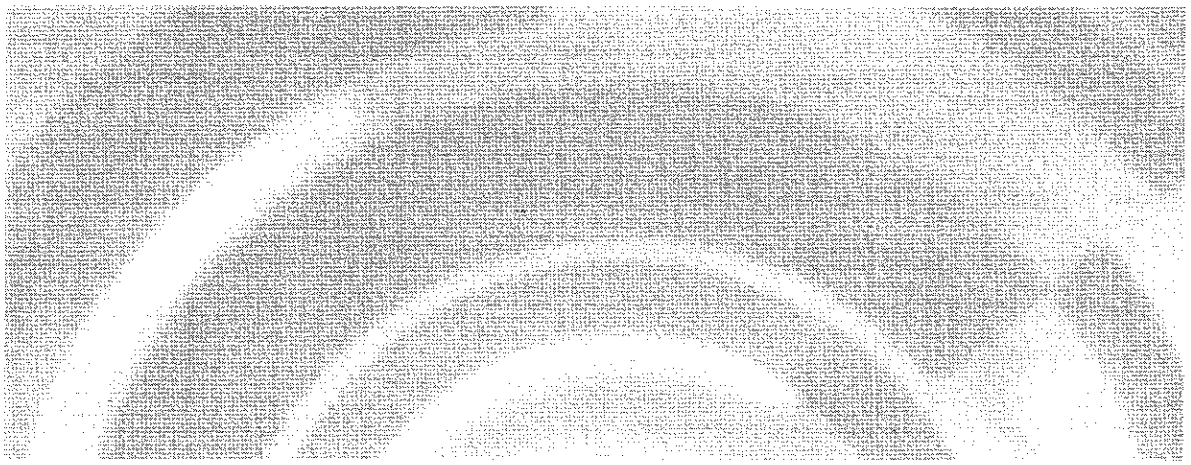
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Chapter 2

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Confronting difference: an excursion through the history of special education

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Across the range of human behaviour, there is some point at which different societies and cultures make a judgement as to whether an individual is normal or abnormal. Those considered abnormal are variously labelled exceptional, different, disabled, or deviant. While all societies have faced the fact of individuals who differed physically, intellectually, or socially, how these differences have been addressed mirrors the vibrant and shifting gestalt of societal dynamics and forms one critical indicator of a society's humanity. However, because the markers for the moral correctness of a position stand in their own time and space, difference and disability have been conceptualized and addressed differently from era to era. It is the interweaving of many complex threads – social, political, economic, and religious which create a propitious climate – one that respects the rights of all individuals in a particular society at a given time. It also establishes the climate in which models of schooling and schools evolve in a particular society.

It was not until the middle decades of the eighteenth century that Europe turned, for the first time, towards the education of persons with disabilities. The spirit of reform, crystallized in the philosophy and precepts of the European Enlightenment, created new vistas for disabled persons and the pioneers who ventured to teach them. Although special education emerged in a number of national contexts, France was the crucible where innovative pedagogies to assist those deaf, blind, and intellectually disabled emerged and flourished (Winzer, 1986). Following the French initiatives, movements to provide services for those in the normative categories of deaf, blind, and intellectually disabled were contemporaneous in continental Europe, Britain, and North America. And, taking into account national idiosyncrasies, the broad outlines of intervention were similar. For example, following a progression that has become a constant pattern in the development of special education provision, deaf persons were the first to be served, followed by services to assist those who are

blind, followed by services for persons with intellectual disabilities (Winzer, 1998). In addition, much education for people with disabilities has been inspired by evangelical commitment; early pioneers and teachers often arose from the clergy.

From the outset, special education has been subject to reforms. In fact, more than in general education, reform movements directed at curriculum, at specific groups, at discrete settings, or at the entire enterprise, have redounded. The complex history and cycles of special education show a field always vulnerable to the caprice of changing fashions, politics, and fads, and characterized by fervent appeals to new philosophies and paradigm shifts. Quests for reform come from within the profession; just as often from without. The field can catalogue a long series of reforms constructed in particular eras in response to political rhetoric, social perceptions, and fiscal conditions.

The emotional appeal of school location – where students designated as having special needs should receive services – has made school addresses central to all reform in special education. As reforms are continuous and reflect a society's view of what is important at a given time, a gradual humanizing stance from society in general has been accompanied with significant thrusts for general school environments, currently encapsulated as inclusive education, inclusive schooling or, occasionally, progressive inclusion.

