Exploring the Enactment of Functional Curriculum in Self-Contained Cross-Categorical Programs: A Case Study

Emily C. Bouck
Purdue University, bouck@purdue.edu

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Abstract

Little research has been devoted to studying functional curriculum in secondary special education programs, self-contained cross-categorical programs, or curriculum enactment in special education, which warrants study of the culmination of these issues. This article presents a case study that attempts to answer, "What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs?" The study occurred in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs with two teachers, four paraprofessionals, and 15 students. The findings suggest that the curriculum was enacted in the moment, was relative, and created tensions between special education and general education. The findings also suggest that the enactment had to be very encompassing and that it developed a community within each programs.

Keywords

Special Education, Curriculum Enactment, and Functional Curriculum

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Emily C. Bouck
Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana

Little research has been devoted to studying functional curriculum in secondary special education programs, self-contained cross-categorical programs, or curriculum enactment in special education, which warrants study of the culmination of these issues. This article presents a case study that attempts to answer, "What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs?" The study occurred in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs with two teachers, four paraprofessionals, and 15 students. The findings suggest that the curriculum was enacted in the moment, was relative, and created tensions between special education and general education. The findings also suggest that the enactment had to be very encompassing and that it developed a community within each programs. Key Words: Special Education, Curriculum Enactment, and Functional Curriculum

Case Study Research

"A case study is an examination of a specific phenomenon, such as a program, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group" (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). As a methodology, case study attempts to understand "the complex interrelationships among all that exists," (Stake, 1995, p. 37) or in others, a case study attempts to understand particular nuances about a case, which in education, can be a student, a school, etc. (Stake, 2006). It involves an examination of a bounded system, which is the case or multiple cases one chooses to study (Creswell, 1998). Each case study is bounded by both time and place as well as the actual case being explored (Creswell). Case study research is a form of qualitative research, focused on interpreting a particular phenomenon. Thus, case study methodology studies the particulars and complexities of a case as opposed to trying to generalize to a larger group, with a central focus of interpretation (Stake, 1995).

Qualitative case study research is just one form of qualitative research, and there are several different types of case studies within the qualitative tradition. Within the case study "family" there are ethnographic case studies, historical case studies, and psychological case studies. Case study research methodology can also be parsed by its end product. Case studies can be descriptive, where a detailed account of the phenomenon is presented; interpretative, in which thick description is presented to either illuminate, support, or challenge previously held theoretical assumptions; and evaluative, which focuses on judgments (Merriam, 1988).

Case study methodology, particularly interpretative, was used in this study because the method fits the questions being asked (Merriam, 1988). It is an "ideal design for understanding and interpreting observations of educational phenomena" (Merriam, p. 2), in which a case in education can be a class, program, teacher, or another bounded educational phenomenon. A lack of previous research or exploration on a topic might warrant qualitative research, particularly a case study approach (Naumes & Naumes, 1999; Stake, 1995). Case studies typically consist of varying emphasis on data collection by observations, interviews, and document or archival reviews, in which triangulation among the data is sought to reduce the likelihood of misinterpretation (Stake, 1995).

Curriculum

The question of what constitutes curriculum has been frequently asked, and its answer sought (Nolet & McLaughlin, 2000). It has been referred to as long-lasting educational programs, materials used in classrooms (i.e., textbooks), and experiences that students receive while in school (Morrison, 1993; Nolet & McLaughlin). However, curriculum is not singular. It is comprised of the written, enacted, and received curriculum. The written curriculum "is the official or adopted curriculum often contained in state or district policy" (Nolet & McLaughlin, p. 15) and represents what students are expected to learn (Cuban, 1992). The enacted curriculum "is the operationalization of the intended curriculum" (Nolet & McLaughlin, p. 16). It reflects teachers' decisions in implementing the written curriculum and encompasses formal and informal lessons and activities as well as teachers' behaviors, groupings, management strategies, beliefs, and comments (Cuban; Nolet & McLaughlin). The received curriculum "is what students actually learn as a result of being in the classroom and interacting with the intended and taught curricula," and includes the written and enacted curriculum as well as the unintended consequences (Nolet & McLaughlin, p. 17).

Some scholars have felt that the enacted curriculum was more encompassing. Synder, Bolin, and Zumwalt (1992) expanded the definition of enacted curriculum to include the co-construction of educational experiences by teachers and students. They suggested that enacted curriculum is a transactional process where teachers and students interact, construct, and make meaning of the curriculum and educational experiences within context. Yet, their expanded definition may still be too narrow. Enacted curriculum is a transactional process, co-constructed by the current situation and histories of teachers, students, the schools, communities, legislation and policy, and curriculum materials.

Special Education Settings

Special education offers a continuum of service delivery models, from general education settings (i.e., inclusion) to resource rooms and self-contained classes (Hardman, Drew, & Egan, 2002). Self-contained settings are typically defined as programs where the majority of a student's day is spent in a pull-out setting to receive special education instruction or other services (Flagle, 1999). Self-contained settings have a negative reputation, often considered a dumping ground (Langone, 1990). Yet, they

offer an important option for students who need more individualization or specific objectives tailored towards life skills and vocational education.

Placement in self-contained settings has been associated with the type of curriculum teachers utilize and students' social experiences. Sands, Adams, and Stout (1995) found that students' time in a self-contained class was positively correlated with life, affective, and communication skills, and negatively correlated with academic remediation. In reverse, time in a resource room was negatively correlated with instruction in life, vocational, and communication skills (Sands et al.). Guterman (1995) found that students experience negative social consequences from being educated in pull-out programs, such as being teased, and that they do not share with their friends that they are in pull-out programs for fear of not being accepted. Another concern with self-contained classrooms has been the lack of role models (Panacek & Dunlap, 2003). Research by Knitzer, Steinberg, and Fleisch (1990) suggested that self-contained educational settings result in impoverished positive social opportunities.

Previous research suggested that the general education curriculum at the secondary level does not always serve the best interests of students with disabilities (Benz & Kochhlar, 1996; Johnson, 2000; Patton, Polloway, & Smith, 2000). Important experiences tied to post-school success may be missing, such as vocational, life, and independent living skills (Cobb, Lehmann, Tochterman, & Bomotti, 2000; Johnson; Thurlow, Ysseldyke, & Anderson, 1995). As the general education curriculum moves towards higher academic standards and high stakes testing, secondary students with disabilities may be less likely to receive valuable non-academic opportunities to prepare them for post-school life (see No Child Left Behind Act, 2002; Olson, 2004; Patton, Polloway, & Smith).

Research Study

This research sought to understand the enactment of functional curriculum in two rural secondary self-contained cross-categorical programs through the use of case study methodology. A functional curriculum is a curriculum that teaches functional life skills, or in other words, the skills necessary to live, work, and have fun in an inclusive community (Brown, McLean, Hamre-Nietupski, Pumpian, Creto, & Gruenewald, 1979; Falvey, 1989; Snell & Browder, 1987). It consists of core subject areas (academics), vocational education, community access, daily living, financial, independent living, transportation, social/relationships, and self-determination (Patton, Cronin, & Jairrels, 1997). A self-contained setting refers to a pull-out special education instructional environment. Self-contained settings are typically defined as over 60%, or at least this majority, of a students' day is spent in a pull-out setting to receive special education instruction or other services (Flagle, 1999); or in other words, "designed for learners who can not benefit from enrollment in a regular class" (Langone, 1990, p. 36). Finally, a cross-categorical program refers to special education programs that serve students from multiple disability categories together (Nichols & Sosnowsky, 2002).

This article depicts one aspect of the study of the enactment of functional curriculum in these programs. The larger study sought to understand the enactment of a functional curriculum both in terms of the emerging themes surrounding enactment as well as the pre-determined factors that impacted the enacted. This study specifically

focused on the themes that have emerged regarding the enactment, whereas the other aspect not reported in this article focused on the pre-determined factors that were hypothesized to influence the enactment of a functional curriculum (e.g., teachers, students, school) (see Bouck, 2008). Thus, this article essentially reports half of the larger study, which was too large to report in one article. The two articles from the study were logically separated along two different foci: emerging themes following the qualitative tradition and alignment of the qualitative data to pre-determined factors hypothesized to impact the enactment. The study sought to answer the question, "What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs?"

Methodology

Setting

This project involved two rural high schools in the state of Michigan. Purposeful sampling was used to select the schools. The schools were chosen because: (a) they had a self-contained, cross-categorical program in their high schools to educate students with disabilities, (b) they were located in the same county to minimize the differences across schools (i.e., geographical location, resources, socioeconomic status), (c) they had similar school profiles (e.g., similar rates of special education, low socioeconomic status, diverse populations), and (d) they represented a convenient sample for the researcher to access (i.e., where within driving distance from the researcher's institution). The first school, Harborville High School[1], had a student count of 622, a special education rate of 14.1%, an economically disadvantaged rate of 10.3%, and was 97% Caucasian (Standard & Poor's, 2004). Purposeful sampling was used to select the second school, River Bend, which was located in the same county. It had a student count of 807, 11.8% special education rate, and 16.9% economically disadvantaged rate. It was also a relatively racially and ethnically homogeneous school district (96% Caucasian; Standard & Poor's).

