Sunday mornings. They could swim, but only with others with disabilities and their caretakers at the heated and ramped pool at the special school.

A family moved into our neighborhood from another part of the country. We told them what a great neighborhood they chose. We explained how tolerant of individual differences our community members were. We pointed out how almost

everyone wore beads, roman sandals and flannel clothing; ate only vegetables with blemishes; had lots of leg, facial and armpit hair; drove small and old foreign cars; installed solar panels on the roofs of their houses; and cried when they saw hungry African children on television.

Wednesday from 5: 00 to 7: 00 PM was family swim time at the public school across the street from our houses. Both of our families decided to go. Four adults and four children met at our house and walked and wheeled to the pool. The attendant would not let us in because their daughter was obviously disabled and used a wheelchair. He informed us that the pool at the Jerry Lewis School on Saturdays was reserved exclusively for “the handicapped.” We were shocked that this could happen in our great neighborhood. Humbled, we went back to our house. After a short time and inhibiting amounts of alcohol, someone said, “Do you know what we should have done?” Someone else said, “I agree and we also should have .....

Soon we had an interesting list of should haves. We decided that something should be done to correct the situation. The following Wednesday the two mothers quickly wheeled the daughter past the attendant, rushed through the dressing room and helped her into the pool. I showed the attendant a piece of paper and told him it was a letter from the school board giving the girl permission to swim in this pool as I dashed past him and into the dressing room. The three other children said, “Hurry up, we want to go swimming.” “Let’s go, we want to see our friends.” “We are wasting time.” The father paid the exact amount of money for eight swimmers and quickly entered the dressing room. Soon, all eight of us were in the water. After a while we relaxed. The three children without disabilities left us to play with their friends and neighbors. Then, one of the mothers quietly said, “We have a problem.” She directed our attention to the stuff floating near us. We prayed it would not happen. We poured many chemicals into her body in an attempt to prevent it from happening. Nevertheless, there it was. Because of her history, we had addressed such a contingency in our rehearsals. Thus, the two mothers took her out of the pool immediately, rushed her through the dressing room and across the street to our house. The father went to the other end of the pool. When I was the only one left I exclaimed, “Oh darn, that Chinese food goes right through me.” The life guard blew her whistle and yelled, “Clear the pool.”

The next Wednesday we repeated the routine. In the pool, we only attended to each other, but we could feel the eyes that we knew were focused upon us. We knew they were watching. The muscles in our eyes were hurting because we were trying so hard not to look at those who we knew were looking at us. Catholics



know about eyes that follow you. Eventually we looked around. The lifeguard was staring at us, but she was smiling. She pointed at something hanging on her watchtower. We looked. She brought a fish scooper. We relaxed. What a great neighborhood.

Segregated environments and activities might be acceptable in some circumstances. Public toilets, wheelchair only basketball teams, health clubs for women, black congressional caucuses, the Ladies Professional Golf Association tour, golf tournaments only for individuals who are blind and the fellowship of atheist athletes are examples. You may be a military veteran who lost legs in battle and claim the right to play on a basketball team of only others who use wheelchairs. However, you should not have to tolerate being told that you could have pizza after the game, but only with persons who used wheelchairs; swim in a public pool, but only on wheelchair day, etc. There must be compelling reasons for, and reasonable options to, segregation. All proposed justifications must be scrutinized carefully and rejected whenever feasible.

#### Relating to All

Debbie went to the Principal's office for the first time to deliver information to the school secretary. In the past, it was delivered by teachers or paraprofessionals. When Debbie entered the office, the secretary stared at her and yelled, "What are you doing here? What did you do? Who sent you?" When Debbie becomes scared, she makes loud noises, flaps her hands and arms and slaps herself on the sides of her head. The actions of the secretary scared her. Predictably, she manifested her disability. Predictably, the school secretary became upset and yelled at her to "Stop that". This scared Debbie more. This reverberating circuit had to end, so we intervened. That is, we guided Debbie out of the office gently. Subsequently, we met with the secretary privately. We told her we were trying to teach our students with disabilities to interact successfully with all who functioned at the school and that we were trying to arrange for all who functioned at the school to interact successfully with students with disabilities. She said that she did not want to be treated like that again and asked that the teacher bring the information to the office like always. We explained that Debbie had Autism and that when she became scared, she acted as she did in the office. However, when people were nice and calm when they interacted with her, she acted like most other teenagers. The secretary then asked, "What kind of a family is she from?" We explained that the manifestations of her disability have little to do with the nature of her family. We reiterated that if people are nice to her, there was rarely

a problem. She then asked, "Could you just send the little fat ones?" We again told her that all of our students with disabilities must learn to interact with all who function at the school and all who function at the school must learn to interact with all students with disabilities.

The next time it was Debbie's turn to go to the Principal's office, a remarkable transformation was observed. Specifically, as Debbie and her teacher approached the office, the secretary could be heard reprimanding a student without disabilities. Debbie became tense and was quite reluctant to proceed. Her teacher assured her that all would be OK and guided her into the office. When the secretary saw Debbie, she stopped yelling, walked over to her slowly, smiled and quietly said, "Hi Debbie. Good to see you. Can I help you with something?" Debbie delivered the information and left the office.

It would have been better if the school secretary had a person with Autism in her immediate family. She said she did not. It would have been better if the school secretary went to school with students with disabilities. She said she did not. It would have been better if the school secretary interacted with people with disabilities in her faith community. She said she did not. Some people will never change but, given appropriate experiences, training, models, rules and guidance, most will. This is encouraging because we cannot afford another generation of disability bigots.

### Who Gets Millie?

Millie, a student who moved around a lot and made noises frequently, was scheduled to go from a second to one of three third grade classes the following year. Third grade teacher X met with the Principal privately and communicated that she was the newly elected union representative. With all her additional responsibilities next year, Millie would be too much. Third grade teacher Y met with the Principal privately and announced that he will retire after 40 years of teaching at the end of the next school year. Millie would be too much. Third grade teacher Z met with the Principal privately and communicated that she was going through an extremely difficult divorce which was likely to be prolonged. Millie would be too much during these trying times. How was Millie's third grade class placement decided?

The Principal met with the third grade teachers and told them all three had come to him privately and asked that Millie not be assigned to his or her class next year. He then told them that he held three straws in his hand. One was shorter than the others. Whoever picked the short straw would get Millie. The teacher who got

Millie was then allowed to reduce her class size by four. Specifically, she could pick four students on her class list that she did not want. Those four would be reassigned to the other two teachers. In addition, Millie's teacher would receive a 50% time paraprofessional and a practice teacher from the local university.

What are important factors that should be considered when distributing students with disabilities across integrated classrooms and classes in home schools? Instructional groupings, class size, a good match between teaching and learning styles, cumulative social relationships with peers, a history of successful experiences with students with similar disabilities and successful collaboration skills are some. There are reasonable adjustments that can be made to minimize the difficulties sometimes associated with students with disabilities who function in integrated settings and activities. It would be nice if all teachers learned to like, respect and teach students with disabilities in integrated classrooms and classes in home schools. How would you like professionals to arrive at a class placement decision for your child?

### Who Cries First?

I was scheduled to give a lecture at a conference. A friend asked if I would assist two parents at their daughter's IEP meeting nearby. Their daughter was functioning in a Special Education classroom in a nonhome middle school. The parents wanted school district personnel to move their daughter to integrated classes in her home middle school and to provide her with individually appropriate supplementary aids and services therein. I agreed to assist. During the morning before the 1 PM IEP meeting, the parents, their local advocate and I met to prepare. I insisted that one of our major responsibilities was to be certain that a school official was the first to cry at the meeting. They asked why that was important. I told them that I had been to too many IEP meetings at which parents cried first. When they did, school officials referred them to a local mental health clinic or to some other psychotherapeutic service. The crying parents were embarrassed, frustrated and realized that they were functioning at distinct disadvantages. Too often this prevented them from being the best advocates for their children. The mother was reluctant to do so because she was afraid that school officials would hurt her daughter in retaliation. The father thought it was a good idea.

