INFORMATION TO USERS

This manuscript has been reproduced from the microfilm master. UMI films the text directly from the original or copy submitted. Thus, some thesis and dissertation copies are in typewriter face, while others may be from any type of computer printer.

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted. Broken or indistinct print, colored or poor quality illustrations and photographs, print bleedthrough, substandard margins, and improper alignment can adversely affect reproduction.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send UMI a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if unauthorized copyright material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.

Oversize materials (e.g., maps, drawings, charts) are reproduced by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left-hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps.

Photographs included in the original manuscript have been reproduced xerographically in this copy. Higher quality 6" x 9" black and white photographic prints are available for any photographs or illustrations appearing in this copy for an additional charge. Contact UMI directly to order.

UMI®

University of Alberta

The Effects of Government Restructuring on Inclusive Education:
Perceptions of Educators in a School Division in Alberta

by

Brenda Anne Willis ©

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Education

in

Educational Administration and Leadership

Department of Educational Policy Studies

Edmonton, Alberta

Spring 2000

Canada

University of Alberta

Library Release Form

Name of Author: Brenda Anne Willis

Title of Thesis: The Effects of Government Restructuring on Inclusive

Education: Perceptions of Educators in a School

Division in Alberta.

Degree: Doctor of Education

Year this Degree Granted: 2000

Permission is hereby granted to the University of Alberta Library to reproduce single copies of this thesis and to lend or sell such copies for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes only.

The author reserves all other publication and other rights in association with the copyright in the thesis, and except as hereinbefore provided, neither the thesis nor any substantial proportion thereof may be printed or otherwise reproduced in any material form whatever without the author's prior written permission.

Brenda A. Willis
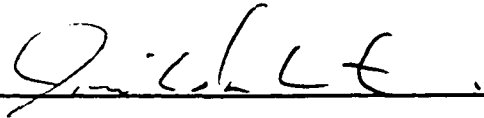
565 Victoria Court
Sherwood Park, Alberta
Canada   T8A 4L2

Date: March 21, 2000

University of Alberta

Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommended to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled *The Effects of Government Restructuring on Inclusive Education: Perceptions of Educators in a School Division in Alberta* submitted by Brenda Anne Willis in partial fulfillment of the degree of Doctor of Education in Educational Administration and Leadership.

Dr. J. da Costa, Supervisor
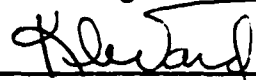
Dr. F. Peters
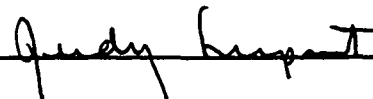
Dr. F. Snart

Dr. L. Wilgosh

Dr. K. Ward

Dr. J. Lupart, External Examiner

March 13, 2000

Dedication

This work is dedicated to educators

who are committed to making a difference in the lives

of *all* children,

including those with special needs,

by accepting them for whom they are, recognizing the gifts that these children

possess, and the potential that they can attain by including them in our schools

and our classrooms.

Abstract

This qualitative study examined the perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators about the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. This study's primary purpose was to obtain the perceptions of educators regarding the effects of restructuring on the provision of programs and services offered in regular classrooms for students with disabilities.

A purposive sample of two principals and seven teachers from two elementary schools and two central office special education administrators, all from a small urban and rural school division in Alberta, participated in this study. Data were gathered using semi-structured interviews. These interviews were subjected to qualitative analysis and yielded a number of emergent categories and themes. The study addressed the following general research question: What perceptions do teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators hold about restructuring and its effects on inclusive education?

The study found that the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education is characterized by a number of themes expressed in four categories that included conflict, loss, fear, and empowerment. The study's findings included a discussion of the various ways in which restructuring has affected inclusive education, the identification of those aspects of restructuring that facilitated and constrained inclusion, and ways that educators believed effective inclusive education could be provided within the parameters of restructuring.

Four major findings emerged from this study. First, inclusive education is being constrained by government restructuring to the point where serious consideration is being given to abandoning inclusive education in favor of a more cost effective segregated model of special education program delivery. Second, aspects of restructuring involving shared decision-making and the devolution of authority to the school site facilitated inclusive education. Third, aspects of restructuring that constrained inclusive education included: (a) the philosophical underpinnings of a business model that are incongruent with the philosophy of inclusion, (b) the emphasis on fiscal restraint, and (c) complete decentralization of responsibility for special education to the school site. Fourth, educators identified specific strategies for how effective inclusive could occur within the parameters of restructuring.

Acknowledgements

The writing of this dissertation has been a long and interesting journey. Without the tremendous support and encouragement of a number of individuals it would not have happened. So as I come to the end of this journey it is time to acknowledge and give thanks to those people who have contributed as much to the completion of this dissertation as I have. I am most grateful for the continued guidance and support provided by Dr. Joe da Costa, my supervisor, who inherited my dissertation work and gave me the confidence and encouragement needed to sustain my efforts. I am also grateful for the kindness and patience extended to me by Drs. Margaret Haughey and Ted Holdaway, who helped me to persevere through a particularly difficult time in my doctoral studies. As well, I would like to thank Drs. Frank Peters and Fern Snart who were members of my supervisory committee, as well as, Dr. Eamonn Callan, chair of my candidacy committee, and Dr. Lorraine Wilgosh, on the examining committee. All of these individuals offered excellent guidance on how to proceed with my study.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support and encouragement provided by my colleagues and friends within the Department of School Operations Services in the Edmonton Catholic Regional School Division who motivated me through their interest in my study and generously shared their technical advice and support in the creation of this dissertation. In particular, I would like to extend a thank-you to Louise Nadeau-Gaunce who read my work, provided feedback, and mentored me towards completion.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge the teachers, principals, and special education administrators who opened their doors, invited me in, and shared their inner-most thoughts with me. Without their co-operation and support this dissertation could not have been completed.

Finally, and most importantly, I extend my deepest thanks to my family who provided me with the strength and encouragement I needed to carry out this task. My husband Ray created an environment of support and faith and gave me the time and space I needed to work on this dissertation. My children, Breanna and Caid, displayed patience and understanding and placed my need for time to work above their need for mothering. And finally, I thank my God, who guided me through rough waters, carried me through periods of doubt, and gave me the strength to complete the journey.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER 5

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Change is a journey of unknown destination.

(Michael Fullan, 1993)

Individuals involved in education have come to realize that dealing with change is endemic to post-modern society (Baines,1997; Dalin,1996; Dimmock,1993; Fullan,1999; Glickman, 1993; Hargreaves & Fink, 1998; Leithwood, 1995; Marzano,1995; Walling,1995). Guskey (1990) highlighted the significance of this fact for educators by observing that, "at no time in the history of education have there been more new ideas and innovations available to educators" (p.11). Schools are expected to respond to the needs of a diverse and changing student population which includes increasing numbers of students with special needs, a rapidly changing technology in the workplace, and demands for excellence from all segments of society (ATA, 1993; Ferguson, 1995; Fullan, 1993; Fullan & Hargreaves, 1991; Iacocca,1991; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Schlechty,1990; Sergiovanni & Moore,1989; Welch,1994). Bunin (1996) maintained that conditions such as these have forced education officials to look at new and alternative ways of doing things.

The changing educational perspective was well summarized by Burello (1995) in his analysis of the three most significant discourses guiding public education for the next millennium: (a) the best of traditional practices,

(b) the reforms of inclusive education, and (c) a restructured education system. There is consensus among individuals involved in education that the demands being placed on schools as a result of these initiatives are more complex than ever before. For example, the current restructuring efforts in school systems worldwide, coupled with reform trends in special education, have created significant challenges for educators. Restructuring is becoming synonymous with such terms as decentralized governance, school-based management (SBM), and shared decision-making (Berreth, 1988; Chrispeels, 1992; Conley, 1993; Dimmock, 1995; Lange, 1993; Leithwood, 1995; Lieberman & Miller, 1990; Murphy, 1991; Whitaker & Moses, 1994; Williams, 1995). At the same time, the current focus in special education advocates a renewed call for the education of students with disabilities in classrooms with their peers. This model of programming, referred to as "inclusive education" (Ballard, 1999; Crokett & Kauffman, 1998; Daniels & Garner, 1999; Ferguson, 1995; Lipsky & Gartner, 1989; Sailor, 1991; Skrtic, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1992), has increased dramatically during the past decade. As these reform initiatives converge on schools, school personnel are becoming increasingly responsible to design, manage, and implement programs for all students.

In the midst of this press for change and reform, Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) suggested that there is a need for educators and concerned members of the community to reflect at a "deeper level" on the nature and purpose of the various changes being implemented. They argued that within the current milieu where access to knowledge increasingly divides the "haves" from the "have

nots," much is "at stake" for public education – and for the notion and reality of democracy:

> Public schools are being asked to educate the most pluralistic group of students in history for more challenging learning than ever before. Teachers and other school leaders are expected to learn to teach in much more sophisticated ways that reach students who approach learning from diverse vantage points while restructuring schools designed many decades ago for a much different mission in a much simpler time. (p. ix)

Given the complexity of the current educational environment, they maintained that only through the process of "deeper analysis" can more "powerful action" in educational reform occur:

> Going deeper means hard thinking and soul searching about the fundamental value and purpose of what we do as educators. It means reaching into our hearts to care more deeply for those we teach and to forge stronger emotional bonds with other people, who share in this educational responsibility. Going deeper means staying optimistic and hanging on to hope, even in the most difficult circumstances, not as futile indulgence, but as an active commitment that helps make real differences in young people's lives. Going deeper, in other words, involves purpose, passion, and hope. (p. 29)

Going Deeper – Purpose, Passion, and Hope

Reforms in education are continuous and reflect society's views of what is important at a given time. Researchers, in analyzing the current reform movement, agree that the movement has been implemented in two parts called waves (Beare & Boyd, 1993; Conley, 1993; Martin & MacPherson, 1993; Murphy, 1991; Reavis & Griffith, 1992). The literature on school reform describes the first wave of school reform as focused on external factors designed to increase excellence and giving particular attention to such things as higher standards, new and often mandated curricula, and more rigorous graduation requirements

(Shaw, Bilken, Conlon, Dunn, Kramer, & Wagner, 1990). The second and current wave of school reform focuses on the roles of adults - - teacher empowerment through shared decision-making, school-based management, and parental choice (Martin & Macpherson, 1993; Reavis & Griffiths, 1992; Sailor, 1991).

However, within the literature on school reform, special education students have been generally ignored in considering the impact of current reform initiatives on their schooling. Writers and researchers in the field of special education are increasingly concerned about the lack of consideration for students with disabilities in research on school reform. For example, Lipsky and Gartner (1992) maintained that "neither the changes of the first nor those of the second wave give particular attention to students labeled as handicapped" (p. 4). They suggested that the possible reason for this lack of attention has been that proponents of these reforms do not include such students within the area of their concern. Supporting this position are Braaten and Braaten (1988), who maintained that "the current focus of the school reform movement does not appear to include careful consideration for the needs of, or consequences for, at-risk and handicapped students" (p. 47). Similarly, McIntyre (1992) argued that current approaches to school reform are essentially aimed at general education with minimal application to special learners.

The failure to include these students within the scope of research in educational reform negates the possibility of examining issues of change and reform at the "deeper level" being suggested by Hargreaves and Fullan. As an educator who has worked in both general and special education for over a

quarter of this century, I am passionate about improving the educational system for all students, including those who are disabled. However, the traditional view of school reform is both pervasive and exclusionary. As such, there is much in the literature that raises serious questions about the impact of school reform on students with disabilities (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; McIntyre, 1992; Mostert & Kauffman, 1993). This study was initiated with the purpose of examining the impact of current reform initiatives on the education of students with disabilities. Given the nature of this particular problem, the process I used to achieve this goal was to engage my colleagues in dialogue and reflection on the perceived impact of change and reform in general education on programs provided for disabled students in inclusive classrooms. Greenfield and Ribbins (1993) argued for research that looks at social reality from a variety of perspectives. As both researcher and active learner, I was able to temporarily enter the lives and thoughts of various dedicated educators and obtain divergent views relative to this problem. It is my hope that by focusing the lens of this research on students with disabilities, the perspective of reform in education will be "deepened" and become more "inclusive."

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to explore educators' understandings about the relationship between the current initiative in educational reform in general education, namely restructuring, and programs for students with disabilities provided in inclusive education classrooms. In particular, this study's primary purpose was to obtain the perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office

special education administrators about specific aspects of restructuring that affect the provision of programs and services offered in regular classrooms for students with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

One of the most obvious aspects of the current reform initiative in general education is the restructuring of the educational system. The focus in restructuring, relative to students who are disabled, often sees the responsibility of programming for students with disabilities shifting from a centralized administrative model to a decentralized school-based model. Only a limited amount of research has been conducted to provide specific knowledge about the effects of restructuring on programs for students with disabilities. Researchers generally agree that there is a lack of empirical research on the effects of reform initiatives, such as restructuring, on programs and services for students who are disabled (e. g., Delaney,1995; Dyson,1990; Goor,1995; Guerra, Jackson, Madsen, Thompson, & Ward,1992; Lee,1991; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Sage & Burrello,1994; Wohlstetter,1995; Yssledyke, Algozzine, & Thurlow, 1992). There is a void in the literature regarding an understanding about under what conditions are essential, and how restructuring works to promote substantive and positive school reform in relation to the provision of programs and services for this particular group of students. That void includes a lack of research whereby schools, operating under the mandate of a restructured administrative system, while at the same time charged with the responsibility of programming inclusively for students who are disabled are studied in order to ascertain how the key

players--namely teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators --view the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The problem for this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators in order to determine what that relationship was, and specifically, to decide what aspects of restructuring facilitate or constrain the provision of inclusive education.

Research Questions

This study was guided by a general research question and four subsidiary research questions.

General Research Question

What perceptions do teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators hold about restructuring and its effects on inclusive education?

Subsidiary Research Questions

From the general research question emerged four subsidiary questions, namely:

1. To what extent does restructuring affect inclusive education?

2. What specific aspects of restructuring are perceived by teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators to facilitate inclusive education?

3. What specific aspects of restructuring are perceived by teachers, principals,

and central office special education administrators to constrain inclusive education?

4. How could effective inclusive education be provided within the parameters of restructuring?

Significance of the Study for Research and Practice

The topic of restructuring has dominated the literature on change and reform in general education for the past two decades. However, literature that examines restructuring relative to students who are disabled remains scarce. Although increased dialogue on this subject, particularly in the past five years, has taken place, discussions on restructuring relative to students with disabilities are narrowly focused and seldom viewed within the context of general education. Thus far, the literature has been restricted to somewhat isolated discussions about the nature of restructuring and hypothetical implications for this group of students. The majority of writings represent only a modest beginning in considering the restructuring movement from the perspective of advocacy for students with disabilities. Sage and Burello (1994) argued that in the educational reform debate the issue of special education is without much discussion of restructuring. They maintained that while reform efforts such as restructuring involve "a series of multi-level organizational activities designed to increase most students' achievement, little of the discourse on the topic has included discussion of issues critical to the education of students with disabilities" (p. 20). To further address this gap, the present study contributes to the body of knowledge on

change and educational reform in both general and special education relative to the topic of restructuring.

This study is significant because it examines the reform initiative of restructuring from the perspective of the impact this initiative has on the provision of inclusive education programs, thus helping to fill the present void in empirical research on this topic. By drawing on the experience and expertise of individuals in the school environment who are charged with the responsibility of programming inclusively for students with disabilities, while the same time operating under the mandate of a restructured school system, the study contributes practical, as well as theoretical information. It serves to illuminate the effects of restructuring on inclusion from the perspective of educators working directly in the field with this group of students and provides these participants with a voice to share their current understandings and experience relative to this issue. This study also provides information about those specific aspects of restructuring that facilitate or constrain the provision of inclusive programs for students with disabilities.

Limitations

Limitations refer to potential weaknesses in a study (Creswell, 1994). Limitations of this study were as follows:

1. The study relied mainly upon the perceptions of the participants as articulated in the interviews.

2. Information was obtained mainly from interviews: observations of classes were not made.

3. The respondent group was deliberately selected and may not have been truly representative of the total population of teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators.

Delimitations

Delimitations, according to Creswell (1994), refer to those aspects of the study that narrow the scope of the study. This study included the following delimitations:

1. This study was delimited to obtaining information relevant to the provision of programming for students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms in schools operating within the parameters of restructuring.

2. Only teachers, principals, and special education administrators having a minimum of three years experience in their respective roles were included in the study.

3. Only teachers who are currently programming for students with disabilities in their classrooms were included in the study.

4. One school division in Alberta was the site for collection of data in this study.

5. Information was obtained through semi-structured interviews and documentation analysis.

Assumptions

This study was conducted on the basis of the following assumptions:

1. Both inclusive education and restructuring are initiatives promoted through policy by Alberta Learning and schools are participating in the implementation of these initiatives.

2. There is a relationship between restructuring and inclusive education.

3. Restructuring can affect programs and services for students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms.

Definitions

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions were used:

1. **Restructuring:** "restructuring activities change the fundamental assumptions, practices, and relationships, both within the organization and the outside world, in ways that lead to improved and varied student learning outcomes for essentially all students" (Conley, 1993).

2. **Inclusive education:** "providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the needed supplementary aids and support services, in age-appropriate classrooms in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students for productive lives as full members of society (National Study, 1994, as cited in Lipsky & Gartner, 1997, p. 99)

3. **Students with disabilities:** "a special needs student is one who by virtue of

the student's behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical

characteristics, or combination of those characteristics, is in need of a special

education program" (Alberta School Act, section 29(1), 1988).

4. **Special education:** "special education is designed to respond to the unique

learning characteristics of students whose needs cannot be met within the

standard school context. The special education program typically is highly

individualized and aims at either remediation--correction of special academic or

social problems, or compensation--alternative procedures to aid students in

overcoming specific academic or social problems, or both. Although viewed

generally as a separate system, special education may be delivered within a

context ranging from complete segregation to full integration" (Kavale, 1990,

p. 35).

Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the topic

and explains the background to the problem. Both general and subsidiary

research questions are listed and the significance of the study for research and

for practice is discussed. The major terms used throughout the study are defined

and the limitations, delimitations, and assumptions are stated. Chapter 2

presents a review of the relevant literature on educational reform as it pertains to

students with disabilities, restructuring as an initiative of educational reform,

inclusive education, and restructuring and inclusive education. A framework for

the study is provided at the end of this chapter. Chapter 3 discusses the

theoretical orientation upon which this study was based, and also, provides a

description of, and rationale for, the specific method that was used in this qualitative study. The third chapter includes discussions of the (a) research design, (b) data collection procedures, (c) procedures in data analysis, and (d) procedures used to ensure methodological rigor. Descriptions of the participants, the school division, and the schools are also presented. Chapter 4 discusses the interpretation and analysis of the study data. The various categories that emerged from the data, along with the accompanying themes, are also explained in detail. Chapter 5 states the findings of the study in terms of the specific research questions that guided the study. Chapter 6 provides a summary of the study, the various conclusions resulting from the study, a number of recommendations and accompanying implications for practice and for research, and a personal reflection on the experience of the researcher in carrying out the study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

Over the past 20 to 30 years there have been several reform movements in general education, most of which have been instituted with little thought regarding their effects on students with disabilities (Cuban, 1996; Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, & Danielson, 1990; Paul, Rosselli, & Evans, 1995; Stevener, 1991). However, as increasing numbers of students with disabilities receive their schooling in general education classrooms, through a model of program delivery referred to as inclusive education, a different approach to implementing and studying educational reform is needed.

In 1993, the Government of Alberta released its policy on the educational placement of students with disabilities. Policy 1.10.1 states that "educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighborhood or local schools shall be the first placement option considered by school boards, in consultation with students, parents/guardians and school staff." This policy is based on the belief that providing education programs for students with disabilities in regular classrooms is a desirable educational goal. As a result of this policy, school jurisdictions in this province have implemented, in varying degrees, a model of inclusive education for students with disabilities. Today, many educators in Alberta are dealing with changes in the organization and

delivery of programs for students with disabilities that ensures that these students receive their education in general education classes.

In 1994, this same government began a process for educational restructuring throughout the province. Sharing characteristics of the restructuring movement that is being implemented in industrialized nations around the world (e.g., fiscal restraint, decentralization, parental choice, accountability) school jurisdictions in this province are currently addressing issues involved with a restructured system of general education. The combination of these two initiatives (i.e., inclusive education and educational restructuring) within schools in this province is without precedent in the literature on educational reform.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between restructuring, a reform initiative in general education, and programs for students with disabilities offered through an inclusive education model. This chapter provides a review of the literature as it relates to this purpose. These areas were addressed: (a) educational reform and students with disabilities, (b) restructuring as an initiative of educational reform, (c) inclusive education, and (d) restructuring and inclusive education. A specific attempt has been made to include those writings that represent an integration of the research from the fields of general and special education.

Educational Reform and Students with Disabilities

A fundamental premise of the present study is that the education of students with disabilities is explicitly bound to current initiatives in reform within general education. Also, understanding of that relationship contributes to the

development of a "deeper" understanding of school reform and a shared

educational agenda between special and general education.

In reviewing the literature on educational reform from the perspective of

students with disabilities, a number of issues emerged that were of particular

import for this study. These included (a) the current exclusionary nature of the

reform literature, (b) emergence of a shared educational agenda between special

and general education, (c) significance of the philosophical, social and political

context for educational reform, and (d) Canada's unique organization and

administration of education.

Current Reform Literature and Students with Disabilities

Numerous writers and researchers in the field of special education have

identified the lack of consideration for students with disabilities within the current

waves of reform in general education (e. g., Barton, 1999; Cuban, 1990; Goor,

1995; Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, & Danielson, 1990; Lilly, 1987; Lipsky &

Gartner, 1997; Paul & Rosselli, 1995; Sage & Burrello, 1994; Stainback &

Stainback, 1992; Stevener, 1991; Ysseldyke, Algozzine & Thurlow, 1992).

One of the most significant examples of the extent of this void is found in

the work of Ysseldyke, Algozzine, and Thurlow (1992). In conducting a survey of

the literature on educational reform from the 1980s, these researchers concluded

that, " after reviewing a summary of the education reform decade from the

Educational Testing Service Policy Information Center, 1990, there was not a

single mention of the students with disabilities or even special education" (p.140).

Lipsky and Gartner (1997), in following up on the work of Ysseldyke,

Algozzine, and Thurlow found similar evidence of a significant void in the reform

literature and further identified specific reasons for the lack of attention to

students with disabilities. After conducting an extensive review of the literature on

educational reform from both the 1980s and 1990s, they concluded that students

with disabilities have largely been ignored in discussions on educational reforms

since the mid-1980s. They identified four commonly held rationales in the

literature that explain the fact that these students have been overlooked:

1. The education of students with disabilities does not need reform.
2. Because the education of students with disabilities is the province of
   the separate special education system, whatever reforms are
   necessary are not part of the broader educational change.
3. General education reforms must take priority; only then will the
   resources necessary for change in educating students with disabilities
   become available.
4. The education of students with disabilities is not a matter of general
   education concern. (pp. 221-222)

Two findings from Lipsky and Gartner's work that are particularly relevant

for this study include the writers' conclusion that these rationales serve as a

useful summary of the state of school reform literature in the 1990s and the as-

yet-unfulfilled mandate to include students with disabilities in that reform. Also,

the significance of the perception of general education and special education as

separate systems of education as a factor contributing to this void.

Special Education and General Education as Separate Systems

The constraints of the historical perspective that views special education

and general education as separate pedagogies have been identified by writers in

the areas of both educational reform and special education (e. g., Cuban, 1996;

Dyson,1990; Henderson,1995; Kaufman, Kameenui, Birman, & Danielson,1990) as the primary reason for preventing researchers from examining special education within the context of change and reform in general education. Lilly (1987), in his examination of this issue, concluded that central to the problem of educational reform and the lack of attention to students with disabilities is the pervasiveness of the belief that special education and general education are two separate systems of education. Skrtic (1991), in analyzing the reason for the separateness of special education and general education, maintained that throughout the past century general education and special education have developed as separate but mutually reinforcing discourses in education. He argued that organizational policies and practices in both general and special education promoted the separation of regular and special education students and programs, and an elaborate system of assessment and classification evolved to support the need and conduct of these two separate systems of education.

Over the past decades significant reform efforts have characterized both general and special education. However, for the most part these reform initiatives have been conducted in isolation of each other without any type of significant collaboration between general and special education. For this reason, in the past the nature and direction of these reform initiatives have been characterized by what Ysseldyke, Algozzine, and Thurlow (1992) called "parallel plays in school reform" (p.144). The result has been that reform directions within general and special education have held relatively little significance for one another and as

Sailor (1991) suggested "if anything, have tended to increase the separation between the two groups of educators" (p. 8).

In recent years, writers and researchers have begun to recognize the importance of examining programs for students with disabilities within the broader context of changes occurring in general education. The literature on special education, in particular, illustrates an increased interest by researchers on the impact of change and reform in general education on special education (e. g., Barton, 1999; Burello,1995; Cuban, 1996; Dyson, 1999; Evans & Lunt,1994; Fuchs & Fuchs,1995; Goor,1995; Kauffman,1994; Lipsky & Gartner,1997; McLaughlin & Hopfengardner,1992; Mitchell, 1996; Rayner,1994; Sailor,1991; Stainback & Stainback,1992). Important for this study is the need cited by these authors to study special education within the context of change in general education.

Despite the paucity of research examining reform from the perspective of students with disabilities, several themes are beginning to emerge in the school reform literature that reinforce the need cited earlier to study programs for students with disabilities within the parameters of reform in general education. The emergence in recent literature of a shared agenda in educational reform in special and general education demonstrates the significance and timeliness of this study.

Emergence of a Shared Educational Agenda

A shift in the perspective that views special education and general education as separate discourses in education is now being addressed by an

increasing number of researchers (e. g., Daniels & Garner, 1999; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Paul, Rosselli, & Evans, 1995; Sailor, Kelly, & Karasoff, 1992). The main thrust of their work is facilitated by the recognition of an evolving movement to merge general education and special education and, hence, the need to examine programs for students with disabilities within the broader context of general education (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1995).

Dyson (1990), in analyzing the concept of reform relative to special education, supported the notion of examining change in special education within the broader context of the change process that is occurring in education in general. He believed that society was moving towards a greater understanding and acceptance of individual differences. Therefore, change within the educational system and not the individual should be the focus of study in school reform. He contended that "special educational needs are needs that arise within the educational system rather than the individual, and indicate a need for the system to change further in order to accommodate individual differences" (p. 59).

In addition to the need being voiced by researchers to study special education within the context of general education, writers and researchers are also beginning to identify common themes within the literature between the reform goals of general and special education. The work of Sailor (1991) exemplifies the extent to which this is occurring. In reviewing reform trends in both general and special education, he indicated that reform efforts have shifted recently in both areas such that "sufficient parallels exist between the general and special education reform agendas to suggest that the time may be at hand

for a shared educational agenda" (p. 8). Sailor found that reform efforts in

general education have shifted from a concentration on curriculum and

instruction to organization and governance issues in an effort to better support

the needs of a changing student population. This shift towards reorganization of

school and division level governance systems, as well as the manner in which

fiscal and personnel resources are allocated at the school site, parallels the trend

in the past few decades in special education which questions the efficacy of a

"dual system" of education (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg,1988; Will, 1986) and

calls for "full inclusion" models of special education that exemplify placement of

students with disabilities in general classrooms with responsibility for programs

and services administered by school personnel (Ferguson, 1995; Skritic, 1991).

Braaten and Braaten (1988) found evidence of this same convergence

when they analyzed more than 80 references on school improvement and reform

since 1983. Seven dominant themes from a special education perspective were

identified in the school reform literature: (a) increased academic standards,

(b) evaluation of student achievement, (c) discipline, (d) increasing

professionalism of teachers, (e) governance, (f) accountability and parent choice,

and (g) the regular education initiative. In analyzing each of the seven themes,

they concluded that the current reform initiative in general education could

significantly affect programs for students with disabilities.

One of the most comprehensive reviews of the literature to date was

undertaken by Lipp in 1992. He identified 10 points of intersection in the literature

between special education and current initiatives in reform in general education:

(a) policy, (b) administration, (c) assessment, (d) instruction, (e) support services,

(f) funding, (g) teacher training, (h) advocacy, (i) interagency liaison, and

(j) decision making. Based on these findings, he suggested that a common

ground was emerging in the reform initiatives between general education and

special education.

Lipp's (1992) description of the perspective shift in the literature on school

reform offers an excellent summary statement of research and thought in relation

to special education and outlines an emerging paradigm in educational reform,

that being, special education and general education viewed as one unified

system rather than two separate or parallel systems.

Significance of the Context for Reform

An examination of the literature on educational reform highlighted two

significant aspects relative to the context for reform that impact on the education

of students with disabilities. The first was the relevance of the philosophical,

political, and social contexts that frame reform movements. The second related

to the tensions that can occur in the education of students with disabilities as a

result of the interaction between these three variables.

The literature on educational reform, particularly those entries from the

1990s, highlights the significance of the philosophical, social, and political context

in influencing reform initiatives. The ongoing debate of these political, social,

ideological, and moral issues forms the substance of the school reform

movement. Numerous writers and researchers (e. g., Cuban, 1996; Fullan, 1999;

Guthrie & Koppich, 1993; Leithwood, 1995; Milne, 1995; Paul, Rosselli, & Evans,

1995; Winzer, 1996) have drawn on this broader context to examine current reform initiatives in both general and special education.

Paul and Rosselli (1995) suggested that during the past few years it has become increasingly clear that the reforms in general and special education are framed within a larger philosophical, social, political, and moral context. They argued that consideration of these factors is critical to understanding school reform and its effect on the education of students with disabilities.

Brown and Lauder (1992), in addressing this same issue, contended that educational issues cannot be adequately understood in merely technical and resource terms. They are fundamentally social questions, involving struggles over, for example, social justice, equity, and citizenship. The success or failure of reform initiatives is closely linked with the dominant values, pervasive political philosophies, and economic conditions driving society in any given period.

Of particular importance for this study is the work of Guthrie and Koppich (1993) who addressed the influence of values in the context of educational reform. They suggested that educational reform is affected by three strongly preferred values within society that influence public policy: equality, efficiency, and liberty. Belief in these values has historical roots that are deeply embedded in the cultural heritage of most western nations and their influence permeates political parties, religions, schools and other social institutions. For these authors, equality "signifies parity of opportunity, outcome or treatment (p.20)." Proponents of efficiency "strive for tools or techniques capable of producing greater output" while liberty connotes "freedom of choice" (p. 20). They maintained that a

dynamic equilibrium among these three values is constantly shifting as a result of political and economic pressures and cultural perceptions. Education is one of the prime instruments through which society attempts to promote all three values. Therefore, as the value preferences shift in society reform in education takes on different perspectives.

Contributing to the understanding of the significance of political and social context for reform is the work of Milne (1995). She emphasized the significance of the political and social context on educational reform worldwide, and maintained that the wave of reform that started in the 1980s, and carried forward in the 1990s, represented the convergence of various forces in industrialized nations around the world. These included "fiscal imperatives, an ideological shift to the right, and enthusiasm among parties of various political persuasion for commercialism and privatization" (p. 4). She contended that:

> In Canada, educators must come to grips with the immense consequences that are inherent in the ideological shifts that drive educational reforms. The issues raised include the balance of power and control – especially with an output orientation to accountability; commercial or democratic definitions of equality; the purposes of schooling and how they relate to economy; the tension between participatory democracy and efficiency; and social justice in terms of group and individual rights. (p. 8)

Winzer (1996), in examining the relevance of the context for reform in relation to students with disabilities, maintained that, "Society's attitude toward persons with disabilities has always been complex, fashioned at any given time by the prevailing culture, religion, government, and economic conditions" (p. 3).

She emphasized that, "A newly evolved social philosophy has emphasized the value of the individual and the rights of every citizen" (p. 69). As a result, the concept of equal educational opportunities for children with disabilities has become a dominant ideology in society. There is growing evidence in the literature on special education supporting Winzer's position on the relevance of the social and ideological context for reform on the education of students with disabilities, indicating that significant philosophical changes are occurring in school responsibility, program delivery, and program implementation for students with disabilities (e.g., Bunch & Valeo, 1997; Daniels & Garner, 1999; Ferguson, 1995; Paul, Rosselli,& Evans, 1995).

For Dyson (1999), the most fundamental social change of recent decades has been the clear and unequivocal statement of the responsibility of educational authorities to provide all children equal access to education in a manner most appropriate to their needs. Following on this premise, parents, politicians, and advocacy groups have supported the development of inclusive classrooms on the belief that placement in general education classrooms in proximity to normal peers is preferable to removal to segregated special education settings (York & Vandercook, 1990).

The literature also contains references to tensions that exist within the philosophical, political, and social context of current reform initiatives as they relate to students with disabilities. These tensions are predominantly situated in issues of *equity versus economy, individual versus group rights,* and *liberal versus conservative* political agendas. For example, McLaughlin, Fuchs, and

Hardman (1999) argued that the concept of equity, as suggested within the

current reform initiatives in general education, could be contentious for students

with disabilities:

> This premise of equity is an important theme in current reform
> initiatives, including the creation of common standards, challenging
> assessments, and enhanced accountability for student performance.
> Central to these reforms is the notion that each student is entitled to
> instruction that is grounded in a common set of challenging content
> standards, and that schools and individual students must be held
> accountable for achieving equally high levels of performance based on
> these standards. The concept of equal opportunity and equity of
> treatment, as currently being defined poses some unique challenges to
> students with disabilities who maintain an entitlement to an individualized
> educational program. (p. 26)

Mostert and Kaufman (1993) proposed that underpinning the current drive

for change is a belief by politicians, influenced by New Right Ideology, that

market forces are more efficient at allocating resources and more responsive to

the needs of individuals. They contended that applying this business philosophy

to educational reform has a potential negative impact on students with

disabilities: "Big business is not motivated by benevolent concern for persons

with disabilities, but solely by profit. Thus, people with disabilities are viewed as

economic liability in the drive for corporate revenue" (p. 111).

Canada's Unique Organization of Education

Literature on educational reform and students with disabilities from a

Canadian perspective is difficult to ascertain. The primary reason is that Canada

lacks any type of cohesive federal perspective on education. As a result, there is

no administrative or even strategic unity about Canadian education. For the most

part, the literature on educational reform in Canada is comprised of a synthesis

of international writings and research applied within the context of our somewhat unique Canadian educational system.

Hargreaves and Fink (1998), in reviewing educational change and reform in Canada, suggested that:

> it is difficult to describe a Canadian perspective on educational issues. Each province guards its power over education carefully and on occasion jealously. The federal government in Ottawa plays a limited role in post-secondary education, and has almost no direct involvement in elementary and secondary education. (p. 42)

Lawton (1993), in addressing reform initiatives in Canada, from a historical perspective, contended that a number of factors have produced a politicized context for school reform in this country. These include (a) the economic pressure because of its closeness to the United States, (b) the political and economic developments in Asia and the Pacific, and (c) the racial mix within the Canadian population.

Fleming (1993) highlighted that, within Canada, reform initiatives have been generally defined by the philosophical tension between ideas about educational freedom and restraint, and ideas about social reform and equality. He identified three broad issues within current educational reform in this country: (a) public versus professional control of schooling, (b) a social context preoccupied with individualism, and (c) public choice in schooling.

Winzer (1996) suggested that important for the education of students with disabilities is the fact that, in Canada, the right of every child to education is not constitutionally entrenched. Each provincial government must now develop its own legislation, regulations, policies, and procedures to ensure that all children

receive a free and appropriate education. Winzer further indicated that, since the

late 1960s, a number of studies in special education have highlighted the

shortcomings of Canadian legislation and the provision of programs and services

for students with disabilities (e. g., Csapo, 1981; Hall &Dennis, 1968; Poirier &

Goguen, 1986; Poirier, Goguen, & Leslie, 1988). In examining the current status

of reform and programs for students with disabilities in Canada, Winzer (1999)

concluded that:

> The terrain in special education is remarkably diverse: differences in
> prevalence figures, in etiology, in definitions of exceptionality and labeling,
> in identification and placement procedures, in eligibility for special
> education services, in funding formulas, in early intervention programs,
> and in legislation are readily observed across the country. (p. 101)

She suggested that the thrusts of reform in Canada are influenced by and

associated most with the wider political and cultural trends in this country.

Further, she believed that one of the strongest waves of reform in this country in

the past decade revolves around ensuring educational equality and opportunity

for all students.

Restructuring as an Initiative of Educational Reform

The topic of restructuring has dominated the literature on change and

reform in general education for the past two decades. Few movements in

educational reform have captured the attention of the international audience as

has that of restructuring. A number of writers have demonstrated the significance

of school restructuring as an international trend. For example, Guthrie and

Koppich (1993) suggested that industrialized nations around the world are

currently engaged in sustained and extensive programs of restructuring in order

to transform their educational systems. They argued that this press for change and reform through restructuring continues to be intensified as the world economy becomes more competitive and interdependent.

Beare and Boyd (1993) concurred with the global nature of this reform initiative and suggested that: " the decade 1980-90 saw a spate of educational reconstruction occurring simultaneously in many countries around the world" (p. 2). They further concluded that, although there are commonalities emerging from the restructuring movement, the word "restructuring" continues to carry different meanings in different countries.

The Meaning of Restructuring

According to Berreth (1988), to restructure means to "change the pattern or organization of an entity" (p. 44). In the private sector the term has come to mean a process of rapid adaptation prompted by the need to maintain or regain competitiveness (Conley, 1993). In education, the term restructuring is most notable for its ambiguity. Kirst (1992), in commenting on the meaning of restructuring in education, indicated "Restructuring is a word that means everything and nothing simultaneously...It is in the eye of the beholder" (p. 2).

Similarly, Goodlad (1992) suggested that: "We are rapidly moving toward the use of the word "restructuring" whenever we talk about school reform at all...this is becoming another catchword when the truth of the matter is that hardly any schools are restructured" (p. 2).

Lewis (1989) believed that the newness of the term in education and the wide range of changes being proposed or instituted account for this confusion.

She highlighted the variety of views held by individuals within the educational community on the subject of restructuring and suggested that it is simultaneously viewed as a threat for some individuals and welcomed by others. Lewis described restructuring as those actions that allow and encourage higher expectations of both teachers and students.

