IMPROVING SOCIAL SKILLS THROUGH INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE MENTAL DISABILITIES IN A NON-ACADEMIC ART CLASS

MARY M. GULIN

To the Graduate and Research Council:

I am submitting hereafter a field study written by Mary M. Gulin entitled "Improving Social Skills Through Including Students with Moderate to Severe Mental Disabilities In A Non-Academic Art Class." I have examined the final copy of this field study for form and content and recommend it to be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Special Education.

Dr. Larry Lowrance,
Major Professor

We have read this field study
and recommend its acceptance.

Dr. Allan Williams

Dr. Penelope Masden

Accepted for the Council:

Dean of the Graduate School

IMPROVING SOCIAL SKILLS THROUGH INCLUDING STUDENTS WITH MODERATE TO SEVERE MENTAL DISABILITIES IN A NON-ACADEMIC ART CLASS

A Field Study

Presented to the

Graduate and Research Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree of

Education Specialist

By

Mary M. Gulin

May, 2000

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to express my deepest appreciation to the chairperson of my committee, Dr. Larry Lowrance. His continual guidance and constant encouragement made this project possible. I would also like to thank the other members of the Graduate Committee, Dr. Penelope Masden and Dr. Allan S. Williams, for their support and guidance. In addition, I would like to thank my colleagues, especially Kim Butts and Kathy DePriest, who have supported me every step of the way.

None of this would have been possible without the support of my husband, Gary Gulin, and my children, Daniel and David. Their patience, understanding, support and love helped sustain me through many long hours that went into the completion of this field study.

ABSTRACT

The acquisition of appropriate social skills affects the post-secondary outcomes for persons with disabilities. Secondary students with moderate to severe mental disabilities taught in self-contained classrooms do not have the opportunity to acquire and practice these skills. This study investigates the possible increase of positive social skills and the decrease of negative social interactions in non-academic secondary inclusionary settings.

The behaviors, initiating interactions with non-disabled peers, responding to non-disabled peer interactions, encroaching in personal space, and inappropriate conversations were pre and post assessed. The results were subjected to t-tests to determine significant changes in the social behaviors of students with disabilities. Analysis of the data revealed some significant increases in positive social behaviors for students with disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1

Introduction

A socially competent person is able to interpret social cues in a variety of settings and react to them in the appropriate manner. A person with a disability who is unable to blend into social settings is more likely to be considered mentally retarded than a person with the same disability but exhibits appropriate social behaviors (Black and Langone, 1997).

Appropriate social interactions can not be taught in the isolated settings of self-contained classrooms. Students with disabilities must have repeated exposure to non-disabled individuals to learn acceptable social behaviors (Black and Langone, 1997). Including students with disabilities in a non-academic classroom environment allows them to interact with peers without the added pressure of learning specific content. In this environment more emphasis can be placed on the social interactions between the two groups of students.

Art classes are among the settings that provide this environment. Students are able to produce art at their own level with many opportunities to interact with each other. The general education students serve as role

models for the included students as well as provide assistance in completing projects assigned. This setting may also provide more opportunities for all the students to form social relationships than do other settings where content is important.

The Problem

Non-disabled peers often view students with disabilities in a negative light. There may be many factors contributing to this viewpoint; however, the inappropriate social skills displayed by many moderately to severely disabled students appear to be one of the biggest contributing factors to the inability to assimilate into the community. This in turn causes an inability for people that are moderately to severely disabled to assimilate into the community.

Importance of the problem

A student's ability to develop and maintain appropriate social relationships with his peers and adults may be as good as, or even a better predictor of developmental outcomes, than intelligence test scores or academic achievement (Sowers, Thompson, & Connis, 1979). Moderately to severely disabled individuals with acceptable social skills are more likely to gain and maintain employment. They are also more likely to

develop social relations with others and live in less restrictive environments such as supported living arrangements.

Relationship of the study to this problem

Including students with moderate and severe disabilities in non-academic classes such as art enables them to practice social skills with non-disabled peers regardless of their cognitive differences. These peers can also act as models for appropriate behaviors. As a result, the students will have a better chance of forming lasting relationships with community members.

Preview

To reach this goal, students with disabilities were included with non-disabled peers in an art class. Four specific social interactions were assessed prior to the beginning of the class and again upon completion of the course.

Hypothesis

1.) There will be no difference in initiating interactions with non-disabled peers by students with disabilities between the pre and post measures during the period when they are included in the art class.

2.) There will be no difference in the number of times students with disabilities respond to the interactions of their non-disabled peers between the pre and post measures during the period when they are included in the art class.

3.) There will be no difference in the number of times students with disabilities encroach in the personal space of their non-disabled peers between the pre and post measures during the period of time they are included in the art class.

4.) There will be no difference in the number of inappropriate conversations by students with disabilities between the pre and post measures during the time they are included in the art class.

Definition of terms

Lifeskills classes: Special education classes in which the students spend more than 50% of the school day. The curriculum focuses on functional skills necessary to live independently as adults.

