

Cooperative Teaching: Pictures of Possibilities

JEANNE BAUWENS AND JACK J. HOURCADE

Cooperative teaching, in which a general educator and a special services provider (e.g., a special educator, Chapter 1 teacher, speech and language therapist) teach together simultaneously in a general education classroom composed of academically heterogeneous students, has rapidly emerged as an effective way to facilitate the inclusion of students with diverse curricular and instructional needs. In this article we provide an overview of cooperative teaching, note problems experienced by some participants moving into cooperative teaching, and offer practical suggestions for enhancing the effectiveness of cooperative teaching.

Perhaps the most dramatic development in U.S. education over the past decade is the fast-emerging consensus that the traditional structure of our schools is less than adequate today and will be even more inadequate in the future. The rapid increase in the relative proportions of students from diverse backgrounds in many classrooms and schools has reached the point where it is no longer practical to continue pulling out and segregating the students who represent diverse ability levels, cultural groups, and/or linguistic backgrounds. In addition, such segregatory practices are called into question by ethical considerations. Increasingly, therefore, the question is not whether students with diverse backgrounds *should* be included in the general education classroom, but instead

how instruction might be provided most effectively for *all* students.

THE FOUNDATION OF SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION: COLLABORATION

Historically, teaching has been a "lonely profession," with teachers working in almost total isolation. How can schools establish a new professional culture capable of responding more effectively to the rapidly changing needs of the contemporary U.S. school system? The most promising alternative is professional collaboration between teachers, especially in the form of cooperative teaching.

In cooperative teaching, two (or more) educators possessing distinct sets of skills work in a coordinated fashion to teach academically heterogeneous groups of students together in the general classroom (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). The critical feature is that two educators are simultaneously present in the general education classroom for a scheduled part of the instructional day. The essential philosophy undergirding this arrangement is that all educators are responsible for all students.

Although having two teachers simultaneously in the classroom offers great power, often participants are unsure exactly how they can best take practical advantage of this new instructional arrangement. The following pictures of possibilities are verbal and graphic descriptions of field-tested practices that help to release the instructional power inherent in cooperative teaching.

PICTURES OF POSSIBILITIES

The three most promising approaches to implementing cooperative teaching are *team teaching*, *supportive learning activities*, and *complementary instruction* (Bauwens, Hourcade, & Friend, 1989). Within each of these approaches we have identified specific ways to restructure the physical and instructional environment so as to maximize the educational impact of two educators cooperatively teaching. These suggestions are graphically illustrated in this article. (Note: Even though each of these suggestions is discussed and illustrated separately, it is sometimes even more useful to combine these in the classroom.)

Team Teaching

In team teaching, the initial presentation of new content is shared between two teachers who jointly plan and present the targeted academic subject content to all students as clearly and concisely as possible (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). At various times each might assume primary responsibility for specific types of instruction or portions of the curriculum. Pictures of possibilities within the team teaching approach are provided in Figures 1 through 6.

In Figure 1, while one educator gives an overview of the overall content to be presented in that day's instruction, the other can visually supplement the presentation, making the content more concrete and providing an alternative learning channel/modality. Figure 2 illustrates how students can be divided into two heterogeneous groups to receive the same or similar instruction in some skill or concept in smaller, and thus more indi-

visualized, groups. As shown in Figure 3, when the order of instruction of some content is noncritical, the students can be divided into two groups. The two educators then rotate to each group in turn, each teaching a different portion of the content.

Figure 4 illustrates one of the most powerful uses of cooperative teaching, in which one educator presents the basic information to the entire class, while the other moves about the room paraphrasing, clarifying, and monitoring student learning. In the example shown in Figure 5, one of the cooperating teachers also presents basic information, while the other develops and asks questions designed to move students into higher-order thinking. Finally, Figure 6 shows how one educator can review basic content of some lesson while the other provides additional review (e.g., vocabulary instruction) for students who require additional work on a specialized component of that curriculum.

Supportive Learning Activities

In supportive learning activities, cooperative teaching partners identify, develop, and lead student activities designed to reinforce, enrich, and/or enhance learning for all students. These activities can precede the primary instruction, follow it, or be integrated throughout it. Pictures of possibilities for two educators to work together using activities that support true learning of the content are offered in Figures 7 through 12.

