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## A Report of an Internship at the Ottawa Area Center Ottawa County, Michigan

Donna Sue Angell  
*Western Michigan University*

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**A REPORT OF AN INTERNSHIP  
AT THE OTTAWA AREA CENTER  
OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN**

**by**

**Donna Sue Angell**

**A Project Report  
Submitted to the  
Faculty of the Graduate College  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the  
degree of Specialist in Education  
Department of Educational Leadership**

**Western Michigan University  
Kalamazoo, Michigan  
April 1987**

A REPORT OF AN INTERNSHIP  
AT THE OTTAWA AREA CENTER  
OTTAWA COUNTY, MICHIGAN

Donna Sue Angell, Ed.S.

Western Michigan University, 1987

The internship was completed at the Ottawa Area Center in Ottawa County, Michigan during the late spring and summer of 1986. It developed in two main areas: (1) the design and implementation of an off-campus community based educational experience for trainable mentally impaired (TMI) students and (2) the development of a computer based data system to maintain and examine student records.

Major experiences included the development of a curriculum which would optimally use the resources of the City of Holland, personal contacts with community leaders to explain and gain acceptance for the program, coordination of other activities at the Center during the summer session, and the examination and processing of student records with a computer system. Sections of this report contain documents which include an analysis of selected student data, a report of the intern's activities at the Center, and a log of experiences.

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**Angell, Donna Sue, Ed.S.**

**WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY, 1987**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PROSPECTUS

This report describes an internship experience completed at the Ottawa Area Center in Ottawa County, Michigan, during the spring and summer of 1986. The Ottawa Area Center (OAC) serves the trainable mentally impaired (TMI), severely mentally impaired (SMI), and the severely multiply impaired (SXI) students in the county. At the time of the internship, there were 212 students enrolled at the OAC ranging in age from three years to twenty-six years. The Center is located in a rural area of Allendale Township and is centrally located within the county.

The Ottawa Area Center has students who have a wide variety of physical and mental handicaps. These students are provided with many educational and therapeutic resources. The intern chose to work at the OAC because she was appointed to the position of Special Education Coordinator at Coopersville Area Public Schools and felt she needed a better understanding of the county resources as well as a better awareness of handicapped students. The intern had no special education experience prior to accepting the coordinator's position. The Ottawa Area Center offered opportunities for growth in administrative skills and in the knowledge of special education.

Structurally, the OAC is administered by the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District (OAISD). Dr. Fred Leaske is the Director of Special Education for the county. Mr. Mulder, the director of the OAC, reports to Dr. Leaske. All policy and budget matters are handled at the ISD level. The OAC has a staff of 40 teachers and 82 paraprofessionals. Two psychologists from the OAISD are assigned part-time to the center as well as an occupational therapist and a physical therapist. A full-time nurse is on duty during the school day. The internship was conducted during the spring and summer of 1986. During spring vacation, the intern spent the week examining student records and preparing a report for the director on the family status of the students. The director was interested in determining the number of students who were living with their natural parents, the number of students in foster care, and the number of students who had been adopted. He also wanted to know the ages of each group and the handicaps of each. He theorized that the closing of many institutions for the handicapped had increased the number of foster children being served by the OAC. Also, he theorized that the neo-natal facilities increased the number of adoptive severely handicapped children. This information would be needed to make enrollment predictions for the next few years.

The primary objective of the internship was to prepare the intern for the responsibilities of an educational leader as might occur in a line position. The internship addressed the following expectations and goals:

Conceptual Skills

1. Understand the operational and organizational philosophy and goals of the Ottawa Area Center.
2. Determine how the stated goals and philosophy are related to and incorporated in the curriculum planning processes.
3. Gain knowledge and background concerning student records as they relate to family and/or institutional background.
4. Become aware of ways in which the Least Restrictive Environment mandate can affect the Ottawa Area Center and local school districts.
5. Gain an increased knowledge of the day-to-day duties and activities required of the Center director as permitted within the seasonal and time constraints of the internship experience.
6. Become knowledgeable with the life skills curriculum with emphasis on the implementation of that curriculum during the summer session.
7. Understand the evaluation theories and methods as they apply are used with students and curriculum.

### Human Skills

1. Identify the differing relationships and networks of communication which exist in person-to-person, person-to-group, and group-to-group encounters which occur throughout the organization.

2. Identify the ways in which the personal and community values condition the roles and expectations of the OAC staff with regard to the types of communication patterns which are utilized.

3. Identify the ways in which the Center and the many persons who represent the Center use various methods and skills of communication to relate in a positive manner to the community and the media in regard to the Least Restrictive Environment implementation.

### Technical Skills

1. Develop the procedures for initiating curriculum innovation and change in accordance with Center goals.

2. Conduct an analysis of student records as one method of evaluating the effectiveness of current curricula, goals, and philosophy of the Center.

