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## Criteria for Transition for Self-Contained Classrooms

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# Criteria for Transition for Self-Contained Classrooms

By

Christopher S. Marden

A proposal submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION

in

Special Education

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Committee Chair

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Committee Member

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY  
Logan, Utah

2011

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**Abstract**

This project was an effort to ascertain what skills regular and/or resource teachers require of self-contained students with learning disabilities in order to transition successfully in their classrooms. A twenty-one-question survey was given to regular and resource teachers in four junior high schools. This survey questioned teachers with regards to what the minimal academic, behavioral and procedural criteria should be mastered before students transition into regular classrooms. Once this information is received, self-contained teachers may analyze their curriculum, behavioral and classroom procedures to better mirror the requirements and the realities of the regular and/or resource classrooms.

### **Introduction**

The transitioning of self-contained students with learning disabilities to the least restrictive environment (LRE) needs to be a priority for Special Education (SPED) teachers. Indeed it is a federal mandate to transition students into a least restrictive environment when possible (Weidenthal and Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). However, there doesn't appear to be any well-defined measurable criteria aiding teachers to recognize if students are prepared or not to make these kinds of transitions (Salend and Vigilianti, 1982). As a result, students may not be entirely prepared to transition but are still placed into mainstream classes. In many of these cases, the student may end up back into the original self-contained classroom with the student and teacher more frustrated than before. On the other extreme, there may be students who have been ready to transition but are still waiting in a self-contained classroom, because the special education teacher does not know if the student is ready to transition to the regular education environment or not (Mykelburst, 2002). A uniformed list of objective criterion would make it easier for special education teachers to determine when students are ready, or not ready to be transitioned, as well as allowing teachers to gage what skills are necessary to teach students in preparation for that progression.

According to Mykelburst (2002), transition can be defined as leaving one system and entering another one. Transition is an essential process that needs to be fully implemented in the self-contained special education classroom to ensure that all students are educated in their least restrictive environment. Palmer stated that Congress passed legislation that was intended to improve opportunities in education for children and adults with disabilities through the provision of a free appropriate public education. This law is called Public Law 94-142. It provided that children with disabilities be educated in the "least restrictive environment" to the maximum

extent appropriate, meaning that they are educated with children without disabilities and that special classes, separate schools or other removal of children from their regular educational environment occurs only when the severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes cannot be achieved (Palmer, 1980). In the article Factors to be considered in Placing Handicapped Children in regular classes, Palmer summarized the qualities, such as behavioral, academic, and social skills that students need to be successful in before transitioning into regular education. Fuchs, Fuchs and Fernstrom (1993) suggest that “federal law requires educators to prepare these students for an eventual return to the mainstream.” The article talked about using services of the school district to educate special education students in close proximity to regular education students.

The basic concept of the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was to have students placed in the least restrictive environment. However, IDEA did not set guidelines concerning the procedures of transitioning students back into the LRE. Little information can be found concerning when students should be transitioned and what procedures should be followed when transitioning student from special education back into the regular education environment (Wilkes, Bireley, and Schultz, 1979). One of the reasons that there is only a small amount of information regarding the criteria for transitioning is that researchers and other professionals get confused between the topics of transitioning and mainstreaming. As a result, when researchers and other professionals are considering transitioning as a topic, they assume that there is plenty of research on this topic, and as a result, choose other topics. However, one only has to do a cursory search of the topic of mainstreaming to find that there is an ample supply of studies. On the other hand, to find research regarding transitioning students who are not in the post high school environment is more difficult. (Fuchs et al, 1996). “Mainstreaming studies, by definition

explore the effects on students with disabilities of being there; the students have already re-entered before such studies start. Transitioning or re-integration by contrast focuses on the process of getting there; they begin with students' participation in special education, not regular education setting" (Fuchs, Fuchs and Fernstrom, 1993).

One of the main focuses of The Council for Exceptional Children is to help teachers learn to transition students into their LRE. If special education students are not currently in a mainstream setting, then the focus of the organization is to prepare them to meet that goal. Resource and self-contained classrooms are not seen as a permanent placement but as "stopovers" on their way to a standard educational placement (Fuchs et al., 1996). The special education infrastructure must embrace this philosophy if students are to be consistently educated in their least restrictive environment.

The President's commission on excellence in special education determined that the initiating and planning of transition services was falling short of the IDEA mandates (Weidenthal & Kochhar-Bryant, 2007). One issue that they identified is that once students are transitioned into special education, they rarely make it back into regular education (Fuchs et al., 1996). During the students' time in special education, the students meet other actors who function as gatekeepers in the transitional decision making, such as teachers or administrators. The word gatekeeper refers to the people who allow the students to leave or stay in the self-contained environment. If the gatekeepers believe and assist in getting their students to the least restrictive environment, that gatekeeper becomes a "passage facilitator." If that teacher or administrator does not believe in getting students out to their LRE, they become a "passage obstacle," (Mykleburst, 2002). Thus students are held back or advanced not by facts but by personal opinions of teachers and administrators.

As mentioned above, it is the teachers and administrator who are the decision makers when it comes to transitioning students. If transitioning is going to be successful in the long term, it is the teachers who must have a plan and procedure to move students into regular education. When teachers bring up the subject of transition, it is usually assumed that they are referring to post high school. However, transition doesn't only mean transitioning to adult life. As mentioned earlier transition is defined as, anytime a person leaves one place and moves to another place. For example, transition could mean going from Kindergarten to First grade or leaving elementary school and going to junior high. Of course, it can also mean leaving a self-contained classroom and moving to a regular education environment or visa-versa. Regardless, if special educators are going to place students into their least restrictive environment, teachers and administrators must understand that there are many transitions throughout a student's school career. These transitions are often linked. "In this way, the basis of successful adaptation to working life is often to be found in tidy transitions on one's way through a course of studies," (Mykleburst, 2002). In other words, if the individual is going to live up to his/her potential after high school, the student must be transitioned and placed at their potential throughout their school progression.

Salend and Lutz (1984) stated that in order for special education students to transition "correctly," and for the skills to generalize from their environment to the regular education environment, the two environments must mirror as closely as possible. If the special education teacher is going to imitate the learning environment of the regular education classroom, he/she needs to know the expectations and the "environmental variables" that the transitioning student will come across. However, Salend and Vigilanti (1982) further content that there are few sets of guiding principles in place for the special education teacher to follow to get the student ready for resource or regular education classroom.



Mathes et al (1998) asked the question “when do we know that a student is ready to transition into a regular education class?” Mathes et al indicate that special education students should meet criteria in the area of academics and behavior before transitioning into regular education classes.

Salend and Lutz (1984) were also concerned that there were no objective criteria for special education students transitioning into the mainstream. They were worried that special education students were “indiscriminately” being placed into the regular education environment. They wanted to determine what were the desired social skills that transitioning students needed to possess in order to be successful in the regular education environment. The researchers also wanted to discover if special educators and regular educators had the same behavioral expectations of transitioning students. The researchers, Salend and Lutz (1994) decided to design a survey that would answer these questions.

The researchers surveyed 188 regular and special education elementary teachers. The teachers took a 36 item survey which focused on the social skills that they expected transitioning students to have when coming into the mainstream. Teachers ranked each social skill question as (1) very important (2) somewhat important (3) not important. Once computed, the researchers compiled a list of social skills according to the above rankings. These social skill rankings could then be used as objective criteria to tell if the student was ready to transition as far as behaviors were concerned. If the student was not ready, items could be chosen off this list as goals. These goals could then be worked on so that they may become ready.

Another point that they found out was that special educators expected their students to have better behavior than was expected from their counterparts. Regular educators deemed 18 social skills as critical while special educators deemed 26 social skills as critical. As a result the

researchers thought that there should be better communication between the two types of educators.

The study also revealed that the behavior requirements became more advanced the higher the grade. As a result when looking at placement, the social skill requirement for that particular grade should be considered.

Fuchs et al., (1994), designed the Classroom Ecological Inventory (CEI) which came about as a result of a three year federally funded research program. The CEI is used to identify differences between special and regular education classrooms that might get in the way of reintegration students with special needs into mainstream classes. The CEI is completed in four steps. In the first step, the special education teacher observes the intended class that the student will transition into. In the second step, both teachers sit down and answer a pre-determined set of questions. By using this set of questions, teachers identify the issues that may become problems in the transitioning process. During the third step, teachers discuss what can be done about the issues of the two rooms. Some of the most common issues are: the difficulty of instruction and the degree to which students are expected to work independently. In the last step, the teachers plan modifications to their classrooms to overcome or reduce these issues. Some of these modifications have included the curriculum or the type of assignments general education teachers give. Special educators may agree to give homework with the same frequency as the mainstream teacher. The more similarities between the two learning environments, the more likely the skills will be generalized to the regular education environment. By using the CEI program, participating teachers placed 60 resource and self-contained middle and junior high school students with learning disabilities into a less restrictive environment in a two- year period.

Part of the reason for this success is that the CEI encourages communication between regular and special educators which has been cited as a main reason that the transitioning succeeds.

Two additional researchers, Salend and Viglianti (1982) discuss the importance of finding out the criteria for a regular education classroom as well as teaching those criteria to the transitioning students before they move into the LRE. In order to find out what these criteria were, the researchers designed a form called the Classroom Variables Analysis Form. This form consisted of 26 questions that covered several classroom environmental variables. One of the purposes of this form was to assist the SPED teacher to approximate the new learning environment of the transitioning students. This form is completed by observing and interviewing the receiving regular education teacher. The form assists the SPED teacher by giving them a list of variables of a specific regular education classroom. These variables are then used to instruct the students to prepare for the regular education environment. For example, if the regular education classroom requires the student to complete fill-in-the-blank worksheets, then the special education teacher should teach the best way to complete fill-in-the-blank worksheets and require fill-in-the-blank worksheets to be completed in the special education setting. If the student is not ready, the form indicates what areas the student needs to work on. If the form indicates that the student is ready to transition into a LRE, the placement team can use the form to place the student in the most appropriate environment. Once in the regular education environment, this form can serve as an evaluation tool and an agenda for potential meetings between the sending and receiving teachers. This form was designed for the secondary setting but it can also be adapted to the elementary setting.