Inclusion: Educational placements in which students with disabilities are educated in the general education classroom. This placement is based on the individual needs of the students as outlined by the Individual Education Plan. The students placed in this setting may be striving to obtain academic or social skills, or both. The general education environment is modified to meet the students' specific needs.

General Education: Students whose placement in the regular classroom is not based on any particular mental, physical, or learning disability.

Self-contained classroom: Educational settings in which students with disabilities are educated for the majority of the school day in a special education room.

Individual Education Plan (IEP): An IEP is the educational plan for a child receiving special education services. This plan is developed with the input of all persons involved with the child, to include the special educator, parents, general education teacher, any related service personnel and, if appropriate, the child.

Limitations of the study:

There are several limitations to this study. 1.) The study was one which was limited in scope because of the time restraints of the art project and so it may not

yield the same results one would find in a longer study. 2.) The sample was limited to students in the *Outside the Box* art program and those students may not display the same behaviors as one would find in a larger sample. 3.) The sample was further limited in scope to students of secondary age, 13-20 years, and may not have the same results as one would find in a study with younger children.

Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

Social integration and normalization of children and their acceptance into society has long been a goal of special education (Cole and Meyer 1991). A major part of social integration as adults is the ability to hold a job and live independently. Persons with disabilities who lack social skills are not as likely to secure and maintain employment and usually live in more restrictive settings as adults (Benz, Yovanoff, and Doren, 1997). Intelligence does not seem to be as much a factor in success as social competence for this group of individuals (Sowers, Thompson, and Connis, 1979). The educational environment of students with disabilities may play an important role in the development of these social competencies.

Students with moderate to severe mental disabilities can not learn appropriate social skills when educated in isolated self-contained environments. They are unlikely to be able to generalize those skills practiced in the classroom to other settings. These students must have repeated exposure to multiple settings for generalization of skills to occur, including social skills (Black and Langone, 1997).

Students with moderate to severe disabilities who are included with general education students show an increase in the acquisition of appropriate social skills (Brinker & Thorpe, 1984). Correct use of proximity, eye contact and calling peers by name to gain attention were increased when students with disabilities were taught social skills using non-disabled peers in inclusion settings (English, Goldstein, Shafer, and Kaczmarek, 1990). Kennedy, Shukla, and Fryxell (1997) noted a significant increase in social interactions when students with disabilities are taught in inclusive classrooms as compared to those taught in self-contained classrooms. The included students had a broader group of non-disabled peers, and there was a greater carry over of skills across settings such as the gym, lunchroom, and halls.

A two year study of social integration found that students educated in inclusive settings showed an increased ability to manage their behavior, provide negative feedback to others, accept assistance from others, indicate personal preferences to others, cope with negative social circumstances and terminate social contact. The students were able to generalize the skills to multiple settings. Students from self-contained settings generally regressed in each area (Cole and

Meyer, 1991). Collins, Hall, and Brandson (1997) noted increased social skills in students with moderate mental disabilities while conducting a study of leisure skill acquisition using non-disabled peer buddies. These social skills were learned through incidental learning, not direct teaching.

Communication skills are an important part of socialization and have been found to directly effect the employability of persons with mental disabilities (Chen, 1983). Chen's 1983 study of the communication and personal-social factors in the vocational adjustment of persons with mental retardation included interviews with employers. It was found employers were more likely to dismiss an employee for inappropriate social interactions than having difficulty meeting production standards of the job.

In order for persons with disabilities to be accepted in society, they must learn how to function in the real world. Social interactions with peers must be taught through repeated exposure to multitudes of settings, including general education classrooms (Stainback, Stainback and Pyres, 1992). In a 1988 study on inclusion, Stainback and Stainback found an increase in communication skills for those persons with mental

disabilities who were included in the general education environment as compared to those in the self-contained classes. The researchers of this study indicated this enhancement of communication leads to more appropriate social skills (Harris, Belchnic, Blum, and Celiberti, 1994).

The inappropriate behaviors displayed by some students with moderate to severe disabilities have been cited as one of the major factors contributing to the negative attitude of the general population toward people with disabilities. Abery and Simmunds (1997) suggest that inclusion with support may play a role in decreasing negative behaviors.

The parents of students with moderate to severe mental disabilities have expressed social isolation as a major concern in regard to their children. A study conducted by Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) examines inclusion from the perspective of parents who have children with disabilities. The authors interviewed parents from 13 families. Children from these families had all received educational services both in inclusive settings and self-contained settings. Some of the disadvantages cited include the possibility of the child's circle of friends with disabilities may be

narrowed and integration would be better if it started in elementary school and continued through high school. None of the parents regretted their child's placement in an inclusive setting. Parents noted several positive effects of inclusion. An increase in social skills was a primary benefit. More favorable attitudes of the non-disabled peers toward their children were also positive outcomes of inclusion. About half of the parents stated friendships developed with non-disabled peers had extended beyond the classroom. All parents felt the non-disabled peers served as positive role models. Many of the parents felt inclusive settings more closely resembled "real life" and better prepared the students for adulthood.

