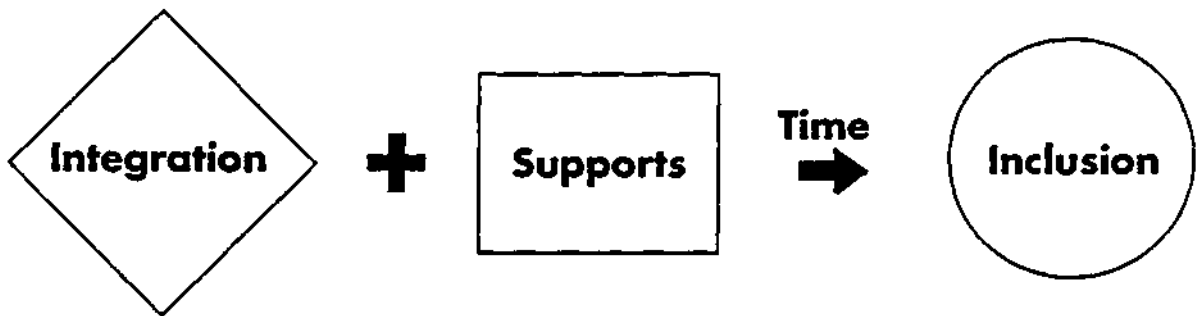


Reflections on Inclusion at School... and Beyond

A resource for consumers, advocates
and human service providers



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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the children throughout history
who have been systematically excluded
and forced to live on the margins of society.
It is with them in mind that we collectively seek
to create a greater sense of social justice in this world,
and in turn, enhance our own quality of life.

Preface

"A place where I belong." That's what each of us needs. A place where, without question, we are wanted, welcomed and have a right to be.

A sense of belonging makes us feel whole and complete. It engenders self-esteem and self-confidence. Belonging makes us feel safe and allows us to be who we are and to be proud of who we are. Belonging means we are accepted, which leads to the conclusion that we are OK. To belong is to feel loved.

Feeling loved, we are free to learn, to grow, to give and to, in turn, love others.

This wonderful publication on inclusion by Tim Knoster calls on us to create places where people belong. It challenges leaders to have a vision and to create change. It also provides a framework for change and insights into the process of change.

If we read this booklet, if we feel its passion, if we act on its advice, we will create places where people belong . . . in the classroom, on the job, in the neighborhood . . . and in doing so, we will make the world a place where everyone belongs!

Nancy R. Thaler
Deputy Secretary for Mental Retardation
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

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Who's on First?

People are born ready to be included, however, many have learned to be segregated through a general lack of supports. The degree to which an individual can be included has nothing to do with innate ability, but rather the degree of natural support available and the sophistication of the support system in the school and community.

Preparing to write this book has been a never-ending saga of things that I and my colleagues have learned from listening to people in our support for services that include people with disabilities in typical school and community settings. Throughout our journeys (and at times they felt like pilgrimages) we have come across some terrific folks. Every time we encountered a new person with a differing perspective was an opportunity to reaffirm our belief in inclusion. It also gave us, as educators, new opportunities to better learn how to communicate using common everyday language. In keeping with this idea, it is important to create a mutual understanding of the term "inclusion" before progressing any further.

Consistently, the question we have been asked most often throughout our "holy crusade" has been "what is the difference between *integration*, *mainstreaming*, and *inclusion*!" The first time I was specifically asked this question, it caught me somewhat off guard—not so much the question, but rather the person (a parent) who was asking it. I really expected educators to have this burning desire to define the jargon. After all, we educators are the ones who invent and control the stuff. However, parents have predominantly been the group that ask this question.

Despite being caught off guard, I am pleased to report that I was able to answer spontaneously and intuitively, which kept the jargon to a minimum. In my mind the differences were, and still are, pretty explicit.

Integration

Integration involves the placement of some-

one (hopefully with supports) into a new setting with his or her non-disabled peers. While there are a number of ways to describe the variety of possible settings, I subscribe to Doug Biklen's view when he talks about integration generally encompassing four areas—physical, community, academic, and social contexts.

Mainstreaming

Acknowledging this makes addressing mainstreaming a relatively simple proposition. *Mainstreaming*, in its typical use at school, represents the academic portion of integration—an activity of placement. It should be understood that as such, viewing mainstreaming in isolation would be nearsighted when one considers the complexity of improving the quality of life of someone who has been traditionally excluded for much of his life. It is equally important to understand that *integration* or *mainstreaming* should involve supports to best insure success for everyone involved in the placement. However, and unfortunately as is sometimes the case, placements can occur without adequate supports. This does not mean that the person being *integrated* or *mainstreamed* is not capable, but rather that the support system has failed.

Inclusion

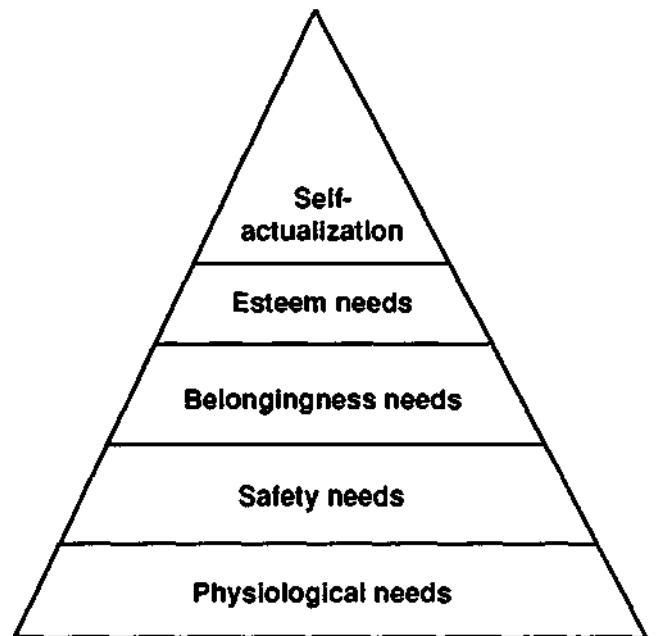
Inclusion, on the other hand, transcends the notion of someone being let in to nurturing an acceptance of human diversity in our schools and ultimately our communities. Inclusion, unlike the two previously described terms, is not a placement, even though I do continue to hear statements in some schools to the effect of "he is partially included. This statement makes as little sense to me as describing a teammate as "partly on our team—he comes to practice three out of five days a week, makes one half of the games, and will be in 60 percent of our team photos." Inclusion, by contrast, is an outcome or byproduct of a process that involves integration with supports over time. How much time? How many supports? There is no one universal answer.

Perhaps an example, free from "disability," will help to clarify. If I relocate to your community by taking a new job, purchasing a home, and enrolling my kids in the local school system, how long will it take until I feel included, or better yet, belong? There is no way anyone, including me, could accurately predict the time frame. However, asking this absurd question helps to make the point. Acquiring a sense of belonging is a personal event... one that will not lend itself to formulas and strict time frames. Much like relationships, which make precious the human experience, belonging is an individual experience. No one can structure it or MAKE IT HAPPEN. One person may feel as if he belongs in a week; for another it may take a lifetime.

In my mind we can use the concept of *belonging* interchangeably with *inclusion*. Gaining a sense that one belongs and is included in meaningful ways in their community is probably the most important thing that schools can support. Acquiring this sense of acceptance can help all of our children to establish meaningful relationships. You see, only through human connections can any of us truly meet our needs.

OK...OK...I understand that schools have many important roles. After all, there are hard decisions to be made, careers and fortunes to be planned, proms to be attended, and colleges to be applied to by seniors in any graduating class. Then why all this talk about the importance of belonging?

I believe the answer to this is quite simple. Over the years, the works of Abraham Maslow, Jean Piaget, EL Thorndike, BF Skinner, Benjamin Bloom, etc. (let's just call them the boys) have had a tremendous impact on what we know as school today. I have not met an educator to date who is not somewhat familiar with the work of all of these gentleman, including Abraham Maslow. Specifically, Maslow's work concerning the hierarchy of human needs continues to this day to directly impact practices in our schools.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

Think about this. Many schools today have school meal programs that bring in children during the summer to insure that they are at least eating one meal a day. All sorts of examples exist concerning safety needs, ranging from the safety patrol (which is where I understand Dirty Harry got his start) to medical services on school grounds. Also, can you recall the last time that you spent any significant amount of time in a local elementary school and don't remember some form of self-esteem group at work? Duso the Dolphin, Pumsy the Dragon, and the like have found their niche at school... and when it comes to self-actualization, think about all the awards and honors programs that exist to help each student "be all they can be." Yes, it is staggering!

Please don't regard my poking a bit of fun at these programs as a statement regarding their importance, because I believe that these are all, generally, worthwhile causes. However, the thing I find most ironic is that good old Abraham Maslow would be turning in his grave if he were aware of how disconnected many of our children feel today, including children with disabilities.

