PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

THE EFFECTS OF THE ARTS ON STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

A Thesis
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Arts

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August, 2008
PROJECT PARTNERSHIP

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Thesis

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ii
ABSTRACT

The arts play an essential role in the education of students with learning disabilities. The learning disabled students in a regular educational setting, sometimes deal with self-esteem issues. A program called Project Partnership, which teaches the arts in an environment unlike a regular educational setting, has shown an improvement in the self-esteem of students with learning disabilities. The arts instructors in the program are regular artists and not necessarily educators of their art. Project Partnership runs in a typical nine month school year and sessions taught include visual art, dance, theatre, and music. The program culminates at the end of the year with an arts fieldtrip i.e. to a museum or theater performance and then a visiting artist with a disability performs for all the students. Students, teachers, and artists involved with Project Partnership were surveyed and this evidence proves the program was successful in increasing the self-esteem of the learning disabled student.
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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

ARTS INSTRUCTORS AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Arts Instructors

A. Visual Arts
B. Movement
C. Drama

Public Schools in Ashland Holmes and Wayne counties in Ohio

A. Waynedale High School
B. East Holmes High School
C. Northwestern High School
D. Rittman Exempted Village High School
E. Mapleton High School
F. Orrville High School
G. Triway High School
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Understanding disability, the inability to pursue an occupation because of a physical or mental impairment, is a relatively new obsession beginning with the 1990 American Disabilities Act. Throughout history, those with disabilities were simply shunned and put away in institutions for the duration of their lives. Only in recent history have we strived to understand disabilities and provide help to those inflicted. One of the developments to help disabled children is the field of special education.

Can one educational discipline; art education or special education, decisively help another? Project Partnership, the answer to this question, is “An indescribable experience”, “Seeing is believing”, “only evident in the moment” (Wayne County Public Schools 1992). These words express a program set in action in 1990 by the Tri-County Education Service Center at the Wayne Center for the Arts in Wooster, Ohio; Project Partnership. This one program has proven to increase the self-esteem and self-determination skills of special needs students.

By researching the history and legislation behind disabilities, special education, and the arts, one will understand how Project Partnership has synthesized the aspects of the arts to help the disabled and provide benefits for the disabled.

The following pages will make evident the educational need for a program such as Project Partnership. This document will explore legislation for the disabled and disabled
student, self esteem issues of the disabled student, and how art education is effective for
the disabled student. The final chapter will present the process of *Project Partnership*
during an actual school year and evaluate its success.
CHAPTER II
THE HISTORY OF THE DISABLED

In 1973 the Rehabilitation Act (Section 504) prohibited discrimination in educational and other contexts against individuals with disabilities. It wasn’t until 1990 that The Americans with Disabilities Act, ADA, (42 U.S.C. 12181) was passed. The ADA, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by public accommodations and requires places of public accommodation and commercial facilities to be designed, constructed, and altered, in compliance with the accessibility standards established by this part, was made law in 1992 (www.usdoj.gov 2003). The ADA’s language defines disability with respect to an individual, as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities. The ADA also requires there is a record of such impairment (www.usdoj.gov 2003). It seems that a law so evident in its description for the disabled of America should have been established long before 1990. Statistically in 2001, fifty four million Americans, twenty percent of our national population, had a disability of some kind (Jensen 2001). The challenges presented by the passage of the ADA, and its positive implications will be discussed in the next chapter.

The following is a timeline of the history of the disabled that may inform of us the problems and/or the inventions throughout history that should have brought about legislation sooner. Not all the entries in the timeline are within America history but are of interest to developments.
Time line

3500 B.C.

The Rig-Veda, an ancient sacred poem of India, is said to be the first written record of prosthesis. Written in Sanskrit between 3500 and 1800 B.C., it recounts the story of a warrior, Queen Vishpla, who lost her leg in battle, was fitted with an iron prosthesis and returned to battle.

1508

Gotz von Berlichingen, a German mercenary knight, loses his right arm in the Battle of Landshut. He has two prosthetic iron hands made for himself. These are mechanical masterpieces. Each joint can be moved independently by setting with the sound hand and relaxed by a release and springs.

1805

*Rush's Medical Inquiries and Observations* is the first modern attempt to explain mental disorders.

1829

Louis Braille invents the raised point alphabet that has come to be known as Braille.

1916

More than 9,000 cases of polio are reported in New York City alone amid a large outbreak in the United States. Attempts at controlling the disease largely involve the use of isolation and quarantine, neither of which is successful.

1919

At an annual convention, members of the international Shrine fraternity vote to establish a Shriners’ Hospital for Crippled Children to treat orthopedic injuries, diseases and birth
defects in children. It is to be supported by a yearly $2 assessment from each Shriner.

Also in 1919
Ohio-businessman Edgar Allen founds the National Society for Crippled Children, the first organization of its kind. The organization later becomes known as Easter Seals.

1920
Smith-Fess Act begins the Vocational Rehabilitation Program for civilians with physical disabilities.

Also in 1920
Disabled American Veterans is formed to serve as the official voice of America's disabled veterans.

1921
Franklin D. Roosevelt contracts polio and is left with severe paralysis.

Also in 1921
The American Foundation for the Blind, a nonprofit organization recognized as Helen Keller's cause in the United States, is founded.

1924
FDR travels to Warm Springs, Ga., and checks into a cottage on the grounds of the dilapidated Meriwether Inn because of reports that the waters there could somehow cure paralysis.

1928
American Philip Drinker's iron lung, a large metal tank equipped with a pump that assists respiration, is field-tested. It goes into commercial production three years later.
1932
FDR is elected president of the United States. The first and only U.S. president to use a wheelchair, he successfully hides the extent of his disability from the American public throughout his presidency.

1934
The National Society for Crippled Children launches its first Easter "seals" campaign to raise money for its services. To show their support, donors placed the seals on envelopes and letters.

1935
Social Security Act is passed, establishing federal benefits and grants to states for assistance to aged and blind individuals, dependent and crippled children. It also extends and provides the first permanent authorization for the federal Vocational Rehabilitation Program.

Also in 1935
The League for the Physically Handicapped is formed to protest discrimination by the Works Progress Administration. The league's 300 people all had been turned down for WPA jobs.

1937
FDR announces the creation of the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

1938
Entertainer Eddie Canter coins the name "March of Dimes" as he urges radio listeners to send their spare change to the White House to be used by the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis in the fight against polio.
Also in 1938
The first Seeing Eye dog guides a blind person.

1939
Amid the outbreak of World War II, Hitler orders widespread mercy killing of sick and disabled people. The Nazi euthanasia program is code-named Aktion T4 and is reportedly instituted to eliminate "life unworthy of life."

1945
World War II ends. Large epidemics of polio in the United States break out immediately after the war with an average of more than 20,000 cases each year from 1945-1949.

1950
A New York businessman who has muscular dystrophy, a small group of parents of children with the disorder, and Ade Milhorat, a young physician interested in muscle diseases, gather in an apartment in the Bronx to create the Muscular Dystrophy Association of America. The group wants to raise $20,000 a year to fund research for a cure for muscular dystrophy.

Also in 1950
the National Association of Parents and Friends of Mentally Retarded Children found The National Association for Retarded Citizens. The group's mission is to promote the welfare of mentally retarded persons of all ages and to prevent mental retardation.

1952
There are 58,000 cases of polio in the United States, the most ever. Early versions of the Salk vaccine, using killed poliovirus, are successful. In 1955, a nationwide vaccination program begins.
1957

After a mass immunization campaign promoted by the March of Dimes, there are only about 5,600 cases of polio in the United States.

1966

The Jerry Lewis MDA Telethon, inaugurated on Labor Day weekend, benefits the Muscular Dystrophy Association. The initial show, broadcast by just one station in New York City, was the first televised fund-raising event of its kind to raise more than $1 million in pledges.

1968

The Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 requires buildings designed, constructed, altered or financed by the Federal government after 1969 to be accessible to and usable by persons with disabilities.

1973

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 establishes priority to serve people with severe disabilities; mandates an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program for every client; and changes the Vocational Rehabilitation Act to Rehabilitation Act. It establishes Title VI civil rights protection for people with disabilities.

1988

With about 350,000 cases of polio occurring worldwide, the World Health Assembly passes a resolution to eradicate polio by the year 2000. The mission was unsuccessful. In 2000, the Global Polio Eradication Initiative sets a new target date for worldwide eradication of 2005.
The Americans with Disabilities Act provides a clear and comprehensive national mandate for the elimination of discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including employment titles, public services (general and transportation), public accommodations and services operated by private entities, telecommunications and miscellaneous provisions.

How do you define disability? The term "disability" under the ADA is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; has a record of such impairment; or is regarded as having such impairment (Duff 2003).

However, experts often disagree on what kind of disabilities should be entitled to protection under the ADA. Any numbers of people from those with reading disorders to alcoholics and people with eating disorders have claimed that they have a disability and should be protected under the ADA (Duff 2003).

People with disabilities have made great progress toward full acceptance and participation in our schools, economy and political institutions, but this progress has brought a greater awareness of how large the disability community is. Many not identified as persons with disabilities are, in today's world, clearly defined as a person with a disabling condition, and many of them are struggling (Duff 2003).
CHAPTER III

LEGISLATIVE FORCES HELPING THE DISABLED

Prior to 1975, access for students with disabilities to educational opportunities was limited in two major ways. First, many students were completely excluded from public schools. In fact, congressional findings in 1974 indicated that at one point more than seventy-five million students with disabilities did not receive educational services. Second, more than three million students with disabilities who were admitted to school did not receive an education that was appropriate to their needs. Moreover, because of the limited opportunities offered by the public schools, families were often forced to secure education and related services elsewhere, often at great distance from their homes and at their own expense. The education of students with disabilities was seen as a privilege, rather than a right (Huefner 2000).

The haphazard nature of services for students with disabilities led parents and other advocates to seek solutions to these problems through court actions. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s was a catalyst to parents and advocacy groups to begin using the courts in an attempt to force states to provide a public education that was appropriate for their children's unique needs. In Brown v. Board of Education (1954), the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed segregation by race in public education. The Supreme Court ruled that segregation denied equal educational opportunity and thus was a
violation of the 14th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. According to this amendment, a state cannot deny any person within its jurisdiction equal protection with others under the law. The court stated that if a state provides an education to its citizenry, then it must do so for all its citizens on an equal basis. Basing their arguments on this decision, advocates for students with disabilities argued that if segregation by race was a denial of equal educational opportunity, then the exclusion of students with disabilities from schools was also a denial of equal educational opportunity (Huefner 2000; Winzer 1993; Yell 1998).

Beginning in the early 1970s, advocates for students with disabilities began to sue states, claiming that exclusion and inappropriate educational services violated students’ rights to equal educational opportunity under the U.S. Constitution (Turnbull and Turnbull 2000). In 1972, two landmark court cases, Pennsylvania Association for Retarded Citizens (PARC) v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and Mills v. Board of Education, began the nationwide establishment of the right of students with disabilities to receive a public education.

Following the successful conclusions in PARC and Mills, similar lawsuits were filed in many states across the country. Despite similar court rulings in twenty-eight states and the enactment of laws in many states to establish these educational rights, many students with disabilities were still denied services. Also, because of the variability in the quality of special education services across states, many advocates, parents, and legislators believed that a federal standard was needed (Bradley 2001).

Given the challenges that students with disabilities face in their efforts to access educational services, Congress enacted legislation to assure the educational rights of
students with disabilities (Turnbull and Turnbull 2000). Federal money became also available to improve the education of students with disabilities in state schools for the blind, deaf, and retarded (Huefner 2000). The first law that exclusively addressed students with disabilities, the Education of the Handicapped Act (EHA), was passed in 1970. The EHA expanded the federal grant programs of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Grants were offered to institutions of higher education to develop programs to train teachers of students with disabilities. Regional resource centers to deliver technical assistance to state and local school districts were also funded. Following decisions in the PARC and Mills cases, the EHA was amended in 1974 to include a requirement that states that received federal funds adopt the goal of full educational opportunity for students with disabilities. A year later, another amendment to the EHA, the EAHCA, Education for All Handicapped Children, became the first major federal effort to ensure a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities (Bradley 2001).

On November 29, 1975, President Gerald Ford signed into law the most significant increase in the role of the federal government in special education to date. The EAHCA of 1975, often called P.L. 94-142, was actually an amendment to the EHA. The EAHCA, which became Part B of the EHA, combined an educational bill of rights with the promise of federal financial incentives to states that chose to accept EAHCA funds. The law offered grants to states that provided direct services to students with disabilities who were covered by the law. The EAHCA was enacted to ensure that children with disabilities received a FAPE, protect the rights of students and their parents, and assist states and localities in their efforts to provide such services (Bradley 2001).
To ensure that each student with a disability received an education suited to his or her unique needs, the EAHCA granted every student in special education the right to receive a FAPE. The law required that students with disabilities receive special education and related services that:

- are provided at public expense;
- meet the standards of the state education agency;
- include an appropriate preschool, elementary, and secondary school education in the state involved; and
- are provided in conformity with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that is designed for each student.

Since the passage of the EAHCA in 1975, there have been numerous changes to the law. In fact, the law is changed on a somewhat regular basis because part of the law has to be reauthorized every 4 years or so; Congress has to authorize continued funding for certain parts of the law. When Congress has to reauthorize the law, it often makes changes or amendments that affect the delivery of special education. Some of these changes have been minor (Bradley 2001).

On July 26, 1990 the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law, which, in a nutshell, brought about equal access to everything, including education, for those with disabilities. Discrimination against students on the basis of disability is prohibited in education programs or activities that receive Federal financial assistance.

Title II of the ADA requires that: No qualified individual with a disability shall be excluded from participation in, or denied access to, programs or activities; denied benefits or services; or be subjected to discrimination by any public entity. Section 504 of
the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability in any program or activity of state or local governments, which receive federal funds. Title II of the ADA extends this prohibition to the full range of state or local government services, programs, or activities regardless of whether they receive any federal funding (www.projectappleseed.org 2004). This includes public school districts. Virtually all public school systems receive federal funds, and public education is a government service. Both statutes require school districts to provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE) to students with disabilities protected by those laws.