Although definitions of restructuring commonly highlight change in the educational environment, they vary in their emphasis on the area of focus for change and the outcomes of these changes. For Britton (1994) the term restructuring has become a general descriptor for any school reorganization effort to improve student preparation for life in a changing society.

Murphy (1991), on the other hand, viewed restructuring as a reform initiative that has the potential to radically alter the way that schools are run and students learn. His definition emphasizes change among a variety of elements in the educational environment:

> Restructuring generally encompasses systematic changes in one or more of the following: work roles and organizational milieu; organizational and governance structures, including connections among the school and its larger environment; and core technology. Restructuring also involves fundamental alterations in the relationships among the players involved in the educational process. (p. 15)

The changes emphasized in this definition are primarily related to the roles and working conditions of the adults in the educational environment. Implicit in Murphy's definition is the assumption that, by changing the relationships among these individuals, then changes will occur in student learning.

Restructuring, as a catalyst for change, is also apparent in the definition suggested by Reavis and Griffith (1992). For these writers restructuring means:

a complete change in the cultural, organizational assumptions, leadership, curriculum, instructional approach, and accountability of the school. In short, restructuring means exactly what the name implies – a complete change in the structure of the organization and the underlying beliefs that have given rise to that organization. (p. 2)

They identified seven elements of restructuring that they believe represent a

consensus in the literature on the major policy shift that this initiative involves:

1. Site based decision-making in the critical areas of budget, staff development, curriculum and instruction, and personnel.
2. A shift to a market-driven orientation, usually on the basis of parental choice of school.
3. An increase in and shift in focus of technology use, from simple drill to an integrated instructional package.
4. A shift in instructional emphasis to conform more closely to new understandings of human cognition.
5. A shift in curriculum from an emphasis on a wide range of topics to an emphasis on understanding and assisting students in constructing their own meaning.
6. A shift to hierarchies within teaching, reflecting differing levels of responsibilities with various sizes of student groups.
7. A change in accountability toward more performance-oriented /real life assessments of students. (p. 2)

Conley (1993) defined restructuring in terms of different levels of change

that occur in schools. He distinguished between change as renewal, reform, or

restructuring. Renewal activities attempt to improve the effectiveness of an

existing system. Reform activities are policy, rule, or procedural changes that

influence an entire system without stimulating fundamental change. Restructuring

activities, on the other hand "change fundamental assumptions, practices, and

relationships, both within the organization and between the organization and the

outside world, in ways that lead to improved and varied learning outcomes for

essentially all students" (p. 8). Restructuring, according to Conley, represents

changes at a "deeper level" within the educational environment consistent with

Cuban's (1996) description of fundamental (second-order) changes:

"Fundamental changes are those that aim to transform and alter, permanently, the basic structural framework of the system. The premise behind such change is that basic organizational structures and processes are flawed at their core and need a complete overhaul, not renovations" (p. 76). Conley considered a vision of restructuring along a framework of 12 dimensions. These are subdivided into "central, enabling, and supporting variables" (p.105). The central variables, forming the core of the learning process, are learner outcomes, curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Enabling and supporting variables are further removed from the learning process. For example, technology, and school-community relationships are enabling variables; while governance and teacher leadership are supporting variables. Significant for this study is Conley's emphasis on the outcome of restructuring as that of improved and varied learning for all students.

The Concept of School Restructuring

Writers and researchers agree that restructuring is an elusive concept that may include varied, complex, and sometimes, conflicting dimensions (e.g., Conley, 1993; Fullan, 1999; Hargreaves & Fink, 1998; Milne, 1995; Murphy, 1991; Wohlstetter, 1995). Despite the ambiguity surrounding school restructuring writers on this topic agree (e. g., Conley; 1993; Evans, & Panacek-Howell, 1995; Martin & MacPherson, 1993; Murphy, 1991; Newmann & Wehlage, 1995; Townsend, 1998) that this reform initiative involves three types of structural changes:

1. *Changes in organizational and governance structures, and accountability.*
Common strategies for restructuring school governance include site-based
management, shared decision-making at the school site, modifications of union
agreements, school choice, and changes in the relationship between the school
and its larger community (Murphy, 1991; White, 1989; Williams, 1995;
Wohlstetter, 1995).

2. *Changes in roles and responsibilities of school and division personnel, and
local and government agencies.* Murphy (1991) referred to changes in roles and
responsibilities as work redesign. He suggested that, in restructured schools,
traditional roles and responsibilities defined by bureaucratic models are replaced
by the tenets of professionalism. For example: principals become "facilitators-
leaders," teachers become "decision-makers" and "leaders of learners" and
central offices become service centers and limit their role to the provision of
support, technical assistance, and training.

3. *Changes in curricula and the way instructional services are delivered.* There
is much less written in the literature on this area of the restructuring movement.
Evans and Panacek-Howell (1995) suggested that "Outcome-based education
has received much attention as a means for restructuring what we teach and the
way we teach it" (p. 34). Conley (1993) indicated that restructuring has facilitated
a "multitude of projects and experiments that seek to change the learning
environment" (p. 165). Among those of most significance are delivery strategies
such as: multi-age groupings, schools within schools, and community-based
learning.

Philosophical and Political Underpinnings

Of particular significance for this study is the ideological context for restructuring. For Milne (1995) restructuring represents a reordering of society's priorities for education. In the sixties and seventies advocates for societal change attempted to use schools as a vehicle to remake society. Schools were used to promote the ideals of democratic participation and individual self-worth that the civil rights movement represented. During these times freedom was emphasized and accountability downplayed. These were periods of intensive educator activisim.

With restructuring, the emphasis is not on freedom, but on accountability. Conley (1993) asserted that the emphasis in the call for school restructuring is not lofty social goals; it is economic and societal survival. He proposed that restructuring placed stronger emphasis on accountability for economic and societal, not educational, reasons. As a result, the business community, not educators, is leading the drive for basic reforms in education in the 1990s.

Henderson (1995), and Mostert and Kauffman (1993) support this position and maintained that the drive for school restructuring in the 1990s is primarily economic. As a result, restructuring has facilitated unprecedented inroads of marketing forces into the governance and organization of schools (Chubb & Moe, 1990). Central to this discourse have been concerns raised by New Right Ideology over issues of policy, provision, and practice relative to questions of cost and efficiency.

According to Beare and Boyd (1993), fundamental to the new right

approach is a belief in a market economy whereby responsibilities previously

equated with the welfare state must now be the responsibility of private

individuals or the family. They argued that, in redefining what is politically

acceptable, an emphasis has been given to the notions of choice, efficiency,

diversity of provision and rights of the individual. These authors outlined seven

trends in the international restructuring movement that are significant for

educators:

1. The reforms do not originate with educators or with the schools or systems to which they are attached; they are mandated from outside by political factors.
2. Economic factors not only determine but also pattern the nature of the restructuring.
3. National governments are now powerful actors in education even though the federal systems like those in the United States, Canada, and Australia where the national government has no constitutional authority to intervene in education.
4. Restructuring has aimed at a specific target, namely the way schools and school systems are run.
5. It is obvious that countries are learning from each other, adopting ideas and models from elsewhere with a speed which has never been seen before.
6. The economic imperative is also providing a new rationale for education, and more narrowly, for schooling. Schools are expected to compete for customers.
7. The restructuring is not over yet, simply because the forces which produced the current spate – economic competitiveness, the interdependent international economy, the realigning of political forces, the emergence of new national groupings, and values disequilibrium – will produce policy turbulence for some time to come. (pp. 10-11)

Fostered by a general shift towards conservatism in education, Murphy

(1991) contended that decentralization is at the heart of the current restructuring

movement. Restructuring advocates have consistently appealed to the purported

political and economic benefits of decentralization in their calls for the

transformation of public education:

> Proponents of devolution believe that decentralized units increase knowledge about, access to, and participation in governance; make organizations easier to change; and prevent undue consolidation of power at geographically distant locations and hierarchically remote organizational levels. Lurking slightly in the background is the belief that increased responsiveness and accountability will result in more effective and efficient internal operations and the development of a better product or the delivery of better service. (p. 2)

Restructuring in Canada

In Canada, the press for educational change and reform has been

particularly evident where, for the past two decades, educators have witnessed

significant turbulence, uncertainty, and instability surrounding the administration

of schools in Canadian society. Virtually every province has had major

commissions and other investigations into education. According to Martin and

MacPherson (1993), the drive to reform the educational system in this country is

a result of public concern with the administration of schooling in Canada. They

contended that, "Despite a provincial and territorial rather than federal system of

education in Canada, and irrespective of the administrative functions targeted for

restructuring in each case, the impetus for restructuring policy all seem to

emanate from a common breakdown in public consensus about schooling and

administrative services" (p. 11).

Hargreaves (1998), in studying change and the restructuring movement

within the Canadian context, suggested that the current climate for school policy-

making is conditioned by a different ideological perspective and different social

forces than those evident in the early 1970s:

Many schools are operating in a complex post-modern world in which they must respond to the challenges of compression of time and space, changes in patterns of parenting and family life, economic turbulence and uncertainty, greater cultural and moral pluralism, and obsessions with image and appearances. (p. 47)

Fullan (1998) believed that the reform initiatives associated with the restructuring movement (e.g., school-based management) have failed to achieve their desired goals of improved education because they lack coordination, common vision, and effective improvement processes. He observed that reforms, which he labels as "restructuring," may have altered governance procedures but have not affected the teaching-learning core of schools into which they have been introduced. He argued that restructuring bears no direct relationship to improvements in teaching and learning, focussing as it does on such changes in the formal structure of schooling as organization and roles.

School jurisdictions in Alberta, like their counterparts throughout Canada and the industrialized world, have been caught up in the reforms of the restructuring movement. Compared to other countries the reforms of restructuring in Alberta have been more limited in that they do not involve curriculum content and processes; rather, they have focused more on the administration of education.

In the early 1990s government politicians in this province engaged in a series of round table discussions with stakeholders in education aimed at initiating reforms to the administration of the educational system within the province. The result of these deliberations was the implementation of a business model for education in this province. Driven by a conservative philosophy

involving the celebration of individualism, competition, and the decentralization of

planning and decision-making, the government's plan for educational reform was

outlined in a document entitled *Meeting the Challenge: Three-Year Business

Plan 1994/95*. Goal 5 of this document highlighted three areas that the

government would address in restructuring the education system: (a) revise

legislation, (b) establish school-based budget and program decision-making, and

(c) clarify roles and responsibilities. Implementation of the restructuring initiatives

contained in this report followed an aggressive agenda of reform in this province

that led to:

> amalgamations of school boards, centralization of taxation powers for the
> funding of public education, a 5% salary rollback for all teachers and
> administrators, dramatic downsizing of the Ministry of Education and the
> introduction, where it was not already in place, of a model of site-based
> management and decision-making for schools. (Townsend, 1998)

To date, research into the effects of restructuring on education in Alberta

has been generally limited to discussions on school improvement

(e.g., Delaney, 1995; Townsend, 1998) and decision-making (e.g., Yanitski,

1997). As such, the effects of restructuring in this province on the provision of

programs for students with disabilities, particularly in regards to inclusive

education, remain unknown.

Inclusive Education

In the 1990s, inclusion has been among the "hottest" topics in education.

Alternatively referred to as inclusion, inclusive schooling, and inclusive education,

this model of programming for students with disabilities is fast becoming policy in

school divisions throughout this province and the rest of North America (Black-

Branch,1993; Byrnes, 1990; Dinning, 1991; Dyson, 1999; Lilly, 1988). Gerber

(1995) suggested that, "the language of inclusion is now firmly held captive in the

public domain, in the rhetoric of politics and school administration, and in the

advocacy of parents and professionals alike" (p. 181).

In Alberta, inclusion is one of the most emotionally laden issues

confronting stakeholders involved in education. Within the landmark report from

the Alberta Teachers' Association, entitled *Trying to Teach*, Booi (1993) wrote

that "submissions on this topic were the most in-depth and passionate, and

clearly displayed the frustration felt by teachers" (p. 4). This subject also evokes

strong feelings in politicians, administrators, parents of students with and without

disabilities, and other professionals (Daniels & Garner, 1999; Ferguson, 1995;

Gerber, 1995; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Martin, 1995; Winzer, 1996). Position

statements on inclusion have been issued by a variety of political, parent, and

educational organizations in this province. They represent a range of responses,

including: (a) those of unbridled political enthusiasm such as the Alberta

Government's Brassard Report (1990), (b) support for the philosophy of inclusion

but concern over its implementation (e. g., Alberta Teachers' Association Report

of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Special Education, 1997; Alberta Teachers'

Association Policy 17.A.1, 1998; Alberta Teachers' Association Special

Education Council's Position Paper on Inclusive Education, 1998), and

(c) rejection of the concept, citing concern that inclusion practices do not provide

appropriate services for students with disabilities (e. g., Alberta Association for

Children and Adults with Learning Disabilities, 1992).

Tensions surrounding this subject have been well documented in the literature on special education. Dyson (1999) commented that: "These mixed reactions are, to a large extent, attributable simply to the different educational – and, ultimately political and ethical – positions adopted by these commentators" (p. 36). He contended that there are significant ambiguities in the concept of inclusion that arise from different discourses, through which different theoretical notions of inclusion are constructed.

Winzer (1996) supported this premise and suggested that the concept of inclusion defies easy interpretation: "There is no single model of inclusive education and it is not a fully developed structure with paradigms and a data base. Inclusion means different things to different people who want different things from it" (p. 71).

Despite the varying perspectives on inclusion, Bunch and Valero (1997), in examining recent research on this topic, maintained that "there is a sufficient body of evidence out there for us to realize that inclusion is not a dismissible, theoretical construct" (p. 3). Dyson (1999) agreed and suggested that: "In recent years, inclusive education has become so central to the education policies of large numbers of countries in both the "developed" and "developing" world that commentators have been able to describe it, without exaggeration, as a "global agenda" (p. 36).

While there is no single educational model or approach, inclusive schools tend to share similar characteristics and beliefs such as: (a) school-wide

acceptance of the philosophy and practice, (b) belief that all children can learn,

(c) sense of community, (d) services based on need rather than location,

(e) natural proportions, (f) supports provided in general education, (g) teacher

collaboration, (h) curriculum adaptation, (i) enhanced instructional strategies, and

(j) standards and outcomes (Lipsky & Gartner,1997; Sailor, 1991; Stainback &

Stainback, 1996).

The Current Concept of Inclusion

There is no official definition of inclusion or inclusive education. Instead,

there are a variety of interpretations on this subject. Frequently confused with its

predecessors of integration and mainstreaming, inclusion, or inclusive education,

implies subtle but real differences from mainstreaming, the least restrictive

environment, and integration. For Salisbury (1991) this difference is based on

social policy and the view that individuals with disabilities have long suffered

discrimination in education. He maintained that advocates of inclusive schooling

argue that the social-cultural realities of mainstreaming and integration are that

one group is viewed as the "mainstream" and one group is not; hence, one group

must "push in" to the activities and settings occupied by the other. Under the

principles of inclusion, children do not push into the mainstream because the

underlying supposition in inclusive programs is that all children will be based in

the classrooms they would attend if they did not have a disability.

Barth (1990) suggested that inclusive learning is a process that is geared

to improving schools from within. In his interpretation the ultimate goal of

inclusion is the creation of a collaborative school.

Ramsey (1993) connects inclusive schooling to its consequence for society: "Such an education, in its inclusivity, would be richer, more diverse and more stimulating education, and a more appropriate preparation for post-school life in an egalitarian community not only for those students who are disabled, but indeed for all students" (pp. viii-ix).

Kunc (1992) argued for inclusive education in the context of the needed changes in attitudes towards persons with disabilities and the manner in which this form of education can contribute to society:

> When inclusive education is fully embraced, we abandon the idea that children have to become "normal" in order to contribute to the world. As a collective commitment to educate all children takes hold and "typical" students realize that those kids do belong in their schools and classes, typical students will benefit by learning that their own membership in the class and the society is something that has to do with human rights rather than academic or physical ability. (p. 38)

Definitions of Inclusion

Although there are different conceptualizations of what inclusion means, most definitions contain the following elements: (a) all students with disabilities attend their neighborhood schools, (b) general education, not special education assumes the primary responsibility for students with disabilities, and (c) all students with disabilities attend general education classes either full-time (e.g., full inclusion) or with minimal pull-out (Laski, 1991; Sailor, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1992).

In 1998 the Special Education Council of the Alberta Teachers' Association proposed a definition of inclusive education within their *Position Paper On Inclusive Education* that stated: "Inclusive Education is the process of

educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighborhood or

local schools with same-aged peers without special needs on a part or full time

basis" (p. 1). Important in this definition is the aspect of attendance in the

community school within an age appropriate regular classroom. It suggests that

inclusion may occur on a continuum ranging from full time to some portion of the

school day interpreted as part-time.

Laski (1991) suggested a definition that refutes the notion of inclusion on a

part-time basis and maintained that "full inclusion" is the only acceptable learning

environment for students with disabilities. He suggested that: "All children with

learning problems, whether they be "special education" students, "at risk"

students or otherwise regarded as disadvantaged in schooling, belong in regular

classroom environments" (p. 412).

For the purposes of this study the definition developed by the National

Centre on Inclusive Education and Restructuring (NCIER) 1994, was used.

According to this definition, inclusive education means:

> providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities,
> equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with the
> needed supplemental aids and support services, in age-appropriate
> classes in their neighborhood schools, in order to prepare students for
> productive lives as full members of society. (p. 6)

The NCIER definition combines the various aspects mentioned in the previous

definitions, but also recognizes the need for additional supports and services. It

emphasizes the goal of an effective education for students with disabilities and

states an outcome of the educative process for these students as preparation for

membership in society.

Philosophical Underpinnings

Rooted in the principle of normalization (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997) and fostered by the civil rights movement of the 1960s, the philosophical underpinnings for inclusion are based more on social policy than pedagogy. The discourse on this subject is typically framed within the absolutist language of rights and moral imperatives (Ferguson, 1995; Salisbury, 1991). For example, Lipsky and Gartner (1996) asserted that "equity requires inclusion," while Skrtic (1991) advocated "equity as the way to excellence". Sage and Burrello (1994) maintained that "equity is the moral principle that continually resurfaces in discussions of restructuring" (p.18). They argued that "students with disabilities must be thought of as part of a pluralistic society" (p. 18).

Discussions surrounding inclusion, relative to the issues of rights and justice, are typically critical of segregated special education programs (e.g., Pugach, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1992; Zigmond & Baker, 1995). Maintaining segregated special education programs is viewed as incompatible with the establishment of an equitable education system and ultimately, with an equitable society. Therefore, according to inclusionists, only inclusive education can deliver social justice (Laski, 1991; Salisbury, 1991).

Paul and Ward (1996) suggested the literature on inclusion is divided into two opposing philosophical perspectives, those dealing with "ethics" and those dealing with "comparison". Dyson (1999) agreed that there are differing discourses within the literature on the context for inclusion, however, he

maintained that these should not be viewed as competing paradigms but rather as "poles along a single dimension" (p.39).

Along with the rights and ethics discourses are those that are related to efficacy. For Dyson (1999), "Inclusive schools can be seen as bringing greater social benefits, as being more effective educationally, and as being more cost-efficient than segregated special education" (p. 40). Proponents of inclusive education suggest that it is a rational phenomenon grounded in empirical research on the inadequacies of a dual system of education (Wang, Reynolds, & Walberg, 1988; Will, 1986). For these writers, inclusive education would make general education classes more diverse educational environments (Gartner & Lipsky, 1987; Lilly, 1988; McLaughlin, 1995; Pugach, 1995; Stainback & Stainback, 1984). As well, by merging the philosophy and expertise of special education with general education, then creation of a single adaptable system would ensue (Bishop, Foster, & Jubala, 1993; Ferguson, 1995).

Inclusive Education in Canada

There is no legal mandate on inclusion in Canada. Winzer (1996) in commenting on special education in Canada, indicated that the philosophical underpinnings of desegregation appeared in a number of federal reports commissioned during the 1970s. These included: (a) the Hall-Dennis Report (1968), (b) the Report of the Commission on Emotional and Learning Disorders in Children (1970), (c) the 1971 Report on Standards for Education of Exceptional Children in Canada, and (d) the 1976 report on Canadian education prepared by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Across Canada the amount of integration into the general education classroom depends on provincial policy and the individual school division. Some Canadian school jurisdictions have adopted policies of full inclusion. In these school jurisdictions all students, regardless of the severity of handicaps, are educated in general classrooms with their same age peers. A large number of school divisions in Canada have chosen to maintain a continuum of services that includes segregated options and tend to approach inclusion on a one-to-one basis. Only a handful of cases on inclusion have been brought to the courts in this country, and, generally, the individual province's School Act has served as the reference point for deliberations. As recent as 1997, the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the right of Brandt County Board of Education (Eaton versus Brandt County Board of Education, 1997) to place a student in a segregated special education program, a ruling in direct opposition to the request of the child's parents.

Issues in Inclusive Education

Some people speak of inclusion as though it were a universally accepted movement and not something that is evolving. However, as Kaufman (1994) indicated, the inclusion movement is surrounded by often acrimonious debates. Individuals in favor of inclusion cite the current general education system and its methods of organizing for instruction as contributors to student disabilities (Bishop, Foster, & Jubala, 1993; Zigmond & Baker, 1995). Pro-inclusionists have characterized the opponents as segregationists (Wang & Walberg, 1988), and compared the current system of special education to slavery (Stainback &

Stainback, 1987) and apartheid (Lipsky & Gartner, 1987). A further argument of

the proponents dwells in the relative non-adaptability of the general education

system. They maintain that the existence of a special education system is a

barrier to developing a responsive capacity within general education, both in

public schools and in teacher education (Lilly, 1988; Pugach, 1995; Reynolds,

Wang, & Walberg,1987; Skritic, 1991). Further, proponents of inclusion charge

that special education is not a rational system. They argue that the handicapped

designation required by special education does not lead to direct instructional

benefit, and worse, is detrimental to students in the social costs of labeling.

Opponents to inclusive education argue out of this same perspective by

insisting that the handicapped label is beneficial in a political sense. They justify

the current system of special education on the political grounds that it targets

resources and personnel to designated students. This targeting is essential if

students with disabilities are to receive instructional assistance in the context of

the resource allocation process in schools (Mosert & Kauffman, 1993; Kauffman,

1989).

Mosert and Kauffman (1993) proposed that people with disabilities are

viewed as an economic liability and, without the safeguard of the special

education program resources needed by these individuals will be redirected to

serve the interests of advantaged students. This argument is a major reason for

the opposition of the Learning Disabilities Association of Alberta to inclusive

education. They fear that elimination of the label of learning disability and

segregated programs for these students will result in a loss of resources and finances for this group of students with disabilities.

Gerber and Semmel (1985) argued that as long as resources are scarce and students differ, teachers will be forced to choose between maximizing the mean performance of the group -- most notably done by concentrating efforts on the more capable students -- and minimizing the variance -- reducing the differences by concentrating on the least able. Given the current reforms in education which are influenced by a political thrust worldwide for higher achievement and controlled funding for education, the point raised by Gerber and Semmel has significant implications for school jurisdictions, in this province and elsewhere, relative to the provision of inclusive education.

Restructuring and Inclusive Education

There is a lack of literature specific to the area of restructuring and inclusive education. Sage and Burello (1994) highlighted in their discussions on educational reform the issue that special education literature is without much discussion of restructuring, and yet, they suggested that "it [special education] is based on a series of research findings generalizable to all of education" (p.21).

In general, the response to restructuring within the literature on special education is varied. A number of authors view this reform initiative as complementary to inclusive education (e. g., Ferguson, 1995; Guerra, Jackson, Madsen, Thompson, & Ward, 1992; Lipp, 1992; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). For example, Murphy (1991) suggested that the restructuring movement in intent places a renewed focus on the education of all students, especially those who

have been ineffectively served in the past. Sapon-Shevin (1994) argued that it is

essential for the inclusive movement to link itself with the reforms of restructuring.

She indicated that:

> Inclusion will succeed to the extent that it links itself with other ongoing
> restructuring efforts: with the detracking movement, authentic assessment,
> site-based management, and so on. Restructuring means looking at not
> just what kind of classrooms we want, but what kind of world we want, and
> how we prepare children to be members of that broader community.
> (Sapon-Shevin in O'Neil, 1994, p. 11)

The Emphasis on School-Based Management

The majority of writings have been in reference to one of the key

strategies of restructuring, namely, school-based management (SBM). A number

of positive outcomes in the reform of both general and special education are

being cited as facilitated by school-based management. Murphy (1991)

concluded that no element of restructuring has received more attention than the

issue of devolution of authority to the school site. He suggested school-based

management is at the core of transformational efforts to change and improve

schools. Caldwell and Wood (1988) purported that SBM holds the promise of

producing substantial positive changes in schools. David (1989) suggested that

school-based management is a way to change schools into effective learning

environments.

Advocates of reform in special education see school-based management

as a means to facilitate the integration of special education and general

education resulting in the creation of one cohesive system of education for all

students (Ferguson, 1995; Lipsky & Gartner, 1999). Proponents of inclusion

associate the features of school-based management (e.g., participative decision-

making, collaboration, decentralization of resources) with increased flexibility for

schools, resulting in greater accommodation of students with special needs in

regular classrooms (Ferguson, 1995; Lilly, 1987; Lipsky & Gartner, 1994).

Guerra, Jackson, Madsen, Thompson, and Ward (1992) developed a

White Paper on the topic of site-based management, in which they reviewed the

theories supporting SBM, cited examples of current practice, and suggested five

implications for special education. These included:

1. site-based management should be supported by drastic changes in organizational structures and procedures to result in improved educational outcomes for all children,
2. site-based management should promote the inclusion of students with disabilities,
3. changes in policies and procedures are necessary to enable effective special education practices in the context of site-based management,
4. site-based management should integrate regular and special education,
5. site-based management should result in improved quality of programming and services to students with special needs.

Several theorists and researchers have recently proposed that while SBM

has become an important issue in educational policy, much ambiguity continues

to surround the notion of SBM particularly as it affects programs for students with

special needs (e.g., Barton, 1999; Evans & Lunt, 1993; Henderson, 1995). White

(1989) suggested that researchers, practitioners, and policy makers interpret

school-based management differently, and numerous variations can be found

within divisions and schools. Wohlstetter (1995) indicated that there is confusion

and misunderstanding surrounding school-based management. Lee (1991)

contended that there is great anxiety in England about the way special

educational needs are being assessed and addressed under this new

restructuring management initiative. Similarly, Evans and Lunt (1992) cautioned

that the English equivalent of school-based management, Local Management of Schools, has the potential to create fragmentation of responsibilities for children with special education needs.

Lessons From the United Kingdom

The most extensive research to date on the effects of restructuring initiatives on programs for students with disabilities has originated out of England. Local Management of Schools (LMS) is a restructuring initiative that was introduced into the British educational system with the passing of the Education Reform Act: Local Management of Schools, in 1988. It consisted of a "package" of measures, the main elements of which are: financial delegation, formula funding, open enrolment, appointment and dismissal of staff, and assessment of performance (Thomas, 1990). Under LMS, Local Education Authorities (LEA) are obliged to allocate at least 85 per cent of their potential schools budget to schools. The emphasis in this legislation was to create an "internal market" as an attempt to stimulate improvements in educational outcomes and to provide efficiency and accountability. The creation of internal markets within the public sector has been a feature of many restructuring initiatives of advanced industrial nations in recent years (Lawton, 1992). Evans and Lunt (1992) suggested that, "The "internal market" is used as a mechanism to free schools from the bureaucracy of the Local Education Authority (LEA) by allowing schools to manage their own budgets and personnel, and to create competition by extending parental choice of schools, thus requiring schools to compete with each other for pupils in order to obtain funding" (p. 1).

Lee (1991) conducted quantitative research into the implications of LMS

for students with disabilities by implementing a national survey of LMS schools in

England and Wales in 1989 and 1991:

> This research included two national surveys of LEAs, in 1989 and 1991.
> The first analyzed 92 draft LMS schemes from England (excluding inner
> London) and Wales. The second survey included authorities from the new
> inner London authorities. In the spring and summer of 1991 65 out of the
> new total of 117 LEAs took part by providing their LMS schemes, budget
> statements and any in-house working papers prepared on formula funding
> and special needs. (p. 100)

After analyzing the LMS schemes Lee concluded that consistency in service

delivery for students with special needs varied widely in England. Relative to

funding levels for students with disabilities, he discovered that "variations in the

amounts received by schools for special educational needs in different areas are

astonishing" (p. 101). In his conclusion, Lee suggested that the impact of this

restructuring initiative (LMS) is hard to monitor nationally due to the fact

approaches taken by LEAs are so diverse and LMS schemes are constantly

changing. He recommended that the next wave of LMS research be school-

based, to examine the governance and decision-making implemented by these

schools in provision of programs and services for students with disabilities.

Evans and Lunt (1993), researchers with the University of London, also

conducted quantitative research into the effects of the 1988 Act on programs and

services for students with disabilities. These researchers had concern over the

potential effects of the 1988 Act, and what followed it, on provision for special

educational needs. Between 1989 and 1992 they conducted four national

surveys of Local Educational Authorities in Britian. Results of these surveys

suggested that Local Management of Schools has in fact "decreased the capability of mainstream schools to respond to pupils with special educational needs" (p. 60). Findings from their surveys, to which just under 50% of English LEAs responded, suggested that there are changes taking place in the provision of services to students with disabilities. They found two particularly disturbing trends in their data. First, there has been an overall increase in the number and proportion of pupils being designated as special needs. They suggested that the possible reason for the increase in labeling students as special needs had more to do with schools attempting to increase funding than concern for individual student programming. And second, schools are becoming less willing to tolerate pupils who require extra input of resources resulting in an increase in exclusion rates evidenced by an increase in the numbers of students in special schools:

> Taking these trends together – an increase in special school placements, an increase in statement rates, and an increase in exclusions – one could argue that they are an indication that LMS and the pressures that it brings to schools have decreased the capability of mainstream schools to respond to pupils with special educational needs. (p. 60)

Evans and Lunt concluded that their research "points to a need to shift away from support for individuals towards support for schools and re-affirmation of the role of schools in providing for *all* children" (p. 61).

The literature indicates that the main problem relative to school-based management is that educators and policymakers do not realize the extent of system-wide change that SBM entails. Also, the effects of these changes on programs and services for students with disabilities within this decentralized system of governance have not been fully comprehended.

Conceptual Framework

From this review of the literature a conceptual framework (Figure 1) was developed which illustrates the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. According to Rudestam and Newton (1992), "adopting a conceptual framework allows the researcher to bound the study with regard to who and what will and will not be studied" (p.37). Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested the use of "bins" derived from theory and experience to assist in the development of a conceptual framework. They indicated that: "Doing that exercise also forces you to be selective – to decide which variables are most important, which relationships are likely to be the most meaningful, and, as a consequence, what information should be collected and analyzed – at least from the outset" (p. 18).

The development of a framework for the study presented a challenge for this researcher. Because of the lack of literature on the subject of restructuring and its effects on inclusive education, the variables and relationships illustrated within the framework were not easily discernable. Through a process of arranging and rearranging the possible variables and approximating the "deeper analysis" suggested earlier by Hargreaves and Fullan, the "aha moment" finally occurred and the framework emerged. The framework shows how restructuring, with its key aspects of organization and governance structures, work redesign, and core technology, is being driven by philosophical and political
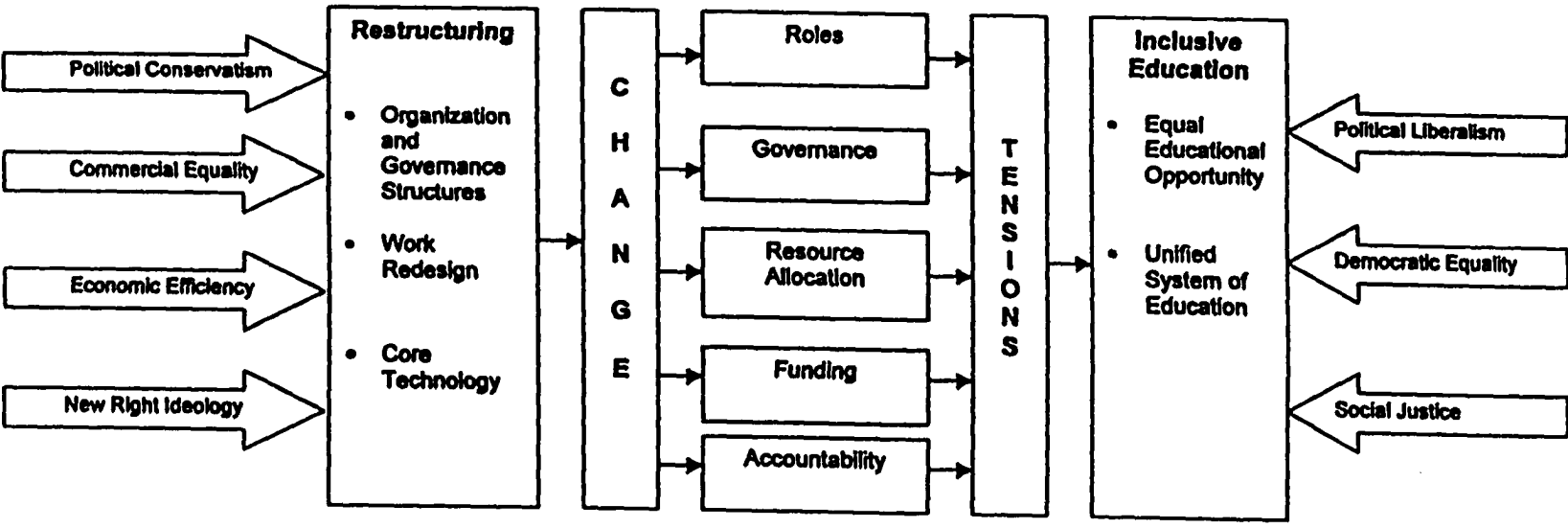
Figure 1. Conceptual framework for the study.

forces within society for the purpose of creating change in education. These forces include such factors as political conservatism, commercial equality, economic efficiency, and new right ideology. The primary areas in education that are being affected by the changes involved with restructuring include (a) roles, (b) governance, (c) resource allocation, (d) funding, and (e) accountability. Changes in these areas are creating tensions within the educational milieu that impact on inclusive education. Key aspects of inclusive education include equal educational opportunity and the move towards a unified system of education. Contributing to the complexity of this relationship are the counter forces driving the inclusion movement, including (a) political liberalism, (b) democratic equality, and (c) social justice.

Summary

The review of the literature serves to reinforce the need articulated by this study to examine issues of reform in special education within the broader context of changes occurring in general education. The literature clearly demonstrates that the past and to a great extent current focus of the school reform movement does not appear to include careful consideration for the needs of, or consequences for, students with disabilities. The lack of literature in the area of restructuring and how it impacts on or relates to inclusive education highlights the continued premises and practices of a dual system of special and general education. However, the literature also holds promise of an emerging awareness

of the need for a shared educational agenda and specific areas of intersection between the reform agendas of special and general education.

Although the literature is inconclusive on whether restructuring has an effect on inclusion, I am of the opinion that the literature supports the notion that restructuring affects programs and services for students with disabilities that are provided through inclusive education. The studies originating out of England (e.g., Evans & Lunt, 1992, 1993; Lee, 1991; Vincent, Evans, Lunt, & Young, 1994) have been particularly useful in highlighting areas relative to programs and services for students with disabilities that are being affected by restructuring. In addition, the following reasons derived from the literature in restructuring and inclusive education have helped me arrive at this conclusion:

1. The theoretical underpinnings of restructuring conflict with those of inclusion (Henderson, 1995; McLaughlin, Fuchs, & Hardmen, 1999; Mostert & Kaufman, 1993) creating the potential for tensions within schools engaged in the simultaneous implementation of these two initiatives. Restructuring initiatives originate from and are being driven by a business philosophy consistent with political conservatism. They focus on economics with an emphasis on cost, efficiency, and accountability. Inclusion, on the other hand, is grounded in social policy emphasizing individual student rights that promote democratic equality and social justice.

2. Programs and services for students with disabilities have historically been administered and monitored by a centralized model of special education governance (Skrtic, 1991). Decentralization is at the heart of restructuring

(Murphy 1991). As a result, restructuring has shifted the governance of these programs and services out of central office into the individual schools.

3. There is growing evidence in the literature on educational reform supporting a convergence in the reform agendas of special education and general education (Braaten & Braaten, 1988; Lipp, 1992). Points of intersection between these two reform agendas address areas that directly impact on the education of students with disabilities (e.g., roles and responsibilities, resource allocation, decision-making, accountability, academic standards, student evaluation).

The purpose of this chapter was to provide an overview of the relevant literature focussing on educational reform from the perspective of students with disabilities, restructuring as an initiative of educational reform, and inclusive education. In order to examine any potential relationship between restructuring and inclusive education, writings and research from both special education and general education were referenced. Out of this review a framework for this study was developed which highlights the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education.

It is obvious from the review that there is a lack of concrete evidence within the literature about the extent and nature of the impact of school reform on students with disabilities. The lack of research and writings within the reform literature relative to students with disabilities does little to assist educators in addressing the issues and problems they face in accommodating the changes involved with the current restructuring movement. What can be stated with some degree of certainty is that research models used in the past that focused on

reform in special education and general education as separate issues have little

validity for understanding the current initiatives facing educators. Nor are they

useful in predicting the future course of education. Paul and Evans (1995)

indicated that:

> The future is not simply a change of course, redirecting what is now in
> place. Rather, we are situated in between fundamentally different and
> often contradictory understandings of what we consider to be true and
> what we regard as worthy. The paradigm of knowledge is changing and
> this has a profound impact on how we understand and go about our work,
> including the work of research, teaching, and policy development.
> (pp. 3-4)

This study's examination of inclusive education within the framework of

restructuring contributes to the shift in the perspective that puts all students at the

center of educational reform and a conceptualization of a unitary rather dual

system of education.

Chapter 3

Method

This study was based upon an interpretive, inductive theoretical orientation. A qualitative research methodology was selected as an approach consistent with this theoretical orientation. This chapter provides a description of the research design, data collection and data analysis procedures utilized in this study. Concerns regarding the trustworthiness of the data and specific measures taken to address those concerns are discussed. The chapter is divided into the following sections: (a) theoretical orientation, (b) specific research design, (c) process for data collection, (d) data analysis procedures, and (e) procedures used to ensure methodological rigor. A description of the participants, their schools, and school division is also provided.