Participants

Teachers

One teacher in each district participated in this study. The teachers were selected because they were the only teacher in the respective districts selected that taught a self-contained cross-categorical high school program. Each teacher started her respective self-contained cross-categorical program and had been teaching the program for five years. River Bend teacher Paula had been a non-traditional teacher education student, returning to college to earn her teaching certificate after 25 years in the business world, and prepared to teach elementary special education. Katie, the Harborville teacher, had been a traditional teacher education candidate and focused her preparation on secondary special education. The teachers were separated by age, but had similar teacher preparation training, as they attended the same institution at approximately the same time.

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[1] The school names, as well as the names of individual teachers, students, and paraprofessionals, are pseudonyms to protect the confidentiality of those involved.

Students

The students in this project were selected because they were the students educated in each of the two programs studied. All students were invited to participate, but not all students had parental consent or gave student assent. Katie had seven students participate in the study: one senior, two juniors, two sophomores, and two freshmen. Three of the seven students were labeled as having a learning disability, two as having a cognitive impairment (mild), one as Autistically impaired, and one as otherwise health impaired. The average IQ across the students was 77.6. One of Katie's students was female, the other six were male. Paula had eight students assent to full participation: one senior, three juniors, and four freshmen. Four of her students were female and four male; four of her students were classified as having a cognitive impairment, two as having a learning disability, and two as emotionally impaired. The average IQ of Paula's students was 68.5.

Paraprofessionals

Each program had two paraprofessionals. In River Bend, one paraprofessional worked in the morning and the other worked in the afternoon. In Harborville one paraprofessional was assigned to the program, and the other was assigned to work with two students with Autism in general education classes. Each program also had a transition/job coach, which assisted and supervised with work experiences. A transition/job coach is typically an individual hired by a school district to help students with and without disabilities acquire job experiences, gather skills to be employed, and to supervise these students to help ensure a positive work experience while in school.

Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher was that of a participant-observer. At the beginning, the researcher attempted to maintain more of an observer role. However, as observations continued the role shifted to more of that of a participant. At different times, the researcher had to assist with instructional activities and intervene for behavioral reasons. The participation was at times sought by the teacher or students. It was also unsolicited at times, but student safety or the lack of instructional assistance to a struggling student necessitated involvement.

The role along the participant-observer continuum was attempted to be structured based on the realities of the classroom and the constraints upon the teachers, actively trying to understand and respect their role within this collaborative research project (LeCompte, 1995). For the project, the researcher tried to set herself as different from the teachers as well, so that she would not have that role attached to her for the purpose and ease of having students participate in interviews (Corsaro, 1985). The students knew the researchers as Ms. Bouck or Emily, depending on the program and the teacher's preference.

The researcher was interested in this topic, given the decreasing emphasis on a functional curriculum in research and practice, despite her belief that this curriculum was beneficial to the education of students educated in self-contained secondary programs (see Bouck, 2004). She was further interested because use of a functional curriculum for

secondary students having particular needs is one of her passions, and she feels that often this population is not given the curriculum it deserves because too much is focused on high-stakes tests and achievement in the general education curriculum. The passion emerged from the researcher when she was working in the field of special education as practitioner and felt too many students within this population were not being properly served by the education field, particularly in light of the curriculum they were receiving. The researcher hypothesized that a functional curriculum would result in better post-school outcomes for this population, but felt that before correlational or intervention research could be conducted that it was important to understand what was occurring. Hence, a qualitative research project was developed to understand the enactment of a functional curriculum.

Procedure

Data from the case study was collected through multiple means in an effort to triangulate (Stake, 1995). At each site data was collected through full school day classroom observations for two days a week for three months (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). A total of 85 hours was spent at Harborville and 70 hours spent at River Bend. During classroom observations, the researcher took fieldnotes and observed the events within the classroom. Decisions about what to observe and when were based on purposeful sampling (Patton, 1980), such that observations were selected to present the greatest opportunity to understand and gain insight into the case (i.e., each program). In addition, document reviews were conducted. Students' CA-60 files were analyzed and data was gathered on students' IQ, achievement test scores, disability classification, years in special education, age, and other pertinent information. Prior to any data collection, the researcher collected student assent and parental consent for the collection of all data.

Teachers in the study were interviewed formally and informally. A semi-structured interview protocol was used in the formal interview (see Appendix A) and focused on how curriculum became enacted as well as factors influencing the curriculum. All students who participated were interviewed as well. They were asked about curriculum choices implemented in class and their ideal curriculum. Students were also asked to respond to questions regarding their high school experience, and what they were learning in the program (see Appendix B). Paraprofessionals in both programs also participated in an interview, focusing on the program from their perspective (see Appendix C).

Data Analysis

Data (interviews, field notes, researcher reflection notes, and archival review notes) were read and re-read, and then divided by the research questions, the specific one for this paper being, "What is the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum in rural self-contained cross-categorical programs?" (see Appendix D). Data analysis began by organizing the hard copy of the fieldnotes, researcher reflective notes, and interviews in chronological order by school site. The researcher then read each site's hard-copy fieldnotes' notebook and noted patterns. The researcher also condensed and expanded the patterns emerging around the question, including both adding to the themes and deleting

themes that seemed less relevant. Key and/or typical analytical vignettes were located within the data to support assertions being made. Parsing the data by emerging patterns occurred for each school site separately and then comparisons were made between the two sites. Overarching patterns were noted that cut across both field sites. These overarching patterns were then organized with the analytical vignettes as well as any negative case analysis.

Triangulation was sought among the multiple data sources (i.e., observation fieldnotes, researcher reflective notes, teacher interviews, student interviews, and paraprofessional interviews; see Appendix E). Observations formed the main source of the data and interviews were used to support or challenge what was observed in the classrooms. Archival or document reviews were also used to support and challenge the data from both observations and interviews. The focus on observations, and then document reviews and interviews, to triangulate data occurred because of the challenge of interviewing the students (see limitations section of this article). Furthermore, given that there was not a formal written functional curriculum (as noted below in the results) analyzing the written curriculum proved challenging as well. Thus, observations formed the main data along with the other data collected (e.g., interviews).

Results

The findings from the research question regarding the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum were parsed into five overarching themes. The first major theme indicated that functional curriculum was found to be relative, as the functional part was "in the eye of the beholder." Next, the enactment occurred in moment-to-moment interactions. The enactment of functional curriculum created a community within the programs, and it was found to be more than what met the eye, as it had to be everything to everyone. Lastly, tensions between special education and general education were formed from the enactment of functional curriculum.

"Eye of the Beholder"

Initially both teachers stated that they used a functional curriculum, which was the major criterion for inclusion in the research project. However, in interviews, River Bend teacher Paula described her curriculum as "a mixture of academic and work-related" (Interview, March 15, 2005), although she indicated that she considered it functional. She suggested her curriculum's functional nature was evident through the spelling words she used in her language arts class, as they were words related to employment stating, "I want students to read words and know what they are when they go for a job" (Interview, March 15, 2005).

Paula's focus on academics and work was revealed through her statements.

> I struggle because I have them [students] for four years. Technically, they should be out of my room junior and senior years and placed in jobs in the community or work sites. That would be ideal if there was money, and resources, and jobs. (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005)

Paula, on a separate occasion, expressed, "I try to get them [her students] out of the building for two years." Paula's commitment to a functional curriculum was further elaborated through her discussions of what she would like to add to her curriculum, such as teaching her male students how to shave, her female students how to give themselves manicures, and all of her students about proper clothing.

Katie, in the Harborville program, also considered her curriculum functional, making comments such as, "Overall ranking of importance… concept of money and time. Math is the most important thing, then just basic reading so they can read job descriptions, applications, and directions" (Interview, June 14, 2005). Her description focused on functional academics as well as outcomes of employment and independent living. She repeatedly stated that she wanted her students to "function in society, not have society take care of them. They can all do something. It is finding that [what each student can do]" (Interview, June 14, 2005). Despite that both teachers believed they used a functional curriculum, few commercially-available functional curriculum models were found to be implemented in either program. Paula continually expressed frustration that there were no research-based curricula available for "this level" of students.

In both programs there was a disconnect between the enactment of a functional curriculum and theory, as both were heavily academically-structured in nature. Katie's classes included social studies, math, English/language arts, employability, and life skills, creating a ratio of three-to-two academic to functional classes. Paula also had a three-to-two ratio of academically-oriented to more functionally-oriented classes in her program, with classes such classes as life management, history, practical business, math, and English/language arts. Yet, it was not the name of the classes, but what occurred within them that demonstrated the relativity of the functional curriculum. For example, Paula used textbooks in her classes. On most days students would read a chapter, or part of one, and answer questions orally or on paper. To Paula, knowing important people, events, and dates of history was considered functional for the success of her students, as was having her students be successful spellers. Every week her students had to learn and take a test on twenty spelling words.