### **Purpose**

Research indicated that special education students transitioning into a least restrictive environment are often lacking the skills to be successful (Mathes et al., 1998). This lack of ability is mainly caused by a need of consistent objective criteria in the special education field. This lack of consistent best practices has led to an inconsistent preparation of self-contained students to transition to the regular education setting. Self-contained special education teachers usually have limited knowledge of what the day to day expectations of regular education classrooms are. As a result, it is difficult to imitate that environment. In preparing students to transition, many special education teachers focus on skills that are actually non-issues for the regular education teacher. Many of the reviewed articles are comprised of relevant and important information that touches on various aspects of the regular education classroom structure. However, they did not delve into the broader skills that self-contained students need when transitioning into the mainstream classroom. This survey focused on discovering the pertinent issues that are based on the realities of the day to day operations of general education classrooms by communicating directly with a large amount of regular education teachers. Once this information is available, special education teachers may instruct their students based on skills that are relevant to the current mainstream environment. Teaching skills that are needed for the regular education environment should be taught intrinsically in the day to day dealings of the self-contained classroom. It is anticipated that this researcher's questionnaire will enable the self-contained special education teacher to find out what is expected and consistently mirror the regular education environment.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

Subjects for this study were junior high school elective, core, and resource teachers. This study was conducted in one of the largest districts in a western state. The school district serves more than 67,324 students in 85 schools, including 16-middle and 9 high schools. The student population is 49% girls and 51% boys and is ethnically diverse (2.27% African American, 1.5% American Indians, 4.39% Asian American, 30.25% Hispanic, and 56.39% Caucasian). In the United States the average school district spends \$9,864 per student. The district in which this survey was completed in spends \$6,425 on each student ("2010 - 2011 annual report," 2011).

### **Procedures**

Permission to distribute the surveys to junior high school teachers was requested from the District's Survey and Research Request Committee. The committee was comprised of people from a variety of school positions within the district. The survey was limited to four junior high schools, which limited the number of surveys to approximately 150 teachers. The junior high teachers were asked to identify themselves as core, elective or resource special education teachers and fill out a twenty-one-item multiple choice questionnaire. The last choice of each multiple choice question was an opportunity for the respondents to comment if an appropriate choice is not provided. Those added explanations, were on the Excel spreadsheet corresponding to the matching question.

The last question was open ended. This question allowed the respondent to add any necessary skills that may have been left off of the survey. There were a few minor respondents that supplied answers on this question. They felt that socialization with peers was an

issue, along with interpersonal relations and the ability to develop them being a basic and necessary skill.

The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out what the minimum academic, behavioral expectation and procedural knowledge were expected from the regular and resource teachers from transitioning self-contained students. The idea for the questionnaire came from this researcher's own experiences and several research articles by Kirk, Berry, and Senf (1979), Salend and Lutz (1984), and Salend and Vigilanti (1982). The questions were reviewed by resource, core and elective teachers for relevancy, and clarity of multiple choice questions and choices. A cover letter was attached to the beginning of the questionnaire explaining the purpose of the study and asking teachers to take part in the research (Appendix A).

Once the questions were gathered, the completed questionnaires were separated by the three categories of teachers (core, elective, resource). The total number of answers in each category was calculated, and the total of each response (a, b, c, d) was divided by that total number, thus giving a percentage for each individual response. The outcome of the survey was displayed on an Excel spreadsheet and visually displayed in graphical format. These individual responses were compared in relation to the other categories of teachers. A copy of the questionnaire, graphs, and results section of the project will be shared with other junior high school self-contained teachers. These teachers are in the same district in which the project was completed. The Self-contained teachers may use this information as they perceive useful.

It was the objective of the survey that the information gathered would increase the knowledge of self-contained teachers to better know what specific academic, behavioral and/or procedural skills to focus on when curriculum and transitioning decisions are being decided. It

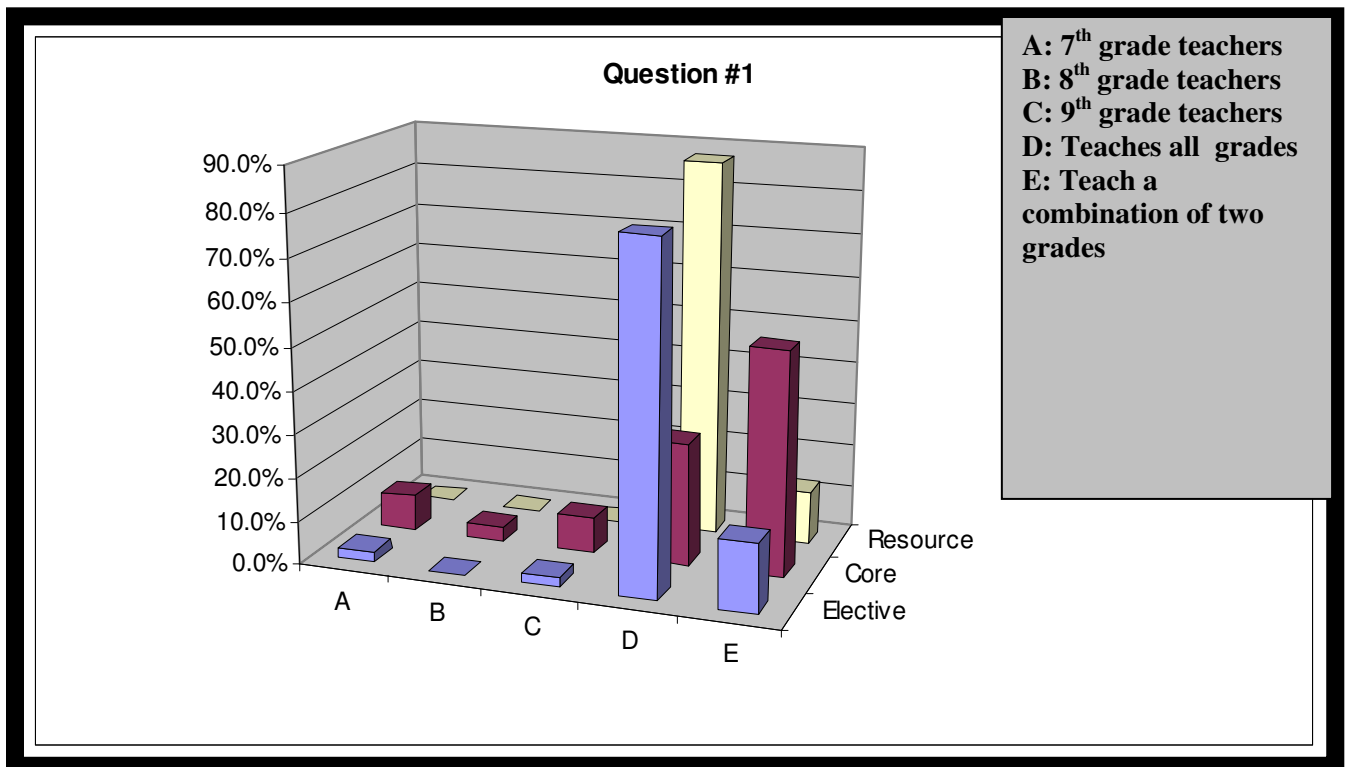
was anticipated that students will be able to transition earlier, quicker and be more successful in junior high once decisions are based on objective information.

### Results

There were 134 teachers in the four schools surveyed. A total of 110 surveys were completed resulting in an 82% response rate. In the charts below, Blue= elective; Purple= core; white=Resource, as detailed in the key of each chart.

#### Question 1: Grades Taught

80% Elective and 88% Resource and 28% of Core teachers taught all grades. In addition 51% of Core teachers taught a combination of two grades. There were only a small percentage of teachers that taught exclusively one of the grades.

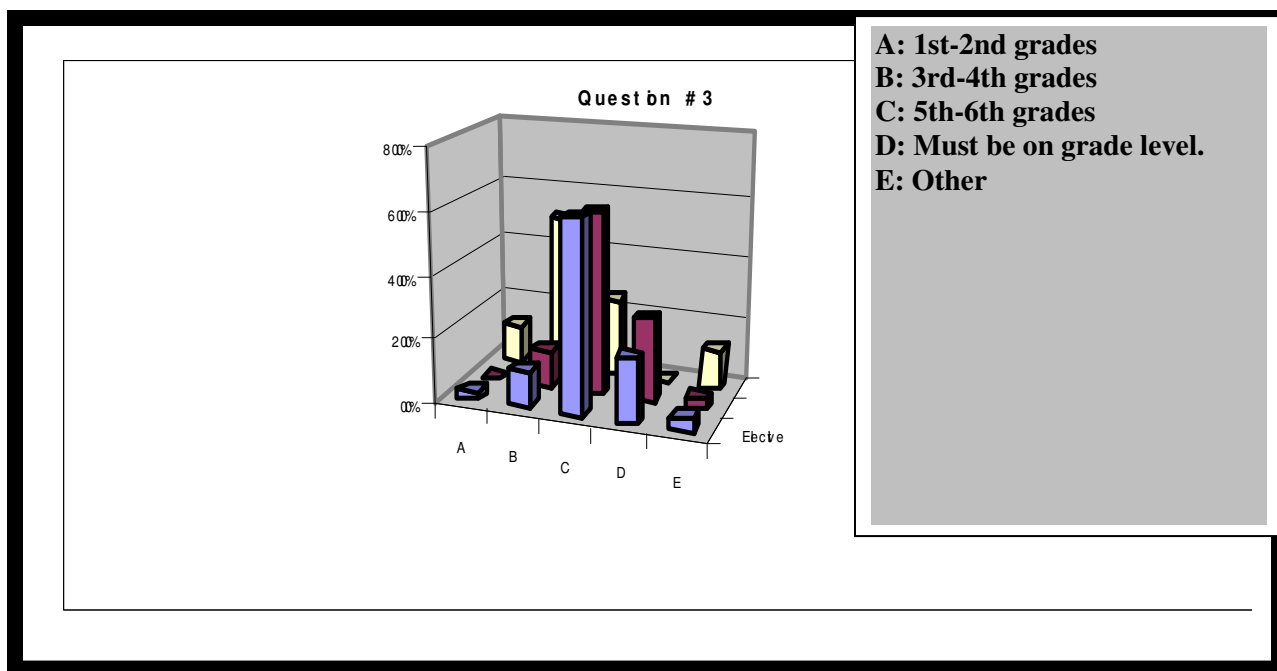


#### Question 2: Specify Subject and Teaching Classification

The participants in this survey consisted of 52.7% of core teachers, 40% of elective teachers and 7.3% resource teachers.