You see, as Norman Kuntz notes, what we have done is inverted, or rather perverted, this pyramid to have belonging be something that needs to be earned after the attainment of self-actualized goals, rather than being acknowledged as a fundamental human need.

The need to belong is one thing that we ALL share, regardless of our interests or abilities. Think for a moment about children who struggle with communication skills and their peers on the forensics team. Despite their unique differences in communication skills, they share the basic human need to feel they are accepted and they belong. If our personal worth or, worse yet, our acceptance into our local community is contingent upon demonstrated skills, none of us could ever acquire a true sense of belonging. We would all be slaves to the pressure of ways needing to achieve our best and not be granted the luxury of human error. Each team would have to win every game, each honors student would need to ace every test, and each person would need to constantly live under the pressure of losing their status, their virtual human value, upon failure.

The pressures our children will face as they enter the 21st century appear enormous. Collectively, we need to help establish, or at least reestablish, a sense of connectedness for our children. Schools need to nurture a sense of belonging for the sake of each individual child, and ultimately society at large. Naive . . . perhaps, from some perspectives, but attainable, and definitely worth the effort!

The Educational Machine:

ing Systems Change

"A little revolution is a healthy thing, as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."
—Thomas Jefferson

If you ever want to put a damper on a gathering of human service providers simply mention the term "systems change." Service providers have been known to literally flee the room at the onset of a discussion on this topic. In reality, I can't blame them. After all, it is difficult enough to excel at one's role without taking on the problems of the world, or worse yet, THE SYSTEM.

The simple fact of the matter is that in order to understand inclusion and how to support its evolution in both school and community contexts involves understanding and effectively working with systems issues. For instance, I will often ask educators to think back over the past five years to a workshop on some new instructional technique with which they were impressed. Initially, most people try newly acquired skills or techniques, but over time often revert back to their "old" pattern of behavior unless they have an existent support system in place. Does this scenario sound familiar? Welcome to the club if it does. Simply put, the drudgery of the daily routine—the system itself—can wear us all down into submission. If this were not the case we would see most of the best practices that support inclusion in place across all schools.

As an illustration, I have not yet met an educator who participated in a workshop on cooperative learning who did not feel that the technique could help students in their classroom. Despite this, only a small number of schools whose teachers have been initially trained in this technique have implemented this best practice across all classrooms. Cooperative learning would be more the rule of thumb in typical classroom settings if this were not the case. While it is easy to agree that great headway has been made in the use of such strategies across classrooms, it is often the systems issues that impede full, long-

term implementation.

Let's stay with the cooperative learning example a bit longer to further clarify this point. Cooperative learning involves facilitating students to solve problems while maintaining relationships between team members. One premise of cooperative learning is heterogeneity. Unfortunately, this cornerstone is compromised when the particular school system in which the teacher works uses ability group tracking practices such as the Daisies, the Daffodils, and the Skunk Cabbages. The teacher, and ultimately the students in the classroom, start out with a strike against them due to such grouping practices.

Over time, most innovative practices call into question many basic assumptions of school operation. Issues continue to surface in schools that are moving in an inclusive direction—questions such as "what is the purpose of grading?"; "why do our schools operate on a rigid, lockstep promotional system?" This, by the way, is also the case in many schools that are becoming outcomes-based sites for learning. When such issues are not meaningfully addressed to accommodate the inclusion of a diverse student population, over time, staff generally become frustrated, and in essence, revert back to the status quo.

Pretty gloomy? It can be if you let it get you down. Or, as many of my colleagues have found, it can serve as a catalyst to change by helping us ask the infamous three-letter question...WHY? Why do our schools, or for that matter, we as individuals act in the way that we do? Is it a conspiracy, a malaise, or just time to find a new job?

Asking the question "why" is really not that difficult. In fact we all at one time were experts in posing this question to our parents and teachers. Unfortunately, with our society's preoccupation with understanding "how" things work, we have forgotten "how" to ask "why." Systems, and subsequently people within systems, need to continuously ask this question. Without such

inquiry we leave to chance the direction behind our actions.

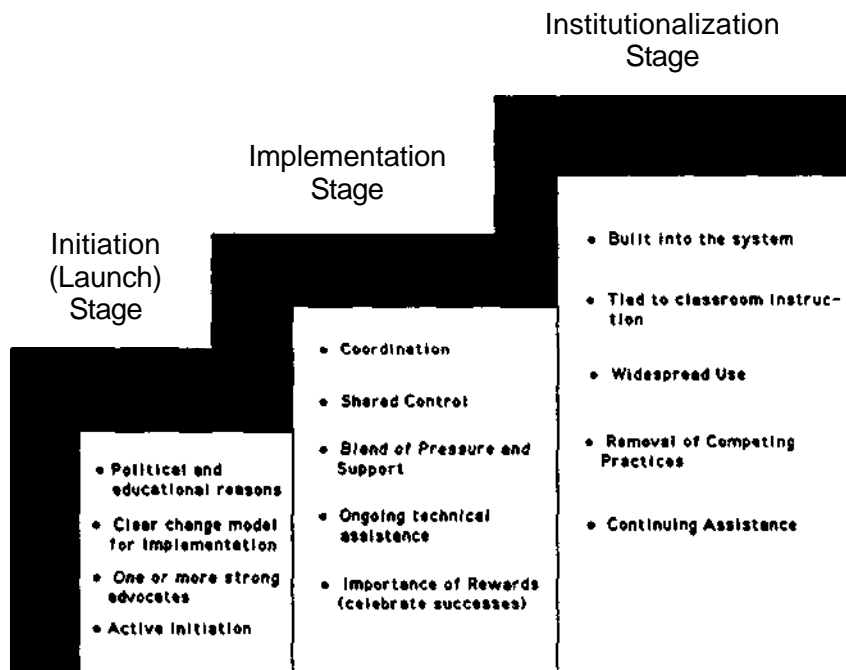
Collectively, consumers and educators can wield great power if they take the time to understand systems issues that support the implementation of inclusive practices, and in turn, publicly ask "why?" However, to do this requires a willingness to not flee the room in order to avoid the conversation on systems issues. To support you in this venture, I will try to briefly highlight what are, to me and many of my colleagues, the more salient features of how school systems operate and ultimately how to positively influence practices within them.

In our work with educators and parents, we have utilized literature from many different sources. One particular resource, Michael Fullan, Dean of the College of Education at the University of Toronto, has greatly influenced our understanding of school systems. While other models of analysis exist, I believe none are as to-the-point as how Fullan views systems issues through three stages: *initiation*, *implementation* and *institutionalization*.

Initiation

It is important to realize that there is probably no more important phase than the one within which any particular staff is currently engaged. Therefore, at the onset, *initiation* (or as I call it the "POM POM" phase) is the most important. Another way to think about this is that you never get a second chance to make a first impression. Do the right thing the first time and implementation can logically follow. Mess it up, and you could spend the remaining days of your career in professional purgatory ... lost with all the souls who once had great intent.

Probably no more important idea exists within this initial phase than that of understanding that it usually takes a combination of both internal and external sources of support and pressure to initiate change. Specifically with inclusion, it takes a combined effort, a coalition so to speak, of educators and consumers who want to change the system. It greatly helps to have champions within the system who want to do the right thing in combination with champions outside the system constructively insisting the right thing be done. In



Adapted from: Fullan (1990)
Miles (1986)

isolation, people within the system can be silenced in a variety of ways; it becomes an internal affair. In isolation people from outside the system can be easily dismissed as not understanding the complexity of issues or as being too emotionally involved to see things clearly. Anyone who has tried in isolation, either from within or outside the system, to pull reality towards the vision of inclusion can relate to this. That's if they survived the struggle. The fact is that internal and external agents of change need each other in order to move a system. Similarly, these change agents need to be conscious about the political and educational reasons behind the inclusive school movement.

Implementation

Implementation, by its very nature, can be the messiest phase in the process. The devil is always in the details...assuming that the direction of change is based on the answers to the question "why." If not, the devil may still reside in the lack of direction for the practices in place at the school. It is important to remember that there is no set time frame, and certainly no set list of supports in a recipe format that will guarantee children, or adults for that matter, acquire a sense of belonging in their school or community. It is a personally unique set of events over time that can enable a person in this manner. Understanding this should underscore the importance of intense collaboration between many different people in the process of inclusion. The notion of team work, which I will address in greater detail later on, comes into play in spades during the implementation phase. No one book, and certainly no one person can possibly have all the answers for every situation to be encountered in an inclusive school. However, I have not encountered a situation to date that could not be resolved through effective collaboration.

Let's stay with this notion for a time. On a personal level, think for a moment about experiences in your own life that you were unable to adequately address alone. Many different examples come to mind for me, ranging from my

background as an athlete on various teams to my professional endeavors where I am, as well, a member of teams. The fact of the matter is that the idea of independence is somewhat misleading when in reality we are all more interdependent in our personal and professional lives. Accepting this notion of interdependence is critical to effective team functioning. Only through effective teaming will any group of educators, in harmony with parents, be able to meet the needs of ALL students.