The term disability under Title II of the ADA means with respect to an individual: a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; a record of such impairment; or being regarded as having such impairment (www.projectappleseed.org 2004).

The U.S. Department of Education is the designated agency to enforce both Title II and Section 504 in public elementary and secondary education systems and institutions. The Office for Civil Rights is the agency within the U.S. Department of Education delegated the responsibility to enforce both Title II and Section 504. The Act applies to discrimination at all age levels (www.projectappleseed.org 2004). In the 1990 amendments to the EAHCA, the title of the law was changed to IDEA, Individuals with Disabilities Act. The IDEA was enacted to assist states in meeting the educational needs of students with disabilities via federal funding of state efforts (Bradley 2001).

The IDEA is a comprehensive law that not only provides supportive funding to the states but also governs how students with disabilities will be educated. According to the law, eligible students with disabilities must be provided with a FAPE, which consists of
special education (i.e., instruction especially designed to meet the unique needs of a student) and related services. A student is eligible for services under the IDEA if he or she has a disability covered under the law and, because of the disability, needs special education services (Bradley 2001).

The IDEA is divided into four parts, Parts A, B, C, and D. Part A is the section of the law in which Congress justifies the IDEA. Part A also contains definitions of terms that are used throughout the IDEA. Part B is the section with which special education teachers and administrators are most familiar. It sets forth funding mechanisms by which states obtain federal money, principles under which students with disabilities must be educated, and procedural safeguards to ensure that parents have an opportunity to be meaningfully involved in their children's educational programming. Part B benefits students who are ages three through twenty-one. Part C covers infants and toddlers from birth through age two. Part D creates a variety of national activities to improve the education of children with disabilities through investments in areas including research, training, and technical assistance. Although Part D does not receive the attention that Parts B and C do, it contains provisions that are vitally important to the development of special education in the United States. The activities funded by Part D have also had a great effect on students in general education and on the lives of all persons with disabilities (Bradley 2001).

Before a student can receive special education and related services for the first time, he or she must receive a full and individual evaluation. The evaluation must be conducted by a multidisciplinary team, using a variety of instruments to assess all of a student's areas of need. Evaluation provisions also include rules that the team must
follow when conducting the evaluation (e.g., evaluators must use a variety of technically adequate instruments that assess a variety of areas; tests must be administered by trained and knowledgeable personnel; if feasible the tests must be administered in the student's native language or mode of communication). The evaluation has three purposes. First, the multidisciplinary team must determine whether a student has a disability that is covered by the IDEA. Second, the team must determine whether, due to the disability, the student needs special education and related services. Third, the team must determine the student's present levels of educational performance and his or her individual needs. This information is then used to plan a student's IEP (Bradley 2001).

Students who are determined to be eligible for services under the IDEA have the right to receive appropriate special education and related services that consist of specially designed instruction and services provided at public expense. The key to providing a FAPE is individualized programming. To ensure that each student covered by the EAHCA receives an individualized education, Congress required that an IEP be developed for each student in special education. The IEP is both a collaborative process between the parents and the school in which the education program is developed and a written document that contains the essential components of a student's education program (Gorn 1997). The written document, developed by a team of educators and a student's parents, describes a student's educational needs and details the special education and related services that will be provided to the student (Bateman and Linden 1998). The IEP also contains a student's goals or objectives and how his or her progress will be measured. The IDEA mandates the process and procedures for developing the IEP (Bradley 2001).
The IDEA mandates that students with disabilities be educated with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. The law presumes that students with disabilities will be educated in integrated settings when appropriate. In fact, students in special education can be removed to separate classes or schools only when the nature or severity of their disabilities is such that they cannot receive an appropriate education in a general education classroom with supplementary aids and services. In such a situation, the student may be removed to a more specialized and restrictive setting that meets his or her needs (Bradley 2001).

To ensure that students are educated in the least restrictive environment (LRE) that is appropriate for their needs, school districts must ensure that a complete continuum of alternative placements is available. The continuum of services ranges from settings that are less restrictive and more typical to settings that are more restrictive and specialized. The most typical and least restrictive setting is the general education classroom or the general classroom and a resource room. Additional settings that must be available along the continuum include special classes, special schools, and hospitals or institutions. The IEP team makes placement decisions. However, the IEP team must determine the appropriate program before it can make a decision regarding placement. Programming, thus, precedes placement (Bradley 2001).

Part B of the IDEA contains an extensive system of procedural safeguards to ensure that all eligible students with disabilities receive FAPE. The safeguards also ensure that parents are equal participants in the special education process. For example, the IDEA provides that a student's parents may participate in all meetings in which their child's identification, evaluation, program, or placement is discussed. Parental involvement is
crucial to successful results for students, and indeed this provision has been one of the cornerstone of the IDEA. The IDEA requires that notification be sent to the parents before a meeting is held. Also, a student's parents must give their consent before an initial evaluation is conducted, an initial placement is made, or new tests are given in the reevaluation. The IDEA also requires that a clear, detailed, and understandable explanation be provided to parents (Bradley 2001).

When there is a disagreement between the school and the parents on matters concerning identification, evaluation, placement, or FAPE, parents can request a due process hearing. A school can also request a due process hearing. The IDEA Amendments of 1997 required that states offer parents the option of resolving their disputes through the mediation process prior to going to a due process hearing. The mediation process is voluntary and must not be used to deny or delay a parent's right to a due process hearing (Bradley 2001).

Any party in a due process hearing has the right to be represented by counsel, present evidence, compel the attendance of witnesses, examine and cross-examine witnesses, prohibit the introduction of evidence not introduced five days prior to the hearing, obtain a written or an electronic verbatim record of the hearing, and be provided with the written findings of fact by the hearing officer. Following the hearing, the hearing officer announces the decision, which is binding on both parties. Either party, however, can appeal the decision. In most states, the appeal is to the SEA. The decision of the SEA can then be appealed to a state or federal court (Bradley 2001).

IDEA 1997 added a section on discipline to the procedural safeguards section of Part B of the IDEA. This section was added in an attempt to balance school officials'
obligation to ensure that schools are safe and orderly environments that are conducive to
learning and the school's obligation to ensure that students with disabilities receive a
FAPE.

IDEA 1997 requires that if a student with disabilities has behavior problems
(regardless of the student's disability category), the IEP team shall consider strategies,
including positive behavior interventions, strategies, and supports, to address these
problems. In such situations, a proactive behavior management plan, based on functional
behavioral assessment, should be included in the student's IEP (Bradley 2001).

School officials can discipline a student "in special education" in the same manner
as they discipline students in general education, with a few notable exceptions. If
necessary, school officials can unilaterally change the placement of a student in special
education to an appropriate interim alternative setting or another setting, or they can
suspend the student to the same extent to which these disciplinary methods are used with
students in general education. The primary difference between suspending students in
special versus general education is that suspension or placement change for the former
may not exceed ten consecutive school days. If a student in special education is removed
from school for more than ten cumulative days in a school year, the school must provide
education services to him or her. School officials can unilaterally place a student with a
disability in an appropriate interim alternative educational setting (IAES) for not more
than forty-five days if the student brings a weapon to school or a school function or
knowingly possesses, uses, or sells or solicits the sale of illegal drugs or controlled
substances at school or a school function. The IEP team must determine the IAES.
Additionally, a hearing officer may order, for not more than forty-five days, a change in
placement if school officials have substantial evidence indicating that maintaining the student with a disability in the current placement is substantially likely to result in injury to the student or others and that school officials have made reasonable efforts to minimize this risk of harm (Bradley 2001).

Since the early days of special education litigation, the parents of students with disabilities have played a very important role in helping schools meet the educational needs of their children. Key provisions of the IDEA that require parental participation are scattered throughout the law. Parents must be involved in evaluation, IEP meetings, and placement decisions. IDEA 1997 also requires that schools give progress reports to the parents of students with disabilities as frequently as they give reports to the parents of non-disabled students. The goal of IDEA 1997 is to have parents play a meaningful role in the education of their children and to maintain a partnership between schools and families. Parental involvement is crucial to successful results for students, and indeed this provision has been one of the cornerstones of the IDEA (Bradley 2001).

Part D of the IDEA has made significant contributions to improved practices in special education. Part D of the IDEA programs account for less than one percent of the national expenditure to educate students with disabilities (www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS 2000). However, programs funded by Part D have played a crucial role in identifying, implementing, evaluating, and disseminating information about effective practices in educating students with disabilities. The Part D programs also provide an infrastructure of practice improvement that supports the other 99% of the national expenditure to educate students with disabilities (www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS 2000). In the IDEA 1997, seven Part D programs were reauthorized. Part D programs are often referred to as
support programs because their primary purpose is to support the implementation of the IDEA and to assist states in improving the education of students with disabilities. The Part D programs, even though they constitute a small amount of the total federal expenditure for the IDEA, help to ensure that the field of special education will continue to move forward by translating research to practice and improving the future of students with disabilities (Bradley 2001).

In implementing education reform initiatives, public schools and school systems must abide by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504), which prohibits recipients of federal funds from discriminating on the basis of disability and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which prohibit discrimination on the basis of disability whether or not they receive federal funds. Education reform initiatives, of course, vary from state to state, and sometimes from community to community (Bradley 2001).

There is one kind of initiative, however, that is common nationwide. This approach, known as "standards-based" education reform, has four basic components. First, standards are set for what students should know and be able to do at various grades. Second, curricula are designed, guided by the standards. Third, based on the curricula, teachers design individual courses and instructional strategies, including the materials and methods best suited for their students. Fourth, students are assessed at different points in their school career to determine how well schools are doing at enabling them to meet the standards. The results of these assessments are then used to hold schools accountable for how well they are educating their students (Bradley 2001).
The theory behind standards-based education reform is that by setting high
standards, shaping curriculum and instruction to meet them, and holding schools
accountable for how well students meet the standards, educational quality will rise for all
students.

The following information examines how Section 504 and the ADA should work to
ensure that students with disabilities enjoy the benefits of these reforms, and the quality
education they aim for. First, key concepts under Section 504 and the ADA (and the
federal regulations implementing these laws) will be discussed, and then how these
concepts apply to the basic components of standards-based education reform: (1)
standards; (2) curriculum; (3) individual courses, instructional strategies, and materials;
and (4) assessment for school accountability.

There are four key concepts under Section 504 and the ADA that effect education;
comparable benefits and services, criteria and methods of administration, reasonable
accommodations, and maximum feasible integration (PEER 2003).

Looking at comparable benefits and services, section 504 and Title II of the ADA
are broad civil rights statutes designed to promote equal access to and participation in
programs and services. The regulations implementing these laws require that students
with disabilities receive benefits and services comparable to those given their non-
disabled peers. Specifically, these laws make it illegal for schools to discriminate on the
basis of disability by:

• denying a student the opportunity to benefit from, or participate in, a service
  or benefit,
• providing an opportunity to participate or benefit that is unequal to that provided others,
• providing a benefit or service that is not as effective as that provided to others,
• providing lower quality benefits, services or programs than those provided others, or
• providing different or separate benefits or services, unless it is necessary to provide benefits or services that are as effective as those provided to others.

(PEER 2003)

For benefits or services provided to be "equally effective," they must afford students with disabilities an equal opportunity to obtain the same result, gain the same benefit, or reach the same level of achievement as other students. The Section 504 regulations require that school systems receiving federal funds provide a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities in accordance with the Section 504 requirements regarding least restrictive setting, evaluation and placement, and procedural safeguards. FAPE under Section 504 means that the education provided to students with disabilities must meet those students' needs as adequately as the needs of non-disabled students are met (PEER 2003).

Secondly, criteria and methods of administration must be appropriate. It is illegal, under the Section 504 and ADA regulations, for school systems to use policies and practices that, intentionally, or not, result in discrimination. The regulations for both Section 504 and ADA use the term "criteria and methods of administration." "Criteria" are written or formal policies; "methods of administration" are the school system's actual
practices and procedures. The ban on discriminatory policies, practices, and procedures includes those that:

- have the effect of discriminating against students with disabilities, or
- have the effect of defeating or impairing accomplishment of the objectives of the education program (or school reform initiative) in regard to students with disabilities. (PEER 2003)

Thirdly, reasonable accommodations should be considered. In meeting the responsibilities to students with disabilities under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA, school systems must make accommodations and modifications to address the needs of students with disabilities. Making accommodations and modifications means changing the way things are usually done in order to take into account a child's disability-related needs. Examples of accommodations and modifications include modifying rules, policies or practices; removing architectural or communication barriers; or providing aids, services, or assistive technology (PEER 2003).

Finally, maximum feasible integration must be evaluated and provided for each disabled student. Under Section 504, children with disabilities must be educated with their non-disabled peers "to the maximum extent appropriate," and "removal . . . from the regular educational environment" occurs "only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily”. The ADA regulations similarly provide that a public entity, such as a school system, will administer services, programs, and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with
disabilities. Schools have the burden of demonstrating that any removal from regular education is appropriate (PEER 2003).

Standards-based education reform aims to attain high quality educational outcomes by identifying desired learning outcomes for students, shaping curricula and instruction accordingly, and holding schools accountable for the results. If a state or school system adopts standards for general education, then students with disabilities have the right to an education based on these same standards. Failure to apply standards to students with disabilities is a failure to provide "comparable benefits and services." Schools violate Section 504 and ADA regulations whenever students with disabilities are denied the benefits of education reform standards (PEER 2003).

Standards in standards-based education reform define some of the outcomes of a quality education. The curriculum is then designed to reflect the standards and deliver that quality education. The goal of education reform is to make sure that students learn the curriculum, which reflects the standards. Therefore, students with disabilities, like all other children, must be provided with courses and instruction that teach the curriculum. Otherwise, they will be denied comparable benefits and services, in violation of Section 504 and the ADA (PEER 2003).

For some students, the method of teaching some or the entire curriculum may need to be modified, perhaps as a reasonable accommodation, or as a supplementary aid or service necessary for maximum feasible participation in regular education. For a small number of students who have significant disabilities, it may be necessary to modify, adapt, or expand the curriculum or instruction to provide access to the standards. These
decisions must be made on an individual basis, and based upon valid and competent individualized educational evaluations (PEER 2003).