### Question 3: Teachers' Expectation of Reading Grade Level

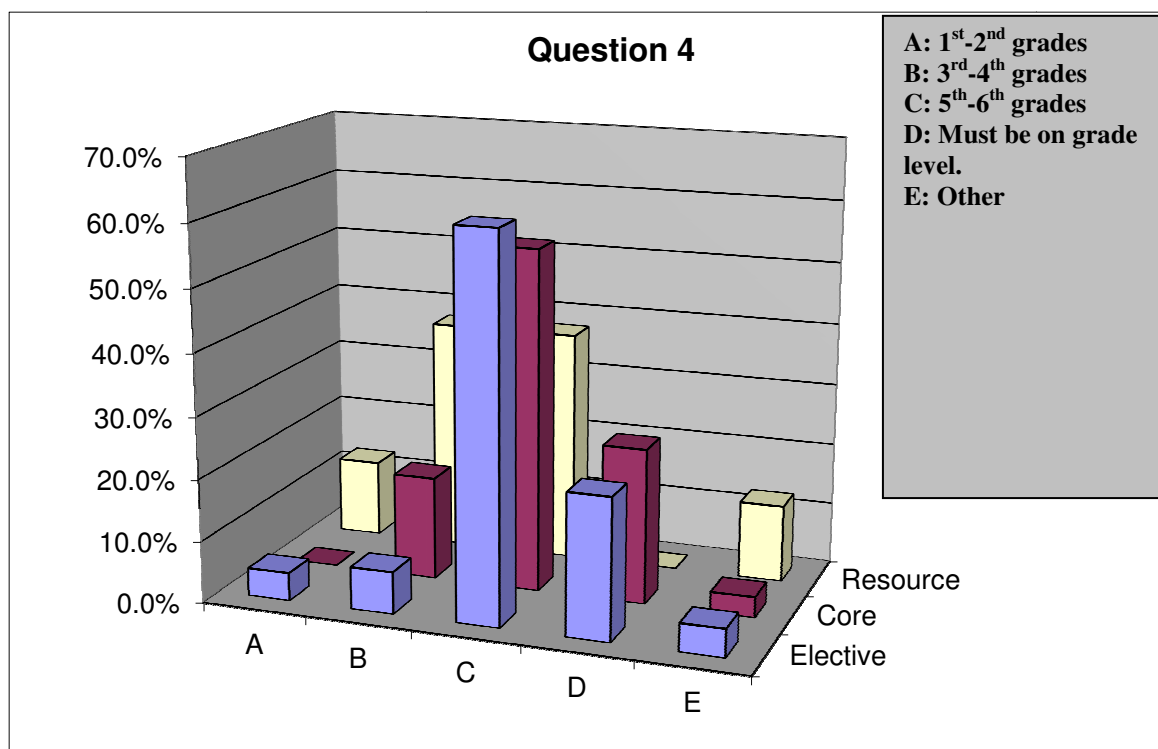
As to respondents' expectations of students reading grade level, 58% of core and 61% of elective teachers expect students to be at 5<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level or better. In contrast 50% of resource teachers expected students to be at least at 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and 13% of expected students to be at 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> grade level.



### Question 4: Teachers' Expectations of Students' Writing Grade Level

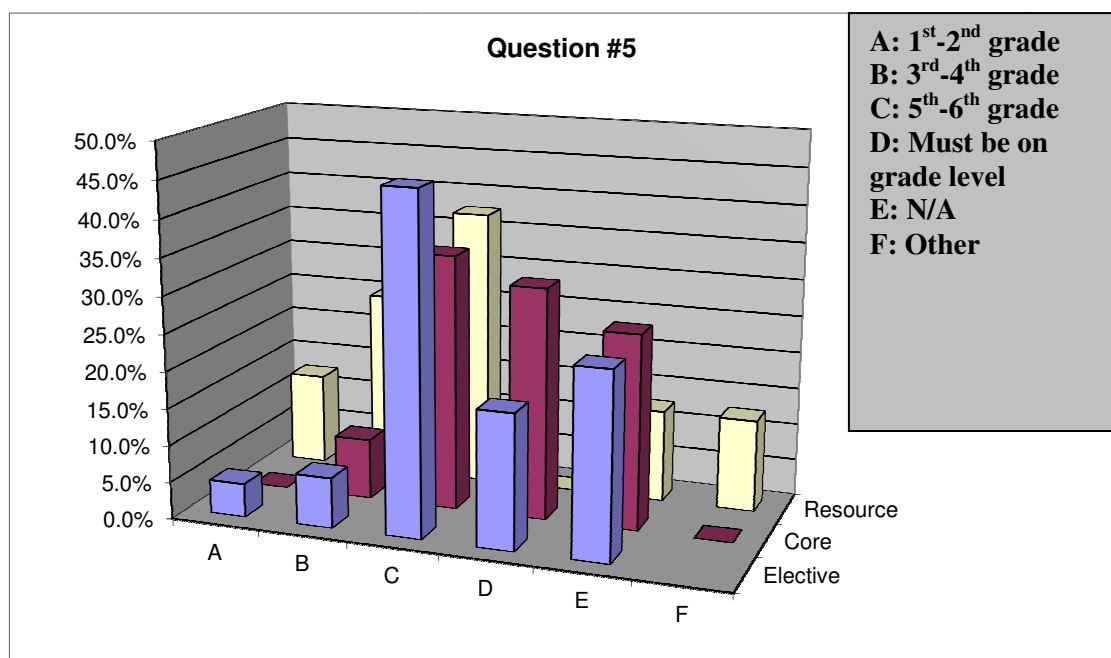
Pertaining to writing skill levels expectations, 55% of Core and 61% of Elective teachers expected students to be at the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade writing level. However, resource teachers were split with 38%, who expected students to be at 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> and 38% also having expected students to be at 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grade writing level.





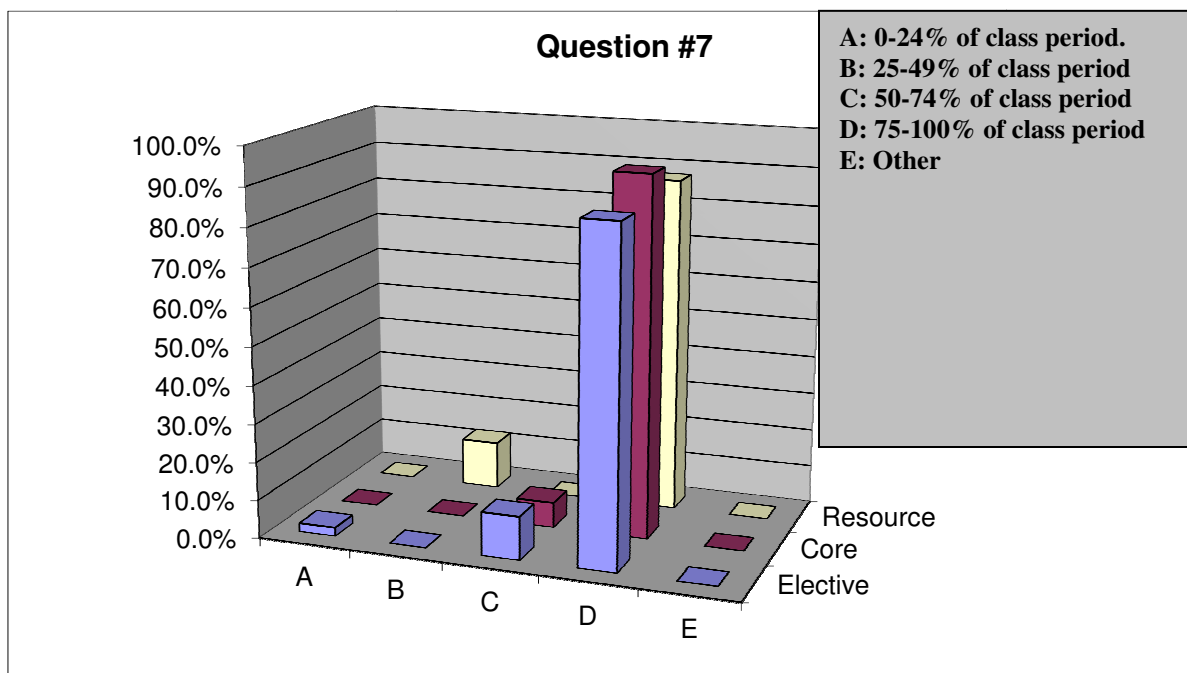
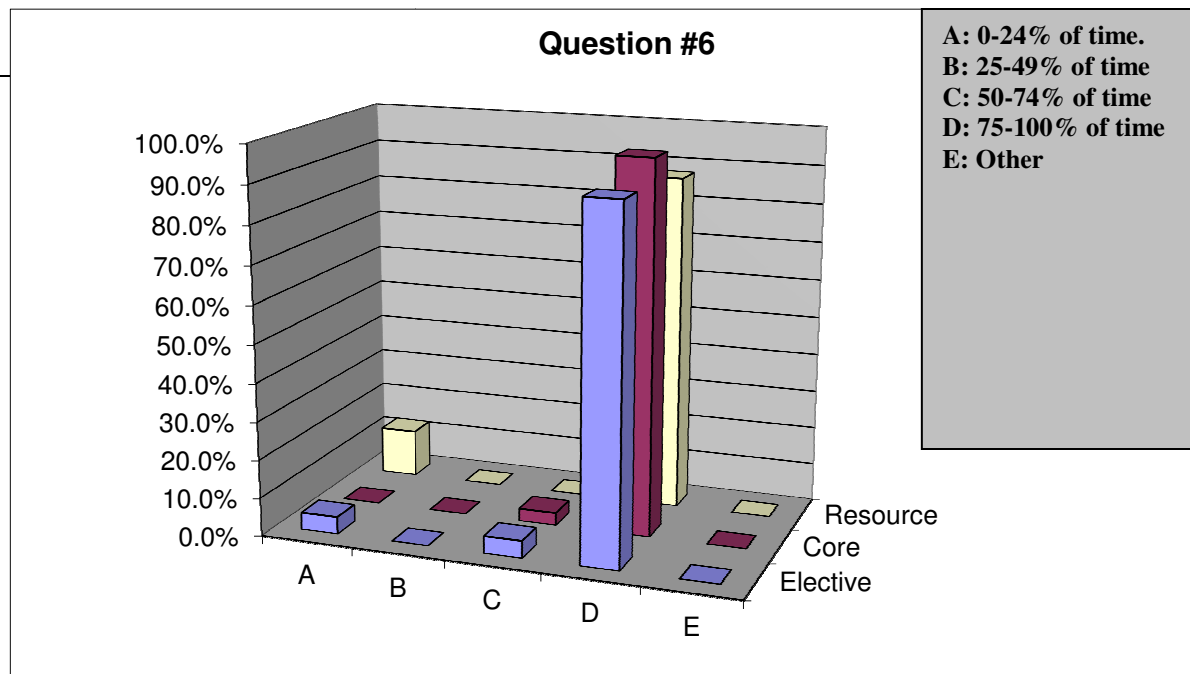
#### Question 5: Teachers' Expectations of Students' Math Grade Level

When it came to the minimum qualification in math, a quarter of core and elective teachers who participated in the survey indicated that it was non-applicable. Forty-six percent of elective teachers wanted students to be at least at the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade math level, whereas, core teachers were divided in their expectations with 34% who expected students to be on 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade level and 31% having expected at least grade level. Seventy-six percent of resource teachers in the survey expected their students to be at 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade level or lower.