Theoretical Orientation

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) maintained that "whether stated or not, all research is guided by some theoretical orientation" (p. 30). Theoretical orientations are manifest in research paradigms that orient thinking and research. According to Creswell (1998), they also speak to our understanding of knowledge:

> Knowledge is within the meanings people make of it; knowledge is gained through people talking about their meanings; knowledge is laced with personal biases and values; knowledge is written in a personal, up-close way; and knowledge evolves, emerges, and is inextricably tied to the context in which it is studied. (p. 19)

According to Capper (1993), a paradigm is a shared pattern of basic beliefs and assumptions about the nature of the world and how it works. These beliefs and assumptions tell us what is real and what is not and they guide and

justify our actions (Sage & Burrello, 1994). Peters (1987) and Peters and

Waterman (1982) suggested that the power of paradigms lie in their ability to

influence what we perceive. According to Morgan (1986), they are powerful

conceptual lenses that filter our individual views of reality. However, Paton (1975)

cautioned that paradigms are both enabling, in that they provide us with a sense

of collective identity and they guide and justify our actions, and normative,

because they conceal the very reasons for our actions in the unquestioned

assumptions of the paradigm.

According to Burrell and Morgan (1979), sociological theory can be

aligned along two axes – one axis represents a continuum of the nature of

science (objective to subjective), and the other represents a continuum of the

nature of society (regulatory to radical change). Together these axes form four

quadrants representing different theoretical paradigms. Hoy and Miskel (1996)

argued that researchers and practitioners concerned with organizations and

administration ground their work primarily in one paradigm or in "one theoretical

story." Of the four sociological paradigms presented by Burrell and Morgan--

structural functionalist, interpretivist, radical humanist, and radical structuralist--

the interpretive paradigm provided the theoretical orientation for this study.

The interpretivist paradigm is concerned with understanding the social

construction of reality – the way people create and share meaning. The

subjectivist orientation of the interpretive paradigm focuses on social life

interactions and the meaning of these interactions as perceived by individuals,

rather than on so-called objective reality. Therefore the view of reality that human

beings possess and communicate results from their interpretations of the interactions with events, people and situations in their world. The interpretive approach examines meanings that have been socially constructed and consequently accepts that values and views differ from place to place and group to group (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Merriam (1988) suggested that "reality is not an objective entity; rather, there are multiple interpretations of reality" (p. 39). Berg (1989) confirmed this view when he stated that "What humans say and do are the result of how they interpret their social world...human beings communicate what they learn through symbols, the most common system of symbols being language" (p. 7).

Intrepretivists, then, according to Capper (1993), are concerned primarily with how people experience organizations. She argued that "critical inquiry uses interpretivist epistemologies and methodologies to provide participant meaning and understanding to the characteristics, patterns of behavior, and feelings of persons" (p. 12). Capper further maintained that

> Using interviews and observations of events and interactions in this interpretive mode can uncover the similar and differing perceptions of "what's happening" in the school. This process of reflection can move participants into deeper meanings, below "ordinary understandings" and "commonsense" assumptions. (p. 12)

Sirotnik and Oakes (1986) supported this view and purported that "Using the interpretive paradigm, decisions for change become informed ones; they can be made with an understanding of the meanings that school participants assign to the way things are now" (p. 36).

Interpretation is the act or process of finding meaning, significance, or explanation in reaching understanding. It provides meaning and subsequently understanding of the individual's reality as well as the processes that comprise that personal reality. Bogdan and Biklin (1982) maintained that "The meaning people give to their experience and their process of interpretation is essential and constitutive, not accidental or secondary to what the experience is" (p. 33). Therefore, I believe that in interpreting the meaning of an experience, process or phenomenon, ultimately, understanding of the significance and relevance of the experience for educators may be achieved. I agree with Hoy and Miskel (1996) that knowledge is not general; and that social reality is constructed as images in the minds of individuals. Therefore, "the interpretive perspective denies the existence of independent generalizations that explain the structure and dynamics of organizational life" (p. 27). This study draws on the perceptions of educators in various roles who are working within a restructured educational system in the provision of inclusive education. I believe that the context for their experience and their interpretation of that experience is important in providing insights and understandings regarding the effects of restructuring on inclusive education. Merriam (1988) proposed that "research focused on discovery, insight, and understanding from the perspective of those being studied offers the greatest promise of making significant contributions to the knowledge base and practice of education" (p. 3).

Research Design

Creswell (1998) referred to research design as the entire process of research from conceptualizing a problem to writing the narrative, not simply the methods, such as data collection, analysis, and report writing" (p. 2). Yin (1989) commented that "The design is the logical sequence that connects the empirical data to a study's initial research questions and, ultimately to its conclusions" (p. 28). In this study an interpretive approach utilizing qualitative interviewing was used to investigate perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators regarding the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. Given that the theoretical orientation of this study was grounded in an interpretive paradigm that values personal meaning and understanding, it was logical to use qualitative research methods. Owens (1987) stated that qualitative inquiry "seeks to understand human behavior and human experience from the actor's own frame of reference, not the frame of reference of the investigator" (p. 181). Denzin and Lincoln (1994) defined qualitative research in the following manner:

> Qualitative research is multimethod in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenonmena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Qualitative research involves the studied use and collection of a variety of empirical materials that describe routine and problematic moments and meaning in the individuals' lives. (p. 2)

Bogdan and Biklin (1982) identified five features of qualitative research

that were important considerations for this study:

1. Qualitative research has the natural setting as the direct source of
   data, and the researcher is the key instrument.
2. Qualitative research is descriptive.
3. Qualitative researchers are concerned with process rather than simply
   with outcomes or products.
4. Qualitative researchers tend to analyze their data inductively.
5. "Meaning" is of essential concern to the qualitative approach.

The specific design of this study used qualitative interviewing as the

method for investigating the relationship between restructuring and inclusive

education. Rubin and Rubin (1995) described qualitative interviewing as "both an

academic and a practical tool" (p. 5). In commenting on the value of qualitative

interviewing as a research method, they maintained, "It allows us to share the

world of others to find out what is going on, why people do what they do, and

how they understand their worlds. With such knowledge you can help solve a

variety of problems" (p. 5). The characteristics of qualitative interviewing, as

described by Rubin and Rubin (1995), are as follows:

1. The researcher encourages the interviewees to explore and reflect, in
   detail, on events they have experienced.
2. Thick description, rooted in the interviewees' firsthand experience,
   forms the material that researchers gather up, synthesize, and analyze
   as part of hearing the meaning of data.
3. Understanding is achieved by encouraging people to describe their
   worlds in their own terms.
4. The interviewees' share in the work of the interview, they are treated
   as partners rather than as objects of study.
5. The researcher is not neutral, distant, or emotionally uninvolved. He or
   she forms a relationship with the interviewee, and that relationship is
   likely to be involving.

Therefore, this study involved me, as the interviewer, interacting with the

participants through open-ended questions to elicit their perceptions regarding

the effects of restructuring on inclusive education. Each participant was asked to provide his or her particular interpretation of his or her experience with no expectation for consensus among participants. The richness of the responses provided data on a number of themes related to the subsidiary research questions. As a special educator and education administrator I brought my own interpretations and values to the data collected.

Respondent Group

The study was situated in a small suburban and rural school division in Alberta. This school division was chosen as a research site based on its experience and approach to inclusive education through what it calls the "neighborhood school model," as well as its familiarity and experience in implementing the restructuring mandates of the Alberta government. I have had close professional linkages with staff in the division who work in the area of special education and I was familiar with its model of service delivery, philosophy on inclusion, and extensive work in restructuring of its special education services in shifting from a centralized to decentralized model. The study was not conducted in my own school division so that I could maintain an arm's length relationship with the research site.

In the spring of 1999 I approached the Director of Student Services in the school division to discuss the feasibility of conducting research in schools within his jurisdiction. A subsequent meeting was held with the Director to review the study proposal and discuss possible school sites. The concept of inclusion and how it was implemented within the division was discussed. The characteristics of

inclusive schools suggested by the literature and described in chapter two were put forward as criteria for school selection (Lipsky & Gartner,1997; National Study, 1995; Sailor, 1991; Stainback & Stainback, 1996). Three schools were suggested by the Director, that were known to have students with a range of disabilities from mild to severe and a reputation for effective inclusive programs as evidenced by positive staff attitude and parental satisfaction with programming. The Director's familiarity with the schools in the division served as the basis for interpretation of the selection criteria. The Director agreed to approach school principals, who had a minimum of three years experience as school administrators, with the proposal, and to identify those who were interested in having their school staff participate. He later provided me with the names of principals in two elementary schools who were interested in participating in the study.

Each of the principals was contacted to discuss the study proposal, answer any questions they had, and review the criteria for teacher selection. They were asked to approach those teachers who had a minimum of three years of teaching experience and who currently were engaged in programming for students with disabilities. The three-years-of-experience criterion was a delimitation of the study. From research in staff development and my own experience as a teacher and school administrator I believe that it takes at least three years for an individual to be comfortable in his or her respective role and experienced enough to engage in reflection on changes that have taken place in

education. Therefore, I wanted to ensure that I would not be including individuals in the study that were in a first or second year assignment.

The study respondents ultimately included two elementary principals, seven elementary teachers, and two central office special education administrators. Following what Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996) defined as "purposeful sampling," the intent of the sample selection for this study was to "achieve an in-depth understanding of selected individuals, not to select a sample that will represent accurately a defined population" (p. 218). The group of interest for this study was teachers, principals, and special education administrators from selected schools in a division in Alberta. The reason for selecting a purposeful sample was to develop a "deeper understanding" of the perceptions of educators involved in programming for students with disabilities relative to the issue of restructuring. The participants identified for inclusion in this study adequately met the needs of this study.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

In accordance with the interpretive orientation of this study, and the parameters of qualitative inquiry, the instrument employed for data collection was the semi-structured interview schedule. This study focused on gaining an in-depth understanding of a specific topic and for this reason followed the process for data gathering outlined by Rubin and Rubin (1995) for topical interviewing. According to these researchers, preparing questions for topical interviews requires considerable background work, "including reading documents or academic studies, undertaking more loosely structured preliminary interviews,

and watching the events unfold" (p. 197). In this study, questions were open-ended, derived from the literature, and refined in advance of the study in a pilot process. The pilot study included discussions with colleagues in the field of special education, as well as, interviews with two elementary principals, a teacher, and a central office special education and early childhood administrator from my school division. Responses to the questions were probed further during the main study to gain a deeper understanding of the issues.

Qualitative methods consider the human as the instrument of inquiry and include interviewing as a legitimate mode of data collection. Creswell (1998), Lincoln and Guba (1985), Owens (1982), and others support the use of interviews as a reliable and effective means of data collection. The interview method was particularly suited for this study as it allowed me, the interviewer, to enter the world of the participants and collect data in a flexible and meaningful manner. The major advantage of the interview process is that I was able to build trust and rapport with the participants and thus increase the richness of the data and obtain information that might not otherwise be revealed (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 1996).

I also kept field notes on thoughts and insights regarding the interviews, observations made during informal contact with the school staff, and informal conversations with the participants. These notes were useful to help identify issues for further clarification, organize my thoughts, and to start identifying themes in the responses. All of the interviews were audio-recorded on standard cassettes for later transcribing and analyzing. Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996)

advocated the use of recording interviews in that it is convenient, inexpensive and an effective means of retaining the actual wording of the participant. The recorded interview tapes were transcribed by a typist who maintained the confidentiality of the respondents. I was provided with a hard copy of the transcriptions, as well as, a copy on computer disk.

Ethical Considerations

To comply with the requirements listed in the document titled "University Standards for the Protection of Human Research Participants" (1991), the following procedures were utilized to protect the participants in the study:

1. All information collected during the research was treated as confidential. Data (actual interview tapes, field notes, transcripts) were filed in a secure location.

2. The study's purpose and process were clearly explained to each participant prior to each interview. All participants signed consent forms outlining the purpose and procedures of the study (see Appendix). Also, they were asked if a tape-recorder could be used to record the interview, and none objected.

3. Each interview was conducted in a private setting.

4. Participants were informed that they could opt out of the study at any time during the study.

5. The participants were informed that only the researcher and the transcriber would have access to the interview tapes and that these tapes would be magnetically erased at the conclusion of the study.

6. Schools and school personnel participating in the study were given pseudonyms to ensure anonymity.

Data Analysis

Gall, Borg, and Gall (1996), and Rubin and Rubin (1995) suggested that data analysis is a systematic process of arranging the interview transcripts to understand data, and to inform others of discoveries. According to Bogdan and Biklin (1982) the analysis involves "working with the data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what to tell others" (p.146). Glesne and Peshkin (1992) outline a variety of methods for analyzing and displaying data. During this study, informal field notes were kept while interviewing, and during all formal and informal interactions with the participants. These notes were used to remind me of situations, comments, and observations that I made while at the schools and meeting with the respondents. They also added to the richness of the data collected.

I also made a summary after each interview highlighting important connections and information that the respondents provided. I used this summary to note areas that I had missed in the interview and needed to pursue through additional dialogue. Data were inductively and deductively analyzed according to both individual and grouped responses to determine common themes. A coding system was used to identify the themes so that grouping of responses for relevance to the research questions could be determined. I started the data analysis process by listening carefully to each tape. I noted words, phrases, and intonations of the participants that "jumped out" at me. I then listened to the tapes

again while reading the transcripts and again made notes in the margins of topics and themes that seemed to be reoccurring. After several readings, relevant sections of the transcripts were highlighted to emphasize those sections that contained information useful for the study. These sections were then analyzed for potential themes and relevance to the subsidiary research questions. Words, phrases, and metaphors were all brainstormed in the margins beside the highlighted sections to generate potential themes. A chart was then developed with themes grouped into what appeared to be common categories. After several rounds of editing, moving, and changing the words and phrases, the four categories were established with themes grouped relative to the categories. With the exception of omitting specific names and locations, correcting grammar, and using pseudonyms, the sections from the interviews were generally printed verbatim. Any changes made were designed to keep the integrity of the quotation and to make the statement easier to read.

Procedures for Trustworthiness

A major challenge for researchers is the need to ensure that data collected and interpreted during the study are trustworthy. Lincoln and Guba (1985) identified four areas in discussing the trustworthiness of qualitative data: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability. Specific procedures were used to improve the trustworthiness of data collection and analysis in this study.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in my own division involving two elementary principals, one teacher, and one central office special education and early childhood administrator. One of the principals involved in the pilot study had extensive experience in inclusive education and also had experience working within the parameters of restructuring. The other principal had the experience of having conducted qualitative research for a doctoral program and had insights into the development of questions and the difficulties that I might encounter in interviewing. The teacher had extensive experience in programming for students with disabilities through an inclusive model and the central office special education and early childhood administrator had several years of experience in programming for students with disabilities in inclusive early childhood programs. Each of these individuals provided invaluable insights and advice on the development of the interview questions and suggestions for proceeding with the interviews. This pilot study helped to ensure that the interview questions developed for this study contained all potentially relevant aspects of inclusive education and restructuring related to the research questions. In addition, the items for the interview were written in a manner intended to be clear and as complete as possible in order to solicit responses which were full and detailed.

To address the issue of credibility, the process of "member checks," as described by Guba and Lincoln (1988), were used to confirm the extent to which the data collected and interpretations of the investigator are similar to those of

the respondents. Eleven separate interviews were conducted over time with subsequent interviews held with three of the individuals who had more information to offer than covered in the first interview session. Each participant was provided with a copy of the interview transcript to read. Respondents were asked to comment on the information contained in the transcript and confirm that the data transcribed were correct. Through meetings and telephone conversations, the respondents either confirmed the accuracy of the data or misinterpretations were clarified sufficiently or eliminated from the data collected.

Interpretive research is judged in terms of the extent to which its findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. The usefulness of the findings generated by this study for other schools is facilitated by the formulation of a "thick" description for each respondent, as recommended by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Consistency equates to what Lincoln and Guba (1985) referred to as dependability. This means that the findings could be reproduced if the same or similar respondents and context were used in a replication of the study. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggested that the use of an external check, through the process of creating an "audit trail," is an acceptable means for checking on the dependability of the study. The "audit trail" can be constructed by providing documentation through interview notes utilized by the interviewer in the course of the study and made available for review by an individual not involved in the study. For the purposes of this study, field notes and summary notes after each interview was maintained for review by an individual from my school division who

is familiar with qualitative research methods and not directly involved in the study.

A study is also judged by the degree to which the findings are the result of the focus of the inquiry and not of the biases of the researcher. In this study the same process of an "audit trail" was used to address the issue of interviewer bias. Again, the individual not directly associated with the study was asked to review portions of the summary notes, document analysis and my field notes as a perception check on my interpretations of the data.

Profile of the Division, Schools, and the Participants

This section presents information on the participants and their respective schools, as well as a brief description of the school division in which the study took place. These data are presented to familiarize the reader with the context from which the comments, quotes and discussions that follow in subsequent chapters are presented. The extent to which the experiences of the participants and the findings of this study are transferable to other school jurisdictions and schools is left to readers to decide. They must assess the applicability of the findings and conclusions to their particular setting by determining the extent to which the settings described in this study are similar or different.

School Division

The division was formed January 1, 1995, bringing together three formerly independent school divisions – all of which have historic significance in the region. The combining of the three school divisions was a result of the Alberta Government's regionalization plan to reduce the number of school jurisdictions in

the province. This new school system resulted in a combined suburban and rural jurisdiction comprised of 13 schools in the larger suburban setting, 4 schools in a smaller town, and 1 school in the rural area. The division serves approximately 7200 students from Kindergarten to Grade Twelve. The bulk of the student population is in the middle to high socio-economic range.

Inclusive education is a high priority in this school division. Students with disabilities attend their neighborhood schools in a model of inclusion referred to as the "neighborhood school model." The move to an inclusive model of program delivery occurred in approximately 1994, through a process of restructuring initiated by a group of school personnel and a special education administrator in the division. A pilot project involving the inclusion of students with disabilities was used to determine the type and level of support required in programming for students inclusively. Staff involved in the pilot provided feedback and recommendations for system-wide implementation of an inclusive model of programming. In 1995 all of the division's segregated special education programs were disbanded and students with disabilities returned to their neighborhood schools. Parents requesting segregated special education programs are directed to programs outside of the division. Support and monitoring of the programs remained centralized until 1996 when the division became involved in the province's restructuring initiative in education. At this time the responsibility for the delivery and monitoring of all programs was delegated to the school principal. In addition to the basic instructional grant, supplementary funding is provided to the schools through a division allocation formula for students identified within the

range of government codes for mild, moderate, and severe disabilities. The

division is continuing to restructure its administrative positions, and in 1999, the

central office special education administrator positions were reduced from two

positions to one position. Profiles of the two schools participating in this study are

highlighted in Table 1.

Table 1. Profile of the Two Schools Used in the Study

School	Grade Levels	Student Enrolment	Location
Caring Elementary	K – 6	400 – 500	Suburban
Shining Elementary	K – 6	250 – 350	Suburban

Caring Elementary School

Caring Elementary School provides programming for just under 500

students in kindergarten to Grade 6. According to the principal, the socio-

economic status of the community is middle to upper income. Using Alberta

Learning coding criteria for disabilities, the school identified five students who are

severely disabled, nine who are moderately disabled, and seven students who

are gifted. The school accesses division supplementary funding for these

students. Students who are severely disabled have assigned teacher assistant

time while moderately disabled and gifted students receive extra support through

a "pull out" resource program. Caring school has the characteristic hum of a large

busy school with student work displayed proudly in the hallways and frequent

comings and goings of staff and students. The students with disabilities are part

of the regular classes with some students removed for portions of the day to receive "one on one" teaching in specific life skills. The atmosphere of the school is very positive with smiling staff and students exchanging greetings and engaging in informal conversations. I was given a warm welcome by both the principal and staff members and felt immediately comfortable in this school setting. Conversations in the staff room centered on school activities and student concerns and staff displayed a genuine interest in my research. The principal expressed a sincere commitment to inclusion believing that one of his primary roles was that of an "advocate for students with disabilities."

Shining Elementary School

Shining Elementary School is located in a middle to high socio-economic community and provides kindergarten to Grade 6 programming for well over 250 students dispersed in 11 home rooms. The school is an attractive new facility with particular attention given to the arrangement of rooms and resources for staff and students. There was an overwhelming interest by staff in the nature of my study evidenced by their questions and suggestions for input. The principal and staff were warm and welcoming and reminded me of the fun and camaraderie that is evident in a school where professionals share ideas and feel comfortable exchanging anecdotes and insights. I immediately felt comfortable and "at home" in this school as it reminded me of the elementary school in which I had been a principal. The principal and staff have identified and receive supplementary funding for three severely disabled students and three moderately disabled students in the school. The three severe students have assigned

teacher assistant time and the moderate students receive a combination of "pull out" and "in class" support. The school "clusters" students with disabilities in classes in order to maximize the resources in the school. The principal believed in fostering a school climate that welcomes and accepts children who have special needs. She had hand-picked her staff to facilitate an environment of acceptance and accommodation for individual student differences.

Participants

The participants consisted of two central office special education administrators, two principals, and seven teachers. Table 2 provides a profile of the participants.

Central office special education administrators. Each of these individuals had considerable experience and expertise in the field of special education. Beth had worked for the division for nine years in the area of special education. She was instrumental in implementing the "neighborhood school model" of inclusive education in the division. She had a strong belief in the value of inclusion and worked endlessly to support schools in their efforts in programming inclusively for students with disabilities. She was well liked and respected by school personnel. In June of 1999 she left the division for a senior administrative position with another school jurisdiction. Her position has since been eliminated, leaving one central office special education administrator.

Table 2. Profile of the Participants in the Study

Pseudonyms	Gender	Position	Site	Years in Position
Beth	Female	Special Education Administrator	Central Office	9
Bob	Male	Special Education Administrator	Central Office	15
Chris	Male	Principal	Caring Elementary	4
Carol	Female	Teacher	Caring Elementary	10
Cathy	Female	Teacher	Caring Elementary	20
Susan	Female	Principal	Shining Elementary	7
Sally	Female	Teacher	Shining Elementary	9
Sharon	Female	Teacher	Shining Elementary	27
Sara	Female	Teacher	Shining Elementary	8
Sheri	Female	Teacher	Shining Elementary	16
Sheila	Female	Teacher	Shining Elementary	18

Beth's colleague, Bob, had worked in the field of special education for 15 years. Prior to Beth's departure he shared the responsibilities of administrating programs and services for students with special needs in the division. He spent much of his time working in schools to support staff in assessment and programming for students with disabilities. Since June of 1999 he has assumed sole responsibility for special education programming within the division. Bob supports the division's policy on inclusive education but he does not believe in

"inclusive education at all costs," and feels that segregated programs are sometimes necessary depending on the particular needs of the students. He has concerns about the reduction in central office special education positions and has opted to take a "wait and see" posture on the outcomes of this move by the division.

Interviewing these individuals was stimulating and thought-provoking. Because I am currently engaged in a role similar to theirs, establishing rapport and a common frame of reference was easily accomplished. We discovered that we had many common experiences in our respective roles and shared a "language of special education" making dialogue easy.

School principals. Chris and Susan are elementary principals committed to inclusive education. Susan had been a principal for seven years and has extensive training and experience in the field of special education. She worked for a number of years as a reading consultant with another school division and believes that this experience has made her well suited to the role of principal in an inclusive school. She believed in presenting a "total school environment that welcomes and accepts children who have special needs and developing a staff that arrives at that point where you can really say that and say it with certainty." She had hand-picked her staff with the intention of creating a school environment that responds to the individual needs of all students. She maintained that an inclusive school provides staff with the opportunity to "model caring and compassion and to really use their teaching skills to the ultimate in providing for these children."

Chris had been a principal for four years. Prior to his role as a principal he was the Director of Student Services in the school division. Therefore, he also had a strong background and experience in special education. In speaking about himself, he indicated that "because I have a special education background I think that I feel that I'm an advocate for the special needs children." Chris believed that one of his primary roles as the school principal is to ensure good support is available for teachers involved in providing inclusive education. In commenting on inclusive education, he indicated that:

> the most important thing is having staff who enjoy having the children in their classrooms, not just being involved in it because they have to but really embracing them and knowing that with the inclusion of these children that many good things happen.

Having been a school principal, I found that I could easily connect with the context from which Susan and Chris were speaking. We were able to trade principal "war stories" and "anecdotes" that I believe ultimately assisted in creating a comfortable milieu for the interviews. I found that these individuals had so much to contribute that I was frequently changing tapes to keep up with their dialogue. I received a reprimand from my transcriber about my interviews with Susan. She indicated that there was so much laughing from us at times on the tapes that transcribing them was an extremely difficult task.

Teachers. All of the teachers who participated in the study exceeded the three years of experience in teaching delimitation as set out in the criteria for participant selection discussed with the principals. The years of teaching experience for these individuals ranged from eight to twenty-seven years. Of the seven, Sally, Sharon, Sara, Sheri, and Sheila had previous training and

experience as special education teachers prior to accepting assignments in general education classrooms. All seven teachers had prior experience in programming for students with disabilities within inclusive classrooms. All of the teachers have had experience teaching in various grade levels throughout their career. They were a responsive and dynamic group of individuals and I found that it was easy to establish a rapport with these teachers. I think that because I have had experience both as a special education teacher and general education teacher I could easily relate to the experiences that they were sharing. All of the teachers indicated that they were excited to be participating in what they believed was "very worthwhile research." For these individuals, teaching students with disabilities within an inclusive classroom was considered to be challenging and yet rewarding. They frequently stated that their biggest concern was to ensure that they were creating positive learning experiences for these students. Although these teachers voiced some variations in their particular understandings of inclusion, there was definite consensus regarding their commitment to providing inclusive education.

Summary

This chapter presented the method utilized in addressing the research questions. An interpretive theoretical orientation for this study was provided and the specific procedures for conducting qualitative research originating out of this orientation were described. As well, the process for qualitative interviewing was highlighted and the method for data collection and analysis was described. Detailed information regarding the respondent group was provided highlighting a

profile of the division in which the study was situated and specific information

regarding the two schools participating in the study. Profiles of each of the

participants were also provided describing their current roles, years of experience

in education and gender.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine how educators view the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The specific focus for this study was to analyze the perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators about that relationship and, to determine what aspects of restructuring facilitate or constrain the provision of inclusive education. Chapter 4 is divided into two parts. The first part presents the participants' understandings of the two key concepts in the problem being studied, that being, inclusion and restructuring. The second part discusses the various categories and themes that emerged from the data. The chapter ends with a summary of the emergent categories and themes.

Participants' Understandings of Inclusion and Restructuring

Interpretive research is concerned with how people understand their worlds and how they create and share meanings about their lives (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). In order to pursue an investigation into the perceptions that these participants held about the relationship between restructuring and inclusion, I believed that it was important to explore their understandings of these two concepts. From their responses it was possible to create a picture of what inclusion and restructuring meant in these individuals' lives and identify some of the specific characteristics associated with these two concepts.

On Being Inclusive

It's always looking at what's best for the child and building the program to suit the child. It doesn't support people saying this child does not belong in a regular school and classroom. Because that just doesn't make any sense. (Beth, Special Education Administrator, speaking on inclusion)

At the time of this study the school division was in its fifth year of implementing the "neighborhood school model." This model of programming for students with disabilities is based on a philosophy of inclusive education, articulated in the division's *Special Education Handbook* (1998), in the following manner:

In keeping with the philosophy of inclusive education, to the greatest extent possible, students with exceptional needs will be given a learning setting that maximizes their opportunity to receive programming within the regular classroom setting. This does not negate the fact that some students require individual or small group instruction to enhance the acquisition of specific skills. Specific delivery models for specialized programs may vary from school to school depending on the needs of the individual students attending.

Inclusion for these participants is based both on philosophy and practice. Susan, one of the principals, expressed these two aspects of inclusion in this way:

There's a philosophical part and a practice part to inclusive education. The philosophical part for me is that any child who is resident of this school community is welcome in this school, would be included in this school. In practice it again means that any child who is a resident of this community in the area of the boundaries of this school community will be included here without question and we will find a way to provide programming for that child. So what it means once we have children here is that they are members of a homeroom. We do not have segregated classrooms. Children are members of a homeroom and we strive to have them take their programming in that homeroom to the highest degree possible.

As the participants expressed their understandings of inclusion a number of common characteristics and practices emerged which helped to define inclusion for these individuals and highlighted the specific context for this study.

Characteristics of Inclusion

Neighborhood school. Students with disabilities attending their neighborhood school has become an accepted norm in this division. Inclusion has become, for these individuals, what Covey (1991) referred to as a "shared value" or "how we do things around here." Sara, a teacher at Shining School expressed the aspect of "shared value" in her comments on the specific practices that make inclusion successful in her school, "Inclusive education is successful in our school because we all have the same dream and philosophy about inclusion." The participants use a common language when speaking about inclusion, exhibited in such words and phrases as; "all kids are welcome," "they are part of our classroom," "he is doing what we're doing," "whatever's best for the child."

Regular class with age appropriate peers. All children in this division attend regular classes with their age appropriate peers. Like other participants Chris, a principal, believed that regular class age appropriate placement was the essence of inclusion:

> Inclusion is being able to have a child that is in the regular classroom be with their age appropriate peers. I've seen some wonderful successes and growth in children, especially our children here who have Down syndrome. Watching them model other children and the growth that happens because they are able to be in with their age appropriate peers is wonderful.

Important in the concept of inclusion for these participants was the distinction between the student with disabilities being a classroom member and not a visitor to the classroom. They view inclusion as something different from integration, a concept associated with the division's previous model of segregated special education programming. Sheri, an elementary teacher, stated the importance of this characteristic in her description of inclusion.

> I guess in its broadest sense it would be including all children within a school system. Making sure that their needs are met by the school they attend. In a more direct way, to my classroom, it means that the special needs students that I have are a part of my classroom. They're in my homeroom, they're not visitors. They're not part-time students. They are part of our classroom.

Acceptance by the community. Inclusion for these participants means more than the mere physical presence of students with disabilities in regular classrooms. They work to foster acceptance of these students by all members of the school community. Acceptance was described in a number of ways, including: "caring," "tolerance," "love," and "understanding." Cathy, a teacher, provided an example of the caring and acceptance that students at Caring School demonstrate for one of her special needs students named Jesse:

> Our special needs students are really well known by all our school body. I have grade 6 students that help Jesse at recess time. They take him outside and they play with him on a rotating basis. So all the children know who Jesse is and when he's walking down the hallway it will be "Hi Jesse, how are you doing?" And it's really nice to see because Jesse responds very well. He's not being segregated away where nobody knows who Jesse is. He is very well accepted by all the children, from grade one up to grade six.

Carol, another teacher at Caring School, believed that this acceptance has had a positive effect on the learning of one of her students with disabilities:

> For Jeff it's the social benefits that he feels that he belongs. That he's a worthwhile participant. That what he has to say and share is important in the group. It makes him happy to be accepted by the other students, and when he's happy he's learning.

Sara, a teacher at Shining School, described how the development of

acceptance through inclusion benefits regular students and staff:

> For the regular students, I think they're the ones that benefit the most. I think they get an opportunity to become tolerant and understanding. They have the opportunity to understand the world on a broader perspective. To realize that it is our job to take care of other people. And for the staff I think it broadens our horizons and makes us better teachers. It teaches us what it means to be teachers.

Appropriate supports. The provision of appropriate supports for inclusion

was a critical aspect articulated by all the participants. Sara stated it quite

succinctly when she said:

> The students with disabilities who are included and they don't have the support, they're toast. They are just being babysat. I've seen it happen and I've seen it almost happen with me.

Chris, the principal of Caring school, described the importance of having

appropriate supports for his staff who are working with students with disabilities,

and the consequence of not having those supports:

> I think if there is any problem at all with inclusion it's when schools don't have the support structure in place, the back-up, such as testing, and expertise to work with teachers in the modification of programs. If all of those things are not in place it won't work. The staff will suffer. They cannot assist the child as best they can, without the supports. And it will be to the detriment of the children.

Susan agreed with her principal colleague Chris in the need for appropriate

resources and supports for inclusion. She described supports in this manner:

> A staff has to have the resources to do the jobs that they need to do for

these children. So this means putting supports in place like teacher assistants. It means having access to consulting services. It means having the material resources to deliver programming.

Opportunity for pull-out. Inclusion, in this division, is not practiced as the "full inclusion model" described in the definition of inclusion put forward in the literature by Laski (1991). All of the participants indicated that it was important to have the flexibility in their model of inclusion of providing students with the opportunity to leave the classroom for individual assistance if it was in the best interest of the student. They articulated a "whatever's best for the child" position as their guiding principle in determining if and when the child is pulled out of the class, and each teacher ultimately decides the extent to which this occurs.

Parents as partners. Parents play a primary role in the implementation of inclusive education in this division. All of the participants spoke to the importance of the parent - school relationship in facilitating inclusion. Susan, a principal, believes "working with parents is a big part of inclusion." She described an incident from the start of the school year that highlights the importance of a positive working relationship:

> A kindergarten parent called me to say, "I have a child with Down syndrome. We live in your neighborhood and I'm wondering are we going to be able to come to this school?" Well of course you're able to come to this school. This is your community and you're very welcome here and I would be interested to meet with you. So right from the very first contact with parents we indicate openness. And that's something that carries on throughout the child's years of schooling.

Division Restructuring Versus Government Restructuring

In discussing their understanding of restructuring and inclusion, the participants made it very clear to me that for them there were two distinct types of

restructuring that have impacted on students with disabilities in their division. The

first type was described as the division-initiated restructuring of special education

that resulted in the development of the "neighborhood school model" in 1994,

and the second, the government restructuring initiative imposed on the division in

1996. One of the main differences between the two is related to the manner in

which the participants perceived they were implemented. For these participants,

the division restructuring of special education originated as a "grass roots

movement," involving teachers in division special education classes, school staff

hosting these programs, and one of the central office special education

administrators. It was initiated as a result of an identified need among these

individuals to create a more effective and flexible method of programming for

students with disabilities. Beth, a special education administrator, described the

impetus for the initiative in this way:

> We were moved to pilot an inclusive model in one school first because we
> thought who owns the kids and where's the flexibility in programming. At
> that time if a student didn't get into a division special education program
> they basically sat at their school and the division didn't give them any
> resources. We knew that wasn't working well. Why should a child sit on a
> waiting list? That didn't make sense. So that's when we started to look to
> see if there is a better way. One so that we all own the kids and so that we
> have the flexibility to move resources as kids move in and out. And so that
> every child we knew for sure we could say would have their needs
> accommodated. That's why we went to the change in special education
> models.

The government restructuring initiative, on the other hand, was viewed by

these participants as a "top down" political intervention that has been forced on

the division. The most commonly associated words used by participants in

describing government restructuring are "school based budgeting," "site-based

management," and "site-based decision making." The most common characteristics associated with the "government restructuring" initiative, as cited by these participants, are discussed below.

Decentralization. Participants indicated that the governance of special education has been decentralized from the division office to the schools. This has resulted in greater responsibility for programming and monitoring in special education resting with the school principal. Bob, the special education administrator, indicated that "there has been massive decentralization to the schools as a result of restructuring." Beth, Bob's colleague in central office, agreed that "the division was far more centralized in terms of decision-making in special education prior to restructuring." She indicated that within the current restructured management model "the monitoring and decision making for special education now rests with the principal and not with a centralized person."

Shared Decision-Making. An increase in the process of shared decision-making has resulted from the government restructuring initiative. This shared decision-making occurs in a number of different ways in the division. The most commonly cited decision making scenarios occur between principals and central office special education administrators, principals and teachers, and school staff and parents. Chris, principal of Caring School, indicated that, "Before restructuring, there was a lot of central office decision-making that was just piped down." He believed that now staff and parents were more involved in the decision making process:

In general we're having the opportunity to have decision-making here and

greater opportunity for teachers and parents to be involved personally and have input. I like being able to have people here at the school be part of the decision-making and not having the decisions rendered from division office.

Changes in roles and responsibilities. Participants agreed significant changes in roles and responsibilities for all of the individuals represented in this study had occurred as result of government restructuring. Changes in the role of the principal and the central office special education administrators were cited as those most affected by restructuring. Bob believed that restructuring had created "business managers" out of both the central office special education administrators' and school principals' positions. In speaking about the impact of restructuring on the role of the principal he stated, "I think we've just saddled them with so many bureaucratic responsibilities that it's really difficult for them to be educational leaders."

Fiscal Restraint. Every one of the eleven participants believed that restructuring had resulted in a notable reduction in funding for education and, in particular, for inclusive education. Susan, principal of Shining School stated that, "I think that restructuring has limited financial resources and therefore human and material resources." Carol, a teacher at Caring School, described the aspect of fiscal restraint associated with restructuring in this manner, "The biggest change in our division has to do with money. Since restructuring we have been forced to do our job with a lot less."

Envelope system. Significant for the principals and central office special education administrators was the "envelope system" associated with government restructuring. Within this administrative structure the amount of division dollars

that can be directed towards central office administrative positions is limited by the government. In speaking about restructuring, Bob viewed the "small administrative envelope for the division office staff as a real ongoing problem." Susan agreed with Bob that the administrative envelope was a significant aspect associated with restructuring. She indicated, "One of the first things that occurred as a result of restructuring was the introduction of the administrative envelope in our division."

Resource Allocation. Participants indicated that changes in the methods of resource allocation for students with disabilities had occurred as result of government restructuring. Beth described the change as "more diverse in terms of allocations of resources and delivery of services." Bob indicated the division now tries various models of allocation for students with disabilities, "We have our own in-house set of criteria in terms of what makes up a mild, moderate or severe student. And in this past year we've moved to a different model for allocation."

The characteristics of "government restructuring," as described by the participants, are similar to those referenced in the literature on restructuring in chapter two, and represent the concept of "restructuring" that I had originally set out to investigate through this study. Because of the importance cited by these participants to distinguish between the "division restructuring" initiative and "government restructuring," I felt compelled to change the title of my dissertation to better reflect the context of restructuring as described by the individuals in this study. My original title was designed to draw the reader's attention to the effects

of restructuring on inclusion. When I initiated this study I had assumed that restructuring, as described in the literature and experienced by me in my own school division, was a commonly held perception of this reform initiative. As a result of the distinction between government restructuring and division-initiated restructuring highlighted by the participants in the study, I reworked the title to better reflect their perceptions of restructuring.