The relativeness of functional curriculum was illustrated in Katie's math class. While mathematics as a subject can be very functional, sometimes in Katie's program it was more so than others. For example, at one point the students in Katie's program were working on banking skills, learning how to write deposit slips, write checks, record all their banking transactions, and balance their checking accounts. This functionally-oriented mathematics curriculum stood in contrast to other lessons, such as when students worked on long division by hand.

The functional curriculum being relative was also evident in the disconnect between teachers and students. Students in both programs did not always see the enacted curriculum as relevant or functional to their lives. Paula's program relied on work-experiences primarily within the school, as the school was not conveniently located to community businesses. Part of these work-based experiences included a practical business class where students worked in the school store. Another part involved spontaneously cleaning the school. During the school day, Paula or the principal might have the students clean the inside of the outside of the school. These cleaning activities would then become the curriculum for the day.

Paula explained to her students the functional nature of cleaning the school, relating students' work to an actual job, and encouraged them to think about future employment and the skills they were learning. This is illustrated below in Paula's dialogue.

Does anyone see people taking trash out or washing window at McDonalds? The boss tells these people to do it and they get paid to do this. Why don't we get paid to do this? So, I think we should get paid. Mr. O'Brien [high school principal] says I can pay you with a pizza party, or with cash, real cash. It depends on how well you do, to pay you. In years past, Stacy and Alex have gotten cash. If you get that, I pay everyone based on the kind of job they did. Not everyone gets paid the same and not everyone knows how much each other got paid. Because in real life you don't know how much each other gets paid. Because it is our business. I try to train you and teach you about stuff like that. (Paula Click, Fieldnotes, March 28, 2005)

While Paula felt this was important and "functional," not all of her students agreed. One student, Rick, summarized the opposing perspective best, "She [Mrs. Click] just does things the janitor is suppose to do. We don't come here to do that. We come here to learn I thought" (Interview, March 15, 2005). Rick obviously did not feel that learning to sweep the hallways was functional. Some students' lack of resentment to the cleaning stemmed more from appreciation over not doing "book-work" rather than performing an activity that would prepare them for employment and daily living. A similar disconnect occurred between Katie and her students over the functionality of some activities, particularly working in the school store. While Katie's students worked at school store selling, stocking, and counting money, not all of them viewed these activities as helping them to achieve their post-school goals and at times tried to resist.

Moment-To-Moment Enactment

The enactment of functional curriculum occurred within the moment-to-moment decisions in both programs, and was associated with the flexibility demonstrated by the teachers, students, and other individuals with the program. Teachers had to be flexible to what students brought into the classroom, to what other school personnel might ask of the teacher and/or students, and finally to their own changes and spontaneity. Students had to be flexible to changes the teachers and other school personnel made, as well as changes their own peers influenced.

The teachers repeatedly used the word "flexible" when discussing their programs. For example when Paula's program at River Bend was visited by middle school students joining the program next year, she created activities to integrate her current students and the new students. However, shortly into the visit the principal stopped in and asked Paula if her class could clean the outside of the school. Paula then changed her plans and sent the incoming students off with current students and an adult to clean outside the school. At the conclusion Paula commented, "See, it's about being flexible" (Interview, March 28, 2005). In another instance, Paula received a phone call from the office at the end of

the day asking her students to stuff, fold, and address parental updates for the school. By agreeing, Paula's curriculum changed for the next day and she stated, "So much for my lesson plans tomorrow" (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005).

Katie remarked on the flexibility of her program, stating "it is nice to have that flexibility." For example, one day Marilyn (the job coach) asked Katie's class to stuff bags for a community five kilometer run/race, and students did this instead of what had been planned for the employability and life skills class over the course of three days. Marilyn did not ask any of the resource room teachers in the building, but focused on the self-contained program to be flexible to do an alternative activity over the next several days. These situations within both programs illustrate that school personnel viewed the curriculum as flexible as well.

"Where Everyone Knows Your Name…"

The enactment of functional curriculum created a sense of community within the programs, constructed through the deliberate and purposiveful decisions of each teacher as well as through the unintentional and inherent features of the program. Because the majority of students spent almost all of their school day within the self-contained cross-categorical programs together, this contributed to the development of community. In addition, most students had minimal acceptance in the larger school community. Their social or peer community was more likely limited to students within their programs, or at least in special education.

Students' lack of acceptance within the larger school community at Harborville was supported by Brenda, a paraprofessional, who commented that not everyone was equally accepted. Katie confirmed that few of her students were accepted within the larger school community and stated that her students' acceptance was "sometimes really good and sometimes they are just that special education group." Katie said that there were "always a few in my class that just naturally stick out more and take the beating; some just naturally stick out more and take the heat," meaning that some students were picked on and less accepted (Interview, June 14, 2005).

Similar acceptance, or lack therefore, was found with Paula's students. When asked, Paula indicated that her students were accepted by peers, stating, "I think so, because River Bend started the categorical program in elementary and made its way to the high school, so students were together earlier. They have been with the same peer groups" (Interview, March 15, 2005). Yet, observations showed that Paula's students did not like to leave her classroom. She had to force students to leave between classes and instruct them to walk around the hallway, making eye contact, and saying hello to others.

In both programs, the teachers' enacted curriculum enabled students to assume the role of more knowledgeable other, which moved them from the periphery in the community to the center. For example, Marilyn (the job coach) created work experiences for the students in the Harborville program. She took students in groups of three to work at the local hardware store, pricing items and checking inventory. In addition to this activity being both vocational and functional, it also created opportunities for students to serve as a "more knowledgeable other" to a peer, as illustrated in the following vignette.

> It is second hour, math, and Marilyn is collecting three of Katie's students to take to the local grocery/hardware/video store to work. She loads Doug, Derek, and another student into her van and drives them to *Ted's* (the local store) where they are going to be working on inventory within the hardware part of the store. When they arrive Marilyn asks Derek, a sophomore who did this work at *Ted's* last year, to oversee Doug, a freshman and who is "working" at *Ted's* for the first time. Marilyn asks Derek to work with Doug and make sure he understands what he needs to do. (Fieldnotes, January 28, 2005)

This situation illustrated Marilyn working to create an opportunity for Derek to define himself in a new way, to see himself as a more knowledgeable other as well as secure an apprenticeship for Doug to learn vocational skills, which increased both students' status in the community.

The role of more knowledgeable other was also constructed in more academic situations, enabling students to feel positive about themselves in ways that schools traditionally define success. The following vignette illustrates Brenda, Katie's classroom paraprofessional, helping to position Sara into the role of a more knowledgeable other by using Sara's skills to assist a peer.

> It is fourth hour, employability class. Students have entered and are taking their seats. Mark got out his book that he checked out of the school library during third hour, *Jurassic Park*. Mark asked Brenda, "Do you want to help me read this?" Mrs. Buckland (Brenda) then asked if Mark was talking to her. Mark replied that he could just go talk to the media specialist, Mr. Fisher. Brenda responded by saying, "I thought you were talking to Sara because she is such a good reader." Sara then offered to read the book with Mark. Mark accepted and Sara started to read the first chapter. She sat down at Mark's table and they took turns reading. Sara helped Mark with the words he didn't know when it was his turn to read. (Fieldnotes, February 10, 2005)

The construction of community within the programs was not always positive as it did involve the lack of positive peer role models at times. Paula acknowledged that social/relationship skills were an area she could improve in her program stating, "I should, but I try to use it in modeling as it happens" (Interview, February 28, 2005). She stated that she tried to teach friendships, but not a lot on actual social skills, the skills needed to enact a positive community and be positive role models to others. Paula was also reluctant to spend time teaching this because "students think they already know this" (Interview, February 28, 2005).

Katie also commented on this aspect of the program, stating that she was going to try to "bleed out" some of her students into general education classes the following year. She indicated that it was not for academics purposes, as they would only be accountable for a few notes, but the social aspect. Katie stated that she wanted her students to see "this is how most kids are in the classroom," and to notice that general education students were not continually talking back to the teacher or egging on other students. Katie

indicated that the social/relationships aspect of her program was something that she hoped would improve. She felt her students could benefit from a greater focus on this component and the involvement of personnel trained in this area.

In summary, the enactment of curriculum in both programs created a sense of community. While the community enabled many positive attributes for students, it also had negative implications, such as a lack of positive social role models. However, it did generate friendships for students in both programs and enabled them to serve as more knowledgeable others to peers.

More Than Meets The Eye…

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs was "more than meets the eye." A large aspect is that the enacted functional curriculum had to be everything and to everyone. Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) coined the term "shopping mall high school" in the 1980s, and stated that high schools represent a unique place, as "no other social institution has the task of serving such matured diversity at the same time and in the same place" (p. 2). Within their *shopping mall high schools*, they discussed different aspects of curriculum, namely horizontal, vertical, extra-curricular, and service curricula.