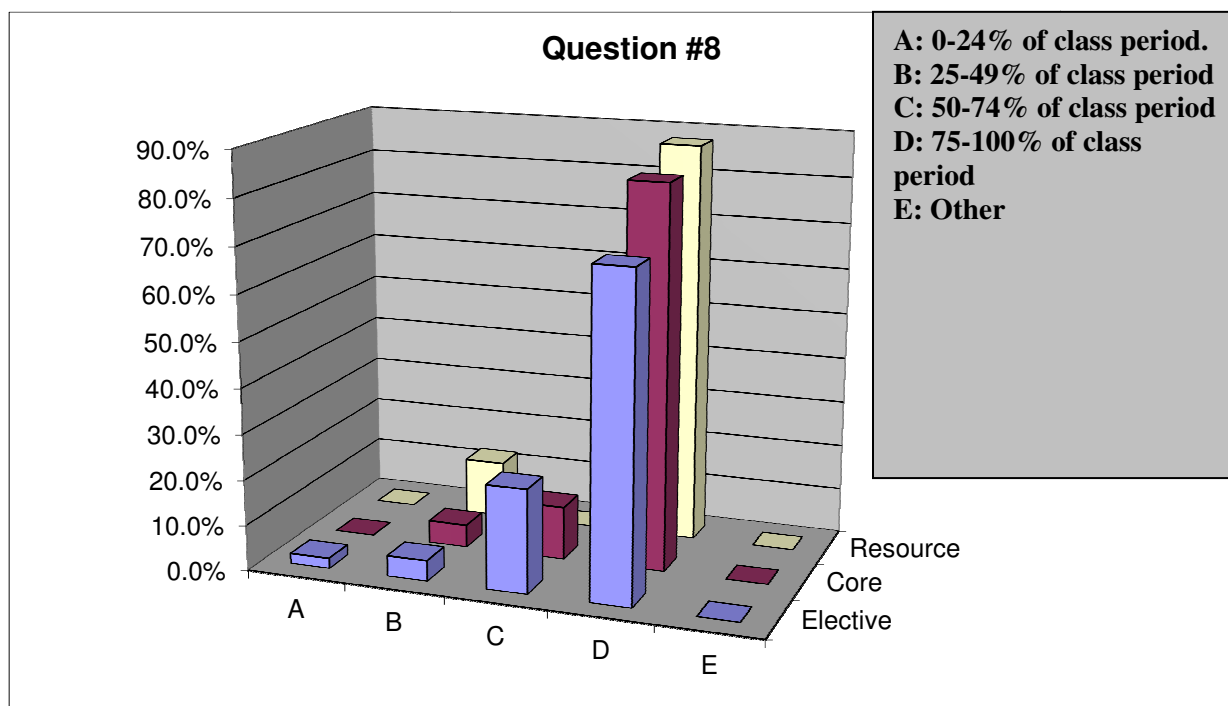
Questions 6 and 7: Bringing Assigned Materials and Staying Seated in Classroom when Required - As Basic Behavioral Expectations of Teachers:

Regardless of teachers' classification, more than 80% of all teachers, who participated in the survey, expected students to bring assigned materials and for students to remain seated when required 75-100% of the time.



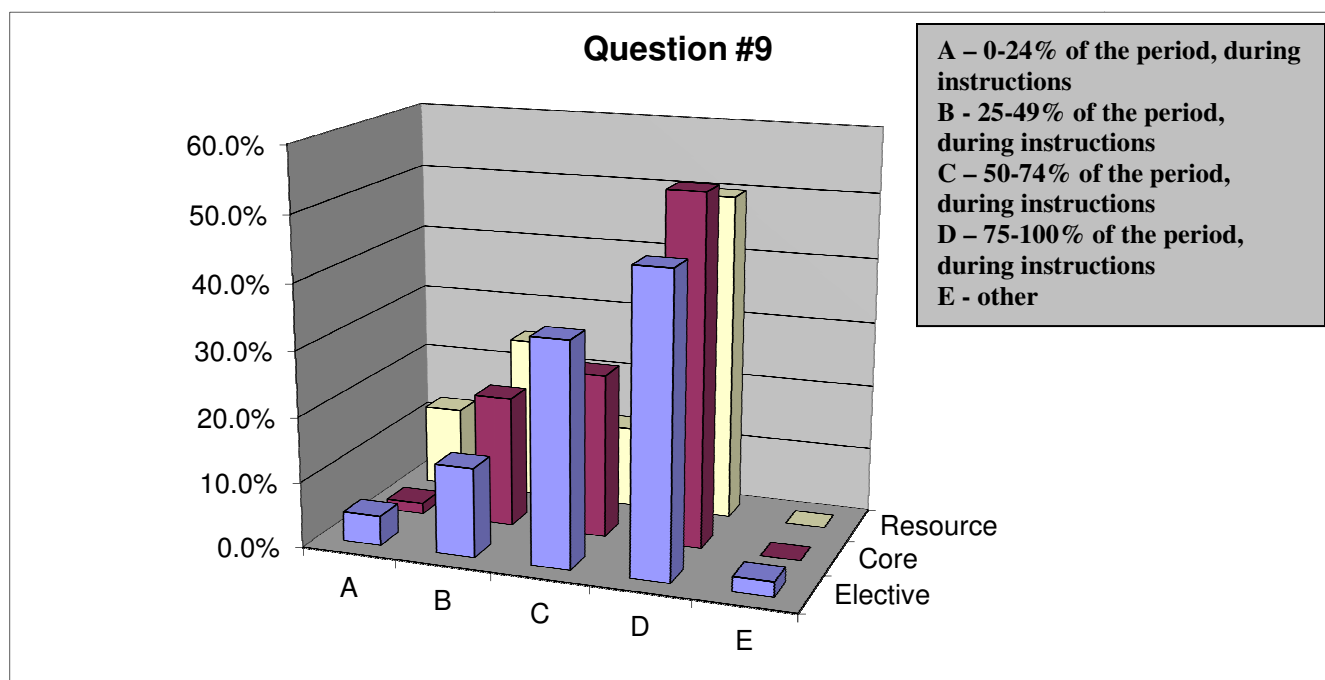
**Question 8: Being Quiet in Classroom when Required - As a Basic Behavioral Expectation of Teachers:**

On the subject of students being quiet in classroom when required, the participating resource teachers were the most stringent: with 88% of them having expected students to be quiet 75%-100% of the classroom teaching time. In contrast, 83% of core teachers and 71% of elective teachers expected their students to be quiet 75-100% of their classroom instructional time.



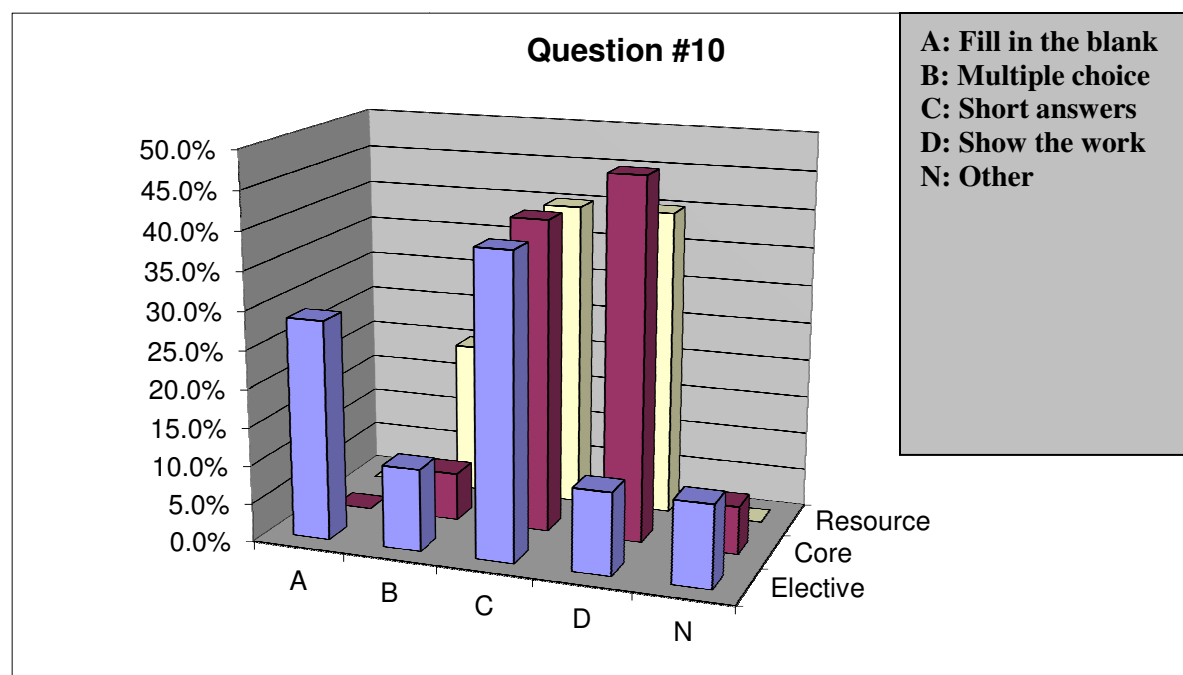
**Question9: At Minimum I Expect Students to Work Without Teacher's Attention, When Needed, \_\_\_\_\_% of the Period, During Instruction- - As a Basic Behavioral Expectation of Teachers:**

When asked about students working without teacher's attention, 53% percent of the Core teachers, 46% of Elective and 50% of Resource teachers who participated in the survey expected students to work individually between 75%-100% of the time. Thirty-four percent of the Elective and 25% of the Core teachers expected students to work individually 50%-75% of classroom time. Twenty-five percent of the Resource teachers responded that they expected their students to work individually 25%-49% of class time as a minimum expectation.



