

INCLUSION OF MODERATE/SEVERE COGNITIVELY DISABLED  
STUDENTS IN FAMILY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION

by

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Abstract

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INCLUSION OF MODERATE/SEVERE COGNITIVELY DISABLED STUDENTS  
INTO FAMILY AND CONSUMER EDUCATION CLASSES  
(Title)

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Publication Manual of the American Psychological Society, Fourth Edition  
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Purpose of Study

The main purpose of the study is to identify what accommodations and modifications are being done in other school districts to include the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in Family and Consumer Education classes at the high school level. The second is to identify if these students are included in FCE classes and if not what involvement does the FCE teacher have in the life skills education of these students.

Source of Data and Method of Study

The data was collected from FCE teachers, high school special education teachers, special education directors or coordinators from 30 school districts that range in student population from 1400 to 1800 students. Data were analyzed by frequency of counts and percentages. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of understanding in regards to students with disabilities. The respondents were asked to indicate possible barriers they see to the success of the disabled student in Family and Consumer Education. Respondents were also asked to identify what the moderate/severe cognitively disabled students are doing in their district in relation to inclusion in family and consumer

education classes. Respondents also rated a number of items related to the districts overall philosophy of inclusion, the FCE teacher's participation in IEP development, and support services provided. Respondents were asked what modifications and accommodations they have done to include the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in their classes. Respondents are also asked to list and indicate what has been most successful.

### Findings and Conclusions

The problem of how to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in the high school family and consumer education classes was the focus of this study. The following two questions were researched to provide a solution. The results of the study answered the following questions.

1. Are moderate/severe cognitively disabled students being included in family and consumer education classes in other districts and how are they being included?

OF those who responded 68.1 % indicated that these students were participating in FCE classes in their district. The classes that they are being included in are various levels of Foods, Adult Life, Parent and Child, Adaptive FCE courses, Reality Class, Working with Children, Chef Specialty, Eating for Life, Creations, Relationships, Clothing, Choices and Challenges, Housing, Peer Helper, and Food Service.

The majority of FCE teachers that responded attended the individualized education plan team meetings and the IEP is developed before the student is included in the class according to almost half of the respondents. The level of knowledge that the FCE teacher has about the expectations of the IEP, however, was spread across the scale. More than a fourth of the respondents indicated that the FCE teacher and special education teacher meet regularly and the rest were spread across the scale. Most respondents have an understanding of the districts goals and philosophy regarding inclusion. Many respondents indicated that a full range of support services is progressing or is occurring consistently in their district.

2. What curricular modifications and accommodations are done for these cognitively

disabled students?

Many of the accommodations and modifications were rated in the sometimes to frequently used range. The top five accommodations and modifications indicated by the respondents were: modified assignments, assistance from regular education peers, pass/fail grading, assessing students skills and knowledge through demonstration rather than written assessment, and assistance from a special education classroom aide. Those that were rarely or never used included physical accommodations to the room and small group non-inclusive instruction from the FCE teacher. Assistive technology was identified as used by only a small percentage, but a number of assistive technology ideas were listed in the narrative portion of the questionnaire. Respondents also listed accommodations and modifications being used in their district to provide success for the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in the FCE classroom.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142) is considered to be the bill of rights for the disabled and is an expression of commitment by the nation to provide a free and appropriate public education for every handicapped person age 3 to 21 (Sarkees and Scott, 1986). The anticipated outcome of this “free” and “appropriate” education is the eventual transition of handicapped people from school to the work place and lives of productivity and self-sufficiency. This law went far beyond any previous legislation in specifying that, to the greatest extent possible, this “special” education was to be provided in the least-restrictive environment (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000). In other words, students with disabilities were to be educated to the greatest extent possible in the general education classroom. The Education for All Handicapped Children Act has been amended several times since 1975, most recently in 1997.

The name of the law has been changed to the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA '97). The new amendments of IDEA emphasize inclusion and transition services. Inclusion has been used to describe the education of students with disabilities in the general education setting. Transition services are part of a students Individualized Education Plan and are intended to facilitate the student’s transition from school to community, vocational programs, college or employment (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000). Other legislation enacted even earlier mandated vocational education for the

special needs learner. Since the passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963(P.L. 88-210) and the Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984(P.L.98-524), federal and state legislation has continued to encourage educational programs to provide services for students at risk because of disability or economic disadvantage. The Carl Perkins Act also requires that individuals with disabilities or disadvantages will receive instruction in the least-restrictive environment and will receive vocational services when appropriate as a component of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP), developed jointly by special educators and vocational educators (Asselin, Todd-Allen, and DeFur, 1998).

Family and consumer education, which is part of vocational education, is particularly important in the education of individuals with special needs. There are many employment opportunities related to family and consumer education and it also provides skills needed for independent living and in families. Students with moderate/ severe disabilities generally have severe cognitive and adaptive behavior difficulties and require instruction in self-help skills, communication skills, functional academic skills, daily living skills, community awareness, and recreation, social, and vocational education skills (Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000). Many of these skills are part of the family and consumer education curriculum. Curricular concerns, such as functional and vocational skills that were traditionally addressed in segregated settings need not be eliminated when students are included into general education classrooms. Students who require opportunities to learn practical living, working, and social skills can be provided guidance and opportunities naturally. This is why family and consumer education could

be a part of transition planning and an area appropriate to the educational needs of the cognitively disabled.

We are likely to find that inclusion in general education provides physical access but no instructional access for most students to the supposedly rich and varied general education curriculum offered in general education classrooms. But physical access to a place can restrict access to the instructional procedures that are most effective for students with learning problems (Kauffman, 1999). Unfortunately, in many schools, inclusion simply means enrolling students with disabilities in regular classes. Only if teachers and students learn new strategies, develop new attitudes, and cooperate can the inclusion of all students in regular secondary classrooms benefit everyone (Schumacher and Deshler, 1994/1995).

#### Statement of the Problem

The Sheboygan Falls School District has been working to become more inclusive since the closing of a self-contained county special education school in 1994. The cognitively disabled students currently in the Sheboygan Falls High School have had many years of education in that self-contained setting, which included instruction by a family and consumer education teacher. The curricular focus in the self-contained setting was a functional skills approach that included many of the skills taught in a family and consumer education. The students not only received instruction from the special education teachers but from a family and consumer education teacher with special education background. When these students were transferred to the high school and

included in the regular family and consumer education classes they were able to participate with the class. For example, safety in a foods class was not an issue. Adaptations were made in the daily assignments and testing, but few adaptations were needed in the lab setting and the more hands-on activities. Students currently moving up from the middle school have not had the functional skills education and experience that previous students have had. They may have participated in a six-week experience in family and consumer education in middle school as an introduction, but the more moderate/severe cognitively disabled have not been included. The problem is how to successfully include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students, with limited functional skills, in high school family and consumer education classes.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to explore what high schools are doing to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in the family and consumer education classes; and to develop a resource of information regarding curriculum adaptations and methods being used.

This study is seeking a solution by researching the following questions:

1. Are moderate/severe cognitively disabled students being included in family and consumer education classes in other districts and how are they being included?
2. What curricular modifications and accommodations are done for these cognitively disabled students?

The study will be conducted in 2001, using an instrument developed by the researcher. The instrument will be sent to high school family and consumer education teachers, special education teachers, and special education coordinators or directors in school districts in the state of Wisconsin.

### Limitations

1. This study is not a random sample, but rather a targeted established population
2. This study is limited by possible sample bias of respondents and sample error
3. This study will not generalize to all populations of the handicapped

### Definition of Terms

**Moderate Cognitive Disability:** An individual who functions intellectually in the 54-40 IQ range according to the Wechsler IQ Test and concurrently exhibits deficits in adaptive behavior.

**Severe Disability:** Individuals who function intellectually between 20 and 39 IQ and require extensive ongoing support in more than one major life activity in order to participate in integrated community settings and to enjoy a quality of life that is available to citizens with fewer or no disabilities.