Turnbull and Ruif (1997) found that parents of children with disabilities who are educated in inclusionary environments are more likely to believe their children are able to make and maintain social relationships with non-disabled peers. Parents whose children with disabilities are educated in self-contained settings believed their children do not have the ability to make these relationships.

Summary

There is evidence from the literature that positive gains in social skills have resulted from inclusive experiences for students with disabilities. Many of the previously mentioned studies were conducted in elementary schools and pre-schools. These educational environments are vastly different from secondary school environments where academic performance in content areas is the accepted means for measuring success. Students with moderate to severe mental disabilities are often secluded from the mainstream in secondary schools because of the inability to perform academically.

Non-academic classes, such as art, P.E. and music may provide an ideal setting for inclusion of these students. The pressures to perform academically may not be as great as in other classes. Students typically interact with each other more in these classes. This could provide the students with disabilities an opportunity to interact with their non-disabled peers in a non-threatening environment.

Chapter 3

Design and Methodology

The Sample

The sample group was comprised of the entire population of special education lifeskills students from two schools located in different school districts in the same geographical region of the southeastern United States. The classes from both schools were previously selected to participate in the grant program *Outside the Box*. *Outside the Box* is a federally funded grant designed to have students develop and display art designed for the visually impaired. The grant provides each class with $500.00 for materials and a tutor to furnish guidance on developing the art. The self-contained lifeskills students from both schools worked in the non-academic integrated setting of the art room within each school. They worked with the general education students to develop various art projects designed to be enjoyed by persons with visual impairments over a four-week term for one class period per day.

Both of the schools are located in the same military community with similar types of students. The residents of these districts share the same socio-economic status. One of the schools is the only high school, grades 9-12,

in a small district. The student population of approximately 600 is diverse and transient. There is a total of 9 lifeskills students with IQ's of 69 or less. One of the students is visually impaired. The second school is a middle school of approximately 1000 students located in a district of moderate size. The school contains a heterogeneous mix of students in grades 6-8. This school provides services for 12 lifeskills students with IQ's of 50 or below. The two groups of lifeskills students are representative of similar classes in districts of the same sizes and economic backgrounds throughout the United States.

There are no identifiable risks to the subjects associated with the study. The lifeskills students participating in this program maintained their daily routine with the exception of going to art for one period per day; data was collected in the naturally occurring environment. The students benefited from the exposure to general education students modeling appropriate social interactions. All subjects remained anonymous in the tabulation of the final results.

The Procedure

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from The Human Subjects Committee of Austin Peay State

University. Once the university granted permission, letters requesting permission to conduct the study were sent to the superintendents of both districts, the principals of the participating schools, and the parents of the lifeskills students. The parents of the general education students selected to collect data relating to the social skills of the lifeskills students in the study also received a letter explaining the role their children would play as data collectors. The letters explained the *Outside the Box* grant program, the purpose of the field study, subject anonymity, and the way the data collected was used. Permission forms, indicating that participating in the study was completely voluntary and in no way influenced the student's ability to participate in the grant program, were attached.

The lifeskills students were pre and post assessed in four specific areas of social interactions, two positives and two negatives. The positive skills were initiating interactions with peers and responding to peer interactions. The negative skills were encroaching in personal space and inappropriate conversation. A tally of each of the identified interactions was collected for each subject on the first and last day of the program.

Instrumentation

Two general education students participating in the program were selected from volunteers and trained to identify and tally the targeted interactions of each lifeskills student. The data collectors were taught how to recognize both the positive and negative social interactions identified in the study through various means to include observations and videos. The data was collected on a tally sheet developed specifically for this study and used for both the pre and post test. The subjects were assigned a number by the data collectors in order for the researcher to assure anonymity. Each of the targeted social interactions was listed for each subject.

Analysis of Data

The data collected for each of the targeted interactions were calculated and a mean was determined for each based on the pre test. The same procedure was followed for the data collected on the post test. The pre and post means of each of the targeted interactions was subjected to a t-test to determine the significance between the means for each of the types of interactions studied. The Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test was used to determine significance of change when the variance of the data was too large for the t-test. These

tests determined if the hypothesis, inclusive settings increase positive social interactions or cause a decrease in the negative social interactions of persons with moderate to severe mental disabilities, can be supported.

Chapter 4

Results

The Test for Homogeneity of Variance was completed for the entire sample group, and four sub-groups. The four sub-groups were comprised of (1) students with a severe mental disability from the high school (SHS), (2) students with a moderate mental disability from the high school (MHS), (3) students with a severe mental disability from the middle school (SMS) and students with a severe mental disability from both the high school and middle school (SHMS). The test for Homogeneity of Variance was used to determine which procedure was used to calculate significance of change of social behaviors from the pre and post assessments, a t-test or Wilcoxon's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test. These were used to test for significance in change of each of the identified behaviors from the pre to post test.