Institutionalization

I must take my hat off to Mr. Fullan in his use of the term *institutionalization* in describing this third phase of change. This is the only good use of this word that I have come across in my readings. Leadership, which I will also talk about later, often involves some form of charismatic presence. This is particularly true during the initiation phase. The problem often becomes that changes become too dependent upon a central or key figure within the school. Problems arise if that particular person leaves his current position and too much is dependent upon him. Inclusive schools that continue to be successful for all children consistently take the long view, which involves building in ownership on the part of ALL staff and community. Simply stated, building redundancy into the system is important to avoid becoming too dependent on any one person. We need to institutionalize the vision of inclusion to have a lasting effect.

One particular issue that is related to this idea is that of removing competing practices (i.e. homogeneous tracking practices). There is nothing more demoralizing than to have staff make a commitment to implement inclusive practices and, when they uncover systems barriers, to be advised not to raise the issue(s) because they would cause too much confusion. It is important not only to articulate the vision of inclusion in words through a mission statement, but it is equally as important to "walk the talk" together by seeking to remove barriers to inclu-

sion. Practicing what we preach is fundamental to everyone's moral, which is critical to the health and climate of schools, and serves as a necessary prerequisite in this phase.

It is important to realize that while initiation, implementation, and institutionalization phases of change have been presented in a linear manner—initiation proceeding implementation, and so on—that a high degree of interrelationship exists among all phases in this mode. In example, actively initiating the process of inclusion reflects a "just do it" mentality. This is to say that, while there do exist some forms of readiness activities that can pay dividends in the long run, there comes a point in time when the team (including the parent and optimally the student) decides to go for it. In leading up to this point, as well as beyond, finding the proper blend or balance of pressure and support is important. This often involves orchestrating (in concert, so to speak) leverage through combining internal agents (i.e. teacher/administrator champions of inclusion) with external agents (parents and advocates). As you can see, in reality no clearly distinct starting or ending points exist between these phases of

change. Rather, a fluid relationship appears evident, with effective change agents moving with the ebb and flow of local needs and resources in the change process.

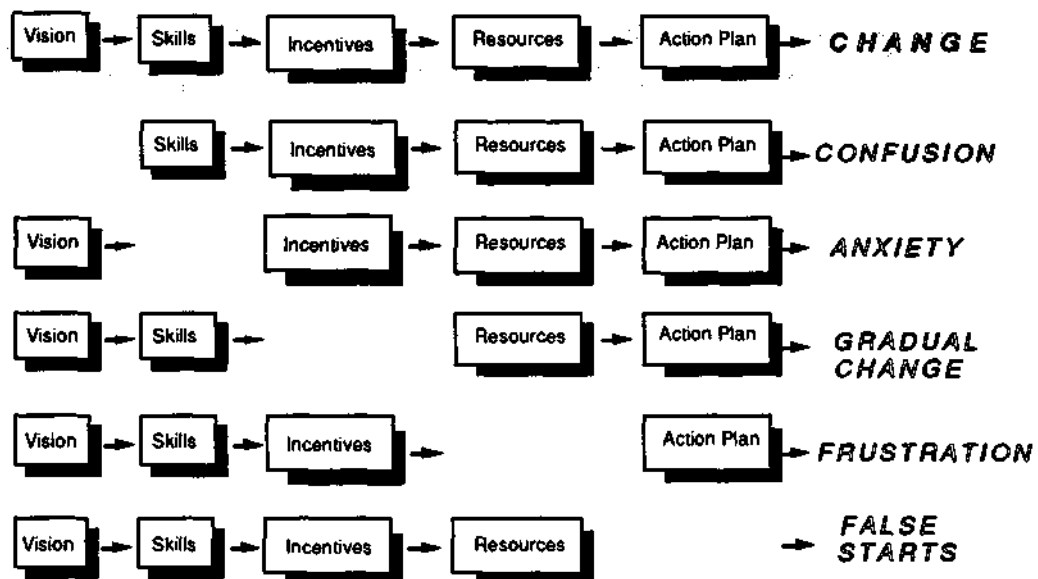
Without question, becoming an inclusive site represents a significant change from past practice for most schools. New and complex issues requiring dynamic leadership surface in schools as they evolve through these stages of change. Administrators need to manage a series of important steps in order for this shift in practice to occur in an organized manner.

Managing Complex Change

It has been said that trying to create a significant shift in paradigm in the public schools is like trying to move a graveyard . . . you are always amazed at how many friends the dead still have. Managing significant change is, at best, a demanding job. At worst it can serve as a proving ground for martyrs.

Understanding the difficulties inherent in managing change is important for the leadership in any school. This is particularly true in schools

Managing Complex Change--The Enterprise Group, Limited



that practice inclusion. The Enterprise Group, Limited in their work with a variety of organizations has identified five key elements necessary for managing complex change.

Addressing issues related to vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action planning appear to be equally important in buildings moving in an inclusive direction.

Vision

Specifically, schools where staff members have played an active role in articulating their beliefs for all children as a result of education tend to have a clearer focus on their mission as educators. Clear articulation (via the collaborative process) of intended outcomes for all children at the given school can serve as a pivotal activity in the change process. As Seneca noted some time ago, "If a man knows not what direction in which to sail, no wind is favorable." The collaborative process can best insure a shared direction, a strategic intent, on the part of staff at the school, and can serve as a common frame of reference from which to gauge existent practices. Working together can lead to outcome statements for all students that avoid a preoccupation with deficits and categorizations. A shared vision by staff serves as a representation of the values base of the building, thus leading to change in practices when the current strategy does not lead in the direction of the desired outcomes. Simply stated. ...it serves as an inertia buster.

Incentives

Schools that have articulated a shared vision have already begun to address incentives for staff. One of the greatest incentives for educators can be to actively participate in the development of the mission as well as the planning and delivery of supports. It is more likely that staff will continue to invest high levels of energy in meeting all students' needs when they perceive themselves as active participants in decision making. This fact has been born out time and time

again in motivational theory literature across a variety of settings.

Unfortunately, I am sure that we can all relate to situations where we have felt put on the spot to perform some skill or activity, but we weren't exactly sure what it was, or WHY we were being asked to do it. You will notice the "why" word has raised its head once again. People need to have an internal understanding of the rationale behind the inclusive school movement in order to successfully support inclusion. Acknowledging this, the notion of participatory management certainly has a place in an inclusive school.

Skills

Coupled with a vision, and the subsequent incentives that this process can provide, leaders can further empower staff by involving them in the decision making process concerning staff development, allocation of resources, and the development and implementation of a building-based action plan for inclusion. These three sets of issues can best be addressed through team work, team work, and more team work!

It is extremely important that staff perceive themselves as capable professionals in the inclusion process. A visible commitment to staff development has been consistently noted across inclusive schools. Staff need to feel comfortable in their abilities to educate students with diverse needs while feeling a part of a cooperative team in designing and delivering effective services. It is equally important that staff development activities be congruent with the mission in the building. Staff often identify specific themes for professional growth as they collaborate on their mission statement. Additionally, it is important for staff to see relevant connections between staff development activities as they support the process of inclusion. These connections need to be clearly visible to all in order to safeguard people from "not being able to see the forest for all the trees."

Resources

Concomitantly, everyone needs to be involved in the reallocation of resources to inclusive priorities. Resources are always tight in public schools, and the reality is that this situation will most likely become more problematic based on current economic realities. One way to create new funding sources from existent ones is through the removal of competing practices (as noted earlier). If the competing practices removed cost money, and often times they do, these monies can be redirected towards initiatives that are consistent with inclusion. For example, inclusive schools accept student diversity as a natural event, making attempts at traditional ability grouping practices generally incompatible with the vision. In this example, resources in terms of peoples' time (which equates to money) can be redirected to addressing the issue of "how do we support staff in meeting all students' needs in integrated settings," rather than attempting to sort children into groups based on perceived abilities and making decisions on who is "ready" to be included. Remember, people are born ready to be included. We need to adopt a "just do it" approach to providing supports.

Action Planning

Articulating the vision at the building level, coupled with professional development, and the development of incentives and resources committed towards the process of inclusion represent significant steps in the full implementation of a building-based action plan towards inclusion. Ongoing collaboration, and a subsequent renewal process for staff, can best insure the continued evolution of an inclusive system.

A final question to address before moving into a more full-blown description of leadership issues in inclusive schools is that of "how do I, as an educator, parent, or whoever, motivate others to see the value (the why) in including children with disabilities with their non-disabled peers?" The key word here is "motivate."

Motivational practices have long plagued people trying to create change across all types of organizations. While I freely admit that I have a tendency to oversimplify issues, a simple dichotomy does exist from my perspective. Simply stated, people who are trying to influence change can either choose to motivate via internal or external means. Let's start with external, as this is probably the most prevalent example of motivational practice. I have heard this approach described a number of different ways, however Frederick Herzberg's description really strikes home for me:

"The surest and most circumlocuted way of getting someone to do something is to administer a kick in the pants-to give what might be called KITA."