**Functional Curriculum:** A curriculum that provides students with independent living skills.

Vocational Education: Includes a variety of educational programs intended to prepare students for employment and life after high school. It is comprised of seven areas associated with different labor markets: agriculture, business, family and consumer sciences, marketing, health, trade and industry, and technical/communications.

Family and Consumer Education: Includes a variety of educational programs intended to prepare students for family life, work life, and careers in family and consumer sciences(Mastropieri and Scruggs, 2000).

## Chapter II

### Literature Review

This chapter contains a review of literature on the problems and issues of inclusion of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in the regular high school class setting, the review of literature regarding guidelines for developing inclusive school settings, and the review of literature on curriculum modifications and adaptations for the inclusion of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in the high school classroom.

Problems and issues related to the inclusion of students with moderate/severe disabilities in the regular high school setting

The debate regarding the educating of the child with a moderate/ severe disability seems to go on unresolved. Teachers, administrators, parents, general educators, and community members continue to express their opinions on what they think is best when educating the general and special education students. This continues to be the “hottest issue” in special education. The legal argument for inclusion is also open to interpretation when it comes to the educating of the student with moderate/severe disabilities. The Individuals with Disability Education Act or IDEA legally entitles students with disabilities to be educated with non-disabled children to the “maximum extent possible”. Despite this, many students continue to be educated outside the general classroom. The students least likely to be educated in a general classroom are those with severe

disabilities. The following is the definition of inclusion for students with moderate/severe disabilities according to (Hehir & Latus, 1992; Janney et al., 1995; Sailor et al., 1989; West, 1991). Students with disabilities are educated in integrated settings to promote more “normalized” community participation by instructing them in the skills that are essential to their success in the social and environmental settings in which they will ultimately use these skills. Functional life-skills training is best provided in a variety of settings, which combine classroom, school, and community-based learning environments (p14).

There is currently a small but increasing trend to include more students with severe disabilities in the general classroom. There is also evidence to show the positive effect of inclusion on students with disabilities from pre-school to secondary schools. Studies done by Cole & Meyer (1991) and Helmstetter, Peck, & Giangreco (1994) focused on the increased peer contact in and out of school and increased social awareness of the disabled students. MacMillian, Gresham, & Forness (1996) argue however, that there is very little empirical evidence to support the efficacy of inclusion. The positive outcomes cited in the many “non-data based” reports are usually social in nature rather than examining gains in basic skills, social competence or content areas. There are also more recent studies on the impact of inclusion on the general education student. Preliminary studies, according to Hunt, Staub, Alwell, & Goetz (1999), have concluded that inclusion has no deleterious effects on the general education students in regards to academic performance.

As literature continues to grow, the focus of the debate among special education professionals has begun to shift away from whether the students with moderate/severe

disabilities should be included in general education classrooms to how best to serve all students effectively. Unfortunately, in many schools, inclusion simply means enrolling students with disabilities in regular classrooms. Throughout the 80's and 90's studies were done to measure the success of mainstreaming, now inclusion, of the disabled student in the regular classroom. The studies also provide criteria to measure the success of inclusion. Since the reauthorization of IDEA there has been a major push for successful inclusion programs.

#### Guidelines for Developing Successful Inclusive School Settings for Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities

One example of a tool developed through the study of effective transition programs, is a resource handbook for administrators developed by the National Needs Analysis Project at the University of Oregon. The handbook lists and discusses the components considered in planning effective programs for students with disabilities. Similar components are listed in several other studies related to effective inclusion. In 1993, interviews were conducted to gather advice about integration from general and special education teachers and administrators from ten schools in five Virginia school districts (Janney, Snell, Beers, Raynes, 1995). Students with moderate/severe disabilities had recently been integrated in the general education setting of these schools. The study explored the educational change process and the general educators' perceptions. Qualitative analysis of interview data revealed teachers' perceptions of the success of

integration and most importantly their advice to others contemplating integration. The results of the study identified two major themes defining success. One was the importance of planning and in-service, and the other was the need for financial support and commitment from administration.

Thousand and Villa (1990) compiled information from a number of studies to develop a list of strategies for education of learners with severe disabilities in their local home schools and communities. Their findings listed 9 critical elements that were important to the success of an inclusion program. Many of these are similar to those identified by Janney, Snell, Beers, and Raynes in 1995.

A study conducted in Iowa in 1997 involved gathering the perspectives of general and special education teachers as they were experiencing the initial year of the return of students with moderate/severe disabilities to three rural neighborhood schools. Interviews were conducted at the beginning, middle and end of the school year. Themes persisted across teachers and time. The themes were compared across the three schools as well as to critical elements of successful inclusion identified in recent literature. This was a limited study since it involved only six teachers, from three schools, from a single state and over only one year. The 9 themes or guidelines compiled from the data however are similar to those identified in other research.

In a study published in 1999, Wilson researched the literature from the last several years looking for guidelines that could be drawn regarding promising practices impacting the success of inclusive education for students with moderate/severe disabilities.

The following is a summary of the findings of the research cited. According to the literature, effective inclusion programs have a program philosophy, administrative commitment and support, established program goals and objectives, communication and collaboration time between staff members, in-service and support with instructional methods and curriculum, support of non-disabled peers, classrooms structured so all could learn, community involvement.

The findings included a number of guidelines, but also left several unanswered questions regarding inclusion, such as how to insure individualized instruction for the included student and how to develop a “sense of ownership” for the included student.

#### Curriculum Modifications and Adaptations for Inclusion of Students with Moderate/Severe Disabilities

The literature offers a wide variety of ideas of how to modify the curriculum or the classroom setting. The most difficult challenge teachers face is having the time to collaborate on how to best meet the students needs and ultimately to take ownership of the instruction. Collaboration time for staff is one of the components of an effective inclusion program. To facilitate the general educator’s implementation of modified curriculum and instruction in the classroom, models and definitions are helpful. The following definitions and models were gleaned from a number of sources.

The purpose of modification is to enable an individual to compensate for intellectual,

physical, or behavioral challenges. The modification allows the individual to use existing skill repertoires while promoting the acquisition of new skills or knowledge. A concept frequently associated with modification is partial participation, which implies some level of active involvement in a task or activity. This concept acknowledges that some students, particularly those with more severe disabilities, may never learn the same material and skills as the majority of the class participants, but that it is still appropriate for them to participate in the general education classroom (Ottlinger & Koohlhepp, 1992).

#### Curricular and Instructional Modifications

Adaptations are modifications that change the content or the conceptual difficulty of the curriculum and extend to the instructional methodology as well. The extent of the change is greater and typically more time-consuming than accommodations, which tend to change only the instructional methods. Selecting one or two basic concepts from a unit of study for a student with intellectual challenges involves changing the conceptual difficulty as well as some of the content. The teacher may be required to change activities, logistics in the room or student interactions. An adaptation rarely only impacts only one student. It may prove helpful to other students, but would not be necessary for all students. Teachers must consequently subgroup students within the classroom enabling those who can progress to move on to the next activity or concept. This kind of organization is frequently present in the elementary classroom, but many times lacking in

the middle school and high school setting where students move through a series of different courses each day and where a lesson plan is intended for all students (Fuchs, 1995).

An accommodation is a modification to the delivery of instruction or a method of student performance that does not significantly change the content or the conceptual difficulty of the curriculum. Accommodations tend to be easier to make and implement within the general education classroom. Generally, accommodations will benefit many students within the classroom (McCarney & Wunderlich, 1988). Accommodations can also be made to the physical environment and classroom activities that enable students with physical challenges to participate.