Powell and colleagues (1985) also proclaimed that special education classes were specialist shops within the *shopping mall high school*. However, the nature of the programs and the enactment of the functional curriculum involved having to be all to all, including the horizontal, vertical, service, and extra-curricular curriculum. Rather, these programs were most like "one stop shopping centers," the Super Targets of today. They were everything, curriculum-wise, to every student who entered.

Horizontal curriculum

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) described horizontal curriculum as the surface of what was available (i.e., the variety of subjects offered). In both programs, a variety of subjects were offered; and remarkable similarity existed between the two programs Both Katie and Paula's programs had social studies, math, language arts, employability/practical business, and life skills/life management classes. Because most students spent the majority of their school day in these classrooms, they had to cover a wide variety of subjects (academic and functional). Paula discussed the three year rotation she used with her curriculum areas, as she taught English and math every year, but alternated the other subjects (i.e., geography, history, life management, personal management, health, and advocacy). Katie's program kept the same core classes every year; social studies, math, language arts, employability, and life skills, but varied the content across years.

While the teachers spoke of different courses, had materials for a variety of subjects, and changed periods in accordance with the school schedule, aspects of the institution failed to reflect the horizontal curriculum enacted in the programs. For example, in the school course requirement book, the description for Paula's classes was void of any range of subjects. Paula stated it best when explaining to her students why they would not find their history, math, language arts, or life skills classes within the book, "My classes are in here, but it just says categorical program" (Fieldnotes, February

22, 2005). Students in Paula's program could merely register for "categorical" classes per the school handbook. In essence, the students had separate classes (i.e., math, history, language arts), but the school did not situate it like that. While the students changed classes and learned different subjects, the school just listed the courses as the "categorical program" and the students had to register for the "categorical program" for multiple hours in a school day. This situated the program and the students into a second class status; students and classes would were not as important at "typical" classes.

Vertical curriculum

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) considered the vertical curriculum to be the range in difficulty within a particular subject. A vertical curriculum was evident within both programs, as historically the field of special education was built upon individualization and accommodating materials to help students access the content. However, one could question the amount of individualization that occurred within these self-contained programs.

Utilizing, and having others validate the use of the vertical curriculum was very important to Paula. Paula stated, and the researcher observed, that she individualized spelling words in private so not to embarrass students in front of their peers, or so students would not know who was getting different words. While Paula discussed individualizing her classes, and wanted validation that the researcher observed individualization, she made comments and actions to the contrary, as illustrated in the following narrative vignette.

> It is third hour, history. The students are working on worksheets. Paula is at her desk on the phone, and Laura [paraprofessional] is helping students with the worksheets. When Paula gets off the phone, she asks Laura how Rick is doing. Laura glances back at Rick's table and reports that he is still on the first worksheet (all the other students are on the second worksheet). Laura moves back to work with Rick. Another student tries to turn in his worksheet, to which Paula told him to wait, "we are going to go over it in a little bit." Paula gave the class two more minutes and then asked Becky how far she is. Becky responded that she is done. Paula told the class that they are going to correct the first page. Laura asked Jim to read the first question and give an answer. The students are called on to give answers in a round-robin fashion until the first page is corrected. Paula told the students the worksheet was worth 18 points, to put the number they got correct out of 18 points on the top, and hand in the worksheet. Paula then told Rick that he needed to finish his second worksheet in his academic support class because everyone else had finished their worksheet and Paula wanted to enter the grades into the computer. (Fieldnotes, February 22, 2005)

The vignette shows that Paula did not want to wait for a student, but wanted the whole class to be at the same level or at the same place, an action that contradicted the individualization she professed. Paula's own words illustrated her conflict, "Most special

education teachers probably feel this way, but I don't know. They would rather do whole group instruction instead of individualization. It's easier" (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005).

Katie also spoke of her desire to individualize the curriculum to the needs of her students, stating that she wanted to "get more individual with the kids and their needs" (Interview, January 27, 2005). Katie discussed wanting more assistance to increase individualization, like working with smaller ratios. She expressed frustration over working with her students on basic reading as they had varying levels of reading ability, which made it difficult to effectively help them all.

Katie's program involved providing multiple levels of difficulty within different subjects, as a wide range of student ability was found within the program. For example, students ranged in ability from being able to properly compose a sentence with minimal spelling assistance to having difficulty with letter formation. A similar situation occurred in math class, where the majority of the students were able to do two-digit multiplication and two-digit division without a calculator. Yet, one student still struggled with telling time and forming numbers. He was pulled aside during math time and worked one-on-one with a paraprofessional on these concepts.

Service curriculum

These programs also had to encompass service curriculum, which Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) considered the academically or educationally relevant emotional or social needs that students might face. While both programs were observed to address "service curriculum," the teachers felt constrained and indicated this was an area lacking in their program and the whole school.

The service curriculum observed in Katie's program ranged from the subtle dynamics of an adult in the program simply talking to a student and discussing everyday, small issues that were bothering him/her in the moment to the more in-depth dynamics of discussing personal issues of larger significance. The following vignette illustrates the subtle enactment of the service curriculum in which a student is talking to an adult in the program about everyday issues.

> It is second hour and students in Katie's program are in the cafeteria doing inventory for the school store. Each student is to pull out an item of candy and count how much they have of it in store to sell to determine what might need to be purchased. Students are scattered among three tables in the cafeteria that are near the closet from which the school store operates. Doug is sitting next to Mrs. Buckland, the classroom aide. He is talking to her about his problems with Adam and Derek. Doug is telling Brenda that Adam doesn't keep his hands to himself and that Derek is sticking out his tongue and making comments to him. Brenda is listening and commenting in return to Doug about ways to address these problems. (Fieldnotes, January 10, 2005)

Because the programs had to be everything, adults had to take responsibility for helping students to work through their problems, even if they appeared to be minor, such as another student simply getting on their nerves. Adults in the programs also helped students work through problems that stemmed from home, as the next vignette illustrates.

> It is towards the beginning of first hour. Half the students have gone to the work-out/weight room with Marilyn and Brenda, the others remain in the classroom with Katie working on a geography worksheet. Mark enters the classroom with a scowl on his face. Katie doesn't know that Mark has entered and is talking to Miguel about making good use of his time and working on his general education science work. Katie then reminds Flip to sit in his assigned seat, as opposed to moving back to Miguel's table. It is then that Katie notices that Mark has come into class. Katie goes over to talk to him, commenting that he still looks pretty sleepy. Mark says that he is mad at his mom; that he wanted to stay home today and take care of his brother who was not feeling well, but mom would not let him. Mark starts to cry and Katie put her hand on his shoulder and rubs, talking quietly to him and saying that she will give him a moment (Fieldnotes, February 3, 2005).

The emphasis on service curriculum involved giving students alternative ways to deal with challenges and coping mechanisms. Katie frequently spent time addressing her students' emotional needs, particularly around their friendship or lack thereof in the classroom and school.

A service curriculum was also part of the enactment in Paula's program and took many forms, from addressing hygiene to exploring choices students were making. For example, one day during life management class Paula spent class time discussing a student's choice to get suspended for fighting. The class discussed ways to express anger without using one's fists. Paula told her students,

> I don't just want you to read the words on a page, but I want you to be able to put it into practice. I would like you to learn how to do things differently and in a better manner. (Fieldnotes, January 31, 2005)

Both programs needed to be all, yet neither teacher could provide all to her students. No teacher can be trained to provide everything and, in these two programs, when something had to give it was usually the service curriculum both in what got enacted and what teachers were trained to provide.

Extracurricular curriculum

Powell, Farrar, and Cohen (1985) defined the extracurricular curriculum as involving nonacademic components, such as sports or vocational activities. Vocational-based opportunities at Harborville went beyond the program's employability class and involved vocational activities in community businesses, such as the local hardware store, an assisted living home, and the community parks and recreation office. In these settings

students had an opportunity to work under a supervisor, stock items, clean, interact with members of the community, and paint. Participation in these vocational opportunities was beneficial for students, enabling them to position themselves into new roles. Being outside of the academic classroom "space" functioned as a release for students. It presented an opportunity for students to define themselves differently than how they were typically defined at school (i.e., impaired or in some way deficient in the academic sense). Vocational experiences provided "spaces" for students to see themselves as competent and demonstrate being a more knowledgeable other.

Paula's students had opportunities to participate in vocational extracurricular opportunities as well. Besides the school store and Paula's practical business course, freshmen were taken into community settings to experience different jobs, such as at a local shopping center and the nearby recycling center. However, as most of the work-based experiences in Paula's programs were limited to the high school setting, students' actual post-school work was not represented. Students had little choice to fulfill their program required work-experience credits unless their family was willing to assist with transportation and possibly a work location.

The extracurricular components in these programs provided benefits to students. It fostered opportunities for them to learn functional skills difficult to address within the four walls of a classroom and enabled students to be positioned to see themselves in different roles.

