Case Study Analysis of a Social Skills Service Delivery Model With Intellectually Disabled Students

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on students with intellectual disabilities (IDs). Social skills instruction is needed for any disability category, but more so with students that are diagnosed with intellectual disabilities. Thus, use of the social skills service delivery model with ID students is examined through two case studies, one in a middle school setting and another in a high school setting. This chapter concludes with a discussion about the causes and characteristics, the educational placement and instructional strategies, and the eligibility criteria for students with an intellectual disability. The chapter concludes with a discussion about future trends for intellectually disabled students and service providers.

INTRODUCTION

Historically, children and adults with some type of learning challenge have often been referred to as mentally retarded. The term has a negative connotation, and thus people with learning difficulties as well as professionals in the field of special education find the term offensive. This was the case with a

young woman named Rosa, whose family fought both their state and federal government to change the wording in all state and federal documentation from "mental retardation" to "intellectual disability." This change became known as Rosa's Law. Rosa's Law resulted in the following changes:

Individuals With Disabilities Education Act:

(1) Section 601(c)(12)(C) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (20 U.S.C. 1400(c)(12)(C)) is amended by striking "having mental retardation" and inserting "having intellectual disabilities."

(c) ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1965—

Section 7202(16)(E) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 7512(16)(E)) is amended by striking "mild mental retardation," and inserting "mild intellectual disabilities."

(d) REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973—

(1) Section 7(21)(A)(iii) of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 U.S.C. 705(21)(A)(iii)) is amended by striking "mental retardation," and inserting "intellectual disability." (U.S. Government, 2010)

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) defines an intellectual disability as a "significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning, existing concurrently with deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period, that adversely affects a child's educational performance" (§ 300.8[c][6]).

According to the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (2012), there were 463,000 students with a diagnosis of intellectual disability (ID) in U.S. schools during the 2009-2010 school year. This type of disability has decreased significantly during the past 40 years. During the 1976-1977 school year, students with special needs who had an intellectual disability diagnosis were at 2.2% of the total school population, and this percentage decreased drastically to 0.9% during the 2009-2010 school year. According to Friend (2011), the reasons for this drastic decrease in numbers are twofold. One reason is that professionals in the field of special education have been able to make a better distinction between students with an intellectual disability and students who have a specific learning disability