Hypothesis One:

There will be no difference in initiating interactions with non-disabled peers by students with disabilities between the pre and post measures during the period when they are included in the art class.

The data collected for this behavior for the entire population was found to have similar variance in both the

means for of the pre and post assessments, therefore a t-test was performed. The critical t at the .05 level of significance is 1.77. The calculated t was 0.338. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase in the number of initiations of interactions by the entire sample of students with mental disabilities (see table 1).

The data collected for the sub-group SHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.132. The calculated t was 1.124. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase in the number of initiations of interaction by this sub-group of students (see table 1).

The data collected for the sub-group MHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.132. The calculated t was -0.381. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase in the number of initiations of interactions by this sub-group of students (see table 1).

The data collected for the sub-group SMS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.353. The calculated t was 5.744. The null hypothesis was rejected; there was a significant increase in the number

of initiations of interactions by this sub-group of students (see table 1).

The data collected for the sub-group SHMS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 1.86. The calculated t value was 2.88. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant increase in the number of initiating interactions by this sub-group (see table 1).

Table 1

Initiating Interactions with Non-disabled Peers

SAMPLE GROUP T	N	CRITICAL T VALUE	CALCULATED VALUE
Entire Sample	14	tcv=1.761	t=0.338
SHS	6	tcv=2.015	t=1.124
MHS	5	tcv=2.132	t=-0.382
SMS	4	tcv=2.353	t=5.745
SHMS	9	tcv=1.86	t=2.884

Hypothesis Two: There will be no difference in the number of times students with disabilities respond to the interactions of their non-disabled peers between the pre and post measures during the period they are included in the art class.

The data for the entire sample was subjected to a t-test. The critical value was 1.77. The calculated value was -0.295. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase in this behavior for the entire sample see table 2).

The data collected for the sub-group SHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.132. The calculated t value was 0.934. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase in the behavior for this sub-group (see table 2).

The data collected for the sub-group MHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.132. The calculated t value was -1.16. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase responses to peers for this sub-group (see table 2).

The data collected for the sub-group SMH was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 2.353. The calculated t value was 2.449. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant increase in the number of responses to peers by this sub-group (see table 2).

The data collected for the sub-group SHMS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was 1.86. The calculated t value was 1.31. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant increase responses to peers for this sub-group (see table 2).

Table 2

Responds to Interactions of Non-disabled Peers

SAMPLE GROUP T	N	CRITICAL T VALUE	CALCULATED VALUE
Entire Sample	14	tcv=1.761	t=-0.295
SHS	6	tcv=2.015	t=0.935
MHS	5	tcv=2.132	t=-1.161
SMS	4	tcv=2.353	t=2.45
SHMS	9	tcv=1.86	t=1.313

Hypothesis Three: There will be no difference in the number of times students with disabilities encroach in the personal space of their non-disabled peers between the pre and post measures during the period of time they are included in the art class.

The data collected to the entire population for this behavior was subjected to Wilcoxson's Matched Pairs signed Ranks Test. The null hypothesis was rejected;

there was a significant decrease in this behavior for the sample. The null hypothesis was rejected (see table 3).

The data collected for the sub-group SHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was -2.132. The calculated t value was -0.931. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in encroaching in personal space for this sub-group (see table 3).

The data collected for the sub-group MHS showed no change in behavior from the pre and post assessment. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in encroaching in personal space for this sub-group (see table 3).

The data collected for the sub-group SMS subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was -2.353. The calculated t value was 1.0. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in encroaching in personal space for this sub-group (see table 3).

The data collected for the sub-group SHMS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was -2.88. The calculated t value was -0.72. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant

decrease in encroaching in personal space for this sub-group (see table 3).

Table 3

Encroaches in Personal Space

SAMPLE GROUP T	N	CRITICAL T VALUE	CALCULATED VALUE
Entire Sample	14	tcv=-1.761	t=-0.79
SHS	6	tcv=-2.015	t=-0.931
MHS	5	tcv=-2.132	t=-0.00
SMS	4	tcv=-2.353	t=1.00
SHMS	9	tcv=-1.86	t=-0.784

Hypothesis Four: There will be no difference in the number of inappropriate conversations by students with disabilities between the pre and post measures during the time they are included in the art class.

The data collected to the entire population for this behavior was subjected to Wilcoxson's Matched Pairs signed Ranks Test. The null hypothesis was rejected; there was a significant decrease in inappropriate conversations for the sample (see table 4).

The data collected for the sub-group SHS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was -2.132. The calculated t value was -2.213. The null hypothesis was rejected. There was a significant decrease in

inappropriate conversations for this sub-group (see table 4).

The data collected for the sub-group MHS showed no change in behavior from the pre and post assessment. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in inappropriate conversations for this sub-group (see table 4).

The data collected for the sub-group SMS was subjected to a t-test. The critical t value was -2.353. The calculated t value was 0.379. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in inappropriate conversations for this sub-group (see table 4).