When the meeting started, I asked if the person who wrote the report of the educational evaluation was present. The Principal said she was. I then announced

that it was the worst report that I had ever read. I asked her if she was certified to teach or if she was functioning with an emergency license. Then I asked her if this was her first report and if she could think of anyone who could help her with grammar and spelling. She started to cry and left the room. The father asked the director of Special Education to arrange for psychotherapy for the teacher. He also offered that she was too emotionally brittle to function as the teacher of his daughter. We then asked if the person who conducted the psychological assessment was present. He was and we started on him. Things were going very well for our side when bells started to ring. A fire drill interrupted our meeting. Our group went outside the school with around fifty other students and school personnel. The father noticed a much larger group across the street. He yelled, "I cannot believe this. We are participating in a retarded fire drill." The principal informed us that students who received Special Education services were taught to escape a fire one way and students who functioned without IEP's another. It was not clear that he understood the danger or the absurdity of this school sanctioned practice. Both parents did. The girl was moved to integrated classes in her home middle school.

Are all participants in an IEP meeting equal? What is meant by "reasonable representation?" Parents should not be intimidated by large numbers of professionals, smaller chairs, titles, degrees, jargon, acronyms, etc. How can parents best prepare for IEP meetings?

Know your legal rights.

Never go alone.

Make your priorities known to all parties before the meeting.

Make audio and/or video records of the meeting.

Study all records available to professionals.

Bring adequate professional representation.

Analyze and counter each important point of contention.

Make someone on their side cry first.

### Resisting Integrated Schooling.

All we want is for children with disabilities to be allowed opportunities to be based in and to function effectively with professionally defensible and individually appropriate supplementary aids and services in integrated classrooms and classes in their home schools. If that does not work, we can consider reasonable alternatives. Why are so many students with disabilities denied these basic and

important legal, educational and moral entitlements? Why do people get so upset when they are even mentioned? Across many years and places I have heard a wide array of reasons why students with disabilities should not be provided individually appropriate and professionally defensible supplementary aids and services in the integrated classrooms and classes and schools in which they would function if they were not disabled. It seems appropriate that I share and respond to several of these points of resistance here.

# 1 - That child will impede the academic achievement of students without disabilities.

Students without disabilities do better when they function with schoolmates with disabilities. Consider the following. State of Wisconsin students consistently obtain the highest or close to the highest average ACT scores in the United States. Madison Metropolitan School District students consistently obtain the highest average ACT scores in Wisconsin. The academic achievement scores of students without disabilities of the Madison Metropolitan School District have risen consistently across many years. Why? Each year since around 1970, more and more students with disabilities have functioned in integrated schools, classrooms and classes. Thus, if you are interested in raising the ACT and standardized academic achievement test scores of students without disabilities in your school district, all you have to do is increase the number of students with disabilities who attend schools, classrooms and classes. What? You say I cannot claim a cause and effect relationship between the increases in integrated education and increases in ACT and academic achievement test scores? You say I should know better? You say I should be ashamed of myself? You are right. I cannot claim a cause and effect relationship between serving students with disabilities in integrated educational settings and increases in ACT and academic achievement test scores. I am sorry for being so ignorant and misinformed. However, if I cannot claim cause and effect for increases, how can you claim cause and effect for decreases?

# 2 - We must establish a fund of knowledge based on quality research practices, before we integrate students with disabilities.

If you need high quality research based information to justify integration, where is the high quality research based information that was or is used to justify segregation? Further, please try to recall the last time an important educational decision was made that was based upon research of acceptable quality.

#3 - Putting those kids in regular education classes is too costly. Maybe it is. Maybe it is not. However, Special Education and related services are much more expensive than those of general education. When we consider the terrible post school outcomes of the recipients of current Special Education policies and practices, it is obvious that we need high quality analyses of all costs, not just those related to the struggle for quality integrated education.

# 4 - Some regular education teachers say, "I have nothing to offer that child." After studying what goes on in many general education classrooms and classes, I conclude that this thesis is too often valid. Indeed, some regular educators do not have anything to offer any child.

# 5 - The child with disabilities will take disproportionate amounts of valuable teacher time and attention away from others. This thesis could or could not be valid. Many are researching this hypothesis, but the data are not in yet. However, consider the following. Option A is to remand any student who disrupts a class, takes too much teacher time, etc. to the disruption room or school. This would please many teachers and parents. The problem is that by midyear, only two students would be left in any class. This tends to upset school board members and taxpayers. Option B is to provide individually appropriate and professionally responsible supplementary aids and services over reasonable periods of time. This usually does away with the vast majority of difficulties. If disruptions persist, a student can function elsewhere. The school library and integrated nonschool vocational and related settings are examples. Elsewhere is not a segregated school, classroom or class.

# 6 - If we integrate them, what will be the effects on the number of patents we file?

We do not know if integrated schooling will produce more or fewer patents. If it results in "dumbing down" the curriculum, it will probably result in fewer. However, if all children are exposed to effective collaborative team planning, teaching and learning and if individualized curricular modifications and accommodations, the latest in assistive technology and other practices that allow achievement in accordance with potential are implemented, we will probably produce more. This nationally significant issue needs research based information of the highest quality.

# 7 - I want my daughter to be an engineer. I want my son to be a lawyer. If students with disabilities go to school with them, will it affect the careers they choose? Will they become teachers? Will they work in group homes? We do not know yet. I hope many are searching for the resources needed to answer these questions with high quality research practices.

# 8 - How will integrated schooling effect the number of children with disabilities produced?

It could result in more. "I am going to keep trying until I get one like that boy in my art class." It could result in fewer. "I will only have one or two. Why take the risk?" We do not know yet. However, it might aid in prevention - minimization. Why? Because people will take better care of their bodies, particularly while pregnant. Reckless driving and the misuses of alcohol and tobacco may be reduced.

# 9 - Will integrated schooling affect how someone votes?

Definitely. We know from many experiences that those who have close relationships with people with disabilities vote differently than those who do not. Thus, we are trying to get a constitutional amendment passed that requires that in order to be eligible to run for public office in the United States, you must have a person with disabilities in your immediate family. If that effort fails, we will try to pass an amendment that requires that to run for public office you must have gone to religious services, schools, camps, scout meetings, the "Y" or a variety of other public venues with peers with disabilities.

# 10 - Will integrated education affect the basic post school life qualities of citizens with disabilities?

Yes, integration begets integration. Integrated lives are safer, more stimulating, healthier and more fun. After all, we choose it for ourselves.

# 11 - Does integrated education affect the number of abortions?

A woman told me she was against integrated education because she was against abortion. I asked her if she saw a cause and effect relationship between increases in integrated education and increases in the number of abortions performed per year. She said yes, because prospective parents will have grown up with children who manifested many different kinds and degrees of disabilities. When they become pregnant, they will take those tests. If the fetus they are carrying has characteristics they do not like, they will abort it. If they did not grow up with

children with disabilities, they would not know about such possibilities. While some think integrated schooling will result in more abortions, others think it will result in fewer because prospective parents will have had successful developmental experiences with children with disabilities. This will prevent them from crossing the abortion threshold. High quality research is obviously needed.

# 12 - Is integrated education related to the employment of persons with disabilities in the integrated world of work?

Yes. The more integrated the schooling, the better are the probabilities of employment in the real world of work. The more segregated the schooling, the lower are the probabilities of functioning in integrated work settings and activities. It is hard to argue that segregated schooling prepares one for integrated post school functioning. It could be that workers without disabilities will say, "I went to school with them. I do not want to work with them." In contrast, they could say, "I went to school with them. I would love to work with them." Who knows? I hope someone is doing the necessary research.

# 13 - A teacher told me that he was against integrated schooling because he was against gays in the military. I asked him if he saw a clear connection. He said he did.

Is integrated education really related to the number of gays in the military services? Perhaps we should ask pentagon officials to cooperate in a high quality research project designed to answer the question.

# 14 - Will integrated education increase the number of persons who use handguns?

Yes. The more integrated the education, the more hand guns. Why? Because more integrated education will result in more constitutional rights for citizens with disabilities, including the right to bear automatic and semiautomatic arms.

Can you think of, or have you heard of, other reasons to oppose or resist integrated schooling?

### Instructional Practices

I once told a farmer it was my professional judgment that his son had significant intellectual disabilities and would learn fewer skills during his school career than



98 - 99% of his schoolmates. I then asked if he had anything to say. First he said, "Please do not teach my son dumb stuff. Then he said, "Please do not waste my son's time." Finally he said, "If my son will learn less than all the other kids, please teach him the most important things he needs to know to have a decent life in our community."