The hidden, unintended, and missing curriculum

McCutcheon stated, "By curriculum, I mean what students have the opportunity to learn in school through both the hidden and overt curriculum, and what they do not have the opportunity to learn because certain matters were not included in the curriculum" (as cited in Morrison, 1993, p. 84). The enactment of curriculum includes not just what was apparent (i.e., socially constructed and blatantly enacted), but also what was hidden; not just what was intended, but also what was unintended or missing.

Paula often spoke of what was missing from the enactment of her curriculum. While she mentioned resources and facilities to teach aspects of functional curriculum, such as laundry and kitchen facilities, she primarily spoke of institutional constraints from the school or district. Paula stated that the master schedule of the school took precedent, meaning that scheduling her students and their educational needs took a backseat to the concerns of the entire school. Paula also discussed that opportunities to enact a functional curriculum were missing because of the location of the school. The high school was located outside of town in the already rural community and, according to Paula, the location impacted the opportunity for her students to have work experiences in the community or for Paula to use community-based instruction within her program. The final component Paula discussed as being missing was freedom to structure her day. Paula suggested that for her program confinement to class periods was not appropriate. Paula wanted the freedom to do spontaneous trips to see and experience things that her students would benefit from, stating, "It sounds like a small thing, but it's a big thing to me" (Interview, March 15, 2005).

Katie also spoke of what was missing from her curriculum, such as, "Things to help them with reading. More assistance to help with reading, so help is more like a one-to-two ratio" (Interview, January 27, 2005). Katie suggested that students' range in reading was one of her most challenging issues aside from behaviors. She also discussed the social aspects, including social skills, making friends, and dating and stated that her students could benefit from actually having a school social worker with them on a day-to-day basis to help them address issues. Finally, Katie mentioned that transportation was missing from her program. The lack of transportation fostered other missing aspects, such as assisting students with daily life activities of scheduling haircuts, making dentist appointments, and access to community-based instruction.

Students also expressed explicit and implicit opinions regarding the missing aspects of the curriculum, such as self-determination, despite teachers indicating this was included. Of the twelve students interviewed, five spontaneously said that their teacher was responsible for choosing the curriculum [what they learned] and three more indicated their teacher was responsible when prompted. Only one student spontaneously responded that s/he played a role in selecting the curriculum s/he received, and four others did so when prompted. On the whole, students tended not to see that having a voice was important. For example, when a student was asked why he was not taking Spanish, a course he expressed interest in, "why not take Spanish… I never really asked if I could take it" (Interview, February 10, 2005).

Students also felt that securing apprenticeship opportunities in related fields was missing. While some students knew what they wanted to do after school, only one was involved in an apprenticeship within their ideal or chosen career path. That student indicated cooking as one of his three career choices and was enrolled in the county vocational program for foods. Unfortunately, he was not allowed back at the county vocational program and hence would not be continuing on this track in an official school setting.

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs was multi-faceted. It involved horizontal, vertical, service, and extra-curricular components as well as the hidden/unintended/ missing curricular components. And while all these various components were evident in both Katie's and Paula's program, they were enacted differently.

"Grass is Always Greener..."

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs created tensions, particularly between the pull-out classroom and general education classes. Students were torn between these two "places and spaces." Students implied the grass was always greener wherever they were not, whether that be general education or special education.

Students in Katie's program expressed concern over being in special education; yet, they did not want to do the work in the general education classes. Students' tension could be seen in comments regarding Katie's program expressing, "it is a crazy class," "I feel like I am in first grade," and suggesting that there were "weirdos" in the class and concern over being associated with them. These stood in contrast to their comments such as, "I don't do book work," refusing to actually do written work in their general

education classes, or selecting an ideal curriculum based on classes that would require no homework.

Despite some students' adamant statements that they have general education classes, they had difficulty staying in them. Of Katie's five students enrolled in a computer applications electives course, three were willingly pulled out by paraprofessionals to do the work in special education classrooms. These students did not want to go to the general education class, although one repeatedly commented that he did not belong in the pull-out program and wanted general education classes. Another student, who was not pulled out, but assisted by a paraprofessional in the computer classroom, repeatedly begged to be allowed back to Katie's class to work. He also spoke repeatedly about wanting to be out of special education and how the students in Katie's class teased him. Another student refused to go to his general education human anatomy course and instead spent the hour working on the course content with the classroom paraprofessional, in Katie's classroom. Thus, while students wanted out of Katie's program and special education, they also simultaneously wanted back in when enrolled in general education.

This tension between being in special and general education was evident in within Paula's program as well. A student in Paula's program may have expressed it best, indicating that he did not want to be in Paula's classes, but he minded it less because the work was easier. While students expressed negative feelings towards being in general education settings, and avoided interaction with their general education peers, some were aware of the stigmatization that can exist with special education status. Although Paula denied that her students were aware of their "special education status," observations revealed otherwise. She explained that peers accepted her students because they had gone to the same elementary school; yet, observations revealed that her students did not have many friends outside of special education.

Another inherent tension with the physical location of education involved safe environments. Katie's program was a safe place to make mistakes and let one's disability and "weaknesses" be apparent, as illustrated in the following vignette.

> It is first hour, social studies. The students are working on a worksheet, finishing up their geography unit. Katie had discussed with the class their up-coming country project and has asked students to think about what countries they might like to research. Katie reminds students that tomorrow they are to write down three countries they might want to research, and then she will let them know what country they are researching. Derek, who sits in front of Katie's desk, piped up. "I want to do Denver." Flip responded back, "Denver isn't a country stupid, it is a state." Katie waited a moment and then replied, "Actually Denver is a city." (Fieldnotes, February 11, 2005)

In the above vignette, Derek felt safe to publicly state that Denver was a country, despite being wrong. Similarly, Flip felt it was a safe place to retort that Denver was not a country but a state, another inaccurate statement. Yet, neither student was embarrassed by his remarks.

Students in both programs felt conflicted over their instructional environments. Students in Harborville indicated that they wanted to be in general education classes, or at least out of Katie's program, but once in general education they did not want to do the work. Similarly, in Paula's program the students felt conflict over something as simple as homework, commenting that they do not get homework [like other students], but then not doing it once assigned. Hence, for the students in both Katie's and Paula's program the "grass was greener" on the other side.

Summary of Nature of Enacted Functional Curriculum

Overall, the nature of the enactment of functional curriculum was found to occur in the moment. The enactment of functional curriculum was not the same in both programs; however, its functionality was relative. What was functional to Katie was not necessarily functional to Paula, and vice versa. While both teachers indicated they enacted a "functional curriculum," they were not enacting the same thing. Despite some negative implications, the enactment created a community within each program, providing students with a peer group and a place to feel safe.

Although both teachers indicated they enacted a functional curriculum, the phrase does not begin to describe what was enacted; as the curriculum had to be more than what met the eye, meaning that the curriculum had to be more than what was just presented. The curriculum could not just be academics or vocational or life skills, but had to be all and it simultaneously had to be at an appropriate level for every individual student. Finally, the enacted curriculum created a continual tension around being in special education versus general education and vice versa. Despite what students verbally indicated about wanting one placement over another, their actions and behaviors revealed different wants and needs.

Discussion

The nature of the enactment of functional curriculum emerged from the themes that cut across the two programs: (1) functional curriculum was in the eye of the beholder, (2) enactment occurred in the moment, (3) enactment created a community, (4) enactment generated opportunities and affordances that were more than meets the eye, and (5) enactment created tensions between general education and special education (see Appendix E).

In the Moment

Functional curriculum in both programs was enacted in the moment, meaning teachers, students, and other personnel associated with the program had to be flexible. Katie and Paula often used this language to describe their program and those within it, implying that flexibility was inherent within the program. The flexible nature of the enactment was met with appreciation and resistance. For example, teachers' comments expressed resentment ("So much for my lesson plans tomorrow") and appreciation ("It is nice to have that flexibility").

The flexible nature enabled moment-to-moment interactions and dynamic assessments as well as positioned the programs to alter their written curriculum to meet the demands of school personnel. Paula was asked to alter the curriculum on short notice and to perform tasks such as cleaning or stuffing envelopes, jobs generally outside of the everyday school activities of a "typical" high school student. Individuals also asked Katie's program to adjust their curriculum to stuff bags for a fundraiser, a task asked only of Katie's students.

While one could suggest that these altered enacted curriculum activities and could be used to teach students both vocational and social skills, one needs to consider the messages being sent to students, teachers, other school personnel, and parents when these students are asked to perform tasks that the requester would not ask of other classes or programs at the schools. One possibility is that school personnel did not see much value in these programs' curriculum and assumed changing it would not be as difficult or as damaging to students' academic achievement or success on state tests. This raises the question of positioning one type of learning over another, and suggests perhaps "book learning" was more important than "practical learning," or even that the education of students in the pull-out programs was not as important as the education of other students. However, rather than completely dismissing these activities and their potential for functional skill acquisition, they should be turned into teachable moments.

