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# UMI®

THE CONCEPTIONS OF AND EXPERIENCES WITH INCLUSION

OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES

BY A COHORT OF PARTICIPANTS FROM ONE ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL

By

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A thesis

submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements

for the degree of

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in the

Faculty of Education

**LAKEHEAD UNIVERSITY**

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Dedicated to my mother

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# Abstract

The primary purpose of this qualitative study is to examine the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with intellectual and multiple disabilities by a cohort of participants from one Ontario high school? The data was collected and analyzed via qualitative semi-structured interviews. Participants were selected via purposive sampling, and included four female caregivers and one male caregiver.

The findings of this study provide insight into the participants' opinions about inclusion, focussing on what inclusion means to them. Also identified are their points of view regarding politics, goals, friendship, and the elimination of special education classrooms and how these relate to inclusion. As well, the participants identified elements necessary for effective inclusive education.

According to the participants, the term inclusion refers to educating students with disabilities together with students without disabilities. Politically, inclusion is seen as being cost effective. The participants do not believe that inclusion facilitates friendships between students with and without disabilities. True friendships develop only between students with disabilities. The participants' goals for inclusion are student orientated. They oppose full inclusion because students with disabilities ultimately forego many benefits. Effective collaborative planning invites the parents, guardians, and support personnel's input, and helps to place students with disabilities appropriately. Negative ramifications for parents, guardians, and support personnel, and students with and without disabilities are a result of inappropriate inclusive educational placements. Positive attitudes and proper support for all individuals involved in the inclusion process are necessary for inclusion to be successful.

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# Chapter One

## Scope and Purpose

### Purpose

This qualitative study has four main purposes: First, based on a cohort of participants from one Ontario high school this study examines the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. Second, this study aims to develop further the existing body of research and knowledge addressing the concerns expressed by the participants. Third, this study explores the terms inclusive education and/or inclusion as defined by the participants. Fourth, this study compares and contrasts the opinions of the participants on inclusive education and/or inclusion for secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The research questions are:

1. What does inclusion mean to you?

2. What are the goals of inclusion as you see them?

3. Can you describe an experience of inclusion?

4. What are the strengths of inclusion?

5. What are your concerns about inclusion?

6. What would be an ideal inclusion program?

Central to this thesis is the concept of inclusive education as it is understood by the participants who are responsible for secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The participant cohort is composed of parents, guardians, and support personnel. Based on my experiences as a special needs educator, I believe that parents, guardians, and support personnel need to be consulted by administrative professionals such as superintendents, principals, vice-principals,

and program managers in order to understand how inclusion affects the education of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities.

At present, in our educational system, it is standard to have two types of support personnel serving students with special needs. First, there are paid special education support persons (SESPs). Second, there are unpaid college and/or high school students who have chosen or been assigned to complete work placements in a school environment to assist students with special needs.

Support personnel are present because of the increase in identified students with special needs. The main responsibility of support personnel is to implement the individual programs of students with special needs. In the educational setting, support personnel learn about the strengths and weaknesses of students whom they work with. Often, a close relationship develops between them.

In special education, parents need to be involved in their child's education. Green and Shinn (1994) asserted that "parents are meant to play an important role as advocates for their children in the special education process" (p. 269). Agreement is evident in Henderson and Hilton's (1993) words, "There is little debate about the importance and potential benefits of involving parents in the education of students with severe disabilities" (p. 199). Palmer, Borthwick-Duffy, and Widaman (1998) commented on the usefulness of parent advocacy. "Parents have historically been the driving force behind many changes that have occurred in the service delivery for exceptional children" (Palmer et al., p. 273). Gearheart, Weishahn, and Gearheart (1995) and Palmer (1995) added further that positive attitudes of parents are significant to the success of inclusion for students with disabilities in general education classes (cited by Borthwick-Duffy, Palmer & Lane, 1996). It was also identified that positive attitudes of support personnel were keys to successful inclusion of students with special needs.

Palmer et al. (1998) said parental involvement is necessary because "parents are arguably those most affected by the move toward inclusive education" (p. 272). Bennet, Deluca, and Bruns (1997) agreed. They "used qualitative and quantitative methods to investigate the perspectives of parents of children with disabilities ... in inclusive settings" (p. 115). Forty-eight parents completed a survey while seven parents were interviewed over the telephone. The disabilities of their children ranged from mild to severe levels. Bennet et al. concluded that "parents ... are most affected by the outcomes of the inclusion process" (p. 127).

## Background to the Study

I have specialist qualifications in special education in Ontario, Canada. I have worked in this capacity for the majority of my teaching career. Five of these years were devoted to a program in Ontario that accommodated secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The students with multiple disabilities were intellectually as well as physically disabled. All the students had severe cognitive disabilities. The ages of the female and male students ranged from 14 to 21.

Radical program changes occurred before the onset of my second year affiliated with this program. Initially, only the students with intellectual disabilities attended the program, and it was delivered in an elementary setting. Although the students with intellectual disabilities were not educated among their peers, the elementary setting had positive aspects. First, the elementary populace was very accepting of students with intellectual disabilities and often befriended them. Second, the library, computer, and gymnasium facilities were geared towards the level of students with intellectual disabilities. Therefore, access into these areas was readily available. The students with multiple disabilities were educated at a different location where it was felt that their physical

needs were better met by specialized services which were not offered in the elementary school setting.

Today, the program consists of students with both intellectual and multiple disabilities. Furthermore, these students attend a high school within their zone and they are included in general education classes.

## The Problem

During the last four years parents, guardians, and support personnel of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities heard repeatedly the terms inclusive education and/or inclusion. Through formal and informal conversations, they indicated to me that they were confused about the meaning of inclusion. Aefsky (1995) said that educators are eminently accountable for this dilemma of confusion because of their inability to agree upon a definition for inclusion.

Aefsky (1995) held that "a significant problem with the inclusion movement is the assumption that educators agree on a definition of inclusion " (p. 1). According to Villa and Thousand (1995), inclusion is an attitude or a belief system. Inclusion "is a way of life, a way of living together, based on a belief that each individual is valued and does belong. An inclusive school will be one in which all students feel included" (p. v). Andrews and Lupart (1993) referred to inclusion as "the merging of regular and special education into a unified educational system in order to meet the diverse needs of all students" (p. xi). Sale and Carey (1995) used the term inclusion "to represent the education of all students in general classrooms" (p. 6). Jenkinson (1997) added that "inclusion is not synonymous with integration and mainstreaming, nor is it concerned only with the education of students with disabilities" (p. 140).

Jenkinson (1997) also said that interpretations of the term inclusive schooling "differ widely

both within and between countries" (p. 7). Coutinho and Repp (1999) reported that "the inclusive schools movement is defined and interpreted in a variety of ways" (p. 14). Villa and Thousand (1995) claimed that "even after it is operationally defined, inclusion is still an elusive term. Part of the confusion arises from the varying assumptions that people associate with inclusive education" (p. 11).

According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994a), people individually define inclusion. "It means different things to people who wish different things from it" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a, p. 299). For example, to some people inclusion is just a renaming of a previously used term such as mainstreaming (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). For others "it means decentralization of power, the concomitant empowerment of teachers ... a fundamental reorganization of teaching and learning processes ... the redefinition of professional relationships (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a, p. 299). Finally, it could mean the elimination of special education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a).

Regarding the meaning of inclusion, there is no consensus about whether special education classes or classrooms will be eliminated (Coutinho & Repp, 1999). The debate as to whether inclusion means a student is educated fully or partially in a regular classroom adds more ambiguity to the term inclusion.

Individuals want to make appropriate educational placement decisions for the students they are responsible for. This can be difficult without fully understanding inclusion, and when conflicting inclusion viewpoints are rampant. Jenkinson (1997) addressed both these issues. Jenkinson stated that "decisions in special education should be informed" (p. 6). She commented further that many parents receive "conflicting advice about educational options....Parents are subject to many pressures and may find it difficult to resist well-meant but ill-informed advice from people they perceive to have greater knowledge or expertise than themselves" (p. 5-6).

## Rationale

Conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities need to be examined by parents, guardians, and support personnel. There are two reasons why investigation is needed.

First, the topic of full inclusion as it is presented by the advocacy groups The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH) and The Association for Retarded Citizens (Arc) centres around students with intellectual and multiple disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). TASH is responsible for the

> change in leadership of the special education reform movement, a rather abrupt replacement
>
> of the heterogeneous, special education-general education, "high incidence/low incidence"
>
> crowd with a group primarily concerned about the rights and well-being of children and
>
> adults with severe intellectual disabilities. (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a, p. 299)

The goals of TASH are the abolition of special education, the enhancement of students' social competency, and the changing of attitudes of nondisabled teachers and students (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Fuchs and Fuchs (1994a) reported that inclusive education "deemphasizes curriculum, academic standards, and student and teacher accountability" (p. 303) and stresses "socialization skills, attitude change, and positive peer relations" (p. 301). "In fact, for some advocates of full inclusion for students with severe disabilities, social integration and the development of meaningful relationships have even surpassed the learning of functional academic and independent living skills as important educational goals" (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996, p. 325).

For those "who place socialization goals above all other education priorities, general education classrooms would seem to be the most appropriate setting" (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996,

p. 319). Palmer et al. (1998) conducted a survey in California on parent perceptions of inclusive practices for their children with significant cognitive disabilities. The survey was completed by 460 parents who had at least one child, from 3 to 22 years of age, attending a public school. The children were placed in segregated classrooms and were mainstreamed anywhere from 0 to 3 or more hours a day. According to Palmer et al., "it may then be that parents who share the inclusionist view of the relative importance of socialization are those who would tend to favour general class placements for their children" (p. 279).

With full inclusion, problems could exist for advocates who focus on educational goals such as functional academic and independent living skills instead of socialization. In their research, Palmer et al. (1998) found that although "parents were relatively positive regarding the social outcomes of general class placement" they were concerned about "the impact of such placement on the quality of education services their children receive" (p. 279). Therefore, more research is needed to determine to what "extent the move toward inclusive practices is consistent with the views of parents of students with significant cognitive disabilities" (Palmer et al., p. 272).

Second, a bulk of existing research addresses program outcomes for students with mild to moderate disabilities in elementary settings (Borthwick-Duffy, 1996) and it focusses "on the perceptions of superintendents, administrators, special education teachers, and general education teachers" and not on "the perceptions of parents on the practice of inclusion" (Ryndak, Downing, Jacqueline & Williamson, 1995, p. 147). Palmer et al. (1998) recognized the lack of research on parental perceptions of inclusion with students with severe cognitive disabilities. They stated:

> While there has been a recent trend toward inclusive educational placements for students with significant cognitive disabilities, little information exists regarding parent perceptions

of such practices....to date there are no published empirical studies specifically addressing

parental perceptions of the efficacy of including their own children with significant cognitive

disabilities in general education classrooms. (p. 271- 273)

An explanation for this limited research may be that "in terms of numbers, students with severe and

multiple disabilities form a minority among those with special educational needs (Jenkinson, 1997,

p. 186).

According to Borthwick-Duffy et al. (1996), research not specific to secondary students with

intellectual and multiple disabilities cannot be generalized to these students. Methodological issues

such as parental expectations, quality of instruction, years of experience of the teacher, attitude of

the teacher, type of inclusion program, the length of inclusion, the age the student, and the severity

of the disability limit generalizability.

The combination of needed research investigating whether the beliefs of parents, guardians,

and support personnel coincides with the goals of TASH, the lack of research focussing on parental

perceptions of inclusion of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities, the

limitations of the generalizability of research that does exist, and my personal connection with

parents, guardians, and support personnel encourages me to examine qualitatively the research

question: **What are the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with**

**intellectual and multiple disabilities by a cohort of participants from one Ontario high school?**

## Definition of Terms

A **student with special needs** is an identified individual requiring special education.

**Multiple disabilities** refers to both intellectual and physical disabilities.

**A secondary student** is an individual who attends high school.

**Inclusive education** means that all students should be educated in regular classrooms whether they have special needs or not (Aefsky, 1995).

**Inclusion** refers to inclusive education (Andrews & Lupart, 1993).

**Full inclusion** means that students with special needs are educated in regular classrooms for the entire school day.

**Support personnel** refers to paid or unpaid individuals who work with students with special needs in an educational environment (Lakehead District School Board).

**A SESP** is a paid special education support person (Lakehead District School Board)

**Cohort of participants** refers to the parents, guardians, and support personnel of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities.

**TASH** refers to The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a) who advocate that all students with intellectual and multiple disabilities should experience full inclusion in regular educational classrooms.

**PL94-142** is the abbreviation for the Public Law 94-142 passed in 1975 in the United States (Wilson, 1983, p. 4-5). PL94-142 identifies the regulations which affect special education, referred to education for all handicapped children. It has seven principles, five of which refer to a free appropriate public education (Yell, 1995). The other two are the least restrictive environment (LRE) and culturally appropriate testing and evaluation.

**LRE** refers to the least restrictive environment. LRE is a principle (regulation) of PL94-142. LRE means "to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including those children in public and private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped,

and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily" (Villa & Thousand, 1995, p. 5). The LRE principle is mandatory in the United States but not in Ontario. Individual school boards in Ontario "may incorporate this principle into their own philosophies and procedures" (Wilson, 1983, p. 5).

FAPE refers to a free appropriate public education (Yell, 1995). FAPE represents five of the seven principles of PL94-142 (Yell).

Bill 82: In Ontario this is the legislative counterpart to PL94-142 (Wilson, 1983). Wilson reports that "Bill 82 was passed in December, 1980" (p. 2). Wilson points out that although people still refer to Bill 82 as a reality, the correct title of this piece of legislation is "The Education Amendment Act, 1980". Bill 82 was an amendment of the 1974 Ontario Education Act (Wilson). The five principles of Bill 82 "are similar in intent if not in wording" to five of the principles of PL94-142 (Wilson, p. 5). FAPE also represents these five principles.

REI refers to the regular education initiative. REI is "the merging of special and general education into a single organisational structure, with all students with disabilities being educated in the regular school" (Jenkinson, p. 37).

Limitations

The following constitute the limitations of the study:

1. I was the primary instrument for data collection and analysis. This may be viewed as a weakness as subjectivity becomes an issue. However, Bogdan and Biklen (1992) hold that a researcher can

overcome this problem by acknowledging and controlling subjectivity through fieldnote reflection (p. 124). Also, a direct correlation between the transcripts and the developed themes, and frequent citation from the transcripts to confirm and support claims verify the trustworthiness of the researcher.

2. The size (5) and mode (purposive) of the sample selection cannot be generalized to a larger sample. This is because the participants represent a small number of individuals residing in Ontario.

3. In the semi-structured interviews, similar questions were asked of all participants. However, follow up questions were required in most cases to clarify or expand upon the responses. According to Patton (1980), flexibility in the sequencing and wording of follow up questions reduced the comparability of responses.

## Chapter Two

## Review of the Literature

### Setting a Context for Inclusive Education

The terms inclusive education and/or inclusion have been used in education since the 1990s (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). Since the inclusion movement was popularized, this topic has been difficult to ignore and is apparent in every school.

Inclusion is another attempt to refocus the notion of the least restrictive environment (LRE) (Aefsky, 1995). The LRE principle favours education in the regular classroom (Yell, 1995). The term LRE means that

> to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children, including those children in public and private institutions or other care facilities, are educated with children who are not handicapped, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of handicapped children from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the handicap is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily. (Villa & Thousand, 1995, p. 5)

Aefsky summarized the LRE. She stated that educational services must be provided in general education classrooms unless the nature and severity of the student's individual educational needs require a more restrictive setting outside of a regular classroom.

Originally, supplementary aids or services were not included in LRE, but were added because attempts at educating students with special needs in a regular classroom proved disastrous (Villa & Thousand, 1995). Once implemented, efforts at inclusion were more effective (Villa & Thousand).

There is plenty of evidence to illustrate past attempts to implement the LRE principle. The

terminology used to represent the forerunners to the inclusion movement are integration and mainstreaming. Andrews and Lupart (1993) defined integration as "full participation of exceptional students in regular education classes" (p. 40). Jenkinson (1997) defined integration as "enrolment in a regular class, with perhaps minimum withdrawal for therapy or special instructional needs that cannot be met without difficulty or considerable disruption to the regular class" (p. 8). The obvious difference between definitions is full versus partial placement in regular classrooms. Andrew and Lupart suggested that integration, the term used in Canada during the 1970s, was replaced in the 1980s with the term mainstreaming. Mainstreaming was defined by Robichaud and Enns (1980) as a "trend toward integrating the mildly handicapped as much as possible into the regular classroom" (cited by Andrews & Lupart, p. 42). Andrews and Lupart defined mainstreaming as "the accommodation of students with special needs in a regular education setting" (p. 13). Lipsky and Gartner (1989) referred "to mainstreaming as the provision of opportunities for students labelled as handicapped who are in special education settings to spend a portion of their time in general education" (cited by Jenkinson, p. 8). Again, an apparent difference between definitions is the amount of time a student spends in the regular classroom. However, a major distinction is the specific reference to students with mild disabilities in the first definition while the other definitions refer to all students with disabilities regardless of the degree of disability. Similar to inclusion, the terms integration and mainstreaming are defined differently by different individuals; however, the underlying similarity among all the terms is the reference to educating students with special needs in regular classrooms.

"The 1970s was an eventful decade for the progressive inclusion movement throughout Canada" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 39). Not only was there an emphasis on educating students

with special needs in the LRE, but categorizing students according to their disability was seen as discriminatory because it gave rise to inappropriate stereotypes (Andrews & Lupart). As well, comparison studies were being conducted on the academic progress and social adjustment of students in special and regular classes (Andrews & Lupart). During this era normalization became an influential theme (Andrews & Lupart). Originating in Scandinavia, normalization implied "that the patterns and conditions of everyday life that were available to these people (people with an intellectual disability) should be as close as possible to those available to the mainstream of society" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 11-12). According to Jenkinson, the concept was later redefined by Wolfensberger (1972) in order to apply it to people with all kinds of disabilities. In education normalization means "making maximum use of the regular school system-the system that is used by the mainstream community-with minimum dependence of segregated facilities" (Jenkinson, p. 12). Deinstitutionalization also became popular. Deinstitutionalization is "the movement to remove disabled individuals from residential institutional care and place them in home community settings that support and foster their independence and quality of life" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 40). These concepts, normalization and deinstitutionalization, together with a publication called "One Million Children" were responsible for significantly reducing segregationist practices (Andrews & Lupart). Another development was "revisions in teacher-training programs to ensure that prospective teachers better understood the learning needs of exceptional students" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 41).

Events in the 1980s also shaped the Canadian movement towards inclusive education. The most significant event "was when the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms was entrenched in the Canadian constitution in 1982" (Porter & Richler, 1991, p. 12). "The Charter created a new environment in which the overriding principles of liberty, freedom from discrimination, and freedom

of association set broad parameters within which education systems must operate" (Porter & Richler, p. 12). According to Porter and Richler, "the original Charter prohibited discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, or age. A 1985 amendment also prohibited discrimination on the basis of mental or physical disability" (p. 41). The Charter created "the means ... to challenge the lack of educational rights for the handicapped" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 47). Elwood v. Halifax County-Bedford District School Board was the first Charter challenge (Porter & Richler). In Nova Scotia in 1986, Rick and Maureen Elwood fought to keep their son, Luke, who had a intellectual disability in an integrated setting. The school board was going to remove Luke from his neighbourhood and transfer him back to a segregated school. The parents claimed that their child had the constitutional right to attend the neighbourhood school. The Elwood case was settled prior to trial and in Luke's favour. In Ontario, the Hysert v. Carelton Board of Education et al. case also "came out in favour of the disadvantaged person in a Charter challenge" (Porter & Richler, p. 67).

There is much to be said about the intent of the Charter; however, inherent flaws limit its influence regarding education. Webster (1994) remarked that there wasn't a flooding of court cases, about educational rights, as was predicted. According to Webster, a reason for this is that "the wording of the Charter is ambiguous and open-ended, making the argument of cases difficult" (p. 11). Robertson (1987) said that procedures for student assessment and categorization, placement, the discretion to exclude students from regular classrooms, and the very concept of segregated education are subject to challenge (cited by Porter & Richler, 1991). Another significant problem with the Charter is that it isn't directly concerned with education (Jenkinson, 1997). Jenkinson demonstrated this idea through citing Black-Branch (1993) who examined school principals on their views on how the Charter impacted special education. Although most principals thought the Charter was important

in expanding the rights of students with disabilities, the impact it had on their education was less apparent to them. Jenkinson wrote, "There had been a great focus on meeting the needs of students with disabilities, but principals disagreed on the extent to which this focus was a direct result of the Charter itself" (p. 28). Jenkinson asserted that positive attitudes displayed by principals and teachers about integrated education will influence the way they interpret the Charter. Jenkinson also stated that individuals with positive attitudes will recognize that integrated education for students with disabilities is a right.