Instructional practices refer to the nature of the direct services provided students with disabilities. Deciding what to teach and why to teach it; how and where to teach; what instructional materials to use; what performance criteria to strive for; how to accommodate to individual learning and performance difficulties in such areas as generalization, synthesis, levels of difficulty, memory and instructional trials needed to reach meaningful performance criteria are examples.

Functioning in regular/general education schools, classrooms and classes may be sufficient to prepare some students with disabilities for meaningful functioning in integrated post school society. However, in far too many instances, it is neither sufficient nor necessary. Specifically, many persons with disabilities who spent 100% of their school careers in regular education schools, classrooms and classes are unemployed, confined to sheltered workshops and activity centers, on a waiting list sitting at home with a parent/guardian or otherwise not engaging in the productive lives of which they are capable. Conversely, some persons with disabilities who spent 100% of their careers in segregated schools, classrooms and classes are functioning effectively in a wide array of integrated post school settings, activities and contexts. The vast majority of students with disabilities will have the best chances of success in the integrated post school world if they grow up functioning in integrated classrooms and classes in home schools with individually appropriate supplementary aids and services; and, if instructional practices that prepare them for success in a reasonable array of important integrated nonschool settings, activities and contexts at school exit are utilized.

#### Authentic Assessment and Instruction, Discrete Trial Training and Repeated Practice.

Authentic assessment refers to putting a person in real life settings, activities and contexts and then determining meaningful discrepancies between her expressed repertoire and the actual requirements of minimally acceptable functioning.

Authentic instruction refers to teaching that which actually is needed to participate meaningfully in important real life settings, activities and contexts.

Authentic assessment and instruction are extremely valuable for persons with significant learning disabilities for several reasons. First, instruction in real life

settings and activities minimizes reliance upon generalization skills that cannot be depended upon with reasonable confidence and safety. Second, valuable resources are dispensed only on teaching that which is actually needed for minimally acceptably functioning in important real life settings, activities and contexts. Third, the actual materials, performance criteria, distractions, etc. that will be experienced in the real world are accounted for in the instructional process.

Discrete trial training with repeated practice refers to selecting a relatively simple, concrete and circumscribed skill, defining an arbitrary beginning and end and then providing unusually large numbers of opportunities to learn it in short periods of time. Providing a child with fifteen opportunities to learn to open a jar of peanut butter in the kitchen of his home in a 1 hour period and providing a student with 25 opportunities to touch a red block in response to the precise verbal cues of a teacher in a 10 minute period are examples. There was a time when I thought that discrete trial training with repeated practice was the best or the only way to teach students with significant intellectual disabilities.

Once we thought it would be appropriate for school personnel to teach an adolescent with significant acquisition disabilities to shop for goods her family members would buy if she did not. When she learned the actual skills needed to function in accordance with the minimally acceptable performance requirements of the real shopping and related settings and activities, we hoped her parents would arrange for her to express them during nonschool days and times without the involvement of school personnel. In order to do so, we needed the permission of her parents and a commitment from them that they would assume practice responsibilities when we taught the appropriate skill clusters. A concern of her parents was what we and she would do if she became lost at the shopping mall. At that time, we were becoming increasingly disenchanted with confining direct instruction to the physical property of schools. In contrast, we were becoming increasingly excited about combining principles of authentic assessment and instruction and discrete trial training with repeated practice. Thus, we told her parents that we did not know what we or she would do if lost until we took her to the actual mall and lost her several times. This would allow us to answer their question with good empirical information as well as to determine the actual skills she needed to learn to perform when lost. Then, we would lose her at least twice a day and teach her what to do until she acted appropriately when lost at this particular mall. Her parents were not thrilled with our plan.

One summer public school officials sublet an apartment from local university

students. The plan was to have teachers live in the apartment with four students with significant acquisition difficulties for two weeks. During this time the students would be provided authentic assessment and instruction and discrete trial training with repeated practice in real life environments, activities and contexts. Shopping, cooking, cleaning, using public transportation, socializing and enjoying parks and theatres are examples. At the end of two weeks, their parents would be invited for a meal prepared by their sons and daughters in a clean apartment and then go on public buses to and from a real movie theatre. After this instruction and the associated demonstrations, the parents would agree to arrange for their children to perform the newly acquired skill clusters in their homes and communities without the involvement of school personnel.

When presented with the plan, one parent wanted to know what we and his son would do if he cut himself while preparing a real meal. We told him that we did not know, but we would use authentic assessment strategies to find out. Then we would use authentic instruction strategies with discrete trial training and repeated practice to teach him the skills actually needed. Specifically, we told him that we would cut him with a knife several times while he was preparing meals during his first day at the apartment. This would allow us to determine the actual cut repair skills he had or needed to learn. Then, we would cut him several times per meal until he learned how to act appropriately. She would not give us written approval to provide his son with authentic assessment and instruction and discrete trial training with repeated practice.

A second parent wanted to know what we and her daughter would do if there was a fire in the apartment. We said we did not know, but we would find out. We asked school officials for permission to take the student to the living room of the apartment. There we would squirt cigarette lighter fluid on an upholstered couch, ignite it and leave. We would watch what she did from another room. School officials sent a marshal from the local fire department. When we explained our plan, he made a series of rather odd facial expressions and left. A week later he returned and told us we could take a fire extinguisher, the student, two teachers, one Kleenex tissue, a cigarette lighter and a metal waste basket to the middle of the outdoor basketball court in the park adjacent to the apartment. There we could light the tissue, drop it in the metal basket and record the actions of the student. We thought of the farmer who asked us neither to waste his son's time nor to teach him dumb stuff. Rather, we should teach him the most important things he needs to know in order to live a decent life in his community. We thanked the fire marshal for his time, expertise and insights. We told the parent

that her daughter would never be left without someone who knew what to do in case of a fire. While this was sufficient to secure the necessary permission, we still do not know what she would do in case of an actual fire.

Many professionals who work with persons who express serious learning and behavioral difficulties operate from the premise that discrete trial training with repeated practice is the best, the only and/or the most appropriate instructional strategy for several reasons. First, because it is often assumed that such persons need more direct instructional trials to reach acceptable performance criteria than most others? Second, because their use almost always results in demonstrations of some acquisition across instructional trials. This allows professionals to feel as though they are making at least some progress. However, a major problem is that professionals become addicted to and dependent upon them. This has unfortunate consequences for too many individuals with disabilities and their family members. Specifically, the pervasive use of discrete trial training with repeated practice too often results in at least the following.

Wasting valuable tax dollars on prepackaged "kits" or other arbitrary instructional systems that deny or negate individuality and severely limit instructional environments, activities, contexts, groupings, performance criteria and materials. This forces unacceptable inferences about and reliance upon generalization skills that are not warranted or that are dangerous.

Selecting low priority, chronological age inappropriate or otherwise relatively unimportant skills for instruction, primarily because they can be taught using discrete trial training with repeated practice.

Limiting the development of functional skill repertoires because it is difficult to generate the necessary instructional trials.

Developing robotic students who only respond if persons in authority provide specific cues to do so.

Interfering with or inhibiting the development and maintenance of important social relationships with schoolmates, neighborhood mates and family members with and without disabilities.

Substituting therapeutic for brotherly, sisterly, motherly and fatherly relationships.

Boring students with disabilities and "burning out" parents, neighbors and professionals.

If a skill is really important, it is probably better to attempt to teach it by providing few instructional trials over extended periods of time in authentic settings, activities and contexts. If a skill is not important, it is probably better to attempt to teach it by providing large numbers of instructional trials in short periods of time in artificial settings, activities and contexts. But why bother? The rational uses of authentic assessment and instruction strategies are endorsed here because they will result in more individuals with disabilities learning to function effectively in respected and integrated school and post school environments, activities and contexts. Obviously, authentic assessment and instruction strategies are at times logistically difficult, frustrating, dangerous and absurd. Thus, we must use a variety of instructional strategies, including reasonable portions of discrete trial training with repeated practice and common sense.