3. Identify the environmental constraints within the Center program which may influence the effectiveness of the building administrator.

4. Practice and improve analytic skills in the area of utilizing information for the purpose of developing program plans and projections.

5. Develop and refine personal strategies which are appropriate to administrative roles and expectations required of a building administrator.

The internship provided experiences that enabled greater understanding and awareness of multiply handicapped students. Knowledge of limitations and potentials was gained. Contact with community leaders provided an arena for discussing, defending, and promoting the acceptance of severely handicapped young people in the community.

Through the internship, the intern observed different leadership styles, different teaching methods, specialized coping skills, and communication techniques used with a very special population.

#### Prospectus

Sponsoring Organization: Ottawa Area Center, Ottawa Area Intermediate School District.

Field Supervisor: Mr. Harry Mulder, Director of the Ottawa Area Center.

Major Focus of Experience: To plan and develop a summer program for Trainable Mentally Impaired students in a least restrictive environment and to analyze student records related to student background.

Duration: 240 hours beginning April 6, 1986.



Rationale: The intern is employed with Coopersville Area Public Schools. Her position is Assistant Principal at the junior high. Her duties include the coordination of K-12 special education, migrant education, and K-12 testing.

The intern's professional goal is to remain in line administration and eventually become an elementary principal. To attain this goal, the intern should become aware of administrative functions in as many areas as possible. The lack of special education background and experience has limited the intern's abilities as program coordinator. An internship at the Center will enable her to better understand severely handicapped students and to study programming for students who are not mainstreamed in regular educational settings.

Ottawa County school districts are generally small. Most record keeping to date has been completed by hand. Many districts do not have access to computers for administrative use. Through the migrant program, the intern has an IBM computer. The Ottawa Area Center has no computers. The internship will provide an opportunity for the Center's records to be computerized and for analysis of those records. Once the data are on computer disks, the Center secretary can use a computer at the Intermediate School District to update those records.

The proposed internship will build on the intern's

experiences and skills. It will provide an opportunity for her to expand her knowledge in special education and to practice leadership skills.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 mandates that local school districts provide a "full continuum" of special education programs and services for identified handicapped students. Programs and services presently provided by local districts may not illustrate this continuum due to personnel, tradition, facility and financial constraints. Furthermore, programmatic factors, as opposed to student needs, often dictate the educational services that are provided. School district administrators need to utilize program models that are based on theoretical, legal, and political grounds to assess program needs which reflect the continuum mandate.

Most identified handicapped students are provided special education programs and services in regular education settings. These students have been designated as "high incidence" handicapped (Reynolds & Birch, 1979) and include the emotionally impaired, learning disabled, and educable mentally impaired. The more severely handicapped students include the trainable mentally impaired, severely mentally impaired, and the severely multiple impaired. This population of handicapped students are not usually

served in regular education facilities. As specialized programs and services are provided for students in educational settings, special education administrators must plan for a variety of needs depending on the severity and type of physical, mental, or emotional difficulties present in the student population.

Three special education programs or service delivery models for students include: (1) the "Teacher Consultant" model, (2) the "Resource Room" model, and (3) the "Self-Contained" or "Intensive Support" model (Reynolds & Birch, 1977). These models are not distinct from one another in terms of the services provided to handicapped students and to classroom teachers in regular settings, i.e., some overlap exists between the Teacher Consultant and the Resource Room models and between the Resource Room and Self-Contained models. In facilities designed for the most severely handicapped students, the service model is usually the self-contained room with children grouped according to handicap. The use of these three models can provide a "full continuum" of special education programs and services mandated by special education legislation in Michigan (Reynolds & Davis, 1979). Other rules, which must be addressed by each school district, include Rule 22 which requires the following:

(1) The superintendent of the operating school district is responsible for assigning a handicapped person

to the facility where the programs and services, as described by the individualized education program or as directed by the hearing officer, are to be provided and shall adhere to the time-lines outlined in R340.1722a.

2. In assigning a student, the superintendent shall assure all of the following:

(a) That to the maximum extent appropriate, the handicapped person assigned to a public or private institution or other care facility, is educated with persons who are not handicapped.

(b) That assignment to special classes, separate schools, or the removal of the handicapped person from the regular education environment occurs only when the nature and severity of the handicap is such that education in a regular class with use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved.

(c) That handicapped persons whose disability is such that they require assignment in special classes or facilities shall be assigned to programs as close as possible to their home.

(d) That in making the assignment, consideration shall be given to the accessibility of physical facilities, socially accepting environments, and to any potential harmful effects to the student or the quality of services which the student needs.