While the administration of KITA is a pretty straightforward proposition, it does serve to form a type of dependency on having a foot ready to swing in an ongoing manner. Reliance on such external activators will only be effective as long as they are present; remove the threat of the kick, and there is a good chance that you remove the longevity of the change.

Contrarily, finding ways to help others become internally motivated to see the value in change can lead to long-term shifts in belief systems, which can result in behavior change consistent with this new view of the community we call school. It is important to remember that while much of this section has been devoted to describing systems approach to inclusion, all school systems are made up of individual people. As such, all stakeholders in the change process need to see what's in it for them. Effective change agents, including principals, nurture such an understanding of proposed changes with staff. By doing so, leaders not only better insure that each staff member will continue to do the right thing over the long haul, but additionally will in all likelihood increase the probability that the particular staff member will stretch the boundaries of the current paradigm.

Effective "motivators" both understand and can implement motivational approaches that encourage long-term growth. Understanding this leads us to the next logical set of questions. "Who should lead and who should follow?" Are there clear-cut ways to identify potential leaders? Can we produce such leaders in administrative training programs to lead the inclusive school movement? Is leadership an art form, science, just plain luck, or all the above? —

Who Should Lead and Who Should Follow?

"The only thing of real importance that leaders do is create and manage culture and that the unique talent of leaders is their ability to work with culture."
-(Schein, 1985)

I have been an avid sports fan for a number of years. As a child growing up, I followed with great fascination athletes from almost every sport imaginable~or at least the ones that made it on prime time TV prior to ESPN. I continue to follow sports, all be it not as avidly as when I was still in high school and college. However, I have found my admiration for athletes has changed as I have come to better appreciate all the dimensions involved with team performance. I have come to appreciate a couple of athletes in particular, and their qualities earn them a prominent position in this section on leadership.

Specifically, Wayne Gretsky of the Los Angeles Kings and Larry Bird (recently retired) of the Boston Celtics top my list of leaders who happen to be athletes. This is not due to their outstanding individual abilities on the ice or court, but rather their unique ability to raise the level of play in their teammates at critical moments when momentum was in the balance. Many of my early lessons in leadership came through team sport experiences. What I have come to rediscover as an outgrowth of my work with inclusive schools is the old adage of a chain only being as strong as its weakest link. Gretsky and Bird understood this concept in their endeavors; regardless of how many points they would amass during a game, they knew no one person can carry a team for very long. It is possible to carry them a short distance~such is the value of a superstar *performer*. But they cannot carry them forever, and herein lies the value of the superstar *enabler*.

I believe the relationship between sport and inclusive schools are apparent to many. However, let's expand this notion of enabling players on the team to allow the team to go further than it could as a result of individual superstar performers.

A sense of synergy is produced when the right players are brought together and nurtured. Thus is the case on great teams and in an inclusive school. Superstar enablers do not hold, or hog the spotlight on the playing field known as school. Rather, they serve as a mirror reflecting the bright lights towards those willing and ready to assume a leadership role.

The truth in education is that the system empowers by title principals as building-level leaders. However, the harsh reality is that no one person can always take the lead in an inclusive school. Certainly principals maintain responsibility for nurturing an environment, or a building culture, that is conducive to ALL students being successful within the regular classroom. However, it is a practical impossibility for any one person to establish a culture. This should become quickly apparent when one considers that cultures ultimately involve people coming together who share a set of beliefs or customs~a common psychology as Peter Vaill calls it. Simply stated, it takes two to tango, and such is the case with culture.

Max DePree, in his best seller *Leadership Jazz*, draws some wonderful examples of what he terms "roving leadership." In my opinion, DePree grasps very neatly a certain reality in all effective organizations~there are times when the entitled leader takes the lead, and there are times when the entitled leader steps back and lets (substitute "enable" here, if you wish) others in a more credible position lead. Teachers (today's water carriers) often are in the best position to lead decision making teams in inclusive schools. To help this occur, building-level administrators are being asked to take the risk of supporting others in the leadership process.

Such a leap of faith by principals can be uncomfortable at first. In reality, risk taking (or wing walking as we refer to it) really never becomes a safe proposition. Rather, it simply becomes a little more known each time you do it. I recall the following words of wisdom from a

colleague: "The more you know, the more you know you don't know." Translation for leaders .. . know when to act, when to help others lead, and when to get out of the way!

Now, having briefly described enablement and distributed leadership, the question becomes where do we find, or how can we develop such leaders? Is it nature, nurture, genetic, learned, art form or science? Well, the simple answer is likely "all the above." Like most important things in life, there is not always one ultimate truth or way. People in human services exist in a grey zone where change in shade is the only thing that is 100 percent predictable.

If I must choose between nature and nurture concerning leaders, I choose to qualify my response. I know ... another shade of grey. See what I mean? Therefore, my response is simply "all of the above."

Regardless of which side of this debate you choose, there are certain qualities that effective leaders consistently demonstrate. Most great leaders, in my humble opinion, find a healthy balance in how they operate within their particular system. One particular leader with whom I have worked, Bill Opdenhoff of Danville Area School District, provides a perfect example of this balance. There are many things about the way Bill leads that I admire, but none more than his single-minded passion for outcomes with children. He has the uncanny ability to balance what Peter Drucker refers to as doing things right and doing the right thing. Managers tend to do things right, by the rules in keeping with precedent. Leaders tend to first and foremost insure that they, and their teammates, do the right thing-which sometimes means changing the rules and creating new precedents. Stated another way, doing the right thing addresses "why"; doing things right addresses "how."

Another way to look at this issue is how Peter Likins, President of Lehigh University, addressing a group of core staff at a leadership retreat,

talked about leadership as "being where the heart comes in." Having, holding, supporting and recruiting others in sharing a belief system~a vision for a new world reality-is fundamental to leaders searching to create a balance that works. The ability of the leadership at the building level and beyond to find a natural balance is the key to successfully supporting inclusion.

Allowing these distinctions to serve as a backdrop, let us turn our attention to the specific leadership characteristics needed in an inclusive school.

You will notice I did not say leadership characteristics of the principal, in isolation. All staff need to demonstrate these qualities by making them a shared responsibility. While one could pull characteristics from many lists of leadership qualities in much of the organizational management literature, here are some qualities that I see as most important in leading an inclusive school. See if you agree ... and be sure to make this list your own by adding to it.

- Vision
- Communication
- Authenticity
- Confidence
- Fairness
- Commitment
- Integrity
- Wisdom
- Naivety

Vision

The ability to envision a point of departure in the future and to build a bridge backward to meet the present represents one of the the most artistic roles that leaders share. They demonstrate what Charles Smith refers to as the "Merlin Factor," the ability to think and plan backwards from a future point in time in order to generate effective action in the present. Vision becomes synonymous with strategic intent in any organization. It is the articulation of a belief system that is to be lived up to through all actions within the organization ... the school. Effective leaders in inclusive schools are able to articulate their vision in a manner that enables other staff to reflect upon

their belief systems and, in turn, to create a consensus position on direction. True leaders do not sell their point of view, but rather find ways to encourage others to ask the question "why" of themselves, which in turn leads to matching behavior with vision.

Commitment

Focusing everyone's energy on the vision is fundamental in an inclusive school, but the notion of sustained development over time is equally important. As I see it, it boils down once again to a simple dichotomy. People in empowered leadership positions by title (i.e. principal) can choose to be either a part of the solution, or a part of the problem. There is little room for people in acknowledged leadership positions in education to act complacently. Creating inclusive schools that embrace human diversity is not just important for children with disabilities, but rather for ALL children and society at large. School administrators are empowered, at least to some extent, by the system to lead. Therefore, "leaders" should lead in dynamic ways.

Additionally, effective building leaders seem to be willing to go the extra mile if it will benefit a child. Equally, this type of commitment is found when it comes to an effective principal supporting a staff member. Commitment to life-long learning is fundamental in inclusive schools. Such a view of education acknowledges that we, as the adults in the system, continually learn as much as, and sometimes more than, the kids during the typical day. A commitment to including everyone in a healthy school environment is a necessary building block.

Communication

Ted Seizer has been noted as saying that three things will help change America's schools: "Focus ... Focus... Focus." I concur with this view of strategic intent, however I would add "Communicate ... Communicate ... Communicate." Principals who enable their staff demon-

strate an unwavering dedication to facilitating communication between all stakeholders at school concerning the well being of children. Staff need opportunities to talk with staff. Parents and other consumers need clear language as a ground rule for conversation with educators. Much attention has been devoted to communication in effective schools over the years; however, I believe that some important areas of communication have been overlooked. Specifically, I believe that two of the most important areas where dialogue needs to occur in an ongoing manner are:

- *kids with adults*---simply put, the kids at school generally are in the best position to tell us adults what they need, or more importantly, how they feel about inclusion and other such issues; and
- *educators with local community members*---including taxpayers who do not currently have children in school. It is important to remember that as motivating as success stories about kids can be, the majority of people who pay the bills in any given school system do not have children currently enrolled.