In the Eye of the Beholder

The functionality of the enacted curriculum came into question when considering different agents' perspectives, and crafted the question if "functional" was in the eye of the beholder. While both teachers believed the curriculum they tried to enact was functional, they expressed subtle resistance to calling it that. This resistance acquires meaning when one considers Morrison's (1993) point that, "how we define curriculum makes a difference in how we think about it and how we plan it." Both teachers were quick to highlight the academic part of their functional curriculum programs. Paula preferred to call her program a "mix of academic and work-related," and Katie repeatedly stressed the importance of math and reading. Their word choices may have been spawned by the current political climate which stresses academic achievement and rigor. Despite the value both teachers placed on work experiences and daily living skills, they illustrated an awareness that these were not supported in policy.

The enacted functional curriculum in each program could also be analyzed regarding if "enough" of certain components were included or taught. For example, were either Katie or Paula allotting sufficient time to the components of self-determination or social/relationship skills? Both teachers spoke of social/relationship skills as an area that was being slighted in their programs. Katie discussed how in her ideal curriculum she would have a school social worker within her program to help her students address issues which may be impacting their relationship skills. Paula also devoted class time throughout the day to addressing issues related to social/relationship skills. However both teachers did question the enactment of social/relationship skills in their programs. Insufficient emphasis of social skills is important, whether the lack comes from teacher controlled factors or other personnel impacting the enactment of this component. Halpern

(1985) stated that personal/social relationships skills were the most important of all transition goals because they impact all facets of life.

The teachers discussed the value of self-determination and indicated they enacted it; yet observations indicated aspects were overlooked, such as an emphasis on post-school plans, course selection, and programmatic decisions (Zhang, Katsiyannis, & Zhang, 2002). Neither teacher employed a formal, commercially-available self-determination curriculum model, either as a stand-alone or embedded within a functional curriculum model. Thus, the lack of a formal, commercially-available curriculum model suggests that the teaching practices the teachers did employ failed to incorporate research or even perhaps theory on best practices towards this domain. Zhang and colleagues found secondary special education teachers did not pay enough attention to self-determination.

Students' comments supported the need for a greater emphasis on self-determination. For example, Katie's student indicated to the researcher an interest in taking a Spanish course, but confessed that he had never asked to take it. This implies that the student was unaware of his need to advocate for himself and had difficultly problem-solving the situation. There were also instances when students tried to express themselves and demonstrate self-determination, only to be "shot-down" by an adult. This occurred with one of Paula's students when he stated he did not want to clean inside or outside of the school. He advocated for himself to Paula and ended up being sent to the school's time-out room.

Overall this theme raised questions: (a) What is functional within a functional curriculum? (b) Who does, and who should, define what functional curriculum is and is not? (c) How does the functionality within a functional curriculum relate to students' post-school success? Even in light of the data from this study, the field needs to consider these issues.

Where Everybody Knows Your Name

The enactment of functional curriculum in both programs invoked a sense of community for the good and the bad. The community developed, in part, because many of the students lacked options in terms of forming a community elsewhere. Students were marginalized within the general education classes and school, and even those that did belong to school groups were seldom fully embraced. The majority of the students spent their school day in the programs and with the same peers year-after-year. This limited their options, as they began to feel comfortable with one another so they did not see the need to seek outside communities or peers. The sheer lack of options, or time to meet other peers, as they had few general education classes, also contributed to the development of community.

The enactment created a sense of community, but a community where students longed to get out, yet longed to stay in. The programs were like being in a revolving door; you were in, but you did not know which side you wanted to get out on. Students wanted to be in general education classes, but struggled once in and did not do the work, or dismissed their pull-out program classmates as possible friends only to find that these constituted some of the few friendships available. Students temporarily stepped out of the revolving door to enter into general education classes, only to want to rush back in. The

students were stuck. They wanted a place where they could belong, fit in, and not stand out, but ironically that was the pull-out program. They did "stick out" in general education and, as Katie stated, "they will always carry that stigma of being special education."

While a community was enacted, one had to question if the type of community was positive. The students could be mean to each other, making comments on someone's hygiene ("you stink" or "I can't sit by him [because he smells]"), one's weight ("you're fat"), and even trying not to sit by particular students. One concern that arose within these two programs involved positive role models. While at times the students tried to serve as positive role models for one another, telling others to stop their impolite or mean behavior, at other times the peer pressure was too great or the leaders felt the same way towards an individual, and there was no positive peer role model to demonstrate social skills and relationship skills. Students appeared at times to feed off each others' behavior enacting a survival of the fittest mode. Many of these students were picked on, ignored, or marginalized in general education settings, and they often retaliated on classmates who were not as strong (physically or mentally) or who were "less cool."

While negative implications did arise from the development of community, positive influences occurred, such as the creation of the role of more knowledgeable other. The teachers and other adults helped position students to serve as more knowledgeable others, where they could showcase their skills or strengths in ways that benefited others.

Finally, the theme raised the larger issue of inclusive versus pull-out education, a controversial subject within the field of education. The current literature on inclusive education is equivocal. Data from this study indicated that students from either program were not widely or generally accepted within the larger school community. Will this group of students ever be fully accepted within the larger school community? The data do not address if students' lack of acceptance was an association of being in special education, and particularly pull-out programs, or as a result of them being in these programs throughout their schooling and therefore more disassociated from their general education peers. The data also do not address if the lack of acceptance was something inherent within these programs, was something specific with these particular students, or if the size of the school was a factor. There are only speculations, but the study does point to the limited acceptance of these students and urges the field to further explore students' limited acceptance with relation to inclusive versus pull-out educational programming.

More than Meets the Eye

The two programs in this study were more than what meets the eye. They had to be more of everything to everyone who entered. Unlike other programs or classes, Katie's and Paula's programs could not stop at academics. The teachers, and the programs, had to extend their repertoire of skills to be more than just academically-oriented, or even functionally-oriented in this case.

The observed programs included extracurricular aspects, which involved components not normally able to be enacted within the four walls of the classroom (i.e., community access, leisure and recreation, and real-life application of social skills). The extra-curricular components served to define students differently, by others and how they

viewed themselves. Particularly important was the emphasis on vocational classes and activities within the community. Vocational settings allowed students to demonstrate their strengths and be a more knowledgeable other. Yet, concerns existed for structured or formal vocational opportunities for students of these programs. Katie indicated that many of her students struggled in the vocational programs at the county vocational center, as that they could not keep up in these non-special education supported classes.

Concern over students' access to formal vocational programs is consistent with data from the Second National Longitudinal Transition Study (NLTS2; Wagner, 2003). Data from the NLTS2 indicated that between the first National Longitudinal Study conducted in the mid-1980s to the early 1990s and the early 2000s, students with disabilities enrolled in vocational courses dropped seven percent, which was correlated to an increase in academic courses for students with disabilities (Wagner). The NLTS2 found that a lower percentage of high school students with disabilities were enrolling in occupationally specific vocational classes as compared to their general education peers (52.2% vs. 64.2%); and more general education students were taking any type of vocational courses than high school students with disabilities (79.5% vs. 61.2%) (Wagner).

In addition, today's formal vocational programs appear designed to serve general education students, and are not necessarily tailored for supporting special education students. Cameto and Wagner (2003) found that more than 85% of special education students reported the same vocational experiences as their general education peers when considering curriculum, instructional materials, instructional grouping, and classroom activities. For students in self-contained cross-categorical programs, who may be several grade levels behind in reading, as well as have challenges with social skills, the lack of individualization or differentiation can be problematic. It may be that students, like those that Katie and Paula educate, are being "phased out" of formal vocational programs and left with only vocational opportunities that can be offered within their pull-out programs.

Grass is Always Greener on the Other Side

Students expressed feeling conflict between special education and general education settings. The students wanted to be in general education classes, but had spent many years in special education. Their time in special education was marked with differing privileges and expectations, which impacted their ability to be in general education classes and follow both the rules and expectations. While some students expressed a desire to be in general education courses, once in these classrooms their behavior reflected otherwise. Students discussed wanting to be in general education classes, sometimes suggesting that the work in their self-contained classes was too easy. However, once in general education classes, they typically did not do the work and struggled not to fail.

While a surface level interpretation suggests that students wanted to be in general education, yet have them function as pull-out programs, a deeper interpretation raises the "big fish, little pond" theory (Marsh & Craven, 2004). This theory suggests that when students in Katie's and Paula's students compared themselves to peers they would feel better about themselves in the self-contained program than in general education classes. In the self-contained program, peers would either be at similar levels or below the student

doing the comparison, thus there would be someone "lower" in ability. However, when comparing themselves in the general education classes, students would most likely feel less academically able. Their lack of effort, which was indicated about a number of students placed in general education classes, might have been their way of "saving face." By not doing the work, students could blame their lack of effort for their "failures" as opposed to their ability.