Next, in New Brunswick in 1986, Bill 85 was passed. Section 454(2)1 of Bill 85 affected significantly the Canadian inclusion movement. Bill 85 states:

> A school board shall place exceptional pupils such that they receive special education programs and services in circumstances where exceptional pupils can participate with pupils who are not exceptional pupils within regular classroom settings to the extent that is considered practicable by the board having due regard for the education needs of all pupils.
>
> (Porter & Richler, 1991, p. 14)

The significance of Bill 85 is that a case has to be made to remove a child from a regular class; whereas, before Bill 85 a case had be a made to include a student with disabilities (Porter & Richler). Equality and procedural issues for educational practice in Bill 85 reflect the Charter (Porter & Richler).

Also, in the U.S. during the 1980s, there was a move towards the regular education initiative (REI) (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Special needs educators headed the REI movement. REI had at least two distinct advocacy groups (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Advocates for the high-incidence group were interested in students with learning disabilities, behaviour disorders, and mild/moderate mental

retardation; whereas, advocates for the low-incidence group were interested in students with severe disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). The intention behind the REI was "the merging of special and general education into a single organisational structure, with all students with disabilities being educated in the regular school" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 37). The goals were to a) restructure the relationship between general and special education without interfering with special education services, b) increase significantly the number of children with disabilities in the regular classroom, and c) improve the academic achievement of students with mild and moderate disabilities and of underachievers with disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). The leaders of the reform wanted to "strengthen regular classrooms' teaching and learning processes by an infusion of special education resources, thereby making such settings more responsive to student diversity" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a, p. 299). At the same time this would lessen the caseloads of special education teachers so they could work intensively with students whose needs are greater (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Also, they did not want to interfere with special education services because they understood "the continuing need of many students with disabilities for additional services and resources" (Jenkinson, p. 37). For example, the advocates for the low-incidence group were interested in having students with severe disabilities attend neighbourhood schools but were not interested in having them educated in regular classes (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a).

Discussed previously was The Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps (TASH). TASH continues to advocate for the low-incidence group. Due to disillusioned and devitalized supporters of other groups, TASH took control of the REI movement (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Although they claimed to represent "all children" critics believe that their school reform plan is driven by "What type of school will be best for our children? ... What's best for our kids is good for all kids"

(p. 303).

In the 1990s the term inclusion (Andrews & Lupart, 1993) referred to adherence to the LRE provision. Jenkinson (1997) asserted that, "the inclusive schooling movement in the United States was advocated primarily by" TASH (p. 40). An aim of inclusion was to "enhance the social skills and community participation of people with severe disabilities and in so doing to change the attitudes of both teacher and students without disabilities" (Jenkinson, p. 141). According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994), the aim of inclusion "differs from the regular education initiative, which had as its prime goal the improvement of academic skills among people with mild to moderate disabilities" (cited by Jenkinson, p. 141). Another difference is the recommendation that students with severe disabilities be educated in the regular classroom as opposed to just attending their neighbourhood schools. Additionally, Jenkinson suggested that advocates of inclusion promote the elimination of special education and special educators altogether.

Andrews and Lupart (1993) suggested that the traditional paradigm characterized by a dual system of educational service delivery (regular and special education) has been replaced by a paradigm that is characterized by a unified system of educational service delivery (a merger of special and regular education). This was recognized by many other researchers (Aefsky, 1995; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a; Lieberman, 1985; Stainback & Stainback, 1984; Villa & Thousand, 1995). Andrews and Lupart supported this new paradigm because of the "increasing numbers of children in need of individualized programming, the expanding knowledge of skill of teachers with respect to student diversity, effective assessment, teaching methodologies, and the lower level of funding for special services" (p. 8). They said that a unified system and not the present dual system is capable of handling effectively the current educational situation.

Support for full inclusion is not universal. It is true that there has been an increase in inclusion programs (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996), and that TASH has profoundly impacted the policy environment, but there are advocacy groups who are not in favour of dismantling the continuum of special education services (Borthwick-Duffy et al.). Fuchs and Fuchs (1994a) reported that advocates for students with learning disabilities claimed these students "sometimes require an intensity and systematicity of instruction uncommon to general education classrooms" (p. 304). As well, they reported that advocates of children with hearing and visual impairments "support special schools on grounds that general education cannot be trusted always to provide specialized services to their children, and that it deprives many students of necessary cultural and socialization experience" (1994a, p. 304). Jenkinson (1997) also referred to the strong opposition from members of the deaf community to full inclusion as the only option. Jenkinson said that students who are deaf lack normal opportunities for communication with peers in the same language and this type of communication is important for normal social and emotional development. "Positive attitudes of students with disabilities in the mainstream, acceptance by peers, opportunities for participation and the availability of resources and support staff may not be enough for many students to develop as fully as possible" (Jenkinson, p. 157). Shanker (1994-95) proclaimed that "many—including those for blind, deaf, attention-deficit-disordered and learning-disabled children—believe a one-size-fits all approach will be disastrous for the disabled children themselves" (p. 19). Coutinho and Repp (1999) stated that The National Education Association and The Council for Exceptional Children believe inclusion is a meaningful goal but they also support educational services in segregated environments. Wilson (1983) suggested that The Association for Bright Children also has mixed feeling towards inclusion "as they sometimes view their children as under-included in special education" (p. 35). According

to Borthwick-Duffy et al., "the group that TASH represents is far from united in their perceptions of the efficacy of the full inclusion model" (p. 319). Jenkinson summed it up. "The inclusive schooling movement has therefore not been universally accepted by either professional or parent groups concerned with the education of students with severe disabilities" (Jenkinson, p. 41).

## U.S. Legislation

It is important for Canadian advocates of students with special needs to learn about and understand both the U.S and Canadian legislations on education. Canadians need to acknowledge the U.S. federal legislation as it "played a significant role in promoting legislation-based educational change in Canadian provinces and territories" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 41-42). Andrews and Lupart also said, "The Canadian movement toward individualized education and the least restrictive environment for all students has followed a pattern of progressive inclusion that was similarly evident in the United States" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 31). Understanding legislation from both countries helps to clarify some of the uncertainty surrounding the term inclusion. The U.S. legislation will be examined first.

The U.S. federal legislation is called Public Law 94-142. The purpose of Public Law 94-142 is to identify the regulations which presently affect special education in the U.S. (Wilson, 1983). According to Wilson, PL94-142 is the abbreviation for the Public Law 94-142: The Education of All Handicapped Children Act which was passed in 1975. In 1990, it was renamed Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) (Aefsky, 1995).

Wilson (1983) documented seven principles to the law. They are the right to a) an appropriate special education program, b) a program without cost to the family, c) a guaranteed due

process for pupils and parents meaning "parents may challenge the appropriateness of the educational program ... and not just the identification and placement of the child" (p. 5), d) an individual education program (IEP), e) an annual review of the suitability of the program and placement (IPRC), f) placement in the LRE, and g) culturally appropriate testing and evaluation. "Although the terms inclusion or inclusive education cannot be located in this law, the definition of least restrictive environment (LRE) is contained in the law and has provided the initial legal impetus for creating inclusive education" (Villa & Thousand, 1995, p. 4).

Yell (1995) believed that the first five principles entitle students to a free appropriate public education. According to Yell, in the U.S the acronym FAPE refers to free appropriate public education. Furthermore, FAPE is referred to as a provision of the PL94-142 mandate.

Four legislative foundations evolved from PL94-142. The foundations focus on a) the continuum of alternate placements, b) discipline decisions, c) receiving an education in a more restricted environment, and d) the conflict among LRE and FAPE. These foundations help to clarify the meaning of PL94-142. Subsequently, the term inclusion becomes less ambiguous. These foundations will be examined next.

## Legislative History: The Legal Story

The first legislative foundation involves the continuum of alternate placements. Congress was aware that under inclusion not all students' needs can be served (Yell, 1995). Congress required that schools and other institutions provide a continuum of alternate placements:

> The settings, listed from less restrictive to most restrictive, are as follows: instruction in regular classes, special classes, special schools, home instruction, and instruction in hospitals

or institutions. The purpose of the continuum is to make available a number of placements so that the child may be placed in the setting that is most appropriate and least restrictive. (Yell, p. 391)

This satisfies both the LRE and FAPE provisions.

The second foundation regards discipline decisions. If a student with disabilities is a danger to her/himself or to other students, the student's placement in the regular classroom can be deemed inappropriate (Yell, 1995). Therefore, safety issues take priority over the benefits the student with disabilities may receive from inclusion (Aefsky, 1995; Yell). If a student is suspended because of violent tendencies "the school district is responsible for having an eligibility meeting to determine if a child's disability is the cause of the action that precipitated the suspension" (Aefsky, p. 17). According to Aefsky, if it is determined that there is a causal relationship between the disability and the action which prompted suspension, all charges are dropped and the student must be provided with an appropriate educational setting. Furthermore, Aefsky reported that if a causal relationship is nonexistent then an appropriate educational setting does not have to be provided. Unless the parents of the aggressive student agree to have their child removed from the inclusive classroom, Shanker (1994-95) asserted that the aggressive student will remain in the classroom until the parents attend an eligibility meeting. Shanker also claimed that it often takes several months before an eligibility meeting is conducted at which point an alternative placement is suggested. From experience, children stay in school until the eligibility meeting because parents prefer that their children are in school than at home. Shanker concluded that this policy is problematic because when aggressive students remain in an inclusive classroom the other students are put at risk.

Another component of this foundation is that if the cost of including a student is excessive

because of the number of supplementary aids and services necessary to ensure an appropriate placement, then removal from the regular classroom is justified (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994). Osborne and Dimattia continued. They stated the problem with the term excessive is that the U.S. courts have not quantified the monetary amount in relation to this term.

The third foundation states that when a student with disabilities cannot receive an appropriate education, even when supplementary aids and services are available, then the student will receive an education in a more restricted environment (Yell, 1995). However, the school does not have to "provide every conceivable supplementary aid or service to assist the child. Furthermore, teachers are not required to devote most or all of their time to the child with disabilities nor to modify their curriculum to the extent that it is essentially a new curriculum" (Yell, p. 394). In Canada, Bill 85 which was previously described, is comparable to this principle.

The fourth foundation is that the two provisions of PL94-142, LRE and FAPE, are sometimes in conflict (Yell, 1995). The tension between these two provisions exists when "an appropriate education may not always be available in a regular education setting, and the regular education setting may not always provide the most appropriate education" (Bartlett, 1992, cited by Yell). When the two provision are in conflict, LRE is secondary to FAPE (Aefsky, 1995, p. 16). This means that when a free appropriate public education cannot be conducted in the regular classroom, with the use of supplementary aids or services, then a more restrictive environment is necessary (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

The U.S. courts were not interested in defining educational policy (Yell, 1995, p. 390). However, through an abundance of court cases they "defined the doctrine of LRE, set parameters for determining LRE's, and offered guidelines for monitoring compliance with IDEA in this area" (p.

390). Understanding the LRE's principles will clarify further the term inclusion. The following section explains these principles.

## Principles for Least Restrictive Environment Derived from Litigation

Yell (1995) referred to five principles derived from litigation. U.S. school administrators must adhere to all of these principles. First, the determination of the LRE must be based on the individual needs of the child and not on district policy. Both academic and nonacademic needs of the student must be considered since nonacademic benefits such as language and behaviour models might be helpful to a child's development. A placement considered outside the regular classroom cannot be justified by the fact that more academic progress may be made in a more restrictive environment (Aefsky, 1995). However, if academic quality is going to be sacrificed for nonacademic needs, then there must be proof that placement in a regular classroom will benefit a student in this fashion (Osborne & Dimattia, 1994).

Second "good-faith efforts must be made to keep students in an integrated setting....These efforts cannot be merely token gestures, but rather, must be authentic attempts at inclusion" (Yell, 1995, p. 400). Efforts to support integration must include the use of supplementary aids and services (Yell). A school must prove that they have complied with the LRE provision if a more restricted placement is judged appropriate (Aefsky, 1995, p. 20; Yell).

Third, in making a decision, regarding the LRE, the needs of the student's peers should be considered (Yell, 1995). If a student with special needs is extremely disruptive or if the education of the other students is adversely affected then a placement outside the LRE is justified (Yell).

Fourth, if students are being educated in settings other than regular classrooms, they must be

integrated to the maximum extent appropriate (Yell, 1995). Areas for consideration include lunch, recess, and nonacademic subjects (Yell).

Finally, an entire continuum of alternative services must be available from which to choose an appropriate placement (Yell, 1995, p. 401). The continuum of alternative services was discussed as the first foundation in the preceding section.

## Canadian Legislation

Unlike the U.S., Canada has never had a federal mandate for education (Andrew & Lupart, 1993). Instead, "Canadian schools operate on the basis of provincial and territorial school acts" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 45). "Each provincial government can develop its own legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures to ensure that all children receive a free and appropriate education" (Winzer, 1996, p. 81). The most relevant of these goals and policies are issued by the Ministries of Education (Winzer). Andrews and Lupart hold that as a result "there is considerable variation in the way that schools across the country are meeting the needs of students with exceptionalities" (p. 45). In Canada there is mandatory and permissive legislation. "Mandatory legislation refers to any statute passed by the legislature that legally requires boards to provide education for all children regardless of their exceptionality....Permissive legislation ... permits but does not legally require school boards to provide educational services for students with special needs" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 49-50). According to Andrews and Lupart, Ontario has mandatory legislation. However, Andrews and Lupart add further that mandatory legislation does not guarantee that students with special needs will be provided with an appropriate education or that it will be provided in the LRE. Also, it does not mean that provinces under permissive legislation are not

meeting the needs of students with disabilities. The concept of zero reject, "a process that prevents a child from being totally or functionally excluded" (Winzer, p. 84), resides within legislation and ensures "an education for all children in different ways" (Winzer, p. 84). The Canadian provinces of Quebec, Ontario, and Saskatchewan are the only provinces that have provincial education laws stating that education for students with disabilities must be most appropriate to the student's abilities and needs (Andrews & Lupart).

In Canada, other than full inclusion, students with special needs can also be educated by means of special schools and special classes. Students who are blind, hearing impaired, and learning disabled can attend special schools. The hearing impaired "see special schools as promoting their own culture" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 89). Jenkinson said that other reasons for special schools suggest that

> students may be unable to make useful gains in the academic curriculum and need an alternative curriculum, or the amount of teacher time and attention required for academic achievement at a useful level would be to the determent of other class members. Yet others need to be placed in a situation in which they have opportunities to succeed and so develop self-esteem and confidence. (p. 89)

Special schools are criticized "for perpetuating segregated education of students with disabilities" (Jenkinson, p. 123). Also, they are categorical. Special classes "have remained a significant force in special education", and "were initially set up to cater for students with serious learning problems, but without withdrawing of students from the regular school" (Jenkinson, p. 123). Special classes are criticized for the same reasons as special schools; however, "they are seen as a form of integration, providing more opportunity for interaction with peers than a segregated special school on a separate site" (Jenkinson, p. 123).

In Ontario, Bill 82 is the legislative counterpart to PL94-142 (Wilson, 1983). Wilson pointed

out that although people still allude to Bill 82 as a reality, the correct title of this piece of legislation

is "The Education Amendment Act, 1980". Bill 82 was introduced as an amendment of the 1974

Ontario Education Act (Wilson, p. 2). While this legislation refers to both regular and special

education, it "has been widely proclaimed as the most comprehensive legislation in Canada" (Andrews

& Lupart, 1993, p. 60). Besides Manitoba, Ontario has the greatest amount of regulation in the area

of teacher certification (Andrews & Lupart). "In these two provinces, specialized certification and/or

course work is required for general special education, education of students who are deaf, blind, or

intellectually disabled as well as for individuals serving as special education coordinators" (Andrews

& Lupart, p. 51).

A major criticism of Bill 82 is the usage of categories to describe students with disabilities

because it is contrary to inclusive practices (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Wilson, 1983). However,

categorization is necessary because Ontario's special education funding formula is "dependent on the

identification of students with exceptional learning needs before funding is released for individualized

programming ... this ties provinces or territories that adopt such formulas directly to a categorical

approach" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 51).

Additionally, categorization causes a problem with the assessment of students with disabilities.

In Ontario, there are two types of assessment models. The prevention model is an integrated view

of assessment and programming (Wilson, 1983).

> The child's learning needs rather than deficits are the main focus of the assessment, so that
>
> specific program objectives can be identified and the plan drawn up. The placement is then
>
> chosen as the setting in which the program can best be implemented. (Wilson, p. 70)

In other words you a) assess the needs, b) plan the program, c) develop objectives, and d) place the student in a program. A goal of the prevention model is "the maintenance of students in the regular classroom" (Wilson, p. 35). Wilson stated that advantages of this program are that classroom teachers become more knowledgeable of disabilities. By dealing with students with disabilities they will also become more skilful at identifying other children with similar disabilities. The restorative model "is taken to mean the placement or classroom setting in which the child is placed" (Wilson, p. 70). With this model you a) assess the needs, b) place the student in a category, c) place the student in a program, and d) plan the program and develop specific objectives. The restorative model emphasizes categorization but not early identification and prevention" (Wilson). Thus, the problem arises when a school board is using the non-categorical prevention model because educators "are accountable to the terms of the current legislation" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 60) which utilizes categorization.

Although funding in Ontario is still generated by categorization, the government's new student-focused approach to funding caters more to inclusive education. First, there is the Foundation Grant which pays "for the basic costs of education that are common to all students" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 3). For example, the Foundation Grant is responsible for teachers, supply teachers, SESPs, learning resources, and classroom supplies (Ministry of Education, 2000-1). Also, there is the Special Purpose Grants. Included in this, is the Special Education Grant (Ministry of Education, 2000-1). One component of this grant is the Special Education Per Pupil Amount (SEPPA) (Ministry of Education, 2000-1). SEPPA "funding is based on a school board's enrolment (counting all students, not just students who have been identified as needing a special education program)" (Ministry of Education, 2000, p. 1). Therefore, money is available to all

students who are in need of special education services regardless of whether they are categorized or not. Besides SEPPA, there is Intensive Support Amount (ISA) funding. This "funding is provided for students who require high-cost specialized equipment, programs and classroom support" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 2). Because of a new policy change "student-focused funding determines only the overall level of funding for school boards. School boards have flexibility to decide how to use this funding" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 3) in order "to provide a quality education to all of Ontario's students (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 2). One of the limits on the school boards' flexibility is that "funding for special education must be used only for special education" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 3). In summary, all of the above funding is combined "to provide individual programs that meet the specific needs of each student" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 6). This approach coincides with inclusive education because categorization does not determine services.

When the number of principles in PL94-142 are compared with Bill 82, the former has seven while the latter has five. It is interesting to note that the five principles of Bill 82 "are similar in intent if not in wording" to those presented in PL94-142 (Wilson, 1983, p. 5). According to Andrews and Lupart (1993), this legislation "is reminiscent" of the PL94-142 (p. 60). I reviewed a comparison chart, designed by Wilson, about Bill 82 and PL94-142. I then combined five principles from each piece of legislation, and grouped them under the Canadian terms. They are as follows:

a) "Universal Access" refers to the right of all exceptional pupils to have access to appropriate education programs.

b) "Education at Public Expense" refers to education at no cost to the family.

c) "The Appeal Process" refers to the right of all exceptional pupils to have their interests represented.

d) 'Appropriate Program' refers to "the right of exceptional pupils to a program that includes a plan containing specific objectives and an outline of services that meets the needs of the exceptional pupil" (Wilson, p. 4). This type of program was mandated in 1999 and is referred to as an IEP.

e) "Ongoing Identification and Continuous Assessment of Review" (IPRC) refers to an annual review of the suitability of the program and placement.

Noteworthy is the variation in the Canadian and U.S. appeal processes. "The principle of due process is somewhat more broadly applied in the United States law, since parents may challenge the appropriateness of the education program designed for their child and not just the identification of placement of the child" (Wilson, p. 5). However, program suitability can be challenged during the identification process (Wilson). The similarity of the wording and intent of the principles from PL94-142 and Bill 82 (Wilson) allows the extension of FAPE to Bill 82.

As was previously reported, PL94-142 also makes provision for placement in the LRE and for culturally appropriate testing and evaluation. Bill 82 does not make these provisions. In Ontario, implications due to the exclusion of these principles surface. Although there is no provision for LRE in Ontario legislation, "individual school boards may incorporate this principle into their own philosophies and procedures" (Wilson, 1983, p. 5). Thus, concerned individuals may question why inclusion is optional when it is supposed to be beneficial to all involved parties or whether a student is getting a better education with or without inclusion. Individual school boards in Ontario need to be united regarding the inclusion policy in order to increase public support for it. Further, this discontinuity of service creates a problem for students who are educated in different districts (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). For example, a student may enjoy a high level of inclusion in one district and not in another, or s/he may be expected to be included when s/he previously enjoyed a more

segregated learning environment. Most importantly, this opposes Bill 82 because the principle of universal access is jeopardized.