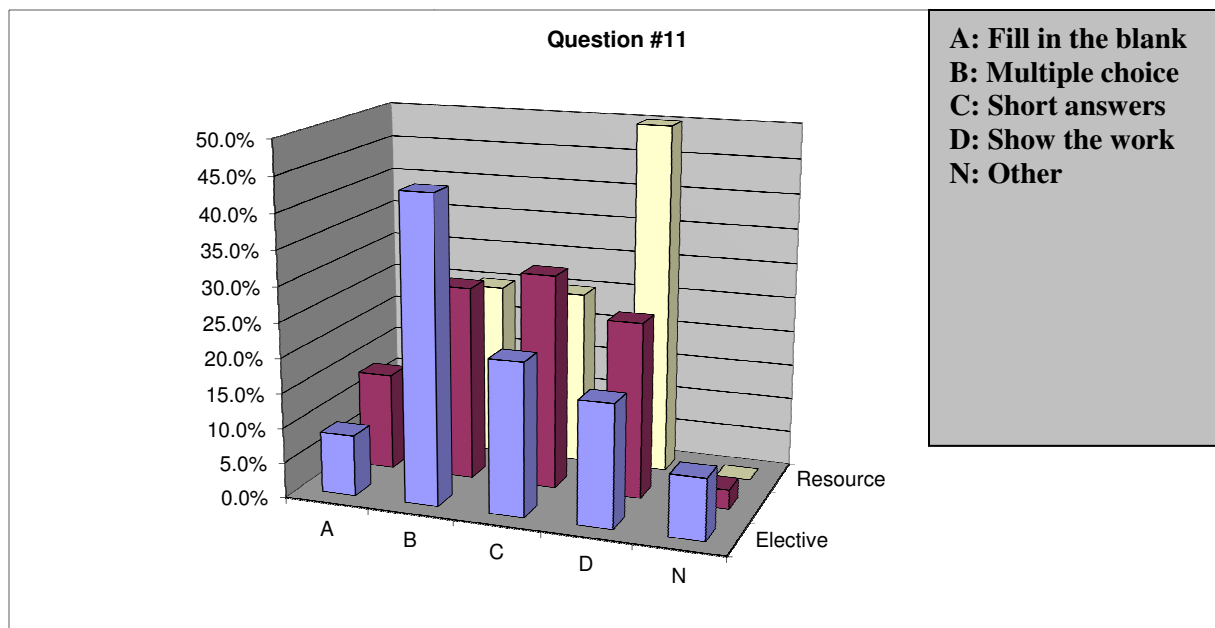
### Question 10: Most Types of Worksheets

Concerning worksheets, 40% of all teachers responded that they used worksheets that required short answers. When it came to worksheets that required analytical thinking, such as showing math problem, building graphs, diagramming chemical or physical procedures, sentence structure analysis etc., 47% of Core teachers stated that they use show the work answer worksheets. Similarly 40% of Resource teachers do the same. Twenty-nine percent of Elective teachers selected fill in the blank worksheets. Core and Resource teachers responded that they did not use fill in the blank worksheets.



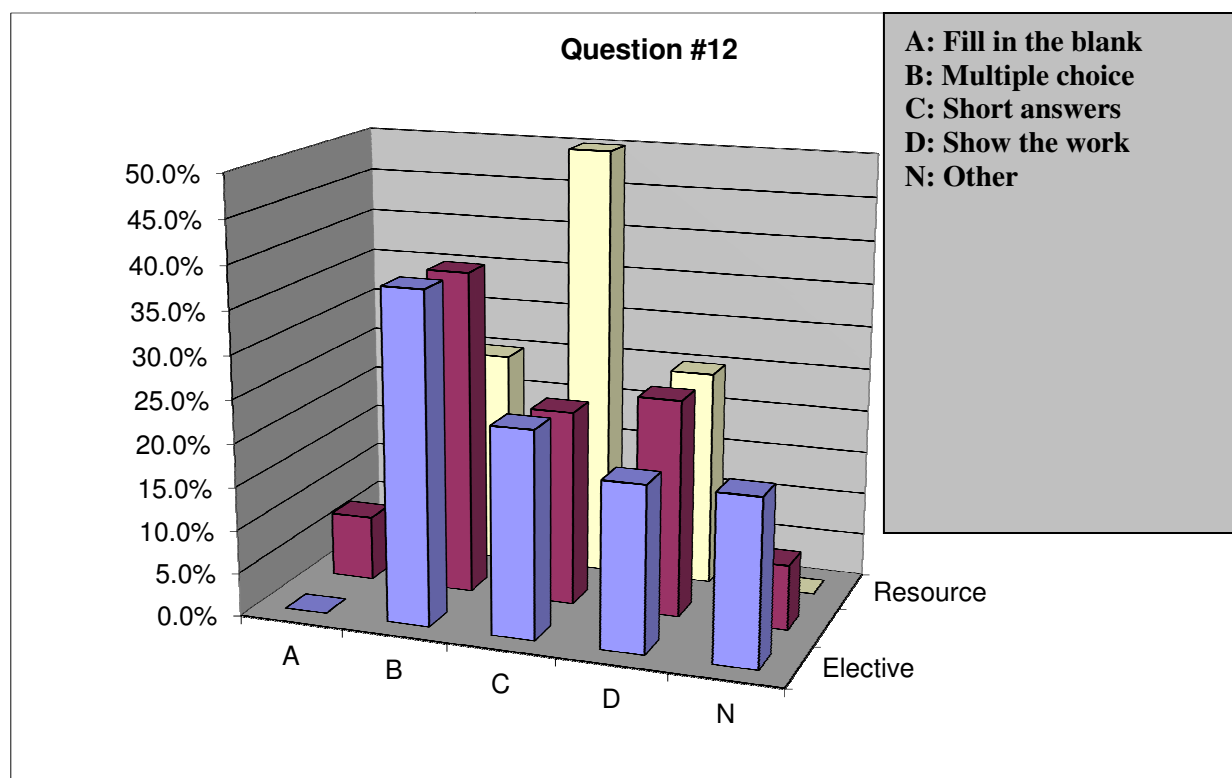
### Questions 11: Most Types of Quizzes

When it came to teachers' preferences in types of quizzes used in classroom, no particular method stood out. Core teachers were spread out in their preferred types. Forty-four percent of Elective teachers indicated that they used multiple choice quizzes and 50% of Resource teachers specified that they used quizzes that require students to show work.



### Question 12: Most Types of Tests

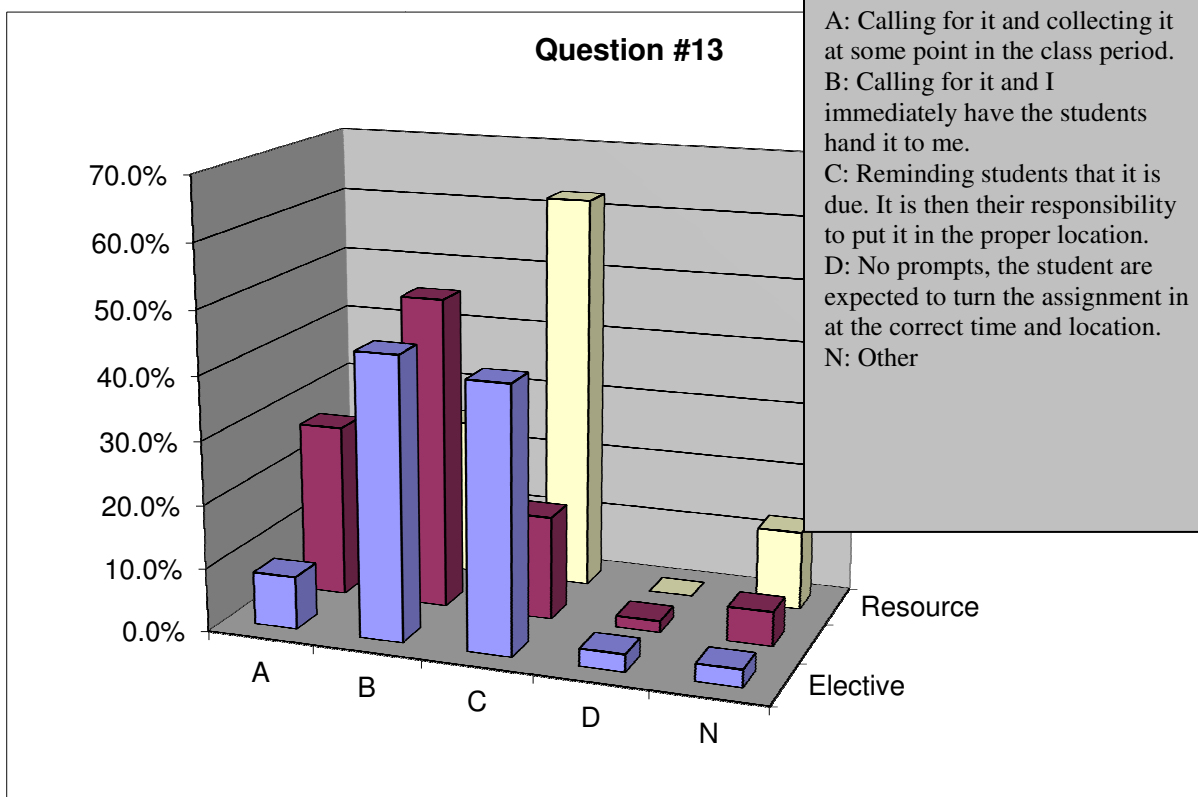
As to the variety of tests given, there also wasn't one method that stood out in responses given by teachers who participated in the survey. However, Core and Elective teachers were similar in their preferences: 38% of them stated that they used multiple choice tests, while nearly 23% of Core and Elective teachers required students to show the work. Fifty percent of Resource teachers indicated that they preferred to give their students tests with short answers.



