

Training

M&R teachers generally said they thought personal and process skills that underlie the work of the M&R teacher should be present when the position is assumed. Organizational and interpersonal skills, as well as a sensitivity to student's needs and the determination to solve problems, are all things that are difficult to teach.

Specific skills related to completing assessments, writing IEPs and developing curriculum knowledge are more easily acquired on the job. A commitment to personal development and self-improvement is obviously a great advantage to someone working as a methods and resource teacher:

I've had some special education training, but everything else I've had to learn on my own. I've had to learn how to integrate students, how to define their needs and how to have their needs met. I've had to learn course curriculums so that I can modify them. I've had to develop my own system of modification. The best training is experience. That's the only way. You don't develop an intuitive feeling about something unless you've had experience doing it. I've learned most of what I do day-to-day on the job.

When school districts 28 and 29 instituted the position of M&R teacher, a formal training plan was developed. It included individual work with teachers and half-day or full-day group training sessions held every other week. Outside consultants have been used on occasion, but most of the training has been carried out by district staff including the original methods and resource teachers themselves.

Training focuses on developing an understanding of the philosophy of an integrated program and the role of the M&R teacher in supporting the program. Training in collaborative skills is particularly useful as these skills are critical in establishing the right relationship with the classroom teacher.