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**Examining how stakeholders perceive the quality of the
Learning Support Unit for learning disabled students in
an international school in Bahrain**

by

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Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of
Arts in Education / Educational Management

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Project approval Form

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To my parents, advisors and friends,
without your support and belief in me
I wouldn't have completed one of my greatest goals.

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Abstract

This study examines how stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the Learning Support Unit for learning disabled students throughout their general education within School X. The effectiveness of the program was studied by examining the school's mission statement, and to what extent the Learning Support Unit objective was aligned with it. The study focuses on leadership and academic excellence, home school connections, and provision for a healthy secure learning environment. Teachers, administrators and parents were interviewed, and given questionnaires that reflected how academic excellence and leadership were achieved, interviews were conducted to gain data on students' learning environment and with parents in relation to the home school connection. After the investigation there were several recommendations made. First that communication and professional development follow systems set up by all parties of the LSU, secondly that ongoing updates and recommendations be given to parents, as well as offering them the opportunity to attend workshops, to play an active role in their child's educational support. Finally, that stigma surrounding the attendance of the LSU program is minimized by allowing students to attend as many general classes as possible and to adjust scheduling to accommodate pull out classes.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The main purpose of this study is to examine the special education unit/services in a private, international, all girls' school in Bahrain. The need for special education programs has been steadily increasing due to the increase of parents' and educators' awareness and acceptance of children with special needs, and that not all students learn in the same manner in a number of schools across the Gulf region. Many Schools across the region have been implementing special education programs to cater for students with learning disabilities. Schools are striving to have special classes which contain different resources that may help the students learn according to their own capabilities. To achieve this goal, schools are hiring specialized educators and collaborating with professionals in the field in order to maximize the number of students that will acquire the needed skills to become long life learners. The schools catering for the needs of these students are implementing a variety of special programs ranging from mainstreaming, where students with learning disabilities spend part of the day in a general classroom to inclusion, where students with learning disabilities spend all the day in a general classroom, provided the special educator is always available to aid the general teacher through a selection of collaborative teaching programs (Idol, 2006). Therefore to be able to reach these students, parents, school administrators, and educators should be working side by side.

1.2 International Initiatives for Supporting Inclusive Education

Children with special needs deserve a chance to learn and to develop social skills, thus need to be with general children so they may learn from them.

Several major initiatives have been taken internationally to support inclusive education. The UNESCO Salamanca Statement (1994) called on the international community to endorse the approach of inclusive schools by implementing practical and strategic changes. The UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993) appealed to countries to recognize the principle of equal educational opportunities for children, youth, and adults in integrated settings.

1.3 Public Law 94-142 and the Laws in Kingdom of Bahrain

The concept of learning disabled children that first appeared in the Public Law 94-142 in 1975 is currently in IDEA¹ 2004. Fletcher, Lyon, Fuchs and Barnes (2007) explain that "LD²s are heterogeneous; reflect problems with cognitive processing, and are not to be commingled with other disorders that represent exclusionary conditions" this quote states that all learning disorders are different from one another, that learning disorders reflect the ability of the affected person in processing information mentally and that they shouldn't be confused with other disorders that are not to do with learning disorders, but are in fact either physical disabilities or other. In 1990, extensive changes

¹ Individuals with Disabilities Education Act

² Learning disabled is referred to as LD throughout the study.

were made to Public Law 94-142. According to Nauert (2004), the most important modification was the changing of the law's name to Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) instead of Education of Handicapped Act. This new law identifies the importance of transition and technology services that help the students with disabilities. Such services must be included in the student's IEP³, which is a document prepared by the special needs instructor, outlining areas that have been assessed in the learning disabled student and that require support in. It also measures progress as well as indicates areas of concern and a projection for future learning support. The amended law also includes rehabilitation, counseling, and social work services. Moreover, this new law allowed different programs to get authorized and created the opportunity of new ones to be designed. These new programs were intended to improve services for children with serious emotional disturbance and to conduct research on attention deficit disorder. All schools across the USA are to abide by the Public Law 94-142.

In Bahrain, according to the Ministry of Education, "the Directorate of Special Education is responsible for identifying the handicapped students and the supervision of students with special needs in public schools as well as special institutions abroad" (Kingdom of Bahrain: Ministry of Education, 2009). This law was implemented in all Bahrain's public schools. However, some found it more suitable to utilize their "remedial" classes in order to accommodate the slow learners; others left their special needs students inside the general classroom and provided them with the required help. This latter group believed that these students could benefit more if they were placed in a

³ individualized education program

LRE⁴, a Least Restrictive Environment that provides support for learning disabled students in a minimal restricted environment. Private schools are not bound to this legislation; they have their own rules and regulations (Kingdom of Bahrain: Ministry of Education, 2009).

This current study examines the special education program in an international private all girls' school in Bahrain. School X⁵, is among the few schools that has accommodated LD students. Where it is believed that the girls will benefit the most if they are provided with the help they need if they are kept in their general education classrooms. The program has been recently restructured and has taken its current shape.

1.4 School's X Historical Background

School X was founded in September 2001. It was the first private international all girls' school in Bahrain. The school follows the American curriculum, and also offers the International Baccalaureate program. In May 2007, the school became fully accredited by the Middle States Association for Colleges and Schools (MSA).

The physical environment consists of three major sections: the administration building, the elementary building and the middle/high school building. All three structures are connected to a central dome. The preschool building lies across the playground.

⁴ LRE = least restrictive environment

⁵ The School being studied is referred to School X throughout the study.

1.5 The Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate how special education services are provided, in this private international all-girls' school in Bahrain. School X is one of the few schools that cater for students with special needs. The school's administration has been implementing this program for five years now. To that end, the researcher identified the model of special education program used at school, and evaluated it in terms of how much inclusion in general classrooms is occurring using the objective-oriented and management evaluation approaches (Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen 2004). The purpose is to help School X in improving the program so that more students are to be served in the future as the demand for the services of a learning support unit increases and to present a model for others to learn from the school's strengths and pitfalls.

The researcher tried to find how these students are supported in the LRE and examined the extent of inclusion. According to a study conducted by Idol (Mar/Apr 2006), various collaborative teaching programs are used to support general education teachers who are teaching special students. The staff needs to work collaboratively in order to reach a "re-conceptualization of how special support programs can best be offered by both general and special education" (Mar/Apr. 2006, pp 78). The researcher attempted to investigate if any of these teaching models are used at School X.

1.6 Research Questions

The study addresses the following questions: 1) To what extent are parents involved with the school's LSU⁶? 2) How is leadership and academic excellence achieved? Is the environment in the program healthy and secure? All these questions were addressed and investigated in a qualitative research approach.

1.7 Importance of the research

This research is important for it identifies the model that helps student adjustment, developmental growth, and adaptation. Sanders and Sullins (2006, p 1) define program evaluation as "the process of systematically determining the quality of a program and how it can be improved." They extend the definition of program evaluation to a broader meaning showing the uses of evaluation. According to them, program evaluation is "...the process used to identify student needs...", "... the process used to set priorities among needs and to translate needs into program objectives or modifications of existing objectives..." (p 1). Keeping this definition in mind and its uses, the researcher considers this study as a step forward to improvement and reform. Thus, the research is trying to find the weak aspects of the program and then suggested ways to improve these aspects. On the other hand, the researcher points out the strong aspects and shows how to maintain them, using studies on the matter. The researcher is looking into more efficient methods to accommodate a greater number of students with LD.

⁶ The Learning support unit at School X

1.8 Operational definitions

- Program Evaluation “is the process of systematically determining the quality of a program and how it can be improved. It is the process used to identify student needs, to set priorities among needs, and to translate needs into program objectives or modifications of existing objectives” (Sanders and Sullins, 2006).
- Special Education “is instruction specially designed to meet the unique needs of students. That instruction can take place in a variety of settings (such as classrooms, homes, and hospitals), and it includes instruction in physical education” (Lewis and Doorlag 2003).
- Inclusion “is when students with disabilities receive their entire academic curriculum in the general education program” (Idol Mar/Apr 2006).
- Mainstreaming “... is when students with disabilities spend a portion of their school day in the general education program and a portion in a special education program” (Idol Mar/Apr 2006).

1.9 Conclusion

This study intended to examine the features of the LSU, previously stated as the learning support unit, in School X and how these features are viewed by the school's administration, the general education teachers, and parents. The results obtained are not to be generalized; however these results can add to the understanding of the factors that contribute to the success and effectiveness of such programs in other schools. School X's learning support unit caters for students with learning disabilities such as dyslexia, mild

retardation, slow learners, speech impediments and genetic disorders that contribute to learning disabilities such as muscular dystrophy. The learning support unit does not cater for gifted students.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The following chapter will introduce various opinions towards inclusion practices and special education in the Arab countries and others, and Pullout options, benefits and difficulties, as well as alternatives to pull out, or remove of students from the general classroom into a learning support class set up, in schools for learning needs children. Learning support units are established in academic institutions in order to support, guide, and teach students both academically and socially. These learning support units can follow different models as outlined in this chapter. Whether these units apply full inclusion, pullout sessions, or main streaming; there is a need to have highly trained individuals in order to facilitate the work at the unit and to support these systems and programs. In addition, the opportunity of professional development is needed to stay up-to-date and to apply new techniques is important, this can include parents and the general classroom teachers. The chapter will also investigate the models of instruction and whether they fit with School X. As well as explaining which model would work best if one does not already exist, or does not fit with the needs of the school.

2.2 Special education in the Middle East

Arab societies have been facing difficulties and social obstacles in accepting the idea of learning disabled children being educated in a normal classroom setting and receiving support while attending normal classes. Many families have hid their children who have learning disabilities so as not to be faced with the "shame" they bring to their

family as a social stigma. However, the growth of western accredited schools and universities that have accepted and improved these students' skills in the Middle East region, has given hope and open mindedness towards these "learning disabled" children and has changed views tremendously (Al-Hilawani et.al., 2008).

Unfortunately, part of the Arab culture still has a negative overview of children with special needs in learning. The culture might regard their families as being disgraced, and thus parents choose to hide them from society or not to acknowledge their needs so as not to affect their social and economic status. These kids are usually viewed as 'handicapped' and are looked upon with pity. The lives of these 'special' students in the Gulf States are devastating. In schools, these students fail, so the parents blame the kids for not working as hard as they should, and they deny the fact that these kids have problems and cannot cope with the general curriculum. When the students fail year after year, the parents tend to blame the school and its academic system. After accepting that their children need special help, parents avoid telling extended family members of their participation in a school's special program and they behave as if they are part of the regular school? Another part of society believes that God has sent them this child that has special learning needs and they have to take care of them, as there is nothing more to do or help to advance or change the situation. Due to denial, fatalism, absolutism, and family shame, early intervention is not a priority in the Arab region. Parents themselves are not educated into how to detect a learning problem at an early age. Also, some experts, in the field of learning disabilities, in the Arab region avoid letting the parents know about the problem until it becomes too obvious to deny its existence. They want to save the family from the stigma and the behavior of others towards their children. This leads to a vicious

circle of denial, lack of intervention and pity. However, the Gulf countries have set up special centers for the learning disabled and the main contact with regular society is through trips or socializing with in small groups. There is no officially accepted system for the diagnostic classification of learning disabilities in Kuwait, Bahrain and Qatar, as there is a big risk of misdiagnosis (Brown, 2009). Moreover, those that have taken on the duty of diagnosis on a private basis push for greater access to facilities that help learning disabled children.

Fortunately, some disabled students are being educated in special schools and centers in the Arab countries. This can be seen mostly in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Some parents are showing readiness to provide financial covering for the children's special programs. This practice is promising and shows that schools could implement special programs in their curricula and also be supported by parents. One of the greatest aspects of accomplishment in the past decade was the shift in the way the disabled were being regarded. The shift was from charitable feelings towards the disabled, to being included in all the aspects of society (Brown, 2009). This is important to diminish the apparent stigma attached to having a child with special learning needs.

In 2006, governmental representatives, parents, teachers, specialists, administrators and concerned citizens attended a conference at the Kuwait University to discuss and find avenues to implement a special needs program for children in the Gulf States. Primary assessment, diagnosis, early intervention, educational strategies, professional development, and community awareness were topics that were discussed, as these are all areas that need to be considered when creating a program for the learning disabled. Having a learning disabled child is met with stigma from the community and

the lack of support creates an environment where the child is then isolated in all aspects including education. The solutions from this meeting, incorporated ideas from the best practices from the US, that have already been implemented, tested, reviewed and continued, as well as specialist ideas from the Gulf region, mainly about promoting community awareness (Al-Hilawani et.al., 2008).

The idea of inclusion in the region's schools is vague as the government and private Arabic schools lack the presence of collaborative team activities for inclusive practices. In the American and British schools that are found in the region, such collaborative teams are present, but their emphasis is mainly on the academic achievement. Moreover, there is a huge turnover of expatriate teaching and support staff every year which does not help the continuity of fixed teams that are focused on support for inclusive education. Traditional beliefs and norms are cultural obstacles which need to be worked on prior to focusing on the specialized professional training (Brown, 2009). More awareness is needed as well as obtained results in order to get parents and society in general to accept that there is a requirement for inclusion in schools (Brown, 2009).