Emergent Categories and Themes

The second part of this chapter discusses the various categories and themes which emerged from the interviews and informal conversations and observations. The specific categories, each containing several themes, are elaborated upon with specific reference made to the various comments from the study participants. According to Merriam (1988), "the development of categories is a part of the analysis process and involves looking for recurring regularities in the data" (p. 133). Devising categories is largely an intuitive process, but it is also systematic and informed by the study's purpose, the researcher's orientation and knowledge, and the constructs made explicit by the participants of the study (Goertz & LeCompte, 1984). Analysis of these data yielded four major categories: (a) conflict, (b) loss, (c) fear, and (d) empowerment. These categories reflect the perceptions that participants conveyed through their conversations and responses to the interview questions. Beneath their stories and discussions on the experience of providing an inclusive program within the context of government restructuring were deep feelings and mixed reactions about the

effects of government restructuring on inclusion. A discussion of each of the four categories and their respective themes follows.

Conflict

In the interview and observation data a number of themes kept recurring which, when analyzed, appropriately fell under the category of "conflict." Conflict is defined in the *Webster's Dictionary* as "inconsistent with, clash, at odds with." In listening to the interview tapes and reading the subsequent transcripts I was struck by the participants' descriptions of the incongruity between many aspects of government restructuring and the provision of inclusive education. The variance in what the participants believed was important or necessary for inclusion and what they were experiencing as a result of government restructuring frequently resulted in feelings of conflict. For many of the participants "conflict" referred to how they described through their experiences the relationship between government restructuring and inclusion. Six themes emerged from the data, that specifically related to the category of conflict:

1. imposition of a business model on education;

2. role changes from educators to managers;

3. preoccupation with funding;

4. disability as liability;

5. regular versus special education needs;

6. principal dependent model.

A discussion of each theme follows:

Imposition of a Business Model on Education

Rubin and Rubin (1995), in describing the process of data analysis in qualitative research, suggested that sometimes in the determination of themes the researcher will encounter an "overarching theme" that influences the identification of other related themes. This was the case with the theme of "imposition of a business model on education." The business model theme either directly or indirectly gave rise to five of the six subsequent themes within the category of "conflict."

Permeating the participants' comments regarding government restructuring and inclusion was the thinking that restructuring had resulted in the imposition of a business model on education that was incompatible with the purpose and philosophy of inclusive education. Participants believed that the business model created tension in schools delivering inclusive education and had a negative effect on inclusion in a number of ways. For Cathy, a teacher at Caring School, the business model, which she interpreted as "site-based management," focused primarily on "balanced books" and had the potential to leave students with disabilities without the human or material resources needed for programming. She was concerned that the business model, viewed as positive by government, was forced on education when in fact "it doesn't work:"

> I feel that site-based management has caused each school to run as a little business and according to the government that is good. But when the school administration is saying we have no money to hire an extra teacher to help with special education or we have no money for books or resources for special needs students, then the business model just doesn't work.

For Sharon, a teacher of 27 years, the difficulty of functioning within a business model had resulted in her experiencing conflict in her role as a teacher in an inclusive program. She indicated that her primary role as a teacher in an inclusive setting was to "care for" and "educate" students, including those with disabilities. She believed that school based decision-making was a manifestation of the business model and the decision-making aspect of this model had been carried too far. She believed that, as an educator, she was not prepared or trained to deal with all of the decisions that were being thrust at her. As a result the preoccupation with shared decision-making was interfering with her real purpose of teaching:

> With school based decision-making I have always felt that we've been given too much to decide upon. We're here to teach and to care about our students with special needs. We're not business people and we don't have the training in business. I think the government is throwing all of that at us and it's all well and good to say, "Make your own decisions" but when you're not trained necessarily to make those decisions it's difficult and it takes away from our real purpose of teaching.

Chris, the principal of Caring School, suggested that a business model had been implemented by government for the purposes of creating accountability in education. He agreed with the accountability aspect of restructuring but did not believe that a business model was the most effective way to achieve accountability in education:

> I have no problem with accountability. I think accountability is good. But to take education as a business I don't think that's appropriate. We're not a business. I'm glad that we're into results. I think that's a worthwhile part of restructuring. But you can't take a business model and then superimpose it onto a school system and expect that it's going to do the same thing as in business. I don't think that is the way that an education system works.

Sheila, a teacher, summed up the general perception of the participants in regards to the business model associated with government restructuring when she stated, "The government is applying business principles to the education system and a lot if it I think is dangerous."

Role Changes From Educators to Managers

A theme linked to that of the business model was the perception of participants that their roles as educators had been changed as a result of government restructuring. Teachers, principals, and special education administrators all believed that their roles as educators had shifted from one that was originally focused on education and learning to that of "managers." This shift in roles was creating conflict in the lives of these educators, and in their perception, affected the provision of inclusive education. A number of participants expressed concern about the direction that the role of the principal had taken in the past three years. Both principals described how government restructuring and its focus on a business model had drawn them away from their perceived roles as educational leaders. Susan, the principal of Shining School, experienced conflict in deciding where to focus her attention as an educational leader and wished that she could be absolved of some of the business tasks that she was burdened with in her role as principal. She expressed frustration with the lack of time left for her to be in the "business of education" when she had finished attending to all of her managerial tasks. Susan believed it was particularly difficult in a small school where the managerial tasks and responsibilities could not be shared with other individuals:

I wish that some of the so-called business tasks of education would be removed from the principal. Either removed from the principal or that we are given staff that could perform some of the business tasks. For example, this week I have to calculate vacation pay, and I'm thinking, what does this have to do with education? I didn't become a teacher or a principal to calculate vacation pay. The change in our role with restructuring has kept the principal more in her or his office doing financial tasks, business tasks. I am a principal with a Masters Degree in education and here I am deciding on what company will get to asphalt the playground and the parking lot. These tasks take me away from the real business of education, that is, educating students and providing staff with support so they can deliver the best possible education, particularly to our students with special needs. Every time I spend hours doing business tasks those are hours that I am away from children, teachers, and parents and I find that really hard to accept.

Bob, the central office special education administrator, agreed with Susan and Chris that the role of the principal had become much more bureaucratic with government restructuring. He had observed over the course of the past three years that principals were being inundated with managerial tasks drawing them away from their role as educational leaders:

I think we've saddled principals with so many bureaucratic responsibilities that it's really difficult for them to be educational leaders, to be in touch with their kids, and their teachers and to be the support person within the school and to bring to their schools a sense of educational vision. How is a principal ever going to have time to even look at educational issues given the bureaucracy that we've piled on them. We've made them business managers not educational leaders.

Commenting on the role change of special education administrators, Bob believed that he was spending an inordinate amount of time on bureaucratic functions since the implementation of school-based management. In his perception this time was being taken away from the time he would normally have spent in schools acting as a resource to principals and teachers:

Administratively there has been a significant change in the focus of my work. My time on the phone and dealing with Alberta Learning stuff and just general bureaucratic paperwork has increased dramatically. It's probably doubled or tripled over the last five years. In terms of the demands for documentation, some of the stuff that I've been asked for in terms of severe disability grants I had to track down to satisfy Alberta Learning has been bordering on ridiculous.

Teachers were also concerned with the change in roles for both themselves and their principals. They expressed concern over the increased focus on finances and issues not related to teaching and learning. Sheila expressed the view of many of the teachers when she commented on the "new role" that had been imposed on educators as a result of restructuring:

Restructuring has given the school staff and particularly the administration a whole new role that they did not need to deal with before. The whole idea of being business managers. We spend a lot of time on finances and budgets. Administrators have to spend a lot of time on that and it's not as though they're dealing with a situation where they can truly solve problems. It involves a whole lot of bookwork and takes a whole lot of time. There's a whole bunch more meetings that I'm going to and I feel like educators have had a lot added to our plates. It takes a lot of effort and energy and meetings that could be better spent towards educating kids, working with kids, doing stuff for kids.

Sara, one of Sheila's colleagues, expressed the effects of the manager role on her as a teacher and member of the school staff. She was particularly concerned about the amount of time that teachers now devoted to management issues as opposed to educational ones:

I see a lot more time spent on management issues in the school, as a staff we spend a lot of time working on the budget and policy. I resent the time I believe is being wasted on policies and budget. For example we spent an entire staff meeting on where are we going to cut twelve thousand dollars. We used to discuss programs and kids and educational issues. It seems that's gone by the wayside with school based budgeting.

Cathy, another teacher, agreed that the role of the teacher had changed as a result of "site-based management." She was concerned about being involved "in every single thing that happens in the school." She described the situation in this manner:

> I can remember years ago here going into staff meetings and we talked about things that were happening in our school, functions, programs, and things that we're going to do for kids. But as far as the money end of it, it was the principal and vice-principal who took care of everything and we never had to discuss well we have five hundred dollars here that maybe we could take half of that and put it there. We never had to make that kind of decision. I find that it takes up a lot of time, a lot of our staff time. Then sometimes we need to talk about some issues happening in our school. So consequently we either have to have a very long staff meeting or we have to do it another time because things, goals and budgets have to be done. So the negative thing is the time that all this takes. You go over and over and over the same things.

Preoccupation With Funding

Another theme associated with the category of conflict was what the participants referred to as a preoccupation with funding. All of the participants indicated that, in their perception, government restructuring had resulted in an inordinate amount of time and concern being spent on matters related to budgeting, particularly in regards to the cost of providing inclusive education. Participants expressed concern about the shift in focus within the division and their schools, from one of concern for the needs of students with disabilities and responding to those needs, and balancing the budget. The pull between these two opposing foci had in their opinion created significant conflict in their attempts to "do what's right and necessary" for students with disabilities. For Bob, the special education administrator, funding had become "a huge issue in trying to

support inclusion within the division." He believed that a significant shift had occurred within the division in the approach being taken to meet the needs of disabled students. This shift involved movement away from addressing individual student need to fitting the supports for a student into the amount of funds available. For Bob this paradigm shift had a negative effect on the provision of inclusion:

> There was a time before the government restructuring where I would go out to a school and identify a student's need and I was able to come back to the office and put supports in place to address that need. Now we are too often saying we'll provide the best program that we can, given the limited dollars. Which often has nothing to do with the amount of need that we see. So in the end it is the student and teachers that suffer.

Susan and Chris described "finances" as one of their greatest challenges as a principal in providing inclusive education within their respective schools. Operating under a division mandate to provide programs and services within a "balanced budget," these two individuals expressed the significant tension they experienced in attempting to fulfill this mandate while at the same time addressing the needs of students with disabilities within the inclusive model. Susan described the nature and range of tensions she encountered as a result of the preoccupation with funding imposed on her since government restructuring:

> My greatest challenge as a principal with regards to students with special needs really is financial. In the past when staffing was not done through the site-based budgeting process we could look at the needs of our student population, go to our superintendent and say, " These are the needs, this is the staffing required to accommodate these needs." That included teaching staff, special education staff and teaching assistants. Now that kind of staffing decision is dictated strictly by dollars. Whatever the dollars you have in the school you have to disperse accordingly. So we end up in situations where we can identify a need but we are not necessarily able to put the amount of staff in place that we feel we should to meet the student needs. And I think that's one of my greatest

frustrations as a principal. I think we're very good at identifying needs. I think we're good at accessing the services that we need to support children inclusively and we're getting better at programming. But we don't have the dollars to support that and in the places where children are most successful we've had the supports in place.

Beth, one of the special education administrators, was concerned about the increased labeling of students that she believed was tied to the division's and schools' preoccupation with funding. Government restructuring, according to Beth, had resulted in the development of a division funding structure whereby schools are funded for their students with severe and moderate disabilities on an individual basis through the process of labeling. In her opinion the labeling process is in conflict with an inclusive philosophy and practice. Her concern with the "funding for labels" practice is that she viewed it as a revenue-producing activity for schools with the focus more on generating funds and not necessarily on students:

> I think that it's unfortunate when we're trying to get away from labeling kids that the way the funding works it in fact is encouraging and supporting that very thing that we've tried to avoid through the neighborhood school model. The original intent of an inclusive model was to provide programming in a holistic sense and yet we're labeling based on diagnoses and very nit-picky things.

Disability as Liability

Some participants expressed that an important aspect of the effect of government restructuring on inclusion was the perception of "disability as liability." Participants expressed the belief that inclusion, if supported appropriately, is more costly than a segregated special education model. As Chris, the principal, explained, "I don't think that the inclusive model is a cheap model. I think it costs more than segregated special education." The concern for

a number of these individuals were the increased discussions at school and division meetings about the negative effect that students with disabilities had on a school's budget. These participants felt caught in a conflict between the division's mandate for schools to maintain a balanced budget and the need for the school to support students with disabilities. Participants perceived that those schools who had fewer students with disabilities would have an advantage in maintaining a balanced budget as opposed to schools with higher numbers of these students. Sheri, a teacher at Shining School, expressed the concern that, "With school based budgeting schools that have a higher proportion of special needs students have to take on too much of a load." Susan, a principal, explained the dilemma in this way:

> If you take a school where the percentage of needs or even the number of severe children requiring one on one teacher assistants is not as great they have more disposable dollars. When you get in a situation like we have this year with three children that require one on one teacher assistants you are paying well above the grants you receive just to put the teacher assistants in place. That creates a funding deficit that has to be reconciled by reduced spending in some other area. Prior to restructuring when the money was in one pot in the division office it automatically went to help the school program for that child and when you had a child who posed a deficit you got what you needed to deal with it. Now you've got to make do with what you have. And you can't always fulfill every aspect of the programming and I find that very difficult because Alberta Learning mandates that we meet the needs of all children. And yet we don't have the money to adequately meet those needs.

Regular Versus Special Education Needs

Of particular concern for principals and central office special education administrators was the perception that government restructuring had created an adversarial relationship between what was considered "regular and special education needs" within schools and the school division. This controversy was

most often associated with decisions that division and school staff members had to make regarding expenditures to support students with disabilities within the inclusive model. Beth, from central office, suggested that when a division is involved in the magnitude of change associated with school based budgeting then individuals involved in providing inclusion must be cautious not to "pit special education against regular education." Chris, principal of Caring School, used an analogy of dwindling resources, and the resultant conflict that can ensue, to highlight the tension between regular and special education needs that he and his staff experienced as a result of a funding decision. He provided an example of the conflict that resulted from a decision being considered by him and his staff to increase class size in order to provide support for a student with disabilities:

> We decided to create a class of 33 because we had to use additional instructional funds to support one of our students with special needs. This decision created a situation not unlike that of when the water hole dries up. You know how the animals look at each other differently, and in this case, it became somewhat of an adverse situation with the parents of regular kids wondering why we needed to use so much money for support. They began to ask questions like "Why does this child have that amount of service for them and yet my child is in this crowded classroom? I just want the same for my child as the other child. So let's make it equal in both cases."

For Susan, principal of Shining School, the opposite situation presented itself at her school. In order to address a particularly large class size she and her staff made the decision to split the class and cut service in special education in order to balance the budget. She attributed this "robbing Peter to pay Paul" syndrome to two things; first, that "the dollars don't come to us necessarily based on needs," and second, "site-based budgeting has created a situation where our

ability to provide staff is dictated by the resources in any given school." She

attributed the change in funding structure within the school division to

government restructuring and believed that the division had lost an important

aspect of funding, that being "economy of scale," as a result of school based

budgeting. She explained the situation in this way:

> When the money was pooled at the division office, I think there was an economy of scale in terms of the whole division and all levels benefited. Since government restructuring and school based budgeting, a school's money is drawn basically from the numbers in that community. When you're operating a school with less than 300 students you have no economy of scale. If you have a bulge in numbers at a grade level and are required to put in another teacher, that move puts a direct hit on special education. Because the first thing you do is put your classrooms in place and then look to see what's left over for special education.

Bob, a special education administrator, believed that government

restructuring had created an adversarial relationship between principals, and

principals and central office special education administrators. The root of this

problem was in his perception centered in decisions regarding funding for

students with special needs. In describing the reluctance of school principals to

part with funding that he wanted for programming for autistic students in the

division Bob stated the following:

> To fund that kind of programming I'm going to have to take something out of everybody's budgets. And those principals without autistic kids hesitate to give up the money because it's "not their problem." So I think that the whole model of site-based management has made it much more difficult to do division wide things and it has set up sort of an adversarial kind of relationship between our principals and between our principals and division staff.

Principal-dependent Model

A theme that was consistent in participants' discussions regarding the relationship between restructuring and inclusion, was the belief that the delivery of inclusion had become overly dependent on the beliefs and philosophy of the principal in the school. As one participant stated, "Right now special education is at the whim of the principal." Participants attributed this principal dependence to the school-based management model, implemented as a result of government restructuring. In their perception, the style of decision making utilized by the principal, the perception of power that the principal conveyed, and the principal's knowledge and understanding of special needs students were factors that contributed to the quality of inclusive programming within a school. Bob, the central office special education administrator, believed that "because of the site-based model principals have become mini-chief executive officers and so each school functions like a mini-school division." He believed that a problem for special needs students in this type of arrangement lies with the principal's background, or lack there of, in special education:

> Some of our principals are very well educated and very interested in special education and see a big bang for the dollar spent on supports and services for inclusion. Other principals see it with maybe less background in special education or a different philosophy and just don't emphasize it. To the point where we've had one school in the past three years who has elected not to provide special education services. Therefore, in a completely site-based model if principals don't have the background knowledge to even know what services and supports are required for students with special needs or how to address the special need then it doesn't happen. And I think that in many cases these kids are left without service.

Beth, Bob's colleague at central office, agreed that inclusion within the division had become more dependent on the principal since the restructuring of the division. She expressed the view that in her experience this had resulted in both positive and negative effects on the delivery of programs and services in inclusive education:

> I would say, in most cases, it's been very positive. There's always the danger though, and I can't say I haven't had the experience, where in a school for whatever reason you find that a child that should have been accommodated hasn't been. I attribute that to site-based management because the principals have the right to set their own priorities. I think what happened, with site based decision-making, is you had some principals *dripping power*. That's my expression for it. *I'm the king of my kingdom*. Nobody tells me what to do or how I'm going to deliver services. This is not the majority of principals, but I think that there are some control issues that as a division have to be sorted out.

The issue of power and control has resulted in instances of conflict between the central office special education administrators and principals in ideas about how students with disabilities should be supported and how special education dollars should be spent. Bob and Beth both believed that the decentralization of authority for special education from central office to the schools, that occurred as a result of government restructuring, was the contributing factor in the conflict that occurs between them and the principals. Bob explained that "there has been massive decentralization of responsibilities and authority to the schools in the past four or five years." In his opinion this decentralization has created a challenge for him as a special education administrator and expressed passionate feelings about the resulting effects on inclusion:

My greatest challenge as a special education administrator has been government restructuring. One of the greatest challenges I see specific to our division, probably number one for me, is trying to cope with the effects of site-based management. I think it's been devastating for special education and particularly for inclusion.

Beth suggested that the shift in authority and subsequent change in role for central office special education administrators, resulting from the decentralization of special education associated with restructuring, had created significant constraints for her and Bob. She believed that they have lost the "authority to mandate programs and services" and ultimately must resolve differences of opinions with principals regarding programs and services for students with disabilities through a "cumbersome review process." She described some of the situations of conflict that she had experienced with principals when their opinions differed regarding delivery of programs for students with disabilities:

> Oh, there are significant constraints for central office people within site based decision-making. Well, you can't mandate. You used to be able to mandate. You can assist only under invitation from the principal and you can't get into staffing issues. I think we've been fortunate in our system that a significant number of the principals have asked and we have taken the invitation when it's been offered to sit down and talk about what are their needs for the next year and how could they realign their services. But you don't have the right to do that and that's a huge, huge difference than before restructuring. There used to be a lot more ability for us to direct. I have had situations where I have gone out to schools and tried to suggest changes and have met with resistance from the principal. For example, I went to one school and suggested that, based on the kids they had, that they set up the delivery of supports in a certain way. The principal responded, "No I don't think so. Those kids are doing quite well, or they could get along quite well so I don't think that's necessary." Then we had one school that received X amount of dollars for special education and chose to spend about half on special education. You go out and say this is not a good plan you need a special education teacher who the regular class teachers can go to for advice and support because I can't be here enough of the time to help develop IPPs. The principal says "No I think it's

working just fine." And then you end up in a process where you have to go through a big formal review to be able to direct.

The principals agreed that inclusion is much more dependent on the vision and philosophy of the principal since restructuring. Susan explained:

> Leadership at the school is needed. If you have a school administrator who does not believe in inclusion and is not willing to accept advice from central office or their staff then a real problem exists for the students with disabilities.

Some teachers also believed that the authority of the principal in regards to inclusion had changed. They expressed the perception that an increasingly dependent relationship between inclusion and the principal's knowledge and philosophy of special education had developed with the decentralization of decision making relative to special education. Sara explained her perception of the authority of principals in the following way:

> Well, it's like the principal is in charge of it [inclusion] now. They decide where the special needs child goes and what kind of funding they get and what kind of program to set up for them with the assistance of counselors and things and I don't know if all principals have that knowledge. Some of the promises that are made to parents I know can't be fulfilled because there's a budget. I think it's just kind of gone to this school-based thing now that can be positive if you have trained principals and people who cherish special education. But if you don't that special needs child is in jeopardy.

Sally agreed, "The principal makes the difference to the program of inclusion." She described how in her opinion the principal's philosophy impacted on inclusion:

> The philosophy of the principal makes a great difference. Our principal has worked in special education so she's very sensitive to the needs of the teachers and the students. She sees us all as professionals so therefore she listens to us. If we were to go to her and say something about a child's needs she wouldn't doubt it. The principal makes a great deal of difference, believe me.

Sheri also believed that inclusion is affected by "the principal's philosophy and background." As a teacher she expressed the opinion that her role in providing an inclusive education was " tied into what your principal believes and is willing to support." She felt that the decentralized decision-making aspect of government restructuring was a significant factor:

> To me inclusion now has a lot to do with school based decision-making. So how many staff are hired, how much support staff, certified and non-certified, and how much time is given to the school counselor and special education teacher is all based on decisions made by the administrative team. And quite often it's based on their budget. All teachers have a say in the decision but quite often whether or not their say has an impact depends on the administrator. You know I mean there are still administrators out there who say, "My decision is the one that carries the weight." So even though everyone thinks something different they contend, "I'm still the boss, I get to make the final decisions." So I mean as a teacher you are really tied into what you principal believes about inclusion. For example, one of the principals that I worked with was very much in favor of inclusive education and really pushed even when the staff was unsure.

Loss

Another category that emerged from the data was that of loss. In chapter one I proposed that researchers in educational reform needed to explore issues of concern to educators at a "deeper level," as suggested by Hargreaves and Fullan (1998). For the participants in this study, that "deeper level" frequently revealed passionate emotions surrounding the topic of restructuring and inclusion. The undercurrent throughout the category of loss contains the type of passionate emotions that are difficult to capture in written text. The themes in this section would be better understood if the reader could hear the tapes of the interviews and tone of the participants as they described what, in their opinion,

had been lost in special education and inclusion as a result of restructuring. One

participant described the depth of the problem in this manner, "I think in the

course of the past five years it seems like the education system, particularly in

the area of special education, is broke." In order to understand the meaning of

loss from the perspective of the participants I needed to create a definition of the

term based on what I had heard, read, and experienced. My understanding of the

participants' interpretation of *loss* is one of "the damage resulting from losing,"

and this category is an attempt to give authentic voice to their experiences of

loss. Five themes emerged in this category. They include:

1. funding;

2. support;

3. program consistency;

4. monitoring and accountability;

5. leadership and expertise in special education.

Funding

It would be impossible to overstate the perception of these participants

regarding the relationship between restructuring and its effect on inclusion in the

area of funding. Consistent in their discussions relative to this topic is the belief

that government restructuring had seriously affected the provision of inclusive

education by creating funding structures that have resulted in cutbacks and

constraints in funding for education. All of the participants expressed concern

about various aspects of funding and how they impact on inclusion. Participants

described the situation with phrases like; the "shrinking education dollar,"

"change in the funding formula," "funding restraints," "funding cutbacks to education," and "things are more stretched." Aspects of funding, such as decentralized budgets in special education, the envelope system, government allocations for mild, moderate, and severe students, constraints of binding union contracts, increase in wages, and the burden of balancing the budget, were some of the most frequently voiced topics by these individuals.

Bob, from central office, suggested that "the shrinking education dollar" had affected the provision of inclusion in his division. He indicated that, of particular concern for him, were the restrictions that the restructured funding model had created through the "envelope system." Within this funding system the government has dictated the amount of money that a jurisdiction can allocate for use towards central office administrative positions. This restriction in use of funding had created a situation in his division where the central office special education positions must be allocated out of instructional funds. Since all instructional funds are designated as school funds this means that the principals decide if these positions are warranted and will be funded. Bob felt that he and colleagues in central office positions had suffered a personal loss in terms of job security with the implementation of this funding restriction. He also conveyed a sense of loss of dignity and power in describing how his position is now funded from year to year:

> I think the small administrative envelope for the division is a real ongoing problem. Alberta Learning shrunk the administrative envelope which means a lot of directors or coordinators of special education are at the whim of the principals deciding to put money into the budget each year to have that person at division office. With this type of funding structure a situation can arise where principals are saying "show us that you can get

severe disability money and we'll continue you on." Or "show us that you're saving us work that we would otherwise have to do and we'll keep you."

Susan, a principal, also believed that there had been a loss as a result of the envelope system. She felt that as a principal she had lost both centralized supports and services and school funds. She described the situation from her perspective:

> I think one of the first things that changed with government restructuring was the administrative envelope system and the downsizing of division office because of this system. The special education positions were not dollars in the administrative envelopment. So as principals we said we wanted those services so where was the money to come from for those services? It came out of school based budgets. So first the administrative envelope decreased the resources available to us, and then, in order to have those centralized services we had to pay for that out of our school budgets.

All participants shared a common perception that funding for students with disabilities, received from the government, was not sufficient to appropriately support inclusion. At the school level provision of supports and services necessary for inclusion was frequently subsidized by the basic instructional dollars, leading to constraints and losses in other aspects of programming in the school. From a division perspective Bob was very adamant in regard to monies received from the government for special education. He indicated that "I can tell you very specifically what is spent. And that is all of the money that we receive as an allocation that's earmarked for special education from Alberta Learning is spent on special education."

He explained that the division had devised an allocation formula for mild, moderate and severe students based on the government funds received. The

division funding allocation for severe students had remained constant for the past three years, however the allocation for moderate students had "been declining every year." According to Bob, "three years ago the allocation for moderates was approximately ten thousand dollars per student, and this year it's worked out to be seventy-five hundred dollars."

Susan found that in her school she had to add monies from the school's basic instructional dollars to the division allocations for her special needs students in order to provide the service that they required. This year she estimated that it cost "45,000 dollars beyond what came into the school out of the division allocations for the three severely disabled students to fund just the teacher assistants required by these students." She has resorted to a model of support she calls "piggy backing" in order to address the shortfall in funding for inclusion. Piggy backing involves organizing the classes so that students with disabilities who are not in receipt of additional funding allocations can "piggy back" off the support and resources put in place for students who are funded through the supplementary allocation process. Sheri, one of the teachers at Shining, described how the process worked in her classroom:

> I have a class of 22 students. Out of the 22, 3 are designated special needs students. One is severe and two are moderate that are piggy backed onto the severe. The severe student has an aide attached to him and the other students with needs were specifically placed in my room to access the aide support.

The "piggy back" model, however, does have drawbacks. Sharon described a situation in her classroom where piggy backing "backfired," resulting in some special needs students losing out on support altogether:

We had a student come in and were told that she was a very independent autistic child and would be able to cope with minimal support. So we put two or three other little boys in the classroom that needed just a little bit of help. But, as it turned out this child, she was not independent at all. She was totally teacher assistant dependent. The teacher assistant was not available to help out the other little guys, so they were "up the creek without a paddle."

For Chris, principal of Caring School, "it all boils down to what is sufficient funding." He believed that the cuts in funding which he associated with government restructuring affect everyone in the school environment trying to provide an inclusive program:

The definite drawback in restructuring has been the cuts in funding. Everybody is affected including principals. As administrators we believe that the inclusive model is very beneficial for the children, but if we don't provide the support, if we don't have the funding and we have to take it from another area, and create a loss there, what it does is it sets us all back.

Support

Participants expressed the belief that, as a result of government restructuring, they had suffered a loss in support for school staff providing inclusive education, and also, for students with disabilities in an inclusive setting. According to Sara, a classroom teacher, the biggest shift since restructuring "is that the support has really dried up. And that's not because the administration doesn't want to give it."

Susan described the loss in this manner, "I think that restructuring has limited financial resources, and therefore, human resources and material resources." She believed that as a principal she had lost access to the resources that assist her in fulfilling the division mandate for inclusion:

I find that the service available to me as a principal is decreasing. Three to five years ago we had access to two full time special education consultants, now I hear that we are going down to one. We had a full time occupational therapist for the division. Now we have an occupational therapist for the division one-day a week. The provision of resources like reading programs and computer programs is tighter and tighter. We tend to be phoning other schools and scrounging for things. And what has caused these changes? Under funding of education in my view. It's as simple as that.

Beth, from central office, saw two sides to the support issue. On the one hand, she believed that restructuring had the potential to force schools to become more creative in their use of supports and resources, and on the other, it could strain an already overloaded school environment:

I think that restructuring has made a huge change in terms of administering special education programs. I think that there is a good and a bad part to it. I think that we're more conscious of the importance of using resources well so we become more creative. On the other hand, there's a point you get to where people are stretched too thin and so I would question, in some cases, whether we're able to provide the same level of support. I personally think that, as it is, supports are more stretched.

Bob, Beth's colleague at central office, stated that he "continues to see services erode." He indicated that, in his opinion, "I don't think things are good right now in special education in Alberta. I just think we've lost our perspective."

He was particularly concerned about the reduction in counseling and special education resource teacher positions in his division in the past three years:

Special education teachers are being cut way back. Lots of them are back teaching in regular classrooms. We have fewer counselors and the counselors that we do have are being given less time. Counselors play a big role in special education and I see that that role has been eroded in schools.

Carol's experience as a teacher was that the biggest change for her in the past five years has been "having to do your job with a lot less." For her that

means, "less paper, less teacher assistant support, and having larger classrooms." Sally, also a teacher, expressed concern about the loss of support within the division for inclusion, particularly in recent years. She was not only concerned for herself, but more so for new teachers, who in her opinion, needed all the support that they could get:

> There's nobody within the system that's giving support in inclusive education. It's up to the individual teacher now in the school. With restructuring every school has lost special education teachers. So for a new teacher she's going to be on her own basically. And if she's a brand new teacher, with no special education background, that's where the whole system starts to break down. I think we need to have more services for new teachers in how to deal with special education kids.

Cathy believed that not only teachers, but, also, children and parents were suffering from a loss of support. She explained the difficulty that now existed in trying to access support for students with disabilities:

> For example, in a classroom where you have children with behavior disorders and they can't do their work you quickly see the frustration on both ends. On the child's end and on the teacher's end. Then try and get help for these children. There's no longer a resource room teacher, they can't get in to see the counselor because there isn't one or the counselor has been cut back to two periods a day and is gone. And unfortunately things just don't happen between nine and ten when they're here. Parents are getting frustrated and they have no where to turn. You know, for inclusion to work you just have to have the supports.

Sharon, a colleague of Sheila, was most concerned about the loss of support from individuals in central office. She indicated that government restructuring had a "great impact" on the support that she now received from central office staff. She explained the situation in this way:

There used to be more help from division office in terms of the consultants. I think over time the whole division office has been cut back. So they're feeling the pinch. They don't have the time to get out to the schools as much as they would like to. They don't have the time to do the assessments that we need for behavioral funding. It's just, you know, you wait and you wait and you wait.

Program Consistency

Central office special education administrators and school principals expressed concern over what they perceived was a loss in program consistency for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms throughout the division. They attributed the lack of consistency to changes that have taken place as a result of government restructuring. Bob, the central office special education administrator was particularly concerned with the "inequities" in programs and services for students with disabilities that he was encountering throughout the division. He attributed the rise in these inequitable situations to school-based management. He described the situation in this manner:

> As a division special education director, when I look around our school division, one of my personal problems with what we're doing is I think directly related to site-based management, and that's the fact that we have inequitable services across our school region. So if I'm student A with a learning disability that's well documented, if I go to school A I may get a very different level of service than if I go to school B. And as opposed to school C where I may not get any service at all to the point where I have a principal in our division saying, "I have no room in special education service. You'll have to go on a waiting list." So I think it's really set up an inequitable system.

Beth agreed with Bob that under the previous centralized administration of special education consistency in level of support was easier to implement and monitor. She described how even though the model for delivery of supports and

services to students with disabilities prior to restructuring would vary from school to school, consistency in the level of support was mandated by the division:

> One thing that would never happen before restructuring was inconsistency in level of support from school to school in the division. So it wouldn't matter if your kid goes to school "A" or school "G" even though the way the school chose to deliver the services might vary, the level of service must stay the same. And the accountability must be the same. So inconsistency is an issue that you wouldn't have had before.

Susan explained the issue of program consistency from the perspective of the school principal. She described how inconsistency affects students when they move from one school to another within the division:

> With site-based budgeting I don't think you can ensure consistency of service from one school to another school in the division. I had this type of situation happen a couple of years ago. A child moved to my school from another school in the division. They had been in a situation where they were able to piggy back on the supports of another student with disabilities in their classroom. In that grade level in our school we did not have any children with supports. So we weren't able to continue the level of supports that the child had previously.

Accountability and Monitoring

Prior to government restructuring the monitoring of programs for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms was a function of central office. With the decentralization of the responsibility for special education to the schools it had become the responsibility of the school principal to monitor all programs within the school, including special education. Participants expressed the belief that accountability and monitoring had been lost as a result of decentralization. They felt that under the new administrative model no one was holding principals "accountable" for the programs and services provided to students with disabilities.

Sheri, a teacher, missed having a person from central office "overseeing

the special education programs in the division." She was concerned that "there

was no longer someone with special education training to ensure that the policies

of inclusion were enforced." She described what for her was a particularly

disconcerting experience in a previous school where the policy of inclusion was

not, in her opinion, being adhered to by staff:

> One of the schools that I was at talked about inclusive education and yet
> the expectation of the teacher was that this child would be removed to
> another area in the room by the teacher assistant where the doors could
> be shut. The child never participated in the class except for morning
> attendance and at the end of the day to pick up her coat.

From a central office perspective, Bob also voiced concerns about the loss

of monitoring and accountability in the division in regards to special education.

He indicated that he often felt helpless in the face of situations he encountered in

schools that in his opinion were not supportive of inclusion. He believed that

division standards for inclusion previously mandated and monitored by the

centralized special education model were being lost. He described the scenario

of a school in the division that decided to redirect special education funding and

the resulting conflict between him and the principal:

> A school had decided to not provide special education services within the
> school and I pointed out to them that perhaps we should take back the
> approximately two hundred thousand dollars in special education funding
> the division was providing. He just said, "I'm going to reduce my class
> sizes to 19. That should solve all of our special education problems." And I
> think that was actually allowed to go on for about a year because there
> was no division person with the authority to go out there and monitor
> what's going on in special education.

Leadership and Expertise in Special Education

A loss of leadership and expertise in special education at both the division and school level was a perception expressed by teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators who participated in this study. They believed that this loss in special education leadership and expertise was directly related to two specific aspects of government restructuring, the decentralized model of special education governance, and fiscal restraint. Of particular concern to participants was the growing fragmentation of the division vision for inclusion, a result, in their opinion, of the loss of leadership and expertise in special education. For Sally, a teacher at Shining School, the loss of expertise in special education at the school level evidenced by cutbacks in dedicated special education teacher positions was of particular concern. She expressed the view that programming for students with disabilities in an inclusive classroom can be both rewarding and stressful for the teacher. Therefore, the role of the special education teacher in a school was to provide the "expert" support and advice that the regular classroom teacher depends on when programming for these children. It is this school-based expert support that she believed has been lost:

> You need that one person, that one strong special education person in a school who has the time to just pop in and say, "How is it going? Is there anything I could do to help you out?" That person meets with teacher assistants and regular class teachers and says, "Let me help you plan and program." Special education teachers have the resources. They have the ideas. They have the skills. It has to be that extra someone in the school that's available to everyone and has the expertise to support teachers and students with disabilities.

Chris, principal of Caring School, stated that a certain level of expertise in special education at a division level is required to effectively support inclusion. He indicated that with restructuring school divisions appear to have removed that "level of expertise" and, according to him, this has been a mistake. He shared his perception in the following manner:

> I think that there is a major mistake made in taking a level of special education expertise away from the education system. Because those people provide the direct service to the teaching staff and gave them the knowledge, and strategies to work with children, especially when you have an inclusive model. My feeling is when we took away that layer of expertise there was a huge gap and teachers didn't get the direct service. I think principals and vice-principals really felt that as well because there wasn't that person that could come in that understood and could really help us in working with children. So I really think it was a mistake. I think they felt that this was a way of saving money and it really wasn't needed. We could do it at the school level. But we can't. Before we had those people with these great qualifications that really could follow the child and provided us with so much knowledge. And it's not there now. It is definitely not there. And I think we're suffering from that now.

Bob concurred with Chris regarding the belief that the division had become "expertise poor." He attributed the problem to the increased demands that were being placed on staff at central office as a result of the cutbacks from restructuring. He indicated the special education administrators in the past few years have not provided as much in-service to special education teachers, they have not met with these teachers regularly, nor have they been able to facilitate strong networking between the special education teachers. As a result the level of expertise in the area of special education within the division was not being developed. Bob was also concerned that site based decision-making had created a "me first" attitude in schools and, as a result, the division perspective was

becoming lost. He described his perception of the situation in the following

manner:

> School based decision-making means the principal, I guess in conjunction
> his staff, or some cases not, will make the decisions regarding the
> education of students in their school. And I think that's set them up to think
> about their own kids first and not consider a division perspective.