Overlapping instruction is the modification of outcome objectives or expectations for students. As students participate in class activities, several students in the class may have totally different outcomes. Thus, the curricular goals are changed. The basic content may not be the same for all students. An example is a student in a high school family and consumer education classroom who has an objective to complete during a lab activity. The student's objective is distribute ingredients, count materials as they are distributed, and to engage in positive social interactions as the tasks are completed. The concept of differentiation was developed by Giangreco (1993), who refers to it as curriculum overlapping. Differentiation of outcomes can be particularly helpful when a teacher is including students with significant disabilities into a classroom.

Modifications and adaptations have been used for many years in education, in the community, and in vocational settings. Another method of defining modifications is

through the following five categories:

1. Using varied materials and devices
2. Adapting skill levels
3. Providing personal assistance
4. Adapting rules, requirements, or instructions
5. Adapting the physical environment.

Before looking at the above models for modification, it is crucial to remember that the general educator who will implement the modification must be the person who selects the adaptations. Modifications are required by IDEA but also must be reasonable. In other words they cannot be or cause a hardship to the school financially or be so disruptive to the classroom that it impacts negatively on the other students. The literature repeatedly ( Stainback & Stainback, 1989; Giengreco & Cloninger& Edleman& Schattman, 1993; Kocchar & West & Taymans, 2000) suggests that the general educator and the special educator should plan together and that the general educator ultimately does make the decision because they are the primary implementers.

Bradley, King-Sears, & Tessier-Switlick, (1997 suggest the following as a guide for any modification to be effective. They suggest it must FLOW:

- Fit into the classroom environment
- Lend themselves to meeting individual student needs
- Optimize understanding for each student
- Work well with the activity planned for the lesson

Janney and colleagues (1995) found that teachers who were including students with moderate/severe disabilities were successful in adapting the program with the assistance of the special educator because they gradually made changes in their physical, social, and academic classroom activities. Interestingly, direct experience with a student with significant disabilities was more influential in the change process than was in-service or preparatory work.

Moderate/severe disabled students often have a specialized curriculum, which focuses on functional or life skills. The functional approach tends to focus on the usefulness or application of age-appropriate content and skills. There is an underlying theme of functionality that allows for the development of units such as domestic skills, basic academics, daily living skills, and vocational skills. Integrating functional curriculum or life skills into the general education program is still a crucial factor in maintaining social relationships and ensuring generalization of skills being taught. Vocational Education has traditionally been an area that special education has placed students because of the hands on nature of the classes. In family and consumer education, the moderate/severe disabled student can take part in cooking activities with a group of students to facilitate practice in measuring, kitchen safety, survival skills, and cooperation in a group. These courses offer an opportunity for special needs children to work on “life skills” and to be included with their peers.

#### Family and Consumer Education

A survey of 100 Wisconsin secondary schools found that students with disabilities

did not use a full range of vocational programs, only 37 percent of students had participated in vocational assessment activities, and that half had vocational goals included in their Individualized Education Programs (Lombard, 1992). Family and Consumer Education is one of those vocational programs.

As Family and Consumer Education Educators work toward their mission of improving the quality of individual and family life, it is essential that we help students with disabilities become productive members of society (Bowers, 1996). Students with disabilities have always been present in FCE classrooms, but the number of moderate/severe cognitively disabled students has been low. However, two factors have brought about increased pressure to better serve these students. One is the increasing complexity of functioning in our technologically advanced society. Certain skills are required to participate in family life and the work force. Secondly, there is a growing number of disabled in the FCE classroom because of increased emphasis on inclusion. Regardless of the reason, the fact remains that family and consumer education teachers will continue to serve students with disabilities (Mandiloff and Vail, 1996).

A study was done 1996 in a Lansing, Michigan high school to evaluate the impact of full inclusion of students with severe disabilities. The inclusion of seven students with moderate/severe disabilities which included cognitive disabilities, autism, and severe multiple impairments was evaluated using teacher and parent surveys as well as observations of student interaction. Both special and general educators reported that information sharing, development of instructional materials, and support from consultants

and paraprofessionals were effective. Similarly, both groups of educators reported that in-service programs, staff development activities, and technical assistance from the district were ineffective. Observations of classrooms found interactions between students and non-disabled peers to be overwhelmingly accepting (Bang and Lamb,1999).

## Summary

It becomes apparent by this review of literature that moderate/severe cognitively disabled students are to be included in the general education classroom that can most effectively meet their needs. The classes need to be age-appropriate and they must provide regular and sustained interaction with non-disabled peers. The curriculum most appropriate for these students is a functional life-skills curriculum, which combines classroom, school, and community-based learning. The family and consumer education classroom meets these criteria. The curriculum is based on life-skills education and can offer group activities that allow for disabled and non-disabled student interaction. A lab activity in a foods class is a good example. A great deal of thought and planning must be directed toward curricular and instructional modification. This requires an understanding of the student's abilities and needs. It also involves collaboration and support from the special education staff. This ultimately relies on the support and commitment of administration that have developed and communicated the district's philosophy of inclusion. The review of literature revealed that while inclusion has been researched and implemented for many of the disabled population, the moderate/severe disabled are still being educated outside of the general education classroom. There is a lot of research

regarding effective curriculum modifications and adaptations for most of the disabled population, but very little specific information for the moderate/severe-disabled student. This makes it difficult for family and consumer education teachers and even more evident that inclusion of this population can only be done through the collaborative work of the special education teacher and family and consumer education teacher with the support of the school administration.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

The purpose of the study was to identify what high schools are doing to include the moderate/severely cognitive disabled student in family and consumer education (FCE) courses and to identify curricular modifications and accommodations that are being provided. The study surveyed high school family and consumer education teachers, special education teachers and special education directors and asked them if the moderate/ severe cognitive disabled students were included in FCE courses, and if they were, what types of accommodations and modifications were being done. The specific methodology followed is explained in this chapter under the headings of, (1) subjects, (2) pilot study, (3) instrumentation, (4) procedures, and (5) method of analysis.

#### Subjects

The subjects for the survey were high school family and consumer education teachers (FCE), high school cognitive disability teachers, and special education administrators from 30 school districts in Wisconsin with a school district population range of 1,400 to 1,800 students. The schools chosen are similar in size to the school where the researcher is employed.

The Department of Public Instructions web site was used to locate school districts that were medium size or had populations ranging from 1,400 to 1,800 students. The Wisconsin Public School Directory was used to identify high schools in these districts that had Family and Consumer Education Departments and a Special Education Director or Coordinator. Using this technique, 30 school districts were identified.

The high school family and consumer education teachers were selected to find out their impressions of how the moderate severe cognitive disabled students are included in FCE classes. Family and consumer education teachers typically teach courses in Foods and Nutrition, Teen Living, Housing, Parenting, Marriage and Family, Child

Development, Clothing. The total population for this group of teachers from the 30 school districts was 30. These courses are offered as electives in most high schools and often consist of varied grade levels and ability levels. The researcher is a Family and Consumer Education Teacher with an adaptive license in special education and has taught cognitively disabled students.

The teachers of the cognitive disabled teach a variety of subjects to students who may spend varied portions of their day in the cognitive disabilities classroom. These teachers work with the student, their families and other staff to develop Individualized Education Plans, which dictate the learning goals for the student. These plans are developed yearly. Most students who are in this type of classroom have academic and life skills orientated goals, so the cognitive disabilities teacher is responsible for placing the student in classes in the general education area where these goals can be met or provide direct instruction in the cognitive disabilities classroom. The special education teachers were also selected to get information regarding the inclusion of their moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in the family and consumer education classroom. The total population for this group of teachers from the 30 school districts was 30.

Surveys were sent to the person in each district who was the special education director or coordinator. This person is responsible for overseeing the educational program of the special education students in the district. They would have information and knowledge regarding the special education students' level of involvement in general education classes such as family and consumer education. There were 30 special education coordinators or directors from the 30 school districts.

### Instrument Development

The research instrument was designed to solicit information on the respondents and on instruction of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student at the high school level in respondent's school district.