2.3 Pullout

After the introduction of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA), students with learning disabilities started to be treated as children having a serious condition that requires special education services. Therefore, teaching disabled students was taken into consideration by teachers and schools. Educators and administration implemented resource rooms where students are pulled out from the general education

classrooms for a part of the day and then eased back when the child is capable of dealing with another class (Zigmond , Jenkins, Fuchs, Deno, Baker, Couthino, 1995).

2.4 Benefits and difficulties involved with pullout

Teachers' views on pullout programs and their perceptions are important to take into account (Meyers, Gelzheiser, Yelich, Gallagher, 1990) as well as their suggestions of alternatives and improvements to pullout programs. They are the main contact in imparting knowledge to students and will generally know the basic needs of every student in the class population. Some of the disadvantages of pullout programs include not attending to the large number of students who miss academic instruction, due to difficulties associated with scheduling pullout classes. This results in frustration for many students who have difficulty keeping up with the work in both settings and reduces classroom teachers' flexibility in planning instruction (Meyers et al., 1990).

There are many concerns and problems associated with the pullout program; however the main problems include lack of coordination between the pullout class teacher and the general education classroom. This lack in coordination and communication hinders the success of the student. It also leads to a fragmentation of learning and a lack of connection between the basic skills being taught in the pullout class and the material being covered in the regular class (King, 1990). There is likely to be more gaps created than being filled in the students learning because of this.

2.5 Alternatives to pullout

King (1990) suggested alternatives to pullout that have already been used in a number of schools in the US. They incorporated replacement and extended pullouts that

involved a new schedule for the student. The benefits for this are that the student wouldn't miss instruction in any subject area and with one teacher there would be less confusion. It also eliminates the need for coordination between teachers, as the pullout teacher will be responsible for the curriculum, assessment and overall student learning. However, there would be a lower standard and this will result in lower expectations for the student. Investment on the part of the school for resources to compensate the student taken from regular classes will also need to be considered. Another alternative is the use of the resource room and learning laboratory. This will allow student based exploration and learning. There would be smaller groups for the teacher to deal with, so monitoring would be less complicated and the teacher could serve a larger number of students. With this option, enhancement of the regular school program would be achieved and therefore less opportunity for the student to be isolated as a low achiever will occur, although the level and intensity of the instruction will be low.

In addition to pull out options, the extended schedule alternative involves before and after school programs and year round instruction. This would allow a greater period for instruction without loss of regular instruction and will effectively use school facilities. However the cost of additional staff or additional pay can prove to be expensive in the long term. A change in staff scheduling and the changing of a nine month program into a twelve month one will also provide its own difficulties. Parent objection must be considered here also, as there will be less opportunity for extracurricular activity, travel and other movement (King, 1990).

The pull out strategy was seen by some professionals to be unbeneficial to the student. Zigmond et al. (1995) argued that pull out services were too expensive, had

unclear criteria for placing students in the programs, triggered social stigma, and did not show effectiveness and student progress. All of the Regular Education Initiative (REI) was concerned about finding a way to achieve better outcomes than the traditional pull-out practices.

Three models were introduced in order to change the existing general education strategies in order to make special education beneficial. The models focused on including LD students in their general education classes, and to accommodating LD into mainstream classes (Zigmond et al. 1995). The rationale behind these three models was to enable general education to answer the needs of diverse students, improve the achievement and meaningful participation of LD students; hence pull-out programs and special education strategies were stopped then (Zigmond et al. 1995).

The three models were undertaken at three universities: 1) University of Pittsburgh (UOP), 2) University of Washington (UOW) and 3) Vanderbilt University (VU) (Zigmond et al. 1995).

2.5 a University of Pittsburgh (UOP) Model

In UOP model, students with learning disabilities were helped within mainstreaming (Zigmond et al. 1995).

2.5 b University of Washington (UOW) Model

In the UOW model, some special education programs were used. The special educators gave 20 minutes phonics lessons to specific students with decoding difficulties. These lessons were given in regular classrooms. Finally, the special educators and aids

managed a cross-age tutoring program in reading for helping younger students. In short, the methods followed in this model were: 1) pull-out, 2) supplementary decoding lessons and 3) cross-age peer tutoring. The following programs were included in general education classes for cooperative integrated reading and composition, peer tutoring, active mathematical activities, and support from special educators and skills for success support. In cooperative integrated reading and composition special educators depended on basal reading and language arts texts without workbooks and worksheets. Active math was about teaching grade-level concepts to 80% mastery. General education teachers received support from special education teachers and mainstreaming was also used (Zigmond et al. 1995).

2.5 c Vanderbilt University (VU) Model

Finally, the VU model exhibited a totally different approach. Special educators gradually decreased the amount of pull-out time, although the goal was never to entirely eliminate pull-out services. With this gradual decrease of pull-out time, came the process of reintegrating students on a case by case basis. The reintegration process relied on the usage of assessments and intensive instructions which ensured that the basic skills of those LD students were somehow approximated to the basic skills of non-disabled low-achieving students who are managing in general education classrooms. In addition to that, similarities between the setting of special and general education classes and meetings and collaboration between special and general education teachers were always present. In Pennsylvania schools, the special education teachers co-taught in the general education classroom settings during the implementation of the model. This co-teaching practice took the form of small group instructions and special educators met and planned

with the general educators. In this model, there had been an increase in the amount of individually tailored instructions in order to reintegrate students with difficulties into regular education classes. After that, the special educators became consultants for the general educators and helped them become better at accommodating students' diversity and at reducing possible referrals to the special education department. Finally, "reverse mainstreaming" classrooms were set up for those students who were not able to be reintegrated. In these classrooms, special and general educators were paired. The activities that took place in these classrooms were mainly about peer mediation and active learning strategies (Zigmond et al. 1995).

The above three models had one thing in common which was the increase of the teacher's abilities to accommodate learning activities that met the needs of a greater range of students (Zigmond et al. 1995).

Once special education services were terminated, general educators modified their teaching strategies to fit in the special education co-teacher and students (grouping). More focus was put on what to teach and what to overpass based on what was beneficial for the students rather than covering the curriculum. After the implementations of these models, views towards grades changed; they became a reward for achievement and not a punishment for low achievers. The Basic Academic Skills Samples (BASS) testing was administrated to assess the effectiveness of the models. Reading assessment took place every week, and the special educators met with general educators to devise a plan to modify the instructions in order to reach their targets (Zigmond et al. 1995).

2.6 Inclusion

There are problems and confusion when it comes to defining the meaning of “inclusion” when put into practice. Professionals should be aware of clarifying the difference between “inclusive thinking” and “inclusive practices”. “Inclusive thinking” is the belief that disabled students should have a positive impact in the society. On the other hand, “inclusive practices” primarily consists of social isolated practices that the disabled students can perform with some social activities (Brown, 2009).

2.6 a Advantages and disadvantages

According to the United States Department of Education [USDE], 1997, students with unique differences that were previously excluded from the general education classroom are now being integrated and they are learning alongside typical peers.

Lipsky and Gartner (1997) were the advocates of inclusive classrooms. They argue that these classrooms provided valuable academic learning opportunities for all.

O’shea and O’shea (1997) stated that many students who are struggling but are not qualified for special education but they needed support in the general education classroom.

Sapon-Shevin (1996) and Villa and Thousand (1995) concluded that students involved in inclusive education learned an important lesson in social skills that helped them become compassionate adults. This was achieved by respecting the diversity and the tolerance for individual differences when working with a heterogeneous group of classmates. This was along due to the fact that the inclusive classrooms highlighted

teamwork and collaboration. They learned to value individual and group contributing; this developed valuable skills in communication, problem solving, and relationship development; in other words, developing life skills that were usually not explored or practiced in a less inclusive classroom.

On the other hand, Kauffman and Hallahan (1995) argued that inclusive classrooms could be unsuitable learning environments. This was because learning disabled students might be reprimanded by setting unrealistic expectations, having limited classroom support, having inappropriate instruction and insensitive peers. The teachers' attention was given to the learning disabled students thus not shared among all students.

Walther, Bryant, and Land (1996) argued that inclusive classrooms were not really inclusive due to their complex classroom schedules; teacher's limited planning time and resources, challenging concerns, and poor communication.

2.6 b Inclusion in the Arab Region

The introduction of inclusion in the Middle Eastern countries is still new, and it is too early to judge if it is going to be put effectively into practice or not. So far in the Gulf of Arabia, inclusion is practiced mainly in privately run international schools. Nowadays, modern thinking about inclusion is becoming more evident in Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain. "Inclusive thinking" philosophy is now needed for making practices. Inclusive thinking is becoming more evident with the introduction of national legislation in the three countries to promote having disabled students in regular classes. However, there are still no clearly set rules as to how to accomplish the application of the inclusive education. International

schools want to introduce inclusive education and show understanding towards the disabled, but they are still faced by the old mentality of the region.

There are three general types of inclusion, the proximity, social and the academic integration. If the special center is physically near a regular education place it is called proximity integration. The social integration occurs when the special students participate in non-academic activities with the regular students. The academic integration is the participation of the special students in normal academic practices in regular classes.

The inclusive practices in the three gulf countries fall primarily in proximity integration. Academic integration happens with those with very mild learning disabilities, and in the early grade levels.

For instance, the American and British schools in Kuwait apply inclusive practices. Kuwait government financially supports Kuwaiti disabled students to be taught in such regular schools. Even students of the public schools have after school tutoring and special education support to help students fill in "the gap" in order to join the regular government school program (Brown, 2009).

Schools that are ready to practice inclusive practices to mildly disabled students are becoming more evident in Bahrain and Qatar. Still, the program is limited due to the traditional thinking and cultural obstacles. This is because of the persistent requests by parents, to have their children stay within the same group of students, from year to year. This helped inclusion because the parents demand that their children remain in the mainstream class and receive special help instead of having them be removed to a special class.

The advocates of educational inclusion are increasing in number in these three countries, and are starting to look at it as a civil right. This gave optimistic hope for a promising future when it comes to inclusive education in the Arab region.

2.7 Program Evaluation

In order for any program or system to be successful, it needs to be evaluated, updated and then reflected on. This is a cyclic pattern that must take place regularly in order to accurately gauge the achievements or benefits as well as areas that need to be upgraded or reviewed.

2.7 a Definition

Sanders and Sullins (2009, page 1), define program evaluation as "... the process of systematically determining the quality of a program and how it can be improved". To them evaluation is not a mechanical process. On the contrary, evaluation has a lot of complexity and challenges; it is a human endeavor, and it carries with it all the complexities and challenges of any human undertaking, including education".

2.7 b Uses

Sanders and Sullins (2009) continue explaining that program evaluation can be used to identify student's needs, and the use of set of priorities such as objectives can also benefit the program as this allows the objectives to be reviewed, changed and then revisited. Not only the objectives of a program can be visited but by also the approaches being used will be examined such as where staff function best, what resources are needed to be included as well as administrative jobs such as scheduling and choice of facility.

2.7 c Approaches

Fitzpatrick, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) defined several approaches for program evaluation. Objective-oriented, management-oriented, consumer-oriented, and expertise-oriented are some of these approaches.

The objectives-oriented evaluation approach helps the researcher in determining the purpose of the program itself. It also guides the researcher in assessing the procedures and devices used to attain the purpose of the program. Under the objective-oriented approach, three main approaches are usually discussed: the Tylerian evaluation approach, Metfessel and Michael's evaluation approach, and the Provus's Discrepancy evaluation approach.

The Tylerian Evaluation Approach

The Tyler Model worked on evaluating the extent to which practices are in common with the set objectives. His approach to evaluation followed certain criteria. First the administrators have to establish broad goals or objectives, then classify and define the goals or objectives in behavioral terms. After that they have to find situations in which achievement of objectives can be shown. They have to develop measurement techniques, collect performance data, and finally compare performance data with behaviorally stated objectives. Tyler stressed the importance of defining the objectives before accepting them as the basis for evaluating a program. The classification of the set goals includes the philosophical, social and pedagogical aspects of it (Fitzpatrick et. al., 2004).

Metfessel and Michael's Evaluation Approach

Metfessel and Michael's evaluation focused on involving the stake holders as facilitators of program evaluation. They also believed in the formulation of a cohesive and specific set of goals. After that, they advised the evaluators to translate specific objectives into a communicable format, select instruments to measure the program's effectiveness. Consequently, periodic observations using content-valid tests, scales, and other behavioral measures are to be used. Then, analysis and interpretation of the data using standards of desired levels of performance are to be conducted. Finally, the evaluators are to develop recommendations for better implementation, or revision of broad goals and specific objectives (Fitzpartic et. al.,2004).