Further, it is also discriminatory for school systems to adopt "criteria or methods of administration" (policies and practices) which limit opportunities for students with disabilities to learn the standards. To avoid such discrimination, school systems must identify and examine any policies or practices that may have the effect of limiting students' access to the courses and instruction necessary to learn the curriculum and meet the standards.

Depending upon the circumstances, any number of policies and practices might have this effect. Examples include lack of coordination (in terms of both scheduling and content) between pull-out programs, such as resource rooms, and the mainstream academic curriculum; providing a diluted curriculum in separate programs and classes for students with disabilities; and failing to integrate special education supports and related services into regular education classes (PEER 2003).

Assessment is key to ensuring that school reform initiatives actually deliver quality education. The purpose of these assessments is to gather information that shows whether schools are successfully teaching students the standards. This information is then used to identify weaknesses in schools and to make necessary improvements. Assessment is the way that standards-based education reform holds schools accountable for student learning and achievement.

Historically, students with disabilities have been excluded from such assessments in large numbers. As a result, information about the achievement of these students is often missing when the effectiveness of school programs and services is evaluated and
decisions about policies and reform initiatives are being made. With exclusion from assessment, schools are not held accountable for the quality of education students with disabilities receive. These students are denied the benefit of this critical aspect of standards-based education reform in violation of the requirement to provide comparable benefits and services under Section 504 and the ADA (PEER 2003).

These civil rights laws require not only that students with disabilities take part in these accountability assessments, but also that they receive any reasonable accommodations necessary to participate.

For many students, participation in assessment will not require any changes in the way that the assessment is given. Other students will require accommodations such as extra time for the assessment or materials in a different format (e.g., written materials in Braille, or a reader) in order to participate. A small number of students may require a different type of assessment (an "alternate assessment") to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in a nondiscriminatory manner. For example, some students may need a "hands-on" test using models rather than a pencil and paper test to show their understanding of geometry and some students may require a portfolio assessment (www.wrightslaw.com/info/section504.ada.peer 2003).

Part of the recent education reform is the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB). This is a landmark in education reform designed to improve student achievement and change the culture of America’s schools. Three days after taking office in January 2001 as the 43rd President of the United States, George W. Bush announced No Child Left Behind, his framework for bipartisan education reform that he described as "the cornerstone of my Administration”. President Bush emphasized his deep belief in
our public schools, but an even greater concern that "too many of our neediest children are being left behind," despite the nearly $200 billion in Federal spending since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA). The President called for bipartisan solutions based on accountability, choice, and flexibility in Federal education programs (www.ed.gov 2004).

Less than a year later, despite the unprecedented challenges of engineering an economic recovery while leading the Nation in the war on terrorism following the events of September 11, President Bush secured passage of the landmark No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB Act). The new law reflects a remarkable consensus-first articulated in the President's No Child Left Behind framework-on how to improve the performance of America's elementary and secondary schools while at the same time ensuring that no child is trapped in a failing school (www.ed.gov 2004).

The NCLB Act, which reauthorizes the ESEA, is principal federal law affecting education from kindergarten through high school. In amending ESEA, the new law represents a sweeping overhaul of federal efforts to support elementary and secondary education in the United States. The NCLB incorporates the principles and strategies proposed by President Bush. These include increased accountability for States, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for states and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the use of Federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children (www.ed.gov 2004).

The NCLB Act will strengthen Title I accountability by requiring States to implement statewide accountability systems covering all public schools and students.
These systems must be based on challenging State standards in reading and mathematics, annual testing for all students in grades three through eight and annual statewide progress objectives ensuring that all groups of students reach proficiency within twelve years. Assessment results and state progress objectives must be broken out by poverty, race, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency to ensure that no group is left behind. School districts and schools that fail to make adequate yearly progress (AYP) toward statewide proficiency goals will, over time, be subject to improvement, corrective action, and restructuring measures aimed at getting them back on course to meet state standards. Schools that meet or exceed AYP objectives or close achievement gaps will be eligible for State Academic Achievement Awards (www.ed.gov 2004).

The NCLB Act significantly increases the choices available to the parents of students attending Title I schools that fail to meet state standards, including immediate relief—beginning with the 2002-03 school year—for students in schools that were previously identified for improvement or corrective action under the 1994 ESEA reauthorization (www.ed.gov 2004).

Local Education Associations (LEAs) must give students attending schools identified for improvement, corrective action, or restructuring the opportunity to attend a better public school, which may include a public charter school, within the school district. The district must provide transportation to the new school, and must use at least five percent of its Title I funds for this purpose, if needed (www.ed.gov 2004).

For students attending persistently failing schools (those that have failed to meet State standards for at least three of the four preceding years), LEAs must permit low-income students to use Title I funds to obtain supplemental educational services from the
public- or private-sector provider selected by the students and their parents. Providers must meet State standards and offer services tailored to help participating students meet challenging State academic standards (www.ed.gov 2004).

To help ensure that LEAs offer meaningful choices, the new law requires school districts to spend up to twenty percent of their Title I allocations to provide school choice and supplemental educational services to eligible students (www.ed.gov 2004).

In addition to helping ensure that no child loses the opportunity for a quality education because he or she is trapped in a failing school, the choice and supplemental service requirements provide a substantial incentive for low-performing schools to improve. Schools that want to avoid losing students-along with the portion of their annual budgets typically associated with those students-will have to improve or, if they fail to make AYP for five years, run the risk of reconstitution under a restructuring plan (www.ed.gov 2004).

One important goal of No Child Left Behind was to breathe new life into the "flexibility for accountability" bargain with States first struck by President George H.W. Bush during his historic 1989-education summit with the Nation's Governors at Charlottesville, Virginia. Prior flexibility efforts have focused on the waiver of program requirements; the NCLB Act moves beyond this limited approach to give States and school districts flexibility in the use of Federal education funds in exchange for strong accountability for results (www.ed.gov 2004).

New flexibility provisions in the NCLB Act include authority for States and LEAs to transfer up to fifty percent of the funding they receive under four major State grant programs to any one of the programs, or to Title I. The covered programs include

The new law also includes a competitive State Flexibility Demonstration Program that permits up to seven States to consolidate the State share of nearly all Federal State grant programs-including Title I, Part A Grants to Local Educational Agencies-while providing additional flexibility in their use of Title V Innovation funds. Participating States must enter into five-year performance agreements with the Secretary covering the use of the consolidated funds, which may be used for any educational purpose authorized under the ESEA. As part of their plans, States also must enter into up to ten local performance agreements with LEAs, which will enjoy the same level of flexibility granted under the separate Local Flexibility Demonstration Program (www.ed.gov 2004).

The new competitive Local Flexibility Demonstration Program would allow up to eighty LEAs, in addition to the seventy LEAs under the State Flexibility Demonstration Program, to consolidate funds received under Teacher Quality State Grants, Educational Technology State Grants, Innovative Programs, and Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs. Participating LEAs would enter into performance agreements with the Secretary of Education, and would be able to use the consolidated funds for any ESEA-authorized purpose (www.ed.gov 2004).

Since the Elementary and Secondary Education Act first passed Congress in 1965, the federal government has spent more than two hundred twenty-two billion dollars through 2003 to help educate disadvantaged children. Yet, the achievement gap in this country between rich and poor and white and minority students remains wide. According to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) on reading...
2000, only thirty-two percent of fourth-graders can read at a proficient level and thereby demonstrate solid academic achievement; and while scores for the highest-performing students have improved over time, those of America's lowest-performing students have declined (www.ed.gov 2004).

The good news is that some schools in cities and towns across the nation are creating high achievement for children with a history of low performance. If some schools can do it, then all schools should be able to do it.

It is projected that because of No Child Left Behind many will benefit in the followings ways:

- Parents will know their children's strengths and weaknesses and how well schools are performing; they will have other options and resources for helping their children if their schools are chronically in need of improvement.
- Teachers will have the training and resources they need for teaching effectively, using curricula that are grounded in scientifically based research; annual testing lets them know areas in which students need extra attention.
- Principals will have information they need to strengthen their schools' weaknesses and to put into practice methods and strategies backed by sound, scientific research.
- Superintendents will be able to see which of their schools and principals are doing the best job and which need help to improve.
- School boards will be able to measure how their districts are doing and to measure their districts in relation to others across the state; they will have
more and better information on which to base decisions about priorities in their districts.

- Chief state school officers will know how the schools in their states and in other states are doing; they will be better able to pinpoint where guidance and resources are needed.

- Governors will have a yearly report card on how their states' schools are doing; they will be able to highlight accomplishments of the best schools and target help to those schools that are in need of improvement.

- Community leaders and volunteer groups will have information they can use to rally their members in efforts to help children and schools that need the most help. (www.ed.gov 2004)

What is missing from the previous list of benefactors of NCLB? What are the benefits for the students who are ultimately the reason for education? And in particular what are the benefits for the student with disabilities? While those involved in public school education seek to understand the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act as they apply to the entire student population, school districts cannot ignore the implications of NCLB for those students who have been identified as disabled under the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Under NCLB, students with disabilities are one of the major subgroups required to achieve educational proficiency by 2014 (Duff 2003).

NCLB and IDEA are similar in some ways, but different in several respects. The two laws are similar in that both are outcome-oriented, focusing on annual progress (NCLB) or measurable goals and objectives (IDEA). Both laws emphasize reliance on teaching methods that are proven to work, that is, research-based instruction. Likewise,
both laws have mandates related to personnel and assessments, and each requires parental notice, participation, and choice (Duff 2003).

On the other hand, philosophically, NCLB and IDEA appear to be quite different. Special education focuses on programs calculated to meet the individual child's needs and to enable him or her to achieve educational benefit according to his/her capabilities. NCLB mandates outcomes regardless of individual limitations or needs; it requires that all students meet State standards and become "proficient" by the year 2013-14. In other words, NCLB dictates that the achievement "gap" among all groups of students, including disabled children, will close. This gap-closing premise is at odds with special education, which focuses on the individual student, rather than his or her peers. IDEA recognizes that some students will not meet State standards by the end of high school and, therefore, allows those students to receive special education and related services until age 22 (Duff 2003).

Both NCLB and IDEA address testing programs for all students; however, the purposes of the testing under the two laws are quite different. NCLB requires each state to develop a uniform assessment system to ensure students make sufficient academic progress each year to be proficient by 2014. Under NCLB the purpose of testing is to establish that all students are meeting State standards. Under IDEA, disabled students are to be included in State and district-wide assessment programs for accountability purposes, which will assure that such students are making individual progress in the general curriculum (Duff 2003).

In terms of curriculum, IDEA provides that disabled students are to participate in the general education curriculum and in the regular education setting to the greatest
extent appropriate. The curricular implications of NCLB on special education extend much farther. If the assumption under NCLB is that all students should be achieving proficiency under the State standards, the logical conclusion is that all students are to be taught the same courses or course content. The distinction between regular education and special education will all but disappear under NCLB; but teaching the standards may not be the priority for many disabled students who have major deficits in the social and communication domains and in daily living skills (Duff 2003). The standards may be too difficult for the disabled student.

Special education teachers work with children with mild to moderate disabilities, using or modifying the general education curriculum to meet the child’s individual needs at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels. A few special education teachers work with students with severe mental retardation or autism, primarily teaching them life skills and basic literacy. Special education teachers help to develop an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for each student in the public school setting. The IEP sets personalized goals for the student and is tailored to that student’s individual needs and ability. All States require special education teachers to be licensed, which requires at least a bachelor’s degree and completion of an approved training program in special education teaching (www.usdoj.gov 2003).

Special education teachers are not exempt from the "highly qualified" teacher requirements of NCLB. All special education teachers may have to be certified not only in special education, but also in the content areas they teach. For example, if a special education teacher instructs learning disabled students in math in a resource room, that
teacher must have a special education certificate and be certified in Mathematics (Duff 2003).

Some have observed that NCLB actually means "No Child Left Untested." The recently issued NCLB regulations make it clear that the ninety-five percent participation rate for all students applies fully to disabled students. If ninety-five percent of students with disabilities in a school do not participate in the statewide assessment; the school will not meet Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) criteria. Also, the NCLB regulations provide that no more than point five percent of students with severe cognitive disabilities may take alternative assessments to determine AYP. Under IDEA, the working percentage on alternative testing is two percent (Duff 2003).

In the case of low performing or failing schools, how will the remedial measures of NCLB apply with respect to disabled students? If a school is in its second year of "school improvement," Supplemental Educational Services (SES), such as tutoring, remediation and academic intervention, must be delivered to all eligible, enrolled students. The NCLB regulations state that local education agencies must ensure that SES, with accommodations if necessary, are available to students with disabilities. Regarding school choice, the NCLB regulations make it clear that schools asked to accept the transfer of a special needs student from a "failing" school must have the ability to meet the needs of that child under the "free and appropriate education" language of IDEA. If it is not necessary to change a child's IEP, the decision to transfer apparently rests with the parent. If there is a need to make IEP changes, then the IEP team would become involved in creating an IEP to provide services at the new school (Duff 2003).
Observers have noted that complying with NCLB is like "scaling Mount Everest in sneakers." If this statement is valid with respect to the overall student population, it is certainly true concerning special education students. NCLB's one hundred percent student proficiency standard is a one-size-fits-all-approach, which seems particularly implausible in regard to disabled children (Duff 2003). The NCLB overall view is not no child left behind but no child left untested. In reality, testing can be done, but with the diversity levels of students due to many factors including disability, it seems impossible for standards to be reached in all public education.

American education alternates between cycles of reform and neglect. We find ourselves in an extended period of reform focused on improving and, therefore, measuring student learning outcomes. The 1970s “back to the basics” movement resulted in an emphasis on functional skills and a proliferation of minimum-competency tests. The current cycle of reform appears to be directed toward more sophisticated learning goals and more exacting standards (www.taragallery.com 2003).