In Figure 7, a large group of students is broken into two groups. Within each group students are taught a new skill by one of the two educators. The students are then paired off into dyads, each having a partner from

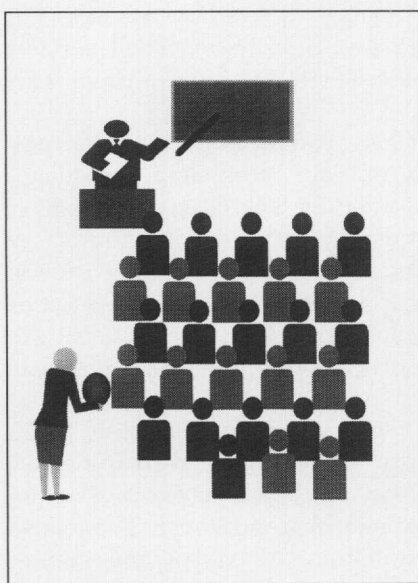


Figure 1. Team teaching 1.

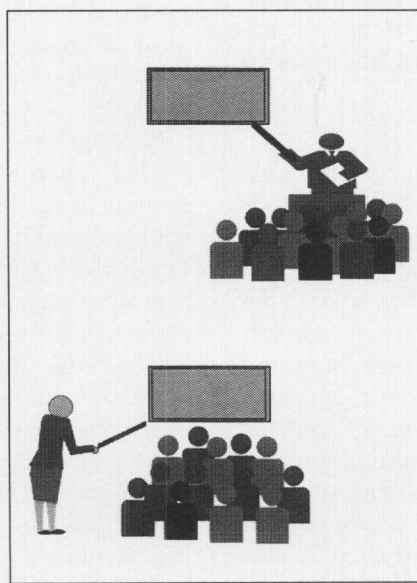


Figure 2. Team teaching 2.

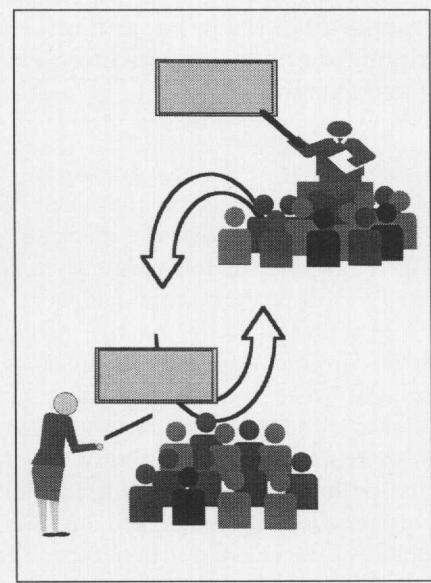


Figure 3. Team teaching 3.