A special education administrator may find it

difficult to determine which model, or mix of models, is "best" for a particular school or school district. Consideration should be given to such factors as district size, number of buildings, number of students, and student needs. Constraining variables, including financial resources, available space, and prevailing attitudes or traditions should be considered if the program is to receive the support of the Board of Education, other administrators, teachers, and parents or community members.

While the least restrictive environment mandate of PL 94-142 assures a full-continuum of services for all students, each school district is unique in terms of resources, organization, student body, and commitment to various aspects of the full continuum concept. Special education administrators should be cognizant of these factors when designing special education programs. Administrators must also be able to work closely with the various professional groups involved. They should consider personal needs, professional roles, and knowledge of special education alternatives. The needs and response of the community must be addressed, also. Any process used to determine special education program needs which lead to fundamental changes within the local district and community should be "politically viable" in this regard.

The absence of a full continuum of special education

programs and services within any local school district can result from many interrelated factors. History or tradition seems to play a major role in determining how programs and services have evolved. Prior to 1970, practically all school districts provided "Self-Contained" special education classrooms for the mentally retarded (Wang, et al., 1985). The most severely handicapped public school students were taken out of the regular classroom altogether. Later, programs and services for the learning disabled and emotionally impaired were developed. (Passanella & Volkmer, 1977). This often involved the addition of new programs; the most severely impaired students were usually identified first. The expectancy was for the complete removal of special education students from the regular class setting. Dependent upon district resources, programs tended to grow toward the provision of services for more moderately to mildly handicapped students. This has been referred to as the "worst first" system of priority setting. The expansion of programs to provide services to the mildly handicapped was often the last to be added and the most difficult to justify (Passanella & Volkmer, 1977).

The administrative arrangements in most schools until the 1970s could be described as the "two-box" theory. From this perspective, there were two kinds of classrooms (regular and special), two sets of teachers (regular and

special), and two classes of children (regular and exceptional). Two separate school systems were operated. Under the two box theory, children who had experienced difficulty in a regular class were referred to a psychologist or other specialist. If the child met the standards for some category of special education, placement was made in a special class. Most of the development of this kind of organization occurred at the elementary school level. Students at the secondary level were often left without special supports (Reynolds & Birch, 1977).

While the historical experiences of a school district are important in considering the effects on attitudes and expectations, other factors should be considered. These additional factors involve the attitudes, knowledge, and daily practices of the teaching staff involved. When programs fail to develop capabilities for serving the moderate to severely handicapped student, a cycle begins which tends to perpetuate itself. A special education teacher must design a program which effectively educates students with moderate to severe learning or behavioral difficulties. The time required for total program planning does not allow for the development of effective supplemental instructional arrangements within regular classrooms.

A more complex model for the organization of special



education programs developed in the 1970s. This model is sometimes described as a cascade or continuum of services. The features of the cascade model proposes the following:

1. Support should be given to regular classrooms as a means of meeting the needs of the children who were kept there.

2. Children should not be classified and given special placements on a permanent basis; they should be moved to special rooms temporarily, and they should be returned to regular classrooms as soon as possible.

3. The lines between special education and regular education should be redefined to allow students to pass between them as dictated by their educational needs.

4. Regular and special education staff should become interactive in their daily work and should share responsibility for students.

5. Justification should be required whenever a child is removed from the regular school environment.

According to Reynolds and Birch (1977), there has been a national trend in special education towards the provision of programs and services in the "Least Restrictive Environment" (LRE). This trend has led away from the traditional "two-box" theory of special education. The trend toward the development of new and creative service alternatives was hoped to successfully maintain the handicapped student in the mainstream of

school experience (Reynolds & Birch, 1979). This trend has led to the development of various "models" for service delivery designed to individualize the educational program for each child. One of the first attempts to describe a model of a "full continuum" of services was provided by Deno in 1970. In Deno's model, an attempt was made to combine the two boxes (full time regular class, full time special class) into a continuum effect. Two additional service provisions were placed between the traditional choices. The first step involved the provision of supplemental aids and services to the regular teacher and the special student. The second step involved part-time placement in special education settings where a combination of supplanting and supplementing instructional services were provided.

A major problem for special education administrators involves the determination of appropriate personnel and program models needed to address a local district's needs. This organizational problem was addressed by Burrello and Sage (1979) as they referred to delivery problems associated with small districts. They identified four dimensions that required consideration when addressing the full continuum mandate. These dimensions include the following:

1. The number of students served.
2. The population density.

3. The severity of the handicap.

4. The location of services.

They identified four steps necessary for the determination of an appropriate organizational model. These include the following:

1. Identify available alternatives for service.

2. Provide for additional alternatives.

3. Evaluate advantages and disadvantages of alternatives.

4. Make decisions between alternatives.

The above discussion demonstrates the various factors which should be considered in determining the appropriate continuum of services in a district. However, no one "method" has been found to demonstrate an effective approach. The continuum of services in many districts has evolved in a piecemeal fashion dependent on administrative skill and financial resources.