In the demographic section each respondent was asked to provide demographic information including sex, personal expertise in the education field, and number of years

in the teaching field. The respondents were also asked to identify their level of understanding of disabled students. Was it “no understanding”, “limited”, “average”, or “extensive”? The survey went on to ask about what categories of disabled students were being included in family and consumer education classes and was the respondent attending Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings. The survey also asked if the respondent was writing goals for IEP’s. The last question in the demographics section asked the respondent to identify barriers they felt were preventing the moderate/severe cognitively disabled students from being successfully included in FCE classes. The subjects were also asked to rank the barriers.

The instruction methods and curriculum section of the survey itself asked the respondents to identify what moderate/severe cognitive disabled students were doing in regards to FCE courses. If the moderate/severe cognitively disabled were not included in FCE classes then the respondent went to the last question in the survey, which asked the reason for this population not being included. If these students were included the respondent continued with the questions.

The respondents were asked to rate questions regarding inclusion of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student, the IEP development, and accommodations and modifications according to what has been done or is currently being done in their district using a four point Likert scale. In two questions the respondents were asked to list examples of accommodations and modifications. They were then asked to list the accommodations and modifications that provided the most success. A space was provided at the end for additional comments.

The researcher developed the questions for the demographic section by following a similar study done by researcher completing a Master’s Degree. This researcher (Klein, 1991) was surveying teachers and administrators regarding the inclusion of students with emotional disturbance in high school vocational classes. The survey itself was developed by modifying some of the questions found in that same survey instrument using this researcher’s objectives as a guide. Information found in the literature search and in an assistive technology questionnaire currently being used by CESA 7 helped develop the

remainder of the questions.

The researcher chose 6 questions for Part I and 25 questions for Part II of the survey that would provide information for the study's two research objectives. The two objectives are to (A) identify if moderate severe cognitive disabled students are being included in FCE classes and the second (B) to identify what modifications and accommodations are being provided. The following 2x2 matrix shows the correlation between the survey questions and the objectives of the study.

Table 1

Matrix of Research Questions Ad joint Question in Survey Instrument

		Questions in Survey Instrument																									
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
Objective	A	X	X	X	X		X	X		X		X															X
Objective	B					X	X		X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

All the questions in the survey instrument were designed to provide the researcher with information to meet the two objectives of the study.

### Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted to validate the questionnaire. The draft survey questionnaire was pilot tested in February 2001 in Sheboygan Falls WI, a school district in the same population range as the final sample. The survey was tested with 12 subjects, which included, 4 family and consumer education teachers, 5 special education teachers, and 3 administrators. The survey was given to a contact person at the high school for distribution. Once the subjects received the survey questionnaire, they were given two weeks to complete the survey and return it to the contact person at the school. When 100% of the surveys were returned, the contact person returned the surveys to the

researcher. Modifications were then made in the following ways. Two sections of questions were changed to a Likert Scale format for clarity and to save time. The order of some questions was changed to assist the respondent in completing the questionnaire. The survey was reviewed for content and construction by the researcher's advisor at the University of Wisconsin-Stout.

The final survey consisted of two parts. Part 1 consisted of 9 demographic questions. Part 2 was comprised of 25 questions regarding instructional methods and curriculum that are currently available to students with moderate/severe disabilities who are included in family and consumer education courses. A copy of the final survey appears in Appendix A.

#### Procedure

The final 90 questionnaires were mailed Monday, April 9, 2001 to high school family and consumer education teachers, high school cognitive disabilities teachers and special education directors. Each subject received a personalized cover letter (see appendix B), which introduced the researcher, described the reason and purpose of the study. The researcher described the focus or population that was being studied and the respondents were assured of the confidentiality of the survey as well as the researchers willingness to share the results. A survey questionnaire with directions, a prepaid, and a self-addressed envelope were also included. The subjects were given two weeks to complete the survey and return it to the researcher. Sample copies of the survey with demographic sheet and cover letter are located in Appendix A and B respectively.

A follow-up mailing was conducted after the two-week deadline. A reminder letter and survey were mailed to the non-respondent subjects to remind them of the importance of completing the survey (Appendix C). Prior to the mailing of the initial survey, each survey was assigned a number to aid in follow-up mailings. All subjects received the surveys in sealed envelopes.

## Method of Analysis

The completed surveys were sent to Christine Ness, the statistical and research consultant at the University of Wisconsin-Stout on May 1, 2001 for SPSS data analysis. The results of each question from the survey questionnaire were divided into three categories: 1) Family and Consumer Teacher, 2) Special Education Teacher, 3) Special Education Director or Coordinator. These will be the categories used in all tables unless otherwise noted in the text or on the table itself. The demographic information was analyzed for frequency of counts and percentages. Specific information summarized in this way were respondent's sex, subject areas of expertise, years teaching, level of understanding of disabled students, categories of disabled students currently taking courses, attendance at IEP's, frequency of written IEP goals, and possible barriers to disabled students being included in FCE courses.

The survey required respondents to identify what the moderate/severely disabled student have done or are doing in regards to FCE courses in their school district. The following 22 questions related to instructional methods and curriculum was analyzed for frequency of counts and percentages. The specific information summarized in this way was the respondent's ratings of each question on a four point Likert scale (0=Does not occur, 1=Initiated or discussed, but showing limited progress, 2=Progressing, but inconsistent, 3= Consistently occurs). Three questions in the survey asked for a narrative list of examples.

All results in chapter four are presented in a descriptive format preceded by tables and discussion.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The purpose of this study was to explore what high schools are doing to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in the high school family and consumer education classes; and to identify develop a resource of information regarding curriculum adaptations and modifications being used. A survey was conducted in April 2001 with high school family and consumer education teachers, high school cognitive disability teachers, and special education directors from school districts with populations that range from 1,400 to 1,800 students.

#### Respondents

Questionnaires were sent to 30 school districts. Each school district received 3 questionnaires addressed to the special education director, high school family and consumer education teacher, and the high school cognitive disabilities teacher. Of the 90 high school family and consumer education teachers, high school cognitive disability teachers, and special education directors sampled, 47 responded giving a 52.2 % rate. There were 6 males and 40 females, and one unknown responding to the survey.

The respondents represented the following backgrounds in regards to fields of expertise: Family and Consumer Education (21), Special Education Cognitive Disabilities (13), Multi-Categorical Learning Disabilities/Cognitive Disabilities (7), Guidance Counselor (0), District Administrator (1), District Local Vocational Education Coordinator 1), Principal 0), Special Education Director (4), Exceptional Education Needs Coordinator (0), Other (8) included Special Education Learning Disabilities, and Health. A number of respondents identified more than one are of expertise. Table 2 shows the breakdown by background of those that responded.

Table 2

Response Rate

Category	Returned	Percent
Family and Consumer Education Teacher	21	4
Cognitive Disabilities Teacher	13	27.7
Multi-Categorical Special Education Teacher	7	14.9
Guidance Counselor	0	0
District Administrator	1	2.1
Local Vocational Education Coordinator	1	2.1
Principal	0	0
Special Education Director	4	8.5
Exceptional Education Needs Coordinator	0	0
Other	8	17.0
Total	47	100.0

The respondents' length of service in education and /or administration ranged from 1-5 years to more than 26 years. Table 3 presents a grouped distribution of their experience.

Table 3

Years of Educational/Administrative Experience of Respondents

Years	Number	Percent
1-5	3	6.4
6-10	7	14.9
11-16	7	14.9
17-20	10	21.3
21-25	7	14.9
26+	13	27.7
Total	47	100.0

The respondents' self reported level of understanding of disabled students was as follows: 51% expressed "extensive understanding"; 34% expressed "average understanding"; 12.8% expressed "limited understanding"; 2.1 % expressed "no

understanding”. A more extensive breakdown of their levels of understanding appears in Table 4.