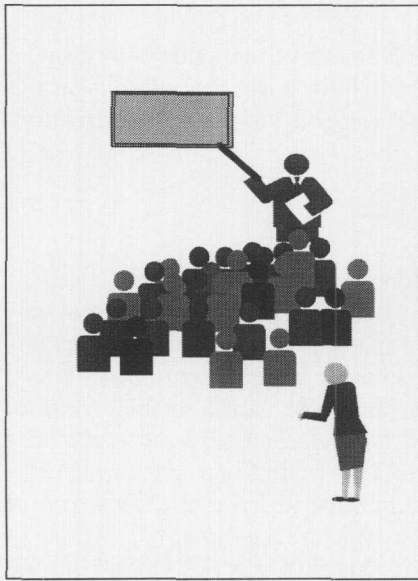


Figure 4. *Team teaching 4.*

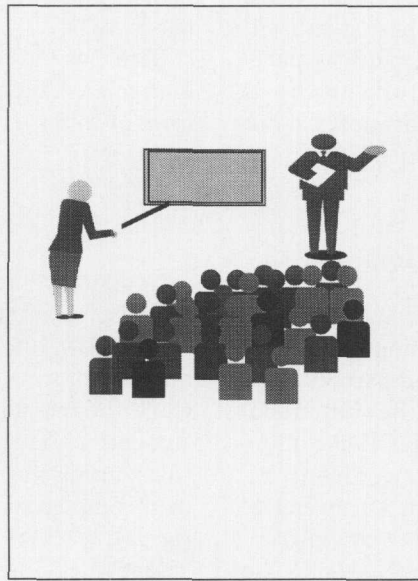


Figure 5. *Team teaching 5.*

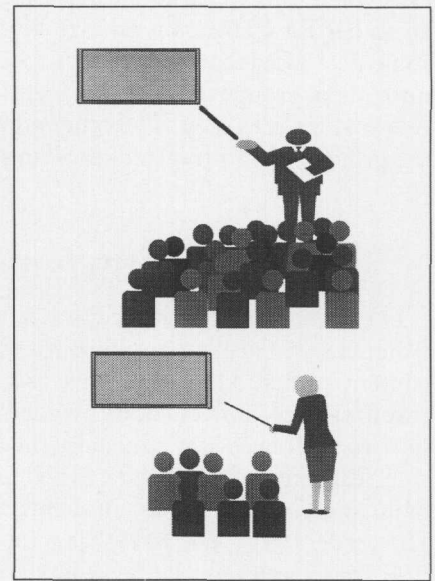


Figure 6. *Team teaching 6.*

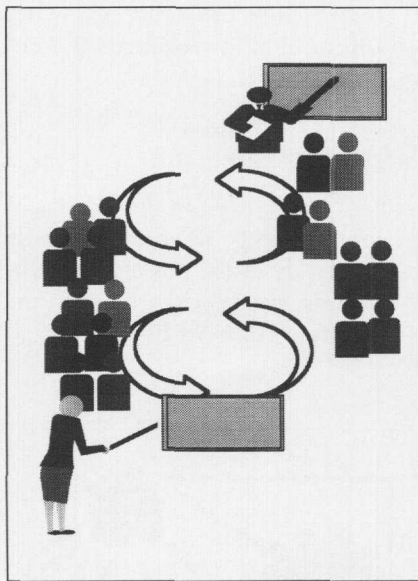


Figure 7. *Supportive learning activities 1.*

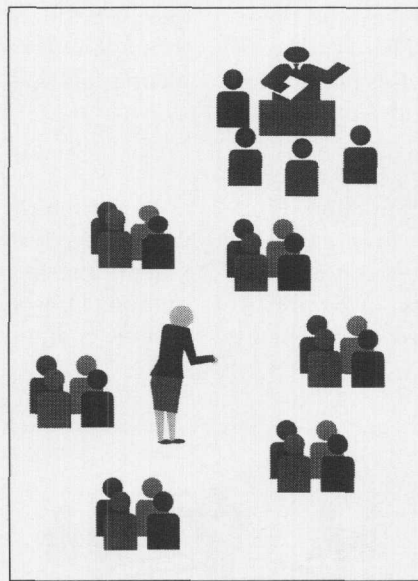


Figure 8. *Supportive learning activities 2.*

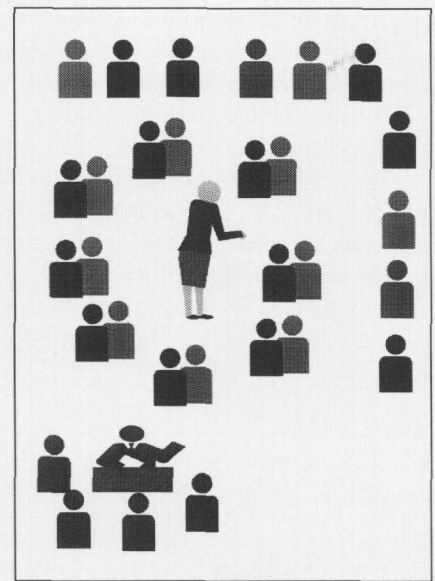


Figure 9. *Supportive learning activities 3.*

the other group. Each peer tutors the other in the skill while the educators monitor. In Figure 8 one educator monitors group work while the other provides small-group enrichment or remedial work as appropriate. Figure 9 demonstrates how one educator might monitor students working both individually and in small groups while the other provides more intensive instruction to a small group of students who choose or need more attention.

Figure 10 illustrates how instruction might be carried out through a debate format, in which the class is divided into two groups, one “pro” some issue and the other

“con.” Each educator works with a group of students to help them develop their position and arguments. Each group subsequently makes a joint presentation to the other group. In Figure 11 the class is broken down into four instructional groups to carry out projects, while the two educators rotate among the groups, monitoring and supporting the students.

Figure 12 provides a useful structure for teaching through multistep projects. In this picture, students are first assigned one of the steps, and are then assigned to groups such that each group contains at least one student who has been assigned each of the steps. One edu-

cator then calls together all the "Step 1" students, who go to her for instruction on that step. These instructed students subsequently return to their groups to peer-tutor their groupmates on that step, and the process is repeated for each step. The other educator moves about the groups, monitoring and clarifying as needed.

Complementary Instruction

In complementary instruction one instructor typically maintains primary responsibility for teaching the specific content matter. The cooperative teaching partner takes responsibility for teaching students the functional how-to skills necessary to acquire the material, including such learning and study skills as taking notes, identifying main ideas, and analysis and evaluation (Bauwens & Hourcade, 1995). The ways that complementary instruction strategies might be incorporated in classrooms are depicted in Figures 13 and 14.