The data collected for the sub-group SHMS was subjected to the Wilcoxson's Matched Pairs Signed Ranks Test. The null hypothesis fails to be rejected; hence, there was no significant decrease in encroaching in personal space for this sub-group (see table 4).

Table 4

Inappropriate Conversations

SAMPLE GROUP T	N	CRITICAL T VALUE	CALCULATED VALUE
Entire Sample	8	T=3.5	WT=4*
SHS	6	tcv=-2.015	t=-2.213
MHS	5	tcv=-2.132	t=-1.633
SMS	4	tcv=-2.353	t=0.397
SHMS	6	T=3.5	WT=2*

*Wilcoxson's Matched Pairs Signed Rank Test

Chapter 5

Summary, Conclusions and Implications

Summary

The purpose of this study was to determine if including students with moderate to severe mental disabilities with general education students in a non-academic art class would increase the incidence of positive social interactions and decrease the incidence of inappropriate social interactions. A data collection sheet was used to tally the number of occurrences of the targeted behaviors: initiates interactions with non-disabled peers, responds to non-disabled peer interactions, encroaches in personal space, and inappropriate conversations. Pre and post data was collected for the sample group. The students participated in the grant program *Outside the Box* with students from general education. There was no direct instruction relating to the targeted behaviors during the study. The findings showed both an increase in the positive social behaviors targeted as well as a decrease in the negative behaviors. The data showed more substantial changes in the behaviors of students with severe mental deficits than those with moderate disabilities. Initiating interactions with non-disabled

peers by students with severe disabilities showed the most significant change.

Conclusions

The inclusion of students with mental disabilities in non-academic classes such as art provides an opportunity for these students to learn and apply social interactions necessary for adulthood. The non-academic setting allows students to interact with peers without pressures to perform academically. They are able to form relationships with others that would not be possible in a self-contained environment, thus broadening their peer group and social contacts.

Several conclusions can be drawn from the data collected during this study. Each of the individual social behaviors showed a significant change for at least one of the subgroups in the study.

Initiated interactions with non-disabled peers

Middle and high school students with severe disabilities significantly increased the behavior of initiating interactions with non-disabled peers while in the inclusion settings.

Responds to interactions of non-disabled peer

When included with general education students, the students with severe disabilities at the middle school

level showed a significant increase in responding to non-disabled peers' interactions.

Encroaches in personal space

High school students with severe disabilities are significantly more respectful of the personal space of others when included with general education peers.

Inappropriate conversation

Students with disabilities, particularly those at the middle school level significantly decrease the number of inappropriate conversations they engage in when included with non-disabled peers.

The previously mentioned conclusions were drawn based on the significant changes at the 0.05 level between the pre and post assessment data collected for the study. Several other conclusions were drawn based on the observations of the researcher and are worth noting. Non-disabled peers developed interest in their disabled peers evidenced by requests to continue spending time with the students in other settings. Interactions were initiated by both groups of students in other settings such as the halls, the gym, and the lunchroom.

Friendships appeared to begin to be developed by students with moderate disabilities and their non-disabled peers. This was not evidenced by the data; the

students all had become very intent on completing the art projects for an impending art exhibit. Many of the students were working on individual pieces, interacting little with others. However, again these positive relationships were evidenced in other settings.

The attitudes of the teachers of inclusion classes may also have an effect on the interactions between students with and without disabilities. On at least one occasion at both the high school and the middle school, students with severe disabilities displayed aggressive behaviors. The way the teachers handled the situation may have affected the interactions between the groups.

Implications for further study

The results of this study have brought further questions to the mind of this researcher.

1. Will the gains made by students with disabilities in social competencies be sustained over time? Across settings?
2. Do the relationships formed between the students with disabilities and those without disabilities last over time?
3. Do these same relationships extend to settings outside of school?

4. Do the attitudes of the adults within the school affect the relationships and social behaviors of students both with and without disabilities?

A longitudinal study on the effects of inclusion on the social behaviors and relationships of both general education and special education students may help to provide the answers to these questions.

REFERENCES

Abery, B. & Simmunds, E. (1997). The yes I can social inclusion program: A preventative approach to challenging behavior. Intervention in School & Clinic, 32, (March). Retrieved from Electric Library.

Benz, M. R., Yovanoff, P, and Doren, B. (1997). School to work: Components that predict postschool success for students with and without disabilities. Exceptional Children, 63, (2), 151-165.

Black, R. & Langone, J. (1997). Social awareness and transition to employment for adolescents with mental retardation. Remedial and Special Education, 18, (July). Retrieved from Electric Library.

Brinker, R. & Thorpe, M. (1984). Integration of severely handicapped students and the proportion of IEP objectives achieved. Exceptional Children, 51, (1), 168-175.

Chen, C. (1983). Communication and personal-social factors in vocational adjustment of mentally retarded persons. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Kent State University, 115-116.