Table 4  
Represented Levels of Understanding of Disabled Student

Understanding	Number	Percent
No	1	2.1
Limited	6	6.0
Average	16	34.0
Extensive	24	51.1
Total	47	100.0

Forty-five respondents reported the type of disabled students that are currently taking their courses. Table 5 depicts the number of respondents and percent of respondents involved with disabled students in their classrooms. The table shows the breakdown of special education teachers and family and consumer education teachers. In many cases the respondent is working with students from various disabilities. Other disabilities reported by the respondents were Other Health Impairments (OHI), Autism and Asperger Syndrome.

Table 5  
Number and Percentage of Respondents That Currently Have Various Types of Disabled Students in Their

Condition	SE	FCE	Percent
Mild Cognitive Disability	15	17	68.0
Moderate/Severe Cognitive Disability	13	12	53.2
Learning Disability	12	21	70.2
Emotional Disturbance	10	22	68.1
Other	3	4	14.9
Total	53	74	

The respondents were asked about their involvement with the disabled students Individualized Education Plans (IEP). The IEP is the disabled students annual plan of goals and objectives to be mastered in a measured level of competency. The Individuals with Disabilities Act of 1997 (IDEA '97) identifies the make-up of the IEP Team. The disabled students special education teacher, the student if appropriate, the students parents or guardian, a general education teacher, a representative of the school district, and any other members the student, parent or teacher feel are appropriate. This plan is to be completed with over 51% of the identified members in attendance. Respondents were asked to self-report if they attend IEP Team Meetings. If so, do they write goals or objectives at the meeting? Of the 47 respondents 39 attend IEP Team meetings and 5 reported they did not attend and 3 did not respond. Of the 39 that attend the IEP Team meetings, 17 of those were FCE teachers. Special education teachers and special education directors are required to attend. The special education teacher is the primary developer of the IEP document and the special education director represents the district. A more complete breakdown of who attends the IEP is detailed in Table 6.

Table 6  
Number of Respondents That Attend Disabled Students IEP Team Meetings

Attendance	Yes	No
	Position	
SE Teacher	20	0
FCE Teacher	15	2
SE Director	4	0
Other	0	3
Total	39	5

Respondents were then asked if they wrote goals and objectives at the IEP. The typical FCE teacher did not write goals and objectives at the IEP. The special education

teacher writes goals and objectives for all their students. Respondents were given an opportunity to explain their involvement in the IEP Team Meeting. The following are a list of narrative responses from the FCE teachers regarding their participation in the IEP Team Meeting: present how course/strategies are modified, relate to other members how students are doing in class, several stated they assisted the special education teacher in writing goals and objectives.

In this study the typical special education teacher had between 11-26 or more years of teaching experience with an extensive understanding of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student.

The typical family and consumer education teacher had between 16-26 or more years of teaching experience with a limited to advanced understanding of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student. The typical teacher has learning disabled and disabled, emotionally disturbed and mild cognitively disabled students in their courses. Typically the FCE teacher is a member of the IEP Team, and seldom to never wrote IEP goals.

The typical special education director in this study had 16 or more years of experience with an extensive understanding of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student. The typical special education director does attend IEP meetings and seldom to never wrote goals.

## Barriers

Respondents ranked possible barriers that need to be overcome for a student that is moderate/severe cognitively disabled to be successfully included in a Family and Consumer Education Course. The respondents checked the statements they felt were barriers, then ranked them from hardest to least hard barrier to overcome. Table 7 provides a closer look at the respondents' choices and their rankings of the barriers.

Table 7

Percent Who Agree It Is A Barrier And Ranking of Top Five Possible Barriers to Success

Barrier	% of Yes	Ranking
Lack of basic academic skills	72.1	1
Lack of life skills	48.9	5
Lack of basic social skills	59.6	2
Lack of knowledge to teach disabled	34.0	
Lack of administrative support	10.6	
Lack of instructional aides/materials	40.4	4
Lack of modified or adaptive materials	38.3	
Counselors do not encourage disabled to take FCE classes	00.0	
Teachers fear of disabled	21.1	
Courses are too difficult for disabled	25.5	
No instructional support staff to assist	40.4	3
Lack of parental involvement	6.4	
No barriers evident	6.4	

## Discussion

Lack of basic academic skills was identified as a barrier, by 72.2 % of the respondents, to successful inclusion in a Family and Consumer Education Class and it was ranked as the hardest barrier to overcome. Lack of social skills was identified by 59.6 % of the respondents and was ranked second. Lack of life skills was identified by 48.9 % but was considered fifth hardest to overcome. No instructional support staff to assist and lack of instructional aides and materials both were identified by 40.4 % of the respondents and were ranked third and fourth respectively in difficulty to overcome. Other barriers identified by 14.9% were too many students in a class, lack of comprehension of basic concepts, lack of handicap accessible lab, sink, etc., and lack of time to meet student needs.

## Inclusion

Respondents were asked to self report if moderate/severe cognitively disabled students are included in Family and Consumer Education classes as part of their life skills education. The respondents self reported regarding what best describes what these students have done or are doing in their school district. If the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student is not included in high school FCE classes in the respondents district they were instructed to skip to the final question on this part of the questionnaire. Table 8 will provide a breakdown of the findings.

Table 8

Moderate/Severe Cognitively Disabled Students  
Participation in FCE for Life Skills Education

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Category	Percentage
Family and Consumer Education Classes	68.1
Special needs Family and Consumer Education Classes	17.0
Life skills education from Special Education Teacher Only	57.4
Special Education Teacher uses the FCE Classroom	8.5
Special Education & Family and Consumer Ed teacher collaborate	14.9
No Family and Consumer Education involvement	21.3

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The respondents were asked to list family and consumer education classes where moderate/severe cognitively disabled students have been or currently are being included. The classes they listed are; Foods, Adult Life, Parent and Child, Family Foods and Society, Adaptive FCE course for mild CD and severe CD, Reality Class, Working with Children, Chef Specialty, Eating for Life, Creations, Relationships, Clothing, Choices and Challenges, Housing, Peer Helper, and Food Service,

## The Individualized Education Plan

The respondents rated statements according to what currently occurs in their district

related to inclusion of special education students and individualized education plans using a 4 point Likert Scale. Table 9 is a breakdown of each statement by percent of what is occurring. In general, the respondents indicated that many of the statements listed were progressing or were consistently occurring. An area that was rated significantly higher as not occurring and or being initiated is teacher collaboration time to develop modifications and time for teachers to meet regularly. The respondents also indicated that the individualized education plan is being developed before a disabled student is placed in a FCE class.

Table 9

Percent of What Is Occurring In Regards To Inclusion of Special Education Students And Individualized Education Plans In School Districts Surveyed

Statements	Does Not Occur	Initiated	Progressing	Consistently Occurs
Teachers are aware of districts philosophy goals regarding inclusion of disabled student in regular classroom	2.1	6.4	40.4	36.2
IEP's are developed prior to placement in FCE	6.4	2.1	25.5	46.8
FCE teacher is member of IEP team		12.8	23.4	36.2
Modifications and support services needed in FCE are written in IEP	8.5	6.4	25.5	38.8
Full range of support services available to student when in FCE	8.5	6.4	36.2	31.9
Teachers informed about students disabilities	4.3	2.1	40.4	38.3

(table continued)

Table 9

Statements	Does Not Occur	Initiated	Progressing	Consistently Occurs
Teachers work in teams to plan accommodations/modifications	17.0	23.4	17.0	27.7
FCE teachers knows IEP teams expectations	8.5	23.4	25.5	21.3
Teachers provided with technical assist	6.4	19.1	36.2	21.3
FCE and special education teachers meet regularly	19.1	12.8	19.1	31.9

Accommodations/Modifications

Respondents self reported the kinds of accommodations and modifications that are being used or have been used for moderate/severe disabled students in the family and consumer education classroom using a 4-point Likert scale. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the percentages of what is occurring in the districts surveyed.