Given the critical nature of location in the history of special education, this chapter uses locational developments as stepping stones through its history to provide an overview of historical developments. The history of special education is complex and the debates, issues, and controversies that have always characterized the enterprise so interwoven that a quick review cannot capture the reforms and detours in development nor the subtle ways in which particular contentions have been woven together to generate arguments for a particular ideological stance. More detailed accounts of these issues can be found in Cole (1989), Lazerson (1983), Tomlinson (1982), and Winzer (1993).

ADDRESSING THE HISTORY OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The history of special education cannot be described as extensive; the historical literature tends to be scattered and specialized. Save perhaps for the history of deaf education, there is so little comprehensive research that the historical development remains a relatively unexplored cul-de-sac within the history of education.

Indeed, many special educators seem curiously disinterested in the foundations of the field; historical knowledge is learned incidentally and unintentionally (Mostert & Crockett, 1999–2000; Winzer, 2004). To some, history becomes increasingly selective, with the past made over to suit present intentions; others speak to the 'lack of history' (Renzaglia, Hutchins & Lee, 1997, p. 361). At the same time, some contemporary writers disparage earlier events, programmes, and pioneers in favour of contemporary models. Some point to fossilized traditions; others hold that if today's inclusive movement embodies the best ideals of social justice then the past, by extension, had to be unjust (Winzer, 2004). Implicit to this position is a steadfast unwillingness to learn from the wisdom of the accumulated past.

In 1975, Blatt observed that 'in this field we call special education, history has not served us well. We have not learned from it' (p. 404). Yet, the complex dilemmas of contemporary special education did not emerge in a vacuum; rather, they arose from almost two centuries of social, legal, and educational changes that have left a storehouse of unresolved issues.

Historical inquiry is a vital component of the struggle to understand our ideologies and practices. Complex issues seldom yield to broad generalizations and a historical tool enables us to examine theoretical stances in different ways and challenge the inadequacies

of single explanations for complex educational movements. Certainly, a consideration of the historical background of current issues is no guarantee that special education will not repeat its mistakes, but an examination of the past illuminates both past endeavours and the underpinnings of current dilemmas. Distinguished pioneers have provided a legacy and a 'heritage rich with lessons abundantly able to inform contemporary issues in special education, particularly those related to intervention' (Mostert & Crockett, 1999–2000, p. 134).

While some detours cannot be erased from our professional history, special educators do not need to assuage some collective guilt. Rather, we should celebrate the contributions of the brilliant, innovative, often controversial and erratic philosophers, physicians, pedagogues and many others of a philanthropic bent who laboured in their own societies and eras to improve the lives of persons with disabilities. Among the venerable list are those who created opportunities for deaf persons such as John Wallis, John Bulwer, John Comad Amman, Samuel Heinicke, Michael Charles de l'Epée, and Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet. For those blind stand Edward Ruston, Valentin Häuy, and Samuel Gridley Howe. Phillippe Pinel, Jean Etienne Esquirol, Benjamin Rush, and William Tuke improved the lives of those mentally ill; Itard, Seguin, Belhomme, Ferrus, Falret, Voisin, Vallee, and Saugert intervened with people who were mentally retarded.

PIONEERING EFFORTS

Prior to the mid-eighteenth century, individual deviations were rarely tolerated and little was done for those who in some way disrupted the norms of a society. Disability was not an innocuous boundary; rather, it was a liability in social and economic participation. People perceived as disabled – whatever the type or degree – were lumped together under the broad categorization of *idiot*, scorned as inferior beings and deprived of rights and privileges.

This early period is replete with innumerable stories of healing, many imbued with an aura of the miraculous. By the close of the fifteenth century, the uncertain recitation of miracle and legend conceded to the more or less stable compilation of authenticated records. By the end of the next century, there was a growing literature, a spawning of ideas, and innovative individual interventions, particularly with deaf persons (see Winzer, 1993).

The middle decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the pervasive influence of the European Enlightenment. While the intellectual project of the Enlightenment was to build a sound body of knowledge about the world, its humanitarian philosophy prompted ideas about the equality of all people and the human responsibility to take care of others, particularly individuals outside the private circle of the home and the family. Reform movements sprang up, aimed at the improvement of the well-being of groups of individuals, varying from poor people and slaves to prisoners, the insane, and disabled people.

