Shaping special education

Running head: Shaping SpecialEducationFrom Past to Present: Shaping Special Education Laura TerpstraGrand CanyonUniversity: SPE 523 May 30, 2012 From Past to Present: Shaping Special Education Fundamental Concepts and Philosophies The history of American special education has taken a long, ever-evolving journey to get to the place it is today. Marilyn Friend (2008) discusses how in the early twentieth century students were still not accepted into public schools. Students who had physical or mental disabilities were placed into separate classes, made up entirely of students with disabilities.

Throughout the first half of the twentieth century students with a wide range of disabilities were enrolled in special education classes. Over the past century, various court cases have defined how special education has changed. In 1954, the Brown v. Board of Education, gave way to questions about whether or not separating special education students from the general education population was appropriate or not. Some people believed that taking students out of the classroom gave them a label for their disability and therefore was discriminatory towards students, rather than helpful in providing services they needed to make them successful. Friend, 2008, p. 47) Not only did educators become advocators for children's with disabilities, so did parents. The Mills v. Board of Education (1972) sparked the determination of providing special education services for students. In response to various lawsuits against the Board of Education legislation created mandates to ensure the rights for students with disabilities. Structure of Special Education Parents continued to push for the rights of children, as well as congress.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 were laws that provided funding to states to assist them in creating and improving programs and services for children with disabilities. The Education for All Handicapped children Act in 1974 was created to allow full educational opportunities for students with disabilities. In 1986, the federal special education law was changed to include services for infants and young children. (Friend, 2008, p. 49) In 1990, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act was changed to Individual with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and more disabilities were added.

The most recent change was in 2004 when provisions were added to help resolve disputes between parents, as well as the requirement for student instruction to be taught using evidence-based practices. Federal law forced educators to change their view of special education students and how to best serve their needs in the schoolenvironment. Also in 2004, President Bush and Congress wanted IDEA to align with No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 so that schools would be held accountable for making sure students with disabilities achieve high standards (Friend, 2008, p. 68).

Jill Hockenbury (2000) pointed out that special education is a key part of the public education system but that there are still challenges in special education today. Critical changes that are needed in special education include constructing a defensiblephilosophy of education, providing effective and intensive instruction, and improving the quality ofteachertraining. These changes are still being worked on today. The needs of children today are demanding that teachers provide effective instruction, that's meaningful and allows the teacher to reach all levels of development in one classroom.

Trends and Issues Quality teacher training is also one of the biggest challenges facing special education and relates directly to a key topic heard a lot about in special education, which is inclusion. Inclusion centers on the belief that students with a disability should be allowed to be a part of the general education classroom. However, inclusion is difficult because of the requirement of the general education teacher. The general education teacher should be able to meet the needs of the students in his or her classroom, which can be difficult depending on the students needs.

However, inclusion states that students should be in the classroom full time, receiving instruction the same as non-disabled peers, and there should be no need for pull-out. In some cases, members of a child's IEP team may not agree on the appropriate environment for a student. With increased opportunities for teachers to have training with research-based methods and strategies, this area should be able to improve in the future. Researchers have stated that inclusion is beneficial to both students with disabilities, and those without disabilities.

A study done investigating perceptions of learning of nearly 5, 000 kindergarten students through 12th grade revealed that students with disabilities wanted to learn the same material, use the same books, and enjoy the same homework and grading practices as typical peers. (Friend, 2008, as cited in Klinger and Vaughn 1999) Other trends in special education include universal design for learning and differentiation. Universal design for learning (UDL) is the instructional approach that students with disabilities should have access to the curriculum.

Along with UDL is the use of differentiated instruction (or differentiation) to explore the concepts of UDL further. Differentiation means that within one environment, students with multiple needs will have their needs met through various ways. UDL and differentiation should be utilized by general education teachers to meet the needs of their special education student. (Friend, 2008, p. 77) These trends are all key concepts in the world of special education. They all impact the way special education teachers should teach to meet the needs of all their students.

Pat Beckman (2001) reiterated this fact stating that " improved student learning requires teachers, schools, and districts to give up unproductive traditions and beliefs, replacing them with validated practices and a full understanding of the intent of the law. " IDEA requires teachers to use " programs, interventions, strategies, and activities" that are researched based. (Friend, 2008, p. 63) As the needs of students increase, the resources provided need to increase, which is theresponsibilityof those providing the education.

Special education has come very far since placing disabled students in their own separate classroom, but it still has a long way to go. There is much to be said about meeting the needs of special education students and reaching those administrators, parents, and educators who still do not have a full understanding of inclusion.

References Beckman, Pat (2001), Access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities, Council for Exceptional Children, retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www. cec. sped. org/AM/Template. cfm? Section= Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay. cfm&CONTENTID= 5519 Friend, M.

2008). Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon. Hockenbury, J. C. , Kauffman, J. M. , & Hallahan, D. P. (2000). What is right about special education. Exceptionality, 8(1), 3-11. Obiakor, F. E. (2011). Maximizing access, equity, and inclusion in general and special education. Journal Of The International Association Of Special Education, 12(1), 10-16. U. S. Department of Education (2007) " Thirty Years of Progress in Educating Children With Disabilities Through IDEA", retrieved May 28, 2012 from http://www2. ed. gov/policy/speced/leg/idea/history30. html