In Figure 13 the two educators demonstrate correct and incorrect applications of some new skill. Students are paired into dyads in which they observe, critique, and record their observations of their teachers' uses of these skills (for example, job interview skills). Then, each student demonstrates correct and incorrect uses of the new skills to his or her partner within the dyad; each educator circulates and monitors.

Figure 14 represents teachers modeling a how-to complementary skill, such as interviewing. Often in projects, students are asked to collect information from a variety of sources, including interviews. However, rarely are students taught skills appropriate to this task. In Figure 14 one teacher models suitable question-asking in inter-

views. The students subsequently imitate this skill in dyads.

Rarely would complementary instruction comprise the bulk of an educator's teaching. Instead, it often takes the form of "mini-lessons" wedged into the day's instruction.

Test Day

Cooperative teaching arrangements can be particularly useful on days when individual evaluations of student skills are taking place. As illustrated in Figure 15, one educator can monitor a larger group taking a test, while the second teacher works with a smaller group of students who require additional support or accommodations during the test. As shown in Figure 16, as each student completes the test, he or she takes the test to one of the two teachers for immediate feedback.

Figure 17 illustrates another way in which complementary instruction can provide immediate feedback to students after completion of the quiz. In this case, students are paired and swap their completed but ungraded quizzes. One teacher reviews the correct answers to the quiz for the entire group, while the other circulates throughout the classroom to monitor accuracy in completing this task.

CONCLUSION

As is often the case with innovation, in the infancy of cooperative teaching, approximately 10 years ago, early practitioners believed intuitively in the power of collaboration. However, they often struggled to identify the specific components and strategies most likely to maxi-

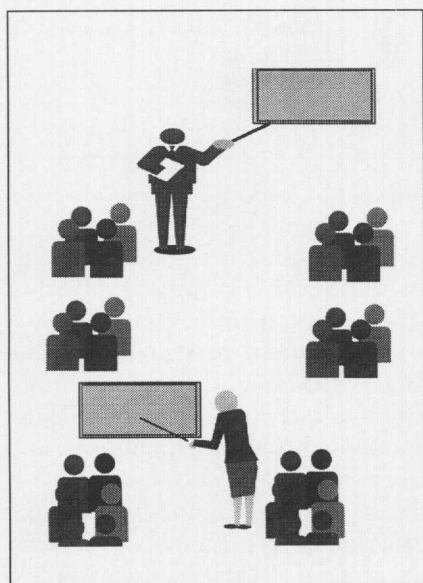


Figure 10. Supportive learning activities 4.

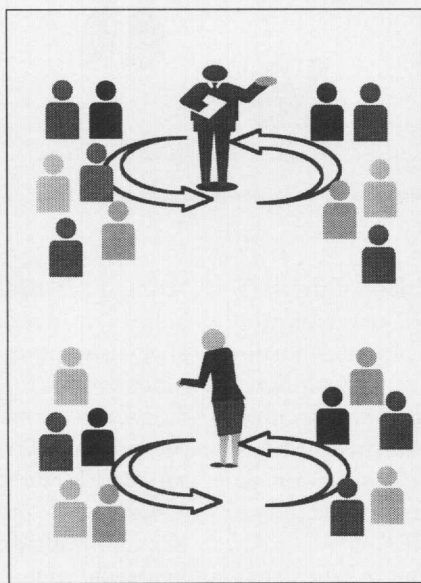


Figure 11. Supportive learning activities 5.

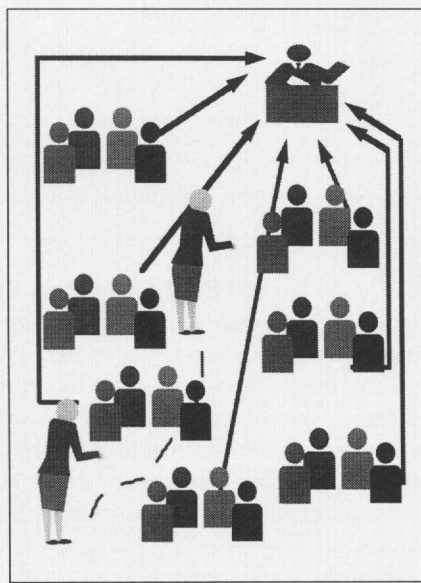


Figure 12. Supportive learning activities 6.