In France, the Abbé Michel Charles de l'Epée assimilated Enlightenment ideals of equality, as well as novel concepts about language and its development. He joined these to the sensationalist philosophy of John Locke and the French *philosophes* to promote innovative approaches to the education of deaf persons. If de l'Epée's doctrine promoting a silent language of the hands was not unprecedented, it was nevertheless revolutionary in the context of the times. In devising and instructing through a language of signs, the Abbé gave notice that speech was no longer the apex of instruction in the education of deaf persons. Simultaneously, he influenced and guided innovations for other groups with disabilities, specifically those blind, deaf blind, and intellectually disabled.

Following de l'Epée's successful mission with deaf students, Valentin Häuy in 1782 initiated the instruction of blind persons using a raised print method. Somewhat later, in 1810, Edouard Seguin devised pedagogy for those considered to be mentally retarded.

The French educational initiatives travelled the Atlantic to be adopted by pioneer educators in the United States and Canada.

The influence in Britain was less pervasive. In that turbulent period, religious zealotry and political conservatism held sway, while one dominant mode in British thought was animosity to all things French. Although the British social climate promoted education of some disabled persons largely as an extension of schemes for managing the impecunious, the dependent, orphans, and 'vicious' children, the French advances were largely denounced. For example, the sign language system developed by de l'Epée was characterized as 'altogether useless' and 'an absurd and inexcusable waste of time' (cited by Seigel, 1969, p. 115).

Rejection of French innovations did not imply that British advances were minor. On the contrary. Building on the prerogatives of earlier pioneers, teachers and clergy such as Thomas Braidwood and John Townsend promoted education for deaf persons. Schemes to assist other groups soon followed.

By the close of the eighteenth century in Europe and Britain, the instruction of disabled persons was no longer confined to isolated cases or regarded merely as a subject of philosophic curiosity. Permanent facilities were established, staffed by a cadre of teachers experimenting with novel and innovative pedagogical methods. The French endeavours formed the core of systems and methods adopted in the United States and much of British North America (Canada). In the latter, however, the Maritime provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick initially adopted British pedagogy (see Winzer, 1993).

INSTITUTIONAL MODELS

Prompted by Enlightenment thought, early-nineteenth century Americans found a common level of sympathy to improve the lives of people who were weak, dependent, or disabled. Founded on a humanitarian philosophy, evangelical commitment, and unbounded philanthropy, they established from 1817 onwards a complex of institutions designed to cater to the unique needs of exceptional individuals.

As social philosophy, special education was reformist but not radical. Institutional openings coincided with a period of wide social reform and embodied the three major principles of nineteenth-century child rescue – protection, separation, and dependence. Development was built on the recognition of the need for organized social responsibility and intrinsically associated with changing social, economic, political, and religious determinants of early-nineteenth century American society. As well as being urged on the grounds of expediency, charity, and imperative duty, institutional formation represented rapidly changing perceptions of the role of disabled persons in an industrializing society.

This early special education, under the aegis of the clergy and philanthropy, and presented in an expanding complex of institutional settings, had two faces. On the one hand, it was the protector of vulnerable children. Pioneer reformers, not uncertain in their piety and concerned with humane treatment for the disabled and disenfranchised, set out to provide for those perceived as being in need of assistance. Institutional settings would protect children and youth from a callous world, while at the same time providing examples of the evangelical belief that all people were capable of being saved. For examples, Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, reflecting his views of upper-class Protestant New England society, defined his role within a missionary context. He viewed himself as responsible for the character formation of pupils, and entrusted by God as a private steward of their welfare (Valentine, 1991). Deaf people to Gallaudet (1836) were 'Long-neglected heathens,' (p. 217), excluded from the hopes and knowledge of Christianity and dwelling in a 'moral desert' (in Barnard, 1852, p. 102).

On the other hand, the activities had the effect of limiting opportunities for the very pupils they set out to serve. Child-saving was sanctioned in the interests of social control: special schooling served the interests of advantaged members of society by maintain-

ing and rationalizing the further marginalization of those it purported to help. It also served to turn consumers into producers. Schooling for blind children would remove from society 'so many dead weights' and prevent them from becoming 'taxes on the community' (Dunscombe, 1836, p. 97). Education would emancipate deaf children from 'the fetters ... imposed by their deafness' (Ontario Institution, 1895, p. 12) so that 'the old ignorance, the old animism, the old brutishness are passed away' (Turner, 1858). For the mentally retarded, 'Being consumers and not producers they are a pecuniary burden to the state. Educate them and they will become producers' (Knight, 1860, cited in Trent, 1994, p. 25).