In 1991 the Bush administration educational summit presented America 2000, outlining an ambitious set of national education goals for the year 2000. This proposal included the establishment of schools that that would enable all U.S. students to meet “world class” academic standards. In response, subject area associations and commissioned groups began developing new curriculum standards to define what students should know and be able to do, including standards for arts education. The Goals 2000: Educate America Act was signed into law by President Clinton in 1994, continuing the emphasis on educational reform, standards, and assessment. Education reform as crafted by the George W. Bush administration calls for testing of all students
by the 2004-05 school year to assure that all students have access to a “first class” education. It appears that reform, accountability, and assessment will continue to dominate education deliberations into the foreseeable future (www.taragallery.com 2003).

Legislators, educators, business leaders, and parents have recognized that national education goals should reach beyond traditional subject matter. The 1991 Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) Report, *What Work Requires of Schools*, examined the demands of the workplace and identified basic competencies needed for the worker of the future. Workers in our rapidly changing world need basic skills in reading, writing, mathematics, and communication; thinking skills including the ability to learn, reason, think creatively, make decisions, and solve problems; and personal qualities focusing on individual responsibility, self-esteem, self-management, sociability, and integrity. The SCANS Report emphasizes the importance of teaching collaboration and “learning how to learn” in our schools (www.taragallery.com 2003). The arts are areas that fulfill the problem solving skills needed in the workplace.

The SCANS Report has informed the fields of education and human services, offering a basis for the development of standards, curricula, and assessment methodologies that connect school-based learning and career success. For instance, the California Department of Education has developed model frameworks for curricula in the visual and performing arts and vocational education and is actively pursuing assessment methodologies to validate learning in these areas. California has identified seven career pathways, including the visual and performing arts. Performance standards have been established for the pathways that incorporate the competencies identified by the SCANS
Report, provide the basis for assessing student proficiency in personal and interpersonal skills, thinking and problem solving, communications, occupational safety, employment literacy, and technology literacy (www.taragallery.com 2003).
CHAPTER IV
SELF-ESTEEM AND THE DISABLED STUDENT

There is no shortage of ways to define self-esteem. Perhaps the simplest one is found in Webster’s Dictionary, which says that self-esteem, is satisfaction with oneself (Soukhanov 1984). Self-esteem begins to develop early in life and has been studied in children as young as seven years of age. As children learn to describe aspects of themselves, such as their physical attributes, abilities, and preferences, they also begin to evaluate them. Researchers conclude that, contrary to intuition, individuals have not one but several views of their selves, encompassing many domains of life, such as scholastic ability, physical appearance and romantic appeal, job competence, and adequacy as a provider (Lerner 1985). Psychologists generally split self-esteem into two types: earned self-esteem and global self-esteem. The concepts of each differ in critical ways: Earned self-esteem possesses all of the positive character traits that ought to be encouraged and applauded, because it is ultimately based on work habits or accomplishments. Global self-esteem refers to a general sense of pride in oneself. It is not grounded in a particular skill or achievement (Lerner 1985). Children with disabilities may be lacking in earned self-esteem simply because of their disability. Self-esteem is a result of an accomplishment and since the disabled sometimes do not feel achievement or are frustrated when trying to achieve, their self-esteem may be lowered. Learning-disabled students within the school setting and at home, have special needs that will help their
self-esteem. Knowing the type of disability and its effects, is an important step to helping these students gain self-esteem which will in turn lead to self-determination. There are several categories of children with special needs. Some children, including emotionally handicapped children, physically handicapped children, mentally handicapped children, abused children, and children with learning disabilities have special needs. Although children in each of these broad categories exhibit different handicaps and disabilities and each demands or imposes different challenges on family life and social acceptance. All these children need special opportunities to develop inner self-esteem (Owens 1995).

The following describes and/or illustrates the previous categories. Take a look at emotionally handicapped children by reading this excerpt: Al, in his senior year of secondary school, obtained a certificate from his physician stating that a nervous breakdown made it necessary for him to leave school for 6 months. Al was not a good all-around student; his teachers found him a problem and he had a history of poor school adjustment. Al was a late talker and had no friends. Al also had odd mannerisms, made up his own religion, and chanted hymns to himself. His father was ashamed of his son's lack of athletic ability and regarded him as "different." Albert Einstein didn't speak until he was four years old or read until he was seven years old. This brief profile of Albert Einstein illustrates the danger of making snap decisions on the basis of superficial and incomplete evidence and the difficulties in defining mental health or a mental disturbance. Being different does not necessarily mean that one is in poor health or disturbed. Overwhelming evidence indicates that Einstein was a gifted and creative individual who had difficulty conforming to the requirements of school settings (Owens 1995). Defining the disability of emotional disturbance to certain standards is difficult
because of the changing and revised criteria for determining eligibility. The current
definition under the Individuals with Disabilities Act, Public Law 101-476, lists several
characteristics to consider for eligibility for special services. An emotional disturbance is
a condition exhibiting one or more of the following characteristics over a long period of
time and to a marked degree that adversely affects educational performance:

- An inability to learn that cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory, or health
  factors;
- An inability to build or maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationships with
  peers and teachers;
- Inappropriate types of behavior or feelings under normal circumstances;
- A general pervasive mood of unhappiness or depression; or
- A tendency to develop physical symptoms or fears associated with personal or
  school problems. (Fowler 1996)

The causes of emotional disturbance have not been adequately determined.
Although various factors such as heredity, brain disorder, diet, stress, and family
functioning have been suggested as possible causes, research has not shown any of these
factors to be the direct cause of behavior problems.

Some of the characteristics and behaviors seen in children who have emotional
disturbances include:

- Hyperactivity (short attention span, impulsiveness);
- Aggression/self-injurious behavior (acting out, fighting);
- Withdrawal (failure to initiate interaction with others);
- Retreat from exchanges of social interaction (excessive fear or anxiety);
• Immaturity (inappropriate crying, temper tantrums, poor coping skills); and,

• Learning difficulties (academically performing below grade level).

One of the more public issues associated with the condition of emotional disturbance involves safety and discipline in the school setting. Occasionally, students with emotional disturbance exhibit provocative and disruptive behaviors in school. These behaviors raise issues of discipline and safety in schools. The most recent revisions of PL 101-476 provide more leverage for teachers to suspend and, in some cases, expel students with emotional disturbance who exhibit disruptive behavior. It should be noted that a student assessed as having emotional disturbance does not necessarily exhibit disruptive behaviors and may show more withdrawn symptoms. Many children who do not have emotional disturbances may display some of these same behaviors at various times during their development. However, when children have serious emotional disturbances, these behaviors continue over long periods of time. Their behavior thus signals that they are not coping with their environment or peers (Fowler 1996).

The educational programs for students with a serious emotional disturbance need to include attention to mastering academics; developing social skills; and, increasing self-awareness, self-esteem, and self-control. Career education (both academic and vocational programs) is also a major part of secondary education and should be a part of every adolescent's transition plan in his or her Individualized Education Program (IEP) (Fowler 1996).

Behavior modification is one of the most widely used approaches to helping children with a serious emotional disturbance. However, there are many other techniques
that are also successful -- such as counseling, anger management, and learning contracts that may be used in combination with behavior modification (Fowler 1996).

Students eligible for special education services under the category of serious emotional disturbance may have IEPs that include psychological or counseling services as a related service. This feature is an important related service that is available under the law and is to be provided by a qualified social worker, psychologist, guidance counselor, or other qualified personnel (Fowler 1996).

Families of children with emotional disturbances may need help in understanding their children's condition and in learning how to work effectively with them. Help is available from psychiatrists, psychologists, or other mental health professionals in public or private mental health settings. Children should be provided with services based on their individual needs, and all persons who are involved with these children should be aware of the care they are receiving. It is important to coordinate all services between home, school, and the therapeutic community with open communication (Fowler 1996).

Parents and Teachers need to be familiar with symptoms that may be a sign of unhealthy adjustment in children. When informed, early intervention can take place and, thus, the child has a better chance of developing healthier adjustments. The sooner identification of the child who is in need of professional help is made, the better the chances of helping that child as well as preventing other emotional overlays such as low self-esteem due to repeated frustrations, failures, and unhappiness. The purpose of early identification is to develop more effective learning and behavior programs for these children so they can develop competent behaviors and skills that lead to high inner self-esteem (Owens 1995).
Symptoms of emotionally handicapped children include children who are failing to function effectively in academic, personal, or social areas. Excluded from this definition are children with extreme emotional disturbances such as autism and child schizophrenia. Emotionally handicapped describes a child with intrapersonal conflict; these children are not at peace with themselves. Inwardly, they are in a state of turmoil; they are unable to cope with the stress of living, have a low opinion of themselves, and see themselves as disliked by others (Owens 1995). These children have learning difficulties despite having average or above-average intelligence. But because of behavior difficulties, these children are potentially limited in learning capabilities.

Emotionally handicapped children are unable to form a good relationship with peers, teachers, and parents. They may be timid and passive or hostile and aggressive in their relationships with others. Finally, their behavior is limited, rigid, and inflexible. They exhibit extreme stubbornness and are generally not motivated by the usually effective motivational techniques (praise, reward, punishment) used to change their behavior (Owens 1995). Only those children who demonstrate severe behavioral symptoms may need professional help. Children who seek out trouble, are predisposed to anger, are defiant, consistently seek immediate gratification, and fail to profit from experience may need help.

Next, physically challenged children have special needs. The physically challenged are those children who have physical defects or disorders that make it difficult for them to perform some of the everyday tasks and activities others of their age routinely perform. These children may have an incurable disease. They may be missing a limb; lack the ability to control parts of their body; suffer from complete or partial loss of vision or
hearing; their hearts, lungs, muscles, bones, or nervous systems may be diseased, damaged, or deformed. Physical challenges range from different degrees of blindness and deafness; to crippling conditions such as muscular dystrophy, and various kinds of paralysis; to disfigurements. Children may be born with physical challenges such as cerebral palsy, epilepsy, and hemophilia; or they may suffer a physical challenge because of a disease contracted during childhood, such as severe ear and eye infections leading to deafness or blindness, or meningitis, which can lead to paralysis (Owens 1995). Another type of physical challenge may result from serious accidents.

Another category of children with special needs is children who are subject to child abuse. Although the concept of child abuse draws on the compassion of people, researchers and policymakers have recognized the extent and severity of violence toward children. There is three types of child abuse; physical, emotional, and sexual.

Physical child abuse involves acts of commission by the parent, characterized by overt physical violence, beating, or excessive punishment. The use of physical punishment against children seems to reflect a mixture of positive belief in force as a tool for shaping behavior, lack of effective alternatives to force, and emotional tension in the parent. Young children are more at risk of physical abuse than are older children; over half of the reported child abuse victims are under 4 years of age, with children under 2 years at the greatest risk (Owens 1995).

Emotional child abuse is the systematic diminishing of another person. Emotional abuse is generally a lifelong process of destroying another person's self-esteem. The emotionally abused child suffers from a constant barrage of put-downs; this child never measures up. If he gets a B on a test, it's not good enough. They constantly receive
negative remarks: "You're stupid," "You're fat," "You're ugly." They are negatively compared to others: "You'll never be a success like your older sister." Every area of their life is subject to constant disapproval. Emotional abuse occurs when parents fail to encourage normal development through assurance of love and acceptance. It involves verbal put-downs, labeling, humiliation, and unrealistic expectations. After a while, these children believe they are totally unworthy - unworthy of love, respect, friendship, and, in some cases, life (Owens 1995).

While active emotional abuse involves thoughtless but constant belittling, passive emotional abuse is labeled neglect. Child neglect is maltreatment due to acts of omission, that is, when the parent fails to meet a child's physical, nutritional, medical, emotional, and other needs. There are a large number of abused children for whom parents have very little affection or investment. These are the children who are likely to be kept in their rooms and their cribs as infants. These are children who are likely to be poorly fed and who have poor hygiene. Since the child is unloved, not cared for, and inadequately nurtured, psychological scars may be much more prominent than in other types of abuse (Owens 1995).

Regardless of whether emotional abuse is active or passive, frequent or occasional, it is always painful; as painful as physical abuse and perhaps more devastating. A parent's love is so important to children that withholding it can cause damage. Because emotional abuse tends to be repetitive and begins at an early age, children do not have the cognitive sophistication to denounce or reject the negative remarks they hear. They often absorb these remarks like a sponge and come to believe they are as bad as others tell them they are. Many begin to belittle and humiliate themselves (Owens 1995).
Sexual abuse in families, or incest, involves dependent, developmentally immature children and adolescents in sexual activities they do not fully comprehend, which violates the social norms of family roles. Sexually abused children have low self-esteem and are often depressed and withdrawn. They often engage in fantasy and/or baby-like behavior. They often have poor relationships with other children and are unwilling to participate in physical activities. At times, the sexually abused child engages in delinquent acts or runs away from home. Short-term effects of incest include regression to earlier behaviors such as thumb-sucking, eating disorders, sleep disorders, bed-wetting, tics, or excessive fears (Owens 1995).

Developmental disabilities range from retardation to learning disabilities. Mentally handicapped children vary widely in intellectual ability from those who must live their lives under continuous medical supervision to mild forms of retardation. A mentally challenged child is one who has sub average general intellectual functioning. In most states, children with IQs below seventy are regarded as mildly mentally retarded. While low academic competence is a necessary attribute in describing a mentally challenged child, low IQ alone does not equal mental retardation. Other factors, which are amenable to change, such as having few friends, poor adjustment to school, feeling unhappy, and self feelings of incompetence are often characteristic of the mentally challenged child (Owens 1995).

One cause of mental retardation is Down syndrome. The behavior of a Down syndrome baby is similar to that of any other baby during the first six months of life. But after six months their rate of development slows down. The handicapped child develops at a slower pace.
The child with Down syndrome has distinctive facial features: large, protruding tongue, broad skull, and slanting eyes. After birth, the rate of growth continues to be slow, with shortness of stature common. These children generally show poor balance and sexual maturity is rarely attained. Down syndrome children have difficulty communicating with others and sometimes have a hard time maintaining eye contact. Vocalizations tend to be brief and intermittent and require greater stimulation to elicit a response. Speech is immature and sometimes hard to interpret. Their skills at taking turns while conversing are poor, which may cause more clashes socially (Owens 1995).