#### Integration of TMI Students in Schools and Communities

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 has provided the impetus for schools to examine the way in which students with severe handicaps are educated. Prior to the passage of this legislation, most students with severe handicaps did not attend schools with their non-handicapped peers. One of the most important mandates

of the law is that education must occur in the least restrictive environment possible. This requires that, to the maximum extent appropriate, students with severe handicaps must be educated with non-handicapped students. This mandate has forced school districts to consider integration of students with severe handicaps with their non-handicapped peers. Integration is thus defined as the placement of students with severe handicaps into special education classrooms which are within environments shared with regular education students. This differs from mainstreaming in that the move is not to place the severely handicapped students into the general education classroom, but, instead, to locate the special classroom on the campus of the regular education site. In that manner, the students with severe handicaps would be integrated into nonacademic areas and have opportunities to interact with each other (Falvey, 1986).

Educational programs for students with severe handicaps are being developed to emphasize integrated, age-appropriate and community-based experiences. Falvey, 1986, lists five reasons for integrating severely handicapped students into regular settings:

1. Integration can foster positive attitude changes in the public. Non-handicapped students must be provided with the opportunity to develop skills to interact with their handicapped peers.

2. Integration provides opportunities for handicapped and non-handicapped students to learn about and from each other.

3. Integration provides opportunities for interaction, communication, social, and leisure skills with students with severe handicaps and their non-handicapped peers.

4. Integration provides opportunities for both groups to increase their understanding of individual differences. and

5. Integration provides opportunities for both groups to develop friendships.

A community-based educational model was proposed as an alternative to segregated programming. In this model, the community becomes the expanded school environment. By providing instruction within the community setting, students gain the opportunity to acquire skills that will enable them to function in community environments upon completion of school.

A community-based educational model can be applicable to moderately and severely handicapped students. Systematic instruction can result in the opportunity and training for students to function appropriately in their home communities. Community-based programs can be a proactive, problem-solving approach to the mandate requiring education in the least restrictive environment.

### Summary

The Education for all Handicapped Children of 1975 has had far-reaching effects on education in the United States. School districts are committed to the development of special education programs which meet the demands of the law and provide for the full education of all handicapped students. A full-continuum of services must be provided to ensure that each student has an equal opportunity for full educational services.

Several models have been developed to address the least restrictive environment issue. The community-based model is used in some school districts to provide services beyond the self-contained concept. This model has allowed handicapped students to interact with members of the community for part of their school day.

## CHAPTER III

### DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

#### Introduction

The Ottawa Area Center provides educational services to students from the age of three years to twenty-six years who live in Ottawa County and are diagnosed as being severely handicapped. The OAC students are divided into three groups: trainable mentally impaired, severely mentally impaired, and severely multiply impaired. The continuum of educational programs at the Center include an infant program, a preschool unit, school aged classroom units, pre-vocational training programs and placement and follow-up services. The Ottawa Area Intermediate School District administers the program at the Center. It also has maintained an agreement with Kandu Industries in Holland, Michigan to provide work evaluations and work training within a sheltered workshop setting. The internship involved two main directions: (1) the development of skills in the administration of a community-based educational program for trainable mentally impaired (TMI) young adult students and (2) the designing and implementation of a computer-based data system to determine family status of Ottawa Area Center students.

Experience was also gained in other areas at the Center.

#### Community-Based Program

A portion of the internship was designed to produce an experimental off-campus TMI program in the city of Holland. The mandate of the "Least Restrictive Environment" clause of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 encouraged the OAC director to review the policies of the Center. A Least Restrictive Environment Committee was established in the spring of 1986. Their final report is included in Appendix A. The committee recommended that an alternative site be established for a TMI classroom in a local district school building. A second recommendation suggested that integrative activities be encouraged and fostered at all levels. A third recommendation was to study the curriculum and to include as many experiences as possible for community living. Their fourth recommendation was for the implementation of a center based program for the older aged students for the 1986 summer school session and housed in the City of Holland.

The intern was assigned the duty of the implementation of the community-based program in Holland. It was the intern's philosophy that when planning the community program, consideration had to be given to the



students' needs, cognitive abilities, and home and school expectations. The skill expectations had to correspond to those placed on the student within other domains. For example, if the student was expected to use public transportation independently as an adult, that student had to be given the opportunity to be learn those skills during the community based program. Activities had to be developed to meet future needs as much as possible with emphasis on using community service agencies such as banks, post offices, clinics, public transit systems, recreational facilities, etc. The mentally disabled student must be trained to function within the community, not only in group homes and sheltered workshops, but in stores, restaurants and service agencies, and must be able to use various modes of transportation.