Reformers held that students with disabilities required different forms of organization. The system that emerged reflected the perception of disabled persons as different, deviant, and charity recipients. The nature of services was educational, but the context in which they were presented fell wholly within the confines of public charities. Hence, the common designations of institution, asylum, colony, or training school reflected a fact – students were public beneficiaries, dependent on official charity.

Institutionalization, as an idealistic reform, sought to concentrate persons with disabilities in rural environments where the daily regimes were typical of rural life. For persons with mental retardation, the rural institutions soon evolved into farm colonies consisting of a custodial department, a training school, an industrial department, and a farm. Inmates laboured on the farm, worked the heavy machinery in the laundry, print shop or boiler room, and tended the animals and farm. Females performed domestic chores, did the sewing and mending, and the hand laundry. For custodial clients, even rudimentary optimism was soon abandoned. Samuel Gridley Howe ([1848A], 1972) described idiots – at that time the lowest category of feeble mindedness – as 'mere organisms, masses of flesh and none in human shape' (p. 7). Seen as incurable and totally unteachable, the eventual release of custodial inmates grew increasingly doubtful.

Throughout the nineteenth century, institutions formed the chief setting for training and instruction. By the close of the century, a complex of institutions was in place and the social, educational, and psychological philosophies that propelled the institutional movement were well developed. However, these institutional settings were not developed within the framework of a stable school system. Permanent facilities predated the common school movement by four decades and birthed the dual system of special and general education that, despite reform efforts, remains prevalent today.

COMMON SCHOOLS

Robert Osgood (1997) points out that 'The common school movement has long constituted one of the defining themes and primary focal points of scholarship in the history of American education' (p. 375). Not only did the movement stamp indelibly the historical and cultural fabric of America and other countries with similar movements, but it changed the course of educational intervention for students with special needs. North American special education drew heavily on British and European experience, particularly in philosophy and pedagogy. Therefore, although this and the following sections address chiefly the North American experience, other nations were, in the broadest way, similar in their development of pedagogies and settings that allows for some generalizations to be made.

Under Horace Mann's reorganization, American public education became, for the first time, a state vehicle. With the primary object the socialization of all children, the common schools represented the unique means to instil American values into students with diverse ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds and therefore provided a bulwark against the radical social, economic, and demographic changes that threat-

ened to destabilize American society in the post-Civil War period.

The initial vision of the common schools embraced all students, from the docile and tractable to the deviant and the intractable. But almost from the outset, the reformist and optimistic impulses that characterized the common school ideal faltered when confronted with disobedient, rambunctious, and nonconforming students. Issues of classroom behaviour touched upon basic notions of child normalcy (or deviance), and the authority of both adults and social institutions such as schools. The school system was little willing to tolerate students who violated social mores, failed to conform to the expectations of teachers, and mounted threats to the placidity of general classrooms.

Adopting models developed in Halle, Germany in 1859, jurisdictions in the eastern United States established ungraded classes in the 1870s. Those sent to ungraded classes tended to show the unholy trinity of academic retardation, low intelligence, and undesirable behaviour. They were the trouble-makers, depicted in contemporary reports, as the 'morally as well as intellectually weak,' and the 'troublesome and obnoxious' (see Osgood, 1997). The majority of students were male. As Baker (1949/50) later pointed out, 'Boys of all ages bully, fight, and act smart aleck much more frequently than girls' (p. 203). Joining the disabled group were children of immigrant backgrounds. In ungraded classes, the Americanization of immigrant children and English language instruction were fundamental activities (Osgood, 1997).

Leading educators articulated the philosophical and pedagogical bases for the establishment of special segregated classes within the public schools. Bolstering arguments about class size, teacher time, and declining standards were the voices of prominent special educators such as Alexander Graham Bell and Samuel Gridley Howe who disputed institutional landscapes and the congregating of persons with disabilities together. Edward Johnstone, superintendent of the Vineland Institution for Feeble Minded Boys and Girls took a more modern stance. 'The blind, the deaf, the crippled, and the incorrigibles must some day take their place in the life of the commonwealth with normal people,' he said. Therefore, 'they at least must have training in the public schools to keep them from becoming institutionalized and thus losing touch with normal community life' (Vineland, 1912, p. 22).