Students with mental retardation experience difficulty in learning and social adjustment. As defined in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), mental retardation means significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period that adversely affects a child’s educational performance. General intellectual functioning is typically measured by an intelligence test. Persons with mental retardation usually score seventy or below on such tests. Adaptive behavior refers to a person's adjustment to everyday life. Difficulties may occur in learning, communication, social, academic, vocational, and independent living skills (Moss 2003).

Mental retardation is not a disease, nor should it be confused with mental illness. Children with mental retardation become adults; they do not remain "eternal children." They do learn, but slowly, and with difficulty. Many authorities agree that people with mental retardation develop in the same way as people without mental retardation, but at a slower rate. Others suggest that persons with mental retardation have difficulties in particular areas of basic thinking and learning such as attention, perception, or memory.
Depending on the extent of the impairment -- mild, moderate, severe, or profound - individuals with mental retardation will develop differently in academic, social, and vocational skills (Moss 2003).

Persons with mental retardation have the capacity to learn, to develop, and to grow. The great majority of these citizens can become productive and full participants in society. Appropriate educational services that begin in infancy and continue throughout the developmental period and beyond will enable children with mental retardation to develop to their fullest potential. As with all education, modifying instruction to meet individual needs is the starting point for successful learning. Throughout their child's education, parents should be an integral part of the planning and teaching team (Moss 2003).

One of the most widely discussed disabilities affecting the academic achievement of children is ADHD, (formerly known as ADD, 1980). ADHD is a neurologically based, developmental disability that is estimated to affect three to five percent of the school-age population -- often difficult to diagnose accurately and with varied approaches for treatment. Many educators and parents struggle in meeting the needs of children experiencing ADHD symptoms. In defining this disability, the National Information Center for Children with Disabilities has sorted the symptoms of ADHD into three categories. Predominantly Inattentive Type emphasizes problems children have with attending to tasks, often manifested in children who have difficulty following directions, perform poorly on tests for no apparent reason, etc. Predominantly Hyperactivity-Impulsive Type focuses on the symptoms of hyperactivity and impulse control problems. This type can involve children who may have difficulties staying in their seat in the
classroom or who tend to jump from activity to activity. The last category, Combined Type, features both of the symptoms described above (Moss 2003).

Presuming that most children show symptoms of inattention and excessive activity occasionally, one of the most controversial questions involving ADHD is the degree and frequency to which the symptoms occur. Although ADHD is considered a neurologically based medical problem, no simple assessment such as a blood or urine test exists to diagnose the problem. Accurate assessment is much like solving a puzzle and should be conducted by a professional familiar with ADHD (developmental pediatrician, child psychologist, or child neurologist). It is important to remember that diagnoses are made on the basis of observable behavioral symptoms in many settings. Multiple sources of information need to be collected (Moss 2003).

Sometimes the children with the least apparent special need are children with learning disabilities. A learning disability refers to a specific disorder in one or more of the following areas: language, perception, behavior, reading, spelling, writing, mathematical reasoning or computation. Learning disabilities comprise a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning, or mathematical abilities (Owens 1995).

Generally, the learning disabilities concept provides a canopy for all those children who are not performing as expected. The learning-disabled child is affected in different areas of function, not with a generalized inability to learn. Most definitions incorporate a significant discrepancy between these children's estimated intellectual potential and their actual level of performance. These children are achieving considerably less than the composite of their IQ, age, and educational opportunity. Children who are severely
brain-damaged (mentally retarded, cerebral palsy) are excluded from the learning-disabled category. Estimates of the number of learning-disabled children vary considerably but are in the 10 percent range. Learning-disabled children are usually diagnosed in the primary grades when lags in reading and writing become apparent. Early identification is important for early treatment (Owens 1995).

Possible causes for learning disabilities fall into three categories: neurological damage, genetic, and environmental. Neurological damage can be caused by low birth weight or deprivation of oxygen at birth. Genetic causes have shown that there is a higher rate of learning disabilities among twins than for singletons. In general, genetic factors should be considered as contributing to learning disabilities in certain cases. For example, there is some evidence that children with severe reading disabilities have a genetic vulnerability that makes them prone to develop this disorder. Environmental causes range from impoverished learning environments to poor teachers (Owens 1995).

Learning-disabled generally lack good judgment. They make snap judgments, reach conclusions that don't follow from the facts, and fail to use problem-solving skills. These children display difficulty in abstract thinking, have poor organizational skills, are unable to pick out significant information, have difficulty with concepts of right and left and time relationships, and have trouble getting their ideas on paper.

Behavioral disorganization is one of the prime characteristics of the child with learning disabilities. The child exhibiting behavior disorganization is hyperactive and may display erratic and inappropriate behavior. The child is abnormally responsive to environmental stimuli and tends to react randomly without logic. Other behavioral descriptions of a learning-disabled child are; inability to discontinue an activity on
command, distractibility, restlessness, purposely-disruptive behavior, withdrawal from others, low self-esteem, and a lack of awareness of the consequences of one's own behavioral actions (Owens 1995).

Learning-disabled children have low self-esteem in the academic and social worlds. They do not do well in school and many, because of their annoying behavior, alienate their peers. Their behavior problems interfere with their meeting the demands of a traditional classroom. Learning-disabled children may be defiant, nervous, irritable, disobedient, and a bother to other children. They are distracted easily and have a short attention span. Daydreaming is a favorite activity for the learning-disabled child. Most of the time learning-disabled children act before they think. These children simply cannot organize materials and thoughts the way other children do (Owens 1995).

Frequently, the learning-disabled child is clumsy. He stumbles and falls frequently and has a difficult time playing certain sports, riding a bike, or playing running games. Printing, writing, and drawing may be poor. The child tends to be confused about space and time. These children have difficulty understanding right and left and up and down. They may also find telling time is difficult (Owens 1995).

In the school setting, the learning-disabled child is in the regular classroom because their IQ is in the average range. Learning-disabled children are characterized by high rates of off-task behavior, inattentiveness, poor concentration, and a lack of persistence when faced with difficult tasks. They tend to be overly active and appear to be more interested in everybody else's activities rather than their own. They are often over stimulated by the wealth of material on hand and by the lively activity of their classmates. The learning disabled child’s nervous system becomes overloaded by appropriate
classroom activities and leads to immature or objectionable behavior that is disturbing to the group. They seem to make little or no progress in the classroom no matter what techniques the teacher may employ. Any failure on her part may be viewed purely in terms of her behavior and poor attitudes. The child's anxious and frustrated behavior is magnified when the parents or teachers increase their impatience and blame (Owens 1995).

In conclusion, special children require special conditions for enhancing their inner self-esteem. Emotionally handicapped children are those who exhibit intrapersonal conflict learning difficulties, and interpersonal difficulties. Once parents and or teachers recognize the symptoms and identify children with emotional handicaps, they can begin effective treatment for them. Physically handicapped children should be encouraged to be as self-sufficient as possible, which helps develop their inner self-esteem. Characteristics of physically, emotionally, and sexually abused children and how their parents can create conditions that foster their self-esteem are examined. All abused children and their abusive parents need professional help. Parents of children with learning disabilities can help them develop inner self-esteem by making their learning environment in the home as free from distracting stimuli as possible, planning a definite sequence of activities each day, expecting great variability in day-to-day performances, and knowing that the frustrating and annoying behavior of some learning-disabled children is not intentional (Owens 1995).

Our society highly values achievement in school. Subsequently, when children do not do well academically, parents rightfully are concerned. To many parents, a good education plays an important role in determining the child's future success in many areas.
There are several skills, behaviors, and attitudes that are vital to developing inner academic self-esteem. One pivotal factor is experiencing more success than failure in the academic setting. A significant portion of children's academic self-esteem, because academia is so valued in our society, is based on their performance in school. When children experience more failure than success they engage in various "no effort" strategies (low effort, procrastination, not doing their homework, setting low or ridiculously high goals, not caring about school, and so forth) to protect their self-esteem. To children, the lack of effort becomes the reason for not doing well in school, not the lack of intelligence or ability; thus, a small shred of their academic self-esteem is preserved (Owens 1995).

Children need to feel that they have some control over what happens to them in the academic setting. They need to learn that they are responsible for their grades, turning in their assignments, and carrying out the behaviors that are required to succeed in that environment. When parents use natural and logical consequences in disciplining their children and recognize problems that belong to their children and problems that belong to both parents and children, an inner sense of control is established. Moreover, children need to be organized, have a good motivational drive to do well, and see the importance of doing their homework assignments to enhance their academic self-esteem (Owens 1995).

Parents need to become involved with their child's education; they need to provide children with stimulating activities and materials, help children with their homework (not do it for them), and be interested in the academic progress of their child. Parents need to have realistic expectations of their child and very importantly, believe that their child is
capable of succeeding in the academic domain. By achieving in the academic area, the child has a solid basis for maintaining high inner self-esteem (Owens 1995). After discussing several types of disabilities of school aged children, developing inner self-esteem during the school-age years can be an important process. School is a social institution, reflecting the culture of which it is a part and transmitting to the young a world view as well as specific skills and knowledge. Children spend years in school as members of a small society in which there are tasks to be done, people to relate to, and rules that define the possibilities of behavior. Such experiences affect several aspects of children's behavior, their sense of self, beliefs about their academic competence, and their conceptions of a social system beyond the family (Owens 1995). When children first begin school they are wonderfully confident about themselves. Most children begin school with positive feelings of being smart, capable, and eager to please. When children enter kindergarten they tend to underestimate the difficulty of a task, believing they can accomplish just about anything. They tend to hold and maintain high expectancies, are less apt to focus on negative outcomes, and view their ability as extremely high. In fact, most students in kindergarten and first grade rank themselves at or near the top of their class. In contrast, by fourth grade a number of children hate school, don’t like to come to school, and don’t try when they are in school. Why? What can parents do to help their children continue on a positive path and feel as good about themselves academically as they did in kindergarten (Owens 1995)? Factors that are crucial to the child's inner academic self-esteem are experiencing more success than failure, feeling a sense of control over what happens to him or her in the academic setting, being organized, reading well, believing that effort is important and makes a difference in how well he or she does
in the academic setting, doing homework, being motivated, being organized, and having parents who are involved with their children in school work, who have high expectations for their child, and believe that their child is capable in the academic setting (Owens 1995). When children move from middle childhood to adolescence, we see a shift in their self-images from concrete, observable traits to more analytical, psychological, and abstract traits that sometimes involve a great deal of introspection. Girls tend to base their self-esteem on their physical appearance and popularity; boys tend to base their self-esteem on competence and athletic skills. Boys have higher self-esteem in achievement and leadership; girls have higher self-esteem in congeniality and sociability (Owens 1995).
Art is a fundamental human process. Every society, from the most primitive to the most sophisticated, has expressed itself through art (Lowenfeld 1982). The arts have described, defined, and deepened human experience. All people have a need for meaning—to connect time and space, experience and event, body and spirit, intellect and emotion. We create art to make these connections, to express the unseeingly inexpressible. A society without the arts is unimaginable (www.wcpss.net 2004).

Art is a personal and satisfying activity at any age, for although the arts are responsible for a greater awareness of the external world; it is also the arts that give vent to the emotions, the joys, and fears of life (Lowenfeld 1982). Our present educational system emphasizes the learning of factual information. Passing tests, passing to the next grade, or even remaining in school depends upon mastery of certain bits of information. More and more people are realizing that the ability to learn differs from age to age and person to person. This ability to learn not only involves intellectual capabilities but social, emotional, perceptual, physical, and psychological factors are involved. The process of learning is very complex, and there is no single best teaching method. There is a tendency to focus on the regurgitation of information for the learner. By doing this we only emphasis one factor of human development, that is one measured by intelligence tests. Intelligence does not include a wide range of thinking abilities that are necessary
for life skills. The abilities to question, to seek answers, to find form and order, to communicate to rethink, and to find new relationships are qualities that are not generally taught (Lowenfeld 1982).

Learners learn through their senses, seeing hearing, smelling, and tasting. Teaching is not just teaching certain predetermined responses, but should develop perceptual sensitivity. Arts education is depended on stressing the use of the senses. This development of the senses of the learner will increase the opportunity for all learning (Lowenfeld 1982). Formal education relies upon the knowledge of twenty-six letters and ten numerals, which become tools in the pursuit of knowledge. They themselves are not learning. These abstract figures are shuffled around from kindergarten to college. The development of mental growth tends to become an abstract function because they take on different meaning. Understanding what they mean is developing knowledge. Not only learning to spell a word like “rabbit” will acquire knowledge but seeing and feeling a rabbit will help learning what a rabbit means. Mental growth therefore relies on the varied relationships between a learner and their environment. The senses are a basic ingredient of a creative arts experience (Lowenfeld 1982).

Art for an adult and for a child has different meaning. Art means not merely being an observer. Most adults encounter and participate in the arts as observers. But for children art is primarily a means of expression. A child becomes an active participant in creation and observation. In art education, the product is subordinate to the creative process in which a child’s thinking, his feelings, his perceiving and his reaction to his environment is the important result. Art education therefore is primarily concerned with
the effect that the process has on the learner or child, where as the so-called fine arts are more concerned with the products (Lowenfeld 1982).

Understanding that the process is more important than the product, an important factor in viewing or observing a final product is understanding the work individually. We can appreciate the product and its significance by understanding the child and seeing the product as a part of his life. This emphasizes the purpose to use the arts as means to understand the child, to give support for his expression and learning style, and involve him in life more fully.

Every child has a right to expect an education rich in knowledge of the arts, as have students in societies dating back to ancient civilizations. We know that arts education provides avenues to crucial modes of thinking and learning. It helps students on many levels with all academic subjects as well as developing an understanding and appreciation of various disciplines of the arts. Also, it is through exploration of pieces of art and through inquiry into the making of the arts that understanding of human experiences is gained and cultural values are transmitted (www.sceaonline.com 2004).

Comprehensive arts education is exciting and stimulating involving students as active rather than passive learners. The diversity of real activities provides opportunities for discovering talents and developing transferable life skills for all students regardless of experience, social status, cultural background, or handicapping conditions. The creative challenges, in depth experiences, and leadership opportunities encourage students to reach their fullest potential. By participating cooperatively and constructively, students develop understanding and respect for the abilities and efforts of both themselves and others. This creative involvement in a variety of problem-solving experiences expands
intellectual and philosophical horizons, preparing students to become well-rounded
individuals and appreciative consumers of music, theatre, and visual art
(www.sceaonline.com 2004).