### Question 13: Preferred Methods of Collecting Homework assignments

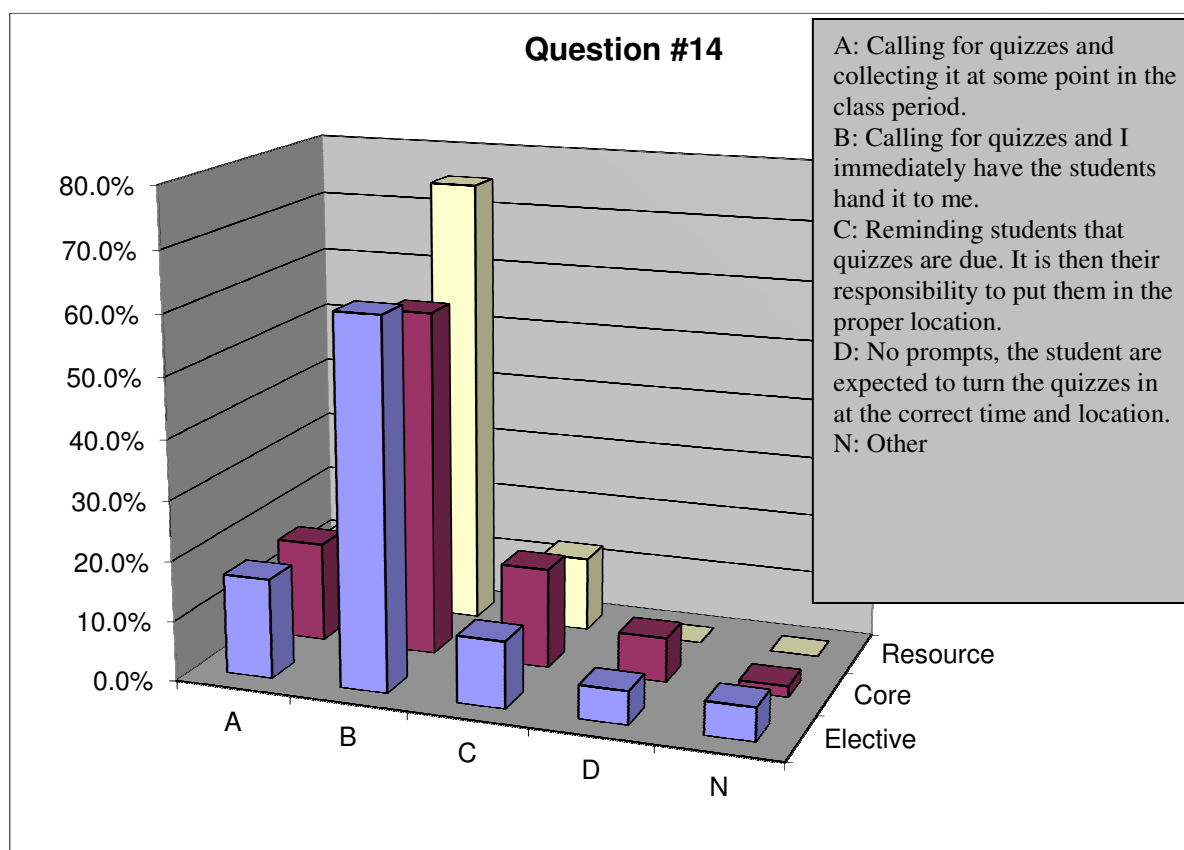
Forty-nine percent of Core teachers, who participated in the survey, responded that they requested the students to submit the homework while in class, and immediately have the students hand it to them. In this survey, 44% of Elective teachers indicated that the homework was turned in by students in classroom when it was called for and 42% of teachers, in that same category, stated that students were reminded to place their homework assignment in a designated area.

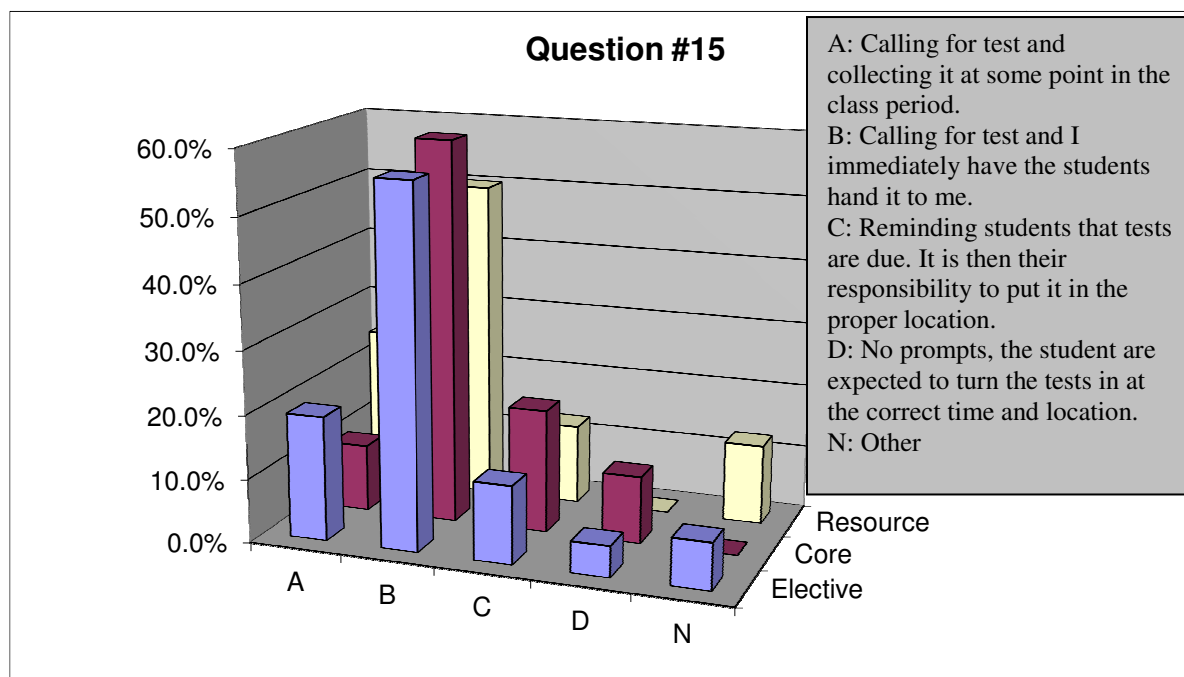
Reminding students that the homework was due, and indicating that it was the students' responsibility to put the homework assignments in the proper location was, according to the survey, 63% of the Resource teachers' expectation.



Questions 14 and 15: Preferred Methods of Collecting Quizzes and Tests:

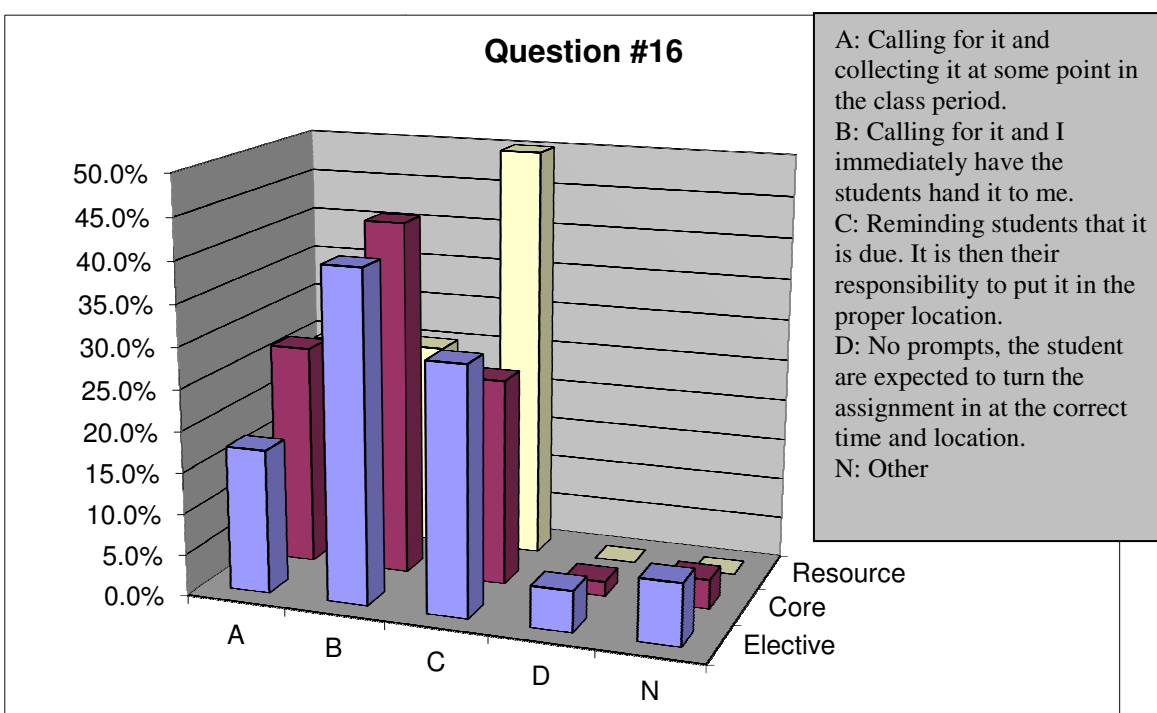
An average of 59% of all three groups of teachers stated in the survey that they collected quizzes and tests by calling for it and immediately have the students hand the assignment to them.





#### Question 16: Preferred Methods of Collecting Worksheets

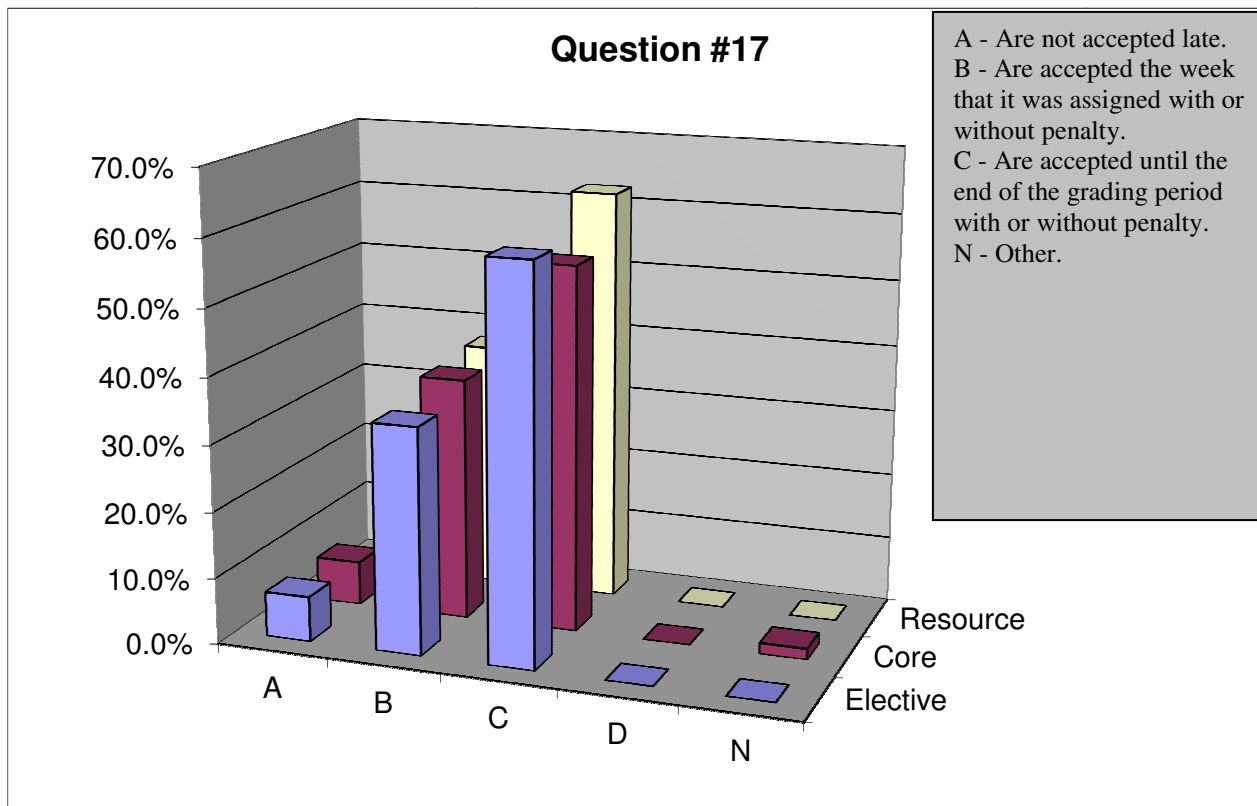
Teachers practiced various methods when collecting worksheets in their classes. As Indicated in the survey 40% of Core and 40% of Elective teachers, requested students to turn in their worksheets immediately after they were completed. However, 50% of the Resource teachers preferred to remind students that the assignment was due and told them to put the worksheet assignment in the designated location