Despite what the students said about both settings, their actions and behaviors revealed that they actually felt safer and completed more work in the special education setting. These data raise questions about the appropriateness of not only a general education curriculum, but an inclusive placement. The students themselves sent signals that they preferred being in the pull-out program. Many of them tried to come to Katie's classroom during their scheduled general education classes, and students in Paula's program were content not to leave the classroom during break time like requested.

Questioning students' placement in inclusive classes is necessary when considering students' zone of proximal development (ZPD; Vygotsky, 1978). ZPD refers to Vygotsky's theory that learning occurs within a child's zone of proximal development, which is the difference between what s/he can do independently and what s/he can do with the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. Students placed in general education classes were often without the assistance of a more knowledgeable other. These classes had up to and over 30 students, making the needs of the many outweigh the needs of one. Thus, one could question if students' refusal to go to class or other displays of inappropriate behavior were their way of communicating that they were in over their head. Perhaps educators need to look deeper into the meanings of these behaviors and explore the possibility that students were communicating that they did not want to be in general education classes and learn to respect their wishes.

Clearly, there are benefits and disadvantages to education within both places. The lack of positive role models is a large disadvantage to pull-out programs. Yet, data from this study indicated that students felt safer in these programs and were more likely to be working within their ZPD, let alone actually doing work. While there are no easy solutions, perhaps the answer, or at least the right direction, lies in listening to students' words and behavior. Students' perspectives regarding their education need to be sought out, heard, and respected. Inclusion, or lack thereof, cannot continue to be a debate among scholars and researchers, but must reflect the needs of students and what is best for each individual student.

Limitations

This study presented several limitations. One limitation involved the cases, as the study consisted of two rural self-contained cross-categorical programs, and whether or not the results of this study might appropriately transfer to other locations and different school programs. Another limitation is that the two cases were observed for a bounded period of time, although the data did become saturated prior to ending observations. Additionally, the cases were not observed for the same amount of time. More hours of observation were recorded at Harborville High School, Katie's program, than at River Bend High School in Paula's room. This resulted from the teacher at River Bend High School getting sick, the school having snow days, and students being away on field trips.

Limitations also arose in the data collection. Not every student in both programs returned parental consent forms. Little is known regarding the students for whom consent was not obtained, in terms of their personal and school data as well as their perspective of the enactment of functional curriculum. Student interviews posed a limitation. Some students had difficulty understanding some of the interview questions. Even when students did appear to understand the questions, their responses were limited to a few words rather than expanding their thoughts even when prompted by the researcher.

Future Directions

Research needs to continue to explore the enactment of functional curriculum in multiple settings. In general, greater research is needed across all of special education areas; self-contained cross-categorical secondary programs, functional curriculum, and curriculum enactment in special education. Research needs to explore the enactment of curriculum before the field can begin to analyze the relationship between curriculum usage and post-school outcomes, which should be the ultimate goal of research related to special education curriculum.

Research needs to explore inclusive versus pull-out settings. The data from this study added to the current equivocal literature, but additional research is need. And within that research, students' voices need to be reflected. In addition, researchers need to increase the attention paid to vocational education and the benefits it brings to students primarily educated in self-contained cross-categorical programs.

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Appendix A: Teacher Interview Protocol

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for
Secondary Special Education Students

Background Information

1. How many years have you been teaching:
    a. In special education?
    b. In your district?
    c. In your current position?

2. What was your teacher preparation like?
    a. What did it focus on?
    b. What kind of field experiences did you have?

3. What is your teaching philosophy?

Curriculum

4. Who chooses the curriculum to implement for secondary special education students at your school?

5. What type of curriculum do you believe is implemented in your classroom?

6. How did this curriculum get selected for implementation?

    Prompts: *Were you able to select the curriculum?*
    If you weren't, did another teacher, an administrator, or curriculum director select it?
    Did you review teachers' manuals?

7. What type of functional curriculum do you use?

    Prompts: *Do you use a store-bought name or self-created or combination?*

8. What components, units, or lessons of a functional curriculum do you implement?

    Prompts: *Do you use functional academics?*
    Self-determination?
    Vocational education?
    Daily living skills?
    Social/relationship skills?
    Independent living skills?
    Community skills/access?
    Financial skills?

> *Leisure recreation?*
> *Communication skills?*

9. Why and how do you choose particular units, modules, or lessons?

10. What components/units/modules of the curriculum that you implement do you feel are most beneficial for your students in terms of their post-school success?

11. How long have you taught using the same structure to your curriculum?

12. How much store bought curriculum is utilized in your program?
    a. What kinds?

13. Is the curriculum rotated across years (for example if students spend 4 years in your class do they get the same material or is it rotated?)?

14. If you could create an ideal curriculum for secondary special education students in self-contained settings, what components would it entail?

15. In your opinion, what is missing from the students' curriculum?

Factors

16. How much does who you have in class impact your curriculum use?

17. Do your students take MI-Access or the MEAP?
    a. How does it impact your curriculum?
    b. Do you use the AUEN Functional curriculum?

18. What is your school's (school district's) philosophy?
    a. How does that impact your curriculum?

19. What impact does the ISD have on your curriculum?

Classroom/School Information

20. How do you decide who is in what class? (i.e., who is in your class and who is in another special education class or inclusion class?)

21. How do you work it so students get all their "core classes" credit?

22. How open are the other teachers in the school to inclusion?

23. What is the acceptance of students in the school community?

24. What is your goal for your students when they leave you each year?

Miscellaneous

25. How much choice do students have in their schedules?

26. What is the primary mode of instruction?
    a. Do you differentiate across students?

27. What is the role of the paraprofessionals?

Appendix B: Student Interview Protocol

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for
Secondary Students in Self-Contained Classrooms

Thank you for taking the time to complete this interview. Your responses are very important and your input is valued. Please remember that you don't have to answer any question you don't want to and can stop at any time.

Demographics: Background Information on Student

1. What grade are you in at school: ___ 9th   ___ 10th   ___ 11th   ___ 12th

2. What is your schedule at school now?

High School Experience (in general)

3. Tell me about your high school experience.

4. Tell me what you learn in high school.

Curriculum: Current and Ideal

5. Who do you believe chooses the curriculum (*what you learn in your classes)* for you?

    Prompts: *Do you think your teacher chooses it?*
                         The principal?
                         Another administrator or teacher?
                         Do you think that you get a say?

6. On the following list, please say yes or no if you are receiving (getting) this at school now. [If you are not sure of what one means, please ask the interviewer and it will be explained.]

	Yes/No		Comments
Regular academics (math, science, language arts, social studies)	Y	N	
Functional Academics (math, science, language arts, social studies)	Y	N	

Electives (gym, computers, art, drama, etc.)	Y	N
Learning strategies (teaching how to learn)	Y	N
Remedial skills	Y	N
Career and employability skills	Y	N
Social Skills	Y	N
Vocational education	Y	N
Community access	Y	N
Daily living skills	Y	N
Financial skills (money, banking, etc.)	Y	N
Independent living skills	Y	N
Transportation skills	Y	N
Social/relationships skills	Y	N
Self-determination skills	Y	N
Advocacy skills	Y	N
Transition (transition skills)	Y	N
Leisure and recreation skills	Y	N
Other: _____	Y	N
Other: _____	Y	N

7. If you could create an ideal curriculum for yourself, what would it be?

> *Prompts:*   *If you could choose what you wanted to learn in schools (in your classes) that would most help you, what would you choose to learn?*

Post-High School

8. What do you want to do after high school?
   a. How do you think what you are learning is helping you reach that goal?

Consumer Satisfaction

The following questions are based on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 5 being very satisfied. Please circle the number that corresponds to your satisfaction level.

9. How satisfied are you with what you currently get at school in your classes?

   1   2   3   4   5

10. How satisfied are you with what you currently get in school compared to what you described you would want or like to get?