Table 10

Percents of Accommodations and Modifications Used in the FCE Classroom

Accommodations/modifications	% of Use			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Progress evaluated according to IEP goals	4.3	8.5	19.1	42.6
Pass/Fail grading	12.8	8.5	27.7	25.5
Modified assignments according to IEP	4.3	2.1	23.4	46.8
Demonstration of skills/knowledge rather than written	2.1		23.4	48.9
Peer assistance in labs and group activities	4.3	4.3	14.9	53.2

(table continued)

Table 10

Accommodations	% of Use			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently
Special ed. teacher provides support	2.1	14.9	21.3	38.3
Special ed. teacher and FCE teacher team teach	36.2	14.9	21.3	6.4
Special Ed. Aide provides support	12.8	6.4	14.9	40.4
Special ed. Student has one-one aide	12.8	14.9	29.8	14.9
Individual or small group instruction by FCE teacher prior to FCE class inclusion	42.6	14.9	12.8	4.3
Physical accommodations in classroom	38.3	6.4	10.6	17.0
Assistive technology	23.4	12.8	8.5	2.1

Respondents were asked to list physical accommodations that were provided in the classroom, example; lowered counter space, wheel chair accessible sink and/or mixing center. The following accommodations were self-reported by the respondents: handicap accessible kitchens, lowered counter and work space. Several respondents indicated they were in the process of moving into new school buildings, which will have handicap accessible workstations.

Respondents were also asked to list examples of the types of assistive technology that were successfully used in the FCE classroom with moderate/severe cognitively disabled students. The following were listed as examples of assistive technology used in the FCE classroom: lap-top computers, simple sewing machines, various communication devices, adaptive switches, picture books, adaptive equipment for cutting and opening cans, sound boards, power point and other software, adaptive table, non-slip mats, plastic slip covers over recipes so students can check-off steps, Master Cook Cookbook-rewrote recipes into steps at appropriate reading level, and Alpha Smart.

Respondents then chose the accommodations/modifications that provided the

moderate/severe cognitively disabled student with the most success. Modified assignments and assistance from regular education peers were identified as most successful, followed by assistance from a special education classroom aide, pass/fail grading, and assessing students skills and knowledge through demonstration rather than written assessment.

Respondents, who indicated in question one of this section of the questionnaire that the moderate/severely cognitive disabled students were not included in FCE classes in their district, were to respond to the last question in this section. Of the 47 respondents, 10 or 23.3 % indicated that the moderate/severe cognitively disabled students were not included in FCE classes in their district. The question asked what this population of special education student was doing in their district. Table 11 is a breakdown of the findings.

Table 11

What is Occurring in Districts Where Moderate/Severely Cognitively Disabled Not Included in FCE Classes

	Number	Respondents Percent
No M/S CD enrolled at this time	7	14.9
M/S CD receive education in special ed. Classroom	6	12.8
Plans are being developed to include M/S CD in FCE	2	4.3
Special Ed. Teacher uses FCE classroom to provide life skill instruction	5	10.6
Total	20	

## Discussion

The moderate/severe cognitively disabled student is included in FCE classes according to 68.1% of the respondents. Two school districts reported that these students were attending other schools outside of their home district and some did not include the moderate/severe cognitively disabled in family and consumer education classes(21.3%). Some moderate/severe cognitively disabled students (17.0%) were participating in FCE classes offered for special needs students only, 57.4% of the respondents also reported some moderate/severe cognitively disabled students receiving their life skills education from the special education teacher. The special education teacher and family and consumer education collaborate according to 14.9% of the respondents and the special education teacher uses the FCE classroom for instruction according to 8.5 % of the respondents. A few districts reported that they were fully inclusive while most of the other districts responding used a variety of methods as was evident by the varied responses to the questionnaire.

Table 9 looked at what is occurring in the respondents' school districts in regards to inclusion of special needs students and individualized education plans. The typical respondent felt that teacher awareness of the districts philosophy and goals regarding inclusion was progressing or is occurring consistently. About 46% of the respondents felt that individualized education plans were being developed prior to the disabled students enrollment in an FCE class and 25.5 % indicated it is progressing. The family and consumer education teacher is a member of the IEP Team consistently according to 36.2 % of the respondents. The remaining respondents indicated that it is progressing, according to 12.8% it was being initiated and none of the respondents reported that it was not occurring. The typical respondent indicated that modifications and support services needed by the student in a FCE class is written in the IEP consistently and/or is progressing. Having a full range of support services available to the disabled student when in an FCE classroom is progressing and/or consistently occurs according to most of the respondents. The respondents (40.4%) indicated that being informed about the student's disabilities is progressing and 38.3% reported it consistently occurs. Teachers working in teams to plan accommodations/modifications were spread across the scale. It

consistently occurs in 27.7% and is being initiated in 23.4 %. Teachers do not work together according to 17% of the respondents. According to 25.5 % of the respondents, the FCE teacher's knowledge of the IEP Team's expectations is progressing. The rest of the respondents were spread between being initiated 23.4 % and consistently occurs 21.3 %. Family and consumer education teachers do not have knowledge of the IEP team's expectations according to 8.5% of the respondents. The respondents (36.2 %) indicated that teachers are being provided with technical assistance is progressing, 21.3 % reported that it is consistently provided, 19.1 reported that it is being initiated and 6.4 % reported it is not occurring. The family and consumer education teachers and special education teachers meet regularly according to 31.9 % of the respondents. It does not occur according to 19.1 %, it is progressing according to 19.1 % and is being initiated according to 12.8 %.

Respondents were asked to rate a list of accommodations/modifications according to what is occurring in their district. The most frequently (53.2 % %) used modification was providing peer assistance in a lab or group activity. The next most frequently used modification was allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and skill rather than using a written assessment. This is reflective of the respondent's choice and ranking of barriers to the disabled students success in the FCE classroom. The respondents, 72.3 %, had identified lack of basic skills; reading, writing, etc., as a barrier and it was also ranked as the most difficult to overcome. Most respondents again agree with allowing students to demonstrate their knowledge and skill rather that using a traditional written assessment, which would be difficult because of the students lack of basic skills. Respondents also indicated that assignments were modified according to the IEP frequently 46.8 % and sometimes 23.4 %. This does reflect the findings in regards to the FCE teachers' involvement in the IEP Team. The majority of the respondents attended the IEP team meetings.

A special education student will receive one-one support from a teacher's aide sometimes (29.8%) according to the respondents. The special education teacher and the FCE teacher rarely team-teach according to 36.2% of the respondents. The least used

accommodation in the FCE classroom is assistive technology and individual or small group instruction by the FCE teacher prior to inclusion in a FCE course. Despite the fact that assistive technology was rated as the least used, a number of respondents listed types of assistive technology that are being used in the family and consumer education classroom to help the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student find success.

Of the 47 respondents, 10 indicated that the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student were not included in the family and consumer education classes. Seven of the respondents indicated that some of these students are not in their home district and are being educated in another district. Six respondents indicated that the students receive their life skills education from the special education teacher. Two respondents reported that plans are being developed to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in the family and consumer education classes. Finally, five respondents indicated that the special education teacher sometimes uses the family and consumer education classroom to teach life skills to the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student.

### Summary

The inclusion of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in family and consumer education classes is occurring in more than half of the districts surveyed. The respondents identified barriers to student success and identified accommodations and modifications to the classroom environment and curriculum that are being used successfully.

Based on the results of the instructional methods and curriculum questions survey conclusions can be drawn about the objectives of the study. Recommendations can be made to increase inclusion opportunities for the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student into the family and consumer education classroom and to provide accommodations and modifications that will help the student overcome barriers to success in that environment.

## Chapter V

### Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter is divided into three sections: a summary of the study; conclusions based on the results of the study; and recommendations related to the study.