The goals of the community-based program were to teach the functional use of community facilities in order to meet the students' personal needs and to maximize students' levels of independence. Students were expected to:

1. Use restaurants appropriately including ordering, paying for food, and displaying proper table manners.
2. Use community stores for shopping while displaying appropriate behavior involved in locating and paying for items.
3. Shop within grocery stores using shopping lists

and grocery carts, locating and paying for items while displaying acceptable behavior.

4. Use community facilities independently.

5. Utilize means of public transportation.

In choosing community settings and services for programming, attention was directed toward the individual's current and future needs. Information from the family concerning its activities was crucial. Future adult residential and work placements were considered. As the young adult student approached the last years of school, the staff, student, family, and concerned others had to make decisions that assisted students in the transition from school to work placements.

The environments within Holland which were identified to teach community mobility skills were identified as follows:

1. Restaurants (full service and fast food)
2. Supermarkets
3. Post Office
4. Police station
5. Banks
6. Medical Clinics
7. Library
8. Parks and recreational facilities

These businesses and agencies were visited by the intern prior to the implementation of the program in order

to determine their accessibility to the handicapped, food service available, prices, check-out procedures, management policies, etc. In addition, the location and the means of getting to and from the businesses were important factors considered when determining the environment used to teach community mobility skills.

The intern met with the OAC director and the TMI teacher to discuss the summer program. The community activities were chosen and the intern proceeded to schedule visitations by the students to each business. The program included one experience on Dial-A-Ride and one trip to Grand Haven to orientate the students to another city. The log of the internship discusses the actual daily experiences of the students. The intern did not accompany the students to each site. Rather, it was her responsibility to tend to administrative details such as evaluating overall experiences of students and the teacher's responsibility to actually carry out the curricular experiences with the class.

#### The Computer-Based Research

Part of the internship involved the design and implementation of a computer based data system to manage student data. The intern sought to establish this system for the Ottawa Area Center to gain experience with IBM

data management and with word processing software. Mr. Mulder requested that the intern spend spring vacation compiling data from the student records regarding custodial placement of the students. Mr. Mulder was interested in determining the percentage of students who were in foster care, adopted, or living in residential settings. He was interested in the ages of these students. It was believed by Mr. Mulder that the medical advancements in the neo-natal wards were increasing the number of severely multiply impaired students and that these children were placed in foster care within the first few years of birth. This information would be valuable to him when making long range enrollment predictions. The increase in SXI students would also impact the Center's expansion needs.

During spring vacation, the intern studied the cumulative records of each Center student. The medical and family histories were found to be very interesting. Many of the children who were labeled SXI had been born three to ten weeks premature. Other SXI students were children who had stopped breathing and been revived later. These children were diagnosed as survivors of sudden infant death syndrome. One three year old girl was born with only a brain stem. Another severely mentally impaired four year old boy had been a near-drowning victim. He had been underwater for nearly an hour. Though his life was spared,

he remains severely brain damaged.

The IBM Lotus 123 program was used to manage the student data. Originally, the director wanted a listing of students and their family status (living with parent, living in foster care, adopted). However, soon after the data were compiled, the director soon wanted more information placed in the system. The final printouts included information for the director, for each local director in Ottawa County, and information needed by the secretary. This information included the student's name, birth-date, phone, address, city, school district, handicap, OAC teacher, and family status. Once the information was recorded on Lotus 123, it could be sorted by any category.

The data were sorted by teacher name to give the secretary 1986-87 class lists; the data were sorted by school district to present to the local directors for their accounting purposes. The data were sorted by birth-date to denote the students who would reach their twenty-sixth birthday during the school year. These students would be referred to Kandu Industries for placement upon completion of the OAC program. The data could also be sorted to print-out lists of all TMI, SMI, and SXI students. This information in the past was either not available or took hours of secretarial help to compile

The family status data proved to be helpful to the

regarding percentage of OAC students in TMI, SMI, and SXI programs and the percentage in varying family situations.

Table 1

Home Situation of Ottawa Area Center Students

Group	Natural Parents	Foster Parents	Adoptive Adoptive
Trainable Mentally Impaired	94	15	10
Severely Mentally Impaired	23	15	3
Severely Multiply Impaired	36	8	3

The above information allowed the director to make several assumptions. As the TMI students aged, they were more likely to enter foster care residential facilities. The number of facilities in each local district impacted the enrollment at the Center. Over one-third or 37% of the severely mentally impaired were in foster care while only 3% were adopted. The foster care placement usually occurred with younger SMI children than the TMI population. Many Downs Syndrome children were placed in foster care at a very early age, usually with individual families. As they grew older, many of them were placed in residential group homes along with the TMI students.