Cole, D. A., and Meyer, L. H. (1991). Social integration and severe disabilities: A longitudinal analysis of child outcomes. The Journal of Special Education, 25, (3), 340-351.

Collins, B. C., Hall, M., and Brandson, T. A. (1997). Teaching leisure skills to adolescents with moderate disabilities. Exceptional Children, 63, (4), 499-512.

English, K., Goldstein, H., Shafer, K., & Kaczmarek, L. (1997). Promoting interactions among preschoolers with and without disabilities: Effects of a buddy skills-training program. Exceptional Children, 63, (2), 229-243.

Hanline, M. F., & Halvorsen, A. (1989). Parent perceptions of the integration transition process: *Overcoming* artificial barriers. Exceptional Children, 55, (6), 487-489.

Harris, S. L., Blelchie, J., Blum, L., & Celiberti, D. (1994). Behavioral assessment of autistic disorder. In J. L. Matson (Ed.), Autism in children and adults: Etiology, assessment and intervention. (pp 127-46). Pacific Grove, California: Brook/Cole Publishing Company.

Kennedy, C. H. , Shukla, S. & Fryxell, (1997). Comparing the effects of educational placement on the social relationships of intermediate school students with severe disabilities. Exceptional Children, 64, (1), 31-47.

Sowers, J., Thompson, L. E. & Connis, R. T. (1979). The Food Service Vocational Training Program: A model for training and placement of the mentally retarded. In G. T. Belamy, G. O'Connor, & O. C. Karan (Eds.), Vocational Rehabilitation of Severely Handicapped Persons. Baltimore: University Park Press.

Stainback, W. & Stainback, S. (1988). Educating students with severe disabilities in regular classes. Teaching Exceptional Children, 21, 16-19.

Stainback,S. Stainback, W. and Pyres, B. (1992). Schools as inclusive communities. In S. Stainback & W. Stainback (Eds.) Controversial Issues Confronting Special Education: Divergent Perspectives. (2nd ed.). Needham Heights, Mass. Simon & Schuster. 32.

Turnbull, A. P. and Ruif, M. (1997). Family perspectives on inclusive lifestyle issues for people with problem behaviors. Exceptional Children, 63, (2), 221-227.

Appendices

LETTERS REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

January 24, 2000

Dr. Parris R. Watts, Chair
Institutional Review Board
Austin Peay State University
37044

Dear Dr. Watts,

RE: Study Number 00-024: Including Social Skills Through Including Students with Moderate to Severe Mental Disabilities in a Non-academic Art Class.

Attached you will find the corrections to my original application to conduct research. I hope these will be acceptable to the committee.

If you need to contact me you may call me during the day at Fort Campbell High School (931) 431-5056, in the evening (931) 648-9442. My email address is mgulin@fced.org.

Sincerely,

Mary Gulin
Ed.S Candidate, APSU

1900 Dover Road
Clarksville, TN 37042
December 1, 1999

Dr. Ray McMullen, Ed. D., Superintendent
Fort Campbell Dependent Schools
77 Texas Avenue
Fort Campbell, KY 42223-5127

Dear Dr. McMullen:

I am currently enrolled in Austin Peay State University as a graduate student working toward my Ed.S. degree. I am requesting permission to conduct my field study and collect data in one of the classes in your school system.

The targeted students will be participating in the *Outside the Box* grant program at Fort Campbell High School. The focus of my study is the increase of appropriate social interactions of Lifeskills students in a non-academic inclusionary environment. The data will be collected on four targeted social interactions. An observer will collect this data on the first and last day of the grant program. Pre- and post-data will be compared to determine if there is a significant increase in appropriate social interactions of the Lifeskills students.

The application for the project approval has been submitted to the University Institutional Review Board, and is currently under consideration. Enclosed you will find a copy of the application, the projected proposal, and a copy of the parental consent form.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Gulin
Lifeskills Teacher, Ed.S. Candidate-APSU

Cc Dr. Larry Lowrance, Field Study Director
Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board
for Project Approval
Enclosures

1900 Dover Road
Clarksville, TN 37042
December 1, 1999

Mr. Ken Killebrew, Principal
Fort Campbell High School
1101 Bastogne Avenue
Fort Campbell, KY 42223

Dear Mr. Killebrew:

I am currently enrolled in Austin Peay State University as a graduate student working toward my Ed.S. degree. I am requesting permission to conduct my field study and collect data in one of the classes in your school.

The targeted students will be participating in the *Outside the Box* grant program at Fort Campbell High School. The focus of my study is the increase of appropriate social interactions of Lifeskills students in a non-academic inclusionary environment. The data will be collected on four targeted social interactions. An observer will collect this data on the first and last day of the grant program. Pre- and post-data will be compared to determine if there is a significant increase in appropriate social interactions of the Lifeskills students.