Finally, I once interacted with a teacher who was addicted to discrete trial training with repeated practice. I asked her to list the repertoire a particular student in her charge can learn and will actually need at school exit in order to function meaningfully in a reasonable array of integrated and respected post school settings, activities and contexts. Then, I asked her to list the skills he has learned through the use of discrete trial training with repeated practice strategies and the time consumed to teach them. Then, I asked her to consider his empirically validated rate of acquisition and project how much more time would be needed to develop the repertoire needed to function in integrated society at school exit. She estimated that he would have to remain alive and in school for eight hundred years. If you are involved in such a dilemma, please consider utilizing reasonable versions of authentic assessment and instruction, before you burn out.

### Performance Criteria.

It is generally accepted that instructional objectives should be operationalized so that progress toward their realization can be validated empirically. A recognized way of operationalizing an instructional objective is to describe it so that it can be seen, heard, smelled, felt or otherwise sensed by rational and honest persons. If an instructional objective is properly operationalized, it is relatively easy to sense, to empirically verify, progress toward the realization of it or the lack thereof. If an instructional objective is not properly operationalized, it is very difficult or even impossible to sense, to empirically verify, progress toward the realization of it or the lack thereof. The objective "Sue will understand Shakespeare" may be appropriate and important, but it must be operationalized in order for her progress toward the realization of it to be validated empirically in

professionally acceptable ways. Performance criteria refer to characteristics of an instructional objective and the conditions under which it will or should be performed in order for a professional to make a claim that a student has realized it.

In many instances, legal mandates for empirically verifiable objectives and performance criteria have resulted in changes in instructional planning and practices. For example, in the past one might have examined IEPs and read “Mo will do better in Math this year” and “Lydia is learning red.” Now, one might read “Mo correctly added two numbers that totaled less than ten on three consecutive occasions across three consecutive school days” and “Lydia touched a red block with her index finger in response to a verbal cue provided by the teacher two out of three times across four out of five school days.” Some think this is progress. They may or may not be correct. Consider the following. “Tracy will get off at the correct bus stop three out of five times.” “Jose will stop his electric wheelchair correctly at the curb of a busy street six out of ten times across five school days.” If a skill is not important, who cares what performance criteria are specified? Make them up. Five out of twelve times, 33% of the time, a lot, a little, 82% of the time, it does not matter. However, please remember the farmer who would probably say, “If a skill is not important, why do you want to waste my son’s time?” The more important the skill, the more authentic, natural, real must be the performance criteria. Authentic, natural and real refer to the minimally acceptable requirements of safe and effective functioning in important integrated school and nonschool environments, activities and contexts. If you hit a baseball safely 33% of your six hundred at bats across 164 major league games, you would be doing quite well. If you performed in accordance with the minimally acceptable standards of your employer for eight hours per day across two hundred and twenty days in a calendar year, you would probably keep your job. In sum, specifying objectives and performance criteria in empirically verifiable and individualized ways is necessary, but certainly not sufficient. Objectives also must be chronological age appropriate, important and respected, directly related to enhanced functioning in integrated society, likely to minimize differences between the student and peers without disabilities, etc.

### Instructional Materials.

Assume it is your intention to teach a student with severe intellectual disabilities what an apple is. Would you tell him to read about apples? No, because if he could so read, he would not have severe intellectual disabilities. Would you tell

him to search for “apple “on his computer and study the results? No, because if he could use a computer in such a fashion, he would not have severe intellectual disabilities. Would you tell him about an apple? If so, what would you say? Most apples are spherical. Some are red and some are green. Some are sweet and some are sour. They vary in size and weight. Those with blotches that were too rotten to sell yesterday are in the organic section today? No, because if he could understand your complex verbalizations, he would not have severe intellectual disabilities. Would you show him a photograph of Picasso’s silhouette of an apple? No, because it is too abstract. Would you let him feel a plastic apple? You might, but what degree of confidence would you have that he understands what real apples are? Would you give him several different kinds of real apples across school days and let him touch, hold, smell, cook, cut, squeeze, bite and taste them? Of course you would. You understand that he learns best when provided with concrete, tangible, clear, actual, authentic, real life experiences. You also understand that he learns very little, if anything, from abstract, verbally laden, complicated and amorphous experiences and that an irrational dependence upon limited generalization skills is wasteful and harmful.

One year we reached the point at which we had to publicly acknowledge that our students were manifesting difficulties in the area of sexuality. Menstrual accidents, out of context sexually explicit verbal language, clothing malfunctions, inappropriate touching of others, public masturbation, exposing body parts and assuming unacceptable positions are examples. After much contemplation and discussions with parents/guardians and colleagues, a few teachers decided to initiate a sexuality curriculum. Most of the teachers at the school were not interested in participating. We thought we would start by attempting to teach our students about their bodies. Specifically, we made two large drawings of a sexually mature male and female. The teacher then touched a body part on a drawing with a wooden pointer and asked some students to verbally label it. Some students were given the pointer and asked to touch a body part on a drawing in response to a specific verbal cue. When a student could verbally label or touch a body part in response to a verbal cue appropriately, instruction related to understanding the function of the part was initiated.

One of the teachers involved was sponsoring a practice teacher from the local university who worked part time in a clothing store. One Monday morning she brought two manikins, a male and a female, to the classroom. We quickly realized that the three dimensional manikins were more lifelike and therefore better instructional materials than the relatively abstract two dimensional drawings.

However, the male manikin did not come with genitalia. It was necessary to have a meeting about the absent body parts. One teacher suggested that we should not use the manikins. This was voted down because most involved considered the 3 dimensional manikins superior to the two dimensional drawings. Another teacher suggested that we teach all the body parts but "that one". This was voted down because most felt that "that one" was sort of important, causing a lot of problems, etc. Eventually, we decided to purchase a dildo. A requisition was sent through channels. Two weeks later it came back stamped "approved - petty cash." The teacher who signed the requisition asked where we could get one. I said, "What do you mean we? It is your classroom. You signed the requisition. It is your responsibility to go downtown and buy one." One of our very religious teachers said that she was told that if you are seen shopping in the rubber goods section of an adult bookstore, you cannot be buried in a national cemetery. Consider the training of airplane pilots. Pilot Q had a proven record of competence flying a specific two engine propeller driven plane. One day she decided to try to fly a 747. Would you fly with her? Of course not. You would want to be sure she practiced successfully on an actual 747 before you would fly with her. Consider the training of eye surgeons. One of our sons hurt his eye playing baseball. We took him to our family physician. She said he needed surgery. We asked if she could do it. She said yes, because she did an operation like the one needed on a monkey when she was in medical school. We said no. We wanted someone who practiced on the eyes of the children of many others before she touched ours. The closer the training materials are to the real materials, the better will be the generalization, the more confidence you can have that your teaching is meaningful and the better you will prepare your students for functioning in the real world.

### Functional Skills.

In the early 1970's we became interested in increasing the number of nonschool environments and activities in which students with significant disabilities functioned effectively, increasing the range of persons with whom they interacted appropriately and reducing the demands they made on others by increasing their functional skill repertoires. A functional skill is referred to as follows. Assume a person with disabilities is asked to, is required to or otherwise should perform an action, but does not. If someone else must then perform that action, it is considered a functional skill. If no one else is required to perform that action, it is other than a functional skill.



The parents of Linda both worked. Her sister and brother were attending college and living away from home. Her parents were addressing the day when Linda would finish her schooling. They asked us if we could help them get her ready for post school life. They also communicated that it would be helpful if Linda could learn to perform some of the tasks her brother and sister completed before they left for college. We asked them for a list of tasks they had to perform that were once completed by Linda's brother and sister. Then we asked them to delineate the tasks they thought she could learn that would be the most helpful to them. One of the tasks they selected was for Linda to pick up a few items at the grocery store the family frequented and that she passed on her way home from school. Linda did not speak, read or write. She walked with an unsteady gait and often lost items in her possession. One reason was because she had difficulty carrying materials. Many options were considered, but the initial plan was as follows. The parents would open a charge account at the store. The teacher would compile a list of groceries the parents would likely want Linda to purchase. In fact, most of the items were in the dairy and bakery sections. The teacher would construct a picture communication booklet that included all the items on the list. Then, the teacher would ask the person in charge of the bakery if she would agree to keep a copy of the communication booklet in a convenient place. Each day Linda would come to school with a list of the groceries needed by her family. Prior to leaving school, the teacher would rehearse the needed items with Linda. She was good at remembering the dairy items, but not so good remembering the bakery items. Then, Linda would get off her school bus, walk to the grocery store, find the dairy area and select the needed items. Then she would go to the bakery and gain the attention of a worker who would produce the stored communication booklet so that Linda could communicate the items she wanted to purchase. Then she would go to the checkout counter and charge the items to the family account. Implementation of the plan required that the teacher present it to the store manager. He said it was OK with him, if it was OK with those who worked in the bakery. Unfortunately, the manager of the bakery rejected the plan and referred the family to other grocery stores in the area. This rejection presented significant problems in the areas of proximity to the home, bus access, street crossing, the distance food items had to be carried, etc. After much discussion, it was decided to send Linda to the bakery for needed items, study what happened and decide accordingly.