Students who are exceptional because they are economically disadvantaged or culturally different do not qualify for special education programs (Wilson, 1983). The Ministry's Special Education Handbook (1981) states that "cultural, linguistic or soci-economic differences must not be the prime or sole detriment in identifying a student as exceptional" (cited by Wilson, p. 97). Wilson said that these children are not exceptional in the conventional sense. A pupil is considered exceptional if s/he has an exceptionality in one of the following categories: "behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, or a combination of these, that is, multiple handicapped" (Wilson, p. 5). Autism, hearing, language, and speech impaired, and learning disabled are considered communication deficits. Intellectually challenged refers to gifted, or educable and trainable retardation, while physically challenged refers to visually or orthapaedically impaired and/or physically handicapped.

The new student-focused funding addresses this shortcoming. Under the Special Purpose Grants is the Learning Opportunities Grant. This grant has a demographic component which "provides funding for students who are at risk of experiencing academic difficulties as a result of social and economic circumstances" (Ministry of Education, 2000-1, p. 9). The Learning Opportunities Grant uses low family income, low parental education, aboriginal status, or recent immigration status as social and economic indicators.

## The Goals of Inclusive Education

There are many goals for inclusive education. First, there is the goal of life long learning

(Andrews & Lupart, 1993). Andrews and Lupart asserted that a broad and flexible curriculum, which meets the needs of all students, leads to education that is fun and meaningful. The foundation for life long learning is the personal satisfaction acquired from educational experiences (Andrews & Lupart).

In a semi-structured study, Ryndak et al. (1995) examined the "perceptions of parents of 13 children with moderate or severe disabilities in relation to their child's education in inclusive general education settings" (p. 147). The children ranged in age from 5 to 20 years and they were from seven different school districts in western New York State. Regarding perceived academic skill acquisition all parents felt "that their children were learning some content from the general education curriculum" (p. 151). Parents of six children noted "a major change in their children's attitude toward both school and school work as compared to their experience while in self-contain classes" (152). A significant change noticed by parents of three of the four high school students was with the improved ability to read. Also, parents of seven children "made comments about their children understanding the learning process, learning how to learn, realizing they could learn, and being motivated to learn since being included in general education classes" (p. 152). A study by Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) described the experiences of 19 male and female teachers who had a student with severe disabilities in their class. Both interviews and questionnaires were completed by the teachers. The teachers worked in 10 Vermont public schools teaching kindergarten through grade 9. The teachers noted that students with disabilities

> experienced improvement with their awareness and responsiveness ... to routines of the class....Students learned a variety of communication, social, motor, academic, and other skills to assist in participation in home, school, and community life....The general education placement provided the students with opportunities, enjoyment, and challenges. (p. 386)

Parents involved in the study by Bennet et al. (1997) observed their children had benefited from development gains in areas of preacademics and language.

Second, there is the goal of equity and quality (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). All children have the right to a quality education and to receive it among their peers (Andrews & Lupart; Villa & Thousand, 1995). Receiving an education among peers will stimulate a feeling of belonging (Aefsky, 1995; Villa & Thousand). This feeling of belonging prompts a child's motivation to learn (Villa & Thousand). Also, opportunities to socialize with peers increase the chance of developing friendships. An increase in socialization, friendship, motivation, and self-esteem are considered nonacademic educational benefits (Yell, 1995, p. 400).

In their research, Beers, Janney, Raynes, and Snells (1995) interviewed 53 teachers and administers from five urban and rural Virginia school districts about their experiences with recent integration of students from elementary through high school with moderate and severe disabilities. The participants noted an increase with socialization, self-esteem, and friendships for students with severe disabilities when included in general education classes. Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) were interested in "parent perception of the integration transition process" (p. 487). The participants in the study were parents from 13 families in the San Francisco Bay Area. The 13 families had 14 children. The 14 children ranged in ages from 4 to 22. Eleven of the students had severe disabilities. The five high school students had severe disabilities. The parents of students with disabilities "discussed the positive impact of their children's self-esteem and talked about their children being less intimidated, (and) more comfortable with people" (p. 490). As well, one-half of the students had friendships with nondisabled peers which extended outside of school hours. Bennet et al. (1997) said that "four parents noted that inclusion had facilitated the development of friendships outside of

school" (p. 124). An additional nonacademic benefit gained from being educated with peers without disabilities was improved social development through role modelling (Hanline & Halvorsen; Alper & Ryndak, 1992; Bennet et al.; Beers et al.; Kennedy, Shukla, & Fryxell, 1997).

In the U.S. it is a civil right for all children to gain academic and nonacademic benefits from their public education, and to be educated in the LRE (Aefsky, 1995; Villa & Thousand, 1995). Although in Canada, the goal of equity and quality is not a civil right, the Charter has been effective in promoting appropriate education for students in general education classrooms. Elwood v. Halifax County-Bedford District School Board and Hysert v. Carelton Board of Education et al. cases are examples of successful Charter challenges (Porter & Richler, 1991).

Third, there is the goal of developing a strong sense of community in the classroom (Aefsky, 1995; Ryndak et al., 1995) and "in doing so change the attitudes of both teachers and students towards disability" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 141). Andrews and Lupart (1993) asserted that class members will become more tolerant of individual differences and will learn to respect and accept them.

Beers et al. (1995) found that integration had a positive effect on the attitudes of those teaches who were originally apprehension about integration. Getting to know the students with disabilities helped the teachers to perceive them in a more positive way. Giangreco et al. (1993) said that all but one teacher in their study had a positive change in attitude towards the students with disabilities. The teachers also said that they were more reflective, confident in their abilities, and open to change. Ryndak et al. (1995) reported that the parents they interviewed stated "that since their children were included in general education classes, classmates without disabilities showed more respect for and acceptance of their child, and offered to help their children with classwork" (p. 152).

Teacher participants in the study conducted by Giangreco et al. said that students without disabilities "experienced an increased level of social/emotional development, flexibility, and empathy" (p. 369). Hanline and Halvorsen (1985) wrote, "The majority of parents also observed benefits to nondisabled students such as improved attitudes toward disabilities" (p. 490). Alper and Ryndak (1992) said that these new skills, values, and attitudes will prepare students without disabilities for the realities of life which include living and working in a pluralistic society.

Fourth, there is the goal of school-home partnership (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). The importance of this partnership cannot be overstated. Families and schools can offer each other valuable information to enhance the student's educational and social-emotional development (Andrews & Lupart). This partnership may heighten support for the different goals that school and home have for the student (Aefsky, 1995; Andrews & Lupart).

Hilton and Henderson (1993) reported that "while teachers understand the importance of parent involvement, they may under-use parent involvement practices and may view parents as playing a limited number of roles in the education of their child" (cited by Bennet et al., 1997, p. 117). Bennet et al. discovered valuable insight regarding this goal. They found that teachers who had taught ten years or more found parental involvement to be much more intrusive than for teachers with only a few years teaching experience. Also, parents felt that as their "advocacy effort increased, positive relationships with team members decreased" (p. 126). Furthermore, the interviewed parents felt that the most effective way of developing a partnership was through their physical presence at the school such as volunteering in their child's classroom; however, teachers preferred communication through daily logs or weekly phone calls.

Fifth, there is a goal of academic and social competence (Andrews & Lupart, 1993). Andrews

and Lupart commented that inclusive education provides teachers with opportunities to be more responsive to the differential unique abilities of children in academic and social domains.

Finally, there is the goal of TASH to eliminate "any continuum of service, including special education and special educators as a system of provision....Supports and services currently used by students with disabilities would be relocated into the regular classroom to provide support to all students in needs" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 141).

A thorough examination of the term inclusion needs to extend beyond aims or objectives. It requires a discussion about the existing principles or reasons behind it.

## Rationales For Creating Inclusive Education

Andrews and Lupart (1993) were very critical of the five-step process which is used in most Canadian schools to direct students to special education. The five steps are referral, testing, labelling (assigning a categorical description to a student's disability), placement, and programming of the student. This process identifies with the restorative model which was discussed earlier. With this linear model all five steps must be completed in the above stated order (Andrews & Lupart). This is why Andrews and Lupart referred to this model as being static. Andrews and Lupart recognized several problems with this educational model. First, because the five step process is identical regardless of the type or severity of disability, immediate intervention for students who require only slight modification is not available. Second, students who require special education have to stay in general education until they are assessed by the process. Third, according to Andrews and Lupart, students can receive assistance only if they have successfully proceeded through the five steps. Finally, they suggested that gifted students may be overlooked as this special education approach is

usually initiated only if a student is failing significantly. In Canada, gifted students are acknowledged in all provinces and territories except Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island (Winzer, 1996). Therefore, gifted students in Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island may stay in general education as it is highly unlikely that a referral regarding an exceptionally intelligent student will be made (Winzer).

Villa and Thousand (1995) cited three rationales for inclusive education. First, general education needs revamping because it has been unable to serve "an increasing proportion of children" (p. 37). This is evident in Ontario's multiple systems of education. "Aside from general and special education, there is adult education, vocational education, gifted education, rural education, bilingual education, English as a second language (ESL) education, at-risk education, and more" (p. 37). In conjunction with this, there is a rising number of labelled students so one must ask whether the disability is with the students or with the system. In the U.S. "the number of students eligible for special education increased 23 percent from fiscal year (FY) 77 to FY 90" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994, cited by Villa & Thousand, p. 36). Lipsky and Gartner (1989) informed us that in the U.S. "in the decade from 1977 to 1987, the number of children labelled 'learning disabled' alone increased 219 percent" (cited by Villa &Thousand, p. 36). Second, cost wise, in dollar terms, exclusion of students is expensive (Villa & Thousand, p. 37). Hehir (1994) said that in the U.S "for FY 94 the federal government expend more than $2.5 billion on special education, while local school districts spent $3 billion-in addition to general busing cost to transport children with disabilities to special education placements" (cited by Villa & Thousand, p. 37). Since the 1980s communities across U.S. have shown that it might even be cheaper to educate students with special needs in regular classrooms because there would be a "reduction in busing costs" and an "elimination of duplicate services" (Villa

& Thousand, p. 37). Third, in the U.S. but not in Canada, it is a civil right to be educated among your peers.

Leading proponents for the merger between special and general education, Stainback and Stainback (1984), provided two rationales for inclusive education. First, they argued against two distinct systems asserting that each student is unique and deserves individualized programming. Combining the two systems increases curricular options and provides all students with access to individualized programs. Presently, special needs students can benefit from general education but there is not a reciprocal trend to involve general education students in special education offerings. With consolidation, according to Stainback and Stainback, all students can access any of the classes. For example, students previously taught in general education can benefit from larger print materials and a social skills class if these are their needs. Jenkinson (1997) added that general education students can benefit from specialized speech and language programs. Second, Stainback and Stainback emphasized the competition and duplication inherent in a dual system. This breakdown of professional relationships extends into colleges, universities, educational research, and direct service programs. This breakdown prevents professionals from pooling their expertise and resources. Without sharing, unnecessary duplication occurs. In their professional opinions, Stainback and Stainback suggested that a unified system would encourage cooperation, and devalue competition, and duplication. York et al. (1992) maintained "that collaboration between regular class teachers and special educators have been seen by both groups as a positive outcome of placement of severely disabled students in mainstream classes (cited by Jenkinson, p. 63).

Understanding the term inclusion and being knowledgable about the supporting goals and rationales does not guarantee that the process of inclusion will be successful. Several elements need

to be considered for inclusion to be successful. An examination of these elements follows.

## Elements to Consider for Effective Inclusive Education

Planning is essential for inclusive education to be successful (Aefsky, 1995; Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Villa & Thousand, 1995; Porter & Richler, 1991; Beer et al., 1995; Kennedy, Shukla, & Fryxell, 1997). Aefsky declared that "a system of change must have a focused plan, contain mechanisms for communication with and among all component parts and establish a shared mission or goal" (p. 27). Blenk (1995) reported, "Placement of the challenged child in a regular class, without careful planning ... is a major injustice to that child" (p. i). Beers et al. suggested that the pace of change must be slow. Make a small change and then let everyone get used to it before you implement another change. Also, before a change is made, explain the derived benefits from the change for the students and for all involved parties (Beers et al.). Regarding change Jenkinson (1997) said, "Such a radical change to special education requires bold decisions that are enacted, not overnight, but with a period of careful planning and preparation" (p. 146).

Many issues need to be considered with the implementation of an inclusion program. The degree to which these issues apply will vary according to the situation. Realistically, each program runs differently because of the individual needs of the students:

It is important to note that inclusive programs will be and should be different from one another and may vary within and between grades and school because individual student needs vary. The acknowledgement that these differences are a positive part of a district wide program is significant. Flexibility is a key component to inclusive classrooms. (Aefsky, p. 30)

If these issues are considered, they will act as a guide towards program success.

Aefsky (1995) addressed in-service for teachers to gain and share information, ask questions, learn about new techniques and strategies, and work towards collaborative solutions. Furthermore, there is a need for consultant services for students with disabilities to help them succeed in the classroom, collaboration of regular and special education teachers, team teaching and co-teaching, and an evaluation or assessment component. Aefsky added that planning does not end once the teachers are trained and the program is implemented.

Aefsky (1995) suggested the necessity for developing a sense of community. In this community parents, students, teachers, and administrators must be involved in planning. Beers et al. (1995) agreed. Take "a team approach to planning by getting input from everyone involved, including parents, teachers, and related service providers, regarding how and when to integrate students" (Beers et. al. p. 433). Aefsky stated "teachers, parents, administrators and students need to be included in all stages of developing and actualizing a change in the delivery of services for some students" (p. 29). If psychologists, speech and language clinicians, social workers, guidance counsellors, physical and occupational therapists, and/or paraprofessionals are working with students with disabilities they too need to be consulted so their information is accurately disseminated (Aefsky). Each individual's information is invaluable because the role of the individual is likely to influence her/his attitude towards inclusion. For example, Center and Ward (1989) found that psychologists' attitudes towards inclusion were more optimistic· compared to teachers (cited by Jenkinson). The reason may be that psychologists are more involved with the process of assessment and decision making than with the direct teaching of students with disabilities (Center and Ward cited by Jenkinson).

With community involvement, there is a need to change to site-based management so that decisions are made by community members. McLaughlin and Warren (1992) asserted that "the concept of site-based management supports individual schools being responsible and accountable for school decisions in budget, personnel, and program decisions" (cited by Aefsky, 1995, p. 53). Site-based management is consequential because it leads to better commitment to the program, a higher level of trust between community members, and mutual respect for differences (Aefsky). Beers et al. (1995) recommended "top-down leadership while allowing the teachers and principals who ultimately must execute the change to engage in bottom-up planning and implementation" (p. 436).

Planning for change requires time. Aefsky (1995) pointed out "that staff members need time to research and explore topics, and share information and concerns ... in order to be partners in change" (p. 27). Aefsky also recognized that community members need time to attend meetings, and that both students with and without special needs and their parents need time to adjust to new programs (p. 27). Aefsky (1995) stressed that administrators demand time for scheduling (p. 38). According to Aefsky, teacher duties, preparation times, coordination of lunch hours and conference days, staff in-service, visitations to inclusive sites, and community meetings are only some of the events which administrators need to schedule. In addition, time is needed to meet with members at the district levels to discuss the programs. Andrews and Lupart (1993) said that

> particular duties of the principals are also channelled into directing, coordinating, and evaluating the total school program....They tailor the general district policies to compliment the school operation, and they must make immediate changes without being held back by policy guidelines. (p. 232-3).

Since their dual role now includes being an instructional leader, they also need time to be available

regularly to assist school staff (Andrews & Lupart) and to provide them with ongoing support (Beers et al., 1995). Administrators need time to empower the regular classroom teachers (Andrews & Lupart). "It is critical that administration help teachers help themselves cope with the frustrations and stress involved in inclusive education" (Andrews & Lupart, p. 23). Finally, Aefsky acknowledged that administrators at the district level need time to work on structural change.

Andrews and Lupart (1993) said that "the direction and leadership of school administrators is one of the most critical features of successful inclusive schools" (p. 232). Bennet et al. (1997) maintained that "administrators need to realize the important leadership role they play in making inclusion successful" (p. 129). Ironically, the lack of direction and leadership by administrators is considered a major problem (Andrews & Lupart). The main criticism among teachers involved in inclusive programs are lack of communication with parents, staff, and administrators, preparation time, and teacher training. According to Andrews and Lupart, all these issues fall under the jurisdiction of the administrators.

Administrators must view inclusion positively. A comprehensive review of The Yellowhead School Division in Alberta, Canada, which gradually introduced inclusive schooling over a 5 year period showed "that even careful planning and thorough consultation with all those involved do not necessarily ensure success" (Jenkinson, 1997, p. 146). Jenkinson said:

> This beautifully designed, well-equipped school, with the expertise of a special educator to draw on, would seem to have all the ingredients necessary for successful inclusion. But physical environment, although important, is no substitute for a climate of acceptance (p. 150).

According to Jenkinson, "positive attitudes, reflected in a commitment to encouraging the progress

of students with disabilities in the mainstream, are essential" (p. 29). Successful school inclusion needs positive attitudes from the top down (Jenkinson). Porter and Richler (1991) agreed. "It is imperative that the commitment to integration be reflected in the school administrator's behaviour" (Porter & Richler p. 157). In New Brunswick, educators indicated that the most progressive schools were the ones which school administrators committed to integration (Porter & Richler). Beers et al. (1995) asserted that "the principal sets the tone in the building and his or her positive attitude toward the integration effort, and toward the students with disabilities themselves was seen as imperative to success" (p. 432).

Additionally, general classroom teachers' attitudes are important if inclusion is going to be successful. These teachers need to be "optimistic and have a positive approach, particularly to their expectations of the student with a disability" (Porter & Richler, 1991, p. 115). According to Bennet et al. (1997), "important qualities noted by parents included caring, compassion, and sensitivity to the child's feelings and needs. Flexibility, caring, and determination of teachers to make inclusion work were also commonly reported" (p. 126). Besides flexibility teachers felt that "other essential qualities ... were open-mindedness, a sense of humour, and an ability to communicate with other adults" (Bennet et al., p. 126).

The attitudes of principals and general classroom teachers shape the attitudes of students without disabilities. Jenkinson (1997) said that "the attitudes of school principals and teachers are likely to be reflected in the attitudes of students" (p. 34). Lynas (1986) found that general education students had similar attitudes as their teachers towards integrated students with hearing impairments (cited by Jenkinson). Parent participants, in the study by Bennet et al. (1997), reported that peer acceptance was necessary for inclusion to be successful. For is reason, it is important for students

without disabilities to have principals and teachers who are positive role models.

The review of Yellowhead, referred to elements other than planning and positive attitudes, which were of crucial importance to the success of inclusion.

A high level of support for students with disabilities....the role of functions of various staff concerned with the education of students with disabilities are clearly defined....classroom teaching is structured on small group learning and each student must be member of a group ....inclusion is extended to parents of students with disabilities, who are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education. (Jenkinson, p. 152)

Andrews and Lupart (1993) suggested that resources need to go beyond support staff. "Transportation services, building modifications, material resources (e.g., assessment instruments, program materials, and instructional aides" (p. 22) are also needed.

Beers et al. (1995) added that inclusive change should begin with volunteers. Eventually these volunteers will recruit others. According to Beers et al., this approach was less threatening than forcing teachers to integrate when they were not ready for it. Also, of importance was the special education teacher's manner and personality. S/he should be flexible, nonthreatening, enthusiastic, and positive (Beers et al).

Giangreco et al. (1993) reported that typical activities, materials, and approaches suggested by classroom teachers were better than special ones because they were more helpful, relevant, and less confusing and stigmatizing. For example, one teacher thought the feeding program developed for a student by a specialist was humiliating for the student. In other words, if possible, keep approaches simple. Additionally, minimizes the traffic by specialists and other visitors so classroom routines are not constantly disrupted.

## Problems with Inclusion

Critics of inclusion raise issues which question the overall effectiveness of inclusive education. In random order, several issues will follow.

Inclusion requires extensive planning. A prevalent criticism of inclusion has been the lack of time devoted to collaborative planning (Aefsky, 1995). As a result of decreased preparation time and professional development days in Ontario, less time is left for inclusive planning.

Shanker (1994-95) suggested that students with disabilities may lose their support when they enter inclusive environments because adopting full inclusion was a cost saving measure. Similarities have been noted between the policies of full inclusion and deinstitutionalization. Like deinstitutionalization, support is supposed to follow students. Unfortunately, this was not a reality for deinstitutionalization. Research conducted by the Public Citizen Health Research Group and the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill found that instead of continued care the absence of care with "deinstitutionalization has caused more than 250,000 people with schizophrenia or manic-depressive illness to live in shelters, on the street, or in jails (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a, p. 302).