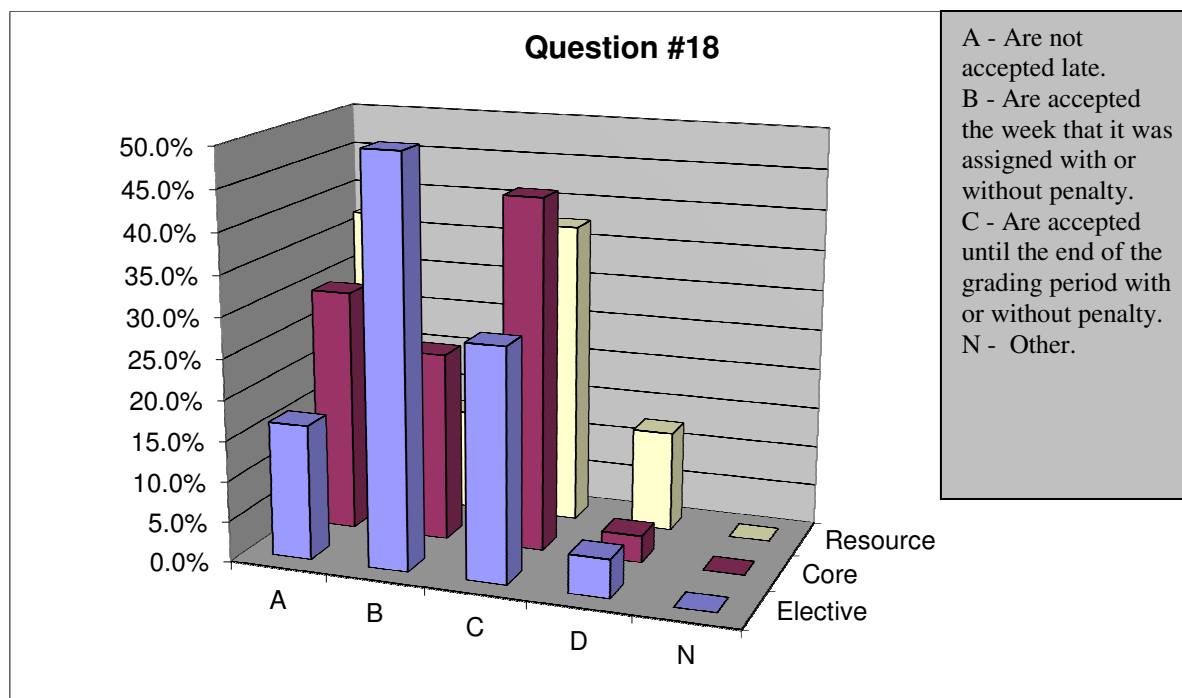


### Question 17: Late Acceptance of Homework, Assignments, and Worksheets

An average of 59% of all three categories of teachers, who participated in the survey, accepted students' late work until the end of the grading period submission with or without penalty. An average of 36% of all three categories of teachers, as stated in the survey, accepted late work within the week that it was assigned with or without penalty. Consequently, 95% of all teachers accepted some type of late work.

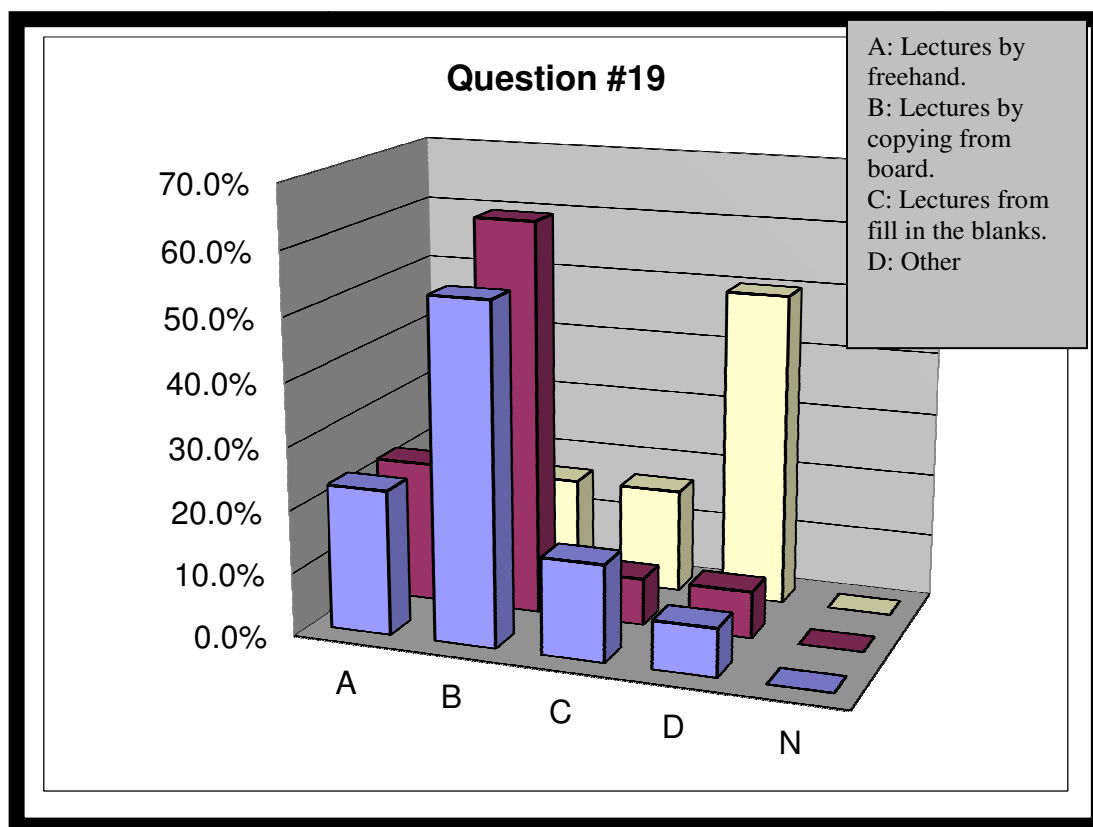


Question 18: Late Acceptance of Quizzes and Test. As far as accepting late quizzes and tests were concerned, the participants reported that no common practices were used. Nevertheless, an average of 27% of teachers stated that they did not accept late quizzes and tests. Elective teachers were the most lenient with 50% of them allowing the submission of late quizzes and tests the week that it was given.



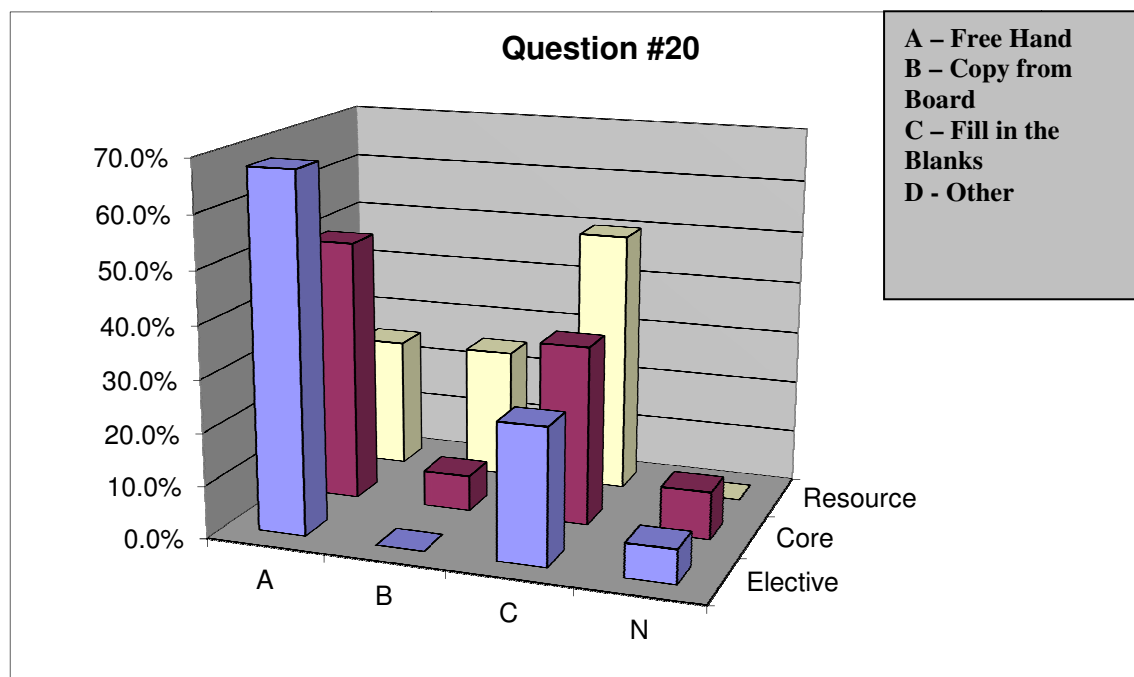
#### Question 19: Note-Taking Skills from Lecture

According to survey, 63% of Core and 54% of Elective teachers had students copy notes from the board when giving a lecture, while Resource teachers did not have a specific method which dominated.