Facilitating conversations between kids and adults should be pretty self-explanatory. It is their school, their community, and their futures we are all trying to make better. Kids have the greatest long-term stake in their education, not we adults. Our adult interests are primarily focused on the short run.

The second area should likewise not be so difficult to understand; however, it never ceases to amaze me how many thoughtful educators are surprised by this taxpayer realization. It should be rather clear at this point that while this text is dedicated to pulling reality towards the vision of inclusion, most of the observations concerning leadership lend themselves to effective schools in general. Leaders, and in turn everyone at school, need to realize the need to find ways to effectively communicate with people from across a variety of constituencies. For example, senior citizens need support in understanding how

inclusive schools will directly benefit them now, as well as children in the future. Effective leaders find creative ways to support these types of conversations, and in turn, stimulate such exchanges over time.

Integrity

Communication of intent is important, but should not be viewed in isolation from action. Stated another way, "Saying something is one thing, walking the talk is another." Max DePree talks about blending "voice" and "touch" in the role of leaders. Voice represents the articulation of one's beliefs systems (as noted earlier), while "touch" represents the demonstration of one's resolve and competence. Integrity, in my mind, can be defined as consistency in action with the stated belief system.

I, as well as many of my closest colleagues, believe that most people already have in tact a values base that will allow them to embrace inclusive schooling. The key is acting in an inclusive manner to help support others in unlocking this often times dormant habit of the mind. Walking the inclusion talk goes beyond kids by asking all of us, as human beings, to reflect upon how we interact with one another. Understanding this should help clarify the important role communication plays in supporting inclusion. In my eyes, it is hypocritical to take the "bunker-siege" approach to supporting inclusion at the local level. Certainly I can, on a personal level, appreciate how tempting this approach is. After all, it would feel so good to react at a visceral level to someone who sees the world differently from "us." Alas, the pay off, our feeling of "I got them," is short-lived with such an approach. The more challenging strategy, and I might add more long-term oriented approach, is to meet people where they are and build on common ground. This is not to suggest that we compromise our beliefs, but rather that we remain in constant touch with those beliefs in communicating with others who have a different point of view. Gentle advocacy, in my mind, is harder work, hands

down, than the "bunker-siege" approach. It is also demonstrating competence and resolve by walking the talk of inclusion.

Authenticity

Coca Cola for a number of years has targeted the authenticity angle in marketing its soft drink. Billboards and radio waves have carried the message that "coke is the real thing" for better than half a decade. Being perceived as "the real thing" was, and still is, fundamental to Coca Cola. Being perceived as real, or genuine, is important for leaders, regardless of whether they drink Coke, Pepsi, or whatever. Leaders in inclusive schools are viewed as consistent, but most important, as believable. Simply put, it is not just for show. In this day and age in human services it is reassuring to meet such leaders. They not only walk the talk, but also demonstrate a level of sincerity that is simply captivating.

Wisdom

The pursuit of enlightenment has served as an elusive Holy Grail of sorts for human beings throughout history. Philosophers, politicians and others have long regarded its pursuit as the ultimate voyage. As such, I certainly will not attempt to operationally define this elusive concept; however, I will briefly elaborate on the notion of "the more you know the more you know you don't know." Having the foresight, or better yet, the wherewithall to know when to act, defer, or simply get out of the way is of tantamount importance to leaders in inclusive schools.

Confidence

If you are interested in stretching people's boundaries through discussion begin by deleting what Al Mamary of the Johnson City School District describes as "killer terms" from our shared vocabulary. By this I mean that educators are notorious for creating language that is understandable to only the "in crowd," and sorry, in general non-educators do not fit in. Perhaps by switching our language paradigm to expanding

opportunities rather than constraining growth has merit, especially when we look to minimize non-productive terms such as the word "can't."

The word, or rather contraction, "can't" is an excellent place to start because of its simplicity. Just about everyone has some general agreement concerning what this term means. Additionally, most people would agree that it is a disheartening term that possesses little growth potential (at least in a positive sense). Inclusive schools in practice (usually unwritten) have done away with this term and its surrounding negative outgrowths. After all, at one time it was impossible for man to walk on the moon, or for people from what was previously known as East Germany to freely move and talk with people from West Germany because of the physical nature of the Berlin Wall. After all this, can we continue to believe that kids with varying abilities "can't" be educated in the same classroom. Come on... it is time for us to get a grip on the world the way it really is, rather than the way some still choose to see it. Inclusive schools, and ultimately an inclusive society, are achievable if we stop thinking in "can't" terminologies. The only real barriers that exist are the limits we self-impose through our expectations.

Naivety

Is this perspective naive? Some believe so. In reality, it will take a miracle to move all schools in an inclusive direction in a reasonable time frame. After all, we have over 200 years of past practice in segregation to overcome. Jonathon Kozol, in his latest book *Savage Inequalities*, reconnects Americans with this harsh reality. Segregation, in its broadest sense, has been and continues to be the practice of choice across many of our schools. Leaders, and in turn all others in schools, need to pursue their "naive" dreams in order to survive. Naivety in this sense is truly a virtue for any adult in this day and age. Being naive enough to believe that there is no such concept as "can't" is proof in the pudding. As for myself, I would rather be a hopeful optimist than a helpless pessimist

Fairness

The final leadership quality that I have included in my list is that of fairness. I believe that this one characteristic most closely relates to what we might describe as attaining the American dream. It also gets at the very heart of the "why" question previously discussed. Living in a society where certain rights are supposedly inalienable, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, directly implies some degree of a level playing field. Separate has been legally acknowledged as not equal in terms of educational options through *Brown vs. The Board of Education*; however, we still have segregated educational programs for children across minority groups, including children with disabilities. Why is this still the case? Certainly there is no one response to this question, but staff in schools that have begun to transcend the notion of "letting some students in" to accepting human diversity as a natural event in life demonstrate in their actions an understanding of the importance of fairness. They strive, day in and day out, to create and maintain a level playing field of equal opportunity for ALL children.

Hopefully, this description of leadership characteristics will help to shed some light on the question of "who should lead and who should follow." Principals, as well as other school officials, are expected to lead. However, the reality is that no one person can effectively be in the lead in all instances. This is not to let school officials off the hook in terms of their responsibilities as leaders, but rather to help define what the leader's role is—one who deals in culture. It is hoped that everyone assumes a leadership role at school, and this is certainly a necessity in an inclusive school where complex issues regarding human diversity exist. Administrators need to nurture healthy organizational climates where all are engaged in the daily realization of their belief systems. The key is in empowerment, or as Colleen Wieck notes, addressing the three words embedded in the concept of empowerment: power, we, and me.

Gentle Advocacy: The Empowerment Process

Generally speaking, most people already have in place a values base that will embrace inclusion. The art is in enabling individuals to revitalize their existent beliefs through a process of support.

Point one... life is full of choices. Exercising our choices calls for judgment. *Point two ...* inclusive schools operate based on a shared belief system. Beliefs and values are personal matters, and therefore can be touchy subjects to discuss. *Point three...* exercising judgment in how we approach discussing values systems within the inclusive schools context is crucial in supporting others in an inclusive manner.

Gentle advocacy, for lack of a better term, represents what I and many of my colleagues believe to be the most effective way to support inclusion within the educational system. Effective change agents do not try to force systems change, but rather find ways to help others to see the value in change. Changing practices in systems in a long-term manner calls for high levels of internal motivation on the part of staff, as opposed to more traditional approaches that rely on external delivery of "goodies" or KITA.

Let me share another personal observation to help make this point more clear. Coaches (drama, sport, etc.), much like building-level leaders, are charged with motivating their players. Some employ KITA as described earlier with varying results, however most that employ this approach need to be present in an ongoing manner to deliver the boot. In fact, the argument could be made that the players are not motivated to be better players, but rather to avoid the "wrath of Khan." The only one truly motivated, as opposed to merely activated, is the coach in this instance.

Contrarily, there are coaches who, while indulging in a bit of KITA, primarily target getting "inside of their players' heads and hearts" to explore their motivational systems. Coaches, or better yet enablers, find creative ways to help others see the value in hard work. They work with their "team" where they are by building on

common ground between members in terms of what they collectively want to achieve. This, along with hard work and some good old-fashioned luck, powers people to strive for excellence.

This scenario has direct implications on how individual team members function on the stage known as school. Understanding the value of holding one another accountable for shared commitments at school is imperative to serving as an effective change agent in support of inclusion. Simply stated, KITA has very little value in the inclusive school movement.

Influencing Others

When we at the CSIU began our public support of inclusion, we became easily frustrated with educators who did not see the world as we viewed it. We simply could not appreciate where "they" were coming from when we would encounter resistance to the notion of inclusion in vehement ways. This caused us to second guess ourselves at times. On an individual level, I was forced to revisit my belief system to find possible solutions to what I saw as major impediments to implementing what I had come to believe. In retrospect, this self-evaluative process was, and still is, the key to creating common ground with others who hold a different viewpoint. I, as well as my colleagues, began to revisit what helped us see the value in including kids with disabilities with their non-disabled peers in the first place. We simply retraced our own trail of bread crumbs so to speak and, lo and behold, there was the answer... SUPPORT!