Research regarding inclusion is conflicting; therefore, it is hard to justify the elimination of a continuum of services. Palmer et al. (1996) said that "research is unlikely to provide a simplistic conclusion, ie., that all students either can or cannot profit from general education programs" (p. 314) Sale and Carey (1995) asserted that there is "disparity among study results" (p. 7). Kennedy et al. (1997) maintained that the emerging literature on inclusive education is mixed. Borthwick-Duffy et al. (1996) said that "currently, someone with a particular viewpoint can relatively easily marshall enough 'research evidence' to present convincing arguments either in favour of or in opposition of full inclusion" (p. 320). For example, Green and Shinn (1994) said that there was an increase in the self-

esteem of students with special needs in special classes; however, Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) said that increased self-esteem for these students occurred with inclusion. Sale and Carey inferred that students with special needs may not be accepted by the general education students, but Beers et al. (1995) and Hanline and Halvorsen discovered that friendships are made between students with and without special needs. Finally, Ryndak et al. (1995) and Green and Shinn reported that parents liked special classrooms for their children. Hanline and Halvorsen found that although parents had concerns about inclusive education, they were quite happy with the inclusive environments their children were involved with.

Present funding formulas in Ontario work against inclusion as they rely on labelling and categorization (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). Special funds are allocated by the number of children identified with special needs (Aefsky, 1995). Therefore, funding issues arise with inclusion (Aefsky).

Included students are still stigmatized by their peers. Martin (1995) wrote, "An interesting social observation in his report on Jennifer was that her classmates complained that she was 'cheating' when she copied from their papers. She was observed to use this strategy to try to perform adequately in several situations" (p. 197). Sale and Carey (1995) found that "full inclusion strategies did not eliminate negative social perceptions of students with disabilities" (p. 6).

According to Lieberman (1985), categorization retains individuality. He stated that a student who has been categorized "has a significantly better chance of being treated as an individual than if he or she remains noncategorized within the overall framework of regular education" (p. 514). With inclusion, a noncatergorized student forfeits an individual educational program (Lieberman). Lieberman stated that in special education the student dictates the curriculum but in general education

the system dictates the curriculum.

Lack of support for full inclusion by many advocacy groups (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994b; Shanker, 1994-95) questioned the assumption that inclusion can meet the unique learning needs of all students. For example, full time placements in regular classrooms did not provide full access to communication among peers who are deaf (Borthwick-Duffy et al.). According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994b), "whereas full-time placement in the regular classroom will be appropriate for many children with disabilities, it will fall considerably short of a heavenly experience for others—a prospect that will not go unchallenged by a majority of the disability community" (p. 12). Apparently, full inclusion repudiates the provision of LRE. Fuchs and Fuchs (1994b) held "that to abolish special education placements in the name of full inclusion is to deprive many of an appropriate education" (p. 10).

Centra (1990) found that when learning disabled (LD) students were interviewed they "generally felt much more positively toward their special education teachers than toward their general class teacher, and rarely considered resource room stigma a serious concern" (cited by Mastropieri & Scruggs, 1995, p. 232). Intrinsically, inclusion discriminates against students who are convinced that their educational, social, and emotional needs can be better met in special education classes (Borthwick-Duffy et al., 1996).

There is no basis to the statement that a separate education is unequal. Full inclusionists justify this by making an analogy with historical racial segregation (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994b; Shanker, 1994-95). Shanker asserted that it has been suggested that excluding a person with a disability is similar to racial discrimination because both groups are treated as if they are inferior. Shanker said that this analogy is faulty, while Fuchs and Fuchs (1994b) said it is misleading and unfair. African-

Americans were excluded solely on colour and not on the ability to function or benefit from a regular education. This is quite different from putting a blind individual in a special class to learn Braille (Shanker). S/he is not excluded because s/he is blind but because s/he may not receive an appropriate education.

Full inclusionists focus on social competence and friendships, and deemphasize curriculum and academic standards (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994b). In other words, "Social interaction with nondisabled peers is the appropriate education for students with disabilities" (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994b, p. 5). According to Fuchs and Fuchs (1994b), this is not necessarily shared by all advocates of students with special needs. Fuchs and Fuchs (1994b) also said concerning socialization, that full inclusionists have not acknowledged the paradox inherent within this goal. Full inclusionists want an end to the continuum of services because it precludes desirable socialization experiences for their clientele, yet when blind and deaf advocate groups use the same argument to preserve the continuum full inclusionists turn their backs on them. It would seem that inclusion supports exclusion.

Parents interviewed by Hanline and Halvorsen (1989) identified areas of concern during their children's transitions to an inclusive educational placement. Parents worried that their children's safety may be jeopardised. They were more concerned about an accident occurring or an emergency situation rather than intentional wrongdoing. Furthermore, a few parents questioned whether their children would be taken advantage of sexually. Parents doubted that their children would be accepted by the nondisabled students and staff. Parents also wondered whether their children would be babied or patronized by the nondisabled population. Parents were anxious that program quality would suffer if their children did not have access to the same resources. Additionally, parents feared the loss of a dedicated staff and supportive atmosphere. A few parents were apprehensive that the quality of

transportation might be threatened. They were concerned that it meant a longer ride for their children to an inclusive setting. Many parents doubted the necessary commitment of the school districts. Without commitment, parents worried that their children would fail. Finally, parents who acted as advocates resented having to assume this role and they felt that the professionals should assume this responsibility. Ryndak et al. (1996) added that parents were sensitive to the correlation where increased advocacy efforts decreased the positive relationship with team members. This made parents feel that they were not valued members of their children's educational team.

## Pro Inclusion Studies

Although my personal experiences with inclusion thus far have been more negative than positive, and while this review of the literature is presented from this point of view, there are many pro inclusion studies in the literature. Selected examples are studies by Smith (1997), Klingner and Vaughn (1999), and Ferguson (1999).

Smith's (1997) study "Varied Meanings and Practice: Teachers' Perspectives Regarding High School Inclusion" examined inclusion utilizing semi-structured interviews and participant observations. The study was conducted over the 1994-1995 school year at West High School in the U.S. This school served a low income urban population. The student body was mixed ethnically and racially. This school was known to regularly include students with severe disabilities in general classes, but only one such student during a given school year was enrolled. Gerard, a grade nine male with Down Syndrome, was the selected student. He was included with 125 grade nine students of whom 25 were identified as special education students while 25 were labelled at risk of dropping out. The remaining students were not labelled.

Findings indicated several factors that affected the successfulness of inclusion for students with severe disabilities. Not only did students with severe disabilities need to feel that they belong, but the inclusive teachers and the students without disabilities needed to treat the student with severe disabilities as regular students. The students with severe disabilities must attend general classes on a regular basis so they were not viewed by others as visitors. Consistency with attendance facilitated the teachers' commitment to these students, and as a result an academic agenda was developed. This academic agenda led to higher standards of participation. Also, consistency facilitated greater socialization for co-operative learning and group activities. A final key factor for successful inclusion was support for the students as well as for the teachers.

Klingner and Vaughn's (1999) study "Students' Perceptions of Instruction in Inclusion Classrooms: Implications for Students with Learning Disabilities" examined students' perceptions of instructional procedures in general education classrooms that included students with learning disabilities. The study was based on 4,659 student participants in kindergarten through 12th grade. Approximately 16% of the student participants were learning disabled while the other participants reflected a range of achievement levels such as gifted, and high, average, and low achieving. Measures included individually administered interviews, focus group interviews, and survey questionnaires.

The findings suggested the students were flexible and empathetic. They understood that learning needs were individual and most students were positive about instructional adaptations and accommodations to assist students with special needs. However, they wanted to know more about instructional adaptations and for whom they were intended for. Also, all students showed a strong preference for peer tutoring whether they gave or received assistance. Furthermore, students across

grade levels preferred working in pairs or groups. These latter two views facilitate co-operative learning and other strategies that support inclusion.

Ferguson (1999) study "High School Students' Attitudes toward Inclusion of Handicapped Students in the Regular Education Classroom" examined students with special needs who were either mentally or physically challenged. She surveyed 196 high school students without special needs in 9th and 12th grades. There were 99 grade 9 participants and 97 grade 12 participants of which 81 were females and 115 were males. The participants attended a suburban school in Niagra Falls, Ontario. The range of academic ability of the participants was typical of a community comprised of middle-income families with students of all ability levels grouped in the same classes.

Specifically, Ferguson (1999) examined a peer-tutoring program to determine student attitudes. The peer tutoring program involved a 4 week orientation to learn skills, techniques, and procedures to assist students with special needs. Also, the potential peer-tutors met with the students with whom they would work. The findings suggested that real differences in attitudes do result from participation in a peer-tutoring program. Sixty-seven percent of the peer tutors suggested they liked inclusion while only 31% of non-peer tutors liked inclusion. Also, 75% of peer tutors' attitudes became more positive toward students with special needs compared to 54% of non-peer tutors. Finally, 76% of peer tutors felt that students with special needs benefited academically from inclusion in contrast to 62% of non-peer tutors. In conclusion, inclusion did not guarantee interaction between students with and without special needs, although successful interaction can be nurtured and fostered by, for example, peer-tutoring.

## Summary

The term inclusion is contemporary but the intent behind the term is not new. Before inclusion there was integration, mainstreaming, and the REI movement. There is still plenty of debate among different advocacy groups regarding full inclusion. As well, there is no consensus regarding the meaning or definition of inclusion. To get a clearer understanding of the term inclusion individuals should familiarize themselves with the U.S. and Canadian legislations. Awareness of the goals, rationales, potential problems, and key elements of inclusion will help to ensure the success of inclusion.

# Chapter Three

## Methodology

### Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the methodology used to gather data for this study. The following topics are examined in the given order: a) characteristics of qualitative research, b) participant selection, c) ethical considerations, d) interview process, and e) data collection procedures and data analysis.

### Qualitative Research

The design of the study is qualitative (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990). Dawson, Klass, Guy, and Edgley (1991) described qualitative research as:

Research that depends mainly on direct observation and descriptive analysis of social interaction and outcomes in specific social settings, sometimes relying on the intuitive skills of the researcher. It tries to describe fully and comprehend the subjective meaning events have to individuals and groups. (p. 436)

Bogdan and Biklen added "that data collected have been termed soft, that is, rich in description of people, places, and conversations, and not easily handled by statistical procedures" (p. 2).

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), Borg, Gall, and Gall (1993), Dawson et al. (1991), and Patton (1990) qualitative research can be identified by themes, characteristics, or traits. Patton referred to themes, characteristics, and/or traits as strategic ideals:

The themes of qualitative inquiry ... are strategic ideals: real-world observation through naturalistic inquiry; openness through inductive analysis, contextual sensitivity, and a

holistic perspective; personal contact and insight; attention to dynamic process; appreciation

of idiosyncrasies through a unique case orientation; and a stance of empathic neutrality.

(p. 59)

Qualitative research is conducted in a natural setting. A natural setting is the environment

in which you research the phenomenon you are interested in (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). Qualitative

researchers are open to whatever emerges, and are prepared to evaluate the data in its entirety.

Patton (1990) reported that, "naturalistic inquiry replaces the fixed treatment/outcome emphasis of

the controlled experiment with a dynamic, process orientation" (p. 42). The researcher makes no

attempt to manipulate, control, or eliminate situational variables or program developments. Data

collection involves whatever emerges because the researcher is interested in the reality of a situation.

Qualitative researchers utilize a bottom up approach to analyze their data (Bogdan & Biklen,

1992). Theory is developed from the data, rather than data verifying existing theory. Theory that

is developed through data analysis is termed grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). This

procedure is both emergent and inductive. Patton (1990) wrote, "The strategy of inductive design

is to allow the important analysis dimensions to emerge from patterns found in the cases under study

without presupposing in advance what the important dimension will be" (p. 44). When themes and

patterns surface by means of interviews and observations, they need to be further developed via the

same approaches, therefore, making the data collection process intensive and continuous (Borg et al.,

1993). The concern "with process rather than simply with outcomes or products" (Bogdan & Biklen,

p. 31) is both pragmatic and productive. Inductive processes thrive on design flexibility. Without

flexibility in design, emerging themes and patterns would be obstructed. Therefore, I concluded that

this emergent inductive style was central to qualitative research and that the open-ended nature of

qualitative research will be problematic without design flexibility. With design flexibility I was open to changes as they arose. For example, follow-up interviews had to be scheduled with four out of the five participants in order to confirm or clarify data that was collected.

Bogdan and Biklen (1992) held that good fieldwork relations enhance the quality of the collected data which results in credible research. Data collected in the field is descriptive in nature:

The data collected are in the form of words or pictures rather than numbers. The written results of the research contain quotations from the data to illustrate and substantiate the presentation. The data include interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents memos, and other official records. In their search for understanding, qualitative researchers do not reduce the pages upon pages of narration and other data to numerical symbols. They try to analyze the data with all of their richness as closely as possible to the form in which they were recorded or transcribed. (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 30)

This approach assumes that nothing in the data is trivial, thus, consideration is given to "such things as gestures, jokes, who does the talking in a conversation, the decorations on the walls, and the special words we use and to which those around us respond" (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 30). According to Bogdan and Biklen, "Everything has the potential of being a clue that might unlock a more comprehensive understanding of what is being studied" (p. 30-31).

A primary goal of qualitative research is to provide a version of an individual's phenomenological reality (Borg et al., 1993) of a particular situation. Phenomenological reality refers to "an individual's perceptions of inner experiences and the world around her" (Borg et al., p. 194). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992), researchers are interested in meaning and want to accurately

capture the participant's perspective, and "by learning the perspectives of the participants, qualitative research illuminates the inner dynamics of situations-dynamics that are often invisible to the outsider" (p. 23). These insights are critical to understanding the phenomenon. Patton (1990) remarked that researchers study complex phenomena using unique case studies. Since the whole phenomenon is greater than the sum of its parts, researchers focus on interdependencies rather than a few discrete variables and linear, cause-effect relationships (Patton). Patton contended that the experience needs to be described, explicated, and interpreted. He also stated that the assumption of essence "becomes the defining characteristic of a purely phenomenological study" (p. 70). Essences are defined as:

> The core meaning mutually understood through a phenomenon commonly experienced. The experiences of different people are bracketed, analyzed, and compared to identify the essences of the phenomenon, for example, the essences of loneliness, the essence of being a mother, or the essence of being a participant in a particular program. (Patton, p. 70)

Patton explained that researchers understand essences because they focus on unique case studies which are "rich in the sense that a great deal can be learned from a few exemplars of the phenomenon in question" (p. 54). The findings can be placed in a social, historical, and temporal context; however, generalization across time and space is doubtful (Patton).

As was mentioned earlier, the data collection process encourages the development of a relationship between the researcher and the participants. In the field the researcher "deliberately interacts in a personal way with each individual in the study" (Borg et al., 1993, p. 196). Regardless of the research method "the emphasis is on equality and closeness in the relationship rather than on formality" (Patton, 1990, p. 80). Critics are concerned with the issue of subjectivity and they question whether credibility can be lost due to subjectivity. Patton reminded us that key insights by

Piaget, Freud, Darwin, and Newton included closeness to the participants. Patton stated, in closing, that "closeness does not make bias and loss of perspective inevitable; distance is no guarantee of objectivity" (p. 48).

Patton (1990) continued by reminding us that tests and questionnaires are also vulnerable to researcher bias. He argued that the terms objectivity and subjectivity have lost their utility and perhaps meaning. He revamped the old terminology with the term empathic neutrality. Patton suggested that quantitative and qualitative investigators should adopt a stance of neutrality when studying a phenomenon. He said that this means that they do not set out to prove a particular perspective or manipulate the data to arrive at predisposed truths. Because of obstacles, neutrality may be difficult to obtain. Patton also said that since neutrality does not mean detachment, qualitative researchers must learn the insights of their participants through empathy. Thus, the term empathic neutrality evolves.

## Participant Selection

I selected five participants for my study. These individuals are the cohort of individuals referred to in the title and elsewhere in the thesis. One participant was male and the other four were females. Lack of males in this field, at the time of the study, explains why there was only one male participant. All participants resided in Ontario. They all had been involved with the inclusion process of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The students the participants were responsible for, attended the program I worked at which was previously described in the section "Background to the Study". Therefore, the participants were known to me prior to participant selection. In selecting the participants I was aware that some of them had doubts about inclusion

as the best educational option and that their views might have been fairly negative, however, I was not absolutely certain of that.

Three of the participants were directly involved with the inclusion of students because they were support personnel. Regardless, all participants were able to provide information regarding the inclusion of the student/students they were responsible for. I wanted the group of participants to vary according to age and gender so there would be a range of conceptions of and experiences with inclusion. Included in the group of participants was at least one individual from each category. The categories were those of parents, SESPs, high school students, and college students. Two of the participants, one male (23 years) and one female (31 years), were SESPs. The other participants consisted of a high school student (18 years), a foster parent (34 years), and a social worker (37 years). The latter was contained in the parent category as she was the legal guardian to a few students in the program. Post secondary education ranged from a nine month practical registered nursing course (PRN) to a four year Social Work degree. One of the participants belonged to more than one category. The female SESP is presently a foster parent to a student with intellectual disabilities. All the participants were excited about being part of the study and agreed enthusiastically to be interviewed.

Participants were selected purposefully:

You choose particular participants to include because they are believed to facilitate the expansion of the developing theory. This is not random sampling, that is, sampling to ensure that the characteristics of the participants in your study appear in the same proportion they appear in the total population. (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 71-72)

Table 1

Description of Participants

| Pseudonym | Gender | Age | Role | Inclusion Experience | Education |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Randy | Male | 23 | SESP | 2 years | College Degree Social Work 2 years |
| Noreen | Female | 37 | Social Worker | 10 years | University Degree Social Work 4 years |
| Tessa | Female | 31 | SESP Foster Parent | 5 years | College Degree Developmental Service Worker 2 years |
| Ramona | Female | 18 | High School Student | 6 months | College<br><br>Youth Worker Program completed 1st year |
| Cathy | Female | 34 | Foster Parent | 3 years | Regional School of Nursing Assistance PRN 9 months |

Patton (1990) noted that "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 169). I speculated that the intention of purposive sampling was to highlight the depth of data to gain a deeper understanding of the cases rather than to generalize to a larger population. Bogdan and Biklen suggested that since some qualitative researchers are

> more interested in deriving universal statements of general social process....they concern themselves not with the question of whether their findings are generalizable, but rather with the question of to which other settings and subjects they are generalizable. (p. 45)

Initially, I contacted some of the participants by telephone and others personally to ask them if they wanted to participate in this study. If the response was positive, the participant received a letter. This letter explained further the research project including the purpose and methods of data collection for this study. Included as well was a letter of consent which was signed and given to me during the initial interview. Both cover and consent letters followed the guidelines set out in the handbook of Ethics Procedures and Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects.

## Ethical Considerations

The proposed research was conducted on the participants according to the rules, guidelines, and procedures for ethical research on human subjects as indicated in the handbook of Ethics Procedures and Guidelines for Research on Human Subjects. Participants were given a cover letter and consent letter. Together, the letters explained the purpose and the proposed methodology of the study, as well as extending an invitation to participate in the study. In particular the consent letter indicated that a) participation was voluntary, b) the participant could withdraw at any time from the study, c) there were no risks involved for the participant, d) there was a procedure for maintaining

confidentiality and anonymity, e) data collection was going to be stored for 7 years by the researcher, and f) the study was going to be made available to the participants at the Chancellor Patterson and/or Education library located at Lakehead University.

## Data Collection Procedure

This study was conducted through semi-structured interviews which were taped with the permission of the participants. Structured questions guided the interview, also known as an interview guide. Patton (1990) described an interview guide as

> a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. An interview guide is prepared in order to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. The interview guide provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will elucidate and illuminate that particular subject. Thus the interviewer remains free to build a conversation within a particular subject area, to word questions spontaneously, and to establish a conversational style-but with the focus on a particular subject that has been predetermined. (p. 283)

The interview guide made effective use of limited time available in an interview situation, and it helped to make the interviewing systematic and comprehensive. The following questions guided the research question which was: **What are the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with intellectual and multiple disabilities by a cohort of participants from one Ontario high school?**

1. What does inclusion mean to you?

2. What are the goals of inclusion as you see them?

3. Can you describe an experience of inclusion?

4. What are the strengths of inclusion?

5. What are your concerns about inclusion?

6. What would be an ideal inclusion program?

Prior to engaging in the interview, a pre-interview discussion was undertaken in order to set the foundation for the semi-structured interview. It was important to try to establish a comfort level with the intention of eliminating any nervousness. The pre-interview discussion was utilized to briefly inform the participants about the purposes of this study, to make assurances that the participants' identities were confidential, and to provide an open forum for the participants to ask any questions.