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 includes, in almost every section of the law,
support and assistance for “core academic subjects.” The No Child Left Behind Act’s
definition of core academic subjects includes the arts. In this respect, the arts have equal
billing with reading, math, science, and other disciplines. And this definition could lead
to a huge improvement in national education policy. This means that whenever federal
education programs (such as teacher training, school reform, and technology programs)
are targeted to “core academic subjects,” the arts may be eligible to receive funds

It’s the Law. The definition of core subjects in the new law is located in Title IX,
Part A, Section 9101 (1) (D) (11), Definitions. Here is how the definition reads: (11)

**CORE ACADEMIC SUBJECTS**- The term ‘core academic subjects’ means English,
reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and
government, economics, arts, history, and geography. The definition of core academic
subjects is included in the glossary of the bill, which tells local and state education
decision-makers how to interpret the concepts used throughout the Act. However, these
decision-makers may not be aware that the arts are identified as a core subject in the Act
and, as a result, may be unaware that many types of federal education funds may be used
for arts education (www.aep-arts.org 2004).

The law does not include a definition of what the arts encompass as an academic
discipline. It should be noted, however, that the national standards for the arts include
standards for dance, music, theater, and visual arts. Furthermore in 1997, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) arts assessment was developed with separate assessments in dance, music, theater, and visual arts (www.aep-arts.org 2004).

As discussed early, children learn best when they experience through all their senses; hearing, seeing, touching, feeling, moving, and smelling. Much is to be gained by providing musical and artistic experiences throughout a child's educational journey. Fortunately, some curriculum is heavily embedded with music, art, and movement (e.g., marching, dancing, acting things out). These are very critical components of an effective school program. Each of the four arts disciplines has their own special dynamics when it comes to educational gains.

Children learn much by hearing music of different kinds. They learn to discriminate between different sounds, pitches, and rhythms. They learn to identify rhymes, which are so common in the lyrics of songs. Rhyming is critical to the development of phonemic and phonological awareness. Children learn rhythm, which is important in skills such as counting, patterning, and many gross motor activities. Music speaks to our emotions. It can positively affect our mood. Music can be uplifting and make us feel good. It can also be calming, soothing, and comforting. It can energize us or relax us. The opportunity to hear and play different instruments builds good auditory discrimination and listening skills. It is also a strong motivator and means of self-expression (Rief 2001).

Visual art, in the form of drawing, painting, and crafts, fosters growth in many developmental skills. Many fine motor skills are involved in art activities, such as squeezing glue, using a finger to paste, holding a scissors to cut, and holding and
controlling pens, crayons, paintbrushes. Children learn many basic concepts through art such as color, design, patterning, size/shape, directionality, and borders and boundaries. Numerous visual-perceptual skills are developed through arts and crafts, discriminating and attending to the likenesses and differences in shapes, size, color, position in space (Rief 2001).

Dancing and marching help children develop in many ways. They improve a child's sense of rhythm and beat. They are fun and social experiences. They build math concepts (e.g., counting with one-to-one correspondence of the movement matched simultaneously to the count, patterns such as step-step-kick, step-step-kick. They develop a child's coordination, motor control, and balance. They develop laterality—the awareness within the body of the difference between right and left. These activities also develop a child's spatial perception and directionality, which are necessary in reading and writing (e.g., recognizing and producing letters that look similar but are rotated in space, such as b/d/p/q; m/n; reading and writing with left-to-right progression) (Rief 2001).

Theater activities for children should be rich in improvisation. Problem solving skills are heightened through theater improvisation when a child is asked to bring resolution to an ever so familiar problem they may have encountered. Individual and creative solutions are formed through the use of the child’s body movement, voice dynamics, and usage of space creatively. Developing these skills help children cope with ordinary daily tasks. Learning and practicing theater concepts also test social experiences.

As established core subjects and the law states all child will have the opportunities to equal educational resources, and we understand the arts importance in the educational
setting, the question of the regular education of the disabled student arises. The arts have shown to be a discipline where the disabled cannot only achieve, but the arts can increase abilities for the disabled students in other areas.

Many art educators were not trained formally within the art education structure on how specifically to teach disabled students. Howard Gardner’s submission implied that schools should be a place where learners go to nurture their personal intelligence, a place rich with choice, opportunity, and an accessible and varied curriculum (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995). With his statement in mind, the question arises, what is specifically available for these students (Catterall 1999)?

The use of arts to teach the learning disabled is not a new concept, but it is, in a sense, a concept disregarded by regular classroom teachers. A learning disabled student will have an IEP (Individual Education Plan) and regular classroom teachers follow the plan for the most part. But is there something more regular classroom teachers can give their learning disabled students (Catterall 1999)?

To begin to address some of the dilemmas and issues raised by educators with respect to the abilities of students with LD, several studies have been conducted over the past decade. Although our current diagnosis, assessment, and instructional practices remain oriented toward locating and curing deficits rather than capitalizing on talents, our cure rate has been low suggesting that it might be time to rethink our direction. Howard Gardner's pivotal work on multiple intelligences emerged to lend more structure and impetus to research in the field of learning disabilities. Below, we summarize some findings from relevant research and the issues they raise for both general and special educators (Reif 2001).
In 1988, Baum and Owen conducted a study of 112 elementary school students (grades four through six) to investigate what characteristics distinguish high ability/LD students from learning disabled students with average cognitive ability and from high ability students. The researchers examined six types of motivational, and cognitive predictor variables (Self Efficacy for Academic Tasks, Creative Potential, Interests, Disruptive Behavior, Self-Concept, Attributions for Academic Success or Failure) using a variety of tests, for example, the Self Efficacy for Academic Tasks (Baum & Owen 1985); the Group Inventory for Finding Talent (Rimm 1976); the Williams Scale (Williams 1980); and the Torrance Tests of Creative Thinking (Torrance 1980). Among other findings, the high ability/LD group performed higher than other groups at tasks involving problem solving and abstract thinking. Owen and Baum reported that in nonacademic settings, they have been observed to be creative and productive. They can show extraordinary abilities and are highly motivated when completing challenging tasks based on their own interests. Clearly thirty-six percent of the students labeled LD simultaneously demonstrated traits of gifted behavior. Rather than further dichotomizing instruction for the gifted and for the high ability/LD students, Owen and Baum argued the need for the same kinds of challenging learning experiences—experiences based on their common creative and intellectual characteristics (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995, Rief 2001).

In a more recent study, applying a different measure of divergent thinking, Stone, Poplin, Johnson, and Simpson (1992) looked for differences in divergent thinking and feeling in sixty matched elementary school students with Learning Disabilities (LD) and No Learning Disabilities (NLD) peers from ten schools in the southern California area.
Using the Test of Divergent Thinking and the Test of Divergent Feeling, the researchers found no differences between scores for the students with LD and their NLD counterparts. In fact, results suggested that the students with LD actually scored higher on the Titles and the Elaboration subtest, as well as showing better total test performance. While divergent thinking is characteristic of creativity, it is not necessarily characteristic of success in school (Rief 2001).

In a concurrent two-facet study among the same sample, musical and visual-artistic talents of students with LD as compared with their NLD peers were examined. Utilizing the Barron-Welsh Art Scale Revised and the Welsh-Barron Figure Perception Test, students were asked to state whether they liked or disliked a series of pictures. Responses were recorded and compared to scale scores obtained from responses by artists and non-artists in the standardization sample. Results revealed no significant differences between scores earned by the students with LD and their NLD counterparts (Rief 2001).

The second facet of the study compared students with LD and their NLD peers on the Seashore Measures of Musical Talent. Six areas of musical ability were explored: pitch, loudness, rhythm, time, timbre, and tonal memory. Students were presented with pairs of sounds, tones, and rhythm patterns, and with tone lengths and sequences of notes. They were asked to make judgments about them, and responses were converted to scaled scores. Again, results indicated no significant differences between students with LD and their NLD peers in this sample.

In related studies utilizing the Test for Creative Thinking-Drawing Production, the average combined scores on the Humor subtest for elementary students with LD were significantly higher than the average for their general education peers. This distinguished
humor from other forms of creativity, although the forms are positively correlated. Even though humor is a cognitive process, it is more adequately described as cognitive playfulness, which is an indicator of creativity. Humor is described as the process of bringing together different ideas from two distinct planes, which then interplay in the mind to form a relationship. That process is creativity. Again, those of us who know these students from our own classrooms can attest to their leaps of insight, use of double entendres and parody, and creative solutions to both textbook and teacher posed problems, despite confidential records that reflect intellectual and academic inadequacies. These research findings might then suggest humor as one productive line of inquiry into the strengths, cognitive and otherwise, of students with LD, and humor’s role in subsequent pedagogical considerations.

Authors of studies reported here are quick to point out limitations of their research, but it should be noted that until relatively recently there has been a lack of both interest and instruments for productive research in these areas. The creation in recent years of such instruments as the CALIP, the Krantz Talent Identification Instrument (Krantz 1982), and the Multi-Dimensional Screening Device, along with multimodal approaches to assessment, suggests a growing interest in nontraditional strengths and talents. The concurrent dialectic on constructivism and critical pedagogy offers perhaps even greater evidence of interest in ways of knowing other than the linguistic and logico-mathematical, which have dominated our research to date (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995).

Taking these studies together, one sees many implications for developing new instructional strategies for individuals with LD and, potentially, implications for students
who fail to achieve in today's schools. It seems we must admit that being learning disabled in the schools today says much about our obsession with teaching and assessing solely through written language. If music, art, and divergent thinking were valued, would we not have a different group of students labeled learning disabled? Are other remedial students also plagued by our overemphasis on written language and intelligence testing (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995)?

New instructional approaches should help the divergent and multiply talented learner, especially the learner for whom traditional language instruction and school requirements are problematic. Both whole language and interdisciplinary curricula, for example, emphasize the "whole" of what is to be learned and encourage multiple ways of conceptualizing, organizing, and demonstrating knowledge; divergent thinkers should be far more successful with interdisciplinary instruction that brings diverse information to bear on single topics, particularly topics of special interest to the learner (Rief 2001).

In their discussion of multiple ways of knowing, Leland and Harste (1994) appealed to semiotic theory for support of multiple modes of individual inquiry: According to semiotic theory, the ways of knowing are sign systems which we have created to express meaning and to mediate our world. These sign systems include art, music, mathematics, drama and language that offer different perspectives. Different perspectives offer different ways of framing questions and conducting inquiry. If learners are allowed to frame problems in their own way, perhaps they might better identify their own unique means of making sense of the world around them. Consider, for example, the student who experiences a sudden flash of understanding about multiplication right in the middle of a poetry lesson. For all the teacher's efforts to teach
the concept of “times” during math class, it took the interplay of language, meter, rhyme, and repetition to create within the child an epiphany, in which all past knowledge was suddenly transformed and a revised worldview was created. Although poetry provided the unique framework this student needed to construct the concept of multiplication, no doubt countless other students routinely make such connections between seemingly dissimilar pieces of information and among disciplines to construct meanings in areas other than the one presently being studied (Rief 2001).

Cooperative learning also offers students a way to think through curriculum issues in their own way and to understand one another's thought processes and insights, rather than just the teacher's. The emphasis on active learning should aid students who seem to thrive on activity and suffer in passive classrooms. In addition to these current activities, other specific suggestions fall into two general areas: teacher preparation and instructional practices. However, paramount to the success of any set of plans for improvement is the assurance of strong commitment along all lines of the educational hierarchy (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995).

Art gives the student with learning disabilities opportunities to express thoughts and feelings that don’t necessarily come easy to them. Studies have shown that students with learning disabilities can feel isolation and a reluctance to interact, often due to their awareness of the disability. Art provides opportunities for students to express themselves effectively in the learning community of the classroom, free of the burden of having to distinguish between standardized visual, auditory, and writing symbols (Moss 1989). Research studies focusing on children with learning disabilities found that Drama training can improve the social skills of these students (de la Cruz 1995). Sign systems such as
music and art offer different perspectives to the learner that in turn helps them better identify their own unique means of making sense of the world around them (Hearne, Dixon, & Stone 1995). Can teachers do more to help students with learning disabilities by using arts in their curriculums (Catterall 1999)?

In 1974, Jean Kennedy Smith as a private, non-profit organization in Washington D.C., founded The National Committee, Arts for the Handicapped (NCAH). Operating out of a small office in the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the NCAH’s purpose was to provide opportunities for children with emotional, physical, and mental disabilities to learn in the arts, about the arts, and through the arts, and to greatly increase the number of children with disabilities in the United States receiving access to arts programs (www.vsarts.org 2003). Growing from the initial plan of the NCAH the Very Special Arts (VSA) was developed. The VSA is an organization that bridges the large number of educational arts programs available to the learning disabled. It is currently known as VSA arts; Vision, Strength, and Accessibilities through the arts.

The VSA currently has fifty-two domestic affiliate and collaborator organizations in forty-eight states and sixty-six others in other countries. The VSA arts affiliates are independent non-profit organizations. These organizations maintain strong connections to the VSA in a relationship that includes funding, participation in conferences, networking, the use of national programs like curriculum guides, professional training, artists in residency training, and sharing state developed programs and plans among themselves (www.vsarts.org. 2003).

The VSA has also developed collaborations with existing non-profit arts, disability and/or education organizations. These collaborations allow the VSA to
continue initiatives across the country, as well as to develop new programs to serve local residents. Through working with the VSA, the collaborators act as the accredited organization providing the VSA programs or help in the process of developing an independent VSA state organization (www.vsarts.org 2003). The VSA educational programs use the arts as a vehicle for learning many skills needed to succeed in school and for learning a wide range of other life skills. But if an educational program is not getting financial support from the VSA, the knowledge of its existence is non-existent.