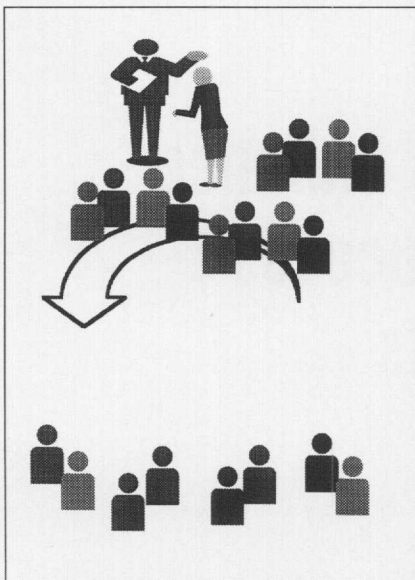


Figure 13. Complementary instruction 1.



Figure 14. Complementary instruction 2.

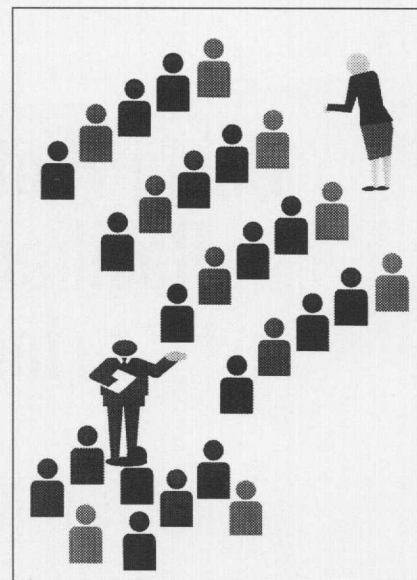


Figure 15. Test Day 1.

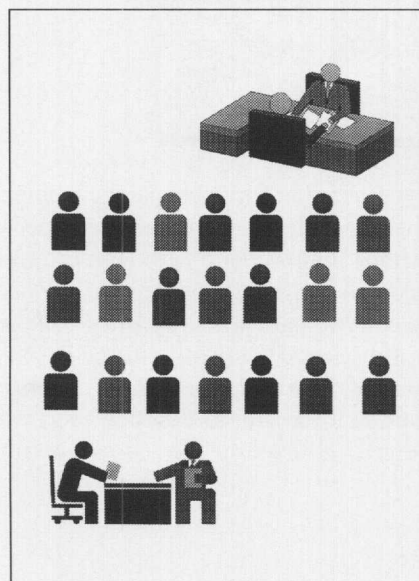


Figure 16. Test Day 2.

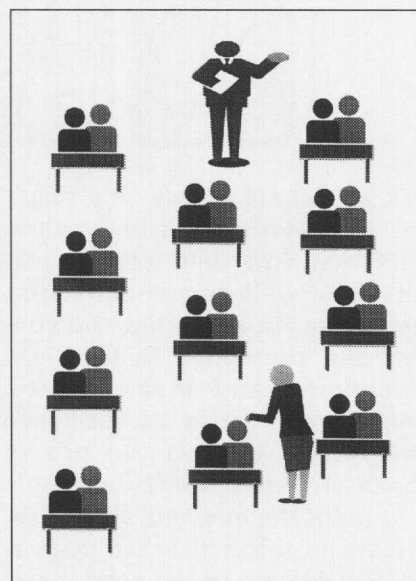


Figure 17. Test Day 3.

mize the strength of two education professionals working together.

A decade of extensive research and practice later, cooperative teaching clearly has demonstrated itself to be an impressively powerful instructional strategy for providing success for students with special needs in general education classrooms. This success is due in large part to an accurate analysis and determination of those fundamental and practical strategies most critical to successful cooperative teaching. Teachers will begin to unleash the powers inherent in cooperative teaching when using the aforementioned pictures of possibilities

as jumping-off points from which to generate more creative utilizations of the power of two educators simultaneously truly working together in a co-active and coordinated fashion.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jeanne Bauwens, EdD, is a professor of special education at Boise State University. Her current professional interests include the identification and dissemination of information on effective collaborative

(continued on p. 89)

child to change his or her direction in school. One student came from another elementary school with a history of behavior problems in the school. The receiving school needed someone to care for and display the flag. The child was asked to raise and lower the flag each day; he made a successful transition into the new school, presenting few problems in the new environment (J. Christiansen, personal communication, April 12, 1991).

Special assemblies and school guests can have a profound impact on children. The content of the program or the power of the message can attract the interest and attention of a child. This can be enhanced by enabling children to shake hands and exchange greetings with the school guest.

