

Chapter 31

Case Study Analysis of an Adaptive Academic School Service Delivery Model With Multiple Disabilities/ Handicapped Students

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter focuses on multiple disability (MD) or multiple handicapped (MH) students. Being considered equal to their grade- and age-level peers is essential for MD/MH students. Thus, in this chapter, use of the adaptive academic service delivery model with MD/MH students is examined through a case study within a junior and high school setting. This chapter includes a discussion about the causes and characteristics, the educational placement and instructional strategies, and the eligibility criteria for students with multiple disabilities or multiple handicaps. The chapter concludes with a discussion about future trends for MD/MH students and service providers.

INTRODUCTION

The history of students with multiple disabilities (MD) or multiple handicaps (MH) follows a similar route as their disabled counterparts. In 1976, Dr. Lou Brown and colleagues published the first journal article describing how students with multiple handicaps should be educated using an inclusive, whole-skills approach (Friend, 2011). Despite this awareness, education was slow to adapt to this approach, and in 1989, a parent of a multiple-disabled child sued the local school district for the student's right to be educated with his grade- and age-level peers. In the court case of *Timothy W. v. The Rochester, New*

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Hampshire School District (U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit District, 1989), the school district alleged that the student, according to professionals at the time, was not capable of being educated due to his severe mental and physical disabilities. The court disagreed with the experts and demanded that the school district educate Timothy. Despite this landmark case, students with multiple disabilities were still educated separately from their peers. The only time they were seen was getting on and off the bus that transported them to school; on occasion, they ate in the same lunch room as their colleagues. Other than these times, there was no interaction between the two groups (Friend, 2011).

In 2004, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized, and a provision within the new law stated that *all* students despite their disability were to be included in and have access to the general education core curriculum (Friend, 2011). From that point forward, students with multiple disabilities were to be taught among their age- and grade-level peers and learn the same academic content.

This chapter will:

1. Examine the needs of MD/MH students and the challenges they face on a daily basis.
2. Discuss the causes and characteristics, educational placement and intervention strategies, and eligibility criteria for MD/MH students.
3. Present a case study that utilizes an academic service delivery model with MD/MH students.

IDEA DEFINITION AND PREVALENCE

According to IDEA (2004), “Multiple disabilities are defined in one regulation as ‘concomitant impairments (such as mental retardation-blindness, mental retardation-orthopedic impairment, etc.), the combination of which causes such severe educational problems that they cannot be accommodated in special education programs solely for one of the impairments.’ The term does not include deaf-blindness” (§ 300.8[c][7]).

In 1980, the prevalence of MD/MH was 2% out of 4,144,000 students identified as having some type of learning disability. This increased in 1990 to 3% of the 4,710,00 served and has remained the same through 2015, despite 6,555,000 students identified as needing services under IDEA (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2018).

Within every school district, there will be at least one school that houses students with MH. Because of the small number of this population, there is typically one class for elementary students and one for middle and/or high school students. In the MH classroom, there is one main teacher and numerous para-professionals, depending on the needs of the students. Some students with MH may require a one-on-one aide to take care of their every need, from feeding them to taking care of their personal hygiene issues. These students can remain in high school until they are 21 and will probably be placed into a group home if their families cannot meet the demands of caring for them. However, some students with MH can live in the community on their own, take care of their personal needs, and even obtain employment, depending on the severity of the disability (Friend, 2011).

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