The application for the project approval has been submitted to the University Institutional Review Board, and is currently under consideration. Enclosed you will find a copy of the application, the projected proposal, and a copy of the parental consent form.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Gulin
Lifeskills Teacher, Ed.S. Candidate-APSU

Cc Dr. Larry Lowrance, Field Study Director
Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board
for Project Approval
Enclosures

January 6, 2000

Dr. Frank Hodgson
Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools
621 Gracy Avenue
Clarksville, TN 37040

Dear Dr. Hodgson,

Please consider our request for conducting research at Kenwood Middle School in the classroom of Ms. Debra Lowrance, Life Skills teacher. We have prepared a packet of information for your Institutional Review Board to consider as we seek this permission. This study will be an analysis of behavior changes with the life skills students and attitude changes of their peer tutors as they work with these children in an inclusive art project that is associated with the *Outside the Box* grant program which is a Goals 2000 project funded to your district and subcontracted to our university. Two of my graduate students, Katherine DePriest and Mary Gulin, are interested in duplicating a study they are conduction at Fort Campbell High School in a life skills class there with middle school students in your district which adjoins theirs. This will strengthen their study if similar results are found with a similar population at a younger age and in a neighboring school system. This request is to conduct such a study.

The Fort Campbell Schools IRB and the Austin Peay State University IRB have tentatively approved this study conditional upon approval in your district also.

We hope you can move expeditiously upon this request and give us a response so we can conduct the study early this calendar year.

Please feel free to contact me or either of the students at the phone numbers listed below for additional information.

Most respectfully,

Larry Lowrance, Ed.D
Professor
APSU
(931) 221-6153

Katherine A. DePriest
Ed.S. Candidate
APSU
(931) 431-5056

Mary M. Gulin
Ed.S. Candidate
APSU
(931) 431-5056

1900 Dover Road
Clarksville, TN 37042

December 1, 1999

Ms. Rosalyn Evans, Principal
Kenwood Middle School
241 E Pine Mountain Road
Clarksville, TN 37042

Dear Ms. Rosalyn Evans:

I am currently enrolled in Austin Peay State University as a graduate student working toward my Ed.S. degree. I am requesting permission to conduct my field study and collect data in one of the classes in your school.

The targeted students will be participating in the *Outside the Box* grant program at Kenwood Middle School. I will be working with the Lifeskills teacher, Debbie Lowrance and her students. The focus of my study is the increase of appropriate social interactions of Lifeskills students in a non-academic inclusionary environment. Mrs. Lowrance and her students will be working with general education students to produce art for the grant. The data will be collected on four targeted social interactions. An observer will collect this data on the first and last day of the grant program. Pre- and post data will be compared to determine if there is a significant increase in appropriate social interactions of the Lifeskills students.

The application for project approval has been submitted to the University Institutional Review Board, and is currently under consideration. Enclosed you will find a copy of the application, the project proposal, and a copy of the parental consent form.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of this proposal.

Sincerely,

Mary M. Gulin
Lifeskills Teacher, Ed.S. Candidate-APSU (648-9442)

Cc Dr. Larry Lowrance, Field Study Director
Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board
For Project Approval
Enclosures

LETTERS OF CONSENT

Box 4545
APSU 37044
6 January, 2000

Dear Parents,

The Lifeskills class has been chosen to participate in the grant program *Outside the Box*. This program was developed for students to produce art for the visually impaired. The students in the lifeskills classes will work with the students in the general education art classroom to produce this art in an inclusionary setting.

The program will begin on Jan. 27, 2000. Once all the art projects are turned in from all of the participants, they will be judged by the directors of the grant program. The chosen works will then be displayed to the public at the Clarksville Museum as well as various other sites throughout the country. At the completion of the tour, all works will be returned to the producing school.

We are very excited to be chosen for this federally funded grant program. The class will receive $500 worth of materials to produce the artworks as well as training for the teachers involved. We anticipate a very exciting experience for all of the participants.

This inclusion art program will provide the setting for a study on the increase of appropriate social skills for students with disabilities when included with general education students in a non-academic art class. Data will be collected while the students are working together to develop art projects, the participating lifeskills students will be watched by observers to note each time one of the targeted interactions occurs. The data will only be collected on the first and last day of the project. The data will be compiled and the number of interactions on the first day will be compared to the number of interactions on the last day to determine if there has been a change in social interactions.

The information from this research will be compiled and the final product will be in the form of a written Field Study available to students and the public through Woodward Library at APSU. All identifying information will be turned over to Dr. Larry Lowrance to store. Only the behaviors will be identified in the final report.

There are no risks to the students anticipated in this study. The lifeskills students may benefit from the

modeling of appropriate behaviors of the general education students. Participation in the study will in no way influence participation in the grant program. Participants in the study may withdraw, without a penalty, at any time during the study.

If you have any questions about either the grant program or the research study, please feel free to contact any one us at any time. Questions about research participants' rights may be directed to the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044, (931) 221-7881. Thank you very much for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,

Dr. Larry Lowrance Professor APSU 221-6153	Mary M. Gulin Ed.S. Candidate APSU 431-5056	Katherine A. DePriest Ed.S. Candidate, APSU 431-5056

Please return this form to your child's teacher.