### Question 20: Note-Taking Skills from Movies

Fifty percent of Core and 68% of Elective teachers stated in the survey that they had students take notes from movies by freehand. However, 50% of Resource teachers had their students fill in the blank when taking notes from movies.



### Question 21: Additional Skills That Are Important For Self-Contained Students When Transitioning into Mainstream Classroom Environment

This question gave the participating respondents an opportunity to comment if they felt an important skill concerning transition was not addressed in the survey. This was how the participants responded: Socialization with peers was an issue for few of the survey participants. They indicated that “interpersonal relations and the ability to develop them should be a basic skill.” Teaching appropriate behavior was another essential skill for transitional success. In addition, some participants indicated the importance of students’ ability to comply with mainstream education classroom organization and procedures. Students’ behavior in getting up

and returning to their seats, putting names on things, passing out papers, arranging folders in class, and knowing how to ask questions were also points of concerns.

### **Discussion**

This project was an endeavor to determine what the fundamental behavioral, academic and procedural expectations regular and/or resource teachers had for self-contained students when transitioning into their classrooms. Many self-contained special education teachers may have started a career in teaching without ever having instructed a regular education classroom. As a result, they may have not known the behavioral, procedural, and academic expectations of a regular education classroom. A fundamental description of a regular education program was examined so that self-contained teachers who may not be aware of the workings of a typical classroom may arrange their classes in a similar manner. Students had multiple teachers in the junior high schools that were surveyed in this study. The study indicated that each teacher had various procedural, behavioral, and academic expectations. The fundamentals given in this study may have provided the self-contained teacher the knowledge they need to teach similar essential academic, procedural, and behavioral skills to their entire class during the school day.

As indicated in the study, the behavior expectations of the core, elective, and resource teachers are similar. This study indicated that 90% of teachers expected students to bring material and stay seated. An average of 80% of teachers indicated that students needed to be quiet during class 75%-100% of the time. With this information as a guide, these same behavior expectations can be replicated in the self-contained classroom. These behavioral skills would be anticipated when transitioning into the resource and regular education environment along with procedural academic expectation.

The academic expectations of the majority of the mainstream teachers are also consistent with seventy percent of regular education teachers expected students coming into their class to be on grade level or at least a 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level. Over half of regular education teachers expected the same from students going into classes when math was required. This study suggests that self-contained teachers needed to consistently attempt to increase students' academic skills to at least the 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grade level.

When it came to procedural processes, this study pointed out that teachers have their own conviction about which type of test, quiz, assignments, and note taking should be used in their classroom. Although accepting of late work should also be discussed with the students, the survey indicated the completion of worksheet, assignments, and its timely submission was an essential learning skill and a value attributed in teaching self-contained students a sense of responsibility when preparing them to transition. Nevertheless, just as the various teachers in the students' school day used an assortment of styles of worksheets, quizzes and tests, self-contained teachers could use this information to also use an assortment of coursework. Not only do self-contained teachers need to provide a variety of coursework, they also needed to teach the best strategies when taking these assignments. Teaching how to take tests could include such skills as restating the question when answering a short answer problem or picking out the distracters when given multiple choice assignments. This knowledge could be generalized when moving to a regular education class.

When the students have acquired the behavioral, procedural and academic skills in the self-contained classroom, and are ready to transition in the regular education class, the referring teacher will then communicate specifically to the regular education teacher where the student will be transitioning into. This is best to happen at the IEP where the general education teacher

and the rest of the team attend. The behavioral, procedural, and academic strengths and needs specific to the receiving classroom may be addressed at this stage.

Perhaps, additional studies in the future could investigate if there are any other obstacles that are inhibiting the transitioning of self-contained students. Additional studies on transition could examine schools and/or districts' policies regarding transition to see if there are inherent roadblocks for students and /or teachers. For example, a roadblock could be that students that are not properly placed or mixtures of students with learning and emotional disabilities are placed in the same class. Additional studies could investigate what effects mixing students of a different classification has on the teacher's capability to teach the skills that are needed.

There were limitations to this survey. The original intention was to survey all junior high school teachers in the school district. However, because of this district's policy; only four junior high schools could be surveyed. Perhaps a university could design a similar study. A university, most likely would not have the same constraints as an individual district employee.

Another limitation of this survey was that only teachers were surveyed. It is possible that if school administrators or other district personnel were asked for their insights on transition, different viewpoints might have been gleaned.

The information obtained from this survey could be used to guide self-contained teachers into making academic, behavioral, and procedural choices similar to that of a regular education classroom. This similarity of academic, behavioral, and procedural decision could assist students in bringing these skills into standard education classroom. These skills can be adopted by additional students who could be more successful when transitioning into regular education classes. In addition, I will send the letter in Appendix C to additional self-contained LD instructors for use at their own discretion.

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**Appendix A**

## Letter to Principals

Dear Principals,

I am a self-contained LD/ED special education teacher at Bennion Junior High School. I am finishing up my project for completion of my Masters of Special Education. The purpose of my project is to find out the minimum academic, behavioral and procedural expectations of resource and regular education teachers have for self-contained students entering their classrooms. The data gathered could help self-contained teachers mirror these expectations in their classroom and make transitions more successful.

In order to accomplish this, I am requesting permission for the teachers at your school to take a 21 -question multiple-choice survey dealing with this subject. The surveys should be distributed directly at a faculty meeting where the surveys could be completed and collected at that time. For your convenience, I am also available to administer the survey. The survey currently has preliminary pre-approval by the Granite School District Research, Assessment & Evaluation Committee. I anticipate having final approval by the end of March/ first of April and would like to distribute the surveys at that time.

Sincerely,

Christopher Marden

Self-contained LD/ED Teacher

Bennion Junior High School

**Appendix B**

## Survey

Circle the correct response.

1. Grade/s taught. (**Mark all that apply**)

- 7<sup>th</sup>
- 8<sup>th</sup>
- 9<sup>th</sup>
- Other, please specify.

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2. I am a \_\_\_\_\_ teacher

- Core
- Elective
- Resource
- Other, please specify.

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3. At **minimum** I expect students to be at \_\_\_\_\_ grade reading level.

- 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>
- Must be on grade level.
- Other, please specify.

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4. At **minimum** I expect students to be at \_\_\_\_ grade writing level.

- 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>
- Must be on grade level.
- Other, please specify.

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5. At **minimum** I expect students to be at \_\_\_\_ grade math level.

- 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup>
- 3<sup>rd</sup> -4<sup>th</sup>
- 5<sup>th</sup> -6<sup>th</sup>
- Must be on grade level.
- N/A
- Other, please specify

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6. At **minimum**, I expect students to bring assigned materials \_\_\_\_\_ % of the time to class.

- 0-24
- 25-49
- 50-74
- 75-100
- Other, please specify

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7. At **minimum**, I expect students to stay in seat, when needed, \_\_\_ % of the period, during instruction.

- 0-24
- 25-49
- 50-74
- 75-100
- Other, please specify

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8. At **minimum**, I expect students to be able to stay quiet, when needed, \_\_\_\_ % of the period during instruction.

- 0-24
- 25-49
- 50-74
- 75-100
- Other, please specify

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9. At **minimum** I expect students to work without teacher's attention, when needed, \_\_\_\_% of the period, during instruction.

- 0-24%
- 25-49%
- 50-74%
- 75-100%
- Other, please specify

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10. **Most** worksheets in my class are:

- Fill in the blank
- Multiple choice
- Short answers
- Show the work
- Other, please specify.

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11. **Most** quizzes in my class are:

- Fill in the blanks
- Multiple choice
- Short answers
- Show the work
- Other, please specify.

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12. **Most** tests in my class are:

- Fill in the blanks
- Multiple choice
- Short answers
- Show the work
- Other, please specify.

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13. I collect **homework** by:

- Calling for it and collecting it at some point in the class period.
- Calling for it and I immediately have the students hand it to me.
- Reminding students that it is due. It is then their responsibility to put it in the proper location.
- No prompts, the student are expected to turn the assignment in at the correct time and location.
- Other, please specify.

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14. I collect **quizzes** by:

- Calling for it and collecting it at some point in the class period.
- Calling for it and I immediately have the students hand it to me.
- Reminding students that it is due, it is then their responsibility to put it in the proper location.
- No prompts, the student are expected to turn it in at the correct time and location.
- Other, please specify.

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15. I collect a **test** by:

- Calling for it and collecting it at some point in the class period.
- Calling for it and I immediately have the students hand it to me.
- Reminding students that it is due, it is then their responsibility to put it in the proper location.
- No prompts, the student are expected to turn it in at the correct time and location.
- Other, please specify.

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16. I collect in class **worksheets** by:

- Calling for it and collecting it at some point in the class period.
- Calling for it and I immediately have the students hand it to me.
- Reminding students that it is due, it is then their responsibility to put it in the proper location.
- No prompts, the student are expected to turn it in at the correct time and location.
- Other, please specify.

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17. Homework, assignments, and worksheets:

- Are not accepted late.
- Are accepted the week that it was assigned with or without penalty
- Are accepted until the end of the grading period with or without penalty
- Other, please specify.

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18. Quizzes and tests:

- Are not accepted late.
- Are accepted the week that it was assigned with or without penalty
- Are accepted until the end of the grading period with or without penalty
- Other, please specify.

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19. Students are required to take notes **from lecture** by:

- Free hand
- Copy from board
- Fill in the blanks
- Other, please specify.

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20. Students are required to take notes **from movies** by:

- Free hand
- Copy from board
- Fill in the blanks
- Other, please specify.

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21. If you feel an important skill concerning transition was not addressed please comment here:

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## Appendix C

### Letter to Self-Contained Teachers

Dear self-contained teachers:

I taught in a self-contained LD/ED classroom for 6 years. Of course, one of the main goals is to transition our self-contained students into a mainstream classroom. One of the questions that I always had was when do I know that a student is ready to go into a regular education classroom. I was working on my Master's Degree in Special Education and decided to make this the focus of my project. For my project, I created a twenty-one-question survey and gave it to regular education and resource teachers in four junior high schools asking them what their minimum academic, procedural, and behavioral expectations were for incoming self-contained special education students. This way I could find out the skills my students needed before initiating their transition into a mainstream classroom. My intent was to set my classroom's expectations similar to that of the regular education classroom so that all my students would be able to develop their transitioning skills.

I have included my questionnaire and findings for your own personal use in transitioning your students into a regular education classroom should you desire. The data and results included may or may not fit your teaching style; however, the validity of the information may be of use.

Sincerely,

Christopher Marden

Self-contained LD/ED Teacher

Bennion Junior High School