Provus's Discrepancy Evaluation Approach

Provus believed that for a program to be effectively evaluated standards are to be placed and then discrepancy between what is written and what is done is to be found out. After finding out the discrepancy, the evaluators are to improve, maintain, change, or terminate the program.

Provus advised educators who are interested in developing or analyzing a program on five main points: definition, implementation, collection of data, results and cost-benefit analysis. Thus, his approach was called the Discrepancy Evaluation Model (DEM) (Fitzpartic et.al., 2004).

The objectives-oriented approach of evaluating a program is simple, easily understood and straightforward to follow and implement. It is usually preferred by school's administrators as the discrepancy and pitfalls of the practices are effortlessly observed when compared with the set objectives. Finally, it highlights observable, measurable and practical data which are used as bases for assessment. This helps evaluators and others to see the value basis for analyzing the program.

Critics claim that the approach used is not judgmental; thus not showing any obscurity. Moreover, the discrepancy is not based on any hierarchy, thus every finding is viewed with the same importance. Some critics believe that this type of evaluation restricted the alternatives that could be helpful in assessing the program. This type of evaluation ignores outcomes that might be beneficial for the program but not found in the previously set objectives. This model of evaluation is viewed as "common vision" since it tends to focus only on previously set objectives.

Furthermore, other critics believed that the set objectives are not reliable as they are usually written by the school's professionals who usually do not have any standardized bench mark to compare their work to.

As for the management-oriented evaluation approaches, Fitzpatric, Sanders, and Worthen (2004) argue that it is a very useful approach in defining who will use the evaluation results and how these results will be used.

Stufflebeam (1968), as cited by Fitzpatric, suggested that evaluator should work closely with the administrator and collect data then analyses it. Stufflebeam was a powerful advocate of a decision-oriented evaluation approach which is helpful in

structuring the administrators' good decisions. The result was the development of the CIPP approach which served as a framework to provide managers and administrators guidelines.

The CIPP Evaluation Model

The CIPP stands for context, input, process, and product evaluation. The context evaluation helps in defining the program's objectives. It helps the evaluator in foreseeing where the program should be. It provides information concerning the state of the program. Input evaluation helps the evaluator in determining the available resources, to check for alternative strategies for the program and for plans that help the program in meeting its full potential. Process evaluation, helps the evaluator in determining how well is the plan being implemented, what are the obstacles that threaten its success, and what revisions are needed to be considered. The final step is the product evaluation, which deals with the end result of the program evaluation. At this stage, the evaluator usually investigates and applies the best plan that helps the program being evaluated to stay running on course.

The UCLA Evaluation Model

Alkin (1969) developed another evaluation model known as the UCLA evaluation model. The UCLA model is similar to the CIPP model. It consists of five types of evaluation: 1) systems assessment, 2) program planning, 3) program implementation, 4) program improvement and 5) program certification. The systems assessment is similar to the context evaluation stage. The evaluator gathers information concerning the state of the program. The program planning phase is similar to the input evaluation stage. The

program implementation phase helps the researcher in checking whether the program was introduced to the appropriate group of people in the intended manner. Program improvement is similar to the process evaluation. As for the program certification, it is similar to the product evaluation.

Alkin continues that an evaluation model should have four assumptions.

Evaluation should be a process used to gather information. The information collected should be used to make decisions concerning the alternative route of the program. The results should be presented to the decision makers in a simple and understandable easy to use format. Finally, for different kinds of decisions, different kinds of evaluation procedures are required.

The management- orientated approach is advantageous as it gives necessary focus and stress on information that has been utilized. Some people, however, do not agree with the way questions are answered or the lack of ability by the decision maker to answer questions that may arise. Other weaknesses within this model are the preference given to top management and the lack in decisive leadership, (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

2.8 Conclusion

It is vital to have an overview of the different opinions and studies in the area of classroom pullout and alternatives, inclusion in the classroom and special education in the Arab region. In doing this it is possible to find the model or explanations to why and how schools in the Arab region work with regard to the questions stated in the methodology.

All the above models provided a framework for the study and helped the researcher in identifying important aspects to include in the study's instrumentation. The researcher derived the questions from a study conducted by the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, Alexandria, VA. (1992). Gonzalez (1992) study evaluated the special education program practices in 49 states. Wentling (1989) as cited in Gonzalz study stated five purposes for program evaluation. The first purpose was that evaluation results are to be used to gain support. Second, evaluation results are to be used to promote understanding. Third, is to secure the involvement of the key individuals. Fourth and the fifth purpose, was that program evaluation results are to be used to improve the program thus demonstrating accountability. To attain these purposes, a group of summative and formative questions needed to be asked, such as has the program been affective? Should it continue? And what are the strengths and weaknesses of the program? How can the program be improved?

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This study was conducted in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning support unit at School X. This chapter includes the methods, tools and procedures used to evaluate the program.

It is necessary to follow a process when evaluating a program. The mission statement of the school (Appendix A) was reviewed and broken down into three areas, leadership and academic excellence, home school connection (parent involvement), and maintaining a healthy, secure learning environment. These points translated into the research questions. Part of the investigation was to collect data to measure whether each of the research questions were being met and to what degree. In turn, the results were analyzed and discussed, from this came recommendations to either change model of instruction or adopt one, as well as establish new guidelines for self assessment for future development

3.2 Case study methodology

The researcher was interested in studying the quality of a specific program; thus wanting to obtain a complete picture of what was going on in a particular program, the best method was to use a qualitative research approach. As Fraenkel and Wallen (2007) defined, a qualitative research is “a research in which the investigator attempts to study naturally occurring phenomena in all their complexity”.

Since the researcher studied only a single subject, namely one school, the best method to check the LSU's strengths and weaknesses was a case study. Cohen, Manion

and Morrison 2007) defined a case study as "... a specific instant that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle; it is the study of an instance in action" (p 140). So this research was conducted as a qualitative case study method which was considered the most appropriate methodology to evaluate the LSU.

The rationale behind this research was to highlight the strengths and the weaknesses of the special education program and then to provide appropriate recommendations and to model how the LSU should look like.

This study consisted of studying students' profiles, Individual Educational Plan (IEP), observations of student classes in a pullout situation, informal interviews with teachers, and qualitative questionnaires for parents, learning support unit staff and teachers.

3.3 Ethical Considerations

Prior to conducting this study, a written approval was granted to the researcher by the school's principal (Appendix B). All the participants, teachers and parents, were formally informed by the school's administration in order to assure the confidentiality and significance of the study (Appendix M). The researcher made sure that no harm was done to the participating adults and children.

3.4 Participants

The sample in this research is a purposive sample having access to the classes and interacting with the different staff was easy. The main disadvantage of this sample group is that generalization is hard to attain. However, generalization was not the purpose of

this study; it was meant to present the LSU model in order to enhance the learning of their students to the maximum.

All the seventeen students in the LSU were included in this study hoping it would give an overview of how effective this program is across grades, from K to 11. The parents of the students, in addition to their special and general teachers whose professional experience varied between two to seven years, were also part of this study.

3.5 Methods, instruments and items

The data collection tools for this study consisted of informal interviews (see Appendix C, D, E, and F), questionnaires (see Appendix G, H, and I), observation (Appendix J), and Individual Education Plan (IEP) (Appendix L) document study. The questions were derived from several studies mentioned in chapter two. Questions were also formulated from the mission statement of the school; this was to investigate home-school connections, health secure environments and leadership toward excellence. Three forms of investigation and data collection were used, questionnaires, interviews and observation. Data triangulation increased validity and reliability of findings.

3.5.1 Informal interviews

Interviews were conducted with a parent, LSU coordinator/special educator, speech therapist, school's principal, and with four general education teachers.

3.5.1.a Interview with the parent

The parent was invited to school by the coordinator/special education teacher as a representative of the students' parents. An informal interview was conducted in which no

specific sequence, type, or form of questioning was followed (Fraenkel and Wallen, 2006). The aim of the interview was to find out if the parent could sense any improvement in the child's academic performance and emotional wellbeing due to the restructuring of the program that took place in the current year, 2008 -2009. The interview took place in school and was audio taped with the parents' permission.

3.5.1.b The LSU coordinator/special educator and the speech therapist

The coordinator and the speech therapist were chosen as informants, or sources of information, as they were the personnel responsible for the restructuring of the unit. The main objectives of this interview were to inquire about out their beliefs towards the LSU and to emphasize the different instructional techniques, assessments tools, objectives of the learning support unit (LSU), and the administrative restructuring of the LSU. The interview took place in the resource room and was audio taped with their permission.

3.5.1.c The schools' principal

The school principal's input was of great value as she informed the researcher about how the restructuring took place and to what extent the administration, parents, and general educators were involved. The interview took place in her office for fifteen minutes and was audio taped after her approval, then transcribed and analyzed.

3.5.2 Questionnaires

The researcher developed three questionnaires, one for the parents (Appendix G), one for the general education teachers (Appendix H), and another one for the LSU teachers (Appendix I), to inquire about their perception of the learning support program. The

administration sent an official letter requesting the parents input concerning the LSU through answering a questionnaire (Appendix M). The researcher intended to send a questionnaire that consisted of a set of "Likert scale" statements and one open-ended question. Unfortunately, the school administration refused this type of questions and asked the researcher to change the questionnaire to an open-ended questionnaire format. The questionnaire consisted of six open-ended questions. Open ended questions allow the participants to express themselves freely and avoid limitation of preselected categories. However, open ended question can provide unrelated and redundant information (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). In the questionnaire, the researcher asked the parent about the effectiveness of the LSU, if the program should be part of the school, and if any changes were observed in their daughters academically. Then the researcher asked about the strengths and weaknesses of the program from the parent's point of view. Finally, the researcher asked if there is any specific area in the program where the parents need to see improvement in the future. Ten questionnaires were sent to the parents, only six were returned.

Another questionnaire was addressed to the general education teachers. The LSU coordinator took care of informing the teacher and asking them to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of a set of seven "Likert scale" statements, and seventeen open-ended questions. The purpose of the "Likert scale" used by the researcher was to examine how the teachers felt about the topics included in the statements. On the scale, a 1 (strongly agree) indicated a high positive attitude, a 2 (agree) indicated a positive attitude, a 3 (neutral) indicated a neutral attitude, a 4 (disagree) indicated a negative attitude, and a 5 (strongly disagree) indicated a high

3.5.4 Document Study

The researcher reviewed documents related to the study. The documents reviewed were: Middle States Association (MSA) report, the LSU objectives and referral forms (Appendix K), and students' IEPs (Appendix L). The school provided the researcher with a copy of each of the above listed documents.

3.6 Data Analysis

The information collected from the interviews, were transcribed and later classified into the major skills and objectives previously set by the researcher.

Concerning the questionnaires, percentages of the "Likert Scale" were analyzed numerically. The results from the open ended questions were classified into the categories they fit into.

As for the observation sessions, the researcher used a pre-set checklist. During the observation sessions, the researcher found the need of adding anecdotal notes to emphasize on the activity conducted by the observant. The data was then analyzed and classified according to the mission statement's skills and objectives.

As for the IEPs, they were reviewed and used to benchmark the practices of the LSU.

3.7 Triangulation

Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define triangulation as "... the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study ...". The need to collect data from several resources is important to demonstrate the validity of the results collected in the research. The researcher in this case study used interviews, questionnaires, observation and document study to collect the data. These instruments helped the researcher in creating an in-depth understanding and awareness of the LSU function and effectiveness. All the data obtained were compared, analyzed and evaluated accordingly.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

According to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) validity is the procedure of representing correct conclusions based on the data obtained from an assessment. To increase the external validity, the researcher needs to repeat the same procedure two or three times or implement the same procedure in a different school. In this case study, however, the researcher was not able to repeat the research many times and in different situations, so the external validity and reliability were not measured. Another pitfall that might affect the internal validity is that the special education coordinator was selective in choosing which parents and general education teachers to answer the questionnaire. One more factor that affected the validity of this study was the parents' English background. The statements used in the questionnaires might have been ambiguous for some parents or general education teachers, but unfortunately the researcher couldn't pilot the questionnaires before presenting them neither to the parents nor to the teachers.

3.9 Limitation

This case study methodology was useful for collecting data from the participants using various instruments such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documents study. Nevertheless, there were some limitations such as the lack of time and restrictions imposed by the special education coordinator. The results obtained cannot be generalized because the study was conducted in one school therefore this study is not replicable by other researchers or schools. The researcher did not have enough time in order to use the methods more than once to increase reliability. One more limitation to this study was the selectiveness of the parents and the general education teachers involved in the study as the special education coordinator selected those who had successful kids in the program and teachers she was friends with.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

The following chapter outlines and details data collected towards the study of the LSU of School X. Data collection was undertaken using questionnaires, observations, and informal interviews. Classification of data follows the questions set out in Chapter 1, which are the main research questions.

Questionnaires and interviews were set up and conducted with questions pertaining to the research questions, mainly being to what extend are parents involved in the LSU at school X? How is leadership and academic excellence achieved through the LSU? And finally, is the environment in the program run by the LSU safe and considered healthy?