On the subject of lack of central leadership, Bob attributed the cause to

the fact that "there is no central pool of money." Without centralized funds he felt

that he was constrained in his role of providing leadership in special education.

He described the somewhat onerous process that had been established under

the new decentralized management regime for implementing ideas or projects

from central office, such as teacher in-servicing:

> Because there is no central pool of money, there isn't any central
> leadership. So if as central office administrators we want to do something
> like in-servicing teachers we have to go through a process of consensus.
> This means we have to go to each principal, survey them, and have a vote
> about what they think about sharing the cost of in-servicing in the division.
> And if it means money out of their pockets generally they say no. So from
> that point of view this model of site-based management has really hurt us.
> I guess that's one of my frustrations. I think we need strong division office
> leadership to say this is good for everyone, it's a good policy or practice
> and we're going to do it.

Fear

When participants spoke of issues that related to the category of *conflict*

their voices were usually strong and filled with the passion associated with anger.

When they referred to topics that addressed the situations of *loss* their body

language and oral expressions were often more quiet and subdued. Some of the

most moving times in the interviews, however, were when the participants spoke

of situations that I have categorized as *fear*. Themes associated with the

category of fear most frequently addressed situations that participants envisioned

for the future of inclusion as a result of restructuring. Four themes presented themselves within the category of fear. These include:

1. staff burnout;

2. kids falling through the cracks;

3. further cutbacks in services and supports;

4. future of inclusion in the division.

Staff Burnout

Some participants feared that the rigors of fiscal restraint were creating situations in their inclusive classrooms that resulted in staff burnout. They believed that the incidence of staff burnout had increased in the past three years and were worried that the trend would continue as a result of the mandate for balanced budgets and the limited funding dollars available in education. Increased class sizes, increased incidence of students with disabilities, reduced services and supports, and lack of funding for in-servicing and training in the area of special education were factors identified by participants as contributing to increased staff burnout. Sharon, a teacher at Shining School, attributed some of the teacher frustration and staff burnout to a lack of funding for training in special education. She indicated that, in her experience, children with disabilities presented as more complex now and, without the background and knowledge to understand their needs and how to program for them, staff burnout was inevitable. She described a recent situation where this had occurred:

The teachers have been exceptionally frustrated with this one particular situation. We've burned out two teacher assistants that I know of because they did not have the background in dealing with these types of children. There are courses that you can take but you know that costs money and a school can't afford to send people to all the different courses.

Cathy agreed with her colleague that classrooms had become more stressful environments in recent years. She attributed the increased stress to lack of support created by insufficient funding to support students with disabilities:

In my classroom I have children who are very frustrated because they can't do the work and they know they can't so it turns into a behavior problem. Then I have to deal with those children, and I have to deal with the parents of the other children and it's all very stressful on me. So I just feel that the classroom teacher is taking the brunt of all this because we have children who need help in our classrooms with no help. No extra funding. Nobody to come and help us and say, "OK this might work, that might work." I just feel that it creates a lot of stress in the classroom on the students and on the teachers.

Kids Falling Through the Cracks

The fiscal restraints and change in funding structures that participants associated with restructuring were, in their opinion, creating situations where they feared "kids were falling through the cracks." They believed that some students with disabilities, who require services and supports in the inclusive classroom, were not able to access those services and supports. This happened either because the students did not meet specific criteria for supplementary funding, the school had no extra funding to provide the supports, or because of school-based decisions that redirected funding to other needs in the school. Beth was particularly fearful of the potential for "kids to fall through the cracks" as a result

of funding restraints and the added costs associated with the support of inclusion:

> I think that with funding restraints certainly there's always the potential for kids to fall through the cracks and I think we have to be very vigilant to see that their needs are being met. I think that sometimes care has to be taken to see that differences are valued and not used as identifiers in some negative way. To do inclusion well requires more money than segregated special education and in the current administrative model this has been a big concern.

Cathy, a teacher, was concerned that, "We are missing out on helping a lot of our children." She was most fearful for the group of students that are considered mildly and moderately disabled. She believed that these students because of the current funding structures were proceeding through the education system without having their educational needs appropriately met:

> We have children that have difficulty with processing information, such as difficulty in reading or writing. All they would need is just that extra help. But when you have a class of 29 students as a teacher that is very difficult to do. And if you have say 4 or 5 of those children what happens is those kind of children are slipping through the cracks. You know they go from one year to the next year without the help they need and by the time they are in grades 4, 5, and 6 they are still reading at a grade 1 or grade 2 level. I just find that I would like to see the criteria for how a child is funded changed. I would like to see it based on the needs of that child.

Sally, another teacher, was also concerned about the mild and moderate students losing out on the help that they need. She was particularly concerned about students with learning disabilities. She believed that this group of students had suffered the most as a result of the fiscal restraints associated with restructuring, "I think the kids that at one time were helped, the learning disabled kids, now they're not getting any help."

As a school administrator, Susan agreed that the mild and moderate students were suffering. She suggested that her first priority in dealing with a situation of inadequate funding was to address the needs of the severe students first in order to maintain an effective learning environment. She described the dilemma in this way:

> I find that in the past few years we're taxing everybody, or taxing the energy and the resources and what people are able to give. I feel that our children, our so-called typical children, have fewer resources in their classroom. I think that children with mild needs tend to get less human resources directed their way because we tend to operate on our most significant need, our most outstanding need. So we tend to meet that need first in hope of providing a workable environment for the teacher and the other students in the class.

Further Cutbacks in Services and Supports

Some participants expressed fear about even further cutbacks in services and supports for inclusion. They believed that with higher wage settlements, increased costs for materials and resources, and the continued pressure for balanced budgets, there were few places left to reduce other than the services and supports for special education.

Chris, the principal of Caring School, described the situation in this manner:

> My feeling is that if the budget for special education gets to be too big and support services are so costly because of wage increases, then I think that we're just going to be going down a different road than what we've been able to maintain up until now. For example, our counseling time is going to go down, we'll have to reduce our special education teacher time, and it also means that the class sizes are going to have to be larger.

Sally, a teacher, agreed with Chris that supports for inclusion would suffer in the future if budget cuts had to be made. She believed that the decentralized system of management and decision-making was at the heart of the problem:

> Where the dollars go is now more in our school. And well let's say we have to cut the budget, and the principal has to look at that, they would probably cut the teachers' assistants before anything else. They won't have a choice because they have to pay for that staffing. Whereas before site-based management it was the division who got the teacher assistant and they went with the student.

Sheila, another teacher, was also fearful of continued reduction in supports. She questioned whether her school would be able to continue the supports and services that they now had in place. She expressed her concern in the following way:

> I wonder if we will be able to maintain the support given that the funding is so tight. I know that just talking through the grapevine, the teacher assistant support is going to be reduced in some of the schools next year. Never mind staff cuts but teachers' assistants will also be cut and that's going to be hard because some of those kids need a full time teacher assistant.

Future of Inclusion

Expressed in the words and comments of many of the participants was fear for the future of inclusion. Although these educators were all highly committed to inclusive education they were beginning to question whether the inclusive model could be sustained within the current context of restructuring. They were fearful that such aspects as the perceived cost efficiencies of segregated special education and the continued erosion of supports for inclusion would eventually cause the demise of the inclusive model. Bob described the

change in attitude among educators in the division regarding the provision of

support for inclusion that he perceived was beginning to take place:

> Even in our division we're talking now about more segregated models for
> special education. And that's going to be driven by a cost factor that we
> can provide service more cheaply to a group of kids than tied to support in
> their classrooms with individual teacher assistants.

Empowerment

In speaking about the relationship between restructuring and inclusion

some participants held the perception that some aspects of restructuring have

the potential to enhance or enable inclusion. As Susan, the principal of Shining

School, stated, " I think the concept of restructuring expressed in site based

decision-making provides the opportunity for each school to attempt to meet the

needs of its community. So that sort of philosophical premise to me has the

potential to foster inclusive education." This enabling aspect of restructuring in

relation to inclusion is addressed in the themes that I have grouped in the

category of empowerment. Within this category six themes were identified that

represent the participants' thinking about the empowering aspects of

restructuring. These include:

1. creative problem solving;

2. enhanced understanding of student needs;

3. better decisions;

4. efficient and effective use of resources;

5. flexibility to meet individual school and student needs;

6. stakeholder collaboration.

Creative Problem-solving

Beth, a central office special education administrator, stated that the site-based management aspect of restructuring had in some schools empowered stakeholders to work together more creatively in support of their special needs student population. She had witnessed situations in schools where stakeholders were using creative problem-solving to implement programs and services that would otherwise not have been available within a centralized model of special education administration. She explained the situation in this manner:

> I think it [restructuring] empowers people to work with parents and staff to make good decisions. Prior to site-based management and changing the funding structure people used to come to me and ask, for example, for money for teacher assistants. And then when I gave it or didn't give it I was usually the hero or the bum. After restructuring it was the school staff that decided where they would have to take it from. And suddenly they were able to see how maybe they could do it another way and that never would have happened before because somebody else had the responsibility.

Enhanced Understanding of Students' Needs

Chris, principal of Caring School, believed that the process of shared decision-making, implemented as a result of restructuring, enhanced inclusion by increasing the understanding of school stakeholders about the difficulties that students with disabilities encounter and the needs required by them in support of their educational program. His experience in sharing concerns and ideas about the support of inclusion with stakeholders in his school led him to believe that the process of shared decision-making, particularly when parents are included, has been a positive outcome of restructuring:

Any time that you have the opportunity to have stakeholders meeting together, working together, and making decisions together, I feel that good things can come from it. It also facilitates well for the child with special needs because you're able to discuss it. You're able to talk at a grass roots level. Parents have a better understanding when they are involved in the decision-making about the needs of the children and what is required for them to have the services they need.

Sharon, a teacher, agreed with Chris that having the responsibility of allocating resources at the school level gave everyone in the school a better understanding of what the resources were that were available and could be offered. She believed this school level allocation process made individuals more tolerant of the decisions that were made in the provision of supports and services. She stated, "I guess just the fact that we know what our resources are and the fact that everyone knows what's going on I think it helps everyone to be accepting of the way things are."

Better Decisions

Sheila, a teacher at Shining School, also believed that shared decision-making was a positive aspect of restructuring. She felt that, when school stakeholders were involved in decision-making, better decisions are made regarding supports and services for inclusion.

Restructuring brings the decision making into the school rather than with another body out there at central office. So now it's within your own group of people and so you can make better decisions and you can meet more of the needs for students with disabilities.

Efficient and Effective Use of Resources

Some of the teachers expressed the view that the shared decision-making aspect of site-based management had resulted in more efficient and effective use of resources in support of inclusion. For example, Sheri felt that involvement

of school staff could make decision-making more cost effective. In her experience some decisions made in the past, by individuals at central office who were unfamiliar with the school situation or the student's specific needs, were more excessive than those now made at the school level. She described her perception of this cost efficiency in the following:

> Maybe the decisions made as a result of school based governance might be better suited to the students' needs and then you're not getting the excesses in spending that I know sometimes happen when those decisions are made at central office.

Sheila agreed with this aspect of shared decision-making and its effect on the use of resources. She emphasized that school staff members are in a better position to plan for inclusion because of their immediate knowledge and experience with the students and their special needs:

> If you're trying to plan and develop some sort of a way to deal with your own students with special needs then it stands to reason that you know them better then maybe you can make a better plan.

Flexibility to Meet Individual School and Student Needs

Beth, a special education administrator, believed that school governance of inclusion allowed for greater flexibility for schools to meet the needs of students with disabilities. She admitted that the previous centralized model of special education administration frequently lacked flexibility and could create extra hoops for schools seeking resources to support inclusion:

> I think site-based management allows you more flexibility in terms of being able to move your resources to meet the needs of the kids that you have in your neighborhood school. I think you don't have to go through any bureaucracy in terms of getting permission to do things for kids.

Bob, Beth's colleague, agreed that school governance of inclusion could facilitate more flexible and unique programming for students with disabilities. He believed that, under the right circumstances, where the principal was interested in special education and assumed a leadership role in the provision of inclusive education, school governance enhanced the provision of inclusion:

> I think in the case of those principals where they're sensitive to the needs of special needs kids and committed to providing programs I think they do a better job. They're more aware of what's going on in the school and with the kids because they're closer to the actual situation. They are more aware of the kid's needs now than they probably were in the past when somebody came in and said, "these are the things you should be doing." So many principals I think have taken it on themselves to get knowledge about special education, and that has been a great thing. And I think that leads to unique programs where some really good things are happening for kids.

Increased Collaboration

Chris, principal of Caring School, expressed the view that site based decision-making had fostered a situation in his school where people are drawn together in a more collaborative manner in the provision of inclusive programming:

> We work together. Now we talk more about school rather than the division. I think with site based decision-making there is more of a linkage between the school and the community. The school and the community working together has been enhanced more now than before.

Beth, from central office, agreed school based decision-making could facilitate collaboration and impact positively on inclusion. In commenting on how school based decision-making could affect inclusion she had this to say:

I guess probably the biggest thing about shared decision-making is that it creates a situation where staff are working together with parents and kids in providing an inclusive education. You know asking themselves, "How can we make this work. How can we meet the needs?" That's been a positive thing.

Summary

This chapter discussed the various themes that emerged from the participant interviews and informal researcher observations and conversations. A summary of those themes is contained in Table 3. The categories were conflict, loss, fear, and empowerment. Each of these categories was also discussed and appropriate quotations from study participants were cited. Themes elucidating from the category of conflict presented the tensions that participants experienced in discussing the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The significant impact of the "business model" associated with restructuring was highlighted. Within the category of loss, participants described situations and experiences that in their perceptions represented the negative effects that they believed had occurred in inclusive education through loss. Participant discussions within the category of fear were characterized by deep emotions as they described the impact of restructuring on the future of inclusive education. The final category of empowerment provided evidence of the participants' positive experiences with restructuring.

Table 3. Summary of Emergent Categories and Themes

	CATEGORIES			
	Conflict	**Loss**	**Fear**	**Empowerment**
T H E M E S	imposition of a business model	funding	staff burnout	creative problem solving
	role changes from educators to managers	support for inclusion	kids falling through the cracks	enhanced understanding of student needs
	preoccupation with funding	program consistency	further cutbacks in services and supports	better decisions
	disability as liability	monitoring and accountability	the future of inclusion	efficient and effective use of resources
	regular versus special education needs	leadership and expertise in special education		flexibility to meet individual school and student needs
	principal dependent model			stakeholder collaboration

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

We do not learn from experience.
We learn from reflecting on it.
(John Dewey)

Introduction

The main purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of

teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators with

respect to the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education.

Specifically, it was anticipated that this study would determine the extent to which

teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators perceived

restructuring to have an affect on inclusion. Further, the expertise and experience

of educators was viewed as a resource for determining aspects of restructuring

that facilitate or constrain inclusive education.

The study was directed by a general research question and a number of

subsidiary research questions. Chapter 4 detailed and elaborated upon the

categories and themes that emerged from the data gathered in response to those

research questions. This chapter discusses the specific findings of the study as

guided by the research questions.

Subsidiary Research Questions

To What Extent Does Restructuring Affect Inclusive Education?

To begin to address this subsidiary research question, participants were

asked first to provide their understandings of the two areas under study: inclusive

education and restructuring. From their responses an understanding of inclusive education and how participants perceived restructuring emerged. This information provided the context for examining the relationship between restructuring and inclusion. Following this participants were asked to comment on the extent to which restructuring affected inclusive education.

Participants' Understandings of Inclusive Education and Restructuring

Participants in this study used the terms "inclusion" and "inclusive education" interchangeably. Important in the discussions of these participants was their interpretation of inclusive education as the preferred model of special education programming for students with disabilities, as well as being a vehicle for social change. For these individuals inclusive education was perceived as a complex pedagogical concept involving both philosophical and practical aspects. "There's a philosophical and a practical part to inclusive education" (Susan, principal of Shining School on defining inclusive education). When speaking about inclusion, there was a high degree of consistency among participants in their understanding of inclusive education, evidenced by similarities in characteristics that they attributed to inclusion and commonalties among examples of inclusive practices within schools and individual classrooms. Participants attributed the following characteristics to inclusive education: (a) attendance of all students at the neighborhood school, (b) placement of students with disabilities in regular classes with age appropriate peers, (c) fostering acceptance by the community of students with disabilities, (d) provision of appropriate supports for inclusion, (e) opportunity for pull out for

individual assistance, and (f) the primary role of parents as partners in the provision of inclusive education. From these findings a conceptual understanding of inclusive education emerged that included a broad range of characteristics and the belief that inclusion is a vehicle for social change. Important for this study is the finding that the interpretation of inclusive education as described by the participants is more comprehensive than the understanding put forward in the definition used in this study. For the purposes of this study the definition put forward by the National Centre On Inclusive Education and Restructuring (NCIER, 1994) was used as a basis for understanding inclusion. Many of the characteristics of inclusion described by the participants are similar to those contained in the NCIER definition, for example, attendance in neighborhood schools, age-appropriate classrooms, and provision of appropriate supports. However, the participants' interpretation of inclusion was more extensive including characteristics such as the primary role of parents as partners in inclusive education, acceptance by the community as a goal of inclusion, and the opportunity for pull out as a key element in the delivery of inclusive education.

In addition to articulating the characteristics of inclusive education, these participants demonstrated through their stories and responses to the interview questions the belief that inclusion was a strongly embedded and highly valued aspect of the culture within their division. In describing their understanding of inclusive education they frequently referred to the philosophy of inclusive education contained in the division's Special Education Handbook (1998). Participants believed that this division philosophy provided a "direction for

schools and classrooms" in creating an environment for inclusion. As Sheri, a classroom teacher stated:

> I'm not sure when the philosophy came into being but as a division we have made a conscious decision to be inclusive. I know the information I always received as a classroom teacher was this is the direction we're moving to and the idea that every teacher is an inclusive teacher is certainly part of our division now.

Participants also voiced a "deeper purpose" for inclusion, viewing inclusive schooling as a way to build community within their schools and facilitate change within the school and society in general. Providing an inclusive environment has become for these participants what Sergiovanni (1992) referred to as a "moral imperative" or "what is good." Susan, one of the principals, described the value of inclusion in this manner:

> I think that having a school or school system that has as their premise inclusion serves society really well. I think that fostering inclusion in our division has been a big step in the school contributing to the greater good of society. I think that so much of what has happened with inclusion has contributed to a more compassionate and caring society. I believe that inclusion has been really important in that way.

Fullan (1999) described this commitment to an innovation in education as "moral purpose." His definition of moral purpose adroitly describes the approach to inclusive education witnessed in these two schools: "At the micro level, moral purpose in education means making a difference in the life-chances of all students – more of a difference for the disadvantaged because they have further to go" (p. 1).

The findings suggest that individuals in this study have internalized the concept of inclusion to the extent that they define the concept in their own terms relative to their division philosophy and underlying ethical principles. The fact that

the definition of inclusive education provided by the participants in this study varies somewhat from definitions contained in the literature supports the notion suggested by Winzer (1996), that the concept of inclusive education "defies easy interpretation." The findings of this study relative to the participants' understandings of inclusive education also support the ideas of Dyson (1999), who maintained that different discourses in inclusive education are attributable to "the different educational, and ultimately, political and ethical positions adopted by the commentators" (p. 36). Susan's explanation of why inclusive education is important to her exemplifies Dyson's position regarding the significance of the ethical position of the commentator. In speaking about inclusive education she stated, "I find as a Catholic school principal I am rooted in gospel values. To me the example is before us of Jesus who opened his arms to marginalized people and I think as a Catholic school community we're called to do the same."

Connecting inclusive education with the purpose of creating positive change in society is a finding of this study that has been discussed by a number of writers and researchers in special education (e.g., Ferguson, 1995; Pugach, 1995; Skrtic, 1991). Salisbury (1991) and Laski (1991) both believed that "only inclusive education can deliver social justice," and Ramsey (1993) and Kunc (1992) argued that inclusive education has the potential to create "inclusive societies" by facilitating "the needed changes in attitudes towards persons with disabilities." Participants held a position similar to Sage and Burello (1994) in suggesting that "students with disabilities must be thought of as part of a

pluralistic society" and, therefore, inclusive education is a means to facilitate "equity in society."

Relative to the subject of restructuring, the research findings presented two aspects of restructuring that are important considerations for this study. First, variability in participant understandings of restructuring, and second, the negative view of what participants termed "government restructuring" due to the perceived "top down" approach used in its implementation. There was tremendous diversity among participants in their understandings of restructuring. This was evidenced by the variety of terms participants used when speaking about restructuring and the uncertainty they expressed when asked to provide their understanding of this concept. All of the participants used the terms "school-based management," "site-based management," "school-based budgeting," and "school based decision- making" interchangeably in conversations and discussions about restructuring. No attempts were made by the participants during the interview sessions or informal conversations to differentiate between these concepts. For example, Cathy, a teacher, indicated that "I think the site-based management thing and the school budget is one of the biggest restructuring things we have gone through." Sheri, in commenting on restructuring, stated that, "Restructuring has a lot to do with school based budgeting." When asked to elaborate on the subject she had difficulty differentiating between the various concepts. She responded that, "To me this whole school based decision-making is so tied up with school based budgeting that I'm not sure anymore what we're talking about."

Writers and researchers on the topic of restructuring have identified the

ambiguity associated with the term "restructuring" as an issue in educational

reform. The findings of this study support the views of Hargreaves and Fink

(1998), Fullan (1998), Milne (1991), and Conley (1993), in suggesting that

restructuring is an elusive concept that may include many and varied, complex,

and sometimes conflicting dimensions. The continued confusion surrounding

restructuring is significant in light of the length of time that this reform initiative

has been cited in the literature. For example, the work of Lewis in 1989

highlighted the variety of views held by individuals within the educational

community on the subject of restructuring. At that time she attributed the

newness of the term in education and the wide range of changes being proposed

as accounting for the confusion.

The current study was conducted a full decade after Lewis's work and yet

the findings suggest that a variety of views on the subject of restructuring

continues to plague educators. Kirst (1992) suggested that the term restructuring

in education "is a word that means everything and nothing simultaneously." He

noted that school-based management is often seen as equivalent to

restructuring, rather than a component of the overall plan. My experience, in

dialoguing with participants on the subject of restructuring, bears witness to

Kirst's comments and concerns. Not only is school-based management seen by

educators as the equivalent to restructuring, but a host of other concepts, such

as school-based decision making, school-based budgeting, and site-based

management as well. Goodlad (1992) purported that restructuring has become a

"catchword whenever we talk about school reform" and, in his view, the lack of consensus within the educational community on the meaning of restructuring negates the value of using restructuring as a vehicle for educational reform. The findings of this study would support the concern expressed by writers and researchers regarding the lack of consensus within the educational community on understanding restructuring within the context of educational reform. This study also highlights the significance of examining educators' interpretations of restructuring within the context of their experience when studying the effects of this reform in education.

In addition to the confusion surrounding the definition of restructuring, a second finding of significance in the interpretation of restructuring is the negative view held by these individuals for what they termed "government restructuring." In commenting on restructuring, participants made the distinction between "division initiated restructuring" and "government restructuring" in relation to inclusive education. Division initiated restructuring was viewed by these participants as more desirable and less intrusive than government restructuring. The difference between the two types of restructuring was focused on the origin or locus of control for restructuring activities. The perception of these participants was that division initiated restructuring was the result of collaborative "grass roots and division office efforts" to improve programs and services for students with disabilities. As Beth, from central office, suggested, "We started to look at a better way to serve kids. We worked together to develop a model where one, we all own the kids, and two, we have flexibility to move resources to kids." The

involvement of stakeholders in the division initiated restructuring project was viewed as a significant reason for the success of the implementation of the inclusive "neighborhood school" model. Government restructuring, on the other hand, was considered a "top down" initiative imposed on schools and the division by government. School personnel and division office staff felt little control over, or ownership of, the implementation of government restructuring activities that they commonly referred to as "school-based management, school based decision-making, and school-based budgeting." As a result, a negative mind set towards government restructuring had developed that permeated the perceptions of the majority of participants. For example, Sara, in commenting on restructuring, indicated that, "Restructuring is a political issue in my mind. They've [the government] used it to cut salaries, cut teachers, and cut support. I just can't believe that we're not rioting." Sheila concurred with her colleague and stated, "I don't know why the ATA didn't fight school based budgeting more to begin with but it was one of those insidious little things that kind of crept in and I don't think it's done us any good."

The views held by participants that the current restructuring movement has been mandated by political factors originating outside of education is consistent with the research and writings by a number of authors including Beare and Boyd (1993), Milne (1995), Hargreaves (1998), and Henderson (1995). Findings from this study would support Conley's (1993) premise that the business community, not educators, is leading the drive for basic reforms in education in the 1990s. In relation to the implementation of restructuring

initiatives, Paul, Rosselli, and Evans (1995) have commented on characteristics that influence successful restructuring activities. A feature that they described as "collaborative partnerships" provides a plausible explanation for the difference cited by participants between "division initiated restructuring" and "government restructuring." According to these authors, "Creating collaborative partnerships, within the school site and from one system level to the next, is a critical feature in enhancing the success of school restructuring activities" (p. 40). "Collaborative partnership" is a feature consistent with the participants' description of "division initiated restructuring" and their view that this restructuring activity resulted in a positive inclusive educational model. Using Paul, Rosselli, and Evan's concept of "collaborative partnership," one could suggest that the negative experience of "government restructuring," as perceived by these participants, could be attributed to the manner in which the restructuring activities were implemented rather than the actual activities themselves.

By examining the participants' interpretations of the two issues under investigation it was possible to establish the context from which these individuals experienced restructuring and inclusive education. Important for this study were the findings that participants were highly committed to inclusive education and, also, that they harbored negative feelings about their experience with government restructuring due primarily to the "top down" manner in which it has been implemented.

The Extent to Which Restructuring Affects Inclusive Education

After discussing with participants their understandings of inclusive education and restructuring, the interviews moved into an examination of the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The data collected through this study and presented in Chapter 4 suggested that participants experienced conflict, loss, fear, and empowerment in regards to the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. Of particular note were the strong emotions that this subject evoked in these participants. In their discussions about the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education, they identified a number of ways that inclusion, in their perception, had been affected by restructuring. The following contains a description of the extent to which inclusive education has been affected by restructuring as perceived by these participants. The findings have been grouped into four areas for presentation and discussion:

1. the future of inclusive education in the division.

2. allocation of funding, resources and services to support inclusion.

3. roles and relationships of stakeholders in the provision of inclusion.

4. monitoring and accountability in the delivery of inclusive education.

The Future of Inclusive Education in the Division

Some participants expressed concern over the future of inclusive education in the division. They suggested that changes in their beliefs about the feasibility and sustainability of inclusive education had developed in recent years as a result of their experience with restructuring. They indicated that inclusion

had become so much a part of the culture within the division that they had come to take the "neighborhood school" model for granted. As Sara indicated, "inclusive education is successful because we all have the same dream and philosophy about inclusion." Participants discussed how prior to their experience with restructuring they "assumed" that this model of inclusion would evolve, improve, and continue well into the future within schools in the division. However, the majority of participants in this study now believed restructuring activities have created situations in schools and the division that dramatically challenged their assumptions regarding the feasibility of inclusive education. They expressed the view that restructuring had impacted negatively on inclusion by creating tension and fear in regards to their perception of the future of inclusive education within the division. According to Bob, "One of the greatest challenges is trying to cope with the effects of site-based management. I think it's been devastating for special education and it's made us question the future of inclusive education in our division." Sheila, a teacher, concurred. She indicated, "I'm finding that now in providing inclusion there is a breaking point where you say, I'm not sure how long we can continue to do this. Restructuring in my mind has pushed us to this point."

Participants indicated that there was growing concern over the ability of schools to sustain the model of inclusive education provided through the "neighborhood school" model. A number of participants were beginning to question whether "commitment to inclusion" alone was going to be enough to sustain this model of programming. As Chris stated:

I think it's only because we're willing to provide the funding through our principals that inclusion has worked so far. But my feeling is that if the budget for inclusion gets to be too big and the support services are too costly, then I think we're just going to be going down a different road than what we've been able to maintain up until now.

The emphasis of this reform movement on economics and efficiency have caused these individuals to question the provision of inclusive education particularly when it impacts on other programs and services within the school. As one principal stated, "I really think we're at a crossroads here. If inclusive education continues to grow and other areas of the budget are going to be depleted and the school and other children are suffering because of that then we can't continue to provide inclusion." Participants attributed this change in perception, regarding the future of inclusion, to among other things the "fiscal restraints" associated with restructuring and the effects of political and economic pressures like "mandates for balanced budgets." Susan viewed fiscal restraints as a part of the restructuring "political agenda" that significantly impacted on inclusive education. She explained the relationship in this way:

Part of the restructuring that seriously impacts on inclusion are funding restraints. I don't know if this was coincidental with restructuring or they [government] would have done it anyway, was capping what they would spend on special needs. This funding cap has created a number of challenges for schools in the provision of inclusive education.

Commenting on the pressures for a balanced budget, Chris indicated:

This is the first year that I've seen with the increase in wages of seven per cent that we've had to cut back in support to inclusion so that we could come up with a balanced budget. If this continues the future of inclusion will be significantly different.

Some participants expressed the view that, since the implementation of restructuring, inclusion as a model of program delivery for students with

disabilities was "at risk of being replaced entirely" by more "cost-effective" segregated special education programs. Both school and division office personnel are now considering a return to segregated special education programs for students with disabilities as an alternative to inclusion. Bob, from central office stated, "Even in our division we're talking now about more segregated models and that's going to be driven by a cost factor in that we can provide service more cheaply to a group of kids than tied to support in their classrooms with individual teacher aides."

A different future for inclusion. The findings suggest that the effects of restructuring on the perceived future of inclusive education in this division are significant. There is no doubt in the minds of these individuals that inclusive education will "be different" in the future as a result of restructuring initiatives that are currently impacting on schools. The extent to which the "neighborhood school" model will change could range from further cuts in service and supports for inclusion within schools to accommodate the need for a "balanced budget" to a return to segregated programs for some students with disabilities as an economic rather than pedagogical alternative. The findings also suggest that, as a result of restructuring, participants in this division are involved in a debate between the *"value of inclusion"* versus the *"cost of inclusion."* This struggle is creating significant emotional conflict for them in regards to their assumptions and beliefs about the provision of inclusive education. As mentioned earlier, these participants indicated a deep commitment to and belief in inclusive education. For them to suggest that inclusive education will not continue in its

present form, or perhaps be replaced by a segregated model, is an important finding of this study. It speaks to the significant pressure that this reform initiative has placed on educators who are trying to provide inclusive education. It also begs the question, when educators that have expressed themselves as committed advocates for inclusion, such as these participants, are questioning the sustainability of this model of education, then what will happen in schools that are staffed with individuals who are less committed to inclusive education?

Issues of equity versus economy. The findings also indicated that participants are struggling with issues of "equity" and "economy" in relation to inclusive education. As participants indicated, "the inclusive model is not a cheap model." The cost of providing a "level playing field" in order for students with disabilities to function "as equals" within an inclusive classroom has become a contentious issue within these schools as a result of restructuring. "How much is too much" is a question increasingly permeating the discussions of these individuals. This finding is consistent with the research results of McLaughlin, Fuchs, and Hardman (1999), who argued that the concept of equity, as suggested within the current reform initiatives in general education, could be contentious for students with disabilities. The tension experienced by these participants in regards to the "equity versus economy" issue is consistent with the tensions described in the literature within the philosophical, political, and social context of current reform initiatives as they relate to students with disabilities.

Decreased capability of schools to sustain inclusion. The inability of schools to sustain inclusive education due to restructuring initiatives is a finding

of this study that supports the research results of Evans and Lee from studies

carried out in Britian in 1993. Results of surveys conducted by these researchers

indicated that restructuring within the educational system in Britain had

"decreased the capability of mainstream schools to respond to pupils with special

educational needs" (p. 60). One of the most significant results of this diminished

capability was the finding that schools are becoming less willing to tolerate

students who require extra input of resources, resulting in an increase in the

demand for segregated special education programs. The idea of returning to

segregated special education programs for students with disabilities as a cost

efficient alternative to inclusive education is an important finding of this study. It

supports the views of Mosert and Kauffman (1993), who proposed that "people

with disabilities are viewed as economic liabilities." It also gives credence to the

arguments of Gerber and Semmel (1985), who maintained scarcity of resources

creates situations where teachers must choose between focusing on the more

capable student or concentrating efforts on the least able.

Issues of individual need versus group need. The issue of "individual

need versus group need," expressed by Chris and others, dominates the

literature on educational reform and has particular relevance for students with

disabilities. The "rob Peter to pay Paul" scenario described by a number of

participants has been exacerbated by restructuring and inclusive education is

being targeted as the reason for the increase in this practice. As Guthrie and

Koppich (1993) indicated, values such as "individual versus group rights" are

constantly shifting as a result of "political, economic, and cultural pressures." The

experience of these participants in struggling with the value shifts created by restructuring (e.g., economic efficiency versus social justice) is consistent with the views of these researchers in that "as value preferences shift in society reform in education takes on different perspectives."

Allocation of Funding, Resources, and Services to Support Inclusion

Participants were consistent in their belief that restructuring had seriously affected the provision of inclusive education by government funding structures and allocation practices, that have resulted in cutbacks and constraints in funding and the provision of supports for inclusive education. Susan, a principal stated, "I think that restructuring has limited financial resources, and, therefore, human resources and material resources." Bob, from central office, suggested that "the shrinking education dollar had affected the provision of inclusion in his division by limiting the supports and services we can provide for teachers and students." Chris agreed that "it all boils down to what is sufficient funding." He believed that restructuring had "imposed artificial limits on the dollars needed to provide inclusive education." All of the participants shared a common perception that funding for students with disabilities received from the government and reallocated by the division was "not sufficient to appropriately support inclusion."

Of particular concern to participants was the change in recent years where, at the school level, provision of supports and services necessary for inclusion is "frequently subsidized by the basic instructional dollars, leading to constraints and losses in other aspects of programming in the school." This process of subsidizing "special education" with dollars assigned for "general

education" has worked against the development of a "unitary system" of

education that these participants believed they had been moving towards prior to

restructuring. This finding refutes the suggestions of researchers such as Lipsky

and Gartner (1999) and Ferguson (1995), who purported that restructuring would

result in the creation of one cohesive system of education for all students.

Prior to restructuring the support of inclusive education through the

allocation of resources and services was administered and coordinated centrally

by division special education administrators. Restructuring changed this from a

central office to school based function within the division. This change resulted in

each school being responsible for the allocation of resources and services to

support inclusive education. The shift to a decentralized model of administration

in special education eliminated all centralized supports and services for inclusion.

Participants identified a number of ways that this change in practice affected

inclusive education.

Participants believed that the change in practice in the allocation of

resources and services from a central office to school based function had

resulted in "a shift in the division away from allocating resources to address

student need to fitting the supports for students with disabilities into the amount

of funds available at the school." Bob explained the negative effect of this

change:

> There was a time before restructuring where I would go out to a school and
> identify a student's needs and I was able to come back to the office and put
> supports in place to address that need. Now we are too often saying we'll
> provide the best program that we can, given the limited dollars. Which often
> has nothing to do with the amount of need that we see.

Susan agreed, "What restructuring seems to have done is limit the dollars that facilitate our making decisions about the kind of inclusive programming we can provide. It seems that we got school based decision-making at a time of decreased financial resources and so dollars are driving our decisions."

Of particular concern for principals and central office special education administrators was the perception that the shift to a school based model had in some respects created an "adversarial relationship" between what was considered regular and special education needs within the school. This controversy was most often associated with decisions that school personnel had to make regarding the allocation of resources for inclusive education. Beth, from central office, suggested that, "When a division is involved in the magnitude of change associated with school-based budgeting then individuals involved in providing inclusion must be cautious not to pit special education against regular education." Both Chris and Susan, who are principals, related situations where conflict within the school and between the school and community had occurred because of resource allocation decisions made at their schools resulting from the perceived differences in the needs of "regular students" and "students with disabilities."

Some participants believed that the division had lost an important aspect of resource allocation, that being "economy of scale," as a result of the decentralization of resource allocation. Susan stated, "When the money was pooled at the division office, I think there was an economy of scale in terms of the whole division, and all levels benefited." Participants described examples of the

purchases of resources and services to support inclusion that were unnecessarily duplicated by individual schools when a centralized pool of resources and services would have been as effective and more cost efficient. This was a significant issue in smaller schools whose operating budget is determined by the number of students. Having to purchase "everything themselves" left fewer dollars to support inclusion.

Relative to the subject of program delivery in inclusive education, participants believed that decentralization to the schools of the responsibility for allocation of resources and services had created "inconsistency and inequities" in programs and services throughout the division. As Bob stated, "I think directly related to site-based management is the fact that we have inequitable services across our school division." Beth agreed with Bob that "under the previous centralized administration of special education consistency in level of support was easier to implement." She indicated, "One thing that would never happen before restructuring was inconsistency in level of support from school to school." Susan also believed that, "As a result of the decisions that have to be made with site based budgeting I don't think you can ensure a consistency of service from one school to another in the division. We encounter serious problems when children move."

Consistency in service and supports for students with disabilities who move from school to school has been seriously impacted on by the decentralization of responsibility for allocation of resources to the schools. Unlike "regular" students, who can be assured of relative consistency in the delivery of

the program of studies from one school to another, "students with disabilities" have become "situation dependent" as a result of the decentralization of allocation of resources.

Some participants believed that restructuring had forced schools to "become more creative in their use of supports and resources in inclusive education." Beth indicated that she "had witnessed situations in schools where stakeholders were using creative problem solving to implement programs and services that would otherwise not have been available within a centralized model." The model of support referred to by a number of participants as "piggy-backing" was an example of a school initiated support model that proved, in most cases, to be an effective way of stretching resources to support a greater number of students with disabilities in a school.

Participants also suggested that "having the responsibility of allocating resources at the school level gave everyone in the school a better understanding of the resources that were available and could be offered." Additionally, some of the participants expressed the view that "site-based management had resulted in more efficient and effective use of resources in support of inclusion." Schools were proceeding more cautiously in their purchase of supports and services because the funds were coming from their own budgets. This attention to cost and usefulness was not as relevant for school staff when supports and services for inclusion were "provided by division office."