One day after school Linda exited at the correct bus stop, went to the bakery area of the grocery store and waited for someone to ask her what she wanted. When

someone did, she bent over to get close to the angled glass, pointed and made sounds. The woman on the other side of the counter squatted and asked her to repeat her order. Again Linda pointed and made sounds. The woman then said, "What are you pointing at?" This was followed by more pointing and sounds. The worker called a colleague over to help. After several unsuccessful tries, she called the manager over. The manager did her best to solve the problem, but failed. In the process of studying these interactions we learned the following about persons who work in the bakery areas of large grocery stores.

They are relatively short and round.

They wear hairnets that never cover all their hair.

They wear pink or white polyester uniforms that are resistant to absorbing powdered sugar, flour and other fine particles.

They do not like to squat.

They wear hose they can tie knots in just above their knees. When they squat and are required to hold their lowered position, their faces get quite red, they start to breathe quickly, they start yelling to hurry up and fat tends to pop out just above the knots.

After two days of such uncomfortable interactions, the manager of the bakery agreed to store and use the communication booklet.

Ready or not - here we come

### The Why Question.

Once I witnessed a speech and language session in which a therapist and six students with multiple disabilities were seated around a semicircular table in a small room. The therapist said, "Make this sound." Then she made the ssssssssssssssssssssssss sound as she moved her head and index finger from left to right across the faces of the six students at eye level. In response, most of the students spit at or on her. I asked, "Of all the things you can pick to teach, why did you pick that?" She said that she was trained on the "PEADIS - FLIPPYDIP - PSYCHOSALAD - TEACHVAAS - LANGUAGE COGNITION RECOVERY CURE KIT." I said, "I know the guys who developed that kit. They live in Hawaii. At this moment they are probably smiling, sipping their exotic drinks on lounge chairs next to their pools that overlook the ocean and enjoying another beautiful pacific sunset. You are sitting in this room getting spit on all day. Certainly you can think of more meaningful things to teach that are more instructor friendly." She looked up at me

and made an angry face.

Special Educators are noted for exposing students with disabilities to substantial kinds and amounts of highly expensive therapies, prepackaged kits and canned instructional programs. Indeed, parents of children with disabilities too often empty family treasuries arranging for more and more "therapy." After having observed and participated in these and related activities for many years, I would like to ask that you carefully examine the school and post school lives of large numbers of persons with significant disabilities in many locations who were ascribed a wide array of labels and levels. Then consider the following. The more therapy they received, the more one to one instruction given them, the more door to door services that were provided and the more time they spent with others who had disabilities and persons who were paid to be with them, the greater is the likelihood that they are experiencing isolated, segregated, circumscribed or otherwise less than reasonably stimulating, productive and integrated post school lives.

If a student is likely to learn relatively few skills, those selected for instruction must be the most important. This always sounds nice, but how does one determine if a particular skill is important? The following are offered as good reasons for selecting a skill for instructional purposes, "good whys." I selected that skill for the following reasons.

It is chronological age appropriate.

It is functional. It will reduce demands made on others.

It is a student preference. She asked that I help her learn it.

It is a clearly expressed parent/guardian preference.

It is a justifiable professional preference.

It will increase the number of environments and activities experienced.

It will increase her social relationship range.

It will enhance physical status, appearance and stamina.

There is a reasonable chance he can learn it.

There are reasonable transfer, practice and natural supervision opportunities.

It will help generate curricular balance.

It is important vocationally.

It enhances privacy, choices, respect, pride and social status.

It will reduce government involvement in her life.

It will increase expectations.

It will enhance feelings of belonging and connectedness.  
It is logistically feasible.  
Research results of acceptable quality support teaching it.  
When her parents see her do it, tears will run down their cheeks.

In contrast, there are reasons why a skill is selected for instruction that are not so good, "bad whys." I selected that skill for the following reasons.

I was trained that way.  
The last teacher left the kit in the closet.  
My supervisor went to a conference, had dinner with a salesman, bought it and told me to use it.  
What else am I going to do all day with all these kids in one little room?

If you increase the school and nonschool environments and activities you use for instruction, you run out of time to teach the many important skills a student can and should learn. You never run out of good ideas. In the process, you get to use "good whys." Your students learn more. You feel better. Parents think more of you and you do not burn out. If you confine the environments and activities you use for instruction to the physical property of the school, you exhaust your repertoire of important skills to teach rather quickly. Then you start using "bad whys." Your students do not learn much that is important. Parents may be nice to you, but they do not really respect you. It becomes hard to tell others what you do at work all day with any meaningful degree of pride. You burn out.

Synthesis in Context. Taylor is in the advanced placement, college preparatory, academic honors program at her high school. One day last semester she went to her first period Math class, paid attention and learned something. That same day she went to her fourth period Chemistry class, paid attention and learned something. During the sixth period she spent an hour in the Computer Science Lab and learned much. After school that day she went home, had a snack, went into her garage and made a bomb. One thing that being very intelligent means is that you have the wonderful ability to acquire isolated bits of information, fuse, commingle, integrate, synthesize them and produce something new, different, interesting, creative. Individuals who can synthesize disparate bits of information get us to Mars, make great chili, build skyscrapers and find cures for terrible diseases.

Individuals who are not so intelligent do not synthesize well. This presents serious problems generally, but particularly to educators who work with students with severe acquisition and performance difficulties. Why? Because the school day for such students is typically divided into blocks of time. In these segmented time periods, relatively isolated bits of information are dispensed. Unfortunately, the students are responsible for synthesizing the “splinter skills” they learn. The obvious problem is they are intellectually and/or otherwise incapable of meaningful synthesis. This, coupled with their notorious difficulties in the area of generalization too often results in meaningless instruction. This is extremely frustrating and depressing for students, their parents/guardians, taxpayers and the rapidly burning out professionals involved.

Kyler was fifteen years old and has Down Syndrome and severe intellectual disabilities. He manifested significant speech difficulties and was a wonderful young man. At school he was learning about foods, sexuality, math, how to complete simple discrete tasks in his difficulty range at a table and how to communicate better verbally. He seemed to be doing well, but his teacher realized he might be learning “splinter skills” and that his difficulties in the areas of synthesis and generalization had to be addressed empirically. Thus, she arranged for him to function at a fast food restaurant to see how he performed when coordinated clusters of skills were required in authentic contexts.

He got off the public bus at the correct stop, located the restaurant, opened two doors and went in. No problem so far. He got in line and gradually and appropriately moved to the front. He then had to communicate with an anonymous person. He could have used pictures, but all involved thought that would inhibit the development of his verbal communication skills. The server asked what he wanted. He struggled to produce the proper verbalizations. The server was very pleasant and patient. She seemed to appreciate the effort he was making to communicate and wanted him to succeed. Eventually he replied, “hahahahahahahahamburger.” The caring, sensitive, insightful and helpful server then said, “Hamburger.” He indicated yes with his head. They both smiled. When she asked if he wanted anything else, several persons in the line behind him moved to his sides so they could see. In addition, two other servers paused so they and those in their lines could watch. With this attentive semicircle observing his every move, he started his response. Again, he had great difficulty. Eventually he got it out. “frafrafrafrafrafrabies.” Some members of the group smiled and clapped. Some cheered, “Yesss! The server said, “French fries.” He smiled and nodded yes. The server again asked him if he wanted anything else. He put a 5

dollar bill on the counter and again struggled with his verbal response. Eventually, he got it out. “vavavavavavavavavagina shake.” All became quiet. All eyes focused on the floor. All lines reformed. The ordered items were produced.