The instructors of the LSU were asked to complete a questionnaire (Appendix I) and participate in an interview (Appendix F). Six parents with children in attendance at the LSU completed the questionnaire (Appendix G). Informal interviews were conducted with teachers (Appendix D), the acting principal (Appendix E), and a parent (Appendix C).

All questions asked have been categorized and follow the expectations of the research questions. A summary of the data collected follows.

4.2 The instructors perspective of the LSU through questionnaire

Both of the instructors of the LSU are highly qualified, with eleven years and nine years of experience. Only Teacher B⁷ holds a degree, while Teacher A⁸ holds only a teaching diploma in the area of special needs.

In accordance with the mission statement of the school, to achieve academic excellence, it is important to have qualified teaching individuals. The instructors of the LSU are qualified and feel that their role is to help the student achieve their individual potential, not just on an academic level but also socially. Long term plans are required to see improvement in a student's ability or for achievement to be accurately assessed. They also feel that it is important to spread awareness about the LSU's aims among teachers who face daily classes with special learning students.

Teacher B outlined the LSU mission as being aligned with the school's mission statement and that there be a harmonious reflection in the area of: 1) a home-school partnership, 2) having well trained competent staff, 3) providing a secure environment for children, and 4) acknowledging differences among individuals within the school environment.

In order for them to be successful with the LSU, the instructors believed that a clear vision between teachers, administration, and parents is a must. Continuous professional development should be available to all teachers as well as having a fully equipped resource centre that is accessible to all including students and parents. In

⁷ Teacher B is the Speech Therapist

⁸ Teacher A is the LSU coordinator and Special Educator

addition to revisions in the LSU program, a rigorous follow up and evaluation system that is in accordance with the latest research and its findings is needed. It is important to also have parents' and teachers' involvement to facilitate the success of the LSU.

The role of the special education staff member should be someone who is able to monitor progress, identify areas for improvement and offer reflection. They should also be able to professionally assess and observe all areas of student's performance, be able to meet with parents and other parties involved to further evaluate or impart strategies, and finally set up sessions of awareness for parents and teachers. This was the view of mainly Teacher B, where as Teacher A responded vaguely.

Both Teacher A and Teacher B feel that they complete all the expectations of a special education unit, but have not considered a self assessment study on the total running and implementation of the LSU within school X.

4.3 Parents involved in the LSU and their views through questionnaire

When questioned on the effectiveness of the program, parents responded that the LSU program had helped their daughters recognize their weaknesses, and helped them find ways to relate their needs to teachers, school mates, and administrative staff where necessary. Furthermore, it was seen that the students were able to take key skills and strategies they had learned in school and apply them at home both in the academic and social areas.

Parents believed that the LSU was a vital need within the school and throughout the region. They reaffirmed that it wasn't about the grade obtained but the firm foundation in the basics that the LSU supported, and only in this way would they have

seen improvement in their daughters. However, there was concern that not all students were able to access or attend the LSU because of the overall strict admission requirements and standards (Appendix K).

The academics of the children had improved from the view of the parents. They commented that they had seen great improvements in the Arabic language as well as in Math manipulation. Moreover, on a social level, parents have seen their daughter's confidence levels improve as their standards in class improved.

With regards to questions on what the parents perceived as strengths and weaknesses of the LSU, the general comments on strengths were that there was a clear outline and direction for each child (see IEP Appendix L). Moreover, because the parents could monitor the progress easily, they found that the program was user friendly and uncomplicated. The general weaknesses of the LSU were not fully discussed only two parents of the six commented on this question. However, the comments made were that there was stigma attached to the student who received help from the LSU instructors, this was mainly from the student being pulled out of classes and that students were taken from elective or specialist classes so they didn't have the opportunity to have time as a child, or to enhance childhood, through fun activities and socializing with peers.

When approached with the question of further improvement in the LSU, parents emphasized their desire to see more involvement of the general education teacher, as well as more teachers rather than administrators in the program. Three parents did not comment on where they would like to see further improvements. They also called for

better communication between the general education teachers of the students as well as with the LSU staff members.

Overall, the LSU administered by School X showed great support from both parents and teachers. The parents looked for greater communication amongst all parties involved and they were satisfied with the clear direction and goal of the LSU in their daughter's academic and social participation within the school.

4.4 General education teachers having learning disabled students in class feedback

Eight teachers from all subject areas participated in this questionnaire, the "Likert Scale" was used to assist teachers into choosing five areas, which were 1 for strongly agree, 2 for agree, 3 for neutral, 4 for disagree, and 5 for strongly disagree.

When questioned about the necessity of the LSU, there was a positive outcome with six strongly agreeing and two disagreeing. However, when teachers were asked about their training and implementation of the LSU instructions, there was diverse response with one strongly agreeing and two agreeing while four were neutral and one disagreeing. The feeling of support from the LSU for the teachers was another area that presented an array of results with four teachers agreeing, two agreeing, one neutral and one disagreeing about support, especially in the classroom environment.

For modification of classwork and other general education teachers felt generally positive that they could modify the tasks three teachers said that they disagreed that it was difficult and one teacher strongly disagreed while four chose to stay neutral with regards to modification.

The question of inclusion and its assistance with students academically came with an overwhelming response of six teachers saying they agreed with this practice while one teacher strongly agreed and one teacher disagreed.

Furthermore, on the questions of inclusion and its benefits in the classroom, teachers responded in saying that they saw inclusion as offering students, as well as the teacher, a richer learning experience because of differentiation, sharing styles of teaching, learning strategies and different levels of capabilities. Teachers insisted that socially, students benefited and learned from the challenging time in the general education classroom setting. It was helpful for reinforcement as well as pinpointing areas within the students' capabilities that required improvement.

However, one teacher pointed out that inclusion took time from the general classroom population to focus on the one individual that needed assistance because of the learning difficulties presented and having no LSU member present in class.

4.5 Concerns about inclusion

All teachers raised the point about advanced learning disabilities and whether the LSU was addressing them or were capable of addressing them. They questioned whether inclusion fully benefitted extreme cases and whether the teacher was qualified enough to handle such cases and conditions.

Comments appeared regularly about keeping updated with the new techniques and systems to benefit the whole LSU as well as the teacher, parents and students. Professional development was a key element to inclusion being widely accepted by teachers because of better understanding. Communication that was continuous and

progressive between the LSU staff and general education teachers was highlighted saying that more communication about outcomes and adaptations in plans were needed.

Furthermore, communication about assessment to observe progress and improvement within the students of the LSU while attempting inclusion was important.

Though inclusion is being pushed, teachers said that high achievers weren't being challenged enough, leading to resentment among some students which have then turned into vocalized objection towards the inclusion students. The difficulty in using many methods of teaching in a short period of time to enhance the learning of inclusion students as well as provide the general class population with substantial levels of work was a concern. When a concept is taught to the general class population, they can understand it and grasp it quickly but the students with special learning needs and are included in the class do not grasp the concept easily, so teachers asked: "Do you continue trying to make these inclusion students understand or carry on with the class tasks at hand?" Teachers felt more guidance was necessary as well as support for teachers especially in letting them know that they were benefitting the student and there was improvement; as well as, that the LSU instructors were flexible with different approaches that the teacher was using and whether they worked or not.

4.6 Support, resources and training

The question of whether the teachers felt they had different sources of support, training, and implementation time, resulted in four saying yes they did, and three saying no they did not. Nevertheless, one teacher commented for both responses, thus, balancing the outcome.

Additional information offered by teachers, stated that the LSU gave individual and group guidance and individual meetings with teachers on revision of questions and or teaching methods, especially during examination time, but little guidance during the school year in the area of modification. Teachers felt that the time to work with students was restricted due to the reduction in professional training. Teachers were not aware if they were implementing inclusion strategies effectively or not. This doubt doubled as the LSU staff were absent from classes where inclusion students were attending, therefore, giving the teacher a false sense of accomplishment. Teachers have commented also on the point that they have asked for more training that is directly linked to the preparation of teaching approaches for inclusive students. Expansion of the LSU would mean more professionals therefore more time to meet with teacher's concerns.

4.7 Retention and review of inclusive practices

Teachers were asked about specific inclusion practices and whether they should be kept or revised, with the prospect of some practices being eliminated from the program. All teachers agreed that the current inclusion practices should be kept, but in addition to these, more parent conferences, including the general classroom teacher in the conference should be conducted as well as workshops that invite parents to attend and participate in. Pullout of students needed to be revised, meaning the number of times a student is taken from general classes and what the target of these pullout classes were needed to be examined. There was a suggestion also to screen students as they applied to enter the school to determine whether they would require help from the LSU. This is currently in place however; teachers were concerned that in most cases students were being accepted without any evaluation.

4.8 LSU effectiveness

From the parents' and teacher's perspectives, the LSU program's effectiveness was assessed on the student's overall social and academic improvement. Seven teachers felt that the LSU benefited the students in some way, indicating that it was an effective system though new in school. Students had more self confidence and approached challenges in their academics with less resistance than they first started with. However, one teacher of the higher grades commented that the LSU was ineffective, further commenting that the LSU did not cater for high school students or even middle school students and this disadvantaged them. Moreover, because of the lack of attention towards the higher grade levels, the academic level of the student was skewed, meaning more lower grades were achieving better than the higher grades because the support went to the students attending the LSU program. All teachers viewed that it was important to continue the LSU within the school with the prospect of expansion to incorporate all grade levels, as well as all academic levels of weakness not just extreme or complicated cases.

4.9 Observed academic improvement

The results in this section were about the tangible improvement students exhibited while being included in the LSU. Teachers observed positive progress in the strengthening of basic skills and in some cases students were able to take on tasks on their own and work with minimal supervision. Four out of the eight teachers found that students' confidence increased both socially and academically. Organization of workspace and bookwork also improved, as teachers indicated organization helps students approach tasks better.

4.10 Strengths and weaknesses

As with all programs or systems, there are positive aspects as well as negative. Teachers were asked to evaluate and categorize their comments into strengths and weaknesses with regards to the LSU implementation in School X.

4.10.1 Strengths

Again, one of the major accomplishments of the LSU was the building of confidence, all teachers commented on this. As well as this, teachers felt that the LSU instructors were very supportive to students and focused on during examination time.

4.10.2 Weaknesses

Communication was a problem with teachers not being updated with changes. Though the program is new, all parents should be informed about the LSU and its goal, however the goals of the LSU are vague and sometimes non-existent. The time devoted to the students was limited due to the shortage of staff, where there are many students. Finally, teachers felt that there was a lot more vocalizing rather than physically, hands on work with students and teachers. They also commented that there needed to be more consistency in the objectives of both instructors of the LSU, as one currently has more pro active ideas for the unit than the other.

4.11 Suggested improvements by teachers

Teachers would like to see more training provided to both the teaching staff and parents and that all teachers participate in the LSU program not just teachers that have students enrolled in the program. One teacher would like to see the LSU programs

applied throughout the school because currently the middle school and high school are excluded. Two teachers commented that because of scheduling on the number of students who require support, pullouts were limited and that some students were being excluded also because of the lack of staff.

More suggestions for application of resources and the distribution of resources needed to be reconsidered and finally more information about the individual child needed to be shared with general education teachers.

4.12 Additional comments

The LSU was badly needed and now that it has been established it needs to be expanded. The requirement of more qualified assistance is needed to be run more effectively. Two teachers did not comment on any other comments they wished to make.

4.13 Acting Principal's views on the LSU

Conducted through an interview, the acting principal was asked a series of questions with regard to the objectives of the LSU and its function in School X. The restructuring requirement of the LSU to cater for the growing number of students in need of assistance and the assessment and procedures of the programs implemented by the LSU.

The acting principal was aware of the lack of communication between the LSU, administration and the general education teachers. She would have liked to have seen more work done in a class setting. Moreover, pullouts that are done individually should actually be done as a grouped class setting with students of the same level. Further to

that comment, the principal said that general classroom teachers doing this everyday so she doesn't see why the LS staff couldn't manage it.

In addition to this, concern was raised as to why the LSU only applied from K till 5 and not incorporate the higher grades. The acting principal was aware that there were girls in high school and middle school that also required support. However, they were not receiving any type of guidance and support apart from what their general education teachers were doing for them and this was found to be a great lack in the LSU system within the school.

With regards to contact with parents and their impression towards the LSU, the acting principal saw that most parents found that having a child with special needs was shameful and tended to keep their needs a secret. They didn't want their children to be pulled out of class for any reason and whether they were weak or not. She believes that the parents may have been approached in a misguided way therefore taking on a negative approach to getting help for their child. She accepts this mis-approach as being the fault of the administration and wished to see a new directive put in place.

With regards to parents' involvement, the acting principal was not aware of any, and continued to comment that there was no parent input, as the LSU coordinator had not come back to her with any information. Moreover, she received information only about two students and had not gained any feedback on other students in the LSU program and she was sure that there many things that she didn't know about or hear because of the lack in communication. She feels and overhaul of the whole system of communication is required as well as monitoring of effectiveness is very necessary.