The findings of this study suggested that changes in practices in allocation of funding, resources, and services for inclusion, as a result of restructuring,

affected inclusive education in a variety of both positive and negative ways. Government practices of limiting funding for students with disabilities and initiating changes in funding structures such as the "envelope system" were identified as changes in allocation practices associated with restructuring that had a negative effect on inclusion. Findings also indicated that the shift from a centralized to decentralization model within the division in the allocation of resources and services for inclusion had both positive and negative effects on inclusive education. Mixed views on the effects of changes in allocation practices such as those identified by the participants are consistent with writings and research in the literature on restructuring and inclusive education (e.g., Guerra et al., 1992; Lilly, 1987; Lipsky & Gartner, 1994). The findings refute the suggestion of Sailor (1991) who contended that restructuring initiatives result in a shift in organization to better support the needs of all students.

Participants in this study cited "inconsistency in program delivery" and "inequities in supports and services for students with disabilities provided in inclusive classrooms" as two of the most significant negative effects of the division's decentralization of allocation of supports and services to the schools. This finding supports the research of Lee (1991), who concluded that "consistency in service delivery for students with special needs varied widely in England as a result of school-based management." It is apparent from discussions with these participants that changes in practices within the division in the allocation of resources for inclusion have left students with disabilities in the unenviable position of being bound to the school that they attend in order to

receive a particular support or service. Unlike their "regular" peers, who can move freely throughout the division and expect to find the same program of studies and similar classroom structures, students with disabilities are limited in their freedom to move by the supports that are offered in a particular setting.

Participants indicated that restructuring had in some cases resulted in "greater efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources to support inclusion." Creative methods of stretching resources, such as the "piggy back" approach described by participants, reflects a strategy found in the research of Evans et al. (1992), who indicated "cluster arrangements" are beginning to be an increasingly common response to the problem of deployment of support for special educational needs.

Roles and Relationships of Stakeholders in the Provision of Inclusion

The perception of these participants was that restructuring had resulted in changes in the roles and relationships of stakeholders involved in the provision of inclusive education. Teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators all believed that their roles had changed as a result of restructuring and that these changes affected the provision of inclusive education. Of particular concern for these individuals was the perception that their roles had shifted "from one that was previously focused on education, learning and the provision of inclusive education, to more recently, that of business managers." Having to shift to roles they were not "trained in " nor "interested in" created stress and resentment in these educators and impacted on their primary role as providers of inclusive education. According to these

participants inclusive education was "challenging enough" without the added burden of managerial tasks.

All of the participants agreed that the role of the principal had changed significantly as a result of restructuring. A number of participants expressed concern about the direction that the role of the principal had taken since the implementation of restructuring activities. Susan believed that her role as a principal had changed from that of "educational leader" to "business manager." In her perception the managerial tasks imposed upon her as a result of "school-based management" meant "I'm being drawn away from the real business of education." She was particularly frustrated because, "These tasks take me away from educating students and providing staff with support so they can deliver the best possible education, particularly to our students with special needs." Teachers felt that in schools providing inclusion the presence of the principal in classrooms and availability of the principal to deal with problems and concerns was essential for effective inclusive education. They expressed anger and resentment about the principal's time that was "taken away from them" and redirected to tasks not associated directly with education.

Commenting on the role change of division special education administrators, Bob believed that he "was spending an inordinate amount of time on bureaucratic functions since the implementation of school-based management." In commenting on paperwork, he stated, "It's probably doubled or tripled over the last five years." His role change affected inclusive education by, in his opinion, "reducing the time he would normally have spent in schools acting

as a resource to principals and teachers." Principals and teachers also expressed concern about the change in the special education administrators' roles. As Cathy indicated, "We have a person that is responsible for special education in the division. However, he's so busy with paperwork that you don't see him."

Teachers indicated that the demands of "school based decision-making" were reducing the amount of time that they devoted to planning and program development for students with disabilities. They expressed concern over the shift in focus in their role from that of "teaching and learning" to "finances and other issues" not related to teaching and learning. Sara represented the views of teachers in the study when she indicated, "I resent the time I believe is wasted on policies and budget. We used to discuss programs and kids and educational issues. It's seems that's gone by the wayside with school based budgeting."

Participants also indicated that restructuring had resulted in changes in the "relationships between stakeholders" involved in the provision of inclusive education. Some participants indicated that restructuring contributed to the development of "adversarial relationships" between stakeholders, particularly surrounding issues in the use of funding for inclusive education. Bob believed that the implementation of school-based management created an "adversarial relationship" between principals and central office special education administrators, particularly in relation to issues surrounding the provision of inclusive education. The root of this problem was, in his perception, centered in decisions regarding the use of funding for students with disabilities. Bob and Beth

both believed that the issue of "power and control" in regards to the use of

funding for inclusion had resulted in instances of conflict between them and

principals in ideas about how inclusion should be supported and how inclusive

funding should be spent.

Chris, on the other hand, expressed the view that site based decision-

making had fostered a situation in his school that facilitated a "positive

relationship between staff and school administration and school staff and the

community." In his experience, coming together to make decisions, including

those about inclusive education, fostered a situation in the school where "people

are drawn together in a more collaborative manner in the provision of inclusive

programming." He described the situation in this manner, "I think with site based

decision making there is more of a linkage between the school and the

community. The school and the community working together has been enhanced

more now than before." Beth agreed that she could see how restructuring

facilitated relationships between stakeholders in schools providing inclusive

education:

> I guess probably the biggest thing I noticed about shared decision-making
> is that it creates a situation where school staff are working together with
> parents and kids in providing an inclusive education. You know asking
> themselves, "How can we make this work? How can we meet the needs?"
> That's been a positive thing.

The findings of this study indicated that changes in roles and relationships

of school and division personnel occurred as a result of restructuring. Both

positive and negative examples of the effects of role changes on inclusion were

provided. The negative effects included a shift in focus away from teaching

students with disabilities to managerial tasks, reduced support for teachers in inclusive classrooms from school principals and central office special education administrators, and the development of adversarial relationships between stakeholders providing inclusive education. The positive impact of role changes included greater stakeholder collaboration and enhanced relationships between the school and the community.

The finding of changes in the roles of educators as a result of restructuring is consistent with discussions in the literature involving the types of structural changes associated with restructuring initiatives. Murphy (1991) argued that "efforts to transform schooling will necessitate a reconceptualization of the roles and responsibilities of teachers and administrators, as well as a rethinking of the relationships that bind them together" (p. 35). He referred to these changes in roles and responsibilities as "work redesign." He suggested that, in restructured schools, "traditional roles and responsibilities are replaced by the tenets of professionalism." For example: principals become "facilitators-leaders," teachers become "decision-makers" and "leaders of learners," and central offices become service centers and limit their role to the provision of support, technical assistance, and training. The findings of this study indicated that restructuring had caused changes in participants' roles and responsibilities somewhat commensurate with the examples indicative of "work redesign" as described by Murphy. However, contrary to the research of Murphy (1991) and David (1989), who argued that changes in roles and responsibilities result in "more productive learning opportunities for students," the findings of this study suggested that role

changes have had limited benefits on the education of students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Given the number of examples of the negative effects of role changes provided by participants, I would suggest that perhaps the opposite could be said for the effects of role changes on the learning opportunities of students with disabilities. The shift in roles from educators to managers has apparently impacted negatively on the education of students with disabilities in inclusive schools.

Monitoring and Accountability in the Delivery of Inclusive Education

Prior to restructuring the monitoring of inclusive education was a function of central office. With the decentralization of the responsibility for special education to the schools it had become the responsibility of the school principal to monitor all programs within the school, including inclusive education. Participants expressed the belief that accountability and monitoring had been "lost as a result of decentralization" and this loss contributed to an "erosion in the provision of supports and services to inclusive education." Bob was particularly concerned about the reduction in schools of special education teacher and counselor positions that, in his opinion, were "the main support for students with disabilities" in inclusive education. He indicated, "Special education teachers are being cut way back and the few counselors we do have are being given less time."

Some participants believed that the standards developed by the division to ensure appropriate inclusive programming were being ignored within the decentralized model of special education administration. Bob indicated that

division standards for inclusion, previously mandated and monitored by the

centralized special education model, "were being lost." Sheri missed having a

person from central office "overseeing the special education programs in the

division." She was concerned that "there was no longer someone with special

education training to ensure that the policies of inclusion were enforced." As she

indicated, "There is no one that we're accountable to other than the principal.

There's no one to come in to the school and say, "Excuse me. This is no longer

an acceptable practice." The most devastating example of the effect of the

change in monitoring and accountability on inclusive education is described by

one of the participants as the following:

> One of the schools that I was at talked about inclusive education and yet
> the expectation of the teacher assistant was that she would be removed to
> another area in the room where the doors could be shut. The child never
> participated in the class except for morning attendance and at the end of
> the day to pick up her coat. They never really spent time in the classroom
> with the other students.

The negative effects on programs and services for students with

disabilities due to the loss of monitoring and accountability in special education

has been discussed extensively in research conducted by McIntyre (1992) on the

impact of reform recommendations on urban special education. In his research,

he found two outcomes of the lack of monitoring within urban systems that are

similar to the findings of this study. First, "because of budget cutbacks in urban

systems, tens of thousands of 'at-risk' students are no longer provided with the

'luxuries' of counseling or enrolment in small classes" (p.9). And second, "Ghost

services result in which learners deemed disabled are enrolled on paper, but in

reality they are not receiving services" (p.9). Chris' concern about the reduction in

special education and counseling positions is consistent with the findings of

research conducted by Evans and Lunt (1992) who indicated that "of those

schools which had cut staff, 30 per cent had lost special needs teachers" (p. 60).

Responses to the First Subsidiary Research Question

This subsidiary research question was concerned with participants'

perceptions regarding the extent to which restructuring affects inclusive

education. According to Berreth (1988), to restructure means to "change the

pattern or organization of an entity" (p. 44). In the review of the literature

contained in Chapter 2, many authors purported that the focus of restructuring is

to create change in the educational environment. For the purposes of this study,

the definition of restructuring put forward by Conley (1993) was used as the

reference for investigating the concept of restructuring and the areas within

inclusive education impacted on by restructuring activities. According to Conley,

restructuring activities are designed to create change in "the fundamental

assumptions, practices, and relationships both within the school and between the

school and the outside community" (p. 8). The findings of this study in response

to this research question suggested that restructuring had resulted in changes

that impacted on inclusive education in all three areas cited in Conley's definition.

These included changes involving beliefs and assumptions that participants held

about the future of inclusive education, the feasibility and sustainability of an

inclusive model, and the economic value of the inclusive model. Changes in

practices involving the allocation of resources, funding structures, monitoring and

accountability as they related to inclusive education, and changes in roles and

relationships between school staff, principals and central office personnel, and schools and the community in the provision of inclusion. Participants cited numerous examples of the extent to which restructuring affected inclusive education. The most significant negative effects included (a) the potential loss of the "neighborhood school" model in its current form and a possible return to a segregated model of special education for some students with disabilities, (b) reductions in supports and services for inclusive education, particularly in special education teacher and counselor positions, (c) the creation of an adversarial relationship between the perceived needs of regular and special education students, (d) inconsistency and inequities in the provisions of services and supports for inclusion from school to school within the division, (e) loss of leadership and expertise in special education both at the school and division level, and (f) loss of effective monitoring and accountability in inclusive education within the division. The positive effects included (a) more creative, effective and efficient use of resources by school staff to support inclusion, (b) increased collaboration among stakeholders in the provision of inclusive education, and (c) increased ownership by the school community in the delivery of inclusive education.

Restructuring initiatives have had significant negative effects on the provision of inclusive education within the schools under study. Educators functioning within the restructured educational environment in this school division are experiencing extreme difficulties in providing what they believe is an effective inclusive program. Stress and emotional conflict are the predominant feelings

expressed by these participants in their descriptions of the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. Although they can see the potential of some aspects of restructuring to empower them as professionals and enhance their efforts in the provision of inclusive education, the negative effects are gaining the upper hand and creating a sense of futility and hopelessness among these educators in their attempts to provide effective inclusive education.

What Specific Aspects of Restructuring are Perceived by Teachers, Principals, and Special Education Administrators to Facilitate Inclusive Education?

In addition to discussing the extent to which restructuring had affected inclusive education, participants were also asked to identify specific aspects of restructuring that, in their perception, facilitated inclusive education. It was anticipated that the experience of these educators would provide first hand information about aspects of restructuring that, in their perception, facilitated the provision of inclusive education. Interestingly responses to this question were not easily obtained. As Sheila indicated, "With school based budgeting I see more minuses than I see pluses." A number of probe questions and extensive discussions were required to elicit examples from the participants that would address this research question. The following sections contain those aspects of restructuring identified by teachers, principals, and central office administrators that facilitated inclusive education:

1. opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in decisions about inclusion.

2. flexibility of schools in decisions regarding inclusion.

3. immediacy and local nature of the decision making process.

4. devolution of authority for inclusive education to the school site.

Opportunity for Stakeholders to Be Involved in Decisions

Participants expressed the view that with restructuring all stakeholders had the opportunity to be involved in decisions regarding inclusive education. Chris indicated that, as a school principal, "I like being able to have people here at the school be part of the decision making and not having that rendered from division office. " He believed, as did other participants, that greater involvement of staff and parents in the decision making process fostered "collaboration between your school team and your parent team" in providing inclusive education. A respect for each other's concerns and questions regarding the provision of inclusive education was fostered by this collaboration.

For Susan, the idea of being able to "talk at a grass roots level" about the needs of students with disabilities was facilitated by the opportunity for all stakeholders to be involved in the decision making process. She saw this as ultimately benefiting inclusive education by giving all stakeholders a "better understanding" of what the needs of these students were and the supports necessary for inclusion. As a principal she believed that "the more parents of 'regular students' understand about what's needed for inclusion to work effectively, the easier it is as a principal to justify the dollars spent."

The findings suggest that these participants view the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process as an aspect of restructuring that facilitated inclusive education. Increased collaboration among stakeholders

involved in the provision of inclusion and better understanding by stakeholders of the supports and services required for inclusion were two of the benefits associated with the involvement of stakeholders in the decision making process offered by these participants.

The effects of shared decision-making on the educational environment is one aspect of restructuring that has been discussed extensively in the literature on school reform (Beare & Boyd,1993; Conley,1993; Murhpy,1991; Reavis & Griffith, 1992; Wohlstetter,1995). Increased collaboration among stakeholders as a result of shared decision-making is a finding of this study consistent with the investigations of Liontos and Lashway (1997), who found that "most studies agree that collaboration improves among stakeholders in schools as a result of participation in the decision making process" (p.2). The "increased appreciation for and understanding of inclusive education" as a result of stakeholder involvement in decision making is a finding of this study that is encouraging news for proponents of inclusive education. It highlights the fact that shared decision-making is an aspect of this reform initiative that can impact positively on the education of students with disabilities.

Flexibility of Schools In Decisions Regarding Inclusion

Individuals in this study cited the flexibility of schools in decisions regarding inclusive education as an aspect of restructuring that facilitated inclusive education. They indicated that this "flexibility" facilitated good decision making in regards to the support of students with disabilities and the inclusive classroom. Susan, as a principal, liked, "The flexibility to make decisions for the

good of that child and the good of the class." She indicated that, with the

increased flexibility since restructuring, she "did not feel bound as a principal to

provide the same supports and services to all students and all classrooms." Beth

believed that the movement of resources to meet the needs of students in

schools was also facilitated by the flexibility in decision making associated with

restructuring. She indicated, "I think it [restructuring] allows you more flexibility in

terms of being able to move your resources to meet the needs of the kids that

you have in your neighborhood school."

Flexibility to make decisions that are good for student with disabilities

speaks well for the school based decision-making aspect of restructuring and

facilitates greater accommodation of students in regular classrooms. As

participants indicated, it "empowers" them to think of these students as unique

individuals and the classrooms in which they are educated as unique learning

environments. Increased flexibility in decision-making is a finding of this study

that supports the views of Lipsky and Gartner (1999) and Ferguson (1995), who

suggested that restructuring activities "increased flexibility in schools in the

provision of supports and services resulting in greater accommodation of

students with special needs in regular classrooms."

Immediacy and Local Nature of the Decision-making Process

Another aspect of restructuring that participants perceived as facilitating

inclusive education was the local nature of the decision-making process and the

lack of delay between the time of the decision and implementation. As Beth

stated, "with school based decision-making you don't have to go through any

bureaucracy in terms of getting permission to do things that make sense for kids." Susan agreed; she indicated, "The concept of restructuring and site based decision-making provides the opportunity for each school to attempt to meet the needs of its community." Bob believed that local decision-making was beneficial for inclusion because school staff are closer to the "actual situation" and "more aware of the kids' needs." In his experience, principals, "who are sensitive to the needs of special needs kids do a 'better job' in making decisions about programs and supports because they're more aware of what's going on in the school than somebody from central office." Susan agreed with the benefits of local decision-making:

> With school based decision-making we tend to know the children we're serving. We know their needs more intimately and we can make good decisions about the supports that we put in place. It frees us to be more needs based and to make good educational decisions.

Sheila, as a teacher, also saw the value of local decision-making because "it brings the decision-making into the school rather than another body that's out there in central office." She believed that better decisions regarding inclusion could be made at the school. "If you're trying to plan and develop some sort of a way to deal with your own special needs students and you know them better then maybe you can make a better plan."

The hallmark of shared decision-making, according to Murphy (1991), is the belief that, "Teachers know what individual students need to succeed better than any decision-makers who are far removed from the classroom" (p.40). The participants in this study concurred with this belief. In their opinion they possess an intimate knowledge of the students with disabilities attending their schools,

and, as a result of their close proximity to the students, they believe, as Murphy suggested, that they themselves are in a position to make better decisions regarding the programming needs of these students.

Devolution of Authority for Inclusive Education to the School Site

A number of participants believed that with restructuring the authority for inclusive education had been shifted to the school site. The devolution of authority was viewed as an aspect of restructuring that facilitated inclusive education. In their perception, it resulted in "empowering stakeholders" to work together for a common goal. Beth believed, "Decentralization of program authority for inclusion empowers people to work with parents and staff to make good decisions." She described a situation that she had witnessed in a school that facilitated this perception:

> The grade one teachers were saying that they needed more teacher assistant time and so the administrator laid out their whole budget and asked them where they would like to take it from and suddenly they were able to see how maybe they could do it another way. That would never have happened before restructuring because somebody else had the responsibility.

Chris believed that the devolution of authority "gives us the autonomy to do certain things and work with the parents in the school." He particularly liked the way "we talk more about school now rather than school division. There's more of a linkage to the community." Carol agreed with Chris about the value of local autonomy. She believed that restructuring gave schools "the freedom to make your professional judgement. We have the authority and the money to build what we know is going to work for that child and not having to hear from someone else what we should be doing when we know that doesn't fit that child."

Sara indicated that having the authority for inclusive education facilitated ownership in the program. She stated, "I like the ownership. I think having the authority for decisions provides more ownership over programs for students."

According to Murphy (1991), "No element of restructuring has received more attention than the issue of devolution of authority to the school site" (p.36). The benefits of this aspect of restructuring as described by these participants are consistent with those provided by a number of writers and researchers in the literature on restructuring (e.g., White, 1989; Williams, 1995; Wohlstetter, 1995). Berreth (1988) suggested that, "Restructuring of governance is a complex issue for special education. At its best, it can bring a school closer together through a sense of shared responsibility and authority" (p. 45). Participants agreed that the devolution of authority for inclusion to the school site "empowered stakeholders" in the provision of inclusive education. They believed that this aspect of restructuring facilitated increased ownership for the inclusive program, resulted in better decisions regarding supports and services, and facilitated a common goal among stakeholders in the provision of inclusive education

Responses to the Second Subsidiary Research Question

The experience and expertise of the educators in this study were drawn upon to provide examples of those aspects of restructuring that facilitated inclusive education. When participants were able to push aside their negative feelings towards restructuring they were able to identify specific aspects of restructuring that facilitated their efforts to provide inclusive education. Aspects of restructuring involving shared decision-making and the devolution of authority to

the school site were those most often cited by participants as facilitating

inclusion. Ways that restructuring facilitated inclusive education included:

(a) providing the opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in decisions about

inclusion, (b) increasing the flexibility of schools in decisions regarding inclusion,

(c) facilitating the immediate and local nature of the decision-making process,

and (d) facilitating the devolution of authority for inclusive education to the school

site. Shared decision-making and school governance of inclusive education are

two aspects of restructuring that have significant potential to facilitate inclusive

education. These particular aspects of restructuring have the potential to

empower stakeholders in the provision of inclusion. As Susan stated, "I guess

that site based decision-making in and of itself can be a very positive thing for

inclusive education if both resources and supports are in place." If, as Susan

suggested, the resources and supports are available to facilitate the decision-

making and governance engaged in by personnel at the school level, then

restructuring has the potential to facilitate inclusive education and could result in

the creation of a unitary system of education for all students.

What Specific Aspects of Restructuring are Perceived by Teachers, Principals, and Special Education Administrators to Constrain Inclusive Education?

Participants also identified specific aspects of restructuring that

constrained their efforts to provide inclusive education in the manner associated

with the "neighborhood school" model. The following is a description of the

aspects identified by participants, together with comments from these individuals

that serve to illustrate their perceptions. These aspects of restructuring constrained inclusive education:

1. features associated with a business model.

2. fiscal restraints and funding practices associated with restructuring.

3. over-dependence on the leadership style, knowledge, and philosophy of the principal.

4. lack of centralized leadership and authority in special education.

5. elimination of centralized supports and services for inclusive education.

Features Associated With a Business Model

Participants cited the features associated with a business model as an aspect of restructuring that constrained the provision of inclusive education. In their perception, the features of a business model that restructuring had introduced into the educational environment were counterproductive to the goals of inclusive education. As Chris explained, "You can't take a business model and then superimpose it onto a school system and expect that it's going to do the same thing." Sheila felt even stronger about this aspect of restructuring; "They're applying these business principles to the education system and a lot of it I think is dangerous." As a result, these individuals felt that their efforts to provide the "neighborhood school" model of inclusive education were being hampered. Specifically, they attributed the philosophical underpinnings of a business model, that emphasizes competition, cost effectiveness, accountability, and student learning as a market commodity, as a barrier in the provision of inclusion. Bob

explained his perception of the constraints associated with a business model in

this way:

> I don't think the site-based model is contributing to us getting better at
> providing inclusive education. In fact, I would say it's doing just the
> opposite. I don't know about other areas, but I know in special education,
> it's really eroded the service and the quality of inclusion that we can
> provide to kids. So in my opinion the business model is a bad model to
> use in education.

Chris suggested that the "competition" associated with the business model

was particularly constraining for "small schools" trying to provide appropriate

supports and services for inclusion. He described the difficulty that small schools

were encountering, in the following example:

> I think we're competing against one another and I guess that's an area
> that is surfacing now with the site-based model. If you're a small school
> trying to provide a good inclusive program you're in trouble. Because
> funding is tied to the number of students in your school, if you're small,
> you just don't have the funding to provide the services and then you have
> people working overtime just to survive.

According to these participants, their efforts to provide an appropriate

inclusive education through the "neighborhood school" model are constrained by

the business aspect of restructuring. The negative effects of reform initiatives like

restructuring, that are predicated on a business model, are a cause for concern

among writers and researchers in the field of special education (e.g., Henderson,

1995; Mostert & Kauffman, 1993; Shaw, 1990; Vincent et al., 1994). The

philosophical underpinnings of the business model are viewed as inconsistent

with those of special education, and the problems and concerns for inclusive

education identified by these participants actualizes what until recently has been

only speculation. As Mostert and Kaufman (1993) suggested:

The apparent logic of the current reform movement is that what works in business will work in schools. However, the business community has not been able to produce success for all its members or to enable all businesses much less all employees to meet world class standards. The rate of business failure is high, arguably because of the ways businesses are structured and the way business managers have been trained. For every winner created by a competitive system a loser is created by definition. There is little reason to believe that an education system run on similar principles would produce vastly different results. In a system based on these principles, people with disabilities are viewed as economic liability in the drive for corporate revenue. (p. 119)

The concerns for inclusive education, expressed by participants, reflect those described in the research results of Evans and Lunt (1993) who indicated "The pressure on schools to deliver the curriculum, to produce good results for publication, and to manage their budgets, and set their own priorities has led some schools to become less willing to support pupils with special educational needs" (p.59).

Fiscal Restraints and Funding Practices Associated With Restructuring

Fiscal restraints and changes in funding practices by the government were aspects of restructuring viewed as constraints in the provision of inclusive education by all of the participants in this study. Fiscal restraints limiting the number of dollars for students with disabilities, changes in funding practices including the implementation of an "envelope system" aimed at controlling dollars spent on administration, and mandates for "balanced budgets," were specific aspects cited by participants as hampering their efforts in inclusion. As Cathy indicated, "I kind of felt like this as we went into site-based management. They want us to do big and wonderful things with very little." Participants were particularly concerned about changes in funding practices by the government

and division that involved "capping" allocations for students with severe

disabilities, using a "one size fits all" approach, and embedding the allocation for

students with mild and moderate disabilities within the basic school grant.

Operating under a mandate for fiscal restraint, both government and division

funding for students with disabilities has changed from a focus concerned with

"supporting student need" to one concerned with "supporting what can be

afforded." Educators in this study were concerned that these changes "impeded

their ability to comply with the mandate of Alberta Learning," that states that

"schools are charged with the responsibility of meeting the needs of students with

disabilities," given the funding constraints they were now facing. Susan described

the problem in this way:

> In Alberta school based decision-making is equated with budgeting and it
> has brought about budgeting problems. I think the restraints of site based
> budgeting and under-funding in education have placed us in a situation of
> not having the amount of staffing in place that we feel we should to meet
> the student needs. Instead we have to make do with what we have. And
> you can't always fulfill every aspect of the student's programming. I find
> that very difficult because Alberta Learning mandates that we meet the
> needs of all children. And yet we don't have the money to adequately
> meet those needs. I think that if you had the resources to work with school
> based decision-making would not be as big a challenge.

These participants also believed that the changes in funding practices

constrained inclusive education by limiting the number of students with

disabilities that can be supported within an inclusive model. The greatest concern

voiced by these educators was for students who are considered in the mild and

moderate categories of disabilities and who, they believe, are "falling through the

cracks" due to the lack of appropriate funding. As Susan indicated, "I think that

children with mild needs tend to get less human resources directed their way

because we tend to operate on our most significant need. So we tend to meet that need first in the hope of providing a workable environment for the teacher and the other students in the class."

Beth indicated that the change in funding practices had resulted in an increase in the practice of "labeling students as disabled" in order for schools to generate more special education funding. While she understood the need for more funds, she felt "that it's unfortunate, when we're trying to get away from labeling kids, that the way the funding works it in fact is encouraging and supporting that very thing that we've tried to avoid in an inclusive model."

Funding structures, such as the "envelope system" implemented through restructuring, were also identified as aspects that constrain inclusive education. By restricting the amount of centralized administrative support a division is allowed to fund under specific government guidelines, the "envelope system" has eliminated service and support for inclusive education that these participants believed was essential to sustain effective programs. As Chris indicated:

> We don't have the support structures in place at central office anymore. Without the expertise inclusion will be like a house of cards. It will fall down. Staff will suffer because they cannot assist the child as best they can without support. I think the small administrative envelope for division office staff is a real ongoing problem.

Susan agreed with Chris' perception; she believed that, as a principal, she had "lost both centralized support and service for inclusion, as well as school funds, as a result of the envelope system."

Principals in the study maintained that the mandate to maintain a "balanced budget" was seriously affecting their ability to provide inclusive

education within their schools. As Chris indicated, "The principal and vice-principal's duty is to have a balanced budget." Situations like wage increases and increased costs for resources result in "cutbacks in supports and services for inclusion." One of the most significant negative outcomes for students with disabilities, originating out of the mandate for a "balanced budget," is the perception that the high cost of providing support for these students in inclusive classrooms makes them a "liability for schools."

Over-dependence on the Leadership Style, Knowledge, and Philosophy of the Principal

Participants indicated that the decentralization of the responsibility for inclusive education, implemented as a result of restructuring, caused inclusive education to be over-dependent on the leadership style, knowledge, and philosophy of the principal in the school. The role and influence of the principal in providing leadership in educational reform has been cited extensively in the literature on change and educational reform (e.g., Barth, 1990; Fullan, 1993; Sergiovanni, 1992). The findings of this study serve to illuminate the extent to which the principal, within this educational reform initiative, affects the provision of inclusive education. The significance of the leadership style, particularly their approach to decision making, philosophy of these individuals regarding inclusive education, and knowledge of special education were critical aspects cited by these participants. Beth believed that the leadership style of the principal "set the tone" for inclusion within a school. She described the significance of the principal

on the provision of inclusive education through her description of some issues of

"power" and "control" brought on by restructuring:

> I think what happened with site based decision-making is that you had some principals dripping with power. That's my way of describing it. I'm king of my kingdom. Nobody tells me what to do or how to deliver inclusive services. In this way the principal sets the tone and the principal sets the direction for inclusion.

From a teacher's perspective, Sara indicated, "Well it's like the principal is

in charge of inclusive education now. I mean they decide where that child goes

and what kind of funding they get and what kind of program to set up for them,

but I don't know if all the principals have that knowledge." Lack of knowledge in

special education was also a concern expressed by Chris, who used this

example to describe what he believed happens in inclusive education when a

principal does not possess knowledge in special education:

> Because of the site based model principals are sort of mini-chief executive officers. They are responsible for the decisions regarding inclusion and they don't answer to anyone. Those that don't have the background knowledge in special education to even know what they should be looking at, or who they should be calling in terms of the kinds of assessment work needed or how they should address programming for students with special needs often do nothing. So I think in these cases kids are left without service.

Bob believed that inclusive education was constrained by both lack of

knowledge and the principal's philosophy about inclusive education. In his

experience, "Principals with less background in special education or a different

philosophy just don't emphasize inclusion." Susan agreed with Bob on the

importance of the principal's "vision for inclusion." She indicated, "The vision of

the principal is extremely important. If you have a school administrator who does

not believe in inclusion and is not willing to support these students, then inclusive

education will not thrive in that school." Sally also attested to the importance of

the principal's philosophy on inclusion. She stated, "The philosophy of the

principal makes a great difference to the program of inclusive education." Sheri

very accurately summed up the perception of teachers regarding the significance

of the principal in the provision of inclusive education:

> As a teacher you are really tied into what your principal believes about
> inclusion. Since site based decision-making the principal's philosophy and
> the principal's background in inclusion, in my mind, is the key to inclusion.
> You know I mean there are still principals out there who say, "My decision
> is the one that carries the weight." And regardless of what you believe as
> a teacher you have no real choice but to go along with the principal.

Lack of Centralized Leadership and Authority in Special Education

The provision of special education programs and services is mandated

within the Alberta School Act. As a result, a number of policies, guidelines, and

regulations regarding delivery of programs for students with disabilities and

practices in monitoring and accountability in special education must be adhered

to by school jurisdictions in this province. Historically the practice in this school

jurisdiction was to centralize the responsibility for program delivery, monitoring,

and accountability in special education within individuals operating out of central

office. These designated individuals were vested with the authority to make

decisions regarding program delivery and hold schools accountable for the

services and supports they provided to students with disabilities. As a result, the

leadership and authority for special education was viewed as resting at the

central office site with schools depending on these individuals to provide

leadership and direction in special education. With restructuring, this school

jurisdiction shifted program delivery and monitoring from a centralized to school

based function. Within this restructured system all aspects of special education essentially became the responsibility of the school principal.

Participants in this study believed that the lack of centralized leadership and authority in special education was an aspect of restructuring that constrained inclusive education. Cutbacks in central office staff and a shift in authority for special education had, in their perception, created a "leadership vacuum" in special education within the division. As Sheri indicated, "There is no longer one person overseeing the special education programs in the division. There is no longer someone with training and expertise in special education to see that the policies are enforced." Bob agreed; "There isn't any central leadership." One of his major concerns is the extent to which the lack of centralized monitoring and authority affects special education support to inclusion. He described a situation that occurred as a result of the lack of centralized authority:

> We had one school who elected not to provide special education services for students with disabilities in the inclusive setting. And I think that was allowed to go on for a year because there is no division person with the authority to go out there and monitor in terms of what's going on in special education.

Sheila indicated that lack of centralized leadership is primarily an issue for teachers when dealing with "difficult" or "political" situations surrounding inclusive education. When situations like this present themselves, she indicated that, "There is nobody to sort of guide the ship through the rough waters."

Elimination of Centralized Supports and Services for Inclusive Education

In addition to reductions in centralized administrative positions, this school jurisdiction also eliminated all centralized supports and services for inclusive education. Schools are expected to obtain supports and services such as student assessments, professional development, and resources to support inclusive education through school purchased contracts. The elimination of centralized supports and services was a major concern for these participants. They identified this aspect of restructuring as a major constraint in the provision of inclusive education. These individuals believed that such things as dealing with private consultants and service providers, unfamiliarity of school staff with resource suppliers, and the time invested by staff in seeking out services and supports, was affecting inclusion. Chris explained that, "There used to be a solid core of division office staff who I think were very well connected to other agencies in the community. Those people are now gone. This has left us in a situation of I think being expertise poor in our school division." Sheri agreed that as a teacher she did not have the expertise or knowledge about accessing supports and resources for inclusion. She indicated that, "The support is really difficult to access. I don't have the expertise. Before, the support was there that when you needed help there was someone there to give the answer right away." She provided examples of how difficult it now was for her to obtain resources and assessments for students with disabilities in her classroom:

We've been desperately trying to find a special chair for one of our students this year, and I don't know the contacts and can't seem to find where to get them. Also, I have a student this year who needs a full assessment and I think I've filled out six forms already and if we're lucky they told his mom they should be able to see him some time late next fall. So you know we're talking a good year by the time the initial process started before he's ever actually seen. And then it's going to be a question of "Well here's the reports we have. Now do with them what you will." There's no follow up like when the division had it's own assessment staff.

Chris felt that the division had made a mistake in eliminating the "layer of expertise" that they had in the support of inclusion. He described the impact on inclusive education in this manner:

I feel that if there's an area that we're lacking in now in inclusive education it's having the people with the expertise to go into the classroom and work with the teacher in how to do it. They need that. I think there was a major mistake made by the division in taking away a level of expertise because those people provided direct service to the teaching staff giving them the knowledge and the strategies to work with children in an inclusive model. My feeling is that when we took that layer away there was a huge gap and teachers didn't get the direct service. I think principals and vice-principals really felt that as well because there wasn't that person that could come in that understood and could really help us working with children. So I really think it was a mistake. I think they felt that this was a way of saving money and it really wasn't needed. We could do it at the school level. But we can't. And I think were suffering from that now.

These educators firmly believe that educating students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms requires knowledge and expertise beyond that provided through standard teacher preparation programs. The loss of expertise available to support these educators through restructuring impacts on all stakeholders in the educational environment including students, teachers, administrators, and parents. The findings of this study, in regards to the provision of expertise and support for inclusion, support the views expressed by Shaw et al. (1990), who suggested that, "given the negative attitudes toward disabled, minority, and

disadvantaged populations, local control and autonomy could result in limited support and programs for these populations in many schools" (p.7).

Responses to the Third Subsidiary Research Question

Drawing on their experience of the past five years, participants identified five specific aspects of restructuring that constrained the provision of inclusive education. These included: (a) the features associated with a business model, (b) the fiscal restraints and funding practices associated with restructuring, (c) a model of administration in special education that is over-dependent on the leadership style, knowledge, and philosophy of the principal, (c) the lack of centralized leadership and authority in special education, and (d) the elimination of centralized supports and services for inclusive education. Looking at the number and type of constraints that have been identified by participants, one is struck by the breadth and depth of impact that this reform initiative has had on inclusive education. The constraints have created significant stress on those individuals trying to provide inclusive education. The constraints are so pervasive that the challenge to maintain inclusion is becoming overwhelming for these educators and the easiest resolution appears to be renewed calls for a model of segregated special education within the division.

How Could Effective Inclusive Education be Provided Within the Parameters of Restructuring?

In discussing the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education, participants were asked to comment on how, in their opinion, effective inclusive education could be facilitated within the parameters of restructuring.

Their answers provided the information needed to address the final subsidiary research question in this study. Of the eleven participants included in the study one individual could not provide any ideas or suggestions on how inclusion could function effectively within restructuring. The other ten participants expressed the view that restructuring activities currently in place within the division could provide the framework for effective inclusive education if modifications could be implemented that would better facilitate inclusion. These individuals identified four areas within the current restructuring model that, if addressed, would allow for more effective inclusive programming within schools and the division:

1. focus on education rather than business.

2. establish a more effective and efficient balance between centralized and decentralized governance of inclusive education.

3. provision of adequate funding from government for inclusive programs.

4. align principal selection criteria with the role of a leader in inclusive education.

Focus on Education as Opposed to Business

These educators indicated that in order to provide effective inclusive education within a restructured system of education it was essential that they be "allowed to refocus on matters of education" as their primary mandate. As Susan indicated:

> Right now the business model has taken us, as educators, and particularly principals, far away from the real business of education which is educating students and providing support to staff so they can deliver the best possible education. So that's an aspect of restructuring that I would want to change.

Their solution to the current situation was streamlining the current decision-making process, which in their opinion "has us involved in every little thing." They respect and appreciate the opportunity for involvement in the decision-making process but believed that the division has "gone overboard" in stakeholder involvement in the decision-making process. They would like to see a clear delineation of decisions that teachers want and should be involved in and those that can be left to school administration. In their view this would "free up" valuable staff meeting time for greater discussion and collaboration on issues related to learning and teaching. School principals believe that some "fiscal decisions" like parking lot paving and vacation pay calculation could be returned to central office with people trained in these management areas. This would allow them to return to their role as "educational leaders."

Balance Between Centralized and Decentralized Governance of Inclusion

As mentioned previously, participants expressed the belief that complete decentralization of the governance of inclusive education to the schools was one of the major drawbacks of restructuring relative to inclusive education within their division. In suggesting changes in the current situation they indicated a shift towards a balance between central office roles, responsibilities, authority, and decision-making relative to inclusive education and those of school personnel is required. In essence, they would like to see a balance between centralized and decentralized governance of inclusion. While they recognized and appreciated the positive aspects of decentralization, particularly in regards to decision-making involving the allocation of resources, they felt that the shift had been too extreme

and important aspects like accountability and monitoring had been lost.