Identifying arts education programs outside public education for the learning disabled has not been an easy task. It seems there are programs in existence, but educators who need such a program within the public education arena do not know about them or simply do not take the time to search for them. The arts need to be available for all students. But specifically the learning disabled students need the arts to help them succeed in their education and their life. The research has proven the arts to be a viable and necessary part of the education of the disabled and non-disabled students.
CHAPTER VI

PROJECT PARTNERSHIP IN ACTION AND EVALUATION

Art should be an experience that can be shared by all people in their everyday lives. Art education is not merely the training of people for careers in the arts, but should encompass the totality of the human experience. Through and within the arts, we love, learn and survive. Art is for everyone. Everyone can experience art. Specifically for learning disabled students, art can be the gateway for self-determination. Self-determination is defined as taking control over what affects your life (Webster’s 2004.) Realizing the specific need for the learning disabled to explore within the arts just as the students without disabilities, a pilot program called Project Partnership was developed. Project Partnership is based on involvement in the art and affording new opportunities to explore and develop a sense of one and heighten confidence and self-expression (Harris & McKinney 1993).

The Project Partnership program was developed through a series of organizational attempts for the disabled. In 1974, Judy Kennedy Smith started Very Special Arts (VSA). The VSA is an organization that has spread throughout forty-eight states with fifty-two organizations and has spread to sixty-six international affiliates. The VSA promotes opportunities in the arts for people with mental and physical disabilities. In 1996, the VSA changed its name to Vision, Strength, and Accessibilities, VSA arts.
In 1990, the American Disabilities Act was passed which enforced rights and laws for the correct treatment of the disabled. The ADA created handicapped accessibility in architecture codes. In 1990 Project Partnership started with a grant from The Kennedy Center, VSA, Very Special Arts Ohio, and the U.S. Department of Education. Only nine sites throughout the United States were designated as pilot programs. States included in the pilot were Ohio, Louisiana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, and Washington D.C. All but one of the pilot programs was held at a public school. The program held at the Wayne Center for The Arts in Wayne County, Ohio, was the only pilot that ran the program away from the school setting. The only Project Partnership program still existing is the Wayne County Site.

The Wayne County, Ohio site for Project Partnership involved several organizations: The Wayne County Schools office of Education, which now encompasses three counties, Ashland, Holmes, and Wayne, and is known as the Tri-County Educational Service Center, The Wayne Center for the Arts, and the individual school districts, in then Wayne County, but now Ashland and Holmes counties schools are involved. The project has provided the continuation and strengthening of the school and community partnership established between community arts organizations and supporters and the public schools (Wayne County Public Schools 1992).

Mr. Gary DeVault, who is employed by the Tri County Educational Service Center as the Fine Arts Coordinator, coordinates the project in its fourteenth year of existence in Wayne County, Ohio. Mr. DeVault gives a brief preface to explain the importance of Project Partnership:
Opportunities to participate in the arts are central to the development of self-advocacy and self-determination skills. Students with special needs have traditionally had only limited access to arts education programs and school and community-based arts activities. Typically, special education students don’t have the opportunity to be mainstreamed into arts classes or don’t have the self-confidence to take arts courses. Thus, they are derived only limited benefit from the personal growth, skill development, and social interaction that is integral to these experiences. Project Partnership offers significant benefits both to the individual students and to the educational system. Arts education can be integrated into regular classes. Students have increased opportunities for self-discovery, creativity, self-concept building, skill development, and social integration. Through the Individual Arts Education Plan, students determine their special interests and a strategy to make the most of individual talents and capabilities. At the same time, schools are better able to provide equal service to students with disabilities by systematically identifying barriers to participation in the arts and implementing a plan to remove them. Participation in Project Partnership has increased awareness of how the use of the arts is an important tool for teaching students with special needs. (Wayne County Public Schools 1992)

Participation in the arts is an effective way to develop self-expression, achieving self-realization, and improving communication skills. Through the arts, individuals can express their thoughts, their ideas, their needs, their perceptions, and their wishes. By expressing these personal meanings through the arts, individual communicate their life experiences, and in so doing, take a major step in advocating for themselves. Because of physical, attitudinal, and programmatic barriers, students with disabilities in the public school system have not had equal opportunity to pursue and/or discover their interests, talents, and capabilities in the arts. Research shows no significant differences between people with and without disabilities on measures of creativity (DeMeyer Harris 1993). Project Partnership is designed to develop and enhance the self-determination and self-advocacy skills of students in seventh to twelfth grade who are in special
education or have a disability through increased participation in the arts (Wayne County Public Schools 1992).

There are four objectives derived for *Project Partnership*:

1. To build a coalition of school, and community and family working together to establish and maintain a vital arts program for young people with disabilities that is fully integrated within the educational, social, and artistic community.

2. To develop model for the systematic examination and elimination of barriers to full participation by secondary school students with disabilities.

3. To develop curricula which expand arts opportunities for young people with disabilities.

4. To increase awareness of the importance of self-determination and the arts in the lives of young persons with disabilities among faculty, parents, and community. (Wayne County Public Schools 1992)

These four objectives are achieved through the use of the four arts disciplines. Since the start of *Project Partnership*, creative writing was within the arts disciplines. Since that time only dance, music, theatre, and visual art remain. The following paragraphs look at the four arts disciplines and the purpose of each in education.

Dance has existed since the beginning of humankind. Before verbal or written communication existed, humans used movement to communicate and to help them comprehend, shape, and make meaning of their world. Moving rhythmically is innate. Because movement as a form of self-expression is intrinsic to our existence as human beings, dance is included as part of a comprehensive education. Young children revel in
their own ability to move. Dance is a natural vehicle that children use to help them understand themselves and the world in which they live.

Dance education helps students use movement to creatively express meaning. It provides students with a way of kinesthetically learning and communicating. A dance program is designed to teach students fundamentals in dance and choreography, and to help students develop self-discipline and focus.

Through dance, students come to appreciate rich and diverse cultures, beliefs, and societies. As students examine the role of dance throughout history and in different cultures, they learn to respect diversity. Dance helps people connect with one another and exists in all cultures and places (Wake County Public School System 2004).

Music has always been part of our lives. It is deeply imbedded in our existence, adding depth and dimension to our environment, raising the human spirit, and contributing in important ways to our quality of life. Music is one of the primary ways we learn about ourselves, others, our actions and consequences, and traditions and beliefs. Music is one of the fundamental ways human beings create and communicate meanings. All students, regardless of age, cultural heritage, ability, or financial circumstances, should participate fully in the highest quality musical experiences possible.

A music program is designed as a comprehensive, standards-based course of study that will allow students to become musically literate. Music education helps students express and interpret meaning. Through music, students increase their awareness of rich and diverse cultures, beliefs, and societies of humankind. As students examine the role of music throughout history and in different cultures, they develop respect for diversity.
The processes of learning, creating, and understanding music are the primary goals of a music program. While performance is an important aspect of music study, it does not substitute for students’ development of creative processes and of broader integrated experiences and understandings. Through creating, students are able to be imaginative, think critically, and approach tasks in new or different ways. Students develop aesthetic awareness and learn to evaluate and validate their work and the choices they make. Students also look outside themselves, discovering and demonstrating respect for the efforts and work of others (Wake County Public School System 2004).

Theatre, the imagined and enacted world of human beings, is one of the primary ways children at an early age learn about life, about actions and consequences, about customs and beliefs, about others and themselves. They learn through their social pretend play and from hours of viewing television and film. Children use pretend play as a means of making sense of the world; they create situations to play and assume roles; they interact with peers and arrange environments to bring their stories to life; they direct one another to bring order to their drama, and they respond to one another’s dramas. In other words, children arrive at school with rudimentary skills as playwrights, actors, designers, directors, and audience members; theatre arts education should build on this foundation. The theatre arts program in the early years starts with and has a strong emphasis on improvisation, which is the basis of social, pretend play.

Theatre arts in the public schools teach the basic life skills, thinking skills and personal qualities which:

- develop an understanding of diverse people in different times throughout history as communicated through literature and theatre.
• employ techniques for teaching and learning through developmental processes and activity-oriented methods.

• promote higher-level critical and creative thinking skills, problem recognition and problem solving, intuition, examination and implementation of conflict resolution, and the learning of reading, writing, math and other areas of the curriculum.

• assist in focusing the emotions for controlled use, strengthening the imagination for creative self-expression, disciplining the voice and body for purposeful use, expanding intellectual horizons to include aesthetic awareness, developing self-discipline, and providing a basic understanding and critical appreciation of all the theatre arts.

• involve making connections between theatre arts and other art forms, other curriculum areas, dramatic media, and the related use of technology including numbers and data.

• provide an intense study of what playwrights seek to convey and how this is intensified through theatrical production, thus giving students insights into countless aspects of the diverse and changing world.

• include the reading, viewing, listening, researching, writing, speaking, preparing to perform, performing, and directing of traditional and the experimental theatrical forms, as well as, accompanying aspects of technical production.

• engage students in the creative process and the practical application of theatre techniques (such as observing, considering possibility, and
communicating) which students can use in studying other areas of the curriculum and for life-long learning.

- and enable students to function and communicate more proficiently, work independently as a member of a team, to value the individual contributions of others, and to learn virtually any subject matter in a more dynamic way. (Wake County Public School System 2004)

From the beginning of time, the compulsion to create a visual vocabulary has been as innate in every society as the desire to acquire a system of spoken symbols. Visual art from past civilizations is frequently one of the few remaining clues with the power to illuminate which values were held most dear. As we rediscover these fragments of mankind’s puzzle and attempt to piece together our common humanity, the undeniable power of visual expression is an immutable and triumphant message. Today, every aspect of our designed environment will serve to explain who we are to those of the future.

A K-12 visual arts program in the public schools:

- uses the elements of art and the principles of design as a foundation for exploring visual arts concepts and processes.
- employs developmentally appropriate processes for teaching and learning that are based on activity-oriented methods.
- encourages disciplined creativity by using higher level critical thinking skills to identify problems, explore original solutions, and complete the problem areas of the curriculum and for life-long learning.
- develops and promotes self-expression.
• makes enriching connections between and integrates visual arts and other curriculum areas.
• expands aesthetic and intellectual awareness through reading, writing, listening, researching, discussing, critiquing and reflective thinking.
• teaches how to use both traditional media and incorporates new technology to create art that is individual and expressive.
• builds knowledge and understanding of ideas, values, and beliefs of people in different times throughout history as communicated through visual art with the goal of developing visually literate students.
• challenges students to recognize their own ideas, values and beliefs and communicate them through visual arts. (Wake County Public School System 2004)

The instructors of these four arts disciplines extend the focus of the activity to include self-determination skills. Students are provided the opportunity to practice on a regular basis the following self-determination skills: planning, setting personal goals, making choices, demonstrating independence and self-sufficiency, initiating interactions with others, and self-evaluation. These skills are practiced in a context in which students express themselves (Wayne County Public Schools 1992).

Preliminary to the ongoing establishment of Project Partnership, Wayne County Public Schools set up several key activities to help the pilot program get its start. There was the establishment of a steering committee comprised of teachers, administrators, students, and community arts leaders which were to plan project activities and provide students with an ongoing support system to pursue their interests in the arts. During
those meetings the committee reviewed the preliminary site plan, approved the project budget, and met with the special education teachers, arts teachers and artists to discuss the project. Next, there was the implementation of a site assessment to recognize barriers, which inhibit full participation in the arts by special education students, and students with disabilities, and development of a site assessment plan to eliminate these barriers. During this time project coordinators identified current activities, arts opportunities for special education students including visiting artists and community arts opportunities and faculty in-service opportunities. Then field-testing of the core course of self-determination and the arts took place. Project coordinators identified arts teachers, facilitated curriculum training for participating teachers and developed the first semester course, which consisted of ten consecutive weekly sessions covering two arts disciplines each week. Next, the development and implementation of and Individual Arts Education Plan (IAEP) would be included in each student’s Individual Education Plan (IEP). Then the actual coordination of presentations by visiting artists and artists with disabilities as performers and trainers took place. Here, the students were provided the opportunity to work with disabled artists during a workshop session or performance. Finally, a third party evaluator participated in site visitation, interview sessions with special education teachers, arts teachers, project coordinators, and selected students.

Today, *Project Partnership* flourishes in Wayne County, Ohio, but now includes school districts from the tri-county area including, Holmes and Ashland counties. The plan for *Project Partnership* is much the same as it was in the beginning. Although a steering committee is not needed, participation by project coordinators, school districts, special education teachers, arts teachers, and the artistic community is a must for the
successful implementation of the program. The benefits of Project Partnership is to both the individual students with disabilities and the educational system by increasing the awareness of how the arts are an important tool for teaching students with special needs. The key objectives remain the same as listed above and the overall goal is to promote self-advocacy and self-determination in young persons through participation in the arts.

Understanding the coordination of the project will lead to the explanation of curriculum. In the fall of the school year, the project coordinator, Mr. Gary DeVault contacts the tri-county school districts to create an awareness of the project's availability for their students with special needs. In the school year 2003-2004, twelve schools participated in Project Partnership. These schools included, Chippewa High School, Dalton High School, Hiland High School, Ida Sue School, Mapleton High School, Northwestern High School, Orrville High School, Rittman High School, Triway High School, Waynedale High School, West Holmes High School, and Wooster High School. With the schools administrator’s approval, special education teachers are contacted by the project coordinator and asked for their participation in the project along with their students. Meanwhile, the project coordinator is securing the site, The Wayne Center for the Arts in Wooster, Ohio, for the upcoming sessions of Project Partnership. Mr. DeVault is also searching for and contracting artist instructors for the four arts disciplines in which students will participate during the project. The special education teachers are getting permission from their administrators and school districts to participate as a school. Also, teachers are collecting permission forms from their students who will be participants and planning with an arts teacher in their district for a home school arts activity to take place during the project’s tenure.
With the students committed to the project, a calendar of the project’s schedule is distributed to the schools. The 2003-2004 Project Partnership schedule contained seven calendar dates for sessions at the Arts Center. These dates were October 10, November 7, December 5, January 9, February 6, March 12, and April 23. April 23, was the arts activities day in which students would select an arts discipline to spend the whole morning in and then the afternoon would feature a visiting disabled artist to perform and share with the students. Each day contained five sessions during each scheduled date. The five sessions were Session 1; 8:50 – 9:40am, Session 2; 9:45 – 10:35am, Session 3; 10:35 – 11:20am, Session 4; 12:05 – 12:55pm, and Session 5; 1:00 – 1:50pm. In each session time slot, the respective arts instructors taught the four arts disciplines in different room in the Arts Center. Eight schools would come to the Arts Center on the given day and the other schools would have a home school experience with their home arts teacher who has planned with the special education teacher an arts experience exclusively for the special needs students.