4.14 Parent interview regarding their experience with the LSU

The parent that was interviewed has a daughter currently participating in the LSU program. She was asked a series of questions with regards to her involvement, view of the LSU program, areas of improvement and her daughter's academic and social benefits.

The parent was an active participant in getting help for her daughter at an early stage. The major area of difficulty was in Mathematics. The student had learning gaps in her foundation therefore struggled in manipulation. The LSU pulled the student out of specialist classes in order to affirm the student's foundations in Mathematics. This gave the student more confidence in approaching Mathematics. The student didn't attend the regular Math class but an applied math class that dealt with real life situations such as dealing with money.

The parent continued saying that the LSU as a whole has improved from the previous years. The parent was happy to see more follow up and up-to-date information concerning her daughter.

4.15 Interview with Teacher A and Teacher B

The two areas the LSU focus on are the academic attainment and self esteem of students enrolled into the program. How progress is made comes from mainly modification of the program and filling in the gaps the students have in their foundations. The subjects supported by the LSU are Math, English, and Arabic. Self esteem is dealt with using an indirect approach. Students are rewarded using incentive charts so that they can visualize their improvement. Constant praise and limited use of negative language was also implemented. The teachers had a systematic approach to both

academic and social skills development and encouraged the students to make decisions, express concerns, but supported them in conflict resolution. This all aligns with the school's mission statement.

In School X's LSU, three models of instructions are used: inclusion, mainstreaming, and pullout which ranged from two to eight periods a week. When asked about the strengths and weaknesses of each model, no comment was made about inclusion. They favored mainstreaming the student, commenting that it benefited the student being in a big group and learning with others. Socially, it benefited the students to interact with friends. The instructors commented that the only difficulty is the concepts being introduced and the possibility of the student being overwhelmed. The speed of the class also concerned them, saying that students with special learning needs required more time in class, which is not always available.

The instructors felt pullout was necessary as it gave them time to address the needs fully as well as letting the students have the opportunity to express their needs in privacy, away from their class mates. Students were exposed to a lot of reviewing materials and better understanding of background information that the general classroom teacher can't always offer. However, the instructors felt that depending on one-to-one teaching didn't give the student a chance to be exposed to number of teaching styles and possible discussions and activities that would benefit them. As well as this, they felt that more teachers were needed if pullout continued; as classes were not given in groups of similar or same level but one-to-one. They were aware that pullouts would take more time and it was difficult to cater to all needs especially with just two teachers.

Once admitted into the program, Teacher B used standardized tests such as the Peabody Vocabulary Test, Individual Achievement Test, TOMAL 2 (which assess verbal and non verbal memory; as well as The Comprehensive Test of Phonological Process (CTOPP). These standardized tests helped Teacher B in developing a suitable action plan for the student. When first joining the LSU, both teachers felt intimidated because of the lack of direction, goals, support and other systems to help them facilitate the unit. Now they love it and find it relaxing and rewarding. They wished to see the LSU develop further; therefore being able to cater to a wider student body; as well as having more parents involved and the awareness of the general education teachers raised higher, which can occur through professional development.

4.16 Observation of an LSU class

An observatory study was conducted during a class of an LSU instructor, namely Teacher A. The students attending this class were being introduced to skills that would help them become a lifelong learner.

An observation checklist was prepared and completed during the session (Appendix J). The following points were observed during this time: skills listed on the IEP were taught as well as general classroom routines. Motivation was given to the student at every point that the student wavered or showed signs of confusion, motivation was observed through the student; this was as she moved from one task to another with ease and without being prompted too.

The mission statement of the school, again was reinforced as the classroom practices by Teacher A introducing the students to aspects of being a good citizen was

seen. The students tidied their work space and followed the teacher's instructions. They watered the plant in the class, as this was a job assigned to them from the beginning of the year. They did so without being asked by the teacher. Positive reinforcement was given throughout the class time, this allowed communication to be delivered with ease, and encouraged the student to listen to further instructions.

Some aspects of building a globally aware and actively participating student were not observed. The opportunity to introduce critical thinking was not evident nor was any creative aspect to diversify the lesson. Technological incorporation was also absent and no variety in learning strategy was present. The teacher used the same strategy of repetition.

4.17 Conclusion

It was important to divide the qualitative data in categories which followed questionnaires, interviews, and observation; as well as subcategories of special education teachers, general education teachers, administrators, and parents.

On the collection of this data, the researcher found that the greatest concerns were professional development, communication and the involvement of all parties. The positive findings were that the goals of the LSU and the school's mission statement were in syncopation and steps were being set up to pass this on to the beneficiaries, who are mainly the students.

Though the LSU in was new and is always changing to stay updated and reach students' needs, it is evident that students are improving academically; though there was

more social improvement. General population interaction was vital for the student while pull out classes were for support and guidance.

The process of admission into the LSU required reviewing. The standards for admission should be relaxed to help more students. Moreover, the incorporation of the high school and the middle school with its share of student that needed the LSU services need to be considered.

Chapter 5

Discussion of Results

5.1 Introduction

This section discusses the findings of the data collected and presented in the previous chapter. The discussion provides explanation, examples, and where necessary, comparing and contrasting of the data collected.

5.2 Mission statement and the LSU objectives

The school's mission statement clearly states that it promotes academic excellence, a healthy secure environment for students, and a joint home school partnership. In order to come up with a clear and active mission statement, the school looked for expertise regionally. In doing this they were able to incorporate inclusion and community involvement into the mission statement. This is encouraged as it creates more acceptances for learning disabled children (Al Hilawani et. al., 2008). While revisiting these points, it was clear that the school intentions were to provide students with "a full learning experience" in a facility of excellence both academically and socially; and where they can be supported in their learning either in the mainstream class setting or in a learning support unit, if they have the need for the facility (Brown, 2009).

Through the investigation, it was found that the LSU's goals were closely related to the school's mission statement. Teacher B's ideas and aims were more aligned to the school's mission statement than teacher A. It seemed that Teacher B had more experience with a range of students; whereas Teacher A had less involvement and background in the area.

5.3 Leadership and academic excellence

The LSU was a new venture at School X. The administrative seniors regarded the LSU as an important addition and introduced it earnestly. The LSU was run by a coordinator who is the special educator and hereafter referred to as Teacher A; and a speech therapist who reports to Teacher A, hereafter referred to as Teacher B. The researcher was able to find that Teacher B was more experienced and held higher qualifications than Teacher A, as well as having more contact with the girls and obtaining positive results. Teacher B had given more input to the researcher in the questionnaire pointing out important details and showed great insights for the LSU. However, Teacher A omitted answering a number of questions, saying that certain questions did not need answering as they were not necessary. It was important to see that the LSU had proper leadership and that is something that needs to be addressed. This attitude draws a question whether the correct person was in charge to lead the department forward and be aligned with the school's mission statement and the overall objectives of having a LSU.

Though there have been positive results among students, it has been mostly social. It was clear that students feel more confident when supported by the LSU; however it is difficult to really determine the amount of academic improvement as there isn't a system for assessment in place. Regular assessment of the program effectiveness is necessary. This would help reduce the possibility of students needs not being met properly and as well as the effective running of the program in terms of meeting its goals and showing success long term (Sanders and Sullins, 2009) . Parents and teachers commented on this aspect by maintaining that they wanted to be kept informed to help enhance the function of the LSU by providing feedback.

5.4 Parents' involvement in the LSU

One of the main research questions dealt with the level of involvement parents have in the LSU in School X. The outcome of the thorough data analysis was that parents do not have as much involvement as they possibly could.

Most parents were informed about the progress their children have made, and were updated with changes within the program that helped children where they hadn't been as successful, but this does not show that the parents were directly involved; but rather that they were informed. Parents did indicate that they would like to take a more active role in their daughters' learning, but this did not have to be only home-based or student-directed; it could take the form of attending workshops and conferences and conducting their own research. Attending regular workshops alongside the instructors of the LSU and the general education teachers enables parents to get a full view of how the program works. This also allows them to find their own ways to help their daughters and to give their feedback to both the LSU and the general education teachers. Brown (2009) claims that parents' involvement is necessary in all aspects of a student with special needs, including finances, if necessary to cover the expenses for extra classes or pay the salary of staff for after school or before school activities or any other related expenses.

Parents should also be on the panel of decision makers as part of parental involvement. The conference in Kuwait that discussed special needs amongst Gulf States children also included parents, where they were discussing issues with regional specialists, and others, Offering their experiences and concerns as well as achievements (Al Hilawani et. al., 2008).

Parents are always encouraged to participate in the school activities but this should include academic activities and not limited to social events. The more parents know about the LSU and what their daughters are receiving, the more comfortable the situation becomes and less stigma is attached. Finding that the student is not labeled “dumb” but rather challenged is a constructive way to perceive the situation. The LSU should encourage more parent involvement both on and off the school campus. This would indicate to the community that it is not a ‘bad’ situation to have a child with special needs and in fact the parent should be proactive in assisting their child to receive the best support they can and to reduce any stigma (Al Hilawani et. al., 2008).

5.5 Observations of LSU-pullout class

When conducting pullout classes, a multi faceted approach was necessary. This was to allow the students to gather full benefits from the time that they are pulled out from the general classroom. King (1990) supports this idea, arguing that since children are pulled out of class, it is important to provide them with every tool to compensate being out of the general classroom. As the class is one-to-one, the students had the opportunity to set the pace of their learning with encouragement from the teacher. It was also the teacher’s duty to give the student every tool possible in order to improve and benefit from the session.

Both positive and negative aspects were observed in the class. Communication between the teacher and the student was very clear and encouraging. The student felt at ease and was content to carry on with the tasks at hand. This is in keeping with the school’s mission statement of providing a healthy learning environment. This was done

through positive verbal reinforcement. The teacher also taught the skills listed in the IEP. However, there was no variation in the teaching methods. This needs to be addressed as individual students learn in different ways. Whether the teaching is student or teacher orientated, there is an abundance of resources available to use as teaching tools.

The student reflected good organizational skills in the class as well as improved responsibility. Teacher A gave positive comments to the students whenever she completed a task with little or no prompting. No assistive technology was used during the pullout class. This needs to be addressed because it is known that the general classroom requires the use of technology, therefore the student who was pulled out from the general classroom should not miss out on this important tool.

The creativity of the lesson also needed to be addressed. There are many ways to approach lessons; it doesn't have to be reading and writing alone but a combination of the latter with games, puzzles, worksheets, and other manipulatives available. There are many alternatives and resources available to a teacher to enhance a class or lesson. In the case of students with learning needs attending pull out sessions, there is a valuable bank of tools that will benefit the student in their learning and create motivation while being stimulating (King, 1990).

The observational class would have been more effective in terms of incorporating technology, different learning manipulatives and strategies; as well as making it more creative to ensure the student obtains a well rounded experience. Zigmond et.al. (1995) argued that because teachers do not diversify their classes, the practice of pull out becomes ineffective and unbeneficial. A question is then posed, why do pull out classes.

Instructors cannot justify pulling students out of the general classroom, where it is likely they are being challenged, obtain peer tutoring and tasks that are differentiated. The abundance of positive feedback and open clear communication clearly benefited the student.

5.6 Views of the LSU teachers on models of instruction

The two instructors at School X's LSU were interviewed about the models of instruction they were following, and students' success both academically and socially. It was found that the instructors favored mainstreaming as the model of instruction, followed by pullout. Both instructors didn't comment on inclusion and provided no reason for this omission. They felt mainstreaming offered the student a chance to be challenged and to personally identify areas they found difficult, so that when attending a pull out session they could communicate these concerns to the LSU instructors directly and receive quick feedback. This allowed the student to make decisions about their own learning as suggested by King (1990) who believed that students will also be accountable for their learning. However, they do still receive support and guidance to attain the best decision. The instructors insisted that this approach helped make students better community players and in turn globally aware students, as they gained the skills of self reflection, problem solving, negotiation, and conflict resolution. This is stated in the LSU's objectives and in the school's mission statement.

Pullout sessions were also encouraged by the LSU instructors as it gave them the opportunity to monitor the students' concerns, progress and additional areas that needed to be focused on. The pullouts also allowed instructors to positively reinforce areas of

improvement, which was more social than that academic. The pullout sessions need to follow a particular system to ensure that all the expectations are met. Teacher A commented that they introduce new skills, assess skills already practiced, provide guidance on social and academic concerns as well as give feedback to the student about goals achieved and those still pending or in need of amendment. Sufficient time to address all the areas of concern is needed, and therefore more pull out sessions should be considered. The pull out sessions must also follow a particular structure to allow all of these areas to be met. The observation data show that there was little diversity in the classroom, so the question of whether pull out sessions are being used effectively or not and whether the student is benefiting, can be posed. Lipsky and Gartner (1997) state that being in the general classroom is a valuable academic learning experience as it challenges, informs and allows for exploration amongst students of the same age, but with different learning styles and levels.