It was difficult to make many long range predictions with SXI students because of the short life expectancy

rates. However, medical science is prolonging the lives of these children and it is difficult to determine the number of years they would remain at the center. Only three of the 47 SXI children were born prior to 1970. There are twenty-nine SXI children under the age of ten years at the Center. The last decade has seen the advance of neo-natal units and increased the number of children surviving the first few years of life.

#### Other Experiences at the Center

The intern was involved in other day to day activities at the center. Several days were spent in various classrooms observing students, discussing teaching techniques with teachers, and interacting with students.

The intern was appointed co-chair of the annual summer carnival held on July 31, 1986. The entire student body, teachers, aides, and families participated in a day-long carnival. The intern was responsible for the organization of the games, activities, and notification to family members. The OAC director was vacationing during that week and was not involved in the planning process. The carnival went very well and was well attended.

The intern also worked on the publicity for the Ottawa/Allegan Parent Respite Care Co-op. This involved notifying all Allegan and Ottawa County parents of OAC students about the respite care co-op in their area.

### Summary

The intern's exposure to a range of experiences in the special education field provided an opportunity for conceptual growth. Her general knowledge of curriculum and programming for handicapped students increased. The community based program provided many valuable learning experiences in areas of administration, curriculum, public relations, and community awareness. The computer based informational system gave the intern an opportunity to use the computer with confidence and to learn to design programs for specific purposes. The administrative functions which were carried out provided opportunities for the intern to develop ideas and appropriate methods for dealing with personnel concerns in an organization. Human relations and program development skills were increased, as well as self-confidence in her ability to perform similar activities independently.



## **APPENDICES**

## **APPENDIX A**

### **Least Restrictive Environment Report**

## OTTAWA AREA CENTER

## L.R.E. COMMITTEE MEETING

April 24, 1986

Members Present:	Ray Bickford	Christa Wise
	Penny Daly	Carol Van Drunen
	Cathy Petroelje	Stan Veltema
	Harold Knoll	Harry Mulder

The Committee reviewed the year's activities and made the following recommendations. It does not feel that there is anyone more important than the other,

1. We feel that the alternative for a Trainable Mentally Impaired classroom in the local district is important and necessary. Working with the local districts to find one that is able and willing to provide the classroom for beginning such a class should be pursued. This is to be studied during the 1986-87 school year for possible implementation in September 1987.
2. Integrative activities should be encouraged and fostered at all levels. This could include such things as playing basketball in and with regular schools; have roller skating outings together, etc. This is to be implemented through the assistance of the local Special Education Directors/Coordinators, the Director of the Ottawa Area Center contacting the local schools, and encouragement of parents in helping to make suggestions for integrative activities.
3. That in the older aged students we recommend a needs assessment of the curriculum to include as many experiences as possible for community living. This could include shopping, work activities, etc.
4. Implement a center based program for the older aged students for the 1986 summer school to be housed in a classroom in the City of Holland.
5. Recommend that there be a search for grant money which could be used to implement a community based program.

The chairperson, Harry Mulder, thanked the committee members for their participation during the year, and dismissed the committee as having at this time concluded its mandate of

looking at the concept of LRE as it related to the Ottawa Area Center,

These recommendations will be forwarded to Mr. Fred Leaske.

## APPENDIX B

### Daily Log

The following log describes the daily activities of the internship at the Ottawa Area Center. It covers the period from January 28, 1986 to August 8, 1986.

## LOG OF ACTIVITIES

January 28, 1986

12:00-5:00: A meeting was held between the intern and the Ottawa Area Center director. The programs at the Ottawa Area Center (OAC) and the administrative structure were discussed. Ideas for a summer off-campus program for trainable mentally handicapped students were explored. It was decided that the intern would contact the Holland Public School Special Education Director and discuss the proposed summer program with him.

February 17, 1986

9:00-5:00: The intern met with the TMI teacher to discuss possible activities for the summer program. Background information was obtained so the intern could discuss the program in-depth with the Holland Special Education Director.

March 17, 1986

10:00-5:00: The intern met with Holland Special Education Director, Dr. Nicholas Fridsma. The intern outlined the proposed summer project and asked the cooperation of the Holland Public Schools. The Center needed a room in a regular education building for the four week community based project. The intern and

Dr. Fridsma visited alternative sites in Holland and discussed the program with the principals of each building. It was decided that the Lincoln School would be the most practical site. The Lincoln school is across from Hope College and located within walking distance from the central business district of Holland. Visits were made to the college and to some businesses to discuss the program.

March 19, 1986

8:00-12:00: The intern met with Mr. Mulder at the Ottawa Area Center to discuss the program goals, the meeting with Dr. Fridsma, and to identify areas in which the intern could be helpful to the OAC. The discussion centered on the computer based data management system which could be done during spring vacation. The director showed the intern where student records were kept and gave her initial instructions.