Personally, I believed that underneath it all I was a well intentioned person who was no better or worse than those I was encountering who held differing points of view. The true strength, as well as weakness in having a personal point of view is that we all believe that our ideas are right. If we, as individuals, did not think this way we would probably not have opinions. Therefore, it is important to remember that all of us believe our opinion is correct... the right way to see the

world. Revisiting this idea helped me to rediscover that at one time I believed in segregated options of "special" education based primarily on the fact that this represented my personal experiences as a student, as well as my professional training as a teacher. What helped me to see beyond the edge of my rut to the new horizon was support from colleagues who were, at one time, seeing the world in a manner similar to mine. As I recall, they did not come after me with baseball bats, chanting slogans about me or my belief systems. Rather, they found ways to accept me where I was—include me, so to speak, and nurture me to grow beyond my traditional views.

You will notice that at no time did I suggest that these colleagues who were supporting me ever compromised their belief in inclusion. To the contrary, they reaffirmed it through their inclusive actions. Now I appreciate that there are those who believe that what I am describing is not advocacy in its purest sense. What I would remind readers is that outcomes are how we measure effectiveness of ethical interventions. I would also call attention to the fact that this approach to advocacy is deeply rooted in the advocacy efforts of both Mahatma Gandhi and the Reverend Martin Luther King—both pretty effective agents of change.

The key idea to understand here is ethical... values-driven approaches. Let's explore this idea further through an example.

Throughout my career I have had the opportunity to work with a number of individuals perceived to demonstrate "challenging behaviors." What we, collectively as human service providers, have learned through the use of positive approaches is that "challenging behaviors" result from unmet needs. David Pitonyak (1990) reminds us that, in a sense, "challenging behaviors" are messages that can tell us important things about a person.

The other thing we know about "challenging behavior" is that it can be a very elusive thing, or subjective to define. What one person describes

as challenging, another might interpret as a logical response to unusual circumstances and events.

Understanding both of these perspectives, I submit for consideration that people who see the world differently from us represent a challenge. In some instances we may perceive the person's attitude and behavior as troubling, in other situations we may call it "challenging behavior." This latter point is particularly true when we have different perspectives from administrators, for administrators not only control their own actions, but can in fact control the actions of others.

The point is that people who demonstrate challenging behaviors need support in order to meet their own basic needs. I believe this notion rings true for individuals who demonstrate what we would traditionally define as "challenging behaviors," as well as for educators who, for whatever reason, are not comfortable with the idea of inclusion.

Think about this for a moment on a personal level. Specifically, think about someone in your life who is particularly important to you. This can be a spouse, child, friend . . . you make the choice. Got someone in mind? Good, now ask yourself the following question. How helpful would it be, or better yet, how accepted would your efforts be if this person were experiencing trouble with a situation and you deliver attention, and/or support in a contingent or manipulative manner? If the person you had in mind was your child or a friend, he or she probably would tell you to "take a hike," or even worse if it were your husband or wife. We need to keep in mind how we, and those closest to us, get through what we perceive as tough times. In reality, most of us need more hugs, not fewer, when we feel we are in crisis or when we demonstrate trying or challenging behaviors. Support... support... support is the key to helping others reflect on their existent behavior and to call into question basic assumptions on which their actions are based.

Having elaborated on the notion of an ethical, values-driven approach to communication with people who see the world differently than our own point of view . . . I still believe there is a necessary place for the legal process in inclusion; however, I also realize that we still have segregated schools in America some 20-plus years after Public Law 94-142 was passed. We need the courts, but we need to move beyond the legal mentality if we, as advocates, truly want to make a lasting difference in existent cultures in our local schools. The bottom line is that no one can mandate caring; however, we can nurture supportive community settings where people support one another. Caring then becomes a natural by-product of the culture.

In general, people want both to do the right thing and do things right. We simply need to accept this notion and accept people where they are, focusing on ways to help them grow beyond their existent boundaries of the mind. In defining inclusion earlier in this text I utilized the work of Abraham Maslow. I believe it makes sense to revisit Maslow's work in this respect as well.

In my earlier use of Maslow's hierarchy, I primarily focused on the shared human need that we all have to belong. This is no less true for adults than for our children. However, if we look at educators' needs to belong in relationships and their need to feel safe and secure in their environment, we may be able to glean some useful insights.

Specifically for educators, our need to feel secure incorporates many levels of safety. Of course the obvious ones exist, such as feeling free from the risk of bodily harm. However, our need to feel safe and secure in our professional roles at school as well fall under this level of Maslow's hierarchy. In fact, I believe most educators' need to feel safe and secure in their roles, coupled with their need to feel accepted by their peers, leads most people who work in our school systems to choose the path of least resistance . . . the safest

way to go . . . the status quo. It is known, predictable, and will not shake too many leaves from too many trees.

Acknowledging this is not to suggest that educators cannot work beyond their anxieties in risking their own security to embrace inclusion, but rather that these are basic human feelings, needs if you will, that we must address in a positive manner. I feel certain that I would have been much more reluctant to entertain inclusive practices had I not had the constructive support of colleagues and been encouraged to take risks. My own initial questions sounded very similar to those I encounter today from fellow educators who are just beginning to explore inclusion. Questions such as "What is my role as a special educator?" "Where do I get the training as a regular class teacher?" "Is this being done to save money?" etc., sound all too familiar. The bottom line is that most of us inch our way into the water in a similar manner, one step at a time. Only a rare few dive right in, and worse yet, none of us really appreciate being pushed in. Again, the key is support!

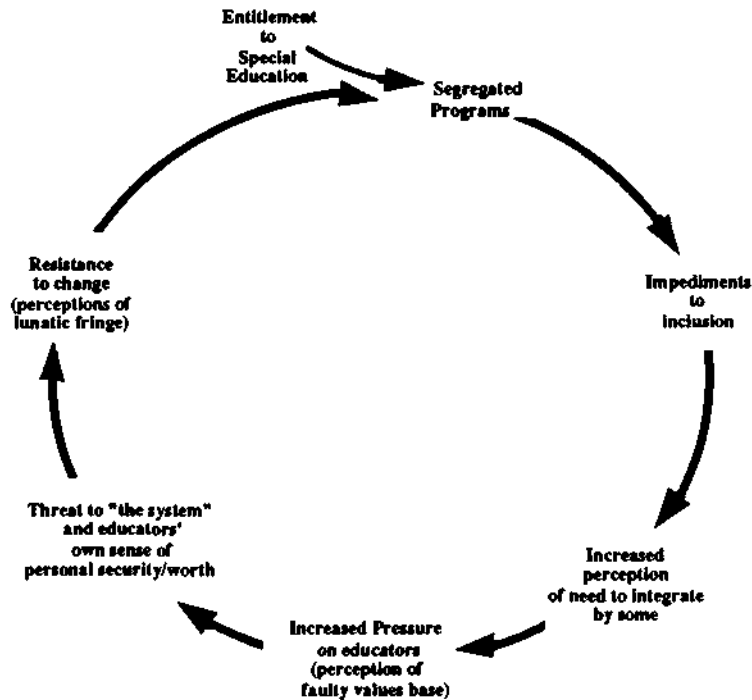
Providing constructive support, as opposed to aversive pressure, is not only consistent with the philosophy of inclusion, but is also compatible with a systems approach to changing practices across schools. Systems thinking can support the development of inclusive practices in both the short and long run.

Seeing the World Anew

Peter Senge (1990), in *The Fifth Discipline*, describes systems thinking as "a discipline for seeing wholes. It is a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns of change rather than static "snapshots."

Stated another way, systems thinking provides a fundamentally different way to view the world. Using a systems view can help us see the underlying structures behind events as opposed to viewing our actions in isolation.