The instructors of the LSU in School X clearly understand that modification is required to benefit the special learning needs of the student , and that this modification helps fill in gaps in the foundation of the student. This only applied to the subjects of Math, English, and Arabic, and pullouts were done by removing the student from specialist classes. This was necessary as there were limitations in the schedule. However, all of these actions helped the student fit into what the school's mission statement states.

5.7 Promotion of a healthy and secure learning environment

While the mission statement of the school clearly pointed out that a healthy and secure environment is important, the researcher needed to discuss this point more closely with the LSU "community"; that is, school administrators, teachers, parents, students and specialists. In some cases, inclusion reduced stigma as pull out created a situation whereby the student was seen as different and stigmatized (Zigmond et.al., 1995).

The comments from parents generally showed that there was little stigma attached at school towards the girls who were attending the LSU. Teacher B found that students raised issues with her and she was able to deal with any incident easily. Choosing to educate the general population rather than isolate the girls who benefit from LSU's services, and hence enforcing and encouraging a more harmonious environment for the special needs student.

Activities in class, though differentiated, clearly allowed all students to participate in the assigned activities, thus not singling out individuals. This allows for more understanding, cooperation, and peer learning. The LSU encouraged this practice with all classes attended by the LSU students and was encouraged by the general education teachers.

One concern that parents and teachers raised was that students on the LSU program still needed to attend specialist's classes. Currently, students are pulled out for one -to-one sessions. Parents felt that this approach reduced the social time in a non graded or academically focused class, therefore marginalizing the students who attend the LSU. However, without the support of the LSU, students tended to get frustrated with

their studies, being unable to keep up with the work in both the general classroom and the pullout class. Scheduling in School X needs to be more orderly and balanced so that students can attend core, specialist and learning support classes, as supported by Meyers et.al., (1990).

5.8 Limitations of the LSU

School X's LSU in general is still considered fairly new and there are still major changes that need to be implemented. There were major flaws in communication on all levels, LSU and administration, administration and parents, LSU and teachers. Meyers (1990) referred to communication, as 'grease', it helps everything to move.

The LSU currently only attends to the needs of grades K to 5, thus omitting grades 6 till 12 where there are students who badly need the support of the LSU's services. The expansion of the LSU is a matter that needs to be addressed urgently in order to allow students throughout the school to obtain proper help.

The admission into the LSU followed a strict and inflexible procedure. This was clearly stated in the LSU's procedures or referral form (Appendix K) that acceptance of certain individuals will only be permitted at the request of the principal. If a teacher felt that a student must be helped, but that student does not meet the admission requirements, then this student would not be supported by the LSU staff throughout that academic year. Coordination is an important area to address within School X. Students did not know whether they were receiving help, teachers were unaware of which students were included in the LSU program, and in many instances, the administration were not aware how many students were involved in the program. When teachers were asked about

results of particular students, it was found that they were supposed to be attending the LSU program. King (1990) maintained that coordination is a paramount concern in the LSU of any school and should be monitored closely.

Some of the procedures for admission were unreasonable, cutting out students who have gaps in one or narrow areas, consequently allowing the LSU to only focus on students who are in need of assistance in numerous areas. In other words, they favored breadth over depth of services. Teachers had mentioned that students were not admitted into the LSU as there was a lack of resources and support. Admissions should not be based on availability of resources (Zigmond et.al., 1995), every student has the right to be assisted in their learning. Setting up strict admissions guidelines just reduced the overall effectiveness of the school's ability to achieve its goals and be recognized in the community. Where students' needs are not met, withdrawal from the school is the immediate solution. Teachers were aware that there was a great possibility of this happening, especially in the middle and high school where the LSU is not implemented, but students with external help are monitored through the LSU.

5.9 Significance and benefits of the LSU in School X

Teachers generally agreed that the LSU created change in the girls' perception towards their learning, thereby allowing students to be more confident and comfortable enough to seek help from any member of the faculty at School X. Social benefits were high among LSU students at School X, but in order for the school to be fully credited with this success, the LSU's program evaluation system should be thorough and readily available for review from the LSU community (Sanders & Sullins, 2009)

Academically, though there was no formal assessment in place to accurately gauge this progress, the only evidence was the remarks written by the special educator on the IEP of the girls, and the comments given by their parents and general education teachers. The girls have approached their classes and tasks more positively, acquiring skills they have learnt and applying them on a daily basis, even at home, as indicated by a parent. It is evident that progress in academics has been made but a more thorough is in order to further explore this aspect.

5.10 Conclusion

The LSU at School X has been deemed an emerging positive influence. However, more attention to communication between the general education teachers, administration and the LSU staff is required. More feedback to the administration regarding the progress of the girls and the LSU as a whole is essential. The benefits for students were mostly social though there were academic achievements.

Teachers need more professional development, and guidance is required with regards to class task design and updates on implementation of inclusion. Further, the LSU services need to be extended to all grades and not just limited to grades K to 5.

The school benefits from having the LSU in its recognition in the community and among other schools. As the LSU grows, the environment in the school will also improve, stigma regarding special needs is deemphasized, parents will find more support for their daughters and teachers become more knowledgeable to teach a wide variety of students.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

6.1 Summary

The aim of this study was to evaluate the extent of parents' involvement in School X's LSU, to distinguish how leadership and academic excellence is achieved, and whether the LSU provides students with a healthy and secure environment.

Findings show that communication in the LSU community was limited. Parents wanted to be more informed of ways they could help their child and to receive feedback about the progress made by the student in different areas. Parents were willing to help in many different areas, and wanted to participate in workshops alongside teachers. General classroom teachers sought a larger role that involved having contact with parents and administration. They also felt they needed to be regularly updated by the staff of the LSU on amendments and adjustments about students' programs in the LSU.

Teachers were enthusiastic to be involved in the LSU; however they felt that it was necessary to receive sufficient training in order to make tangible change for a student. From their perspective they felt they weren't well supported or guided to help students attending their classes. Though they were able to modify work and apply differentiation in the classroom setting, they didn't have access to resources or specific tools as they were limited or not available. Parents felt they would benefit from attending training sessions, in this way they would see how their children were being assisted and learn strategies to help their children at home.

The LSU did not have a formal assessment program on any level. It had no way of gauging long term improvement, student progress for individual skills, or whether the objectives for the LSU were being met. There were end of year reports stating which students were participating in the LSU program, and recommendations given about those students in future grades.

6.2 Recommendations and Implications for Practice

The members of the LSU community all play vital roles to make the program a success. Therefore it is recommended that a formal process for communication be established. This can be done by creating a data base of all contact information as well as a hierarchy of the LSU program, starting with the principal of the school and other internal school factions , to external ones. This will eliminate any opportunity for misunderstandings and miscommunications. Moreover, all communication should follow a check list in order to reach all parties that are involved. Regular updates should be given by the LSU instructors not just from the teachers. Communication works on both ends. Meetings held should include all the core teachers as well as an administrator, alongside the LSU instructor and parent.

Professional development is encouraged in all institutions and organizations. This ensures that best practices and up-to-date techniques are implemented. All teachers should receive basic training, while teachers who specifically deal with learning disabled students need to receive specialist training, even if they are not employed within the LSU. They can still take this knowledge and apply it in the classroom, as well as advise and assist other teachers on their approaches in class. There is limited exchange amongst

teachers as they are unsure about their background, therefore they don't share information. Attendances at forums that discuss issues regarding special needs in the region as well as different approaches are necessary. Regular workshops must be incorporated into the objectives of the LSU to insure that the staff is appropriately equipped to interact with students with learning disabilities on many levels. There is no reason as to why parents cannot be involved in these programs, they should be invited to attend all in house training, and given the option to attend external training, and if necessary at their own cost.

The LSU needs to receive guidance on setting up a system for self evaluation. In doing this they will be securing the future of the program. The results of the program will target areas where change needs to occur. Tracking individual student progress as well as the LSU limitations and successes will also help to develop the program. It is the main goal of the LSU to support students with learning disabilities in their learning; this can only be effective if they know where their strengths and weaknesses are. All reports have to be submitted to the head of school and to the director of the school, and be held for future reference.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

Carrying out the research was hindered as the access of the researcher was restricted. The researcher was unable to be directly involved in questionnaire distribution, and was not able to answer questions pertaining to inclusion, resulting in limited feedback in this area. The researcher was also allowed to include students in the

collection of data. This skewed the data into the perspective of educators and not from a broad range that included students. The only external party to the school was parents.

The instructors of the LSU exhibited mixed attitudes when it came to the program evaluation. Teacher A suggested that the number of data collection tools be reduced; however this would limit the data and triangulation of the data collection. There was reluctance in filling out questionnaires and being interviewed, a fairly aggressive approach was taken when requested to provide specific details of training received and academic attainments of the LSU staff. This approach created a barrier to what should have been a very comprehensible attainment of data.

Teachers' responses were limited in the questionnaires; they completed these on their own and had not guidance for reasons outlined in the researcher limitations. The teachers did not understand 'inclusion' which resulted in unanswered questions or answers that did not pertain to the question. Teachers were also aware that they had to answer with caution as not to bring upon them any contempt from the LSU instructors with whom they work.

6.4 Suggestions for Further Studies

The opportunity for extended studies incorporating a number of schools in the locality or regionally is evident; investigating the implementation of inclusion and other models of instruction to benefit learning disabled children. The prospect of carrying out a comparison on instructional models in an established school and a new school and the chance to compare old programs and new ones is recommended.

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Appendix A

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is a joint home-school partnership that will promote leadership and academic excellence by providing a healthy, secure environment for students to become lifelong learners, to reach their fullest potential as individuals and global citizens, with emphasis on Islamic and traditional values.

رسالة المدرسة

رسالة المدرسة هي خلق قيادات ذات كفاءة عالية بالتعاون بين البيت و المدرسة، تحقيقاً للتميز الأكاديمي في بيئة صحية آمنة للطالبات، عبر تعزيز الثقة بالنفس و الإيمان بالقدرات الشخصية لديهن ضمن برنامج تربوي متكامل ينسجم و تعاليم الدين الإسلامي و التقاليد العربية الأصيلة.

Appendix B

Department of Education

Ms. Cindi DeWitt
Acting Principal
[REDACTED]

January 8, 2009

Dear Mrs. DeWitt:

I am writing on behalf of my advisee Ms. Mirna Nadra who is currently in the process of writing her MA thesis in the Department of education, emphasis educational management at LAU.

Mirna is interested in conducting a program evaluation at [REDACTED] specifically the special education (or learning support) department.

Her research involves the following activities:

- Studying students' files (documentation study): assessment reports, IEPs, teachers' feedback, modified lessons and grade reports
- Conducting interviews with regular classroom teachers, special educators, principal or coordinators, parents and students
- Observing students in the regular classroom and the resource room

The name of the school and the identity of persons interviewed and/or observed may be withheld from the thesis and during any public discussions, including proposal and thesis defense, if you should require that.

I look forward to your favorable response, and the opportunity for Mirna to conduct her research at your esteemed institution.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Ahmad Oueini".

Ahmad Oueini, EDD
Associate Professor
Chairperson

ck
Ms. Cynthia L. DeWitt

Appendix C

Interview questions asked to the Parent

These questions are a tool to obtain data from parents concerning the Learning Support Unit (LSU) at School. All information submitted will be used for research purposes only and is strictly confidential. Kindly answer the questions as accurately as possible as this will ensure the reliability of the collection of data and its later analysis.

Q 1: Tell me in general as a parent about your experience with the LSU?

Q 2: How do you describe this experience?

Q 3: Do you feel any benefits for your daughter?

Q 4: Have you noticed any improvement in Dana's life style, personality?

Q 5: Compared to last year, do you see any changes in the programs itself as management, as academic aspect?

Q 6: Did you have any assessment outside school?

Q 7: You feel that the school's environment encourages them, thus LD students don't feel ashamed or different from others?

Q 8: Did you have any contact with the administration?

Q 9: Do you like to add anything else?

Appendix D

This interview was conducted with the general education teachers who had students attending lessons at the LSU.

Q 1: Your opinion concerning the presences of having a Learning Support Unit in school the LSU in School.

Q 2: You are aware of the IEP?

Q 3: Do you coordinate with the LSU teachers?

Q 4: Do they coordinate with you?

Q 5: Do you meet with her on weekly bases, or monthly bases?

Q 6: You think there is some kind of collaboration between you and the LSU?

Q 7: What does her plan cover? Is it the same as the class plan or she cuts from it?

Q 8: How many girls are there this year?

Q 9: Do they always go to her, during your periods?

Q 10: Do they do the same work with the girls?

Q 11: What do you think is needed to improve the unit?

Appendix E

This interview was conducted with the acting principal who was running the school at the time when the restructuring of the program happened. Restructuring of the program included writing the LSU objective, assessing the girls, having procedures and pulling out girls.

Q 1: What do you think of the LSU team approach towards parents, general education teachers, and administration?

Q 2: Was there enough communication?

Q 3: Like what?

Q 4: What do you mean by a class?