Developing a curriculum for the arts session is the responsibility of the arts instructor who was secured by the project coordinator. The arts instructors are usually active artists in their discipline who can share a different perspective of their art with the disabled students different than the student’s own district’s arts teacher. Keeping in mind that there will be only two fifty minute sessions to meet with the students, the arts instructor must be able to share the unique qualities of the art with the student and create an atmosphere of “I can do it” with the students. Using theatre as an example, the arts instructor has developed through the use of improvisational theatre games, sessions that focus on non-verbal and verbal communication. Students learn through the use of
physical movements, group interaction and voice the importance of being able to take a chance and communicate with the world. Students who come to the sessions with a bit of hesitation are shortly breaking through their disability barrier and experiencing things they never thought they could experience through the arts activity. As an example of the success of the project, a student whose disability caused him to be very inward and not allow anyone to physically touch him became an interactive part of a group. He allowed physical touching after three years of participation in Project Partnership.

Another piece of the project is the home school arts experience. Their own special education teacher and an arts instructor in their home school exclusively develop this arts experience for the group of students. This experience allows the students to become more familiar with the arts teacher in order to create a relationship for the student to be able to take further art courses at their own school. Also this experience creates a more secluded group experience for the disabled students since they are not performing in the art experience with non-disabled students. This seclusion allows the barriers that block expression to be lifted. An example of a home school arts experience would be a cake-decorating unit taught by one of the participating schools. The special education teacher along with the family and consumer science teacher, the visual arts teacher, and the theatre teacher developed a unit for the special needs students to learn to decorate cakes that were created from storybook characters. After the cakes were complete, the students set up a performance for groups of elementary school students where they acted out the story to the young audience. After the performance, the special needs students served their specially created cakes to the elementary students. This home school experience included many students as well as teachers. Another example of a home school
experience was the designing of Ukrainian eggs. This project was incorporated into an English class where students researched the history and tools and techniques of the art of making Ukrainian eggs. They wrote a research paper then designed the eggs with the information they learned. The eggs were then displayed at the school.

The arts activity day at the conclusion of the program is a day for the students to choose an arts discipline that they really felt comfortable. This session is doubled in time and usually consists of a more encompassing curriculum. In theatre for example, the arts activity day has the students planning their own activity. They are to create a commercial using available props and then they create a group improvisation that is written and performed by them in front of a video camera. The productions of the groups are then viewed at the end of the session. This session is a culmination of all the experiences they learned in the first two sessions. The students are also mixed in with other schools on arts activity day and this allows the students to break even another barrier using the art as a vehicle. The once shy and introverted disabled students are now not afraid to express themselves. The afternoon of the arts activities day is concluded with a visiting disabled artist who performs and then shares with the students their journey through life with their own disability and how the art has helped them. In 2003-2004, the Cleveland Sign Stage performed for the students in the Arts Center’s auditorium. A deaf actor along with two hearing actors acted out skits that portrayed some of the difficulties a deaf person might encounter in everyday living. The actors then interacted with volunteers from the student audience and had them act out situations. Other artists to perform in previous years of the project for the arts activities day were The Dancing Wheels and a young blind pianist from the Canton area. The total day is a complete package showing how the arts can be
for everyone, even the disabled. Hopefully after this day, the disabled students will not be afraid to take chances and self-determination is heightened.

One way to evaluate the success of *Project Partnership* is to look at the comments gathered by this researcher during the 2003-2004 project year. The arts instructors, special education instructors, and student participants were surveyed to determine the success and value of the project. The arts instructors and special education instructors completed their written surveys after the completion of the entire project for the year. The student participants were orally surveyed randomly following one or more sessions of the project they attended. The following paragraphs will state the reactions to the project from each of the above named perspective. Due to confidentiality, the names of the participants and instructor will not be used. Information will be noted as to hypothetical names.

The arts instructors who taught the fifty-minute class sessions for the project were asked five questions. The same questions were asked of the special education teachers. Their responses were very similar.

Question number one: What value to students is *Project Partnership*?

Answers to this question include:

1. “It helps them to express thoughts and feelings through the arts. It helps them share a part of themselves with me. I am able to hear and validate their stories as presented through the medium.” (arts instructor A).

2. “It’s a time for the students to be themselves with out fear of what others might think. I was so impressed with my first *Project Partnership* trip in 2002, my students were totally different then they
are in a normal school day.” (special education instructor, school A)

3. “Most of the students are not the typical ‘social, lots of friends’ students. This project has allowed our students to be exposed to new ideas and activities. It allowed them to broaden their horizons. But most importantly, it increased their self-esteem. The staff was very optimistic toward my students and very encouraging too.” (special education instructor, school B).

4. “It’s a great way to let these students experience culture without feeling awkward. They get a chance to do things they never would have tried if it hadn’t been for Project Partnership.” (special education instructor, school C).

These statements conclude that Project Partnership possesses the value of increasing students self-esteem and social experiences through the arts experience.

Question Number Two: Have you seen a difference in the students who have participated in Project Partnership?

Answers to this question include:

1. “Students who have participated in two or three years are much more open experience the arts medium than the first time they come to Project Partnership. The environment of the Arts Center, away from school, and the instructors dedication to the art makes a great invitation for the special needs student to ‘want’ to participate.” (arts instructor C).

2. “While the students are there, I see an increase in self-confidence. I’m not sure that it continues when we are not out of that environment.” (special
education instructor, school A)

3. “They realize they can do things that they never thought they could do. They have realized how minimal their handicaps are compared to the difficulties that many others experience. The students also have raised self-esteem and a deepened appreciation of accomplishments of themselves and others.” (special education instructor, school D).

4. “The differences I’ve seen are that the students are more open to the arts. They are more willing to try different activities. They have gained more confidence as a result of this program.” (special education instructor, school E).

The overall difference seen in special education students is the willingness to try new experiences without thinking “they can’t” because of their handicap. It is not necessarily the art that they liked doing, but the art brought them the ability to want to try to do. Their self-esteem has been increased.

The environment created by Project Partnership is safe. The home school piece of the project is to bring that safety feeling back to the school so that all environments may then be safe to these students. Since the home school piece is left up to the special education instructor, each student, depending on their home school, may have a different feeling of the environment they will feel safe in to try new things.

Question Number Three: How important is art to these students and does the art contribute to their decision making during the activities?

Answers to this question include:

1. “Art provides a learning space in which they are not being graded on ‘skill
level’ as in other coursework. It is an area that permits expression and values differences and uniqueness. Students with disabilities are often left out because they cannot conform. Art embraces non-conformity.” (arts instructor B).

2. “Art is attached to storytelling for almost all my students. Art gives this a voice; the voice is vital to them. Art frees the student to choose the way they express themselves without fear of the wrong answer.” (arts instructor A).

3. “Being creative-being allowed to do their project as they wish or like. They make the decision on how the project will look. It gives them ownership of the project.” (special education instructor, school F).

4. “Art is not an important factor in these students’ lives. That is why it is so nice for them to experience it in an atmosphere of importance. It gives them a new modality of expression.” (special education instructor, school C).

The importance of art in the lives of these students seems to be varied. But the reaction to the arts activities is much the same. The students feel ownership and self-confidence in their decisions they made during the arts activities. The arts are a means of communication that the disabled students have been allowed to learn through Project Partnership.

Question Number Four: Do you believe the self-determination skills have been increased in the students who have participated in the project?

Answers to this question include:

1. “I believe the self-determination skills have been strengthened because the students are given a choice. Their input is important. Therefore, they feel
the empowerment of making an independent choice.” (special education instructor, school E).

2. “Yes—I have noticed our students that would normally hide within, begin to blossom when they’re at Project Partnership. The smiles they give tell it all!” (special education instructor, school F).

3. “Yes—I think some of them could truly say ‘wow, I didn’t know I could do that’. I think that transfers into other aspects of their lives as well.” (special education instructor, school B).

4. “Not really. That is one of the problems these students have. They may increase for the moment they are there, but not long term.” (special education instructor, school G).

5. “I see very little increase in this area. I believe exposure time is too little to help with this skill area.” (special education instructor, school G).

6. “I believe it increases while they are involved in the program. I wish there was a way to continue that in a regular school setting.” (special education instructor, school A).

7. “Somewhat. There is so little time involved at the art center that it is hard to say. But they really do enjoy this time.” (special education instructor, school C).

Time is a problem in this self-determination evaluation. Seemingly, more time needs to be experiences by the Project Partnership participants for them to develop more self-determination. A strong home school experience to help connect the arts centers experiences may also need to be presented. As stated before, each home school
experience is different according to the individual special education instructor. Possibly a more structured and guided home school experience could be suggested to the individual schools.

Question Number Five: Would you recommend *Project Partnership* to other instructional situations? Does the project work?

Answers to this question include:

1. “I believe exposing students to the arts in all situations is beneficial—but especially with this project; students who don’t have the same chances to do art courses. I’m always amazed at the universal appeal the arts have to children. Given a safe environment, children will express themselves with vigor and joy.” (arts instructor A).

2. “The school instructors who are present during the activities can make or break a session. If they lack enthusiasm or neglect to participate, the students follow suit. The importance of their attitude can’t be over-emphasized.” (arts instructor B).

3. “The project works. I believe because the students love what they’re doing and they don’t even realize they’re learning.”

   (special education instructor, school A).

4. “I love *Project Partnership*—so do my students. It gives them something to look forward to. It also increases the rapport between teachers and students.” (special education instructor, school A).

5. “I believe the project is worthwhile even though the experience is short term. Students remember from year to year and with each year’s attendance,
have a tendency to leave their comfort zone a little quicker.” (special education instructor, school G).

6. “Yes—it was so rewarding for us as teachers when our students showed us their finished projects. *Project Partnership* gave our students opportunities that they would otherwise probably never experience.” (special education instructor, school B).

The elements of the project—the arts, the arts instructors, and the special education instructors, are definitely key elements to the success of *Project Partnership* for the student participants. The exposure to the art, the experiencing the art, and the relationships developed between teachers and students while participating in the art are important aspects of the project. Although the shortness of time involved in the project is an issue, students still want to participate year after year.

The students participating in the project were briefly asked time to time throughout arts sessions by this researcher, to orally respond to the question, “Do you like *Project Partnership* and why?” Students responded briefly to the question, but always positively. Some responses are as follows.

1. “I like coming here to do art.”
2. “I can do this.”
3. “I am meeting more people.”
4. “I can’t wait to go eat lunch.”
5. “I think my arts teacher is funny.”

Being a part of the experience of *Project Partnership* has increased my awareness of how the world in general views and treats the disabled and how we have not done enough
to increase the availability of services for them. I have researched the history of legislation that seems to be empty rhetoric to the real needs of the disabled. Yes, we have made laws and enforced them for access for the disabled to buildings and parking spaces and even employment opportunities, but how many times has the law been ignored or barely met when dealing with the education of the disabled? A free and appropriate education is what the law requires. But our public education system is not in sync throughout the nation with this law. It is not until a parent, or the disabled themselves, threatens with lawsuits that our disabled are really receiving an appropriate education.

We have had special units within a school district to house the disabled and then we have mainstreamed them into regular classrooms to be educated. But have we really given them an equal chance? The disabled child needs to have the inner self-determination to want to achieve in a public school setting. The years of a disabled child’s life private institutionally educating them, home-schooling them, has sheltered them or the way the public school environment has treated them has created a void within them. They usually have no self-esteem because of their disability and how they have been sheltered or treated diminishes their self-determination. This treatment needs to be stopped and another hard look at a different way of educating the disabled in public school needs to be sought.

It has been proven, through this small project, Project Partnership, that the arts are essential to the education of the disabled. It seems that there are many arts educators and other supporters of the arts that realize the importance of the arts for the disabled, but not enough to be heard to make a change. I believe that all public education should adopt into their curriculums strong mandated arts programs that cater specifically to the
disabled. These arts programs should not be part of the mainstreaming of the disabled into the regular school population but a separate program where the disabled student could learn self-determination and develop self-esteem. Hence, such programs would indeed improve the overall education of the disabled in other curricular areas. *Project Partnership* has proven to be a successful program where the arts support the education of the disabled. It is now time to place the principles of *Project Partnership* into the bigger picture of all national public education. Local and state education curriculums for the disabled should be revisited to measure the availability of the arts, as separate opportunities to nurture the self-development of the students. State and even federal funding should be made available to foster such curriculums. And after administering the arts curriculums to the disabled, then a change will be seen in the overall education results of the disabled. The experience, as stated before, would be evident in the moment. The goal is set high, but the results would be satisfying.
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**Manuscripts and Assessments**


**Websites**


November 25, 2003

Robin Evans-DelClappo
10045 Etting Dr.
Marshallville, Ohio 44645

Dear Ms. DelClappo:

The University of Akron’s Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (IRB) processed your Application for Review of the research project entitled: "Project P'Artnership". After initial review, it was determined that your project required a convened meeting held on November 19, 2003. The IRB application number assigned to this project is 20030906.

Your research is now approved without further qualifications for one year from the convened meeting date. Per federal guidelines, if you wish to continue the project beyond one year, you must submit a request for continuing review to the IRB. Any changes in the original research protocol must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

Please note that within one month of the expiration date of this approval, the IRB will forward an annual review reminder notice to you by email as a courtesy. Nevertheless, please note that it is your responsibility as principal investigator to remember the renewal date of your protocol’s review.

If your project terminates prior to the annual renewal date, please complete the Application for Continuing Review and Final Report Form in order to complete your IRB file.

Please retain this letter for your files. If this research is being conducted for a master’s thesis or doctoral dissertation, you must file a copy of this letter with the thesis or dissertation. If you should have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Good luck with your research!

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Phil Allen, Ph.D.
Chair, Institutional Review Board

cc: Neil Saplenza, Department Chair
Paul Daum, Advisor
Nikki Wingerson, IRB Vice Chair
Phil Allen, IRB Chair