Where applicable, fieldnotes were written. These were in the form of personal researcher reflections in a journal format. Fieldnotes are "the written account of what the researcher hears, sees, experiences, and thinks in the course of collecting and reflecting on the data in a qualitative study" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 107). According to Bogdan and Biklen, fieldnotes are extremely beneficial:

> The meaning and context of the interview can be captured more completely if, as a supplement to each interview, the researcher writes out fieldnotes. The tape recorder misses the sights, the smells, the impressions, and the extra remarks said before and after the interview. (p. 107)

Fieldnotes were taken during and no later that 24 hours after an interview was conducted. "Notes taken during the interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along, particularly where it may be appropriate to check out something that was said ... and will

facilitate later analysis" (Patton, 1990, p. 349). The reflective part of fieldnotes assisted in the identification of categories or themes, and in decision making about the research design and direction of the study (Bogdan & Biklen).

## Interview Process

The interview portion of this study commenced and was completed in the summer months of June, July, and August of 1999, after approval for this research proposal was granted by the Ethics Committee of Lakehead University. In order to protect the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants, the pseudonyms Randy, Noreen, Tessa, Ramona, and Cathy were used.

The times and locations of the interviews were chosen by the participants. Before the interview process began consent forms were signed. Each participant interview took between 1 and 2 1/2 hours. The process was both revealing and productive. Because the second interview was for clarification purposes, new data generally was not revealed. Instead information was confirmed and reworded. Therefore, repetition was prevalent. Although the participants and I were acquainted and pre-interview discussions were conducted, I was still nervous. This nervousness did not abate as I progressed through the interviews. Because I was so anxious about following the interview guide I did not always engage in active listening. This thwarted numerous opportunities to engage in spontaneous questioning. The interview process was exciting, entertaining, amusing, and therapeutic to both the participants and myself. It was therapeutic for the participants because their ideas and concerns were being listened to seriously. It was therapeutic for myself because I gained a sense of being useful as a facilitator in discussing these issues.

I interviewed Randy at my home on Monday, June the 28th, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. He appeared

to be relaxed. Randy spoke clearly, smoothly, and without hesitation. He was not fidgeting; he slouched in a chair with his legs crossed. Since he is very committed to students with intellectual and multiple disabilities, he spoke with confidence and his responses were candid. He believed that a lot of planning was needed if inclusion was going to be successful. He was considerably more positive than the other participants, although dissenting remarks were woven throughout his interview. He was especially emotional when he discussed the lack of choices presented to students with disabilities. A second interview was not conducted.

I interviewed Noreen at her office on Wednesday, June 30th, 1999 at 10:00 a.m. Noreen is a social worker and some of my students are her clients. Noreen appreciates continual updated program and progress reviews on her clients. Therefore, we had frequent formal and informal meetings and telephone conversations before the interview process.

Noreen made my job as an interviewer very easy because she was relaxed, uninhibited, and garrulous. She was surprised by my nervousness since we worked together for several years and had an excellent rapport. Noreen's remarks suggested that she was against full inclusion. Noteworthy was her opinion that we need to educate the community as well as high school student about students with disabilities for inclusion success.

I interviewed Noreen a second time on Wednesday, July 21st, 1999. This interview was conducted in her kitchen at 10:30 a.m. A few issues made Noreen and I feel pressured for time. For example, on this hot summer day Noreen and her family were supposed to be going to the beach after the interview was completed.

I interviewed Tessa in her kitchen during the afternoon of Wednesday June 30th, 1999 at 1:00 p.m. Initially, there were problems. First, I forgot my guide questions. Second, Tessa's baby sitter

was not available. I proposed that the interview be cancelled until a more favourable day, but Tessa insisted that we attempt the interview. Although nervousness was observable, we completed the interview.

A second interview was held in Tessa's kitchen on Wednesday, July 14th, 1999 at 10:30 a.m. Because of a misunderstanding, her children were again present. Things went smoothly until the end at which point her children wanted her attention. This caused a few disruptions. Her views remained consistent with those from the first interview.

I interviewed Ramona on Wednesday, July 7th, 1999 at my home at 11:00 a.m. I met Ramona when she was a co-op student. She was a mature balanced individual who was easy to get along with. After the completion of her placement, our paths crossed occasionally. During one of these occasions, I asked her if she would like to participate in the research. She accepted.

Ramona's experience with inclusion was limited to approximately 5 months. Her inexperience did not prevent her from forming opinions on inclusion. However, it prevented her from elaborating on her yes or no responses. It was a difficult interview which required my composure because Ramona experienced bouts of nervousness indicated through hesitation, stammering, and giggling. All in all, our efforts proved fruitful. Not only was valuable information imparted, but we had an exceptionally good time filled with fun and laughter. The interview promoted a closeness that was not evident in the student-supervisor relationship.

A second interview was held at my home on Wednesday, July 28th, 1999 at 11:30 a.m. Similar to the other participants, her mannerisms and thought patterns remained consistent to those in the first interview. At the end of the interview, she indicated that she was interested in obtaining a copy of her interviews.

Finally, I interviewed Cathy on Wednesday, July 21st, 1999 at 1:00. At the time of the interview, Cathy and I had known each other for approximately 3 years. Her foster daughter was a student in my program. Being a committed foster parent, Cathy was very much interested in daily communication which was delivered through a communication book. As well, we engaged in frequent telephone conversations. Basically, our relationship was strictly that of a parent-teacher but our style of communication was informal.

Interviewing Cathy was very difficult because of her nervousness. At times, she was unable to respond at all. Also, she frequently answered with yes or no responses. This was arduous for me because as I mentioned earlier I was not adept at developing open-ended spontaneous questions. Nonetheless, we laughed about our shortcomings.

A second interview was held at my house on Monday, August 9th, 1999 at 11:00 a.m. During the telephone conversation, to set up this interview, Cathy was pleasantly surprised to learn that she provided rich data in her first interview. This knowledge, however, did not lessen her anxiety during the second interview. Her style was very similar to the first interview. It was refreshing that Cathy did not leave immediately after the completion of the interview. Instead, she stayed to talk for 45 minutes. Although the focus of the conversation was inclusion related, we wandered into other unrelated areas. We too became more acquainted.

## Data Analysis

Upon completion each recorded interview was labelled under a heading according to the numerical order in which the participant was interviewed, and whether it was her/his first or second interview. Following were the headings: 1A; 2A and 2B; 3A and 3B; 4A and 4B; and 5A and 5B.

Taped interviews were transcribed verbatim and were the primary data source.

Tapes were transcribed immediately after the interviews. Some tapes were easier to transcribe than others depending upon the audio quality of the tape, and the clarity and language patterns of the participant's input. Total transcribing time was approximately 90 hours and upon completion I had 174 pages of data. Initially, transcribing was a difficult process because I was unfamiliar with the use of a dictaphone. However, with a little practise I became adequate at operating this piece of equipment. Although this task was at times frustrating and tedious it was beneficial because I became very familiar with the content in the interviews. Throughout the transcribing, I began to develop themes informally. Also, in bold and upper case letters, I indicated through fieldnotes the areas which needed clarification and why. This simplified matters for me since I didn't have to rely on memory to locate the areas of ambiguity during a second reading.

All participants were contacted via telephone after the transcribing of their interview was completed. With the exception of Randy, second interviews were scheduled. Randy and I talked about another interview for clarification purposes, but I was unable to contact him during the summer. Finally, at the end of September, I spoke to Randy in person and clarified several points.

The data was analyzed according to the methods described by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) and Patton (1990). Constant comparative analysis (Bogdan & Biklen) was performed on the raw data collected from fieldnotes and semi-structured interviews. Initially, the problem of "convergence" which entailed grouping data together (Guba cited by Patton) was dealt with. Coding categories (Bogdan & Biklen) were used to accomplish this. By coding categories I mean references to certain words, phrases, patterns of behaviour, participants' ways of thinking, and events which repeatedly stand out (Bogdan & Biklen). Guba cited by Patton calls these "recurring regularities" and informs

us that they can be grouped through similarities or differences" (p. 402). Through analysis the coding categories, themes, or patterns continually emerged and were redefined. Although the data analysis was emergent, data was compared to the information in the literature review to note similarities and differences between them. Any significant "observer's comments" were recorded as fieldnotes (Bogdan & Biklen, p. 157).

My experience with coding data was not difficult but it was time consuming. Initially, I made a list of the words and phrases which surfaced in my mind as I reflected upon the content of the interviews. Then I read the interviews adding further to the list. After the list was completed, I circled synonyms using a colour coded system. I then categorized the synonyms by naming the colour coded groupings. Initially, the categories were inclusion, friendships, goals, concerns, strengths, weaknesses, and older students with intellectual and multiple disabilities versus younger students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. Next, I printed another set of transcripts and reread them. Using the above categories I coded sections using uppercase colour coded letters. For example conversations dealing with concerns were coded with an uppercase red 'c' while conversations dealing with friendships were coded with an uppercase blue 'f'. I labelled seven envelopes according to specified categories. Using a pair of scissors, I cut the interviews into sections and placed them into the appropriate envelope. Some sections belonged to more than one category. I labelled each conversation by identifying the speaker, whether it was the first or second interview, and the page number. In its entirety, this coding process proved worthwhile as it prepared the findings for analysis making the data easy to refer to. It was during the analysis of the findings that the categories were revamped into four main categories. Three of the categories were divided into sub-themes.

## Reflections on the Methodology

I decided to do this study because of my experience as a person who works everyday with students in inclusive settings. I felt that inclusive classrooms were not working well. For example, limited support meant that students with disabilities sometimes went to inclusive classrooms alone. In one instance, a regular classroom teacher offered to take a student knowing that support would not be available. The teacher was comfortable with the situation because she was familiar with the student. However, she was unaware of and therefore unable to protect the student from being teased and taunted by the students without disabilities. Without knowledge as to why he refused to go, I tried to make this individual attend her art class. The result was he tried to hit me. After probing and anger management counselling, the individual finally explained what happened to him. He showed us love letters he was sent. He believed that they were true, and when he tried to approach the girl who was supposed to be interested in him he was ridiculed. Perhaps with the exception of the insensitive students without disabilities, this experience was horrific for all involved parties. Another unpleasant experience involved sending a student to a computer class in which the teacher was not accepting her. The teacher's attitude was reflected in the attitudes of students without disabilities. They too did not make the student with disabilities feel welcome. The student did not want to attend the inclusive classroom and she often told the support person that she hated her. Although the support person (co-op student) understood why these remarks were made, it still upset her. The support person liked the individual she supported and was bothered when anger was directed at her.

Inclusion is now improving. High school teachers are getting younger and they learn about inclusion from their formal education. Therefore, they expect students with disabilities to be included in their classrooms. Also, it is now common for students without disabilities to be educated with

students with disabilities. As a result, general high school teachers and students without disabilities are more accepting and welcoming of students who are different than they are.

In gathering data for the study, I was very interested in finding out how parents, guardians, and support personnel coped with inclusion not because I was against the idea of full inclusion but because I was interested in how they experienced it and what made it work well and what made it dysfunction. I was opened to all the possibilities of what might emerge. In fact what emerged in this study was that many of the participants were very interested in inclusion. However, they felt that the system needed to be fine tuned.

As I gathered the data, I went through the process of going home, transcribing the interviews, reading them, and discovering that there were things I wanted to check with the participants. After I transcribed the interviews, I had another follow up interview with four out of the five participants and phone calls in between to confirm and clarify what they told me. It was important to confirm that the participants and I were communicating clearly so that I had a complete understanding of what they were trying to tell me.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the main instrument for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. In this regard, it is the trustworthiness of the researcher which determines the validity of the study. Validity is ensured by a direct and strong correlation between the raw data collected (transcripts) and the way the researcher analyzes and interprets the transcripts and themes. Anyone reading my study and looking at the transcripts of the interviews will find that the themes emerged from the transcripts (Bogden & Biklen, 1992; Patton, 1990). Connection between the data and the interpretation of the data is one thing, but what ensures validity even more is frequent citations of the data. Claims about what the participants have said must be confirmed and supported by citations of

the data. That is how I brought the raw data into my study.

The scope of the study extends only to the experiences of five Ontario participants and not to other individuals in other parts of Ontario or Canada. I am relying on the participants for having given me as honest an account of their experiences as they possibly could. As a researcher, I believe they have honestly and truly shared their experiences with me. While statistical data would yield results as to how many participants actually like inclusion or not, this study does not attempt to find out this kind of data.

**Chapter Four**

**Analysis and Interpretation of Findings**

## Introduction

After conducting the interviews with the participants, four main themes were identified. They are opinions about inclusion, participants' goals for inclusion, friendship, and issues about inclusion. Most themes were divided into sub-themes. The sub-themes of "Opinions about Inclusion" are what inclusion means to the participants and political issues related to inclusion. The sub-themes of "Friendship" are relationships in academic inclusive environments and students with disabilities befriend one another. The sub-themes of "Issues about Inclusion" are full inclusion, negative experiences resulting from inappropriate inclusion, and views on collaborative planning. An analysis of the findings as they relate to the four main themes of my study follows.

## Theme 1: Opinions about Inclusion

### What Inclusion Means to the Participants

When asked initially what inclusion means to them, the participants suggest that inclusion is a method of educating students together regardless of their disability. This coincides with Aefsky's definition (1995): "Inclusive education means that all students, with or without special needs, should be educated in regular classrooms" (p. vii). When I confirm for Randy that I am referring to both students with intellectual and multiple disabilities, he says that inclusion means incorporating them "into the mainstream classrooms with normal or nondisabled children or students (1A, p.1). Ramona states, "To me inclusion means bringing the handicapped people into class introducing them into the ... normal environment of a high school" (4A, p. 1).

In addition to being educated together, Noreen, Tessa, and Cathy add unique qualifiers to their definitions. Noreen is adamant that with inclusion all students must be treated equally. She redefines inclusion during her second interview as follows:

> Inclusion means to me that you take a person with special needs--it doesn't matter what their special needs are--you put them into a classroom without any kind of support like ... a regular student that was starting off in the high school system. (2B, p. 15)

In her definition, Tessa stresses the importance of facilitating the willing participation of students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. She suggests, "It means not to be excluded--welcome to join in but not being forced or expected to join" (3A, p. 1). Cathy's definition includes students who are solely physically disabled. She states, "It doesn't necessarily mean developmentally or mentally challenged but also any child that might be in a wheelchair if they have MS, cerebral palsy, or CF or something like that" (5A, p.1).

Randy, Tessa, and Ramona argue that inclusion must revolve around the students with disabilities. Tessa says, "Yes, I think it's good that they have the opportunity to go into some classes as long as ... it's in the best interest of the individual (3A, p. 4). Ramona reports "there wouldn't be such thing as inclusion if there weren't any handicapped students, therefore, inclusion should be about handicapped students" (4A, p. 16).

All the participants make reference to meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities. Randy feels that if the needs are not met "then it was a waste" (1A, p. 23). When Ramona is asked why she feels that inclusion will not benefit students with disabilities she replies, "Their individual needs are not going to be met" (4A, p. 17). Both Noreen and Tessa feel that individual needs are not being met with inclusion. Noreen comments, "I don't think we're meeting

the needs of the students....the children's needs are met last" (2B, p. 2). Tessa says:

> I mean if you have students who do better with academic work in the morning and need it to
>
> be that way and you're just going to shove them into afternoon classes because it fits
>
> everyone's timetable you're not meeting their needs (3B, p. 6)

Cathy is concerned that an inclusive classroom will not meet the needs of her foster daughter. When

she is asked where she thinks her foster daughter's individual needs are better met she replies:

> Her special needs classroom is geared towards her needs and ... (the staff) are helping her
>
> with what abilities she has--to improve upon them and maintain them and in a regular
>
> classroom there won't be any of that. She will just regress. (5A, p. 4)

The participants infer that inclusion will revolve around or benefit students with disabilities when their

individual needs are met.

According to Noreen, Cathy, and Tessa, if the individual needs of students with disabilities

are met, then they receive an education equal to that of students without disabilities. When Noreen

is asked what an equal education means for students with disabilities she states that it means that their

individual needs will be met. "I feel that their individual needs have to be met first ... and then look

at the opportunities out there for them. Then add that onto the program" (2B, p. 9). Cathy and

Tessa's thoughts concur with Noreen. Additionally, Noreen states that with inclusion, students with

disabilities are not getting an education equal to students without disabilities:

> I don't know how that can be equal because in a special needs class it's tailor-made. It's
>
> made to what their needs are, what their strengths are, (and) where the weaknesses need to
>
> be developed but in a regular classroom I don't know how you draw that out of the individual.
>
> I think that they would really lose out because I don't think the program would be as tailor-

made. (2A, p. 14)

The findings suggest that students with and without disabilities should work on the same activities, and that it is permissible to modify the activities for students with disabilities. When I ask Randy if all the students should be doing similar activities he answers, "I think that is the idea" (1A, p. 1). Tessa supports Randy's position:

> I think the activity should be similar. I think that if you're participating in that room you should be doing what's happening in that room. It doesn't have to be exactly the same but a modified version. (3B, p. 1)

When Tessa is asked whether the students with disabilities should be included if they are not doing modified activities, she says, "No, then they shouldn't be in that classroom--that's what that classroom is for and they may need to be in another classroom that is more appropriate" (3B, p. 1). Ramona states that it is unproductive if students are included and not doing the same activity as the others. She then infers that students with disabilities should engage in similar activities as students without disabilities. "To me inclusion also means pretty much doing the exact same thing as the regular functioning kids....If the grade nine class is reading Shakespeare then so should the handicapped kids (Ramona, 4B, p. 1). Finally, Ramona acknowledges that engaging in similar activities doesn't necessarily guarantee that students with disabilities will not be ostracised by others. When asked if it is acceptable for students with disabilities to do their physiotherapy in a gym class while the other students do their stretching Ramona states, "It's ok if the activity is similar but again they're going to be the class nerd" (4B, p. 8).

Ramona's statement that students with disabilities are "the class nerds" suggests that inclusion does not eliminate the stigma attached to students with disabilities. Randy, Cathy, and Noreen agree.

Randy states, "And labels just disappear right....That is a load of crap really. Cause the label will be there. The students will look at the kid--at the retard at the back of the room" (1A, p. 23). Cathy hypothesizes that because inclusion will not change students with disabilities, labels will remain. She informs me, "There always will be (labels). They're not going to change ... because they're in a different setting. They are still the same persons" (5A, p. 15).

## Political Issues Related to Inclusion

Randy, Noreen, and Cathy acknowledges the political aspects of inclusion. Randy states, "I think it is very ... political" (1A, p. 19), while Noreen asserts, "Oh yes, I think there is a lot of politics involved with inclusion" (2B, p. 3). Cathy, in reference to her foster daughter, responds to the question of the purpose of inclusion stating inclusion is "something ... I guess the government of Ontario wants to accomplish" (5A, p. 7). Ramona is the only participant who does not acknowledge and discuss the political circumstances surrounding inclusion. In my judgement it is difficult for a high school student to label issues as political, therefore, making it harder to recognize and address them.

Randy and Noreen use terms which indicate that inclusion has a political history and therefore the intent of the inclusion is not new (Aefsky, 1995; Andrew & Lupart, 1993; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994a). Randy and Noreen both speak about the mainstream. Noreen refers additionally to integration. These two terms, mainstream and integration, are examples of forerunners to inclusion. Although familiarity with these terms does not necessarily mean that the participants realize they are alluding to political history, a correlation is evident. For example, Randy confirms this correlation with his use of the word mainstream and his statement "I don't think it is a new concept" (1A, p. 5). As well,

Randy demonstrates political intuition when he states that the concept of inclusion has been around but not pushed. This concurs with Aefsky who writes that school administrators and educators only begin to address this issue genuinely when "inclusion was publicized as a new mandate in the 1980s and early 1990's" (p. 1).

The participants lack knowledge of the Canadian legislation, Bill 82, which encourages inclusion. Randy states that he has never heard of Bill 82. Tessa refers to Bill 82 but does not define it. Cathy states that she is aware of Bill 82 but she does not know what it entails. Although Noreen initially calls it Bill 182, she is the only participant who speaks briefly about it.

Tessa, Ramona, and Cathy feel clearly that inclusion will eventually lead to the elimination of special education classrooms. The elimination of special education classrooms promotes full inclusion. When referring to the school board's intentions concerning special education classrooms Tessa states, "I see the board going that way. I see them trying to eliminate all the (special education) classrooms" (3A, p.1). Ramona holds that "inclusion will eliminate the special education classrooms (for) the handicapped students" (4A, p.1). When making reference to inclusion Cathy states, "It is just something that has been thrown at us in the past year with no real reasoning behind it other than to eliminate the special needs classes" (5A, p. 22). Randy, Noreen, and Cathy suggest that full inclusion will save the school board money. Noreen says full inclusion "is going to save a lot of money in the long run ... (because) they're going to have to hire less support staff for these individuals" (2B, p. 3). Cathy responds similarly, "It's saving them money on the SESPs, the special needs teacher, and all the equipment and space that goes into the classroom" (5A, p. 14).