Who knows what will be synthesized and generalized properly and/or improperly unless authentic assessment strategies are used? If someone does not synthesize disparate bits of information in effective ways, what can we do? We can put them in environments and activities that inherently require synthesis and teach them to perform the skill clusters actually needed.

### Vocational Preparation

The post school outcomes realized by students who received Special Education and related services are tragically unacceptable and wasteful of hopes, dreams, lives and scarce and valuable tax dollars. Far too many exit schools and are confined to segregated sheltered workshops and activity centers or stay at home all day with family members and/or with others who are paid to be with them. Certainly, some students with disabilities exit high schools with a diploma and enroll in skill training programs, vocational/technical schools and community colleges. However, when they complete or exit them, unemployment too often follows. As reported earlier in this manuscript, when George W. Bush became president of the United States, he convened a group of persons he respected and asked it to address the issue of excellence in Special Education. In 2001, after more than one year of comprehensive study, this group reported that approximately 70% of all persons with disabilities in the United States between the ages of 18 and 64 were unemployed or grossly underemployed. In 2004, the President’s Committee for People with Intellectual Disabilities reported that 90% of adults in the United States so labeled were unemployed. In 2004, a task force established by Governor Bush of Florida reported that approximately 85% of all adult Floridians who were considered to have developmental disabilities, Autism and/or cerebral palsy were unemployed. Why are the unemployment rates of adults with disabilities so high? Does it have to be this way? Some are working, why aren't the others? Can we do anything about this most unfortunate state of affairs? We can and must.

Vocational preparation refers to a student with disabilities being provided the actual experiences, skills, work ethics, attitudes, values and other phenomena needed to perform real work in integrated nonschool settings and activities in

accordance with the minimally acceptable standards of employers at the point of exit from school. If a student with disabilities is likely to realize this standard by experiencing traditional service delivery models, curricula and instructional practices, continue to use them. However, if the manifested progress of a student is not likely to result in realizing the “real work in the real world at the point of school exit” standard, alternative and supplementary experiences must be provided.

### Chamber of Commerce Work.

The parents of Craig, a 21 year old student with severe disabilities, came to their final IEP meeting and asked if we would try to prepare their son for post school life. We told them we thought we were doing just that and asked them to be more specific. They said it was their hope that he could be in a job when he finished school the following year. We told them we would consider their hope and meet with them again. At a subsequent meeting, someone mentioned that Craig’s parents wanted us to prepare him for the real world of work when he exited our school next year. Our Occupational Therapist became quite upset and left the meeting. A short time later she returned with Craig. She positioned his wheelchair in front of a table, placed an adapted spoon in his hand, put yogurt on the spoon and said, “Now watch.” He immediately began to struggle to pull the spoon to his mouth. His hand shook. He spilled some, but he continued until the spoon touched his lips. The Occupational Therapist then said, “Did you see that? For him that is work. Work is different for these people.” We agreed. We then told his parents the judgment of the IEP team was that we should continue with our therapeutic emphasis because we did not think that real work in the real world at school exit next year was an appropriate or realistic goal. They seemed disappointed and perhaps a little angry. This surprised us because we thought they liked and respected us. Then they said something typically parental, naive and uninformed, “But he has had twenty years of Occupational Therapy.” Unfortunately, there are facts of Special Education life that parents of children with severe disabilities simply do not grasp. They think Occupational Therapists exist to help their children get jobs. They do not understand that their children exist so that Occupational Therapists can have jobs.

Several days later the parents of Tim met with his IEP team about his last year of schooling. They too wanted us to prepare him for real work by school exit. We told them we would consider their request and meet with them again. When their request was brought up at a meeting, our Physical Therapist became visibly upset

and said, "The only work I can think of is for him to be a stop sign. Our Recreation Therapist said, "Tim is four feet and nine inches tall. He weighs nine hundred and sixty pounds. Every day he practices for the 3 yard dash in the Special Olympics. You should see how hard he tries. For him that is work. Work is not the same for these people." Our Psychologist then said, "I do not understand their problem. He is going to get a diploma." Later we told his parents we did not think that real work at school exit was a realistic goal for their son. They were obviously disappointed.

Unfortunately, we had basically the same experiences with too many other parents/guardians. We wondered, "What is wrong? How come they do not like us in the end? We cannot go on like this. What should we do?" We decided to ask a group from our local Chamber of Commerce to help. We told them about our serious meaning of work problems with too many parents, introduced them to Craig and showed them how hard he worked with the spoon and yogurt. Then we asked them how they would describe his actions. They looked at each other, made strange faces and said, "We cannot speak for every member of the Chamber of Commerce, but we call that eating." We realized the nature of our problem. Two groups were saying the same word - work, but using different definitions. Then we said, "You people own and/or run the businesses in our community. What definition of work do you use?" They had a short private meeting and then said, "If you do not have to pay someone to do it, it is not Chamber of Commerce work. If you want us to open the doors of our businesses to your students, you should start teaching them to do Chamber of Commerce work. "

Because we have been wrong so many times in the past, we now operate from the premise that there are two criteria for being able to perform real work in the real world - Chamber of Commerce work. You must breathe and you must be able to perform one volitional movement. If you do not breathe, we refer you to another program. If you breathe, but cannot voluntarily control the movement of one part of your body - an eyelash, a thumb, a plosion response - we try to help you develop one. Again, consider the following. The more therapy you receive, the more door to door travel services you use, the more one to one instruction you are given and the more time you spend sitting with a paraprofessional in high school academic classes, the less prepared you are for the integrated world of work at school exit. Further, if you are not in a real job at school exit, the probability that you will be unemployed for years thereafter are overwhelming. The longer you are unemployed, the harder it is to get a real job.



## Diplomas.

Should everyone receive a high school diploma? If no, who should receive one and who should not? Should every one receive the same high school diploma? If no, how many kinds or levels should we award? If someone has a high school diploma, what can we safely assume about them? Should a diploma be a birthright? Is intelligence even remotely related to the awarding of a diploma? Imagine a moratorium on the awarding of high school diplomas. What would we do? Would it matter? Would it help us develop better alternatives?

As long as a diploma is myopically emphasized as a high priority educational outcome, far too many students with disabilities, parents, politicians, taxpayers and businesspersons will be disappointed, disillusioned and frustrated. Why? Because if diplomas are necessary to get a job, to be given access to a post secondary educational institution or a military service, school officials will find ways to award them. To do so makes them feel good, validated, successful and worthy of higher wages and better benefits. To counter this irrational and simplistic perspective, the Sperm X Egg diploma is proposed. It is awarded immediately after a sperm connects with an egg. The purpose is to minimize or do away with "diploma issues" so the real phenomena associated with individually meaningful education can be addressed.

The Grade 12 Diploma. This is the diploma of presidents, governors and other politicians, successful businesspersons, human resource professionals who cannot find enough entry level workers with the competencies they need and other well situated folks who fondly remember the good old days before social promotion, the GI Bill of Rights and other "affirmative action programs." This diploma typically requires 25 to 30 "legitimate academic" credits earned from passing courses such as grade level Algebra, Geometry and Trigonometry and Science, History and Literature courses that are sequenced in levels of difficulty. That is, there are Freshperson, Sophomore, Junior and Senior level courses. Each level up the hierarchy is more difficult and an array of courses at the senior level must be passed. Passing these courses is not enough because teachers grade differently, because achievement standards vary across school districts, because sympathy too often trumps performance standards and because many simply do not trust educators. Thus, this diploma also requires the passing of objective and standardized grade twelve level academic achievement tests. The major problem associated with this diploma is that proportionately few high school students are intellectually or otherwise situated so they can earn one. Those that can and do are not of concern here.

The Standard Diploma. This diploma is the most frequently awarded. Typically, it requires from sixteen to 25 credits earned across a variety of subjects. However, it does not require passing objective and standardized academic achievement tests and it does not require that courses be at grade levels of difficulty. That is, a senior level course in Math may be harder, easier or at about the same level of difficulty as one offered at the Freshperson level. Schools that offer this diploma typically operate "tracks". College bound students are placed in the "advanced placement" or "honors" track. Others are placed in less academically demanding tracks so they can earn this diploma.