____ Yes, my child may participate in the research study.

____ No, my child may not participate in the research study.

Child's Name _____

Parent Signature_____ Date_____

Informed Consent to Participate in Research

Students who are unable to read printed English and who may desire to participate in the research project associated with the *Outside the Box* art program will have the project explained to them and asked to agree to participate while an adult who is not an investigator will observe their agreement or non agreement to the study. This adult will then fill out the form below with the student's name, the date of the explanation and then mark whether it was noted if the potential subject agreed or disagreed to the study and how that agreement was given. Then the adult will sign the form and date it.

Name of potential subject

_____

Date of explanation _____

Who explained the program to the subject

_____

Did the subject assent to the study? Yes _____ No

_____

How did the subject give assent? (describe the subject's statement or physical behavior or both as they indicate agreement or disagreement to be involved)

Name of the observer _____

Date _____

Relationship of the observer to the subject

_____

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
from the APSU IRB

January 25, 2000

Mary M. Gulin
C/O Dr. Larry Lowrance
College of Education
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN

RE: Your application dated November 30, 1999 regarding study number 00-024: Improving Social Skills Through Including Students with Moderate to Severe Mental Disabilities in a Non-academic Art Class (Austin Peay State University)

Dear Ms. Gulin:

Thank you for your response to requests from a prior review of your application for the new study listed above. This is to confirm that your application is now fully approved. The protocol is approved through one calendar year. The consent form as most recently revised is approved. You must obtain signed written consent from all subjects. This approval is subject to APSU Policies and Procedures governing human subjects research.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before December 3, 2000, unless closed before that date.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and reviewed. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Linda S. Freed or Sarah Lundin-Schiller (931-221-7881; fax 931-221-7304; email: grants@apsu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Parris R. Watts

Dr. Parris R. Watts
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research from FCS Central Office

Gulin, Mary

From: Adamkiewicz, Cheryl
Sent: Monday, December 06, 1999 2:07 PM
To: Gulin, Mary
Cc: McMullen, Ray
Subject: Research Project

Dear Mary,

Both Dr. McMullen and myself have reviewed your research proposal. We both believe that the research is well designed and interesting. There should be no problem with your proceeding as long as your university also grants approval. Please let us know when you will begin and end your research project. We would also wish to remind you that it is absolutely necessary to keep student confidentiality. No student names can be used for any reason. Good Luck!!!

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research from FCHS

Gulin, Mary

From: Killebrew, Ken
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2000 2:40 PM
To: DePriest, Katherine; Gulin, Mary
Subject: Field Study

You have my approval to conduct research at Ft. Campbell High School during the spring semester of 2000. It's my hope that this research will prove valuable to the special education programs at the high school.

Letter of Approval to Conduct Research
from CMCS Central Office

Clarksville Montgomery County SCHOOL SYSTEM

Frank M. Hodgson, Ed.D.
Director of Instructional Support
Research and Development

Board of Education 621 Gracey Avenue Clarksville, Tennessee 37040
931-920-7813 Fax: 931-920-9813
email: Hodgson@[illegible]

January 17, 2000

Dr. Larry Lowrance
Professor of Education
Department of Education
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN 37040

Dear Dr. Lowrance:

Your research, survey and/or research project title: The Effects of Inclusion on General And Special Education Students On Attitudes Toward Students With Disabilities And On The Improvement Of Social Skills In The Students With Disabilities has been approved by the research committee. The date of approval was January 17, 2000.

Now that you have approval from the research committee, you may contact the principal for approval. According to Board Policy File IFA, the principal has the final authority and responsibility for approving or disapproving research conducted in his/her building.

Please read the Research Policy and Procedures Handbook for all information concerning research in the Clarksville-Montgomery County Schools. Remember to provide my office with two (2) copies of the results of your research as required by the attached Board Policy File IFA.

If you have questions, please call my office at (931) 920-7813.

Sincerely,

Frank M. Hodgson

Attachment 1

cc: Rosalyn Evans, Principal
Kenwood Middle School
Research Committee
Evelyn Bryant, Secondary Supervisor
Debbie Nichols, Elementary supervisor
Diana Simmons, Elementary Special Ed. Supervisor
File

INSTRUMENTATION USED TO COLLECT DATA

Social Interactions Data Collection Sheet

Student	Initiates interactions with non-disabled peers	Responds to non-disabled peers interaction	Encroaches in personal space	Inappropriate conversation

VITA

Graduate School

Austin Peay State University

Name: Mary Martens Gulin

Home Address: 1900 Dover Road, Clarksville, TN, 37042

Education

I. Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Bachelor of Science

Major: Elementary Education

II. Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN

Masters of Arts

Major: Curriculum and Instruction, Special Education

Certifications:

Kentucky Commonwealth K-12 Special Education

Kentucky Commonwealth 1-6 Elementary Education

Tennessee State K-12 Special Education

Tennessee State 1-8 Elementary Education