Q 5: What was the parents' impression when they communicated to you?

Q 6: Do you think it was the administration mistake approaching these parents or the LSU did not know how to approach these parents?

Q 7: Girls that are attending all year long, was there any positive academic benefits out of the LSU?

Q 8: Was there any positive input from the parents especially from those who were refusing the idea of being pulled out, especially from those parents that had a negative attitude?

Q 9: What about the LSU teachers, don't they communicate with you?

Appendix F

Interview questions asked to the LSU staff

Kindly answer the questions as accurately as possible as this will ensure the reliability of the collection of data and its later analysis.

Thank you.

Mirna Nadra

- 1) When did you first start preparing for the improvement/changes of the LSU at School X? _____
- 2) Kindly list all the factors that are playing a role in the program's success.

- 3) Which of the following areas does the program cater for? And how do you achieve it (you may choose more than one). Academic Skills, self-esteem, compensatory skills, and problem solving skills.
- 4) At the LSU, which Model of instructions is used? (you may choose more than one) Inclusion, mainstreaming, and pullout.
- 5) Based on the Model you selected in question 4; kindly express the strengths and the weakness of the Model.
- 6) Do you have a diagnostic criteria? If yes, please specify. If no, provide reasons.
- 7) From your experience in the current program, have you observed any social stigma such as shame, embarrassment, shyness, or comments made among the students that are being segregated from the general education environment? Please provide details.
- 8) From your experience in the current program, have you observed any social stigma such as shame, embarrassment, shyness, or comments made among the parents of the students that are being segregated from the general education environment? Please provide details.
- 9) When delivering special education services, which of the following strategies do you identify with (you may choose more than one) and explain how you apply it? Instructional strategy, administrative strategy, and organizational strategy.
- 10) Is the program's effectiveness based on students' outcomes only? If yes, explain how. If no, what of the following apply: effective instruction, students records (including IEP), Service coordination, and community
- 11) In your own opinion, do you think assessing the operation and effectiveness of the LSU should include which of the following areas (kindly mark all those that apply): students outcomes, effective instructions, students records (including IEP), service coordination, and community.
- 12) While planning the LSU objectives, who was involved and how? Please explain how.
- 13) Have you conducted any training/orientation workshops? If yes, please specify for whom? (You may mark more than one)
- 14) When planning for the setting of the LSU, did you involve any of the following: curriculum-assessment, survey, physical setting, and procedures for pullout.

Appendix G

This questionnaire is a tool to obtain data from parents concerning the Learning Support Unit (LSU) at School. All information submitted will be used for research purposes only and is strictly confidential. Kindly answer the questions as accurately as possible as this will ensure the reliability of the collection of data and its later analysis.

Thank you.

- 1) In your opinion, how has the special education program been effective?
Please provide details.

-
- 2) In your own opinion, do you feel that the special education program should be part of the school?
Please provide details.

Please comment on any academic benefits you have observed in your daughter's learning?

-
- 3) In your own opinion, what are the strengths and weakness of the special education program?
Strengths:

Weaknesses:

-
- 4) What areas in special education, would you like to see improvement in?

-
- 5) Your comments overall about the special education program?
-

End of questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

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Appendix H

This questionnaire is a tool to obtain data from teachers concerning the Learning Support Unit (LSU) at School. All information submitted will be used for research purposes only and is strictly confidential. Kindly answer the questions as accurately as possible as this will ensure the reliability of the collection of data and its later analysis.

Thank you.

Grade you teach: _____ Subject you teach: _____

Kindly circle the most appropriate.

Strongly Agree = 1	Agree = 2	Neutral = 3	Disagree = 4	Strongly Disagree = 5					
1) I feel that the LSU is a good idea.					1	2	3	4	5
2) I feel that I have the time and training to implement the LSU instructions successfully.					1	2	3	4	5
3) I feel that the LSU helps students develop friendships with their classmates .					1	2	3	4	5
4) I feel that having the support of the LSU is beneficial to my classroom environment.					1	2	3	4	5
5) I feel that I am receiving the necessary support and assistance to implement the instructions given to me by the LSU staff successfully.					1	2	3	4	5
6) I feel it is difficult to modify instruction and my teaching style meet the needs of students with learning difficulties.					1	2	3	4	5
7) I feel that inclusion* helps students academically.					1	2	3	4	5

* Inclusion by definition is to be considered as a part of a whole (according to Webster), in education inclusion is to have various levels of disabilities to be an integral part of the learning environment in the general education classroom. Thus, these students spend all the day in a general classroom and get support from the special education teacher namely the LSU in this case.

8) In your own opinion, how is inclusion benefiting your class?

In your own opinion, what are the biggest concerns about inclusion?

9) Do you feel that you have the support, resources, training and time to implement inclusion effectively?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please provide details.

If no, what support, resources, training, and scheduling arrangement would be helpful to you?

What school wide inclusion practices would you like to see retained (kept)?

What school wide inclusion practices would you like to be revised?

In your opinion, how has the special education program been effective?

Please provide details.

10) In your own opinion, do you feel that the special education program should be part of the school?

Please provide details.

Please comment on any academic benefits you have observed in your girls' learning?

11) In your own opinion, what are the strengths and weakness of the special education program?

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

12) What areas in the special education program, would you like to see improvement in?

13) Your comments overall about the special education program?

End of questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

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Appendix I

Questionnaire filled by the LSU staff

This questionnaire is a tool to obtain data from professionals concerning their qualifications in their current posts and their beliefs concerning Special Education. All information given to the researcher will be used for research purposes only. The name of the participants and the school will be strictly confidential.

Kindly answer the questions as accurately as possible as this will affect the reliability of the collection of data and its later analysis.

Thank you.

Mirna Nadra

- 15) Current position/title: _____
 16) Number of years in this position at the current school: _____
 17) Number of years in similar positions at any other school: _____
 18) Number of years of experience in the field of Special Education: _____
 19) Highest degree obtained in undergraduate studies (BA, TD ...) (kindly list the Major(s) and subject emphasis if applicable)

20) Future plans for higher or graduate degrees (MA, PhD..)

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, please specify.

If no, provide reasons.

21) State your own philosophy for Special Education in general and with in schools.

22) Why did you choose Special Education as a practice?

23) In the program that you are currently teaching in/leading (which is the case study of this research), is there any mission statement/objective?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, does the program's mission statement/objective run in accordance with the School's mission statement? Please explain with details. Give specific examples if needed.

If no, do you think there should be any mission statement/objective for the program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please explain for both yes and no answers.

24) In your own opinion, what do you think are the main factors that would make a Special Education program a successful program? Please provide specific details and examples where necessary.

25) As a Special Education teacher/staff member, what do you think your role should be? Please provide specific details and examples where necessary.

26) In your current post, are you doing any of the roles that you mentioned in question 11?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Please provide specific details and examples where necessary.

27) Have you ever considered conducting a self-study for assessment within the program?

☐ Yes

☐ No

If yes, describe how you would conduct it. Kindly provide a detailed step by step description.

If no, please provide specific details and examples where necessary.

End of questionnaire.

Thank you for your time.

Mirna Nadra

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Appendix J

Observation check list

What to observe	Observed	Not Observed	Remarks
Skills taught in class are listed in the IEP	X		
Being able to follow classroom routines	X		
Self motivated	X		They moved from one activity to another without being asked to do so.
Critical thinking		X	Evaluating alternative solutions to a problem Evaluating facts Interpreting behavior
Responsibility	X		Interpersonal Intrapersonal
Reasoning		X	They did not interpret anything academically
Being a good citizen	X		They cleaned there are. Abided by the teachers instructions. Being responsible for watering the plant in class without the teacher reminding them
The use of positive reinforcement	X		Praise Reinforcement chart
Communication	X		They listened and talked and wrote
Creativity		X	
Technology		X	
Using different strategy to explain/re-explain the same concept		X	She kept on repeating the letter

No assessment techniques took place during the session.

The activity required that the girls use their fullest potentials to solve the problem

Appendix K

GENERAL PROCEDURES FOR THE LSU

- a) The **Learning Support Unit** at [REDACTED] School, with its members [REDACTED] (Special Education Teacher) and [REDACTED] (Speech and Language Pathologist) will work under the direct supervision of the school principal and will collaborate with the head of preschool and the assistant elementary principal.
- b) Our objective is to assess, educate and reeducate students having general/specific learning difficulties from KG1 till Gr. 5 through pull-out sessions that should be pre-defined in coordination with the concerned teachers.
- c) Few exceptions will be accepted and referred by the principal herself after her direct approval for students in upper grades; please note that the priority of LSU schedule will be for preschool and elementary students.
- d) **Intervention procedures:**

The referral of students to the LSU should respect the following procedure:

- 1) Teachers, within their division, are kindly requested to report to the head of preschool or the assistant elementary principal for referral of any student of concern in their classes, after completing the pre-referral checklist found on K drive in the LSU folder.
- 2) The head of preschool and the assistant elementary principal will, in turn, meet with the LSU team and discuss individual students' case.
- 3) The LSU team will contact the parents in question for a preliminary interview and get their approval for further assessments.

Please note that the intervention provided by the LSU team (i.e. completion of educational, cognitive, speech and language assessments, analysis and combination of results, and finally issue of reports) is a process that might take up to one month.

- 4) Upon readiness of the reports/evaluations an internal meeting for the LSU will be held to discuss and generate the remediation strategies, and modifications/accommodations required to meet the concerned student's needs.
- 5) Parents will be called for a second meeting to discuss the findings of evaluations/assessments, to hand over a copy of the reports (educational or reeducation) and to state the necessary recommendations to be followed at

home. It is mandatory to get the parents' consent before any individual work begins with their child.

- 6) Teachers will receive a brief report (not the entire copy of the evaluation for confidentiality purposes) with necessary recommendations to be adapted and followed within their class. Only school principal and LSU team will have the complete report.
- 7) The teachers are highly encouraged to meet and discuss any further concerns, inquiries and clarifications with the LSU team.

STOP US IN THE CORRIDORS WHEN NEEDED ☺

Please bear in mind that some students overcome their difficulties in few months, others may need few years.

The LSU team thanks you in advance for your cooperation and looks forward for a successful year at [REDACTED] School.

Learning Support Unit – LSU

ELEMENTARY (1 – 5) REFERRAL CHECKLIST

Form to fill regarding students causing concerns:

Please complete and return to your Division Director.

STUDENT'S NAME: ----- GRADE LEVEL: -----

DATE OF BIRTH: -----

REFERRED BY: ----- DATE: -----

A) REASON FOR REFERRAL:

Check area (s) of concern where it applies:

Gross and Fine Motor Skills	
☐	Appears awkward and clumsy, dropping, spilling, or knocking things over
☐	Has limited success with games and activities that demand eye-hand coordination (e.g., piano lessons, basketball, baseball)
☐	Has trouble with buttons, hooks, snaps, zippers and trouble learning to tie shoes
☐	Creates art work that is immature for age

	Demonstrates poor ability to color or write 'within the lines'
	Grasps pencil awkwardly, resulting in poor handwriting
	Experiences difficulty using small objects or items that demand precision (e.g., Lego, puzzle pieces, tweezers, scissors)
	Dislikes and avoids writing and drawing tasks
	Shows difficulty copying from chalkboard
	Difficulty aligning columns (ex, in math)
Language	
	Has difficulty modulating voice (e.g., too soft, too loud)
	Misuses words in conversation
	Has trouble naming people or objects
	Has difficulty staying on one topic in a logical sequential way
	Inserts invented words into conversation
	Has difficulty re-telling what has just been said
	Uses vague, imprecise language and has a limited vocabulary
	Demonstrates slow and halting speech, using lots of fillers (e.g., uh, um, and, you know, so)
	Unable to retell a story in sequence
	Uses poor grammar
	Mispronounces words frequently

	Confuses words with others that sound similar
	Has difficulty rhyming
	Has limited interest in books or stories
	Has difficulty understanding instructions or directions
	Has trouble understanding idioms, proverbs, colloquialisms, humor, puns (taking into consideration regional and cultural factors)
	Has difficulty with pragmatic skills (e.g., understands the relationship between speaker and listener, stays on topic, gauges the listeners degree of knowledge, makes inferences based on a speaker's verbal and non-verbal cues)
Reading	
	Shows slow learning of the correspondence of sound to letter.
	Shows consistent errors in reading or spelling
	Confuses similar-looking letters and numbers
	Has difficulty recognizing and remembering sight words
	Frequently loses place while reading
	Confuses similar-looking words (e.g., beard/bread)
	Reverses letter order in words (e.g., saw/was)
	Demonstrates poor memory for printed words
	Has significant trouble learning to read
	Has trouble naming letters