Many of the special classes that were formed before 1900 faltered. Classes which sought to raise the pupils' standards to those of regular class members failed in their efforts at remediation; others suffered from a lack of trained teachers, materials, official commitment, and funding. Many schools' systems operated only one type of special class, which were often used merely to dispose of children who did not conform to a school's behavioral standards. Little distinction existed between obstreperous and recalcitrant pupils and defective learners. Only small numbers attended, a condition preserved by attrition. As one administrator pointed out in 1909, these students 'tend to drop out, or be forced out, of school and the problem of the exceptional child disappeared with him' (in Tropea, 1987a, p. 31).

By the close of the nineteenth century, many European jurisdictions provided both free and compulsory education for exceptional students. Denmark, for example, mandated compulsory education for children with sensory impairments in 1817. France passed legislation in 1882 enforcing primary instruction for disabled children. The British Elementary Education Act (Deaf and Blind Children) of 1893 placed the financial responsibility of compulsory education with departments of education. The movement from supplicant to school child emerged more tardily in North America. Although many of the early state constitutions of the United States spoke freely and somewhat loosely about guaranteeing free public education to all children, compulsory schooling became a reality only in the 1890s. Even then, most state's earliest requirements were lax, with

exemptions for poor families, families involved in agriculture, and families with sick or disabled children (Trent, 1994).

Thus the majority of children with disabilities remained unserved. Yet, the tightening of compulsory attendance laws meant that schools could no longer ignore part of the clientele; once the state assured the right to compel attendance, then the state also had the responsibility to provide an education congruent with students' needs. Hence, special education, still largely confined to institutional settings and nascent segregated classes, was established as a permanent enterprise. It was, however, a fairly well-kept secret in the entire education establishment. The system was separate from general education with different settings and classes, and the beginning of specialized training for teachers and the development of a cadre of specialists from allied disciplines that bolstered school efforts. Special, segregated classes, which were destined to become both the backbone and the chief bone of contention in special education for all of the next century, arrived largely unheralded.

SPECIAL CLASSES

From about 1890, the movement for special classes gathered strength. By the turn of the century, the schools' responses to student heterogeneity became more organized and the new century ushered in a massive expansion of special, segregated classes. By 1913, 108 cities had special classes and special schools (Trent, 1994). By 1927, 218 US cities had special or ungraded classes for about 52,000 children labelled 'mentally handicapped' (Osgood, 1997).

A matrix of reasons accounted for the mounting numbers of special classes and the students in them. These included rapidly increasing numbers of immigrant children entering neighbourhood schools; the lessened participation of youth in the labour market; greater state involvement in the hitherto sacrosanct domain of the family; legislation affecting women, families, and children; new concepts about child normalcy; the birth of compulsory attendance laws; the testing movement; the development of the fields of psychiatry, psychology, and the mental hygiene movement; slowly changing conceptions of exceptional persons which generated altered ways of viewing the institutionalized population; and complaints about the custodial and retrogressive nature of public residential institutions. Child mortality and child morbidity decreased and faced schools with large numbers of students with mild disabilities to learning. As well, constructs of disability had shifted and evolved during the latter half of the nineteenth century as new knowledge and beliefs about the nature of various conditions and the educability of those identified as having them emerged. The child study movement and new psychological and medical findings made professionals, parents, and the public more alert to the educational implications of physical and mental disabilities.

Medical models prevailed, although deeply influenced by the religious and moral preoccupations of the times. Medical models assumed both quantitative and qualitative difference between normal and abnormal. By the 1880s, socially constructed categories that included emotional and behavioural indices truly emerged. It was believed that 'Minor mental defections were fertile ground that allowed ineradicably evil mental attitudes to take ready root' (Vineland, 1894, p. 37). Contributing further to a medical stance was the popularity of evolutionary explanations for social problems, manifested as Social Darwinism and the eugenics movement.

As biology became destiny, evolutionary analogies, explanations, and ways of thinking rapidly became ubiquitous in North America. The public gravitated towards uncomplicated interpretations and explanations of human differences. Many interpreted the ideas of Darwinism and natural selection to mean that procreation was a social, not an individual, issue. Moreover, individuals could be scientifically shaped and controlled to fulfil the nation's destiny.

Civilized society, threatened by genetically defective strains from both immigration and at home, became hostile and repressive and developed an enthusiasm for sterilization. The first state sterilization law, passed by the Indiana legislature in 1907, provided for the 'prevention of the procreation of "confirmed criminals, idiots, imbeciles, and rapists"' (Landman, 1932, p. 55). Special educators joined the new breed of moral entrepreneurs in their crusade for a genetically and socially pure America. By the mid-1930s, more than 20,000 people with mental retardation and epilepsy had been sterilized (see Winzer, 1993).