A Systems View of the Bunker-Siege Approach to Inclusion



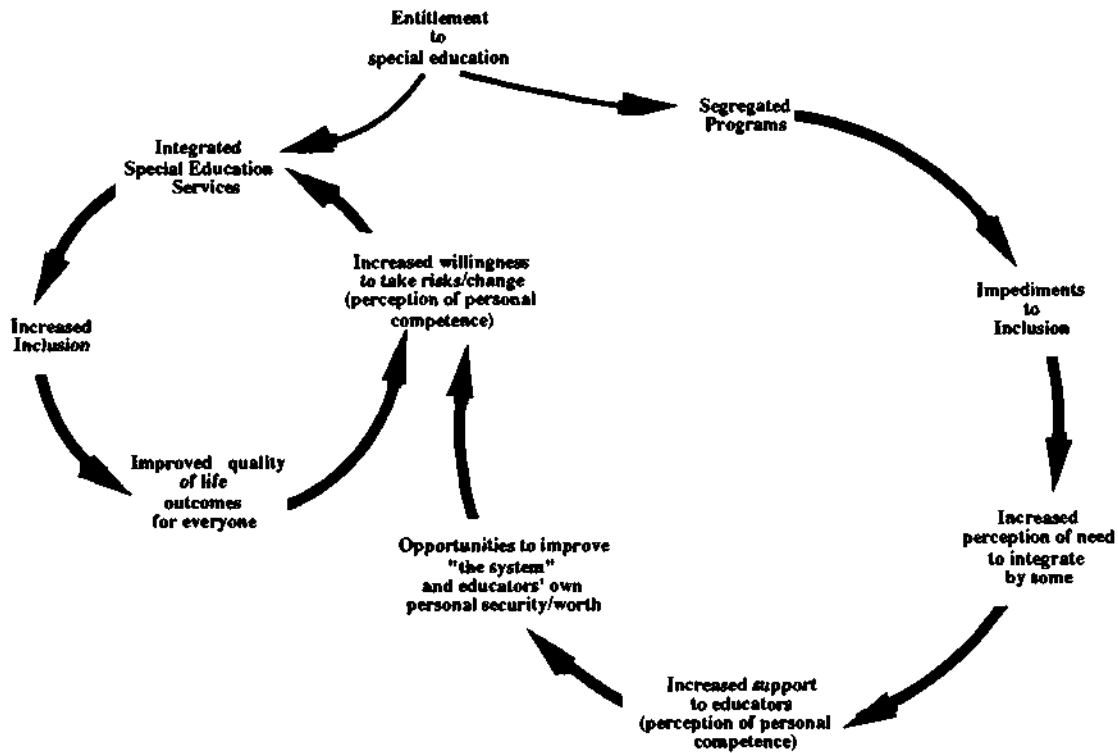
It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. So let's look at a "picture" of this idea. Let's start with a look at the predominant approach to advocacy for inclusion. I call it the bunker-siege approach.

Following the flow of influence in this system is quite simple. We start with the entitlement to special education for all school-aged children. In Pennsylvania, this entitlement was interpreted as both a right and need for segregated programs (as has been the case in many other states). Segregated programs, in turn, have resulted in additional impediments to inclusion (i.e. precedents of segregation in the educational system). This has resulted in an increased perception of need for advocacy for inclusive options by some parents, advocates and educators. Traditionally, this has resulted in advocates applying increasing amounts of intensive pressure (often in accusative terms based on the assumption that those opposed are

not caring people) on administrators in the system, which is often received as threats to both the system as well as their own personal sense of worth and security. Typically, this results in predictable resistance to change (based largely on the perception that those applying pressure represent the lunatic fringe), thus perpetuating a predominant focus on segregated programs and resulting in little change. If you question this notion, think about how many parents actually have real inclusive options in their local public schools today. This should painfully drive home this point.

Understanding the bunker-siege system can lead us to explore alternative approaches to advocacy. Specifically shifting our way of thinking to assuming human competence on the part of those in opposition to our perspective (i.e. administrators) can in turn help shift these individuals' perceptions of us, as advocates for

A Systems View of Gentle Advocacy . . . one way to walk the talk



inclusion, in a positive direction (i.e. rational vs. lunatic fringe) resulting in new inclusive options in the system.

In supporting inclusion we need to understand that the method of the message is as important as the message itself. We need to find new ways of supporting others in the pursuit of inclusive schools, especially those who are furthest from the vision at present. This is particularly true of people in administrative positions who demonstrate "challenging behaviors" in continuing to support segregation. It is time for all of us who believe in inclusion to walk the talk together, and in the process, help further enable others to see the value in it as well. Positive approaches can lead to ethical solutions.

Engaging Others: The Power of Synergy Systems

"Those who say it can not be done should get out of the way of those who are already doing it."

--Joel Barker

Sing along with me:

Just what makes that little old ant
Think he can move that rubber tree plant?
Everyone knows an ant can't
Move a rubber tree plant.
But he's got...synergy, he's got...synergy.

I know, it loses something in the translation. However, it seemed appropriate to start with this chorus, even though I am not a big Sinatra fan. Synergy . . . it sounds dangerously close to educational jargon. Let's define it so we can understand it and, in turn, communicate.

Synergy is nothing more than the whole being worth more than the sum of its parts. Let's explore this first in the case of our friends the ants moving the infamous rubber tree plant. If we were to measure each ant's power to move an object and, in turn, sum an entire colony of ants, we could create a rubber tree plant moving expectancy formula (don't laugh, I believe this is similar to the approach used to measure potential in human beings at one time). While this calculation would take into account some measurement of each ant's power under test circumstances, it would totally miss the additional power gained when, collectively, the colony works to move a plant of this size a predetermined distance and direction. Synergy systems take into account each individual part's (or person's) abilities, and adds to this the additional benefits that would not be found in isolation.

Inclusive schools place a premium on collaboration. It would be nice to believe that this is always predetermined prior to increasing integration for students. Whether it is or isn't becomes moot when everyone realizes that in order to succeed in such a school environment, everyone needs to pitch in and work together.

Accommodating the entire spectrum of human diversity that exists in our population of school children requires fundamental redesign of the educational system. Successfully merging necessary reforms implicit with the inclusive school movement with the outcomes-based educational movement can lead to a unified educational system. Advocates, consumers, and service providers interested in either movement need to work together.

The reality is that there are students whose needs will not be met in school if the system itself is not changed. Some of these students will be children with severe disabilities; however, membership in this group of students whose needs are perceived as "too diverse" is not limited to the recognized disability community. Children who are poor, homeless and disconnected from acquiring a sense of belonging will largely comprise this group of students who have not to date and will not achieve outcomes that enhance their quality of life. Supporting one another in the process of change and meeting everyone's needs in the community we call school is essential for our society.

Collaboration . . . it's such an easy word to say, but so problematic to do. This is especially true for adults. Kids, generally the younger the better, have far less difficulty learning how to collaboratively solve problems. We adults need workshops on this stuff.

In order to have a high degree of synergy, a school needs to have a healthy organizational climate. This is essentially true for any organization, not just schools. If we examine successful corporations in the private sector we will find this as well to be the case. The old saying, "the best answers always lie within the organization," truly comes to life in schools that invest in the collaborative process. Unfortunately, those that don't continue to need to rely on outside "experts" to help them solve complex problems~if, in fact, they address them at all.

Just as communication plays an instrumental role and can take various forms in an inclusive school, the collaborative process may look different from time to time across people and sites. In order for any team to function effectively, all the players need to feel valued and understand their roles. By understanding their role, I do not mean a prescribed or static set of tasks, but rather the team's goal-expected outcomes-which in turn dictates the roles for all team members. Additionally, each team member understands his role may need to change depending on the circumstances.

Perhaps another example from the world of sports will help clarify this point, and my apologies if the room you are reading this in is beginning to smell like a gym.

Think about a basketball team whose point guard (this is the person who brings the ball up the court and runs the offense) fouls out of the game. Does everybody on the team call it quits, take a shower, and head home? Hopefully not, even though I have observed some teams that have little depth do exactly this (at least in a spiritual sense) to the chagrin of their coach. In reality, good teams . . . effective teams . . . have redundancy built in, and more importantly, an understanding of the object of the game--in this case, offense and scoring points.

Now, I must acknowledge that in reality few educators (team members) will foul out of team meetings in effective schools (even though I have observed a few unhealthy team meetings that an official with a whistle should have attended). The point is that it is important that both a shared strategic intent exists (to play and win at the game of inclusion in this case) as well as a commitment to do what it takes, often in the form of collaboration, to succeed.

Understanding the importance of collaboration, and in turn, synergy systems, here are some rules of thumb to enhance the collaborative proc-

ess at school. Let's call them the "dirty dozen," with my apologies to Lee Marvin and the gang.

The "Dirty Dozen" Rules of Collaboration

- 1 **Agree** upon language~NO JARGON~and hold each other accountable.
- 2 **Use** people's names in discussions.
- 3 **Set** clear goals and time frames; be punctual.
- 4 **Complete** tasks and maintain relationships between group members.
- 5 **Facilitate** everyone's involvement in the meeting; avoid a few people dominating the event.
- 6 **Have** the child be a member of the team, perhaps a peer advocate as well; this can improve the tone of most meetings.
- 7 **Discuss** (process) at the end of set time frames how the team is functioning.
- 8 **Avoid** arguing blindly for positions; remember the focus is the child and outcomes.
- 9 **Walk** the talk; be supportive to ALL.
- 10 **Remember** that there is no such thing as a bad idea during brainstorming.
- 11 **Reach** consensus, not majority vote. Everyone needs to be comfortable with the course of action.
- 12 **Everyone** wins; no one feels he or she lost as a result of a team meeting.

In closing, the notion of people within an inclusive school... the organization . . . working together to improve operations is not exclusively an American idea. In Japan there exists a style of management known as Kaizen. Simple as well as powerful, Kaizen is a way at looking at life that could have profound effects on our efforts to improve schools. Simply stated, it requires that each person do whatever is necessary to gradually improve a given situation.