SCHOOL AS A CARING COMMUNITY

Schools are in a unique position to embrace children as they develop their connections within the school community. The concepts and examples presented here are not new. Often, though, we respond to children after a problem situation has emerged. When we anticipate the needs of each child, we can create a learning environment that protects the child, supports the developing needs of each child, and fosters the characteristics that increase resilience in children. This proactive approach meets children's needs through positive recognition and support, is an important piece of the solution for students today, and shows promise as an approach to helping at-risk students.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Jeanne Christiansen, PhD, is associate professor of special education and director of academic programs, field experiences, and certification for the College of Education at the University of Idaho. Her interests include students with disabilities, students at risk for school failure, and issues associated with adoption. James L. Christiansen, EdD, was principal at Lena Whitmore Elementary School in Moscow, Idaho, at the time the article was prepared. He continues to work with children with disabilities as a classroom volunteer. Marilyn Howard, EdD, is principal of West Park Elementary School in Moscow, Idaho. She maintains an active interest in literacy for young children. Address:

Jeanne Christiansen, College of Education, University of Idaho, Moscow, ID 83844-3080.

REFERENCES

- Anthony, E., & Cohler, B. (Eds.). (1987). *The invulnerable child*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Antonovsky, A. (1979). *Health, stress, and coping: New perspectives on mental and physical well-being*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Clark, R. M. (1983). *Family life and school achievement: Why poor black children succeed or fail*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frymier, J. (1992). *Final report Phi Delta Kappa study of students at risk I and II*. Bloomington, IN: Phi Delta Kappa.
- Garbarino, J., Dubrow, N., Kostelny, K., & Pardo, C. (1992). *Children in danger: Coping with the consequences of community violence*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Garmezy, N. (1987). Stress, competence, and development: Continuities in the study of schizophrenic adults, children vulnerable to psychopathology, and the search for stress-resistant children. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 57, 159-174.
- Garmezy, N. (1992). Resiliency and vulnerability to adverse developmental outcomes associated with poverty. In T. Thompson & S. C. Hupp (Eds.), *Saving children at risk: Poverty and disabilities* (pp. 45-60). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Glick, H. (1994). Resilience research: How can it help city schools? *City Schools*, 1(1), 11-18.
- Joseph, J. M. (1994). *The resilient child: Preparing today's youth for tomorrow's world*. New York: Plenum.
- Katz, M. (1994). *Shipwrecked by the laughter of the gods*. San Diego, CA: Learning Development Services.
- Murphy, L., & Moriarty, A. (1976). *Vulnerability, coping and growth: From infancy to adolescence*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Northeast Regional Center for Drug-Free Schools and Communities. (n.d.). *Developing the resilient child: A prevention manual for parents, schools, communities, and individuals*. New York: Author.
- Ramirez-Smith, C. (1995). Stopping the cycle of failure: The Comer model. *Educational Leadership*, 52, 14-19.
- Redl, F. (1966). *When we deal with children*. New York: Free Press.
- Rutter, M. (1979). Protective factors in children's responses to stress and disadvantage. In M. Whalen-Dent (Ed.), *Primary prevention of psychopathology: Vol. 3. Promoting social competence and coping in children* (pp. 49-74). Hanover, NH: University Press of New England.
- Slavin, R., Karweit, N., & Madden, N. (1989). *Effective programs for students at risk*. Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Waxman, H. C., deFelix, J. W., Anderson, J. E., & Baptiste, H. P. (1992). *Students at risk in at-risk schools*. Newbury Park, CA: Corwin Press.
- Werner, E. E. (1989). High risk children in young adulthood: A longitudinal study from birth to 32 years. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, 59, 72-81.
- White-Hood, M. (1993). Taking up the mentoring challenge. *Educational Leadership*, 51, 76-78.

(continued from p. 85)

practices for school personnel. Jack J. Hourcade, PhD, is a professor of special education at Boise State University. His interests include professional collaboration in the schools and family and cultural considerations in assessing technology needs of children with disabilities. Address: Jack J. Hourcade, Department of Elementary Education and Specialized Studies, Boise State University, 1910 University Drive, Boise, ID 83725.

REFERENCES

- Bauwens, J., & Hourcade, J. J. (1995). *Cooperative teaching: Rebuilding the schoolhouse for all students*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED.
- Bauwens, J., Hourcade, J., & Friend, M. (1989). Cooperative teaching: A model for general and special education integration. *Remedial and Special Education*, 10, 17-22.