Educators operationalized the medical model in various modes. For example, with the emphasis on biology and medical orientations, mental abnormality was propelled to prominence to become the major category of disability by the late 1800s. In the institutions for the mentally retarded, a great reliance developed on medical practice, medical institutional structure, and medical leadership. In the school milieu, educators assumed that disorders had distinct patterns of symptoms and signs that resulted from different disease entities and causes, and responded to different treatments. Children were classified within medical knowledge, labelled with a particular disability designation, viewed as deviant, and propelled toward certain institutions, special classes, and pedagogical practices.

The period that matched the growth of scientific racism – from about 1880 to 1925 – was also the most critical for the development of special classes. Special class promoters in the early twentieth century built cogent and persuasive arguments on an already existing body of sentiment and experience. They argued that special education was a logical extension of regular education and the sole effective means of turning handicapped people into producers, and a means of protecting society from 'the threat of the feebleminded'.

Within the confines of the school system, segregated classrooms effectively removed what Wallin (1914) called the 'flotsam and the jetsam', the 'hold backs and the drags' (p. 390). Thus removed from the mainstream, problem children could not disrupt classrooms or contaminate the learning of others. As well, educators could 'ensure diagnosis and treatment at an early age' and use the classes or 'clearing houses for personnel segregation before adult life is reached' (Fernald, 1912, p. 9). Moreover, said a later writer, 'The special school or class has many advantages in that the various resources of the school system can be centered upon traditional and certain desirable routines in behavior can be more easily established' (Notes ..., 1946/47, p. 49).

From 1910 to 1930 there occurred a huge spurt in the enrolments in and types of special classes. Special settings and specially trained teachers served children variously described as deaf, blind, hard of hearing, near blind, undernourished, crippled, academically maladjusted, mentally retarded, speech defective, tubercular, and so on (Palen, 1923). The most heavily funded programmes in Canada and the United States were in mental retardation, followed by speech and hearing disorders.

As the special classes expanded and the fields of psychology, mental testing, social work, and health care developed, a corps of special personnel emerged. Special services provided by psychologists, public health nurses, school workers, and clinics supplemented the work of the schools.

Increased financial support for special classes and schools after World War I ushered in a period of rapid growth in services for mildly handicapped students (Johnson, 1962). Classes, pupils, the teaching force, teacher training facilities, and allied specialists expanded even further. By 1949, there were 175 institutions offering preparation programmes for special educators. The curricula designed for segregated classrooms were refined and structured.

Traditionally, those considered abnormal were seen as not only valueless but generally harmful to society; besides being non-producers, they absorbed the energies and the

productive power of others. During the 1920s, special educators flirted with the concepts of Progressive education. They embraced the notion that schools should assume leadership in initiating social change and accept responsibility for the present and future needs of students. To many practitioners, the ultimate goal of special classes was 'to provide as many as possible with the means of living as normally as possible and of procuring independent livelihood' (Percival, 1946/47, p. 237).

In special classrooms, teachers constructed and then reaffirmed the belief that their students were both capable of and deserving of an education. They abandoned the inflexible curricula that proved the undoing of children who did not conform to the common notion of normal. Rather, practical instruction in trades and agriculture for the boys and in domestic skills for the girls took precedence over the academic programme. About half the time was spent on academics. The remainder was on practical handwork – sewing, weaving, knitting, and cooking for the girls; woodwork for the boys (Percival, 1946/47).

Percival observed in 1946 that 'The immediate purpose of most of these special classes is, of course, to enable the pupils to mingle in due course with normal children' (p. 237). This rarely happened. Right into the 1960s, the segregated class was the unchallenged leader as the preferred setting for students with special needs. In fact, special classes expanded even more during the late 1960s, in part due to the creation of the category of learning disabilities in 1963.

At the same time, the expansion of special classes confirmed for general teachers the parameters of acceptable achievement and behaviour in their own classrooms. Social rejection and stigmatization of pupils and perceptions of the field as unique and different widened into a chasm separating both sets of players within a dual system. Special education remained different and separate from the general stream, with alternate guidelines for programme planning and service provisions.

CREATING A PROFESSION

At the time of the founding institutions, schooling was a charitable enterprise; worthy, but unimportant to the national interest. Early administrators arose from the clergy; it was not until mid-century that private philanthropy ceded to bureaucratic social welfare and school leaders introduced an ethic of disinterested public service. As they developed, the institutions came to share two basic qualities: a highly progressive and reformist zeal among the leaders, and an increasing reliance on the expertise of a scientific and professionalized teaching corps.

