This is from the book "Teaching Students with Special Needs in General Education Classrooms, Ninth Edition, Publisher: Pearson, 9th edition, Rena B. Lewis, San Diego State University, Retired John J. Wheeler, Stacy L. Carter, Texas Tech University

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Provides the knowledge, strategies, and instructional techniques that teachers need to address the complex and often perplexing diversity that lies behind the classroom door. All students, particularly those with special learning needs, deserve special care and special teaching. This reader-friendly, categorically organized text takes a case-based approach to contextualize the laws, organize the information, and teach the methods educators need to know to provide effective instruction to all children. Among new areas of focus in this edition are the important topics of response to intervention (RTI), Universal Design for Learning, classroom assessment techniques, and the needs of English learners. The most tech-savvy text of its kind, this comprehensive new REVEL edition continues to break new ground in preparing general educators for the challenges and opportunities of the inclusive classroom. It focuses first on the creation of inclusive classrooms, second on skills for the general education teacher, and finally on effective strategies for teaching students with disabilities and other types of special needs."

"Roles of Team Members

Teams serving students with special needs are composed of individuals directly involved with some aspect of delivering or supporting instruction. Team members include general and special educators, some of whom may provide direct services to the student. Other professionals such as school psychologists, speech-language pathologists, and school nurses are involved as necessary. School administrators serve as resources to the team, and parents of the student are an important addition. Although parents typically are not professional educators, they are able to provide information about the student and thus play a significant role in the educational decision-making process. If appropriate, the student with special needs should also be encouraged to participate."

"General Education Teachers

The involvement of general education teachers is critical because they have firsthand experience with students with special needs in their classrooms. They share ideas with parents and other professionals, and they assist in devising strategies for successful programs to serve students with special needs who are included in the general education program. If these teachers do not participate on the team, the effectiveness of the inclusion effort is compromised. The involvement of general education teachers in this process has become more commonplace, given the increased numbers of students with disabilities in general education settings.

At the secondary level, students are served by a number of general education teachers, and the school counselor may be designated as the teachers’ representative on teams serving students with special needs. The counselor collects information from each teacher about a student’s classroom performance and reports to the team. The counselor is then responsible for conveying team decisions and recommendations to each of the student’s teachers. Of course, it is possible (and often desirable) for secondary teachers to serve as members of the team, as in the example of Mrs. Monroe, Michael’s and Jarrod’s ninth-grade English teacher (see “Students’ Stories”).

General education teachers who have worked with students being considered for special education services can provide the team with much information. They are aware of strengths students may have, students’ past responses to instructional programs and procedures, and areas in which students may require the most assistance. The presence of these teachers on the team can ensure that all important classroom information is considered. In addition, their experience with individual students may temper the interpretation of assessment results or the recommendations made by the team.

General education teachers responsible for implementing a portion of the IEP should be involved in the team’s discussion of assessment results and other relevant information gathered by professionals or provided by parents. Teachers can describe their classroom programs and their perceptions of a student’s ability to participate in activities in the general education class. They can also contribute to and benefit from the team’s discussion of ways to adapt the general education program. As soon as the modified classroom program or the IEP is initiated, the teacher can inform the team of the student’s progress in the general education class. This input helps the team evaluate the current program in order to make any changes needed to enable the student to meet goals established by the prereferral or IEP team.

Other General Educators

Students with special needs may also be served by general educators other than their classroom teacher. For example, when special needs of students first come to the attention of the school, general education specialists in reading, mathematics, or learning the English language may become part of the team. These professionals may assist by gathering assessment data and by providing instructional support to students who are struggling and to their teachers. If students are then referred to special education, general education specialists can lend their expertise to the team about specific instructional needs and the success of various interventions.

Special Educators

In addition to general education teachers, special educators provide instructional services to students with disabilities. Those most likely to be on the teams serving students with special needs are those assigned to a classroom or office within the student’s school. The special educator may be a teacher-consultant who provides assistance to general education teachers who have students with special needs in their classes. Or the special educator may be a resource room teacher who provides direct services to special students as well as consultation to their teachers. The special class teacher also may participate as a member of the team; this teacher serves students who require more intensive special education, but who may be included in the general education program for selected activities.

Itinerant specialists, who travel from school to school, may be trained specialists in the education of students with speech or language impairments, visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical or health impairments, or other special needs. One of the most common itinerant specialists is the speech–language pathologist, who serves students with communication disorders. Other itinerant specialists include physical and occupational therapists. These and other specialists are team members when a student is being evaluated to determine his or her eligibility for special education services.

Special educators fulfill a variety of roles on the team. Often they are responsible for organizing the team, conducting the meetings, and monitoring the services provided to students with disabilities. They may observe a student in the general education class and conduct much of the educational assessment. Special education teachers explain different types of available special services and describe in detail support services for general education teachers. Also, these professionals help interpret assessment results and assist the team in formulating the educational plan. In the implementation of the IEP, they typically provide direct services to students with disabilities and consultant services to general education teachers.

The special educator most likely to provide instruction to a specific student should serve on the IEP team when that student’s educational program is being planned. This involvement provides the special educator with the opportunity to meet the student and his or her parent(s) and teacher(s). The special educator thus becomes familiar with the student’s current performance and educational needs, as well as with the views of the student’s general education teacher(s), the student’s parent(s), and other professionals concerned with the student’s education."

"Academic problems such as those described in the “Students’ Stories” are not rare occurrences. They are a sampling of the behavioral issues that teachers face daily in the general education classroom.

Academic and behavioral difficulties often go hand-in-hand, and the roles of both general education teachers and special education teachers are not exclusive in responding to these difficulties. The need for a collaborative process among all educators is essential to design beneficial methods for students with academic and behavioral difficulties. Response to intervention (RTI) provides an outline of where both general and special educators can be most effective in preventing academic and behavioral difficulties from becoming increasingly problematic, and also for intervening when problems are severe."