## Theme 2: Participants' Goals for Inclusion

Each participant views academic learning as a goal of inclusive education for students with disabilities. Randy says that students should take courses of interest so they learn about something they enjoy:

> Take the classes that the student is interested in. The student will actually get something out of it so that it is not just putting a student into a class and your wasting valuable time. (If not) he will be learning something that he really has no interest in or is not going to be successful in understanding. (1A, p. 23)

Noreen feels that a student with multiple disabilities might not learn anything when included. She comments "I don't know what a multidisabled student would get out of a regular classroom other than being in that classroom....they are sitting there and perhaps not learning anything" (2A, p. 7-8). Tessa states, "I think the classroom is for learning and for achieving" (3B, p. 6). Tessa explains the importance of learning for students with disabilities:

> I think allowing (the handicapped students) in the classrooms and (working) along side some of the other kids.... makes them feel good and they do feel that they are learning something and...they are completing something as long as their work is ... something they can handle and deal with. (3A, p. 3)

Cathy is adamant that school is for learning. She says that she will pull her foster daughter out of school if full inclusion is implemented because "she's not going to learn anything in the normal setting —she is not going to learn anything" (5A, p. 8). Ramona indicates that academic learning should be the purpose behind inclusion.

All participants perceive personal growth for students without disabilities as a goal of inclusive

education. According to the participants, personal growth refers to students without disabilities becoming more tolerant, self-aware, accepting, and/or educated about students with disabilities. This coincides with the findings of Andrews and Lupart (1993) and Ryndak et al. (1995) who hold that inclusion results in class members becoming more tolerant of individual differences and learning to respect and accept students with disabilities. Cathy asserts that inclusion will make students without disabilities aware of students with disabilities. Randy and Noreen think that students without disabilities become more tolerant and accepting of students with disabilities. Randy states:

> I think in some ways they learn how to accept (handicapped students) and they get used to having them in the classrooms. Seeing them on a day to day basis ... (helps them become) tolerant of some child-like behaviours like a student who makes a lot of noises or sounds. (1A, p. 10)

Tessa agrees that there will be an element of tolerance building, and through this building process students without disabilities may become involved in self-reflection:

> I agree that it does benefit the (students without disabilities). (They) show some tolerance. It (also) benefits (them) ... in the sense that they're learning that there are different people in the world. They learn a little bit more about themselves. I think that when people work with somebody who doesn't have as much as they have going for them they kind of take another look at themselves and other people. (3A, p. 6)

Randy, Tessa, Ramona, and Noreen believe that learning for student with disabilities should take precedence over the personal growth of students without disabilities. Randy asserts that "you need to focus on the needs of (students with disabilities) but at the same time it could be a secondary goal ... for some of the other students to learn to be more tolerant" (1A, p. 10). Tessa states, "I don't

agree that (students with disabilities) should be (included) at the expense of their own programming....(Their) needs should be met first and then you can worry about others" (3A, p. 7). Ramona considers it unfair to jeopardize the education of students with disabilities in order to educate others, and infers that students with disabilities are being exploited if they are included solely to benefit students without disabilities. She also feels that if students without disabilities inadvertently benefit from inclusion then "it's a bonus but not a priority" (4A, p. 17).

## Theme 3: Friendship

### Relationships in Academic Inclusive Environments

Noreen, Cathy, and Ramona hold that friendships did not develop among students with and without disabilities in inclusive environments:

They may go out into other classes for integration but they don't come back with friends

... and they don't have any other friends that are calling them after school or taking them out.

I haven't seen that happen yet. (Noreen, 2A, p. 5)

Cathy's experience concurs with Noreen's as Cathy did not receive any phone calls from her foster daughter's drama peers. Ramona comments that because students with disabilities are different from students without disabilities they will never acquire a sense of belonging with them:

No matter what they are different and there is no way they're going to belong. When they see people laughing and they are not understanding the ... inside jokes about what they did on the week-end they're going to feel left out. (4A, p. 4)

Ramona then suggests that students with disabilities will never make friends with students without disabilities because of their differences. "Either way they are different. There is no denying this fact

... and no matter what they're not going to build a friendship" (Ramona, 4B, p. 5).

Tessa and Cathy indicates that friendships can and actually do develop in different areas outside of the classroom. Tessa is asked about other locations in the school where students mingle. She reports, "Yes, there's [sic] special events that goes [sic] on throughout the day. There's [sic] events that go on throughout the year that they can participate in" (3A, p. 14). Furthermore, Tessa contends that students get to know one another just by seeing them in the school. "I think by seeing each other in the school they get to know each other" (Tessa, 3A, p. 8). Cathy agrees, "Well sure kids can make friends at school but that would be ... in between their classes or lunch or after school" (5A, p. 1).

According to Ramona and Tessa, an obstacle to making friends in inclusive environments is that students without disabilities focus on learning:

> It's hard ... for a regular functioning (student) to make a friendship in an educational place because you have so many other responsibilities....you are so busy with the stress of your homework, your studies, (and) your reading. (Ramona, 4A, p. 6)

Tessa reports, "I mean kids are just tolerating learning. They only have one thing they can really focus on and that's learning and listening to that teacher" (3A, p.14). Ramona believes that this is also true for students with disabilities. "I don't think that if you put (students with disabilities) into regular classrooms they would even have time to make friends because they would be so busy catching up with the work" (Ramona, 4A, p. 3).

Ramona, Cathy, and Tessa hold that making friends should not interfere with learning. Ramona says:

> If you were to do that then you might as well not even send them to school you should

be sending them to group camps not in educational (settings) ... where you are risking their education. (4A, p. 6)

In response to the same question about whether the emphasis of inclusion should be on friendship development Cathy replies "No, because when you are in a classroom you are there to learn you're not there to be socializing" (5A, p. 2). Although in her example Tessa refers to individual needs instead of academic learning, academic learning is an individual need for students with disabilities. Tessa agrees with Ramona and Cathy and adds that if learning becomes secondary to building friendships then students with disabilities are being exploited:

We have to look at the individual's needs to be met first and if you want to try to make friendships and make each other aware and it will be beneficial to both sides then I say fine but if you're using that and not meeting the needs (of students with disabilities) then I think ... it's ... exploitation. (3A, p. 8)

Tessa, Cathy, Ramona, and Randy suggest that the inability of students with disabilities to communicate effectively is another obstacle to friendship development:

Communication is a major thing for friendships ... and I think ... a person who's able to communicate will definitely make way more friends than a person who has difficulty with communication. (When) you're looking at normal people some are really talented socially and their friends are abundant and you have people who are shy and uncomfortable in social situations and they don't have as many friends ... When you are able to communicate you can draw people toward you. (Tessa, 3A, p. 15 )

Cathy does not believe that her nonverbal foster daughter is capable of making friends because high school students are unaware of the messages behind her nonverbal communication:

She can't communicate. As far as her communication goes ... we've learned to anticipate her needs just by her vocalizations and her body actions whereas (students) in the classroom ... are not going to know what she wants or what might be wrong with her. She has the potential for seizures. They're not going to know what's going on if they are not aware of seizures. (5A, p. 4-5)

When asked whether students with intellectual (higher functioning students) or multiple disabilities stand a better chance of developing friendships Ramona responds that higher functioning students should fare better because they can talk to students without disabilities. Randy is aware of a situation where students without disabilities befriend a high functioning student with an intellectual disability:

There has just been one example through one of the programs I worked in--one student that I can think of in my mind that has made actual friends that go and spend time with him. This particular student had a very high development stage I guess you could say. (1A, p. 7)

Being able to communicate is the reason why Randy feels this student makes friends. Randy generalizes this belief to other higher functioning students with intellectual disabilities.

Ramona and Cathy suggest that friendships with students without disabilities develop with reverse integration. Reverse integration means that students without disabilities are brought into the classrooms of students with disabilities whereas with inclusion students with disabilities are brought into classrooms of students without disabilities. The perceived difference is that with reverse integration students without disabilities seek out voluntarily students with disabilities while with inclusion students with disabilities are forced upon them. Ramona recognizes this difference:

High school students are not feeling that the handicapped students are being pushed and

forced onto them to make friendships. They're given the chance to just come in to make the friendship. They are not being forced to. (4A, p. 7)

Cathy responds similarly:

I feel that the only way she can develop an friendship is if somebody comes into her classroom to spend time with her to ... be educated on her special needs....If it is the reverse it's being forced on them whether they like it or not. (5A, p. 9)

Reverse integration can be expedited by allowing students without disabilities to volunteer on community group outings involving students with disabilities. Ramona asserts that "when you go on your outings get individuals (without disabilities) to come on the outings ... they (will not) be forced to develop friendships and they will also be having fun of their own" (4A, p. 6).

Ramona claims that group work facilitates relationship building and still enhances learning:

I think for friendship (development) it would be (classes) like drama because you are constantly working in a group ... and art if you're doing a group project....Even a shop class ... if you worked as a group to build a bird houses. (4A, p. 5-6)

Although in the above conversation Ramona uses the term friendship, she believes that a student without disabilities might help a student with disabilities if s/he needs it but that does not constitute a friendship:

I don't think you could really call it a friendship because it ... would be ... peer helping where they would be helping the handicapped (students) with their work....That doesn't really classify as a friendship. That's classifies as an acquaintance". (4A, p. 4)

Therefore, the relationships that develop through inclusion are acquaintances and not friendships. Noreen and Cathy also distinguishes between the terms acquaintance and friendship:

A friendship is when a person goes home after school and perhaps calls the individual up and wants to take her/him out to a show or they want to get together over coffee or if they want to go out for lunch but to meet in the hall ... it's hi, bye, how are you. Those are the niceties. It's not a friendship it's just an acquaintance. (Noreen, 2A, p. 8-9)

Cathy responds, "Just an acquaintance" (5A, p. 7) when asked how she defines the relationship between the drama students and her foster daughter.

## Students with Disabilities Befriend One Another

Tessa and Noreen observe that students with disabilities usually make friends with other students with disabilities. Tessa states that "most of their friends are their peers" (3A, p. 2) and "the friendships that they have are usually with other special ed kids" (3A, p. 3). Noreen describes a situation where students with disabilities befriend each other:

One child that I work with who is now a grown adult had a friendship develop. She went all through public school (and) had no friends ... until she got into high school. There was another girl who was suffering the same way she was (with) the low self-esteem (and) didn't have any friends so the two of them got together and they were good friends ... This young girl had some special needs (too). (2A, p. 4-5)

Tessa thinks that these friendships which develop among students with disabilities "are the most natural friendships that they have" (3B, p. 4). Natural in the sense that they are voluntary and not forced. Tessa believes that "you can't force a friendship on somebody (because) it's a natural thing that grows" (3A, p. 3). Ramona adds that these friendships will last and that they are more than just hi and good-bye relationships.

Lutfiyya (1990) studies friendships among individuals with and without disabilities. Her participants, two females and males, are white and middle-classed. Although their specific ages are not given they are all adults over the age of 18 and they have completed their high school education. As students, they are all labelled as having an intellectual disability. Their disabilities range from mild to severe. The individual who is considered to have severe deficits is able to use public transportation independently. Also, three of the four participants have no physical impairments so there is not the image of them being disabled.

Lutfiyya (1990) maintains that in three out of four cases it is the individual with disabilities who initiates and sustains the friendship. She says, "It is most often the disabled person who does ... what might be called the day to day "work" of the friendship" (Lutfiyya, p. 31). Lutfiyya also describes the voluntary nature of friendships. According to her research, "The assumptions and expectations held about friends and friendship are that this is a freely given and chosen relationship....A friendship continues as long as this voluntary bond remains" (p. 59). Additionally, Lutfiyya's discovers that friendships develop over a common theme. She writes:

Another assumption about friendship is that these relationships are generally formed on the basis of commonality....This commonality may arise from chosen interests and activities such as stamp collecting, folk dancing or athletics; or result more from other circumstances such as attending the same high school or working in the same office. (p. 41)

Lutfiyya's findings explain the importance of good communication skills for students with disabilities as they are mainly responsible for managing friendships. Also, her theory on the voluntary nature of friendships explains why inclusion might not be successful in facilitating friendships among the students with and without friendships. Lutfiyya says that educators use planned introduction to

develop these friendships. These unnatural planned introductions of inclusion are viewed as a forceful artificial way to establish relationships. As well, this same theory explains why friendships which develop outside the inclusive environment are more successful, why reverse integration might work, and why students with disabilities make friends with other students with disabilities. Finally, her research on common themes suggest that group work facilitates friendships because the group members have common goals.

## Theme 4: Issues about Inclusion

### Full Inclusion

Cathy and Noreen are opposed to full inclusion. If full inclusion is mandated Cathy says, "I certainly wouldn't be happy about that ... Like I said before if it leads to that she probably won't be going to school anymore" (5B, p. 3).

The concerns over full inclusion are so significant that Noreen, Ramona, Tessa, and Cathy prefer students with disabilities to be educated in segregated special education classrooms:

I don't see anything wrong with that. Actually I think that it has been working out and I hope

that it will continue because I think that if these kids are (put) into the mainstream they're

going to get lost in between the cracks--no one will be interested in them. (Noreen, 2A, p. 6)

Tessa and Ramona concur with this view with Ramona asserting, "No, I don't see anything wrong with it. They're learning as a group, they're helping each other out ... and they don't feel belittled because they don't know something that someone else does" (4A, p. 10). Cathy believes that students with disabilities are

still in the high school setting and the regular students are still going to see them but they are

going to see them in their own environment where they are happy. They don't have to be frightened off by the kids or feel threatened by them because they're considered safe and so are ... the special needs kids. (5A, p. 17)

Full inclusion is not well accepted because many benefits that are offered in special education classrooms are not seen as attainable in general education classrooms. Seven perceived benefits of special education classrooms emerges from the data. First, the individuality of the programs in the special needs classrooms is seen as beneficial. Noreen states, "The special needs class ... is geared toward the individuals and what their needs are and how to meet them" (2A, p. 12). As well, Cathy appreciates the individuality because it maintains her foster daughter's existing skills, and it encourages her to engage in hand-over-hand and cause and effect activities:

> The walking part of it....the physio and the pool therapy....the hand-over-hand activities that she does plus the cause and effect toys that she plays with....Sorting utensils and folding laundry and recycling and cleaning transparencies....In a regular classroom there won't be any of that. (5A, p. 2-4)

Ramona holds that individual programs focus on sensory stimulation and functional academic learning. She states, "They got to feel stuff, they got (to) hold pencils ... hand-over-hand....They learned how to write their name, they learned the date, (and) they learned how to say the days " (4A, p. 8-9). To Randy individual programming means that students with disabilities have more time to complete their work assignments:

> In a special needs classroom ... you can allot them more time to complete their work, you can spend more time with them one-on-one to help them understand the work and present it to them in manner that the students will understand. (1A, p. 17)

Lieberman (1985) maintained that in special education the students dictate the curriculum but in general education the system dictates the curriculum. Hence, a student "has a significantly better chance of being treated as an individual" in special education classrooms (p. 514).

Second, teaching life skills and social skills to students with disabilities is seen as a benefit of special education classrooms. Noreen asserts that

> they need the survival skills, the social skills....hi and bye, how are you, how to get along with others in the classroom, role modelling, peer modelling, (and) how to interact ... socially so they can go out in the community....Life skills ... whether that is tooth brushing, washing clothes, eating ... (and/or) preparing meals. (2A, p. 6-10)

Third, group community outings are seen as beneficial to students with disabilities. Cathy says, "It's enjoyable for them and it can be a learning experience for them depending upon where they go. It's teaching them socialization (skills) and I guess (how to) communicate ... (with members of) the community" (5B, p. 2). Noreen agrees, "I think the community outings are also a benefit because they go out as a group and they have a great time" (2B, p. 12). Since Noreen and Cathy are also aware of community discrimination against people with disabilities they feel that community outings are invaluable in the sense that they educate the public about people with disabilities:

> When the children are going out as a group I feel that they are educating the community because they're seeing all these children together participating in an activity that you and I would participate in. (Cathy, 5B, p. 1-2)

Fourth, the participants believe that students with disabilities receive superb care by the qualified special education staff. Noreen states, "From what I've seen in all the different classrooms ... the staff that are in there are very caring (and) they are very nurturing" (2A, p. 11). Noreen also

says that "they have the training. I mean they go to university and I believe the courses that they take give them expertise ... over the other teachers" (2B, p, 8). Cathy says the teachers are "friendly, outgoing, easy to get along with, very informative, and very conscientious of meeting the needs of my foster daughter" (5A, p. 13). Ramona adds that teachers need to be warm, and reasonable with the expectations they hold for students with disabilities.

Fifth, Noreen, Tessa, Ramona, and Cathy suggest that students with disabilities acquire a sense of belonging in their special education classrooms:

I think that they get a feeling of belonging being ... in a special needs class because they see other kids with other types of disabilities. If a child sees someone else in a wheelchair I think they are more inclined to (feel) accepted and comfortable. (Noreen, 2A, p. 13)

Tessa comments:

They are always left to feel that they are not up to the standards of their peers (without disabilities). They need a place to call their own so they can meet with their friends and fit in and feel like they're important. (3A, p. 1)

Ramona says students with disabilities feel a sense of belonging in their own classroom because they can communicate with one another. "They get to talk to each other and even if the outsiders can't understand ... what they are saying to each other they know that they are communicating with one another" (Ramona, 4A, p. 14)

Sixth, the participants believe that special education classrooms retain the self-esteem of students with disabilities. Ramona says, "In the special needs class their self-esteem is boosted everyday" (4A, p. 18). Cathy remarks, "It would be better for (my foster daughter's) self-esteem to remain in the special needs classroom because ... they do accept each other unconditionally" (5A, p.

6).

Seventh, special education classrooms are viewed as providing greater support. Noreen discusses the benefit of having support. Noreen worries that if the support does not follow the students to their inclusive classrooms they may end up being ignored:

> I don't know whether or not some of these individuals will have support attached to them so they could just be sitting in a desk and that's basically what they are doing, sitting in a desk and not getting any kind of direction. (2A, p. 9).

Ramona adds that support for all students with disabilities should be mandatory, "otherwise they will be eaten alive" (4A, p. 19).


## Negative Experiences Resulting from Inappropriate Inclusion

Frequently, individuals who are directly or indirectly involved with inclusion experience negative consequences when students with disabilities are placed inappropriately. Inclusive experiences can become negative for students with disabilities. Randy, Noreen, and Ramona refer specifically to unwilling inclusive teachers and how they will make students with disabilities feel unwanted. Randy says, "Towards the developmentally challenged they will probably have a negative effect of making them feel rejected in some way:" (1A, p. 2). Noreen says, "I think that the child with special needs will suffer ... They will sense that their presence isn't wanted in the classroom" (2A, p. 11). Randy adds that programs for students with disabilities will not be modified properly by those teachers who are not willing participants. "I don't think they will be very good educators. If they're forced to (be inclusive) they will be less likely to put a positive effort into modifying programs" (Randy, 1A, p. 1).

As well, Noreen, Randy, Tessa, and Ramona suggest that inappropriate inclusion encourages the students with disabilities to misbehave. Noreen states, "If they don't have the verbal skills and cannot communicate that they don't want to be there they'll act out" (2A, p. 11). Randy states:

> I spent time in the grade nine geography class and there weren't suitable activities ... to do so the student became more restless, had more free time, and I guess was more bored and that was when more of the behaviours came out. (1A, p. 15)

Tessa asserts, "They do become a problem in the classroom....They will ... show you by acting out" (3A, p. 12). In her example, Ramona talks about the behaviour of a student with disabilities she took to a computer class. "She started to get really defensive with me. She started to get mad at me...She told me that she didn't like me anymore and that didn't make me feel good" (Ramona, 4A. p. 10).