Therefore, in their opinion, they would like to see "a more balanced approach."

Beth believed that by creating a balance between centralized and decentralized

authority it is possible to maintain a division perspective in the provision of

inclusive education, ensure students are being appropriately served, and provide

greater efficiency in program delivery:

> I think a division office has to have the authority to act on a division basis with division perspectives. We have to be able to make decisions that are in the best interest of all our kids. We need somebody at division office with the authority to go into a school and say these things will be in place for special needs students in the school. So balance is needed between division and school authority. We also need to look at those services that are best provided at division office in terms of greater efficiencies.

Bob suggested that a balance between school responsibilities and

authority and that of division office would help to clarify roles and ensure that

minimum standards are in place for inclusive education. As he explained:

> I don't know where I'm at in the decision-making process. I guess I'm looked to for some leadership in terms of identifying areas of need. It's really up in the air now. I don't think leadership and authority in special education is well defined in our school division in terms of administrative structure. So whether I'm responsible to the principal or whether the principals are responsible to me is sort of a gray area.

He suggested that:

> you have to have somebody at the division office with the authority to go into the school and say these things will be in place for special needs students in the school. Here's a minimum standard, for instance, "you have three hundred kids in your school; that's one full time equivalent special education teacher." I think a division office has to have a mandate to act on a division basis with division perspectives so that there's some balance. Some way to say "No just a minute we have to look at the global picture. We have to look at what's in the best interest of all our kids."

In particular participants identified the need to "reestablish centralized monitoring of inclusive education" within the division, with the view towards reinvesting central office staff with the authority to "hold principals accountable for meeting the division standards in special education." Chris expressed the view of a number of participants when he stated that, "I would like to see personnel brought back at the division level to monitor what's happening in inclusive education and hold schools accountable for their decisions in this area."

Adequate Funding From Government for the Provision of Inclusion

"It all boils down to what is adequate funding." This statement made by Chris in discussing the question, "What does it take to provide inclusive education within the parameters of restructuring?" typifies the perception of the participants in this study. There was general consensus among participants responding to this subsidiary question that, in order for restructuring initiatives such as school-based management and school based decision-making to support the provision of inclusive education, sufficient levels of funding for special education were essential. As some participants indicated, "decisions without dollars" are useless in providing appropriate programs for students with disabilities. Susan described the situation best when she stated:

> I wish that Alberta Learning would cost out what it actually costs to deliver adequate programming to children with special needs in inclusive classrooms. And if they were to fund special education in a way that approximates the cost of the delivery of service. I know we would be able to do the job. If we had restructuring with school based decision-making in a time of increased resources some of the decisions that we would make would be more educationally sound decisions and we would be able to provide more service. I think many of us are happy to make decisions about supports and services but I need the dollars to be able to make the

appropriate decisions. In a school like ours we have the philosophy, the attitude and the willingness.

The "willingness" and the "attitude" to give restructuring initiatives a try came through loud and clear in discussions with these participants. What concerned and angered them was the "inability to make restructuring work for inclusive education" because of the lack of sufficient funding. Inadequate funding for special education in this province is contributing to the ineffectiveness of restructuring initiatives such as school based decision-making.

Align Principal Selection Criteria With the Role of a Leader in Inclusive Education

Restructuring has caused the principal's role to become absolutely critical in the implementation of inclusive education. For this reason participants advocated changes in the criteria for selection of individuals to this leadership position. They believed that there are specific attributes, skills, and knowledge required to provide effective leadership within a school offering inclusive education. As Beth suggested,

> Your principal would have to be pro-inclusive education and supportive of students with special needs. You need a principal that's knowledgeable, supportive, and willing to commit resources to inclusive education. Someone who can communicate to parents about the situation in the school, what you're trying to accomplish, and to facilitate everybody working together to make it happen. They have to be willing to make the commitment that they want to serve kids in an inclusive setting.

Susan agreed that the principal was essential to effective inclusive education. For her, the role of principal as leader within an inclusive school had become even more important as a result of restructuring. She viewed the issue of

leadership as critical. She indicated, "Leadership is needed for effective inclusion. You need the leadership and you need a shared vision or a shared philosophy within your staff and then you need to be open to working collaboratively."

The suggestions of these participants echo those of Shaw et al. (1990) who indicated that "all of the school effectiveness literature identifies the principal as one of the most important elements to school reform" (p.19). They recommended that "Local Board of Education members and higher education administrators facilitate leadership training programs for principals providing knowledge, improved attitudes, and skills to help these individuals serve the full range of students within their institutions" (p.19).

Responses to the Fourth Subsidiary Research Question

Four suggestions were provided for how inclusive education could be effectively delivered within the parameters of restructuring. These included (a) focusing on education rather than business, (b) establishing a more effective and efficient balance between centralized and decentralized governance of inclusive education, (c) providing adequate funding from government for appropriate inclusive education, and (d) aligning principal selection criteria to ensure appropriate staff are selected for the role of principal in an inclusive school. That education will and must change is an accepted premise of these educators and that restructuring is a vehicle for change is also recognized and accepted. However, these educators believe that, if the changes they are suggesting are implemented within the restructured educational environment,

inclusive education will have the opportunity to thrive and all students will indeed benefit from this reform initiative.

General Research Question

This study and the above subsidiary research questions were guided by the following general research question: What perceptions do teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators hold about restructuring and its effects on inclusive education? This section will discuss the question as it relates specifically to those subsidiary questions and to the study in general.

The subsidiary research questions formed the basis for the development of the interview questions used in this study to provide a vehicle to engage participants in discussions about their perceptions of the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. Participants elaborated on their understandings of these concepts and provided their views on the extent to which restructuring in their perception affected inclusive education. They also commented on those aspects of restructuring that facilitated inclusive education and identified and commented on those aspects of restructuring that constrained the provision of inclusion. Participants provided suggestions for how effective inclusive education could occur within the parameters of restructuring.

The participant responses to the interview questions provided a collective way of answering the general research question as to whether or not restructuring has an effect on inclusive education. Their interpretations of both inclusive education and restructuring were important for understanding the

context from which they answered the interview questions. It was obvious to me as a result of how the participants responded to the various questions that these educators did indeed perceive restructuring as having an effect on inclusive education. They were able to articulate and elaborate, sometimes in a very emotional manner, on the various ways that restructuring had affected inclusive education. They were honest and open in their comments and shared what I believe were deeply felt expressions of concern regarding the effects of restructuring on the provision of inclusion in their division. This is not to say that all of their comments were negative regarding the effects of restructuring on inclusive education. On the contrary, they made significant efforts to provide positive examples of the effects as well.

In summary, based on their responses to the questions posed, and also on what I observed and heard through informal conversations, I concluded that teachers, principals, and central office special education administrators perceived restructuring to have a significant and primarily negative effect on inclusive education.

Summary

This chapter discussed the findings of the study as guided by the general and subsidiary research questions. For each of the questions, summaries of the participants' responses together with appropriate quotations were provided. Where relevant, the literature on restructuring, inclusive education, and educational reform, as it related to students with disabilities, was cited and discussed with respect to its being supportive of, or contrary to, the findings of

this study. Each section concluded with appropriate comments and personal reflections.

Findings from this study illuminated the extent to which restructuring has affected inclusive education. The significance of the impact of restructuring on the provision of inclusive education was evidenced by the numerous examples offered by participants. Specific aspects of restructuring that facilitated or constrained the provision of inclusive education were provided by the participants that served to illustrate the complex relationship between reform initiatives in general education and how they impact the provision of programs and services for students with disabilities. Educator experience and expertise was drawn upon to determine how effective inclusive education could be offered within the parameters of restructuring.

While many of the findings of this study corroborated those of previous researchers in the fields of special education and educational reform, other findings served to refute the research results in the area of educational reform. Some of the findings revealed new understandings of the impact of restructuring on programs and services for students with disabilities, and as such, added much needed data to the current void in the research in this area.

CHAPTER 6

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the study, a summary of the research findings, conclusions, recommendations for practice and future research, and a personal reflection. It is divided into four sections. The first section provides a summary of the study, that includes the purpose, significance of the study, and the research method used. Section two provides a summary of the research findings as guided by the general and subsidiary research questions. Included in those findings are a number of emergent categories and themes characterizing the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. This section also discusses the conclusions that I reached as a result of the various findings detailed in Chapter 5. In the third section, recommendations for practice and research are provided, as well as the implications arising from those recommendations. The final section of this chapter contains a personal reflection on my experience in carrying out this research.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to explore educators' understandings about the relationship between the current initiative in educational reform, namely restructuring, and programs for students with disabilities provided in inclusive classrooms. In particular, this study's primary purpose was to obtain the perceptions of teachers, principals, and central office special education

administrators regarding the specific aspects of restructuring that affect the provision of inclusive education.

Significance of the Study

Current restructuring efforts in school systems in Alberta, coupled with reform trends in special education, have created significant challenges for educators in this province. Thus far a limited amount of research has been conducted to provide specific knowledge about the effects of restructuring on programs for students who are disabled. This study served to begin to address the void in the research on the impact of this reform initiative on populations of students currently underrepresented in the literature on educational reform. This study was significant because it examined the reform initiative of restructuring from the perspective of the impact that this initiative had on inclusive education. The significance of this study has both theoretical and practical elements. Theoretical significance is related to the refinement of theory regarding how restructuring is understood by educators, how it impacts on the educational environment, and the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The practical aspect of this research for schools is reflected in the aspects of restructuring identified by educators as facilitating and constraining inclusive education and the recommendations regarding how restructuring could support inclusion in schools in Alberta.

Method

Eleven participants from a small urban and rural school division in Alberta were purposefully selected for this qualitative study. A purposive sample was selected to achieve an in-depth understanding of the selected individuals and to develop a deeper understanding about the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The sample included two principals of elementary schools, seven elementary teachers providing inclusive education to students with a range of mild, moderate, and severe disabilities, and two central office special education administrators. In keeping with the philosophy of interpretive enquiry and the design of this study, the instrument used for data collection was the semi-structured interview. Interpretive research is judged in terms of the extent to which its findings can be applied in other contexts or with other respondents. The usefulness of the findings generated by this study was facilitated by the formulation of a "thick" description of responses. The richness of responses to the open-ended questions provided data on a number of themes related to the subsidiary questions. In addition to identifying a number of emergent categories and themes, it was possible to arrive at several findings and conclusions on the effects of restructuring on inclusive education.

Summary of the Research Findings

In addition to the specific findings with respect to the general and subsidiary research questions that guided the study, a number of categories and

themes describing the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education emerged from the interview data.

Those categories and their respective themes were as follows:

Conflict. Conflict was a category exemplified by themes that highlighted the incongruity in the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education. The variance lies in comparing what participants believed was important or necessary for effective inclusive education and what they were experiencing in attempting to carry out the mandate of inclusion within the parameters of restructuring. The disparity between what they believed they should do, and what they could do, generated feelings of conflict. The themes associated with this category included: (a) imposition of a business model on education, (b) role changes from educators to managers, (c) preoccupation with funding, (d) disability as liability, (e) regular versus special education needs, and (f) creation of a principal dependent model.

Loss. The "damage resulting from losing" was the definition given to this category. Within the category of loss participants shared their understanding of the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education relative to aspects of programming perceived to be "lost" in inclusive education as a result of restructuring. Themes in this category included: (a) funding for inclusive education, (b) support of inclusion, (c) program consistency, (d) monitoring and accountability, and (e) leadership and expertise in special education.

Fear. Themes within this category described situations that participants envisioned for the future of inclusion as a result of restructuring activities. These

included: (a) staff burnout, (b) kids falling through the cracks, (c) further cutbacks in supports and services, and (d) a different future for inclusion in the division.

Empowerment. Participants identified certain aspects of restructuring that have the potential to enhance or enable inclusive education. Positive experiences with shared decision-making and school governance of inclusive education resulted in the following: (a) the use of creative problem solving, (b) enhanced understanding of student needs, (c) better decision-making, (c) more efficient and effective use of resources, (d) increased flexibility to meet individual school and student needs, and (e) increased stakeholder collaboration in the decision-making process.

This study was guided by a general research question and four subsidiary research questions. Each question, accompanied by a brief summary of a response to that question, follows.

To What Extent Did Restructuring Affect Inclusive Education?

To address the research question participants provided their understandings of inclusive education and restructuring and also described how restructuring had affected inclusive education, by describing and providing specific examples of changes that have occurred in the provision of inclusive education since the introduction of restructuring activities. A summary of the findings relative to participants' understandings of inclusive education and restructuring is as follows:

Finding 1. Inclusive education was understood as a complex pedagogical concept involving both philosophical and practical aspects. Characteristics of

inclusive education included: (a) attendance of all students at the neighborhood school, (b) placement of students with disabilities in regular classes with age appropriate peers, (c) fostering of acceptance by the community of students with disabilities, (d) provision of appropriate supports for inclusion, (e) opportunity for pull out for individual assistance, and (f) the role of parents as partners in the provision of inclusive education. Inclusive schooling was viewed as a way to build community in schools and facilitate positive social change within the school and society in general. The participants' definition of inclusive education was more comprehensive than definitions currently found in the literature and supported the suggestion by Winzer (1996) that inclusive education "defies easy interpretation." These participants' understandings of inclusion as a force for positive social change in society support the suggestions of Salisbury (1991), Laski (1991), Ramsey (1993) and Kunc (1992), who purported that inclusive education changes attitudes towards persons with disabilities and contributes to the development of tolerance in society. Participants' views that students with disabilities must be thought of as part of a pluralistic society supports the notion of Sage and Burello (1994) who argued that inclusive education facilitates "equity in society."

Finding 2. Restructuring was understood as a complex aspect of educational reform, somewhat confusing for educators. The most commonly cited restructuring initiatives, that have led to changes within the educational environment impacting on inclusive education, included: (a) school-based management, (b) school based decision-making, (c) site-based management,

and (d) school based budgeting. Aspects of restructuring, that have impacted most significantly on schools providing inclusive education, included: (a) shared decision-making, (b) work redesign, (c) organization and governance, and (d) parent involvement and choice. The manner in which restructuring activities are implemented can influence the perceived success of the restructuring activity. "Collaborative partnerships" are viewed as an effective strategy for implementing restructuring activities. On the other hand, the "top down" approach associated with government restructuring initiatives has met with negativity and hostility by these educators. The ambiguity expressed by these participants relative to their understanding of restructuring supports the research of Kirst (1992) and Goodlad (1992). The view that restructuring has been mandated by political factors outside of education is consistent with the writings of Beare and Boyd (1993), Milne (1995), Hargreaves (1998), Henderson (1995), and Conley (1993). The importance of the manner in which restructuring activities are implemented supports the views of Paul, Rosselli, and Evans (1995).

In addition to providing their understandings of inclusive education and restructuring, participants also identified a number of ways that inclusive education had been affected by restructuring. The following is a summary of the findings regarding the extent to which inclusive education has been affected by restructuring.

Finding 3. School personnel believe that they will be unable to sustain the current model of inclusive education as a result of restructuring activities that emphasize fiscal restraints and site-based management imperatives for

"balanced budgets." This issue is exacerbated when inclusion impacts on other programs and services within the school. This finding supports the research of Evans and Lunt (1993) and Lee (1991). It refutes the suggestion of Guerra et al. (1992), that site-based management should promote the inclusion of students with disabilities, and the proposal of Caldwell and Wood (1988) that site-based management holds the promise of producing substantial positive changes in schools.

Finding 4. Inclusive education as a model of program delivery for students with disabilities is "at risk of being replaced" by more "cost-effective" segregated special education programs. This finding also supports the research of Evans and Lunt (1993), as well as the concerns over people with disabilities being viewed as economic liabilities suggested by Mosert and Kaufman (1993). It refutes the ideas of those proponents of restructuring who believe that this educational reform will result in the creation of one cohesive system of education for all students (e.g., Ferguson, 1995; Guerra et al., 1992; Lipsky & Gartner, 1999).

Finding 5. Restructuring has created issues of "equity" and "economy" in relation to inclusive education and contributed to the debate among stakeholders in education regarding the "value of inclusion versus the cost of inclusion." This finding gives credence to the arguments of Gerber and Semmel (1985), as well as the "individual versus group rights" issues identified by Guthrie and Koppich (1995), in their discussions regarding the effects of societal values on educational reform. It also highlights the contention of Brown and Lauder (1992),

that educational issues are fundamentally social questions involving struggles over social justice, equity, and citizenship.

Finding 6. Restructuring has seriously affected inclusive education through government funding structures and allocation practices that have resulted in cutbacks and constraints in funding and the provision of supports for inclusion. Fiscal restraints associated with restructuring have imposed "artificial limits" on the dollars needed to provide inclusive education, and the "envelope system" has restricted the amount of centralized administrative support, resulting in a loss of centralized supports and services for inclusive education. This finding supports the research of Lee (1991) and the beliefs of Mostert and Kaufman (1993), that applying business philosophy to educational reform has a potential for negative impact on students with disabilities.

Finding 7. Funding for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities, received from government, is "not sufficient to appropriately support inclusion." This under-funding of special education has led to the practice of "subsidizing supports and services for inclusive education" from the basic instructional dollars, leading to "constraints and losses in other aspects of programming in schools."

Finding 8. The decentralization of responsibility for allocation of resources to support inclusion from central office to the schools has affected inclusive education in a number of negative ways. These included: (a) creating a shift from allocating resources to "address student need" to "the amount of funds available in the school," (b) fostering an adversarial relationship in addressing

"regular" and "special education" needs, (c) loss of economy of scale within the division in regards to the purchase of resources to support inclusion, and (d) inconsistency and inequities in programs and services from school to school within the division in the provision of inclusive education. This finding supports the research of Lee (1991), and refutes the purported benefits of decentralization for education suggested by Murphy (1991).

Finding 9. The decentralization of responsibility for allocation of resources to support inclusion from central office to the schools has forced schools to become more creative in their use of supports and resources. It also gives stakeholders a better understanding of the resources available and that can be offered for inclusive education, and results, in some cases, in more efficient and effective use of resources in support of inclusion. This finding supports the views of Lipsky and Gartner (1999) and Ferguson (1995).

Finding 10. Restructuring has resulted in changes in roles and relationships of stakeholders involved in the provision of inclusive education. This finding is consistent with Murphy's (1991) description of work redesign, an aspect of the structural changes associated with restructuring.

Finding 11. Relative to role changes, principals and central office special education administrators are spending an inordinate amount of time on bureaucratic managerial tasks since the implementation of school-based management. This change has resulted in less time available for them to support teachers and students in the provision of inclusive education. This finding supports the research of Delaney (1995) and Yanitsky (1997).

Finding 12. Also relative to role changes associated with restructuring, teachers' involvement in school based decision-making has reduced the amount of time that they devote to planning and program development for students with disabilities.

Finding 13. School-based management has contributed to the development of an adversarial relationship between principals and central office special education administrators surrounding issues in the use of funding for inclusive education.

Finding 14. School based decision-making has changed the relationship between the school and community relative to the provision of inclusive education. It has facilitated linkages between the school and community, in that it has fostered collaboration between the staff and principal and the school and the community, in decisions made regarding inclusive education. This finding supports the research of Ferguson (1995) in special education, and the suggestions of Murphy (1991) regarding educational reform.

Finding 15. Accountability and monitoring in inclusive education has changed as a result of decentralization of this responsibility from central office to the schools, and this change has contributed to an "erosion in the provision of supports and services" for inclusion. Both special education teacher positions and school counselor positions, the main support for students with disabilities in inclusive settings, have been reduced in schools since the implementation of school-based management.

Finding 16. The standards developed by the division to ensure appropriate inclusive programming have been ignored within the decentralized model of special education administration.

The relationship between restructuring and inclusive education is characterized by a number of themes in four compelling categories. These include; conflict, loss, fear, and empowerment. Restructuring initiatives, particularly those mandated by government, have had significant effects on the provision of inclusive education, the majority of which have been negative. Educators in this school division are feeling so overwhelmed by their inability to provide effective inclusion within the parameters of government restructuring that serious consideration is being given to abandoning inclusive education in favor of a more cost effective segregated special education model of program delivery.

What Specific Aspects of Restructuring are Perceived by Teachers, Principals, and Central Office Special Education Administrators to Facilitate Inclusive Education?

To address this research question participants identified specific aspects of restructuring that, in their experience, facilitate the provision of inclusive education. By drawing on their experiences of the past few years they were able to share their expertise in this area. The following is a summary of those aspects of restructuring that facilitate inclusive education.

Finding 17. The opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in decisions about inclusion has facilitated inclusive education. Increased collaboration among stakeholders involved in the provision of inclusion and better

understanding by stakeholders of the supports and services required for inclusion are two of the benefits associated with the involvement of stakeholders in the decision-making process. Increased collaboration among stakeholders as a result of shared decision-making is a finding of this study consistent with the investigations of Liontos and Lashway (1997).

Finding 18. Shared decision-making between stakeholders involved in the provision of inclusion has resulted in increased flexibility in schools in the provision of supports and services for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. This finding supports the work of Lipsky and Gartner (1999) and Ferguson (1995), who suggested that restructuring activities "increased flexibility in schools in the provision of supports and services resulting in greater accommodation of students with special needs in regular classrooms."

Finding 19. The local nature of the decision-making process and the lack of delay between the time of the decision and implementation has facilitated inclusion by reducing bureaucracy in the decision-making process and allowing those closest to the students to make the "best" decisions regarding delivery of inclusive education.

Finding 20. The devolution of authority for inclusive education has "empowered stakeholders" to work together for a common goal and has given schools the autonomy to use their professional knowledge and judgement in the delivery of inclusive programs. The benefits of this aspect of restructuring are consistent with those alluded to by a number of writers and researchers in the literature on restructuring (e.g., David, 1991; White, 1989; Williams, 1995;

Wohlstetter, 1995). This finding also supports the work of Berreth (1988), who suggested that "Restructuring of governance is a complex issue for special education. At its best, it can bring a school closer together through a sense of shared responsibility and authority" (p. 45).

Aspects of restructuring involving shared decision-making and the devolution of authority to the school site were those most often cited by participants as facilitating inclusion. Ways that restructuring facilitated inclusive education included: (a) providing the opportunity for stakeholders to be involved in decisions about inclusion, (b) increasing the flexibility of schools in decisions regarding inclusion, (c) facilitating the immediate and local nature of the decision-making process, and (d) facilitating the devolution of authority for inclusive education to the school site.

What Specific Aspects of Restructuring Are Perceived by Teachers, Principals, and Central Office Special Education Administrators to Constrain Inclusive Education?

Participants were asked to draw upon their experiences in providing inclusion within the parameters of restructuring and identify those aspects of restructuring that, in their opinion, constrained inclusive education. The following are the findings related to their responses to this question.

Finding 21. The philosophical underpinnings of a business model that emphasizes competition, cost effectiveness, accountability, and student learning as a market commodity, have been identified as barriers in the provision of inclusion. This finding supports the concern among writers and researchers in the

field of special education regarding the effects of a business model on the provision of inclusion (e.g., Henderson, 1995; Mostert & Kauffman,1993; Shaw, 1990; Vincent et al.,1994).

Finding 22. Changes in government funding practices of "capping" allocations for students with severe disabilities and "embedding" the allocation for students with mild and moderate disabilities within the basic school grant have constrained the provision of inclusive education by reducing the funding available for appropriate supports and services.

Finding 23. Lack of sufficient government funding for special education has impeded schools in their ability to comply with the mandate of Alberta Learning that states, "Schools are charged with the responsibility of meeting the needs of students with disabilities." This same lack of funding has limited the number of students with disabilities that can be supported within an inclusive model. The greatest concern is for students who are considered in the mild and moderate categories of disabilities who are "falling through the cracks" due to the lack of appropriate funding.

Finding 24. The change in funding practices by both the government and division has resulted in an increase in the practice of "labeling students as disabled" in order for schools to generate more special education funding. This finding is consistent with the research of Evans and Lunt (1993).

Finding 25. The decentralization of the responsibility for program delivery and monitoring of inclusive education to the school site, implemented through school-based management, has caused inclusive education to be over-

dependent on the leadership style, knowledge, and philosophy of the principal in the school. This finding supports the work of Sergiovanni (1992), Barth (1990), Fullan (1993), and Delaney (1995), who described the significance of the leadership role of the principal in current initiatives in educational reform.

Finding 26. Complete decentralization of the responsibility for special education to the school site has created a "leadership vacuum" in special education within the division. As well, the elimination of centralized supports and services has left the division in a situation of being "expertise poor."

A number of specific aspects of restructuring were identified that constrain the provision of inclusive education. Among the most significant of these are the philosophical underpinnings of a business model that are incongruent with the philosophy of inclusive education and the emphasis on fiscal restraint and funding structures that restrict the provision of supports and services for students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. In addition, the complete decentralization of responsibility for special education to the school site through the school-based management model has resulted in constraints in the areas of monitoring and accountability in special education.

How Could Effective Inclusive Education be Provided Within the Parameters of Restructuring?

In order to address this question participants were asked to consider how effective inclusive education could be provided within the parameters of restructuring. They were given the opportunity to reflect and dream about "how things could be made better." Their responses were insightful and representative

of the common sense that many educators possess. In the opinion of these participants,restructuring has the potential to provide an environment for effective inclusive education if the following changes are implemented.

Finding 27. In order to provide effective inclusive education within a restructured system of education it is essential that educators be "allowed to refocus on matters of education" as their primary mandate. Streamlining the current decision-making process and providing a clear delineation of decisions that school staff want and should be involved in, and those that can be left to division special education administrators in the area of inclusive education, is required.

Finding 28. Establishing a balance between central office roles, responsibilities, authority, and decision-making relative to inclusive education and those of school personnel is required, in short, a balance between centralized and decentralized governance of special education.

Finding 29. In order for restructuring initiatives such as school-based management and school based decision-making to support the provision of inclusive education, sufficient levels of government funding in support of "actual costs" for provision of inclusive education are needed. As well, the constraining funding structures imposed by government, such as the "envelope system" and "cash for coding" of students as disabled, must be eliminated.

Finding 30. Specific attributes, skills, and knowledge are required by principals to provide effective leadership within a school offering inclusive education.

Four specific strategies that could make all the difference in the world for educators and students with disabilities stand between sense and nonsense. Getting back to the "business of education," creating a more realistic balance between centralized and decentralized roles and responsibilities, appropriate and accessible funding, and putting the right individuals as leaders in inclusive schools were identified by participants as how effective inclusive education could occur within the parameters of restructuring.

Given the responses to the subsidiary research questions, I would now like to comment on the general research question. Participants in this study have a negative perception of what they termed "government restructuring" and its effects on their efforts to provide inclusive education. They provided numerous examples of the various ways that restructuring has affected the provision of inclusive education within their schools and the division. Also in their perceptions is a small glimmer of hope within this reform initiative, the empowering aspects of shared decision-making and devolution of authority for delivery of inclusion to the schools and a realization of the potential for restructuring to facilitate the effective delivery of inclusive education.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions were reached regarding the effects of restructuring on inclusive education.

Conclusion 1. *Inclusive education is a complex pedagogical concept involving both philosophical and practical aspects and is viewed by some*

educators as a way to build community in schools and facilitate positive social change.

These educators identified six characteristics associated with inclusive education and perceived inclusive schooling to be a vehicle for creating positive social change both within the school and surrounding community.

Conclusion 2. *Restructuring is an aspect of educational reform that is subject to a variety of interpretations by educators.*

The confusion for these educators relative to restructuring is due to a lack of understanding and differentiation between the various initiatives implemented as a result of restructuring. Those creating the most confusion for participants in this study included: school based decision-making, school-based management, school based budgeting, and site-based management.

Conclusion 3. *Strategies used in the implementation of restructuring initiatives affect the perceived success of the restructuring activities.*

When restructuring initiatives were perceived by these educators to be implemented using a "top down" strategy, they were met with suspicion, negativity and hostility. On the other hand, when a more collaborative strategy involving both school and central office personnel was used, such as the approach taken by the division in the implementation of the "neighborhood school" model of inclusion, then educators viewed the restructuring activity as positive and effective. This strategy identified by Paul, Rosselli, and Evans (1995)

as "collaborative partnerships," is an effective approach to the implementation of restructuring activities.

Conclusion 4. *The relationship between restructuring and inclusive education can be characterized in terms of conflict, loss, fear, and empowerment.*

Discussing the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education generated a powerful range of emotions from teachers, principals, and special education administrators involved in this study. While the majority of the feelings expressed were negative, there was some hope expressed by these individuals in terms of the empowerment felt as a result of the involvement of stakeholders providing inclusive education, in activities fostering shared decision-making.

Conclusion 5. *The ability of schools to sustain inclusive education has been constrained by restructuring activities to the point where a return to segregated special education programs is being considered for some students who are disabled, as a cost effective alternative to inclusion.*

Fiscal restraints associated with restructuring and site-based management imperatives for "balanced budgets" are creating situations in schools where it is impossible for them to sustain appropriate models of inclusive education. Issues of "equity" versus "economy" and "individual" versus "group" needs and rights are adding to the stress of educators trying to maintain inclusive education.

Conclusion 6. *Restructuring initiatives have seriously affected inclusive education through government funding structures and allocation practices, that have resulted in cutbacks and constraints in funding and the provision of supports for inclusion.*

These participants believed that the fiscal restraints associated with restructuring have imposed "artificial limits" on the dollars provided for inclusive education, and the government mandated "envelope system" has restricted the amount of centralized administrative support, resulting in a loss of centralized supports and services for inclusion. They feel that the under-funding of special education for students with mild, moderate, and severe disabilities has led to the practice of subsidizing supports and services for inclusive education from the basic instructional dollars, leading to constrains and losses in other aspects of programming in schools.

Conclusion 7. *The decentralization from central office to the school site, of the responsibility for allocation of resources, has affected inclusive education in both positive and negative ways.*

Decentralization from central office to the school site, of the responsibility for allocation of resources, has had a positive effect on inclusive education in the following ways: (a) forced schools to become more creative in their use of supports and services for inclusion, (b) provided stakeholders with a better understanding of the resources available for inclusive education, and (c) resulted in more effective and efficient use of resources to support inclusive education. In addition to the positive effects, these educators also identified a number of negative effects on inclusive education from the decentralization of responsibility for resource allocation. These included: (a) a shift from allocating resources to "address student need" to "the amount of funds available "in the school, (b) creating an adversarial relationship between support of "regular" and

"special education" needs, (c) loss of economy of scale within the division in regards to purchase of resources to support inclusion, and (d) inconsistency and inequities in programs and services from school to school within the division in implementing inclusive education.

Conclusion 8. *Restructuring has resulted in changes in the roles and relationships of stakeholders involved in the provision of inclusive education.*

Relative to the role changes associated with restructuring, principals and central office special education administrators are now spending an increased amount of time on bureaucratic managerial tasks that are taking them away from their role as support personnel to teachers and students in the provision of inclusive education. The change in roles for teachers is resulting in a reduction in the amount of time that they spend in planning and program development for students with disabilities. The changes in relationships among stakeholders providing inclusive education has resulted in the development of an adversarial relationship between principals and central office special education administrators, particularly in issues surrounding the use of funding for inclusive education. On the other hand, the changes in relationship between the school and community has been affected positively, in that restructuring has facilitated linkages between the school and community, that did not previously exist, and fostered collaboration between school staff and the community on decisions regarding inclusive education.

Conclusion 9. *Accountability, monitoring, and adherence to division standards in inclusive education have been lost as a result of the decentralization of special education to the schools.*

Teachers, principals, and special education administrators indicated that, in their perception, decentralization of special education to the school site has resulted in an erosion in supports and services for inclusion. Since the implementation of site-based management special education teacher positions and counselor positions have been reduced in schools. Of concern for these individuals is the perception that standards developed by the division to ensure appropriate inclusive programming have been ignored as a result of the decentralized model of special education administration.

Conclusion 10. *Shared decision-making is an aspect of restructuring that facilitates inclusion education.*

Shared decision-making facilitated inclusive education in the following ways: (a) providing stakeholders with the opportunity to be involved in decisions about inclusion, (b) providing increased flexibility in schools in the provision of supports and services for students with disabilities, and (c) reducing the delay between the time of a decision and its implementation.

Conclusion 11. *The devolution of authority for inclusive education has empowered stakeholders to work together for a common goal and given them the autonomy to use their professional knowledge and judgement in the delivery of inclusive programs.*

Teachers and principals believed that they possessed an intimate

knowledge about the needs of the students with disabilities in their schools. The

devolution of authority to the schools in the delivery of inclusion gave these

individuals the "freedom" to use their professional knowledge and experience in

an effective and efficient manner in the provision of inclusive education.

Conclusion 12. *The philosophical underpinnings of a business model,*

that emphasize competition, cost effectiveness, and student learning as a market

commodity are a barrier in the provision of inclusive education.

According to participants in this study, the features of a business model

introduced into the educational environment through restructuring initiatives were

counterproductive to the goals of inclusive education.

Conclusion 13. *Changes in funding practices in special education,*

implemented by the government as a result of restructuring, have constrained the

provision of inclusive education.

These educators identified a number of issues relative to the changes in

funding practices for special education, that have affected the provision of

inclusive education. They believed that their ability to comply with the mandates

of Alberta Learning has been impeded due to lack of sufficient funding in special

education. They also believed that students, particularly those in the mild and

moderate categories of disabilities, are "falling through the cracks" and not

having their educational needs met due to lack of supports and services. These

educators also believed that the change in funding practices had resulted in an

increase in the practice of "labeling students as disabled" in order for schools to generate more special education funding.

Conclusion 14. *Inclusive education has become over-dependent on the leadership style, knowledge, and philosophy of the principal.*

All of the participants agreed that, since the decentralization of the responsibility for inclusive education to the schools, inclusion had become over-dependent on the principal. This was particularly constraining for inclusion when the principal lacked knowledge and expertise in special education or had a personal philosophy contrary to that of inclusive education.

Conclusion 15. *Decentralization of special education to the school site has resulted in a leadership vacuum in special education and left the school division in a situation of being expertise poor.*

The experience of these educators highlighted a serious side effect of the complete decentralization of special education to the school site. These individuals believed that one of the major negative effects of decentralization was the loss of leadership and expertise in the area of special education, that occurred as a result of the elimination of centralized administration and supports for special education.

Conclusion 16. *Effective inclusive education can occur within the parameters of restructuring if appropriate and immediate changes are implemented.*

Participants in this study believed that effective inclusive education was feasible within the parameters of restructuring if the following changes were implemented: (a) allow educators to refocus on matters of education, (c) establish a balance between central office and school roles, responsibilities, authority, and decision-making relative to inclusive education, (c) provide government funding for special education based on "actual costs," and (d) ensure principals have the skills, knowledge and attributes needed to provide effective leadership in inclusive education.

Conclusion 17. The findings indicated that the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education is more complex than indicated by the conceptual framework derived from the literature. *The relationship between restructuring and inclusive education is characterized by changes in the general educational environment that serve to both constrain and facilitate the provision of inclusive education.*

Recommendations and Implications

The findings and conclusions from this study present several recommendations and accompanying implications of relevance to the field in terms of practice and of research.

Recommendations for Practice

The following recommendations for practice have been gleaned from the conclusions drawn from the data provided by participants in this study.

Recommendation 1. *The school community, together with central office personnel, should address the future direction of inclusive education in this*

division. Fear and speculation over the future of inclusion is creating significant stress and anxiety for teachers and principals. One can only speculate on the effects that this level of anxiety is having on the parents of students with disabilities, as well as the students themselves. While the neighborhood school model has provided these individuals with both a philosophical and practical framework for inclusion in the past, it is time to review this model of inclusive education in light of restructuring. Regardless of whether the decision is to retain this model in its present form, change it to accommodate the restructured school division, or eliminate it altogether and replace it with something different, some form of action is needed. It is crucial that these educators take control over the future direction of special education in this division and regain a sense of direction in programming for students with disabilities. The "collaborative partnership" was a strategy that worked effectively for these individuals in the development of the neighborhood school model: this same strategy could be used to develop the future model of special education programming in this division.

Recommendation 2. *A balance between central office and school roles, responsibilities, authority, and decision-making, relative to inclusive education should be established and clearly articulated to all stakeholders.* One of the major conclusions of this study suggested that a number of issues relative to the relationship between restructuring and inclusive education were focused on the lack of clarity regarding who was responsible for what in the provision of inclusive education. Although decentralization in decision-making and the devolution of

authority for delivery and monitoring of special education to the schools was the expressed understanding of participants, many were unclear about what that really looked like. Participants believed that since no one knew who was doing what, in reality, no one was doing anything. The conclusions indicated that there are perceived benefits in having a balance between centralized and decentralized roles, responsibilities, authority, and decision-making. The benefits for inclusion included: (a) an economy of scale in the purchasing of resources and services to support students with disabilities, (b) elimination of inconsistency and inequities in program delivery and supports for inclusion throughout the division, (c) fostering of a division vision and leadership in special education, and (d) provision of a pool of readily available expertise for all schools in the provision of inclusive education.

Recommendation 3. *The division should ensure that principals have the skills, knowledge, and attributes needed to provide effective leadership in inclusive education.* The principal has been identified as a key player in the provision of inclusive education. He or she must take a leadership role in the provision of inclusive education within a restructured system of education. It is not enough to state that principals must possess certain knowledge, skills, and attributes to be instructional leaders in an inclusive school. The division must actualize this belief through its criteria for the selection of principals, and foster the skills and knowledge required by these individuals through an ongong program of professional development in special education, educational change, and the effects of educational reform on students with disabilities.

Recommendation 4. *Shared decision- making is an aspect of*

restructuring that can be used to facilitate inclusive education and should be

fostered and encouraged in schools. Participants identified this aspect of

restructuring as one of the most effective in facilitating inclusion within the

division. They described a number of examples of the different ways that schools

used shared decision-making to foster inclusion. A process for sharing these

strategies among schools in the division, and the provision of professional

development for all stakeholders in the development of skills required for

effective shared decision-making, would benefit those individuals providing

inclusive education.