The General Education Diploma. This diploma is awarded to students who pass objective and standardized tests. School attendance is not required.

The Occupational Diploma. This diploma is awarded to students who are exposed to curricular content that is more practical than academic, more concrete than abstract and more simple than complex. Entry level food service, automobile maintenance and building construction are examples. This kind of a diploma is rapidly fading from high schools in the United States for many good and not so good reasons. It, and the associated schools, classes and curricula were, and in some instances still are, constructive alternatives for many who did not thrive in academic tracks, but did so when provided meaningful alternatives. However, it and the associated classes and schools were too often inappropriately used as ethnic, racial and disability repositories that did not result in real work in the real world at school exit.

The IEP Diploma. This diploma is available to the wide range of students who function in schools receiving Special Education and related services. It may be awarded independent of tests, courses, attendance, grades, skills, intelligence and even molecular motion. It has important subjective value for students with disabilities and their family members and advocates. However, its value to employers, admissions personnel at post secondary institutions, military service recruiters and most others is highly suspect. They almost always ask for other evidence of achievement or potential such as relative performance on standardized and objective tests.

The Portfolio Diploma. This diploma is endorsed here. It is designed to communicate that the students who have earned it have realized individually meaningful competence in such important areas as performing real work in the

real world in accordance with the minimally acceptable standards of at least four different employers; traveling about a community efficiently and safely; maintaining acceptable health and physical condition; managing money earned, and/or avoiding involvement in criminal justice system. If we combined the grade twelve diplomas, the standard diplomas, the occupational diplomas, the general education diplomas and the IEP diplomas awarded last year, we would realize that just about everyone gets one anyway. Indeed, researchers at the center for civic innovation at the Manhattan institute concluded that in 2000, the state of New Jersey awarded diplomas to 87% of its high school seniors. This was the highest diploma awarding rate in the United States. This did not include individuals who earned general education diplomas by passing tests. Whether or not IEP diplomas were included was not reported. The state of New Jersey appears quite close to the sperm x egg standard, if it has not already reached it. Who cares? The unemployment rates of persons with disabilities are still extremely high.

#### NOTE

The 2005 Version of this paper also addressed Authentic Assessment and Instruction; An Authentic Vocational Curriculum Development Strategy; How to Generate Integrated Work Training and Placement Sites; How to Conduct Integrated Work Skill Analyses; and, Individualized School to Postschool Integrated Work Transition Plans. Since 2005, each of those topics have been addressed in more detail in the following papers.

Brown, L. (2012). Educational Standards for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities. TASH Connections, 38 (4), 7 - 20. This paper is also presented on the Inclusion Campaign website of Disability Rights New Jersey - [www.inclusioncampaign.org](http://www.inclusioncampaign.org) and on the website of Lou Brown - [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown).

Brown, L. & Kessler, K. (2014). Generating Integrated Worksites for Individuals with Significant Intellectual Disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation 40, 85 - 97. This paper is also presented on the Inclusion Campaign website of Disability Rights New Jersey - [www.inclusioncampaign.org](http://www.inclusioncampaign.org) and on the website of Lou Brown - [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown).

Brown, L, & Kessler, K, (2015 Version). A School to Integrated Work Transition Manual for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities. A version of this manual is presented on the Inclusion Campaign website of Disability

Rights New Jersey - [www.inclusioncampaign.org](http://www.inclusioncampaign.org) and on the website of Lou Brown - [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown).

Brown, L, & Kessler, K. (2015 Version). Authentic Assessment and Instruction in Educational Programs for Students with Significant Intellectual Disabilities. A version of this paper is presented on the Inclusion Campaign website of Disability Rights New Jersey - [www.inclusioncampaign.org](http://www.inclusioncampaign.org) and on the website of Lou Brown - [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown).

Brown, L, Kessler, K, & Toson, A. (In Press). An Integrated Work Skill Analysis Strategy for Workers with Significant Intellectual Disabilities. Journal of Vocational Rehabilitation. A version of this paper is presented on the Inclusion Campaign website of Disability Rights New Jersey - [www.inclusioncampaign.org](http://www.inclusioncampaign.org) and on the website of Lou Brown - [www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown](http://www.website.education.wisc.edu/lbrown).

### Honoring Property Rights

I was a member of a team that functioned in a large inner city high school. Our focus was to develop a program that would provide authentic vocational and related assessment and instruction to students with disabilities who were highly likely to be unemployed at school exit if we did not do so. One day we were meeting in a fourth floor classroom. I left for the toilet, found one, looked around, but could not find toilet paper. I went into the hallway and approached a guard. In this school a guard was posted in each hall at every right angle on four floors, approximately 24 guards. Consider the expense. These were in addition to the local police and guards who screened at the only utilized entrance/exit. Several street gangs were operative, but had not yet agreed that the school was a gang neutral environment.

I informed the closest guard about the absence of toilet paper and asked if he could help. He informed me that toilet paper was there. I told him he must be mistaken because I looked carefully. He was becoming agitated and I was experiencing escalating biological distress. Finally, he said, "Look there." As he pointed down the hall toward the toilet. I looked, but did not see anything relevant to my problem. I then asked, "What am I supposed to be looking at?" He said, "Look on the door." I did and noticed a roll of toilet paper attached to the outside of the door. After the meeting I told a teacher about my experience. She asked me if I knew why the toilet paper was on the outside of the door. I said, "Of course I know. In the past, students clogged toilets and created expensive floods."

She said that she had been teaching at this school for many years, but had never heard of that happening. She again asked why I thought toilet paper was attached to the outside of doors. I told her I could not think of another reason. She told me that almost all of the students who attended this school were quite economically poor. If they took school toilet paper home, they would not have to spend scarce and valuable cash on it. It was attached to the outside of the doors so guards could minimize how much was taken. Why is this story relevant here?

About a week after the toilet paper on the door experience, a teacher and I met with human resources personnel at a downtown hotel that catered to large conventions. We explained to the hotel officials that we were trying to offer meaningful vocational preparation experiences to students who were not thriving in school and who were highly likely to be unemployed in their post school lives. As part of this process we would like to bring no more than two students to the hotel at one time and provide them with the instruction and related experiences they would need to become employable at this or another hotel. They agreed to open their doors and provide the much needed and appreciated authentic assessment and instruction opportunities. After negotiating many logistical details such as days, hours, instructional responsibilities, lunch, supervision, insurance coverage, uniforms and tests for illegal drug use, we started to leave. Then the manager announced there was one more important issue that had to be addressed, "property rights." Specifically, she informed us that they had a zero tolerance policy that applies to anyone who violates the property rights of the hotel, employees or guests. In short, she told us that if our students are likely to steal anything while they are at the hotel, they do not want them to come. The teacher looked at me. I looked at her. We put our hands behind our backs, crossed our fingers and said, "Our students will not steal anything."

Shortly thereafter we visited a large military surplus store and negotiated a training arrangement with the managers. They were more concerned with stealing than anyone we had ever interacted with because they stocked guns, knives, bayonets, machetes and other expensive and dangerous items. They insisted that our students would be searched before they left the store. As other employees were not routinely searched, we could not allow it. The stalemate was resolved by agreeing that our students would wear tightly fitting jeans and t - shirts with the name and address of the store printed on them and that their coats would be deposited and retrieved at the front of the store near the checkout counter. Who among us does not have a towel, shampoo, lotion, mouthwash, soap, an ice bucket and/or an ash tray with Sheraton, Marriott or Hilton imprinted on it? Still,

stealing toilet paper from a hotel is not right. Stealing guns and knives from a military surplus store is not right and extremely dangerous. What about our students can and should we guarantee the community?

### Tolerance of Deviance, Burn Out

You finish high school and you want to do something relevant and meaningful. You do not want to spend your life folding sweaters at the Gap. You decide to become a Special Education teacher. You go to college for five years, work hard, graduate, and get a teaching license and a job at a high school. You are assigned thirteen young adult students with serious disabilities. They function most of the day at three tables in a rather large simulated sheltered workshop classroom. Your supervisor told you to have them put index cards in, and then take them out of, envelopes, and to have them put plastic spoons and forks in, and then take them out of, plastic bags. It is your first day as a real teacher and you appreciate the presence and assistance of another professional. Soon, much too soon, you realize that your supervisor is gone and you are alone with "them" for the first time.