Additionally, inappropriate placement adversely affects the self-esteem of students with disabilities. Noreen discloses that it adds further to self-esteem problems. "It definitely impacts the self-esteem of the children with special needs. If they are having any kind of problem already then that just contributes to the problem" (Noreen, 2B, p. 14). Randy and Ramona talk about a decrease in self-esteem occurring. Ramona states:

> Their self-esteem will not be any higher, if anything it will be lower ... How is that going to make them feel when they can't keep up, when they can't read a sentence on the board, when the teacher asks them a question and they can't answer it? That's going to lower their self-esteem. (4A, p. 14)

Tessa provides an excellent example explaining how the self-esteem of a student with disabilities is shattered in an inclusive environment. She reflects:

> Yes, I remember one time when we put an individual into a class. He was going and he was

really happy to go because he loved ... art. It was going fine for the first couple of months and then once the kids became comfortable in their environment they started to read that individual and realized how they could take advantage of and hurt this person....They would call him names. They would make fun of him. They would send letters that were not true about some girl that liked him ... and she didn't and it was very upsetting and very heartbreaking for that person....You can't get that person's self-esteem back and make him feel comfortable with doing that again (inclusion). (3A, p. 24-25)

Students without disabilities also endure negative experiences with inclusion. Tessa says that if students with disabilities start to exhibit poor behaviour because of inappropriate class placement, students without disabilities are left with bad impressions of them:

I think that when you're including someone into a class you have to think really long and hard ... and make it an appropriate thing so that it becomes a more positive experience for the student (with disabilities) and as well the other students. If it is a negative experience for the other students then the individual (with disabilities) is looked upon negatively throughout the school. (3A, p. 12)

Not only are students without disabilities left with bad impression of students with disabilities, but their education gets interrupted. Tessa, Cathy, and Ramona express concern over this. Tessa maintains that it is ludicrous when disruptive students with disabilities prevent students without disabilities from learning. She says:

Yes, if they're disruptive to the point where no learning is taking place I think that is just not appropriate. That is not inclusion to me that's crazy ... If you're disrupting the learning for everybody there is just no point to it. (3A, p. 14)

In my opinion, Tessa's viewpoint supports the third principle derived from litigation which states that if the education of students without disabilities is affected adversely by a student with a disability, then s/he should be removed from the inclusive environment (Yell, 1995, p. 401). Cathy fears that if her foster daughter is placed inappropriately she will interfere with the education of others. She comments:

> I think they will wonder what she is doing there, that she is a big waste of time, and she's an interference. (Also) that she's not going to learn and that she's taking away time from (those) that should be learning. (5A, p. 21)

Randy and Noreen argue that it is negative for students without disabilities when they are taught by reluctant inclusive teachers. Randy says, "Oh, definitely, if the teachers aren't going to set an example then who is there to set an example for the regular students to accept these kids?" (1A, p. 2). Noreen agrees that negativity is compounded:

> It will affect the other students. They will pick up on the teacher's feeling and they may also then feel the same way just because of what they've seen their teachers do and I think that would have a negative impact on the classroom. (Noreen, 2A, p. 11)

The final group to sustain negative effects are parents, guardians, and support personnel. These individuals are left with tainted impressions of inclusion because of inappropriate placements. Therefore, it is not surprising that all participants respond pessimistically when they are initially asked to recall an inclusive experience. Ramona says that her experiences with inclusion are more negative than positive. Noreen reports that she is unable to recall any positive experiences with inclusion. "Well, I guess in my thirteen years of working with children (with) special needs I'd have to say that there's been more negative than positive (experiences). I really can't recall any positive experiences"

(Noreen, 2A, p. 21). Noreen adds that foster parents are negatively impacted by inappropriate inclusive placements, and she fears foster placements will be jeopardized because of misbehaviour displayed at school by disgruntled students with disabilities:

> It jeopardizes foster (placements) because if a child is having lots of problems at school and they're not resolved then these problems escalate at home....That impacts on the foster placement because foster parents get tired and frustrated and ultimately they end up calling the workers to say that they can't continue on with the child. (Noreen, 2B, p. 12)

## Views on Collaborative Planning

Aefsky (1995), Andrew and Lupart (1993), and Villa and Thousand (1995) emphasize that collaborative planning is essential if inclusion is going to be successful. Aefsky writes that many issues need to be considered before, during, and after the introduction of an inclusive program. Tessa recognizes the need for individualized planning:

> With certain individuals it is going to be successful and they won't need as much planning but other individuals need more planning ... (so) we have to look at it as an individual thing and it has to be well planned and thought out. (3B, p. 7).

Additionally, Tessa offers a solution to facilitate individualized planning. She recommends that during the timetabling phase, instead of leaving the admission of students with disabilities up to chance, a certain number of spaces can be allotted automatically for them in courses they excel at. She explains:

> Because these kids are put at the bottom of the inclusion list all the other kids are fit in and then our kids get last pick....Let's leave room especially in these specialized classes

where these people can participate in like cooking, automotive, and computers. (3A, p. 21)

Tessa, Randy, Cathy, and Noreen allude to the virtual nonexistence of collaborative planning in their experiences thus far with inclusion. Tessa reports that the success of inclusion is haphazard because of weak planning. When Cathy is questioned whether her experiences with inclusion are well planned out she replies "No, I think it is just on paper and nothing has been really thought out properly and it's something they wanted to do in a hurry" (5A, p. 16). Randy remarks that from his experiences there is not any real planning to inclusion. "To be honest with you it wasn't really well thought out" (Randy, 1A, p. 12). Further evidence of this is Noreen's comment, "There should be improvement with the planning process" (2B, p. 6). Tessa suggests that minimal planning time is spent on students with disabilities because others view them as futuristically unproductive. "A lot of times when you're dealing with our type of kids they're at the bottom of the list because ... everyone sees them....as not (being able) to contribute back to society" (Tessa, 3A, p. 13).

Both Randy and Noreen suggest that existing meetings they acknowledge deal with behavioral issues. Randy says, "When I see a meeting happening (it) is when behaviours are acting up" (1A, p. 9). Noreen reports that the only time she "participates in a lot of case conferences is when an individual (is having) a lot of behaviour problems" (2A, p. 15).

The participants speak about the significance of collaborative planning. Collaborative planning provides a venue for parents, guardians, and support personnel to voice their opinions. The importance of receiving parental input is identified by Noreen, Randy, Tessa, and Cathy. Noreen says, "These parents have raised this child from birth and they know exactly what (her/his) needs are and....it is very crucial that the parents ... have a say in ... in their child's education" (2A, p. 19-21). Randy reports, "The parents are the ones that know ... what their (child's) needs are....You need

immediate input from the parents" (1A, p. 21). Tessa comments, "I think if anyone the parents ... know the individual the best" (3A, p. 11). As a foster parent Cathy says, "Who else knows her better than my husband and I" (5B, p. 5).

Cathy adds that support workers need to be listened to while Randy mentions that members of the extended family should be invited to provide input. In summation, Tessa and Noreen emphasize the consolidation of the parents, guardians, and support personnel's input when devising a student's plan. Tessa says that "it should be a joint effort....(where) everyone puts their input in and comes up with a plan" (3A, p. 10). This type of consolidation will limit the number of despondent parents, guardians, and support personnel because their input will not be ignored. Randy realizes that the parents, guardians, and support personnel's input is often ignored. Tessa, Noreen, and Cathy report how they feel when their input is not and/or they think it is not going to be listened to:

It's very frustrating as a caregiver because you're feeling that you're not valid or you're not important or you don't know enough....It makes me feel like I'm doing something wrong (because) I'm not advocating for the person that I am supposed to be advocating for. (Tessa, 3A, p. 11)

Noreen says she becomes, "anxious, frustrated, not valued as a team player....when my input isn't valued or respected" (2B, p. 13). Cathy reports that she and her husband feel "frustrated, angry, unimportant, and useless" (5B, p. 6) when they are not included in decision making.

Collaborative planning also ensures that appropriate inclusive classrooms are chosen for students with disabilities. A lot needs to be considered before an appropriate choice can be made. Ramona says that the students' personalities and abilities must be determined before the courses are chosen for them. She suggests, "You pick appropriate classes depending upon what the disabilities

are, what their attitudes are, what their traits are, and what their personalities are. You have to figure all that out" (4A, p. 21). This strategy proves successful for Cathy's f oster daughter because she needs to be included into an active class where there is not a lot of structure. Cathy claims that her foster daughter is happy about her drama involvement. "I know she enjoys it (because) there is activity going on ... It is not a quiet setting, (and) it's not structured" (Cathy, 5A, p. 7).

According to Randy, "A class is considered appropriate if the students' needs are met" (1A, p. 18). He also defines appropriate as meaning functional and beneficial to students with disabilities. Randy suggests "courses like home-ec where they learn to cook, clean, and do dishes or cosmetology where they learn proper grooming and laundry skills and shop classes where they learn to make basic materials" (1A, p.7). Tessa says that classes which provide hands-on life skills are most appropriate for students with multiple disabilities. She suggests an assortment of worthwhile classes because they cater to the hand-over-hand technique which enables students with disabilities to engage in the class activities. "Cooking ... Anything to do ... with hands-on things like ... shop and sorting or a little bit of filing. Computer classes....Art would be good if it's something that they can do and they like" (Tessa, 3A, p. 6).

To conclude, the views of parents, guardians, and support personnel need to be taken into account. As well, of great importance is the appropriate placement of students with disabilities in inclusive or special education classroom settings.

# Chapter Five

# Concluding Thoughts

## Summary

The purposes of my study were a) to examine the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with intellectual and multiple disabilities by a cohort of participants from one Ontario high school, b) to develop further the existing body of research and knowledge addressing the concerns expressed by this cohort of participants, c) to explore the terms inclusive education and/or inclusion as defined by this cohort of participants, and d) to compare and contrast the opinions of this cohort of participants on inclusive education and/or inclusion for secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities. The four themes which emerged were opinions about inclusion, participants' goals, friendship, and issues about inclusion.

Initially, all participants define inclusion as a way of educating students with and without disabilities together. They suggest that the focus of inclusion needs to be on students with disabilities. If inclusion revolves around these students and their individual needs are met, then they are receiving an equal education to that of students without disabilities. With inclusion, both students with and without disabilities should engage in similar activities. The participants realize the political orientation of inclusion and they refer to its political history; however, they are unfamiliar with Ontario's special education legislation and regulations. The participants are concerned that a goal of inclusive education is to save money by eliminating special education classrooms. They do not think that this is a good idea.

The participants view learning as a major goal of inclusive education for students with disabilities. Another goal of inclusion mentioned by participants is the advantages to students without

disabilities. The personal growth of these students includes factors such as greater tolerance, self-awareness, acceptance, and education about students with disabilities. Academic learning on behalf of students with disabilities should take precedence over the possible benefits gained by students without disabilities. This coincides with the participants' belief that the focus of inclusion should be on students with disabilities.

The participants do not believe that inclusion facilitates friendships between students with and without disabilities. They suggest that friendships develop at different times and in other ways. Because the majority of secondary students with intellectual and multiple disabilities have poor communication skills, friendships are prevented from developing. Friendships are encouraged through reverse integration where students without disabilities are placed in special education classrooms on a voluntary basis. One participant views group work as a way of forming relationships among students with and without disabilities while maintaining the focus on learning. The participants refer to these types of relationships as acquaintances and not real friendships because friendships consist of more than small talk. Most friendships for students with disabilities develop among other students with disabilities.

The participants show great concern over inclusion. The elimination of special education classrooms is viewed as a disservice to students with disabilities because these students receive benefits not found in inclusive classrooms. The perceived benefits offered in special education classrooms are individual programming such as physiotherapy, occupational and speech therapy, realistic time frames for work completion, sensory stimulation, and functional academic learning. As well they offer life skills and social skills programs, group community outings, superb care, and support services. Furthermore, they develop a sense of belonging within students and they enhance

their self-esteem.

Participants are also concerned about the consequences of inappropriate inclusive placements. Inappropriate inclusive placements make students with disabilities feel displaced, and the education of all students suffer. Students with disabilities are made to feel unwanted and are offered mediocre programs by apprehensive teachers. Students without disabilities experience poor role models when negative teachers are forced to teach students with disabilities. As well, parents, guardians, and support personnel are left with pessimistic impressions about inclusive education.

The data indicates that all participants recall negative experiences with inclusion more readily and frequently than positive experiences. Before the participants were asked to provide an example, all references to inclusion were negative. One participant, Tessa, explains this. She says that the ramifications from one negative experience can be so horrific that it will be more memorable than a series of positive experiences. Additionally, all participants' responses are negative when they are asked to provide an example, while Randy is the only participant who eventually gives an example of a positive experience with inclusion. The successfulness of the experience is explained by stating that the included individual is a well-behaved high functioning individual. The other participants also recognize that success with inclusion is more attainable for students with intellectual disabilities than for students with multiple disabilities.

Furthermore, the participants are concerned over a lack of collaborative planning. They acknowledge that continual collaborative planning is essential for successful inclusion. Collaborative planning will ensure that the parents, guardians, and support personnel's input will be acknowledged. However, thus far participants have not experienced collaborative planning for inclusive education involving teachers and all pertinent individuals. The participants assert that meetings deal with very

immediate behavioural problems and not long term planning. They also infer that collaborative planning leads to appropriate inclusive class placements. Classes are deemed appropriate if they meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

According to the participants, there are many components of an ideal inclusion program. As was previously mentioned the needs of student with disabilities must be met. Subsequently, flexibility with programming is necessary. Furthermore, learning for all students is mandatory. If students with disabilities are going to receive superb care from inclusive teachers then these teachers not only need to be formally educated about students with disabilities but they need to have a positive attitude towards including them. Additionally, they need the right temperament to receive them and make them feel wanted. Inclusion cannot be forced and participants need to be willing. This is especially important for inclusive teachers and students with disabilities. Students with disabilities should have a choice as to whether they want to be included or not. Their input as well as the parents, guardians, and support personnel's input needs to be listened to and taken seriously. For a program to be ideal there must be continual collaborative planning and no political interference.

The participants make a few remarks about the strengths of inclusion. First, students with disabilities are not being excluded. Second, if inclusion is properly planned then students with disabilities pick the courses they are interested in. Finally, students with disabilities can learn a new skill.

Based on what the participants have said the following recommendations need to be implemented to make inclusive education more effective. Better collaborative planning including individuals such as parent, guardians, teachers, and support personnel must take place. Meetings should occur as the school year begins and on an ongoing basis. Next, parents, guardians, and

support personnel for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities need to be educated about Ontario's special education legislation and regulations, and the principles of the least restrictive environment so they can make informed decisions about educational placements. Also, special education classrooms should not be eliminated, and students with disabilities must be placed most appropriately in an inclusive or special education classroom depending upon their needs. Additionally, only those teachers who view inclusion as a positive experience should participate with inclusion. Finally, the administrators of schools that house programs for students with intellectual and multiple disabilities should be marketing the program as an educational opportunity in the same fashion as they promote areas such as athletics and music. For example, co-op students should be allowed to volunteer for on-site school programs regardless of co-op educational policies stating that job placements must be completed off school premises. Also, co-op policies should accommodate students who are interested in completing both of their co-op placements in programs educating students with intellectual and multiple disabilities.

## Suggestions for Further Research

Research is needed to study the SESPs category to discern their specific issues regarding inclusion. Since it is these individuals who are directly involved with inclusion, their input would be invaluable.

If possible, research is needed to determine how students with severe disabilities feel about their inclusive education. How they determine successful inclusion is worth examining because their conceptions of success may differ. Therefore, they may feel that a situation is successful when others may not or vice-versa.

Research may reveal whether students without disabilities are receptive to formal education about students with disabilities. If so, this could be a mandatory addition to the curriculum. Research could also establish the best age to introduce this new curriculum.

Further research could determine whether children model their parents' attitudes regarding individuals with disabilities. Depending upon the results, it may be necessary to educate the parents of students without disabilities about inclusive education and students with disabilities.

The data in my study indicates that some students with disabilities experience great success in the inclusive classroom. Research may reveal whether a correlation exists between the student's type of disability and her/his success in the inclusive classroom.

## Conclusion

The participants appear not to be in favour of inclusion because thus far many of the inclusive environments they are involved with or heard about are not well planned out. Because of lack of planning, many negative situations occur. This does not mean that there are not any positive inclusive experiences, it just means that their responses to the interview questions are influenced by the negative experiences and not the positive ones. For example, Cathy says that she is in favour of her foster daughter being included in a drama class because she feels that it meets her needs; however, Cathy's interviews suggest overall that she is against inclusion.

I believe the participants are open to inclusion regardless of the anti-inclusion statements they make in the interviews. For example, not one of the participants from the parent category refuses inclusion for their child when they feel that their child's needs are met. Therefore, as indicated from Cathy's example in the above paragraph, meeting the needs of the students is central to their inclusion

decisions. The reason for inclusion must be student-orientated focussing on the needs of the students with disabilities. Any other reason does not justify its practice. Also, of importance is that these needs are met in an environment free of emotional and physical harm. Cathy's example indicates as well that opinions about and attitudes towards inclusion can be influenced by direct proof of how inclusion can successfully meet individual needs. Statements from the other participants indicate that their thought patterns are similar to those from the parent category. In other words, direct proof of how inclusion can successfully meet the needs of students with disabilities will influence their opinions about inclusion.

I believe the participants will be in favour of full inclusion if a student's needs are met equally well in an inclusive environment as they are in a segregated environment. However, the participants do not believe that all students can be fully included. According to the participants, a decision to fully or partially include must be determined on an individual basis. As previously stated, if all the individual needs of a student are met via inclusion then full inclusion is the appropriate environment for that student. On the other hand, if only a portion of the student's needs are met in an inclusive environment, then full inclusion is not appropriate for that student. Needs which cannot be met in an inclusive environment should be met in a different environment such as a special class. Since special schools are not mentioned, I take this as meaning that the participants do not favour it as way of educating students with disabilities.

The participants infer that students with multiple disabilities might not be as successful with inclusion as students with intellectual disabilities. Although they feel that opportunities for social and academic success are not as many for students with multiple disabilities, they do not suggest segregated education for this reason.

The participants see the need not only to educate people directly involved with inclusion such as administrators, teachers, and students without disabilities, but people who are indirectly involved such as the parents of students without disabilities. These parents also need to be positive about inclusion because they influence their children's ideals.

Ultimately, this study reveals that for inclusion to work collaboration and negotiation between all relevant individuals need to take place. Also, the participants view inclusion positively, provided that students' needs are met in an accepting and nondiscriminatory environment. However, the specific environment is less important than meeting the needs of students with disabilities.

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# APPENDIX 1

## Follow up Letter

Dear Caregiver:

This letter is a follow up to our recent telephone conversation. During the conversation you expressed interest in participating in a study to be carried out in the summer of 1999. The title of the study is:

"The Conceptions of and Experiences with Inclusion of Students with Intellectual and Multiple Disabilities by a Cohort of Participants from One Ontario High School"

This study is being conducted to answer the question: What are the conceptions of and experiences with inclusion of students with intellectual and multiply disabilities by a cohort of Participants from one Ontario high school? Through your participation in this research you will help to answer this question.

This study will be carried out in the form of a personal interview. I would meet individually with you in a private location comfortable and accessible to you and at a time convenient to you. I will have approximately six standard questions which will act as a guide to our discussion. You will have the opportunity to discuss and expand upon your personal experiences. To record our meeting I will be using a tape recorder. I may also record on paper some observation notes and/or points which can be used to expand on the discussion during or after the initial interview. If areas of ambiguity and uncertainty are revealed after reflecting upon the interview and/or transcript(s), I will contact you. Depending upon the complexity of issue, the situation will either be handled during a phone conversation or if necessary a future time for interviewing will be established. The

interviewing process can be expected to take from one to two hours. Participation in this study is on a voluntary basis and you can withdraw at any time. I want to assure you that no information regarding the purpose and procedures of this study are being withheld from you. There is no risk to you. To ensure anonymity a pseudonym will be used. As well, the region in which you live and work will be referred to as Ontario, thus further ensuring anonymity.

The final copy of this study will be available upon completion and can be acquired from the Chancellor Patterson Library and/or the Faculty of Education Library at Lakehead University. A copy of the original data collected during this study will be kept in confidential storage by myself f or a period of seven years prior to its disposal.

I recognize you have time commitments and responsibilities. As well, a range of emotions which may be triggered during the personal interview. If you believe that an interview regarding your personal situation would be a negative or unproductive experience please do not hesitate to refuse participation in this study. Whether you wish to participate or not, could you please contact me as soon as possible to inform me of your decision? I can be reached during the day at 577-6310, and during the evening at 475-7699.

I want to thank you personally for taking the time to read this letter and I look forward to hearing from you in regard to acting as a participant in this study.


Sincerely,


Deenna Penner.

# Consent Form

My signature on this sheet indicates I agree to participate in a study conducted by Deenna Penner, on THE CONCEPTIONS OF AND EXPERIENCES WITH INCLUSION OF STUDENTS WITH INTELLECTUAL AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES BY A COHORT OF PARTICIPANTS FOR ONE ONTARIO HIGH SCHOOL. It also indicates that I understand the following:

1.  I am a volunteer and can withdraw at any time from the study.

2.  There is no risk of physical or psychological harm.

3.  The data I provide will be confidential.

4.  I can locate a copy of this study at the Chancellor Patterson Library and/or Faculty of Education Library at Lakehead University.

5.  I have received explanations about the nature of the study, its purpose, procedures, and I understand that all primary data will be held in confidential storage by Deenna J. Penner for a period of seven years.