#### Summary

The problem, which is the focus of this study, is how to successfully include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students, with limited functional skills, in high school family and consumer education classes. The purpose of the study was to explore what high schools are doing to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in family and consumer education classes; and to develop a resource of information regarding curriculum adaptations and methods being used. This study is seeking a solution by researching the following questions:

1. Are moderate/severe cognitively disabled students being included in family and consumer education classes in other districts and how are they being included?
2. What curricular modifications and accommodations are done for these cognitively disabled students?

A literature review related that the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student should be included in classes that can most effectively meet their needs. The classes must be age-appropriate and must provide regular and sustained interaction with non-disabled peers. The curriculum most appropriate for this population is a functional life-skills curriculum, which combines classroom, school, and community based learning. The family and consumer education classroom and curriculum meet those criteria.

The study surveyed high school family and consumer education teachers, special education teachers, and special education directors. These subjects were chosen from 30 school districts with student populations ranging from 1,400 to 1,800. The schools chosen were of similar size to where the researcher is employed. A survey instrument was developed that asked demographic questions and also asked the subjects if

moderate/severe cognitively disabled students were included in FCE courses in their district, and if they were, what types of accommodations and modifications were being done. The survey instrument was sent by mail.

The major findings indicate that over half of the moderate/severe cognitively disabled were included in family and consumer education as part of their life skills education. Over half also receive life skills instruction through their special education teacher. Almost one-fourth is not included in FCE at all. Most family and consumer education teachers were attending individualized education meetings, but were not writing goals. Almost half of the respondents indicated that the IEP was developed before the disabled student was included in the FCE class. Most respondents agreed that lack of basic academic skills, lack of social skills, no instructional support staff, lack of instructional aides and materials and lack of life skills were the five major barriers to a moderate/severe cognitively disabled students success in a FCE class.

Some of the major predictors to successful inclusion as identified by the literature, were being initiated in the district, were progressing in their development or were consistently occurring. Respondents indicated most often that an awareness of the districts philosophy and goals regarding inclusion was developing or already existed. Individualized education plans were in place prior to a student's entrance into a FCE class. Respondents indicated that they were informed about a student's disability. Some indicators were spread across the scale from not occurring to consistently occurs. Two examples of this are that FCE teacher and special education teacher meet regularly and teachers work in teams to plan accommodations

Respondents were asked to indicate how often a list of accommodations and modifications were used in the FCE classroom. They also listed examples of accommodations, modifications and assistive technology that was used in the FCE classroom. They then ranked the examples according to what was most successful. Modified assignments, assistance from regular education peers, assistance from a special education classroom aide, pass/fail grading, and assessing student skill and knowledge through demonstration rather than written assessment.

## Conclusion

This study sought a solution to the problem of how to include moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in the high school family and consumer education classes. The following two questions were researched to provide a solution.

1. Are moderate/severe cognitively disabled students being included in family and consumer education classes in other districts and how are they being included?

Of those who responded 68.1 % indicated that these students were participating in FCE classes in their district. The classes that they are being included in are various levels of Foods, Adult Life, Parent and Child, Adaptive FCE courses, Reality Class, Working with Children, Chef Specialty, Eating for Life, Creations, Relationships, Clothing, Choices and Challenges, Housing, Peer Helper, and Food Service.

The majority of FCE teachers that responded attended the individualized education plan team meetings and the IEP is developed before the student is included in the class according to almost half of the respondents. The level of knowledge that the FCE teacher has about the expectations of the IEP, however, was spread across the scale. More than a fourth of the respondents indicated that the FCE teacher and special education teacher meet regularly and the rest were spread across the scale. Most respondents have an understanding of the districts goals and philosophy regarding inclusion. Many respondents indicated that a full range of support services is progressing or is occurring consistently in their district.

2. What curricular modifications and accommodations are done for these cognitively disabled students?

Many of the accommodations and modifications were rated in the sometimes to frequently used range. The top five accommodations and modifications indicated by the respondents were: modified assignments, assistance from regular education peers, pass/fail grading, assessing students skills and knowledge through demonstration rather than written assessment, and assistance from a special education classroom aide. Those that were rarely or never used included physical accommodations to the room and small group non-inclusive instruction from the FCE teacher. Assistive technology was identified as used by only a small percentage, but a number of assistive technology ideas

were listed in the narrative portion of the questionnaire. Respondents also listed accommodations and modifications being used in their district to provide success for the moderate/severe cognitively disabled student in the FCE classroom.

Physical accommodations that are provided in the FCE classroom:

- handicap accessible kitchens

- wheel chair accessible sink and/or mixing center

A few respondents indicated their districts are building new high schools that will have handicap accessible kitchens and work area.

Modifications to curriculum indicated by respondents:

- modified assignments

- assessment of students skills and knowledge through demonstration rather than written assessment

- assistance from regular education peers in labs and group activities

- assistance from a special education classroom aide

Assistive technology indicated by respondents:

- lap-top computers

- simple sewing machines

- various communication devices including soundboards

- adaptive switches

- picture books

- adaptive equipment for cutting and opening cans

- power point and other computer software

- adaptive table

- non-slip mats for mixing and cutting areas

- plastic slip covers over recipes so students can check-off steps

- Master Cook Cookbook-re-wrote recipes into steps at appropriate reading level

- Alpha Smart

## Recommendations

A more thorough study should be completed comparing what the literature sites in Chapter 2 as the important components of effective inclusion programs and what is occurring in the districts that indicated they are including disabled students in FCE classes in Chapter 4.

The list of accommodations and modifications could be expanded through more thorough investigation of those respondents who are including moderate/severe cognitively disabled students in FCE classes. This list could be used to design a curriculum modification and classroom accommodation handbook.

A further study of cognitively disabled students and the correlation between inclusion in vocational classes and their transition to living and working in the community could provide valuable information to teachers and parents working to help students find success.

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Appendix A  
Survey Questionnaire

**Curriculum Adaptations and Methods for Inclusion of Students with  
Moderate/Severe Disabilities Questionnaire  
Demographic Information**

Directions: For the purpose of this survey, a student with a moderate/severe disability is one who, as a school-aged student functions intellectually within the lowest 1% of their particular age group. They may have labels such as moderately/severely cognitively disabled and often have additional physical and sensory impairments. They may also be labeled autistic. These students require extensive ongoing support in more than one major life activity in order to participate with their peers. These students have Exceptional Education Needs (EEN). It does not include learning disabilities, emotional disturbance, or students with sensory disabilities as their primary disability. Mark each response with a check mark. All information is confidential.

**Part I**

1. Gender: \_\_\_\_\_ male \_\_\_\_\_ female
  
2. Check your current position and background. (check all that apply)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Family and Consumer Education (FCE)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special Education Cognitive Disabilities  
\_\_\_\_\_ Multi-Categorical LD/CD  
\_\_\_\_\_ Guidance Counselor  
\_\_\_\_\_ District Administrator  
\_\_\_\_\_ LVEC for the district  
\_\_\_\_\_ Principal  
\_\_\_\_\_ Special Education Director  
\_\_\_\_\_ Exceptional Education Needs Coordinator (EEN)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other: \_\_\_\_\_
  
3. Length of years in education, teaching, and/or administration. (check one)  
\_\_\_\_\_ 1-5 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 6-10 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 16-20 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 21-25 years  
\_\_\_\_\_ 26 years or longer
  
4. What is your understanding of disabled students. (check one)  
\_\_\_\_\_ No understanding of students with a moderate/severe disability.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Limited understanding of students with a moderate/severe disability.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Average understanding of students with a moderate/severe disability.  
\_\_\_\_\_ Extensive understanding of students with a moderate/severe disability

5. What categories of students with disabilities are currently taking your course?  
(check all that apply)

- Cognitively Disabled Mild
- Cognitively Disabled Moderate/Severe
- Learning Disabled
- Emotional Disturbance
- Other

6. Do you attend Individual Education Plan (IEP) Team meetings?

- yes
- no- Skip to Question #8

explain: \_\_\_\_\_

7. When you attend IEP Team meetings, are you asked to bring goals and objectives?

- I always write goals and objectives for IEP Team meetings.
- Sometimes I write goals and objectives for IEP Team meetings.
- Seldom do I write goals and objectives for IEP Team meetings.
- I never write goals or objectives for IEP meetings.