	Has problems associating letter and sounds, understanding the difference between sounds in words or blending sounds into words
	Guesses at unfamiliar words rather than using word analysis skills
	Reads slowly
	Substitutes or leaves out words while reading
	Has poor retention of new vocabulary
	Dislikes and avoids reading or reads reluctantly
Written Language	
	Dislikes and avoids writing and copying
	Demonstrates delays in learning to copy and write
	Writing is messy and incomplete, with many cross outs and erasures
	Has difficulty remembering shapes of letters and numerals
	Frequently reverses letters, numbers and symbols
	Uses uneven spacing between letters and words, and has trouble staying 'on the line'
	Copies inaccurately (e.g., confuses similar-looking letters and numbers)
	Spells poorly and inconsistently (e.g., the same word appears differently other places in the same document)
	Has difficulty proofreading and self-correcting work
Math	
	Has difficulty with simple counting and one-to-one correspondence between number symbols and items/ objects

	Confuses math signs (+, -, x, /, =)
	Has difficulty mastering number knowledge (e.g. recognition of quantities without counting)
	Has difficulty with learning and memorizing basic addition and subtraction facts
	Has difficulty learning strategic counting principles (e.g. by 2, 5, 10, 100)
	Has difficulty estimating (e.g., quantity, value)
	Has difficulty with comparisons (e.g., less than, greater than)
	Has trouble telling time
	Has trouble counting money
	Has trouble conceptualizing the passage of time
	Has difficulty counting rapidly or making calculations
	Has trouble with place value
	Shows difficulty remembering the steps of mathematic operations such as long division
Social/Emotional	
	Has difficulty understanding facial expressions or gestures
	May not detect or respond appropriately to teasing
	Has difficulty 'joining in' and maintaining positive social status in a peer group
	Has difficulty with self-control when frustrated
	Shows apparent lack of "common sense"

	Has difficulty dealing with group pressure, embarrassment and unexpected challenges
	Has tendency to misinterpret behavior of peers and/or adults
Attention	
	Has difficulty sustaining attention in work tasks or play activities
	Does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace and on time
	Has difficulty organizing tasks and activities
	Avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to engage in tasks that require sustained mental effort such as homework and organizing work tasks
	Loses things consistently that are necessary for tasks/activities (e.g., toys, school assignments, pencils, books, or tools)
	Is easily distracted by outside influences
	Is forgetful in daily/routine activities
	Shows inability to follow multiple directions
	Shows unusual sloppiness, carelessness
	Shows rejection of new concepts, or changes in routine
Other	
	Confuses left and right
	Often loses things
	Is slow to learn new games and master puzzles
	Performs inconsistently on tasks from one day to the next

	Has difficulty generalizing (applying) skills from one situation to another
--	---

B) Attach any additional documentation or write further comments which might be helpful.

Date received by LSU -----

C) Agreed action (after discussion with School Principal):

Appendix L

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT
Individualized Education Program
 Academic Year 2008 / 2009

Student's Name: _____ Date of Birth: May 29th, 2001
 Gender: Female _____ Home Language: Arabic
 School: _____ Grade: Grade 1
 Eligibility Recommendations: Mild level of intellectual disability
 Parent/Guardian: _____

SPECIAL EDUCATION AND RELATED SERVICES

Special Education Service	Hrs / Wk	Service Provider
* Resource Room for the following subjects (Pull-out):		
1- English	4 periods	
2- Phonemic awareness & Arabic	2 periods	

TEXTBOOKS AND RESOURCES USED (in the resource room)

English:

- 1- Recipe for Reading – Workbook Level 1
- 2- Easy Sight Words – Frank Schaffer Publications; set 1
- 3- Phonics Ready Readers – Scholastic
- 4- Sunshine Leveled Reading

Arabic:

حروفى الاولى

PRESENT LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

is in regular Grade 1. She benefits from 6 pull out sessions, from the following subjects: 1 Math, 2 Islamic Studies, 1 reading, 1 Art, 1 Music. In addition to the pull-out sessions receives individual in- class attention in English, Arabic, and Math from the teacher's aid.

has acquired the sounds in both English and Arabic; however, she faces difficulties in her decoding abilities, phonological awareness, reading fluency and comprehension, and writing (size of letters, spacing between words, expressing ideas in writing).

In math finds difficulties understanding and applying concepts independently, she shows poor reasoning and critical thinking abilities thus she requires individual guidance, lots of practice opportunities, and frequent reminders before showing mastery.

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT

Individualized Education Program

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES:

Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are designed to meet the student's needs and to allow involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Area / Domain

Phonemic Awareness

Measurable Annual Goal:

During the next 8 months, _____ will improve her phonemic awareness by earning a 1 or 2 on the following objectives.

Measurable, Short Term Instructional Objectives	Person Resp.	Date Initiated	Sch.	Proc. Of Eval.	Date of Progress Review	
_____ will be able to:						
1. syllabicate words and divide them.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
2. divide and isolate initial, middle and ending sounds.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
3. identify consonant blends and diagraphs in given words.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
4. differentiate short and long vowel sounds	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....

Person Responsible:

Sch - Schedule of Projected Completion

Pro - Procedures of Evaluation

Progress

P/G - Parent/Guardian
 CT - Classroom Teacher
 SE - Special Educator
 SLP - Speech & Language Pathologist
 SC - School Counselor
 ST - Shadow Teacher

1) One to Two Weeks
 2) One Month
 3) 6 Weeks
 4) 9 Weeks
 5) Semester
 6) Annually
 7) Others (Specify)

1) Teacher Observation
 2) Written Performance
 3) Oral Performance
 4) Parent Report
 5) Time Sample
 6) Pre Test, Post Test
 7) Report Cards
 8) Standardized Tests
 9) Other

1) Met
 2) Progress Made, but not yet met
 3) Slow Progress
 4) Little or No Progress
 5) Continue/Ongoing
 6) Discontinued
 7) Other

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT

Individualized Education Program

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES:

Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are designed to meet the student's needs and to allow involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Area / Domain

English / Reading & Writing

Measurable Annual Goal:

During the next 8 months, _____ will improve her reading skills by earning a 1 or 2 on the following objectives.

Measurable, Short Term Instructional Objectives	Person Resp.	Date Initiated	Sch	Proc. Of Eval.	Date of Progress Review	
_____ will be able to:						
1. order the alphabet and identify their sounds in non-alphabetical order.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
2. discriminate short vowels sounds.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
3. blend, read and write words with short sounds CVC (cat), CCVC (plot) and CVCC (fast).	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
4. blend consonants in initial and ending position (bl, pl, str, ck, ng, etc).	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
5. read globally sight words from Easy Sight Words set 1, then use the words in oral sentences.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
6. order words (written on cards) to form sentences with proper structure S-V-O.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
7. listen/read stories then answer comprehension questions on plot, setting, character, order, sequence and retell story events.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....

Person Responsible:

P/G - Parent/Guardian
 CT - Classroom Teacher
 SE - Special Educator
 SLP - Speech & Language Pathologist
 SC - School Counselor
 ST - Shadow Teacher

Sch - Schedule of Projected Completion

1) One to Two Weeks
 2) One Month
 3) 6 Weeks
 4) 9 Weeks
 5) Semester
 6) Annually
 7) Others (Specify)

Pro - Procedures of Evaluation

1) Teacher Observation
 2) Written Performance
 3) Oral Performance
 4) Parent Report
 5) Pre Test, Post Test
 6) Report Cards
 7) Standardized Tests
 8) Other

Progress

1) Met
 2) Progress Made, but not yet met
 3) Slow Progress
 4) Little or No Progress
 5) Continue/Ongoing
 6) Discontinued
 7) Other

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT*Individualized Education Program***MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES:**

Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are designed to meet the student's needs and to allow involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Area / Domain

*Mathematics***Measurable Annual Goal:**

During the next 8 months, _____ will improve her mathematical skills by earning a 1 or 2 on the following objectives.

Measurable, Short Term Instructional Objectives	Person Resp.	Date Initiated	Sch	Proc. Of Eval.	Date of Progress Review	
_____ will be able to:						
1. count to 100 by 1s and 10s starting with any given number.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
2. recognize, count, read, and write numbers through 20.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
3. order numbers through 20.	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
4. write addition and subtraction sentences to solve story problems	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
5. give and follow directions about position and location of objects in space: position words	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....

Person Responsible:**Sch – Schedule of Projected Completion****Pro – Procedures of Evaluation****Progress**

P/G – Parent/Guardian
 CT – Classroom Teacher
 SE – Special Educator
 SLP – Speech & Language Pathologist
 SC – School Counselor
 ST – Shadow Teacher

1) One to Two Weeks
 2) One Month
 3) 6 Weeks
 4) 9 Weeks
 5) Semester
 6) Annually
 7) Others (Specify)

1) Teacher Observation
 2) Written Performance
 3) Oral Performance
 4) Parent Report
 5) Pre Test, Post Test
 6) Report Cards
 7) Standardized Tests
 8) Other

1) Met
 2) Progress Made, but not yet met
 3) Slow Progress
 4) Little or No Progress
 5) Continue/Ongoing
 6) Discontinued
 7) Other

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT**Individualized Education Program****MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES:**

Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are designed to meet the student's needs and to allow involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Area / Domain**Math****Measurable Annual Goal:**

During the next 8 months, _____ will improve her mathematical skills by earning a 1 or 2 on the following objectives.

Measurable, Short Term Instructional Objectives	Person Resp.	Date Initiated	Sch	Proc. Of Eval.	Date of Progress Review	
Rayana will be able to:						
1. describe, extend, predict and reproduce patterns	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
2. compare and order numbers	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
3. order events: before / after	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
4. tell time to the hour using analog and digital clock	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
5. use and read a calendar to find dates	SE	.....	....	.....	.....	.....

Person Responsible:

P/G – Parent/Guardian
 CT – Classroom Teacher
 SE – Special Educator
 SLP – Speech & Language Pathologist
 SC – School Counselor
 ST – Shadow Teacher

Sch – Schedule of Projected Completion

1) One to Two Weeks
 2) One Month
 3) 6 Weeks
 4) 9 Weeks
 5) Semester
 6) Annually
 7) Others (Specify)

Pro – Procedures of Evaluation

1) Teacher Observation
 2) Written Performance
 3) Oral Performance
 4) Parent Report
 5) Time Sample
 6) Pre Test, Post Test
 7) Report Cards
 8) Standardized Tests
 9) Other

Progress

1) Met
 2) Progress Made, but not yet met
 3) Slow Progress
 4) Little or No Progress
 5) Continue/Ongoing
 6) Discontinued
 7) Other

LEARNING SUPPORT UNIT

Individualized Education Program

MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS AND SHORT-TERM OBJECTIVES:

Measurable annual goals and short-term objectives are designed to meet the student's needs and to allow involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

Area / Domain

Arabic / Reading

Measurable Annual Goal:

During the next 8 months, _____ will improve her reading skills by earning a 1 or 2 on the following objectives.

Measurable, Short Term Instructional Objectives	Person Resp.	Date Initiated	Sch	Proc. Of Eval.	Date of Progress Review	
(1) التعرف على الحروف الهجائية وقراءتها بأصواتها القصيرة والطويلة.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
(2) التعرف على شكل الحرف منفردا وقراءته في أول الكلمة، في وسط الكلمة، وفي آخر الكلمة.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
(3) تطوير قدرتها على القراءة للوصول إلى قراءة سلسلة، سهلة ومستقلة.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
(4) جمع أحرف بلاستيكية لتشكيل كلمات.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
(5) كتابة الحروف بشكلها الصحيح.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....
(6) كتابة كلمات وتاليف جمل بسيطة.	SLP	.....	....	.....	.....	.....

Person Responsible:

Sch - Schedule of Projected Completion

Pro - Procedures of Evaluation

Progress

P/G - Parent/Guardian
CT - Classroom Teacher
SE - Special Educator
SLP - Speech & Language Pathologist
SC - School Counselor
ST - Shadow Teacher

1) One to Two Weeks
2) One Month
3) 6 Weeks
4) 9 Weeks
5) Semester
6) Annually
7) Others (Specify)

1) Teacher Observation
2) Written Performance
3) Oral Performance
4) Parent Report
5) Pre Test, Post Test
6) Report Cards
7) Standardized Tests
8) Other

1) Met
2) Progress Made, but not yet met
3) Slow Progress
4) Little or No Progress
5) Continue/Ongoing
6) Discontinued
7) Other

School principal

Special Ed Teacher

Speech & Language Therapist

Appendix M

June 7, 2009

Dear Parents,

A teacher has undertaken her Masters in Education Management, and is preparing her thesis at _____ School. Her thesis studies the effectiveness of having a special education program within the school.

Her study is being done with full confidentiality as the school's name and the students' names are not mentioned at all during or within the study and report. Part of her research work is to pass the attached questionnaire to parents and to have their input concerning the Special Education Program in school. Your input is highly valuable and it will be appreciated to the utmost.

The teacher has been coordinating with _____ and _____, as they are the personnel in the special education department; they in turn are coordinating with the administration in the school.

Kindly, fill the attached questionnaire and send back to school by June 11, 2009 in a sealed envelop addressing it to _____

Once again, I would like to thank you for your cooperation.

Regards,

Academic Principal