Teachers of the deaf came early to asserting a sense of unique professional identity; the process of professionalization began during the 1840s when various organizations such as the Convention of American Educators of the Deaf and Dumb emerged. Associations for teachers, administrators, and workers in the fields of blindness and mental retardation developed a little later.

In concert with the burgeoning special classes that grew so rapidly in the opening decades of the twentieth century, the professional paradigm that guided special education shifted and expanded. As teachers of students with special needs assiduously established their own sense of professionalism and authority, they increasingly developed a belief about their mission, how it should be carried out, and the credentials that qualified a person to enter the profession. In doing so, they generated new beliefs about educators' status and power in relation to the clients, to parents, to allied disciplines, and to the world at large (see Osgood, 1999).

New visions of teacher training emerged. College and university programmes paralleled the growth of day schools and day classes. By 1930, ten states set forth legal requirements for teacher certification, usually an elementary degree plus supplemental training (Scheier, 1931).

New and more encompassing professional associations flourished. These not only validated a sense of separateness and uniqueness

among special educators as they struggled for recognition and acceptance in the world of public education, but also distanced special educators from their general education peers, setting them apart in terms of what they knew and how they saw themselves (see Osgood, 1999).

Because 'Pupils with dull minds, crippled bodies, speech defects, deafness, or twisted emotions came to school' (Laycock, 1937/38, p. 108), teachers had to respond to the complex interrelationships of social, emotional, and intellectual traits. It is not surprising that unique attributes quickly attached to special education teachers and expectations regarding their superior teaching skills and personal characters were set high. Writers pointed out that teachers should be selected on the basis of personality qualifications (Font, 1944/45). Samuel Laycock (1940/41) warned that the teacher of special classes should be 'emotionally mature and have a wholesome emotional life of her own' (p. 5). She could not be irritable or bad tempered, fussy or coddling, a self-pitier, not starved in her emotional life; rather, grown up in her sex life and free from frustration and conflict in her own life.

CHANGING SCHOOL ADDRESSES

The 1960s, which marked large-scale political, social, and economic change in the context of many disenfranchised and marginalized groups, saw the modern rewriting of the special education script and the beginning of a genuine movement towards integration and desegregation. Parents, consumers, and advocates used the period's increased sensitivity to human and civil rights to promote the normalization philosophy, the 'handicappism' movement, and to mount a case against special education as it was practised at that time.

The United States has a long history of relying on legislative and judicial remedies for social issues, including special education. By 1930, 16 US states had passed legislation authorizing special education. By 1946, there were well over a hundred laws directed toward the education of exceptional students (Martens, 1946). The 1960s witnessed a boom in legislation and generous funding provided for training personnel and implementing separate programmes. There was an upsurge of funding federally and by the states in the 1960s, as well as critical initiatives such as the President's Panel on Mental Retardation. However, critics chided still that 'One-half of the estimated 7,000,000 handicapped children in our nation are still not receiving special education services in our schools' (Gallagher, 1970, p. 712).

As the fervent egalitarianism and humanism of the 1960s created a new climate, the educational integration of students with disabilities became the central theme of special education. Vexatious questions about segregated instruction mounted, chiefly on the basis of efficacy studies on pupil outcomes. The reasoning of the Supreme Court in the 1954 *Brown* vs *Board of Education* decisions was widely cited in arguments against segregated classes. Calls by persons with disabilities and their advocates for increased participation grew more strident during the 1970s. The next decade introduced overarching and prescriptive federal legislation with the comprehensive enabling legislation (PL 94–142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act) and the concept of the least restrictive environment, interpreted as mainstreaming.

Beginning in the early 1980s, waves of reform surged across the educational systems of many nations. One of the strongest and most basic of the reform efforts in general education revolved around ensuring educational equity and opportunity for all students. Special education quickly co-opted the voice of reform. Now the rallying cry of greater access to the mainstream was replaced by a much more complex note, that of full access to a restructured mainstream, encapsulated as inclusive schooling.