March 31-April 4, 1986

Daily, 8:00-4:30 (40 hours): The intern spent the week studying the student records, medical histories, and contacting parents to obtain the information requested by the director. Time was spent entering the data on the IBM computer and developing figures for the director. The data collected can be located in Appendix B. During this week, the director was

on vacation; the intern worked closely with the Center secretary to locate the information needed.

June 30, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern spent the time in the City of Holland. She visited with merchants, agencies, and public building personnel. The summer program was discussed and permission was granted for the students to visit many of the businesses, buildings, and facilities in Holland.

July 1, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern studied curriculum available at the Center regarding community programs. The student achievement goals and evaluation process was reviewed. A final decision was made regarding the visitations of the class.

July 2, 1986

9:00-11:00: Final arrangements were made regarding transportation to Holland, bad weather provisions, and emergency procedures in case of accident or illness of students.

July 7, 1986

8:00-4:00: The students began the first day of the



summer program. The intern discussed the program with the students, explained the summer schedule, and participated in the teacher's plans for the day. After school, the intern met with Mr. Mulder and assured him that the program was prepared to go to Holland. The intern investigated audio-visual materials available for teacher use at the Intermediate School District. The ISD is normally closed for the summer, but she obtained permission for use of materials for the summer project.

July 8, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern accompanied the class to the Holland Lincoln School. The intern discussed the appropriate behavior expected while in the community. A brief walking tour of Holland followed with the intern supporting the teacher with the students. It was understood that the teacher was in control of the classroom activities and the intern was the administrator of the program. While at the Holland School, all problems, administrative decisions, and contact with Holland administrators would be handled by the intern.

The intern discussed the financial reporting procedures of the OAC. It was interesting that the director has very little input in the preparation of OAC budgets. The intern has much more control of budgetary

matters in Coopersville as assistant principal than the director does at the OAC.

July 9, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern spent the day discussing the annual summer carnival plans with the assistant director and visiting classrooms. She visited representative classrooms of TMI, SMI, and SXI students at all age levels. She discussed individual student handicaps with the teachers and aides. She met with the school nurse to discuss individual cases. The intern attended a staff meeting at the OAC.

Later in the day, the intern developed a school calendar for 1986-1987 for the director.

July 10, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern accompanied the class to Holland. Many summer maintenance projects were underway at the Lincoln School. The intern met with the school maintenance director and discussed how to best handle potential problem areas. Public relations with Holland Public Schools was a priority issue with the intern and every opportunity to relieve anxiety and concern was taken.

The class made its first community visitation. The students visited the Herrick Library. The intern had made

arrangements to have the students taken on a tour and then to have them apply for personal library cards. The students had been well prepared for the visit by the teacher. There was evidence of good pre-teaching of library skills and vocabulary as the students were familiar with the terminology used by the librarian. The intern used this time to continue the public relations focus with the library personnel.

July 11, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern worked with the Severely Mentally Impaired classrooms this day. She observed differences in the student levels of ability. Teaching techniques and behavior modification methods with varying age groups were observed. She discussed how the curriculum at the OAC is developed and modified to meet individual needs.

July 14, 1986

8:00-5:00: The assistant director was gone this week. The intern was asked to assume some of his administrative duties. She spent the day in the office working on updating the computer listing of student family status, preparing hand-outs on the Respite Care Co-op, checking cumulative files on new students, preparing family status report for the director, organizing carnival plans with the director and staff, and visiting classrooms.

July 14, 1986

6:00-10:00 PM: The intern worked on the computer. New lists needed to be prepared; original program needed to be modified to allow additions and deletions more easily. The intern gained invaluable experience on the computer through this project.

July 15, 1986

8:00-4:00: The class went to Holland, accompanied by the intern. It was observed that the students are exhibiting appropriate behavior and doing very well on the community based project. The intern discussed this fact with Holland administrators and the general consensus is that there is a need for more integration of TMI students in the regular education and community settings.

4:00-6:00 PM: The intern worked on the computer project.

July 16, 1986

8:00-5:00: All the TMI classrooms were taken to Grand Haven for community interaction. It was decided that the success of the one classroom was so great that all the TMI students should have the opportunity to participate in some community activities. Visits to area businesses were made. Provisions had to be made for those students who could not walk. It was interesting to note how difficult

it still is for handicapped students to use public facilities. All students participated in taking public transportation from one site to another.

The intern later met with the assistant director to work on carnival plans.

July 17, 1986

8:00-4:00: The class visited the Holland Post Office. This visit was pre-planned by the intern. The postmaster provided a guided tour and gave students opportunities to purchase stamps, mail letters, and observe the sorting of their mail.

The intern then spent the rest of the morning setting up a visit to the Holland Police Station. She discussed the program and the program goals with the Holland Chief of Police. She met with the officer who would conduct the tour of the station.