You notice that one student is nose picking and eating. You are disgusted, but you do not show it. Then you notice another worker who is masturbating. You wonder if he realizes he is going to go blind and that hair will grow on his hands. Your first major professional dilemma is should you try to stop nose picking and eating or the most important cause of acne in Christian society? Before you decide, another student puts her head down on the table. Someone else runs away. Another starts making weird sounds. Another starts flipping his fingers at the lights.

Another..... You want to address them all, but you cannot. You chase one down. You correct another. You tell that one to keep his hands on the table. You turn off the lights, but the flipping continues. You are overwhelmed, but you make it through the day. At home that evening you drink wine, eat and go to bed. The next day you experience the same things. After several more days you figure it out. Do the behaviors go away? No. After a while do we stop noticing them? Yes. What happens when we put many persons with disabilities in a confined space for long periods of time with few persons without disabilities who are paid to be with them? Burn out. Toleration of deviance. Ennui.

Segregated settings are not good for individuals with disabilities. The longer someone is segregated, the harder it is for them to function anywhere else. Segregated settings are not good for the professionals who work in them either. Does it have to be this way? No. What can be done to improve the situation? Provide good social and behavioral models and arrange for the performance of

real work in integrated settings are two good starting points.

### How to Keep Unemployment Rates High.

There are causal relationships between the nature of the Special Education and related services provided and the post school vocational failures of citizens with disabilities. If we wanted to maintain or increase these post school failure rates, some of the actions we should continue follow.

Maintain the current myopic views of diplomas and standardized academic achievement test scores as meaningful educational outcomes.

Reduce curricular options to only academic courses that emphasize complex, abstract, grade level and verbally laden content.

Confine students with disabilities to Special Education schools, classrooms and classes or place them in incomprehensible content regular education classes glued to paraprofessionals.

Exclude or minimize authentic vocational assessment and instruction. That is, provide instruction only on school grounds.

Minimize parent/guardian involvement in school policies and practices.

Transport students to schools that are far away from their homes in special vehicles.

Hire many teachers with emergency credentials.

Teach to developmental rather than to chronological age.

Arrange for more students to receive Special Education and related services.

Do away with social promotion.

Make it legal to quit school at age 14 - 13 - 12 - 11- 10 - \_\_\_\_ .

Establish special schools for those who do not pass high school entrance tests. Keep them there until they either pass them or drop out. In Chicago, 1485 students quit before entering high school in 1996. After several years of "No social promotion" and high school entrance test policies and practices, 2055 dropped out in 2002.

Resist all changes in service delivery models, inservice and preservice training programs, funding priorities, curriculum development strategies and collaboration between all educators and therapists.

Refuse to perform any action that is not clearly required by the management/labor contract. Indeed, demand overtime pay for each minute past the times specified in your contract.

Never conduct or become involved in research.

## How to Increase Employment Rates

What can we do to prepare more students with disabilities to function effectively in the real world of work at the point of school exit? Individualized school exit portfolios are offered as reasonable alternatives or supplements to diplomas, grades, courses, credits and scores on academic achievement tests. What should be in a school exit portfolio?

Video records of at least four successful experiences in real jobs.

Employer testimonials of competence.

Verification that the student is working at least twenty hours per week in a job that pays at least minimum wages at school exit.

Evidence that the student and her/his family are connected to the persons and agencies that will provide support after school exit.

Evidence of good work ethics, reliability, timeliness and respect for the property rights of others.

Evidence of reasonable physical status and appearance.

Reasonable functional, money and tool use repertoires.

Meaningful reading, math and communication skills.

Minimally acceptable social and leisure competencies.

Appropriate travel, lunch and break time skills.

Clear descriptions of individual learning and performance characteristics.

Reasonably valid knowledge of successful accommodations to disability manifestations.

## Three Options

If existing service delivery models are not resulting in preferred and realizable outcomes, what are the alternatives? Three of many are addressed below:

Restructuring High Schools; The Buyout Option; and, Finishing Schools.

Restructuring High Schools. Restructuring high schools refers to making changes in existing service delivery models, curriculum development strategies, personnel preparation programs and resource priorities so that students with disabilities can be provided with the authentic preparatory experiences necessary to function effectively in real jobs that pay at least minimum wages at school exit. Some, but certainly not all, of the changes necessary to realize this important outcome follow. When a student enters high school, authentic vocational and related assessment and instruction should begin. During the first year in high school, one



half day per week should be devoted to learning to function in real nonschool vocational and related settings and activities. Subsequently, the amounts of time spent learning to function efficiently in individually appropriate nonschool vocational and related settings and activities should be increased. If a student is enrolled in school after age eighteen, all of her/his instruction should be provided in integrated, respected and individually appropriate nonschool settings and activities by school personnel during school days and times. In short, integrated school should be faded out and integrated community should be faded in.

When students are not receiving authentic vocational and related instruction, they should be provided individually appropriate kinds and amounts of instruction in chronological age appropriate integrated classrooms and classes in home schools. If individually appropriate educational experiences cannot be generated in integrated classrooms and classes, the amounts of time spent in important nonschool settings and activities should be increased. Special Education classes, resource rooms and other segregated settings should be avoided if humanly possible. So should arranging for a paraprofessional to sit with a student in Math, Science, History and Literature classes when the curricula are absurdly complex, incomprehensible and not meaningfully related to acceptable post school functioning.

Students with disabilities should be given the opportunities and assistance needed to function in a wide array of individually appropriate and integrated school sponsored extracurricular activities each semester. If private therapy is individually appropriate, so be it. Sometimes what transpires between a therapist and a person with disabilities is not the business of anyone else. Whenever reasonable, which is in most instances, Speech and Language, Physical, Occupational and other therapies should be provided in integrated environments, activities and contexts. If therapists cannot enhance functioning in authentic settings, activities and contexts, they should step aside and give someone else a chance. It always amazes me how professionals can justify confining students to segregated, quiet, dimly lit and colorless rooms for extended periods of time at school in the name of therapy. Then they learn that the students function quite well, really enjoy and behave best when they attend a boisterous ball game, a birthday party and play at a busy park with brothers, sisters, friends and neighbors in bright sunlight.

The Buyout Option. Assume school administrators will not allow instructional personnel to provide authentic instruction in individually meaningful nonschool

settings, activities and contexts because:

They cannot figure out how to reallocate personnel so as to provide reasonable coverage;

It is too expensive; insurance rates will increase;

Teachers, therapists, paraprofessionals and other instructional personnel do not want to leave school grounds during school days and times because it is too cold or too hot out;

Professionals spend one hundred and eighty minutes per day commuting to and from work in heavy traffic, they need to rest during school hours;

If teachers cannot get back to the school in the contracted time, they want time and one half pay for overtime. The district will not do so;

School personnel cannot manage the students in nonschool settings; and/or The teachers are too old for that or were not trained to do it.

In short, assume students with disabilities are in need of authentic assessment and instruction, but cannot receive it from school professionals. In such instances, school officials may choose to purchase the needed services from private vendors with school administered tax dollars. That is, to exercise the "Buyout Option".

The Finishing School. Assume school administrators will not allow the provision of individually appropriate instructional services in integrated and respected nonschool settings and activities by school personnel during school days and times and/or that school professionals cannot or will not provide it. Assume further that students with disabilities are unemployed when they graduate with a diploma, drop out or otherwise exit school. Is it too late? No. Is there a feasible option? Yes, the finishing school. The finishing school is essentially the offering of a second chance to learn that which should have been taught during the first passage through school. At the finishing school a student will learn the actual skills needed to be successful at a particular job; to get to and from work; to manage money earned; to act appropriately in public places; to maintain reasonable health; to manifest reasonable work ethics and to learn from compassionate feedback. The finishing school transcends racism, social promotion, sexism, tracking, dead end jobs, academic achievement test scores, exit tests and the other reasons authentic vocational assessment and instruction were not provided during the first tour through school. The objectives and instructional strategies are clear: to teach that which is actually necessary for an individual to become a

productive member of society. Failure, unemployment, involvement in criminal justice systems and producing children you cannot support are not in the curriculum and are not acceptable outcomes.

Enough