In its philosophical guise, inclusive schooling for students with special needs is grounded in quite specific conceptions of

social justice, ethics, and rights. These are an outgrowth of a liberal-democratic social philosophy focusing on individual civil rights, mobilizing the discourse of equity, and guided by axiomatic moral imperatives. Ultimately, as Barton (1999) observes, inclusion 'is about the transformation of a society and its formal institutional arrangements, such as education. This means changes in the values, priorities and policies that support and perpetuate practices of exclusion and discrimination' (p. 58). Operationalized, inclusive schooling aims to rid education of stubborn, long-standing inequalities through a revisualization of the organizational structures of schools.

Because location – a student's school address – has become a central motif of the inclusion movement in North America, inclusive schooling has become a code phrase for school restructuring. When inclusion was adapted from general school reforms, the basic constructs of individual rights and equity translated into 'sameness of treatment' which immediately mutated to 'sameness of experience'. Because sameness of experience has been interpreted by many as physical place, the question of location has become the hub of controversy and the podium for much emotional moralizing and value-laden stances.

In the early-1990s, the clarion call was for full inclusion. Advocates contended that it was more enlightened to alter the classroom and school structure to allow all children to gain an education there than to segregate some students in special settings. The area is complex and fluid. Today, full inclusion in general classrooms is not blanket policy; rather, there exist selective and pragmatic policies based on student needs and the capacity-building of school systems.

Certainly, inclusive schooling has moved from an idea to a conviction to become the dominant ideology in contemporary special education. But despite ideological and philosophical convictions, inclusion remains better accepted in the concept than in the practice. The undergirding philosophy is resilient and can be advocated unequivocally. When the ideology is transferred to the lived worlds of teachers and the hard realities of general classrooms, problems abound. Efforts to forge a fundamentally different educational framework for students with special needs are ambitious but school restructuring and reform efforts have failed to have the necessary impact on traditional school structures.

POSTSCRIPT

As a complex and challenging area, special education is often shaped by emotional responses and historical and cultural beliefs. This brief survey of the major stepping stones in its development shows that over the decades as society has confronted difference, there has been a gradual humanizing attitude toward persons with disabilities manifested both as societal attitudes and as school addresses. It also points out that there are significant patterns of change, as well as patterns of continuity, in the history of special education.

Special education was established formally and permanently in the United States in 1818. The complex of institutions that rapidly arose predated education for normally developing students by decades and grew as essentially a dual system, quite separate from the general stream. However, the systems of service delivery produced by special education from 1817 onwards were not short-lived or static; they evolved and changed, producing new events and actions.

Almost from the time of Horace Mann's creation of the common schools, the public system was tested by student differences and the concern for bureaucratic efficiency. Educators embarked on sustained efforts to address the obstacles that student diversity meant to the organizational structures of the system. Rapidly, the troublesome matters of difference, deviance, and delinquency were addressed not through the general classrooms' assumption of the process, but through the mechanisms of ungraded and unruly class.

At the dawn of the twentieth century, new medical and scientific knowledge, increasing social fears and a climate of interventionist social reform provided the historical context within which the end result was steadily increasing numbers of children identified as in need of special schooling. The growth of segregated settings in both numbers and importance provides vivid portraits of societal and educational perceptions of students with exceptionalities. Not only did the establishment of special classes illustrate how changing societal and educational conditions and priorities eroded the underpinnings of the common school movement, but also how those considered deviant and different were viewed by society.

Right into the 1960s, institutional settings and segregated classes remained the primary mechanisms for educating students with disabilities. However, in light of increasing concerns about social justice, equity, and individual civil rights within education, there occurred a massive remodelling of special education beginning in that decade. Agents of change challenged the persistence of traditional attitudes. Still, the intensification of the trend away from special classes answered not the education decision-making process but, rather, non-educational influences such as civil rights concerns.

In the current climate, special education is no longer viewed as a distant and not too respectable cousin of general education. Inclusive education makes children and youth with exceptionalities the concern of all involved in the school system. Today's inclusive schooling movement may be viewed as one more resolution to the matter of difference. For the moment, inclusion seems set to remain at the forefront of special education reform. Nevertheless, it must be recognized that for students with special needs, the ethic of universal provision remains an elusive dream and many issues remain unresolved. While it is almost universally conceded that people with disabilities have a natural and rightful place in society and that schools should mirror this broader commitment, the dilemma that emerges is not just what such a commitment should mean but how to operationalize it and make it happen.

Special educators are perhaps more adept at advocacy than prophecy. While the concepts and practices we strive towards today may appear sophisticated and socially just, this may not be a permanent status. Solutions to the dilemma of difference and the resolutions of special education do not emerge out of a social vacuum. Today's reforms may indeed appear primitive to historians in another hundred years.

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