_____          _____
Signature                                                      Date

# APPENDIX 2

## Interview Transcript

Date: Wednesday, June 30, 1999.

Time: 10:00 a.m.

Location: In an office at the Children's Aid Society.

Setting: It was an large uncluttered meeting room with a table and several chairs in the middle of the

floor. It was fairly drab room, but the sunlight which shone through the many windows brightened

it up. There were no disruption during the entire interview.

Weather: It was a beautiful warm day with plenty of sunshine.

Interviewer: Deenna Penner (referred to as D)

Interviewee: Noreen is the interviewee's pseudonym (referred to as N)

D: What does inclusion mean to you?
N: I guess inclusion means to me that the individual has the opportunity to participate in any kind of activity or educational setting where they are included and that they are involved in every aspect of that activity or educational program. I don't know if that explains it but for me inclusion means that they are involved totally in whatever aspect they have undertaken whether it is in an educational placement and they have had the opportunity to have what the other students have.
D: Do you think that they are trying to unify the system so that eventually there will only be one system?
N: It appears that way but I don't think that's going to work because of what I've seen with the children that I work with. There are some individuals who cannot be included because they cannot handle--well for example I had one teen on my caseload who they were really wanting to integrate as a youngster and they did it for many years and then afterward they realized that integration wasn't working for him and that he needed to be in a segregated classroom just for the fact that he had ADHD, he was very impulsive, he was easily distractible. He needed to be somewhere in a smaller classroom where he could get the attention he needed as opposed to being in a setting where they were 30 odd kids there and he could not concentrate.
D: What happened to him when he was included into the other classroom?
N: He was very disruptive, he needed a support person with him all the time, he was behaviourial, he was not doing well. They were wanting to look at having him home schooled which we were not

in agreement to because that wasn't fair to him. We really felt that he needed to be in a contained setting but at the same time learn in a smaller environment. He needed that and he is still in that type of environment and doing remarkable well so inclusion didn't work for him and I'm saying that inclusion doesn't work for everybody. Inclusion might work for those who are higher functioning.

D: Could you please explain higher functioning to me?

N: I guess it means those kids probably who are educable mentally retarded. I don't know what the IQ is on that but they have the capacity to learn and I guess what concerns me is the fact that if they are going to included into a regular classroom that the supports be attached to them so I'm not really sure that is inclusion then because inclusion would mean that they are included into a regular classroom and not having the support whereas these kids will need support with them. If they don't have that they won't be included because the kids in the classroom-- a lot of them I don't know if the word is attitudes but they see them in a negative light depending on what the individual brings into the classroom--if it is an individual that's happy go lucky not a behavioral student then they are more inclined to be accepting of them but if they come to the classroom and perhaps if they have a deformity or they are in a wheelchair then they are looked upon as someone different and I think that stigma has always been out there and I don't know how overcome that stigma because there is the regular kids and then the kids who are disabled.

D: Some people believe that if disabled students are put into the regular classroom they are not going to be labelled.

N: No, no that no. Sure these kids are going to raised with these kids with disabilities but what about their parents. I mean there is still a lot of teaching to be done with the community itself. Look at our community and the way stigma is attached to the adults when they go out with this child who is perhaps in a wheelchair or not in a wheelchair but has some kind of disability and how they're looked upon as either poor me kind of attitude or the fact that they don't want to be around these kids. They look at them if they are at a pool or at the CLE--they are looking at them as though they shouldn't be there that they should be in some kind of institution and I don't think that will every go away.

D: Have you ever sat down with anybody and talked about what inclusion really is? Have you attended any information meeting?

N: Ahh.

D: To tell you where the direction is going with inclusion and what inclusion means. Have you had the opportunity to give your views on inclusion?

N: I've talked to some individuals about inclusion and I've not agreed with what they are saying in terms of revamping the program for kids with special needs--looking at how they want to change the system and the system isn't going to change until you change the community because the community has their perceptions about what disabilities are and until you change that nobody is going to be accepting of them.

D: Do you think that including the handicapped students is helping how others perceive them? Do you think including them is helping that?

N: Oh, I don't know if it is helping it. I guess it is giving them an awareness that these people are out there and they are not going to go away and the institutions have been closed and they are going to be in our community. They may become more accepting of them but I don't know if they are going to have them included. For example, a young girl on my caseload or actually all the kids on my caseload need paid staff to go out with them. We don't have friends calling from high school to say

"Oh hi, this is so and so. Can I take this young girl out and we are going to the show?" That doesn't happen and I don't think it will ever happen. I think that were are going to have paid staff to do that.
D: Another purpose of inclusion is for the students to make friends. Obviously, you disagree with that.
N: I can't see that happen. I don't. I probably have one child that I work with who is now a grown adult who had a friendship develop--a friendship not until high school. Actually she went all through public school and had no friends not until she got into high school because there was another girl who was suffering the same way she was with low self-esteem. She didn't have any friends so the two of them got together and they were good friends until this girl moved on into another program and into another high school so this girl is now again without friends.
D: Could you describe this girl to me?
N: She was educable mentally retarded. She also was diagnosed with schizophrenia at a very young age. She had trouble making friends and I always had prime workers and volunteers to take her out. She was involved with Westway and they would have a community friend of course again that's paid. I would take her out but as her worker. At present time I don't think she has this friendship with this girl anymore and I think she has no friends other than paid staff.
D: Was she physically handicapped?
N: She wasn't physically handicapped.
D: Did she display inappropriate behaviours?
N: She had a lot of behavioral problems and they would surface because of the schizophrenia and depending upon what time of the day it was or what she was doing some of these behaviours surfaced and that may have turned people off as well because of the stigma attached to schizophrenia as well.
D: Who did she befriend?
N: A young girl who she met in her class. It wasn't somebody that she sought out. I think perhaps the teacher more so encouraged that the two of them become friends and that's how that developed and it continued throughout I think the two or three the two years that they were there and this other girl moved onto another program at a different school because of her ability. I guess because she was doing far better than this young girl.
D: Did this girl also have special needs?
N: Yes, this young girl had some special needs but not to the degree to the girl that I am referring to.
D: Do special needs students make friends more often with other special needs students rather than regular students?
N: Well yes, they do because they are in that classroom all the time with-- if we are speaking about the Community Living class those kids are with each other all the time. Yes, they may go out into other classes for integration but they don't come back with friends from that class. Their friends are with their circle of friends in that particular class. They don't have any other friends that are calling them after school or taking them out. I haven't seen that happen yet.
D: Do you think that there is anything wrong with educating students with special needs together in segregated classroom?
N: I don't see anything wrong with that. Actually, I think that it has been working out and I hope that this will continue because I think that if these kids are taken into the mainstream they're going to get lost between the cracks-- no one will be interested in them. They will not develop any friendships and I don't see how it is going to work because I think we are all in the same mind set that these kids are

there but should be seen. I guess that we are tolerant that they are out there but that's as far as it goes. That hasn't changed.

D: Do you think that the special needs students' education is being jeopardized at the expense of putting them in the classrooms so that they are seen and perhaps they might make a friendship?

N: No, I think there are looking at including them in the classroom because I think it is probably more cost effective. It is going to be cheaper then it is better off that the student goes into the regular stream of things because it is going to save the board a lot of money and I don't think that is the way to go and it always seems that the kids' needs are always lost but they are looking at how can we save some money here. I think it comes down to money as opposed to what's best for the child and that's my view on how I see things.

D: What do you think some of the skills are that special needs kids learn in a segregated classroom?

N: Well what they'd learn in a regular classroom is perhaps more the academics and a lot of these students depending upon their intellectual ability is they don't need the academics they need the life skills. They need the survival skills, the social skills and they get that in the smaller classrooms because they have the teacher and the support staff that have the time to develop those kinds of programs. Most of these kids don't need to be going into the academics perhaps they could benefit from a music program or woodworking class or maybe Christian Living if they understand the concepts but I mean as far math, reading, writing most of these kids don't need that. The emphasises needs to be on the life skills so that they can live eventually in the community and be accepted by the community.

D: What is the difference between the multidisabled students and the mentally challenged students in their ability to be integrated and what they get out of it?

N: I don't know what a multidisabled student would get out of a regular classroom other than being in that classroom because it depends on the classroom itself and how tolerant these kids will be of this individual. If the individual happens to be in a wheelchair and is always smiling, never creating a problem, very well groomed, looks good they are going to be more accepted but if this individual is in a wheelchair and has some kind of facial deformity or there is some personal hygiene issues then I think people would just isolate that individual and that person will sense that and lose out on it.

D: What then will s/he get out of integration?

N: What will s/he get out of integration? Yes, what will s/he get out of integration? I guess the fact that the board was able to get this individual in a classroom .

D: You just said the board.

N: Yes, the school board.

D: Are you saying that it will make the board look good?

N: Yes, I think it will make the board look good that they were able to get this person into this classroom and they are sitting there and perhaps not learning anything other than socially how to interact if they have that concept. If your talking about the multidisabled this person could be functioning at a two year old level so I mean your looking at a two year old going into a classroom of teenagers and perhaps that may be a benefit to them but I don't know.

D: Do you think that the high school students like these kids or just tolerate them because they have to?

N: I think they tolerate them because they have to. I don't know whether or not they like them. I think there are some kids who genuinely do like them and I these are probably kids who either had a sibling

or a relative in their family with a disability. There are empathetic to what the individual is going through but otherwise if they haven't had this experience or exposure to that then they are just tolerating these kids.

D: Are there other ways, besides inclusion, of creating this bond between the normal population and the special needs kids?

N: Are there other ways?

D: In the school, yes, could there be other ways of doing it?

N: I don't think there are other ways of doing it?

D: Do you think that inclusion develops a bond between handicapped and nonhandicapped students?

N: No, I don't so. I think if the bond is there it is going to happen outside of the classroom. There is going to be a student who is going to form a friendship with a individual in the Community Living class. It is going to happen outside the classroom it is not going to happen in the classroom. Having them come into the classroom perhaps will give these kids in the regular stream some insight into what it is like for an individual with multiple handicaps or special needs-- what it is like for them on a day-to-day basis but I think it is just toleration on their part.

D: What are some things that you think that happen in a special education classroom that benefit these kids that they might not get in the mainstream?

N: First of all, they are getting more support. I don't know whether or not some of these individuals will have support attached to them so they could just be sitting in a desk and that's basically what they are doing--sitting in a desk not getting any kind of direction. That would depend upon the teacher and whether or not the teacher is inclined to have this person in their class. If they are told they are getting this individual they may not be in agreement so therefore there will be some concerns over that. The kid is going to pick up on that for sure.

D: Which kids the high school kids?

N: The high school kids and the child with special needs know that they are going to just be plunked into that classroom.

D: Do you think that there should be certain teachers that should integrate kids with special needs?

N: I think that teachers need to be reeducated. I mean there's probably lots of teachers out there who still believe that these kids should not be integrated and I know one principal in particular in the Northward who felt that the kids in the multihandicapped class were being provided a babysitting service and I will never forget that as long as I live. He said that he felt that these kids with multiple needs were being provided with a day care service so their parents could have a break and I was appalled by that.

D: What do the multidisabled students learn in a special needs class that they are not learning in the regular system? What are some of their programs?

N: Well, they are learning the social skills from what I've seen and gone into the classrooms. There is the teacher there and the support staff who will teach the social skills-- the basics of hi and bye, how are you, how to get along with others in the classroom, role modelling, peer modelling, and how to interact in the community socially so they can go out in the community. Life skills just the basics of personal hygiene whether that is tooth brushing, washing clothes, eating. Some of them have eating problems. Preparing meals. Oh my mind goes blank but there is a whole gamete of life skills out there. There is the physiotherapy, the physiotherapists that go into the classrooms, the occupational therapist, the speech language therapist that go into the classrooms. It is actually a team

approach with the teacher and the support staff work with the outside interventions like OT, PT, and speech and try to develop a program specifically geared to that individual. It is not going to be a program that is for the whole classroom. It targets those areas of that child needs.

**D:** Just to go back to the question about the teachers. A lot of teachers are basically forced to work with these kids and I'm not criticizing them by any means because they are scared and they don't know what is going on. How do you feel about that?

**N:** I feel that those kids should not be in those classrooms. I think that if the teacher is accepting and has a knowledge base or the expertise or the experience to work with the individual then I say put them in the classroom but if they' re very negative or if they're anxious or they don't know how to deal with that individual then they should not be placed in there. I don't think a teacher should be forced to have the kids in the classroom if they are not ready for it.

**D:** If a teacher is apprehensive about these kids how to do you think that this is going to affect the other normal students in the room?

**N:** It will affect the others students because they will pick up on the teacher's feeling and they may also then feel the same way just because of what they seen their teacher do and I think that would have a negative impact on the classroom and I think that the child with special needs will suffer in the end because they will--even if they don't have the verbal skills and cannot communicate that they don't like to be there they' ll act out other ways either behavioral and they will also sense that their presence isn't wanted in the classroom.

**D:** How do you feel about the people who work in the special needs classrooms? Are they very caring people, can you trust them, and can you put the special needs kids in there and know that they will be safe?

**N:** Yes, from what I've seen in all the different classrooms whether it be at the elementary level or in the high school I think that the staff that are in there are very caring. They are very nurturing, they really want to promote the life skills for that individual, and they got a lot of experience behind them because they really know what is out there in terms of the community and what the individual will be going to after they finish high school. Yes, I think that it takes a special person to work in this field because they have the patience, they have the nurturance, they have the tolerance, the perseverance, and the humour and they can see the humour in some aspects of an individual.

**D:** Do you think that the environment in a special needs classroom is better for the special needs kids than in a normal classroom?

**N:** Yes, because it is set up that way. It is tailor-made for each individual, each of their programs so you won't get that in a regular classroom. The teacher will have her agenda and she'll preach it and the kids will have to follow by that and there won't be any I'm lost for words but with the special needs class it's tailor-made. I mean it is geared toward that individual and what exactly their needs are and how to meet them and they have the staff and support staff to do that.

**D:** Do you know if inclusion is a new concept and where it originated from and why it originated?

**N:** I can remember when kids were sent to Twinhaven. All the children with special needs were sent to Twinhaven then all of a sudden Bill whatever it was Bill 182 I can't remember what...

**D:** I think it was Bill 82.

**N:** When Bill 82 came out and for some reason I can't remember who decided that that wasn't working out and these kids needed to be included so then off they went from the Griffis and Twinhaven and they put them in the mainstream. Some of these kids I think have done well but they

are the higher functioning. I think the kids that have lost out are the kids with the high special needs--the multidisabled that have lost out because inclusion hasn't worked out for them and they were better off in a segregated classroom.

D: So what do you think the goals of inclusion are as you see them?

N: The goals of inclusion are I guess first of all to save money because I think that it will take jobs away from support staff and teachers. A second goal would be for the more higher functioning child where they would see the peer modelling, role modelling of socially acceptable behaviours that would be a second goal.

D: Do you think that works? Do you think the kids model their behaviours?

N: They model negative and positive behaviours so I mean it is hard to say. If you have a child who is easily influenced by observing with a regular teen with some behaviour problems he is going to role model that and that's not good but on the other hand they will see some socially appropriate behaviours as well so I think that is good.

D: Do you think that the multidisabled kids get the same experience out of being included with social modelling as the mentally challenged students do?

N: That's hard to say. I'd like to think that they do but I know if they do. I don't know if they feel that they're just being punished by being put in this big classroom with all these other students and the teacher who perhaps doesn't want them there as well as the students. I don't now what they get out of it. It' s debatable.

D: Can you think of any other goals?

N: Other goals of inclusion. Other goals of inclusion.

D: One of the goals of inclusion for these kids is the development of a sense of belonging.

N: I think that they get a feeling of belonging being in their own classroom--in a special needs class because they see other kids with other types of disabilities. If a child sees someone else in a wheelchair I think they are more inclined to be accepted and comfortable but if this child is in a wheelchair and the only one in a regular class I think they're not as accepting and I think personally that person suffers because those kids can't relate to what that individual is going through--having to be in a wheelchair all the time they can't relate to that. I think they do far better off in a much smaller classroom where there are other kids who perhaps have some of the disabilities or abilities that they have. They do far better I think.

D: They also are supposed to be getting an equal education to others when they are included.

N: I don't know how that can be equal because in a special needs class it's tailor-made. It's made to what their needs are, what their strengths are, where the weaknesses need to be developed but in a regular classroom I don't how you draw that out of the individual. I think that they would really lose out because I don't think the program would be as tailor-made. I can't see how that would work out.

D: So basically you are saying that in a special needs program there's more individuality than in a...

N: That's right that's right because they'll be just 1 of 25 students in a classroom.

D: Another goal of inclusion is to develop a sense of community. They are looking for everybody who is involved with a student to get together on a regular basis and to collaborate and plan, and have all kinds of meetings for the student so that the inclusion is successful. Are you aware of any of this happening? Have you been a part of this with your students?

N: Yes, yes I have been a part of it. I don't agree with it. I heard of maps and dreams and something else but I'm not buying into it because I've gone to few of them. They are quiet elaborate. The

individuals participate--they have people speaking on their behalf if they are non-verbal. They have this paper on the wall and they map out all kinds of goals they like to see accomplished and I don't think they are. I think then the next year you review and it is always the same thing and how can you accomplish it and how can we get the community more involved and the community doesn't want to be involved because they still are not totally accepting of these individuals. And so I think it is a waste to time for everybody involved. I think that you really have to individualize it and get those people involved who want to be there not people who are paid to be there-- those that are wanting to do this and genuinely care about the individual.

D: Referring back to the collaborative planning--your answer was very good but I was getting more at case conferences. The foster parents, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, teachers, and friends of a student-- a whole big group of people are supposed to be getting together for ongoing meetings for one student. That's how this is supposed to go in order for it to be successful. Now I am just wondering if you've seen a lot of it. I understand what maps is but that is a one or two time thing.

N: Ah.

D: Are you part of these continual meetings or are there any? Are you always informed on what's going on?

N: Yes, I am always informed about what is going on. The only time I participate in a lot of case conferences is when the individual has a lot of behaviour problems and the school and the board is at its whits end and they don't know what to do with this individual and most of the time they look to the Children's Aid and say what are you going to do to fix the problem when it is not our problem. It is a school issue and the school is not prepared to deal with it .

D: So the collaboration and the meetings that you are involved with have nothing to do inclusion?

N: No.

D: Do you think that there should be more meetings? That you should be involved so that you have some say in this?

N: Well, yes when it comes down to the kids on my case load and if they are looking at putting them in the regular school system we want to have a meeting well in advance of this happening. We want to know what they hope to accomplish, what the goals are, what the program will be for that individual and if we're not in agreement to that and if we don't think it is going to work out then we're not going to put that student in that classroom so we certainly want to be informed. I've had a discussion with a program manager because I know that he has wanted to revamp the Community Living program and he has reassured me that prior to September that he will include my foster parents in a discussion of what is going to happen because my foster parents at this point are very anxious. They don't like the ways things are going. They want things to remain as they are and if they are going to be any changes we want to be informed well in advance and we don't want it be sprung on us after the fact that yes this is what we are doing because this impacts on the child. It impacts on the foster placement and it jeopardises the foster placements so we have to be informed.

D: The plan is going in the direction of full inclusion. How are you going to deal with that?

N: It's not going to work. I can't see how this concept--it is not going to work. It is not going to work for those kids who can't be included and I refer back to that case. It didn't work. The school tried it for years it didn't work it created all kinds of problems. He is in a segregated class doing exceptionally well so full inclusion is not going to work and I'm not in agreement to it. I can't speak for my foster

parents but if you have the opportunity to speak to them they will give you their opinions as well.

D: You described a negative experience of inclusion. Can you think of any other experiences?

N: No response.

D: Or is that the one that sticks out in your mind?

N: That one sticks out in my mind only because that was living proof that is didn't work. They had tried in the elementary level for several years, they kept pushing it, they kept putting supports in the classroom. It just didn't work and then they had finally reached the point where they realized he needed to be segregated. I thought so, the foster parents thought so but it didn't matter because we weren't the professional we weren't the educators so it didn't matter that we knew this child. The educators were better able to plan for him and as it turns out it didn't work out for him. He needed to be segregated

D: What are some strengths of inclusions that you see? You talked about perhaps maybe making friends or the higher functioning ones might be able to pick up some concepts of socialization. Is there anything else?

N: Strengths of inclusion. Well, I don't necessarily think that they will make friends. That all depends on the individual and who you are looking at. Strengths.

D: Can you summarize your concerns about inclusion?

N: Inclusion I think works for those individuals who are able to manage it-- that have that intellectual capability to go into a regular classroom and be able to pick up some of the concepts or the skills but I don't think that it is going to work for those children who are multidisabled because their program needs to be individualised--it has to be tailor made for them and I think by putting them into a regular classroom they are going to lose out on that. I can't see the benefit.