   1   2   3   4   5

11. Anything else you want to tell me about high school or what you are learning?

Appendix C: Paraprofessional Interview Protocol

Enactment of Functional Curriculum for
Secondary Students in Self-Contained Classrooms

Demographics: Background Information on Position

1. How many years have you been: a paraprofessional _____
                                                        In this school district   _____
                                                        In the high school _____
                                                        At your current position _____

2. Can you please describe your responsibilities to me.

3. What is your role with the curriculum?
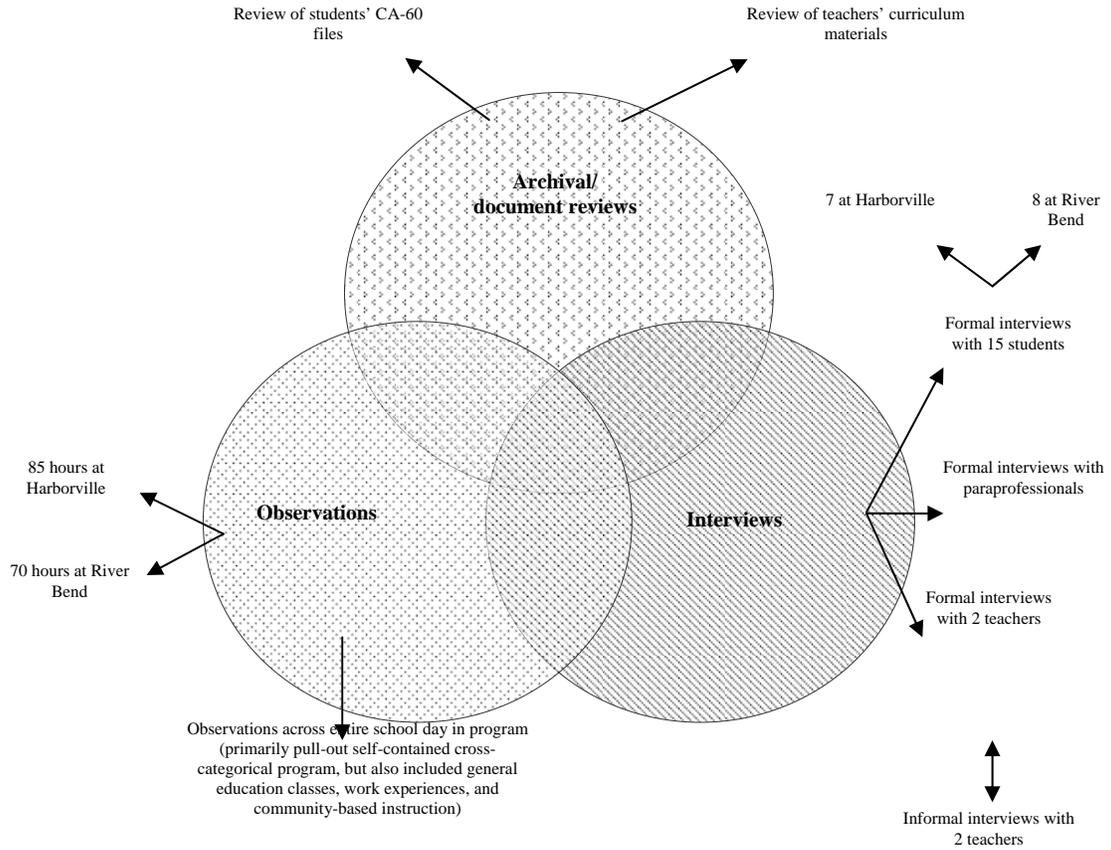
Perspective on Curriculum and Program

4. In your view, describe the curriculum the students receive across their school day.

5. In your opinion, what is the value of other programs that the student are involved in (such as Heartlands or other classes – i.e., inclusions)?

6. What do you think keeps the students' interest? How are they kept engaged in school?

Perspective on Students' Around the School

7. What is the acceptance of students within the school community?

8. What is the hidden curriculum at this high school?

9. Do the students get (understand) the hidden curriculum?

Appendix D

Diagram of Data Collection

Review of students' CA-60
files

Review of teachers' curriculum
materials

**Archival/
document reviews**

7 at Harborville   8 at River
Bend

Formal interviews
with 15 students

85 hours at
Harborville

Observations   **Interviews**

Formal interviews with
paraprofessionals

70 hours at River
Bend

Formal interviews
with 2 teachers

Observations across entire school day in program
(primarily pull-out self-contained cross-
categorical program, but also included general
education classes, work experiences, and
community-based instruction)

Informal interviews with
2 teachers

Finding by Data Collection Type			
	Observations	**Interviews**	**Document Analysis**
Eye of the Beholder	X	X	X
Moment-to-Moment Enactment	X	X	
Where Everybody Knows Your Name	X	X	
More Than Meets the Eye…	X	X	X
"Grasse is Always Greener…"	X		

Appendix E

Summary of data/results within each case across themes

Katie's program (Harborville)	**Paula's program (River Bend)**	**Theme**
· Altered curriculum when requested by school personnel (i.e., changed plans when asked to stuff race bags by transition paraprofessional) · Change *enacted curriculum* when *written curriculum* did not work (i.e., when Katie was gone and Brenda was substituting and no directions were left)	· Described program as flexible · Altered curriculum when requested with little notice (i.e., class cleaned outside school when asked by principal and stuffed envelopes for office)	Moment-to-moment enactment
· Initially said used functional curriculum, but described it later in other words (focus on functional academics; larger ratio of academic to other courses) · Indicated used all operationally defined components of functional curriculum, but observations suggested otherwise (some areas missing or under-addressed). Students did not agree with this and suggested areas that were missing · Little to no use of formal, commercially-available functional curriculum models · At times, focused math class on long division by hand · Disconnect between what students saw as "functional" and what teacher saw (some students wanted more academics, some more vocational)	· Initially said used functional curriculum, but later described it as "a mixture of academic and work related" (larger ratio of academic to other courses) · Teacher discussed focus on vocational and work-related and supported through observations · Little-to-no use of formal, commercially available functional curriculum models · Focus on textbook work and memorizing facts in history course · Disconnect between what students saw as "functional" and what teacher saw (some students did not see cleaning inside/outside of school as "functional" · Students did not agree with all components teacher indicated she utilized	Eye of the beholder (the relativity of *functional* curriculum)

· Students were largely educated together in same room for majority of day · Students had a set of shared experiences (largely stemming from their shared time) · Students had minimal acceptance in larger school community · Celebration of rituals (i.e., birthdays) · Creation of roles (particularly more knowledgeable other; as well as positive – leader – and negative – scapegoat, etc.) · Limited sharing of stories among students and teacher [sharing moved students from consumers to producers of information] · Taking responsibility for each other (i.e., serving in a leadership role to encourage good decisions by classmates or assist with their apprenticeship)	· Students were largely educated together in same room for majority of day · Students had a set of shared experiences (largely stemming from their shared time) school community · Students were leery about interacting with general education peers (avoidance of "walking around the block") · Sharing of stories among students and teacher (i.e., spontaneous sharing) [sharing moved students from consumers to producers of information]	Where everybody knows your name (a sense of community)
· *Horizontal curriculum*: Variety of subjects offered (many academic); same core courses each year · *Vertical curriculum*: discussed wanting to individualize but felt constrained because large range of abilities in students and lack of sufficient assistance; individualization was observed particularly with language arts class and math (some students worked on areas that they struggled in); differential behavioral consequences/concessions · *Service curriculum*: Felt lacking in school (i.e., not strong school social worker) and had to do more; worked on coping with small issues (i.e., annoying peers) and larger family issues · *Extracurricular curriculum*: Katie paid for students to participate in community 5K and walked with them; she and her staff set up community-based instruction opportunities, work experiences for students, and started school store to give experience (i.e., vocational opportunities)	· *Horizontal curriculum*: Variety of subjects offered (many academic); rotated courses across the years; lack of acceptance of programs – courses not identified per name but just program (categorical] · *Vertical curriculum*: stated curriculum was individualized (reduced spelling words for particular students); yet made comments that individualization was, not many teachers probably did it, and struggled to wait for students who worked at a slower pace than her planning; differential behavioral consequences/concessions · *Service curriculum*: Felt lacking in school, particularly for students with emotional impairments (i.e., teacher and her program were not equipped to address); used students experiences to draw upon lessons and help students make good decisions · *Extracurricular curriculum*: Paula set up school store and mandated work credit to give students vocational opportunities; used to have a 1/month evening out activity with students (enactment expands past 4 walls)	More than meets the eye (one-stop shopping centers – having to be everything to everyone)
· Students confused about wanting to be in special education (i.e., pull-out) and wanting to be in general education (i.e., inclusive) [like revolving door] · Students said wanted general	· Some students expressed that liked being in pull-out because work was easier · Some students liked being in pull-out program and resisted inclusive efforts,	Grass is always greener (inclusive vs. pull-out

educational classes, but then refused to go, skipped the classes, returned from them, or would not work once in them · When whole class had opportunity to go into general education class, students did not interact with general education peers and would choose to work back in pull-out classrooms · Student stated wanted to be in general education because treated younger and there was a stigma · Pull-out program was a safe environment – safe to make mistakes · Pull-out program also created opportunities for students that students in general education did not always have (go to vocational center as sophomores, have work release)	even in the hallway ·Students felt like treated younger in pull-out classes · Some students aware of stigma that accompanied being in self-contained program and/or special education · Students has some special freedom for being in pull-out program	educational settings)

Author Note

Emily C. Bouck is an Assistant Professor of Educational Studies in the Special Education program at Purdue University. Her research areas have focused on two lines; curriculum for secondary students with mild mental impairment, specifically focused on a functional curriculum, and assistive technology in the content areas for students with high incidence disabilities.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Emily Bouck, 5146 BRNG, Purdue University, 100 N. University St., West Lafayette, IN 47907; Telephone: 765-494-7238; Email: bouck@purdue.edu

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