At the Center, the intern later talked with a group of teacher aides. They were upset about the method the director used to fill a temporary vacancy. They noted that their contract read one way and the director acted in another. There seemed to be a fair amount of dissention from the aide staff, but no one person was willing to face the issues with the director. It appeared that many of the administrator's actions are purposely vague and indirect. His communication with the staff is also interpreted by

some of the staff members as being very indirect. This leads to confusion on the part of the staff, but open discussions are not engaged in by the parties. It was interesting to hear from the "other side" and to understand how they feel left out in administrative decisions.

July 18, 1986

8:00-4:00: The day was spent at the OAC. One of the activities of the intern involved showing the facility and explaining the programs to a new administrator in the Ottawa County school district. He had never visited a Center program and had many questions. The entire process was educational for both the new administrator and the intern.

July 21, 1986

8:00-4:00: Both the OAC director and assistant director were gone in the morning. The secretary was also gone. The intern was asked to cover the office. The intern spent the day developing the school calendar. The OAC calendar is not as complicated as the one the intern developed for the Coopersville Junior High. The intern found this activity to be relatively easy.

The intern spent the afternoon in the physical

education department and learned about physical therapy both in the gymnasium and the pool. Behaviors of students vary greatly when in different environments. Behavior management was discussed.

July 22, 1986

8:00-4:00: The TMI class visited the Holland Police Station. The intern spent the morning at the Meijers Thrifty Acres preparing the store employees for a class visit. Each student was expected to purchase an item for their personal use. Store employees were requested to be of assistance but to allow for as much independence from students as each individual could accept. Cashiers were alerted that the students would be in the store that week.

The afternoon was spent in conference with the Center director. The director strongly urged that the intern attend a summer institute for special education administrators the week of August 10-13, 1986. The focus of the conference was scheduled to focus on meeting the least restrictive environment mandate of the special education legislation. Plans were made at Coopersville to release the intern for that conference.

July 23, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern spent most of this day discussing curriculum with the assistant director and numerous teachers. The impact of a strong, well-developed

curriculum cannot be over-emphasized for handicapped students. The curriculum should be cooperatively developed by the teaching staff, administration, and community representatives. The value of parental input in curriculum is appreciated at the Center. Parents are very active and concerned about the education and future of their student. Because the Center serves students until age 26, parents and group home providers play a very important role in the vocational and work skills of the student. Administrators must be strong in their leadership and promote curriculum development in the classroom.

July 24, 1986

The students spent the day in Holland. The intern remained at the Center and assisted the director in various activities leading to his absence the next week. The director planned to be on vacation the following week and used this time to brief the intern on activities that had to be completed the following week.

Time was spent reading the State Board of Education book, Trends in Special Education. Of special interest was the information on the percentage of severely multiple handicapped students in the Ottawa Area Intermediate School District in the years from 1978-1983. In 1978, there were no children enrolled in SXI classes in Ottawa County. By the 1982-83 school year, 14% of the ISD



enrollments were SXI students. The data the intern found concurs with the findings of the state department in 1983.

July 25, 1986

8:00-4:00: Final plans for the carnival were made. Last minute directives from the director were noted. The intern spent time with teachers on the carnival plans.

July 28, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern worked on the computer program to give each local school district director a printout of their individual students at the OAC. This list would be complete with student name, address, birth-date, and handicap. The printout would eliminate many calls and extra work for both the special education directors and the OAC personnel.

The intern worked on updating the class lists for the 1986-87 school year. She then planned the last week of the TMI community based program.

July 29, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern accompanied the TMI class to Meijers store in Holland. Each student bought and paid for a personal and practical item. The intern made arrangements with Dial-A-Ride to accept a call from students to take them from Meijers back to the Lincoln

school. All went well. Each student completed the tasks assigned to them for the day.

July 30, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern continued work on the computer program for student lists for each local district.

July 31, 1986

8:00-4:00: The annual school carnival went extremely well. It was attended by family members and members of the community. There were no problems and all noted that it went perfectly even with the absence of the Center director.

August 1, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern completed last day details; completed reports for the program. Records of specific goals met by each student were recorded on cumulative files. The intern talked to Holland administrators to express thanks for the use of Lincoln School.

The intern discussed with the TMI teachers the possibility of offering an off-campus program during the school year. The possibility of a fall and spring program seems viable. Large facilities are not needed and it was felt that the students could be accommodated within a regular setting.

The intern closed her experiences at the OAC with individual conferences with staff at the Center.

August 4-6, 1986

8:00-4:00: The intern completed computer work and reported them to the director. The reports will be distributed to the county directors in the fall.

August 10-13, 1986

Daily 8:00-5:00: The intern attended the special education summer institute in northern Michigan as advised by the director of the OAC. The conference was most helpful in putting into perspective all of the concepts and skills developed at the OAC during the internship.

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