Recommendation 5. *School communities, the community at large, and*

the division central office administration should respond to the politicized climate

of this province by lobbying for greater funding in special education, by providing

examples of actual costs for inclusion in order to heighten public awareness

regarding the serious under-funding in special education. One of the major

conclusions of this study was that the fiscal restraints associated with

restructuring and the government cutbacks in funding for special education have

resulted in a situation within the educational system of insufficient funding to

support inclusive education. The negative effects of insufficient funding on

inclusion were identified by participants as the following: (a) creation of an

adversarial relationship between regular and special education needs,

(b) increase in the practice of labeling students as disabled, (c) reduction in

supports and services for inclusion, and (d) fostering a perception of disability as

liability within schools. These schools displayed a willingness and capability to provide effective inclusive education within the restructured system of education. However, without sufficient funding, their hands are tied in terms of providing effective inclusive education, and the future of all students, including those with disabilities, is being compromised.

Recommendations for Research

Recommendation 6. A conclusion of this study indicated that supports and services for inclusion had been lost as a result of restructuring activities. Participants were concerned that the quality of programming for students with disabilities was adversely affected by the reduction in supports and services. Their biggest fear was that students with disabilities would end up being "warehoused" in regular classrooms without the opportunity to be supported in their learning needs. *It would be worthwhile to explore the impact of the reduction in supports and services associated with restructuring on the learning of students with disabilities.* Some researchers in educational reform, such as Murphy (1991) and David (1989), have indicated that the purpose of restructuring is to improve student learning. Educators in this study would argue that economic efficiency is the real motive for the current restructuring initiative. The desire by government to obtain the same or better educational outcomes with less economic cost is, in their perception, affecting the provision of inclusive education. Research into the learning outcomes of students with disabilities within restructured schools would provide interesting insights into the effects of reform initiatives on the learning of this population of students.

Recommendation 7. This study focused on the perceptions of teachers, principals, and special education administrators relative to the effects of restructuring on inclusive education. *The perceptions of parents should be studied in order to broaden the research relative to the effects of reform initiatives on students with disabilities.* Parents are cited as important partners in the definition of inclusive education purported by these participants. Parents have also been identified as the first, or primary teachers of their children by politicians in this province. However, the voice of parents has remained remarkably silent in the literature on educational reform in general, and particularly, in studies on restructuring. Fullan (1999) speaks about the need for educators to reach out into the community through dialogue and research. Investigating the perception of parents with and without students with disabilities relative to restructuring and its effects on inclusive education would provide a vehicle for extending the research into the broader educational community.

Recommendation 8. This research was concerned with the effects of restructuring on that model of program delivery in special education known as inclusive education. There are, however, a number of school jurisdictions in Alberta who provide a continuum of programs and services in special education reflective of the cascade model of program delivery in special education. Students with disabilities are served in these jurisdictions through both inclusive, and varying degrees of segregated, models of special education. *It would be worthwhile to carry out this study in a school division providing the continuum of programs and services in special education.* The findings could be compared to

the results of this study to determine how the effects of restructuring are similar

or different relative to the type of special education model being implemented.

Recommendation 9. This research was initiated to examine the effects

of educational reforms on programs and services for students with disabilities. As

such it served to address a void in this area of research. One study contributes to

but does not fill a void. The findings of this study suggested that reform initiatives

in general education impacted significantly on students with disabilities and yet

the perspective of these students is not frequently presented in the literature on

educational reform. More research is needed in the area of educational reform

and its effects on students with disabilities. *Studies comparing the differences in*

effects of reform initiatives between so-called "regular" students and those with

"disabilities" would be worthwhile. If a unitary system of education is a true goal,

then it is imperative that information on the effects of reform initiatives on all

participants in the education system be gathered and reflected upon.

Recommendation 10. *An important recommendation for future research*

is the extension of the conceptual framework developed from the literature in

Chapter 2. The findings from this study indicated that the relationship between

restructuring and inclusive education is more complex than current literature

indicates. An expanded conceptual framework, Figure 2, emerged from the

findings of this study that represents the complex relationship between

restructuring and inclusive education. The expanded conceptual framework

indicates that the forces driving restructuring have created changes within the

general educational environment in broad-based areas such as assumptions,

practices, and relationships. Changes in assumptions include the beliefs and·

values held by educators relative to their purpose and mandate in providing an

inclusive education. Changes in practices included: (a) funding structures,

(b) allocation of resources, (c) accountability, and (d) monitoring of programs.

The third area, relationships, was evidenced by changes in the roles of

stakeholders in education and the interactions between stakeholders within the

educational environment. As educators respond to and incorporate these

changes into the school environment, the changes serve to either constrain or

facilitate the provision of inclusive education. A premise of this study was that the

education of students with disabilities is explicitly bound to current initiatives in

reform within general education, and understanding that relationship contributes

to the development of a "deeper" understanding of school reform and a shared

educational agenda between regular and special education. The expanded

conceptual framework demonstrates how reform in general education ultimately

affects special education. As such, it adds to the knowledge and understanding

of the effects of change in general education on programs and services for

students with disabilities. It also serves to highlight the increasing emergence of

a shared educational agenda between regular and special education. Continued

research in this area and refinement of the framework would serve to expand the

parameters of research in educational reform and reduce the current

"exclusionary" nature of this type of research.
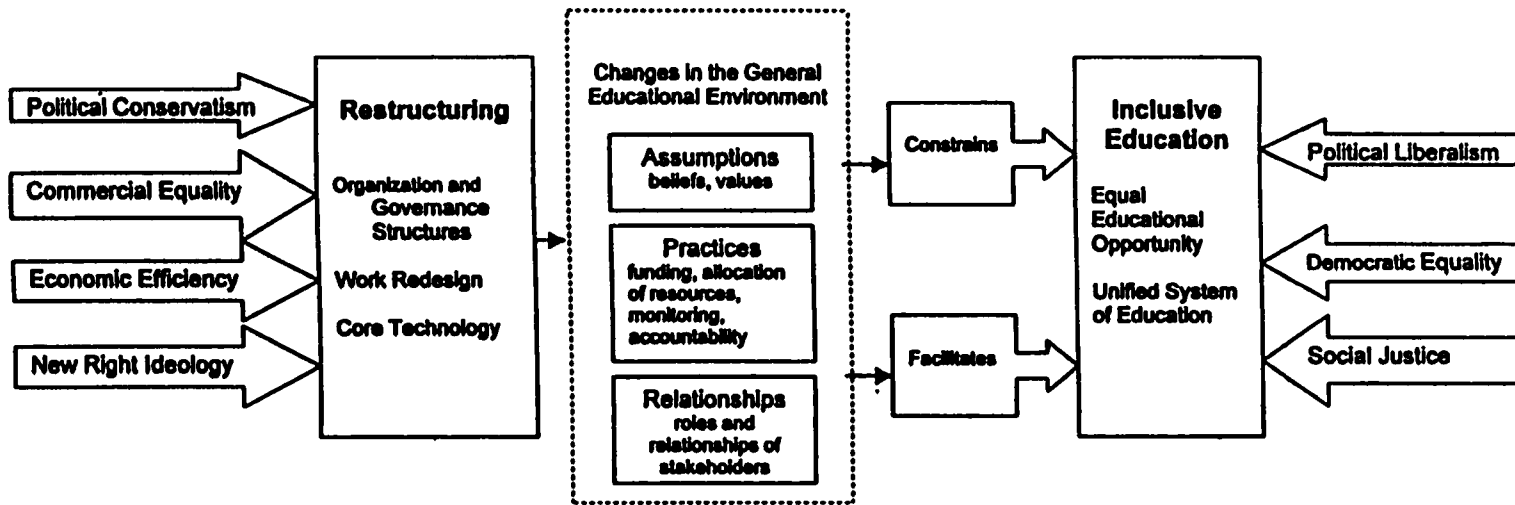
Figure 2. The relationship between restructuring and inclusive education is characterized by changes in the general educational environment in the areas of assumptions, practices, and relationships that serve to constrain or facilitate the provision of inclusive education.

Personal Reflections

The world is round,
and the place which may seem like the end
may also be only the beginning.
(Ivy Baker Priest)

John Dewey suggested that we do not learn from experience but rather we learn from reflecting on experience. When I started my doctoral studies I had far different expectations and beliefs about what I would experience, what I might learn, and how long the journey would last. And although I am at the end of this study I feel as though I am just beginning to understand the intricacies of research, the significance of change and educational reform on the lives of educators and students, and my strength and determination as a writer and researcher. This section contains my personal reflections on the experience of conducting research for this study. I would particularly like to share my thoughts on two aspects of this experience, the research topic and the interpretive qualitative method.

The Research Topic

The education of students with disabilities has been a focal point in my career as an educator. This study provided me with the opportunity to examine the impact of current reforms in education on the schooling of this particular group of students. My experience in conducting this research has lead me to agree with researchers and writers like Stakes and Hornby (1997), who suggested that "the field of special education is in a state of turmoil" (p. 2). At the

beginning of this study, I had anticipated that the initiatives associated with

restructuring would have some affect on programs and services for students with

disabilities. After examining the literature on restructuring, I had initially concurred

with writers like David (1989), Murphy (1991), Ferguson (1995), and others, in

believing that restructuring had the potential to change schools in ways that

would enhance their capacity to provide an effective education for all students,

including those with disabilities. I was certain that restructuring could facilitate

inclusive education by increasing the capacity of schools to program for students

with individual differences and ultimately facilitate the creation of a unitary system

of education. I realize now that when I started this study I had a very superficial

understanding of the forces driving educational reform and the nature and

purpose of the restructuring movement. I was not expecting to find the extent of

negative impact that this reform initiative has had on programs and services for

students with disabilities. This study caused me to "go deeper" in my

understanding of the nature of educational reform and the philosophical forces

driving current reform initiatives. My experience in entering the field to gain the

perceptions of educators working directly with this population of students has

opened my eyes to the reality of the current situation in special education within

schools. It has also reinforced my belief in the need for further study in the area

of educational reform and its effects on special education. My experience in

gathering and analyzing the data for this study has strengthened my resolve to

continue advocating for research investigating the effects of reform initiatives on

the population of students, namely those with disabilities, whose presence is missing within the literature on educational reform.

The Interpretive Qualitative Method

Using a qualitative approach to research was a new experience for me and, admittedly, old habits associated with quantitative research methods die-hard. The most challenging aspect of engaging in qualitative research was letting go of my preoccupation with objectivity. Once I was able to recognize and readily admit that I have biases and preconceived assumptions that influence my research, and also that meaning is influenced by context, I found that I was drawn to the "humanness" of the interpretive perspective. Schwandt (1994) indicated that interpretivist views are decades from their origins in challenges to scientism, and that the main thrust of interpretive research is to restore a primary focus on human inquiry of lived experience. They stated that, "To understand this world of meaning one must interpret it and the inquirer must elucidate the process of meaning construction and clarify what and how meanings are embodied in the language and actions of social actors" (p. 118). The participants in this study allowed me to enter their social situation and provided a variety of perspectives on the effects of restructuring on inclusive education. I now believe that a survey or other quantitative approach would not have provided the "depth of insight" into the problem under study as acquired through the qualitative research method. I also see tremendous potential in using qualitative research methods in addressing those unique issues surrounding the provision of

education to students who are disabled and who have consistently been over-

looked or excluded from current research in educational reform.

Concluding Comment

This study examined the relationship between restructuring and inclusive

education. Through the findings of this study and the conclusions originating out

of those findings, the effects of restructuring on inclusive education were

discerned and discussed. Recommendations and implications for practice and

research were derived from the conclusions and presented for reference by the

reader. This study also served to illuminate the effects of initiatives in educational

reform on a population of students not typically represented in the literature on

reform in education. It presented several benefits to those participating in the

study because it provided participants with a voice to express their interpretations

of and experiences with restructuring, and also gave them the opportunity to

share their expertise regarding those aspects of restructuring that facilitated and

constrained inclusive education.

References

Alberta School Act. (1988). Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, AB: Canada.

Alberta Teachers' Association. (1993). *Trying to teach.* Report of the Committee on Public Education and Professional Practice, Alberta Teachers Association, Edmonton, AB: Canada.

Bailey, W. J. (1991). *School-site management applied.* Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Baines, L. (1997). Future schlock: Using fabricated data and politically correct platitudes in the name of education reform. *Phi Delta Kappan*, March, 493-498.

Ballard, K. (1999). *Inclusive education: International voices on disability and justice.* Philadelphia, PA: Falmer.

Barth, R.S. (1990). *Improving schools from within.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Barton, L. (1999). Market ideologies, education and the challenge for inclusion. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds.), *Inclusive education (pp. 54-62).* London: Kogan Page.

Bauer, S. C. (1992). Myth, consensus and change. *The Executive Educator*, July.

Beare, H. (1990). An educator speaks to his grandchildren: *Some aspects of schooling in the new world context.* Monograph # 8, Australian Council for Educational Administration.

Beare, H., & Boyd, L. W. (1993). *Restructuring schools: An international perspective on the movement to transform the control and performance of schools.* London: Falmer.

Berg, B. L. (1989). *Qualitative research methods in social science.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Berreth, D.G. (1988). Restructuring schools. *Teaching Exceptional Children*, Fall, 44-45.

Bishop, K. D., Foster, W., & Jubala, K. A. (1993). The social construction of disability in education: Organizational considerations. In C. A. Capper (Ed). *Educational administration in a pluralistic society* (pp. 173-202). Albany, NY: State University of New York.

Black-Branch, J.L. (1993). Legal and judicial impacts of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms on expanding the rights of exceptional students in Canada. *International Journal of Special Education, 8*(2), 169-177. .

Blackman, H.P. (1989). Special education placement: Is it what you know or where you live? *Exceptional Children, 55,* 459-462.

Bogdan, R., & Biklen, S. (1982). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods.* Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Braaten, B., & Braaten, S. (1988). Reform: For everyone? *Teaching Exceptional Children,* Fall, 46-47.

Britton, S. C. (1994). *Strategies for restructuring Manitoba secondary schools.* Brandon, Manitoba, Canada: Brandon University.

Brown, D. (1990). *Decentralization and school-based management.* New York: Falmer.

Brown, D. (1991). *Decentralization.* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Brown, J., & Lauder, S. (1992). In In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds.), (1999). *Inclusive education.* London: Kogan Page.

Bunch, G., & Valeo, A. (1997). *Inclusion: Recent research.* Toronto: Inclusion Press.

Bunin, A. (1996). The nature of site-based management. *Canadian School Executive, 16*(5): 20-24.

Burrell, G., & Morgan, G. (1979). *Sociological paradigms and organizational analysis.* London: Heineman.

Burello, L. (1995). *School changes which facilitate inclusion.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Byrnes, M. (1990). The regular education initiative debate: A view from the field. *Exceptional Children, 56,* 345-349.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J.M. (1988). *The self-managing school.* New York: Falmer.

Caldwell, S., & Wood, F. (1988). School-based improvement - are we ready? *Educational Leadership*, October: 50-53.

Capper, C. A. (1993). *Educational administration in a pluralistic society.* Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Chrispeels, J. H. (1992). *Purposeful restructuring.* Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Chubb, J. E., & Moe, T. M. (1990). *Politics, markets, and America's schools.* Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.

Conley, D.T. (1993). *Roadmap to restructuring: Policies, practices and the emerging visions of schooling.* Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

Creswell, J. W. (1994). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions.* London: Sage.

Crokett, J. B. & Kauffman, J. M. (1998). Taking inclusion back to its roots. *Educational Leadership*, October, 74-77.

Cuban,L. (1996). Myths about changing schools and the case of special education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 17 (2), 75-82.

Dalin, P. (1996). Can schools learn? Preparing for the 21st century. *School Bulletin*, January: 9-13.

Daniels, H. & Garner, P. (Eds.) (1999). *Inclusive education.* London: Kogan Page.

David, J.L. (1989). Synthesis of research on school-based management. *Educational Leadership*, May: 45-53.

Delaney, J. G. (1995). *School-based management & school improvement.* Doctoral dissertation, University of Alberta.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dimmock, C. (1995). Restructuring for school effectiveness: Leading, organizing and teaching for effective learning. *Educational Management and Administration*, 23(1): 5-18.

Dimmock, C. (Ed.) (1993). *School-based management and school effectiveness.* New York: Routledge.

Dinning, J. (1991). *Vision for the nineties...a plan of action.* Queen's Printer for Alberta, Edmonton, AB: Canada.

Dyson, A. (1999). Inclusion and inclusions: theories and discourses in inclusive education. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds), *Inclusive education (pp. 36-53).* London: Kogan Page.

Dyson, A. (1990). Special educational needs and the concept of change. *Oxford Review of Education, 16*(1), 55-66.

Evans, J. & Lunt, I. (1992). Developments in special education under LMS. London: Institute of Education, University of London.

Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (1993). Special educational provision after LMS. *British Journal of Special Education, 20*(2), 59-62.

Evans, J., & Lunt, I. (1994). *Markets, competition and vulnerability: Some effects of recent legislation on children with special needs.* London: University of London.

Evans, D., & Panacek-Howell, L. (1995). Restructuring education: National reform in regular education. In J. Paul, H. Rosselli, & D. Evans (Eds.). *Integrating school restructuring and special education reform (pp. 30-43).* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Ferguson, D. L. (1995). The real challenge of inclusion: Confessions of a 'rabid inclusionist'. *Phi Delta Kappan,* December, 281-287.

Fishkin, A., & Sullivan, M. (1993). *Reforming special education.* Paper presented at West Virginia Graduate College, WA.

Fleming, T. (1993). Canadian school policy in Liberal and post-liberal eras: Historical perspectives on the changing social context of schooling, 1864-1990. In Martin, Y. & MacPherson, R.J.S. (Eds.). *Restructuring administrative policy in public schools.* Calgary, AB, Canada: Detselig.

Foucault, M. (1983). The subject and power. In H.L. Dreyfus & P. Rabinbow (Eds.), *Michel Foucault: Beyond structuralism and heremeneutics* (pp. 208-226). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Fuchs, D., & Fuchs, L. S. (1995). What's 'special' about special education? *Phi Delta Kappan,* March: 522-530.

Fullan, M. (1999). *Change forces: The sequel.* Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform.* Bristol, PA: Falmer.

Fullan, M. (1991). Arming yourself with knowledge of the change process. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.* Front Royal, VA: National Cassette Services.

Fullan, M., & Hargreaves, A. (1991). *What's worth fighting for? Working together for your school.* Toronto: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation.

Gall, M., Borg, W., & Gall, J. (1996). *Educational research: an introduction* (6th ed.). White Plains, NY: Longman.

Gartner, A., & Lipsky, D. K. (1987). Beyond special education: Toward a quality system for all students. *Harvard Educational Review, 57,* 367-395.

Gerber, M.M. (1995). Inclusion at the high-water mark? Some thoughts on Zigmond and Baker's case studies of inclusive educational programs. *Journal of Special Education, 29*(2), 181-191.

Gerber, M. W. (1994). Postmodernism in special education. *Journal of Special Education, 28*(3), 368-78.

Gerber, M. M., & Semmel, M. I. (1985). Teacher as imperfect test: Reconceptualizing the referral process. *Educational Psychologist, 19,* 137-148.

Glesne,C., & Peshkin, A. (1992). *Becoming qualitative researchers.* White Plains, NY: Longman.

Glickman, C. (1993). *Renewing America's schools.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Glickman, C. (1991). Reshaping schools: No longer pretending not to know what we know. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.* Front Royal, VA: National Cassette Services.

Goodlad, J. I. (1984). *A place called school: Prospects for the future.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

Goodlad, J. I. (1992). In C. Reavis & H. Griffith (Eds). *Restructuring schools: Theory and practice.* Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Goor, M.B. (1995). *Leadership for special education administration.* Orlando, FA: Harcourt Brace.

Greenfield, T., & Ribbins, P. (1993). Organizations as talk, chance, action & experience (Ch. 3, pp. 53-73). *Greenfield on educational administration. Towards a humane science.* New York: Routledge.

Guba, E., & Lincoln, Y. (1988). *Naturalistic and rationalistic inquiry. In J. Keeves (Ed.), Educational research and methodology, and measurement: An international handbook* (pp. 81-85). Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Guerra, P., Jackson, J., Madsen, C., Thompson, H., & Ward, C. (1992). *Site-based management and special education: theories, implications and recommendations.* Paper presented to University Council for Educational Administration.

Guskey, T.R. (1990). Integrating innovations. *Educational Leadership*, February: 11-15.

Guthrie, J., & Koppich, J. (1993). Ready, A.I.M. reform: Building a model of education reform and high politics. In H. Beare and W. Boyd (Eds.), *Restructuring schools: An international perspective on the movement to transform the control and performance of schools*, pp. 12-28. Washington, DC: Falmer.

Hallahan, D.P., & Kauffman, J. M. (1997). *Exceptional learners: Introduction to special education* (7th Ed.) London: Allyn & Bacon.

Hargreaves, A. (1997). *Rethinking educational change with heart and mind.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Hargreaves, A., & Fink, D. (1998). Effectiveness, improvement and educational change: A distinctly Canadian approach? *Education Canada, 38*(2), 42-49.

Hargreaves, A., & Fullan, M. (1998). *What's worth fighting for out there?* Toronto: Ontario Public School Teachers' Federation.

Henderson, R. A. (1995). Worldwide school reform movements and students with disabilities. *British Journal of Special Education, 22*(4), 148-51.

Herman, J. J. (1991). Introduction to school-based management. *School-based management: Theory and practice.* Reston, VA: National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M., & West, M. (1994). *School improvement in an era of change*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Hoy, W. K., & Miskel, C. G., (1996). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Hoyle, J.R. (1992). Ten commandments for successful site-based management. *NASSP Bulletin*, November: 81-87.

Iacocca, L. (1991). The business challenge to education. *Association for . Supervision and Curriculum Development*. Front Royal, VA: National Cassette Services.

Kaufman, M. J. (1994). Places of change: Special education's power and identity in an era of educational reform. *Journal of Learning Diabilities, 27* (10), 610-18.

Kauffman, M. J. (1989). The regular education initiative as Regan-Bush education policy: A trickle-down theory of education of the hard-to-teach. *Journal of Special Education*, 23(3), 256-278.

Kaufman, M. J., Kameenui, E.J., Birman, B., & Danielson,L. (1990). Special education and the process of change: Victim or master of educational reform? *Exceptional Children*, October: 109-115.

Kavale, K. A. (1990). Effectiveness of differential programming in serving handicapped students. In M. C. Wang, M.C. Reynolds, & H. J. Walberg (Eds), *Special education research and practice: Synthesis of findings* (pp. 35-55). Oxford, England: Pergamon.

Kirst, M. (1992). In C. Reavis & H. Griffith (Eds.), *Restructuring schools: Theory and practice*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Koski, M. (1993). Change - from the grassroots up. *Educational Leadership*, September, 51-52.

Kunc, N. (1992). The need to belong: Rediscovering Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In R. A. Villa, J. S. Thousand, W. Stainback, & S. Stainback (Eds.), *Restructuring for caring and effective education: An administrative guide to creating heterogeneous schools*. Baltimore: Brookes.

Lange, J.T. (1993). *From centralization to decentralization: The principal in transition*. Ann Arbor, MI: Bell & Howell.

Lashway, L. (1997). Shared decision making. *NAESP Research Roundup*. 13(3), 1-5.

Laski, F. J., (1991). Achieving integration during the second revolution. In L. H. Meyers, C. A. Peck, & L. Brown (Eds.) *Critical issues in the lives of people with severe disabilities* (pp. 409- 421) Baltimore, MD: Brookes.

Lawton, S. B. (1993). A decade of educational reform in Canada: Encounters. with the Octopus, the Elephant, and the Five Dragons. In H. Beare & W. Boyd (Eds). *Restructuring schools: An international perspective.* London: Falmer.

Lee, T. (1991). Formula for uncertainty. *British Journal of Special Education, 18* (3), 100-102.

Lewis, A. (1989). *Restructuring America's schools.* Arlington, VA: American Association of School Administrators.

Lieberman, A. (1988). Teachers and principals: Turf, tension, and new tasks. *Phi Delta Kappan,* May, 648-653.

Lieberman, A., & Miller, L. (1990). Restructuring schools: What matters and what works. *Phi Delta Kappan,* June, 759-764.

Lieberman, A., Darling-Hammond, L., & Zuckerman, D. (1991). *Early lessons in restructuring schools.* New York: Columbia University.

Leithwood, K. (1995). Conditions for success: Research on restructuring. *Orbit, 26*(3), 6-10.

Lilly, M.S. (1987). Lack of focus on special education in literature on educational reform. *Exceptional Children,* 53 (4), 325-326.

Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic inquiry.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Lintos, L.B., & Lashway, L. (1997). Shared decision-making. In P. Piele, & S. Smith (Eds.) *School leadership: Handbook for excellence,* 3rd ed. (pp. 226-250) Eugene, OR: University of Oregon.

Lipp, M. (1992). In D. Sage & L. Burrello (Eds.), *Leadership in educational reform: An administrator's guide to changes in special education.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Lipsky, D.K., & Gartner, A. (1999). Inclusive education: a requirement of a democratic society. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds.), *Inclusive education.* London: Kogan Page.

Lipsky, D. K., & Gartner, A. (1996). In D. Lipsky (1997). *Inclusion and school reform: Transforming America's Classrooms.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Lipsky, D. K., & Gartner, A. (1998). Taking inclusion into the future. *Educational Leadership*, October, 78-81.

Lipsky, D. K., & Gartner, A. (1997). *Inclusion and school reform: Transforming America's Classrooms.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Lipsky, D.K., & Gartner, A. (1994). *Inclusive education and school restructuring.* Position Paper, New York: University of New York.

Lipsky, D.K., & Gartner, A. (1992). Achieving full inclusion: Placing the student at the center of educational reform. In W. Stainback & S. Stainback (Eds), *Controversial Issues Confronting Special Education.* Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Lipsky, D. K.,& Gartner, A. (1989). *Beyond separate education: Quality education for all.* Baltimore, MD: Brooks.

Lipsky, D. K. & Gartner, A. (1987). Capable of achievement and worthy of respect: Education for the handicapped as if they were full-fledged human beings. *Exceptional Children, 54,* 69-74.

Malen, B., Ogawa, R.T., & Kranz, J. (1990). Site-based management: unfulfilled promises. *The School Administrator, 47*(2), 30, 32, 53-56, 59.

Martin, Y.M., & MacPherson, R.J.S. (1993). *Restructuring administrative policy in public schooling.* Calgary, AB: Detselig.

Marzano, R.J., et al. (1995). A new paradigm for educational change. *Education,* 116(2), 162-172.

Maxcy,S. J. (1995). Democracy, chaos, and the new school order. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

McDonald, J.P., Hatch, T., Kirby, E., Ames, N., Haynes, N., & Joyner, E.T. (1999). *School reform behind the scenes.* New York: Teachers College Press.

McIntyre, T. (1992). The impact of reform recommendations on urban special education. *Preventing School Failure, 36*(4), 6-10.

McLaughlin, M. J. & Hopfengardner, S. (1992). Issues and options in restructuring schools and special education programs. Paper. *Council for Exceptional Children,* Reston, VA.

McLaughlin, M. J. (1995). Defining special education: A response to Zigmond and Baker. *Journal of Special Education, 29*(2), 200-208.

McLaughlin, M.J., Fuchs, L. & Hardman, M. (1999). Individual rights to education and students with disabilities: some lessons from US policy. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds), *Inclusive education (pp. 24-35).* London: Kogan Page.

Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Miles, M. B., & Huberman, M. A. (1994). Qualitative data analysis. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Miles, M.B., & Louis, K. (1990). Mustering the will and skill for change. *Educational Leadership,* May: 57-61.

Milne, B. (1995). The reform of educational administration in New Zealand. *Canadian School Executive, 15*(3): 3-9.

Milstein, M.M. (1993). *Restructuring schools: Doing it right.* Newbury Park, CA: Corwin.

Merriam, S.B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mitchell, D. (1996). The rules keep changing: Special education in a reforming education system. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education, 43*(1), 55-74.

Morgan, G. (1986). *Images of organizations.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Mostert, M.P., & Kauffman, J.M. (1993). The thread of discrimination: Education reform proposals, business strategies, and prospects for students with disabilities in the U.S.A. *International Journal of Special Education, 8*(2), 111-121.

Murphy, J. (1991). *Restructuring schools: Capturing and assessing the phenomena.* New York: Columbia University.

National Commission on Excellence in Education. (1983). *A nation at risk: The imperative for reform.* Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Neal, R. G. (1991). *School-based management.* Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Newmann, F.M., & Wehlage, G.C. (1995). *Successful school restructuring.* Madison, WI: Wisconsin Center for Education Research.

O'Neil, J. (1994). On Lasting school reform: A conversation with Ted Sizer. *Educational Leadership, 52*(5), 365-368.

Owens, R. G. (1987). *Organizational behavior in education* (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Owens, R.G. (1982). Methodological rigor in naturalistic inquiry: Some issues and answers. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 18*(2), 1-21.

Patton, M. Q. (1975). *Alternative evaluation research paradigm.* Grand Forks, ND: University of North Dakota Press.

Paul, J. L., Rosselli, H., & Evans, D. (1995). *Integrating school restructuring and special education reform.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt Brace.

Paul, S., & Ward, D. (1996). In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds), *Inclusive education* (pp. 36-53). London: Kogan Page.

Peters, T. (1987). *Thriving on chaos.* New York: Random House.

Peters, T., & Waterman, R. (1982). *In search of excellence.* New York: Harper & Row.

Pugach, M. C. (1995). On the failure of imagination in inclusive schooling. *Journal of Special Education, 29*(2), 212-223.

Ramsey, H. (1993). *Characteristics of and strategies for teaching students with mild disabilities.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Rayner, S. (1994). Restructuring reform: Choices and change in special education. *British Journal of Special Education, 21*(4), 169-73.

Reavis, C., & Griffith, H. (1992). *Restructuring schools: Theory and practice.* Lancaster, PA: Technomic.

Reynolds, M. C., Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (1987). The necessary restructuring of special and regular education. *Exceptional Children, 53*, 391-398.

Rieken, T., & Coult, D. (1993). *Dilemmas in educational change.* Calgary, AB: Detselig.

Robertson, S., Soucek, V., Pannu, R., Schugurensky, D. (1995). Chartering, new waters: The Klein revolution and the privatization of education in Alberta. *Our Schools/Our Selves*, *7*(2), 80-106.

Rubin, H. J., & Rubin, I. S. (1995). *Qualitative interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rudestam, K. E., & Newton, R.R. (1992). *Surviving your dissertation*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Sage, D.D., & Burrello, L.C. (1994). *Leadership in educational reform: An administrator's guide to changes in special education*. Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks.

Sailor, W. (1991). Special education in the restructured school. *Remedial and Special Education* (Rase), *12*(6), 8-22.

Sailor, W. (1992). *Restructuring education in the 90s*. Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Washington, DC.

Sailor, W., Kelly, D., & Karasoff, P. (1992). *Restructuring education in the 90s*. California Research Institute, San Francisco State University.

Salisbury, C. L. (1991). Mainstreaming during the early childhood years. Exceptional Children, *58*, 146-155.

Sapon-Shevin, M. (1994). Can inclusion work? A conversation with Jim Kauffman and Mara Sapon-Shevin. *Educational Leadership*, *52* (4), 7-11.

Schlechty, P.C. (1990). *Schools for the 21st century*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T. (1992). Moral leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Sergiovanni, T., & Moore, J.H. (Eds.) (1989). *Schooling for tomorrow: Directing reforms to issues that count*. Boston, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Shaw, S. F., Biklen, D., Conlon, S., Dunn, J., Kramer, J., & DeRoma-Wagner, V. (1990). *Critical issues in special education: implications for personnel preparation*. Submitted to L.M. Bullock & R.L. Simpson (Eds).

Sigmon, S.B. (1987). *Radical analysis of special education: Focus on historical development and learning disabilities*. London: Falmer.

Simons, H., & Billig, M. (1994). *After postmodernism.* London: Sage.

Sirotnik, K., & Oakes, J. (Eds.). (1986). *Critical perspectives on the organization and improvement of schooling.* Boston: Kluwer-Nijhoff.

Skrtic, T.M. (1991). *Behind special education.* Denver, CO: Love.

Smythe, J. (1995). Devolution and teachers' work: The underside of a complex phenomenon. *Educational Management and Administration, 23*(3): 162-167.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1996). *Inclusion: A guide for educators.* London: Brookes.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1992). *Controversial issues confronting special education.* Needham, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

Stainback, W., & Stainback, S. (1984). A rationale for the merger of special and regular education. *Exceptional Children, 51,* 102-111.

Stakes, R., & Hornby, G. (1997). *Change in special education: What brings it about?* London: Cassell.

Steen, C.A. (1993). The reality of change in education and its impact on education systems, teachers and teacher organizations. *Journal of the Council on School Administration of the ATA, 34*(1), 27-31.

Stevener, D. (1991). 'Revisiting the 1985 education reforms: Is the old school bus running better? *Illinois Issues, 17*(5), 14-16.

Thomas, H. (1990). From local financial management to local management of schools. In M. Flude & M. Hammer (Eds.) *The Education Reform Act: Its origins and implications.* London: Falmer.

Townsend, D. (1998). *Impact of educational reforms on the operations of Alberta's public education system.* Lethbridge, AB: University of Lethbridge.

Vincent, C., Evans, J., Lunt, I., & Young, P. (1994). The market forces? The effect of local management of schools on special educational needs provision. *British Educational Research Journal, 20*(3), 261-277.

Walling, D. (Ed.) (1995). At the threshold of the millennium. Bloomington, IN: *Phi Delta Kappan.*

Wang, M.C, Reynolds, M.C., & Walberg, H. J. (1988). Integrating the children of the second system. *Phi Delta Kappan*, November, 70, 248-251.

Wang, M. C., Reynolds, M.C., & Walberg, H.J. (1990). *Special education research and practice*: Synthesis of findings. Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Wang, M. C., & Walberg, H. J. (1988). Four fallacies of segregationism. *Exceptional Children*, 55(2), 128-137.

Welch, G. (1994). Current issues in public education and their implications: Reflections of an administrator in residence. *The Canadian Administrator*, 33(7), 1-5.

Whitaker, K.S., & Moses, M.C. (1994). *The restructuring handbook: A guide to school revitalization*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon.

White, P.A. (1989). An overview of school-based management: What does the research say? *NASSP Bulletin*, September: 1-8.

Williams, R.C., et al. (1997). Sweeping decentralization of educational decision-making authority: Lessons from England and New Zealand. *Phi Delta Kappan*, April, 626-631.

Will,M. (1986). *Educating students with learning problems: A shared responsibility*. Washington, DC: Office of Special Education And Rehabilitation Services, U.S. Department of Education.

Williams, V. (Ed.). (1995). *Towards self-managing schools*. New York: Cassell.

Winzer, M. (1999). The inclusion movement in Canada: philosophies, promises and practice. In H. Daniels & P. Garner (Eds), *Inclusive education*. (pp. 99-106). London: Kogan Page.

Winzer, M. (1996). *Children with exceptionalities in Canadian classrooms*. Scaraborough, Ontario: Allyn & Bacon.

Wohlstetter, P. (1995). Getting school-based management right: what works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan*, September: 22-26.

Yanitski, N.W. (1997). *Site-based decision making*. Doctoral dissertation. University of Alberta, Canada.

Yin, R. K. (1984). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

York, J., & Vandercook, T. (1990). Strategies for achieving an integrated education for middle school students with severe disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education, 11*, 6-16.

Ysseldyke, J., Algozzine, B., & Thurlow, M. (1992). *Critical issues in special education.* Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.

Zigmond, N., & Baker, J. M. (1995). Concluding comments: Current and future practices in inclusive schooling. *Journal of Special Education, 29*(2), 245-250.

Zigmond, N., Jenkins, J., Fuchs, L., Deno, S., Fuchs, D., Baker, J., Jenkins, L., & Couthins, M. (1995). Special education in restructured schools: Findings from three multi-year studies. *Phi Delta Kappan, 76*(7), 531-540.

Appendix

Consent to Participate in the Study

**Consent to Participate
In the study:
Restructuring and Inclusive Education**

February 15, 1999

Dear educator,

My name is Brenda Willis and I am a graduate student in Educational Policy Studies at the University of Alberta. As part of my doctoral degree requirements, I am conducting research on "Restructuring and its affect on inclusive education".

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to obtain the perceptions of stakeholders in education, including; principals, teachers, and central office special education administrators regarding the relationships between restructuring and inclusive education. Specifically, the study is designed to seek the advice of these same individuals in determining those aspects of restructuring that affect the provision of programs and services for students with special needs in regular classrooms with their peers. Information gained from this study should provide important insights about how restructuring affects inclusive education. This information may prove useful for educators as they work to provide programs and services for students with special needs in inclusive settings.

Nature of Involvement of Human Participants

The population of interest includes principals, teachers, and central office special education administrators from a suburban school jurisdiction in Alberta. Schools will be chosen as sites for this study from those recommended by the Director of Special Education in the district. Criteria for selection of schools are based on the presence of students with special needs and familiarity and experience of the principal and staff with inclusive education. Between ten and fifteen interviews will be conducted.

Participants will be interviewed by the researcher for 45 to 90 minutes. All interviews will be audio-recorded on standard cassette tapes. The interview tapes will be transcribed by a typist, who will maintain confidentiality of the respondents. Summaries of the interview will be reviewed later with each participant to verify that the information is correct.

Providing for Exercising Right to Opt Out

Participants will be informed of their right to withdraw from this study, without penalty, at any time. This will be explained orally, and this written consent statement will be provided to each participant by the researcher. Participants can contact the researcher by telephone (441-6155) or by Email at the following (willisb@ecs.edmonton.ab.ca) if they have concerns or questions regarding any part of the study.

Addressing Anonymity and Confidentiality Issues

Each participant will be guaranteed anonymity by using pseudonyms in the dissertation. The school(s) and the district will not be identified. Each interview will be conducted in a private setting and the participants will be informed that they have the right to opt out at any time during the interview, and they do not have to answer any questions with which they feel uncomfortable. The participants will be asked if a tape-recorder can be used to record the interview. The participants will be informed that only the researcher and transcriber will have access to the interview tapes; and that these tapes will be magnetically erased at the conclusion of this study.

Consent to Participate

If you are willing to participate in this study, please indicate this by signing in the space provided below. A copy of this letter will be provided to you for your information.

I Give Permission

I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the consent form, and I

_____ give permission for Brenda Willis to include me in the research study as described in this form.

_____   _____

Signature   Date