explain: \_\_\_\_\_

8. Check those examples listed below that you feel are barriers for students with disabilities to be successfully included in FCE classes. (check all that apply)

- (A)  lack of basic academic skills (read, write, etc.)
- (B)  lack of life skills (health, safety, communication, etc.)
- (C)  lack of basic social skills (control behavior, cooperate with others, appropriate communication, etc.)
- (D)  lack of knowledge of how to teach the disabled
- (E)  lack of administrative support
- (F)  lack of knowledge of instructional aides/materials to adapt the curriculum to teach the disabled
- (G)  lack of modified or adaptive materials for teaching the disabled
- (H)  guidance counselors do not encourage disabled to take vocational courses such as Family and Consumer Education
- (I)  teacher's fear of teaching the disabled
- (J)  courses are too difficult for the disabled
- (K)  no instructional support staff to assist in classroom
- (L)  lack of parental support or involvement
- (M)  no barriers are evident (do not complete #9)
- (N)  other: \_\_\_\_\_

9. Rank the top five barriers you checked in question # 8. Rank in order beginning with the hardest barrier to overcome. Write the appropriate letter in the blank.

                                                                            
First      Second      Third      Fourth      Fifth

## Instructional Methods and Curriculum Questionnaire

Directions: The survey is designed to identify instructional methods and curriculum adaptations that are currently available to students with moderate/severe disabilities who are included in Family and Consumer Education(FCE) Courses. Please read each question carefully before completing. The results of the survey questionnaire are confidential and will be used to develop a resource of ideas. Thank you for taking the time to complete the survey.

### Part II

1. Which examples listed below best describe what the moderate/severely disabled students have done or are doing in your school. (check all that apply)
  - not included in high school FCE classes (skip down to question # 25)
  - included in the following FCE classes
    - Please list classes and how many moderate/severely-disabled students in each:
    - in a FCE class for special needs students only
    - receiving life skills education from a special education teacher
    - receiving life skills education from a special education teacher in a FCE classroom
    - FCE teacher provides assistance to special education teacher in development of life skills curriculum

### The Individualized Education Plan

Rate the following statements according to what currently occurs in your district. Circle the appropriate response.

- |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 Does not occur  |   |   |   |   |
| 1 Initiated or discussed, but showing limited progress  |   |   |   |   |
| 2 Progressing, but inconsistent   |   |   |   |   |
| 3 Consistently occurs   |   |   |   |   |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| 2. Teachers are aware of the districts philosophy and goals regarding inclusion of the moderate/severely-disabled student in the regular education classroom. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| 3. Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are developed before placement in a FCE classroom   | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| 4. The FCE teacher is a member of the IEP Team  | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|   |   |   |   |   |
| 5. Modifications and support services needed to participate in FCE are identified and written into the IEP, along with specific goals and objectives          | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

6. A full range of support services(speech and hearing, assistive technology, vocational assessment, health supports, support from a teacher's aide, consultation from occupational and/or physical therapists) is available to the disabled student included in the FCE classroom	0	1	2	3
7. Teachers are informed about students disabilities and whether the student has a physical, medical, emotional, or behavioral problem that might result in the need to take emergency action in the classroom	0	1	2	3
8. Teachers work in teams to plan accommodations and modify curriculum.	0	1	2	3
9. FCE teachers receive a statement of the expectations of the IEP team for the benefits of the placement and for the progress of the child in the classroom within one year	0	1	2	3
10. Teachers are provided technical assistance to help students with disabilities be more fully accommodated	0	1	2	3
11. FCE teachers meet regularly with Special Education Teachers to discuss progress of disabled student(s)	0	1	2	3

**Accommodations/Modifications**

Rate the following list of accommodations and modifications according to what is used (or has been used) for the moderate/severely-disabled students in the Family and Consumer Education classroom.

Response categories are the following:

0=Never                      1= Rarely                      2= Sometimes                      3= Frequently

12. Progress evaluated according to IEP goals	0	1	2	3
13. Pass/Fail grading	0	1	2	3
14. Modified assignments according to IEP goals	0	1	2	3
15. Demonstration of skills/knowledge rather than written assessment	0	1	2	3
16. Assistance from regular education peer in labs or other group activities	0	1	2	3
17. Special Education teacher provides support	0	1	2	3
18. Special Education teacher and FCE teacher co-teach	0	1	2	3
19. Special Education classroom aide provides support	0	1	2	3
20. Special needs student has one to one aide support	0	1	2	3
21. Individual or small group instruction by FCE teacher prior to being included in FCE course	0	1	2	3

22. Accommodations in classroom such as lowered counter space, wheel chair accessible sink and mixing centers, etc.

0      1      2      3

List physical accommodations provided:

23. Assistive technology used

0      1      2      3

List examples: a. High tech- (Ex. Computer software or specially designed equipment)

b. Low tech (ex. Adaptive knife or cutting board)

24. List below the accommodations/modifications (from questions 12 thru 23) that have provided the most success for disabled students.

\_\_\_\_\_

25. If moderate/severely-disabled students are not included in Family and Consumer Education Classes at your school, check all the following that apply.

\_\_\_\_\_ no moderate/severely disabled students are enrolled at this time

\_\_\_\_\_ moderate/severely-disabled students receive their education in the special education classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ plans are being developed to include the moderate/severely-disabled student in FCE classroom

\_\_\_\_\_ the special education teacher uses the FCE classroom to provide life skill education to the moderate/severely-disabled students

Comments:

Thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to complete this survey.

Appendix B  
Cover Letter

April 9, 2001

Dear Educator:

My name is Dawn LeLou-Matte. I am a Family and Consumer Education Teacher at Sheboygan Falls High School. I teach grades 9-12 and have a number of special education students in my classes.

I am currently completing my graduate studies for my Master's Degree in Vocational/Technical Education from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am doing my thesis paper on the inclusion of the moderate/severely cognitively disabled student into Family and Consumer Education Classes. I have a great interest in this because I taught Special Education prior to my current position as a Family and Consumer Education Teacher. While the project is for my thesis work I personally believe that your responses will help me provide the best education for all my students.

I am soliciting your help in identifying what other districts and teachers are doing to accommodate these students in their classes. Also what modifications are being done to assist the student to achieve their educational goals? The results of each survey questionnaire will be kept confidential. Only aggregate data will be used. For the purpose of this survey "moderate/severely cognitively disabled" is defined as a school-aged student who functions intellectually within the lowest 1% of their age group. They may also have additional physical and sensory impairments. They may also be labeled autistic.

Please take a few minutes from your busy day to complete the attached survey questionnaire. Return the survey in the attached self-addressed stamped envelope by April 20, 2001. Your response is voluntary and is greatly appreciated. Summary of results of this study are available upon request.

Sincerely,

Appendix C  
Follow Up Letter

April 21, 2001

Dear Educator:

Greetings! My name is Dawn LeLou-Matte. While organizing my surveys for tabulation I recognized that I did not have your response. I am writing back at this time to let you know that I value your response. I have included another copy of the survey for you in case you forgot or misplaced it.

I am currently completing my graduate studies for my Master's Degree in Vocational/Technical Education from the University of Wisconsin-Stout. I am doing my thesis paper on the inclusion of the moderate/severely cognitively disabled student into Family and Consumer Education Classes. I have a great interest in this because I taught Special Education prior to my current position as a Family and Consumer Education Teacher. While the project is for my thesis work I personally believe that your responses will help me provide the best education for all my students.

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Please take a few minutes from your busy day to complete the attached survey questionnaire. Return the survey in the attached self-addressed stamped envelope by April 20, 2001. Your response is voluntary and is greatly appreciated. Summary of results of this study are available upon request.

Sincerely,