

**WHAT ADAPTATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS
DO REGULAR CLASSROOM TEACHERS
REPORT MAKING TO THEIR PROGRAMS AND
PRACTICES IN ORDER TO MEET THE NEEDS
OF STUDENTS WITH MILD DISABILITIES AND
LEARNING DIFFICULTIES?**

Catherine A. H. van Limbeek

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the degree of

Doctor of Education

University of Canberra

June 2008

ABSTRACT

Integration has been the policy of the New South Wales Department of Education and Training since 1981. Regular classroom teachers are responsible for implementing this policy at the classroom level. In order to achieve this, teachers need to make informed decisions about aspects of the class program and practice that may need to be adapted or modified to provide opportunities for integrated students to participate meaningfully in regular classroom environments.

The purpose of this study is twofold: to extend research into adaptations made by New South Wales teachers under a policy of integration by surveying teachers' perceptions on various adaptations/modifications and to explore factors related to teachers' implementation of these adaptations/modifications to programs and practices for students with mild disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Researchers have studied integration (variously named and interpreted) since the eighties and the current research is based on a body of research conducted over the last twenty-five years. The current research identified the frequency of different types of adaptations/modifications used by regular classroom teachers. An attempt is made to identify various barriers and isolate particular factors that may influence the use of these adaptations/modifications in regular classrooms.

Results indicated that teachers reported using different adaptations and modifications to varying degrees. Teachers indicated that they held a preference for adaptations and modifications that could easily be implemented for all students in the class. Teachers reported that barriers such as: 'Lack of preparation and planning time'; 'Demands on instruction time'; and 'Inadequate staff ratios' have the greatest affect on their implementation of adaptations and modifications. The level of qualifications held by the teachers was the only factor that had a significant correspondence to the frequency of adaptations and modifications implemented for students with mild disabilities and learning difficulties. Further research is recommended to investigate across a larger area of population, the type and level of disabilities experienced by the students and the influence of teachers' choice on frequency of adaptations and modifications.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank the University of Canberra for providing outstanding institutional support.

I would especially like to thank my primary supervisor, Professor Anthony Shaddock. Without his consistent guidance and encouragement since I first embarked on this journey some years ago, I would not have made it to completion.

I would like to thank my secondary supervisor, Tony Spinks for his assistance and his attention to the editing of my work.

My thanks go to the New South Wales Department of Education for allowing me access to teachers in order to conduct this study.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank John Prattis, Meredith Hill and Julie Prattis who readily provided me with encouragement, support and professional advice.

Special thanks go to my parents, Anna and Alphonse van Limbeek who have assisted and encouraged me throughout the course of the study.

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