Highlights of Kaizen

- A reliance on many people taking lots of little steps to make things better
- An emphasis on continual upgrading and revision
- Each person's job within the organization is to identify problems and create opportunities to eliminate them
- An understanding that improvement is a day by day evolutionary process

Evidently, some organizations in the far east have a history of ants moving rubber tree plants as well! —

Changing World Views: Seeing the Big Picture

"What we need is to develop a new world view of science. One that is based on inclusion, community, contexts, relationships, and empathy."

--Jeremy Rifkin

The human species has evolved tremendously throughout history. We have moved from our hunter/gatherer state to higher levels of sophisticated behavior and interactions with our fellow human beings . . . with the exception of a few political leaders in oppressive governments. Our basic need to belong has, as well, evolved through these stages of human history.

Anthropologists have studied the human species for a number of years, with many publications tracing our ancestral "roots" within the context of evolution. People began to bond together, forming communities as early as the ice age. Living in proximity, and in essence supporting one another (albeit at a primitive level) served many purposes. First, it further enabled individuals to meet their basic physiological needs such as forming hunting parties to conquer large game. Additionally, safety needs were met as no one hunter could possibly tackle the four-legged mammoths of the day without becoming a part of the natural entropy in fast forward. Safety needs were also met as "groups" began to war with one another... oops, how far have we really come after all?

Anyway, the point I am trying to make is that by nature human beings are herd or pack animals. I don't phrase it in this manner to be insulting, but rather to try and help put our existence into perspective. Our communal orientation has long served many needs as we, as a species, have moved forward in time. Positive interdependence is a term we educators began to discuss within the past decade or so, although examples have been around throughout human existence.

The notion of interdependence simply highlights the reality that we all are more connected with our fellow human beings than isolated as we

endeavor to live our lives. If you question this, think again about the lone Neanderthal trying to kill the mastodon. Even if the lone hunter was fortunate enough to land the big one (which is probably as likely as hitting today's million dollar lottery), the work had only begun. How many of us would want to even try to envision dragging this monstrous trophy any distance, not to mention the field dressing. Now I am not a hunter by choice, but I feel pretty safe in suggesting that even the most independent minded of us get the point when we really think about it (and my apologies to those of you with queazy stomachs).

In today's world the notion of interdependence becomes more a living reality every day. Within the past three years we have seen the total reconfiguration of what was once known as the Soviet Union, with its subsequent realities for the United States and other "free" democracies. We continuously read and hear (and in reality I believe most of us accept) the warnings from many environmentalists concerning humankind's collision course with catastrophe at a global level as a result of our arrogance. The harsh reality is that human beings are headed toward an era where their abilities to effectively problem solve in a cooperative fashion are going to be put to the supreme test... with the potential stakes being survival of our species.

Connections with the Green Movement

Along these lines, Albert Einstein once noted that the same type of thinking that has created today's complex problems will not be adequate to solve those same problems. The type of thinking necessary to effectively address our living issues in the 21st century will in fact be generated by people, representing diverse political structures (probably nations for some time to come), with an eye to the future. Many leading environmentalists have been talking about inclusion, community and relationships in a much broader sense than we educators for some time. They tend to focus on longer time spans with respect to change; how-

ever, much of their language and intent is compatible with the inclusive school movement.

Specifically, Jeremy Rifkin, who many acknowledge as one of the more influential public figures on many environmental issues, talks about the need for a new definition of science that embraces relationships and community as its central themes. An inclusive approach to exploring new ways in which humans, and our fellow travelers, can coexist in harmony with the living organism that we call earth. Along this same line, native American culture has long had as one of its foundations the belief in the inter-relatedness of all things in the universe. Black Elk, a spiritual leader of the Lakota, notes that "peace comes within our soul when we realize our relationship and oneness with the universe and all its powers, and realize the center is everywhere. It is within each of us." These, as well as other perspectives, can serve to help us all view inclusive educational practices within a larger context. Perhaps this is a bit of a stretch, but a necessary one if we are to try to more comprehensively understand the big picture in life.

Specifically, Rifkin espouses that our studies in the sciences, including the social sciences, have shifted from the original question posed by the Greeks (when they would sit around the bath houses and ask the question "why") to a more linear pursuit in an attempt to understand and manipulate life forces as a mathematical formula posed by Descartes and others during more recent eras in prioritizing "how" to do things. In keeping with this line of thought, we need to pose the question "why" to put our understanding of "how" into a relevant context. Does any of this sound similar to what we previously discussed concerning inclusive schools? Perhaps it is not such a far stretch after all.

Viewing ourselves in the light of a species that tends to travel in packs (i.e. communities), our interdependence on one another and finding ways to understand the "why" of our behavior, including thought processes, may help put things

into perspective for all of us. It certainly puts the inclusive school movement, as important as it is, into a larger context for me. As broad as it has seemed to many in moving the civil rights argument for inclusion into the larger arena of human rights, perhaps one world view shift we should address is viewing it as a species issue, free from political interpretation and compatible in its most primal form with the Green movement.

In deciding how to receive and perceive this information, I will end with a quote from Joel Barker concerning decisions in how we view the world . . . "the decision is entirely up to you."

Final Thoughts

"Our lives begin to end when we become silent on things that matter." -Martin Luther King

As individuals, we control how we perceive the world in which we live. Certainly we are products of our experiences; however, as human beings, we have some power over our thoughts and subsequently our attitudes and actions.

Throughout this text, I have endeavored to draw specific ties between the inclusion of people perceived as having disabilities in local school and community settings with a larger perspective on inclusion that embraces human diversity in its broadest interpretation. It is certainly easy to understand why people become frustrated with the complexity of today's world and why many view the importance of belonging as "a nice thought, but unrealistic." Most of us in today's society fight off the urge to allow our truly human, or better yet humane, face to show publicly. However, it is our basic connectedness through human touch and spirit that makes us who we are.

William Bridges, in his book *Managing Transitions*, notes that the one constant in this day and age is change. As such, our generation and future generations will face more and more complex issues to be resolved. Our approach as individuals, and ultimately as a species, will predict our chances for success. The importance of seeing the glass as half full, rather than half empty is fast becoming a benchmark in how we cope with all the changes that we currently face and most certainly will be critical in the future.

You see, current generations have through evolution and accommodation become more adaptable to rapid change as a result of experiences when compared with past generations. Future generations should be even more adept at coping with rapid changes. As important as adaptability is, and will be in the future, what we seem to be losing touch with is one another. All the knowledge in the world coupled with chameleon-like abilities to modify and adapt lose their

human luster without a relevant context in which to put them to good use. Kids, adults, most everyone who lives above the poverty line, have access to greater knowledge bases and means to accommodate than was ever imaginable by our grandparents. However, more and more people seem to be aimlessly wandering through life, many of whom feel disenfranchised from their fellow human beings ... endlessly seeking for connections in a rapidly separating world. What we need to do is seize the day, and in fact every moment we encounter, to reconnect ourselves with one another. You see inclusive thought goes far beyond education, systems, and the like. By its very nature it embraces everyone in a manner that acknowledges their unique contribution to be made and, as human beings, show their gifts. In expanding on Judith Snow's view of personal gifts, there may be no more valuable a gift one person can share with another than relationship.. . this truly is the tie that binds us all together.

As we move forward towards the 21st century we must find new ways to help ourselves envision what the future can be, rather than what the future cannot be. We must find ways to apply the Merlin factor for the constructive good.

Leaders in general, and specifically in inclusive schools, need to help their fellow community members see the opportunities that are increasingly available to reconnect all of us with one another. While it is important that leaders learn this ability to envision a future destination and build the bridge backwards, it is equally important that they enable others to see the world in this new light—a new world order, so to speak—one that concentrates on community building through vision and shared commitments to mutual goals.

Bobby Kennedy provided many wonderful examples of this type of vision, commitment and resolve throughout his life ... so many that he paid the ultimate cost with his life in order to adhere to his vision. He was asking us to change our perspective to focus on stretching beyond our self-imposed limits in expectations when he said,

"Some people look at things and say why, I look at things and say why not."

History is strewn with examples of leaders who, in sharing their vision with others, have paid a heavy personal cost. One only need to think back through recent history to see and hear images of Martin Luther King telling us about his dream, Mahatma Gandhi leading the passive resistance movement against human oppression, and Nelson Mandela imbuing his nation's collision course between the races along many lines. The point here is that these leaders have served as visionaries in their own right, and as such, suffered persecution for the benefit of their fellow human beings. They, and countless others, have collectively set a table from which we can shape our futures.

A sense of synchronicity appears to exist between many fronts in today's world. The rate of change continues to hasten as we move through the 90s. We have within our reach the means to shape a better tomorrow through what our children experience in their childhood today. We need to equalize the savage inequalities as Jonathon Kozol alludes to in his recent publication. Creating a level playing field, and nurturing a relevant context within which everyone truly feels a sense of belonging can help us live better today...and lead us to where we want to be tomorrow.

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