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Connecting Regular and Special Education Pathways at the High School Level. Case Studies on Inclusive Education

by

Lorraine M. Stewart 

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

Department of Educational Psychology

Edmonton, Alberta
Spring 2000

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Date: Jan. 17/00

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of a brave, gentle person who died in April 1997 at the young age of twenty. Through his patience and quiet determination, Maitland enriched the lives of those he met. He is fondly remembered for his courage, strength, and smile.

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To Parkland School Division #70, I owe a huge debt of gratitude. This division has encouraged me on my journey, starting with my teacher assistant job in 1982, through my university training, and then onto my graduate studies. I would also like to extend a special thank you to all my colleagues and friends who could see traits and abilities in me that were often not self-evident.

The participants in this research project were enthusiastic and willingly donated their time to provide me with insight into the lives of children with special needs. I am truly grateful for your stories and sharing.

And, to my family – Mike, Tanya and Jean, Kara and Jayson, thank you for your continued belief in me. You have been accommodating, understanding, and supportive throughout all the stages of my journey.

ABSTRACT

Inclusion is a controversial topic in educational circles, especially at the secondary level where the academic focus is so strong. In contrast to elementary school, where the students are involved in co-operative groups and integrated curriculum with homeroom teachers, secondary students achieve more independence, and their focus is on academics with the goal of graduation. In this environment, many educators have difficulty visualizing how students who cannot do the required work - in fact who cannot even read - can be included in this setting and achieve worthwhile, realistic goals.

The purpose of this case study research was to examine three inclusive high school settings and, through interviews and observations, gain a multi-perspective from all participants involved in the process. The goals of this study were twofold: to discern the factors necessary for successful inclusion, and to develop a model of inclusion for educators based on these factors.

A case study method was utilized to bound the study within the high school environment. To provide multi-perspectives on the inclusion setting, data were obtained from three students with special needs in three different high schools, their parents/guardians, "regular" classroom teachers, "regular" students, teacher assistants, a special education co-ordinator or special education teacher, an administrator, and a guidance counsellor. The research project began with a pilot study, and led into the main research project which spanned an 8-month period from September 1998 to April 1999. The data collection method was primarily interviews, supplemented with observations and document analysis.

Research findings suggested that, although there is not one correct way to

implement inclusion at the high school level, there were factors to be considered under the headings of knowledge, skills, and attitudes which could lead to successful inclusion. A model of inclusion for the most responsible environment, based on these factors, has been presented. Six practical applications stemmed from the case studies: clarifying perceptions and definitions; appropriately utilizing the teacher assistant; promoting self-determination of the adolescent with special needs; recognizing the benefits of inclusion to peers without disabilities; recognizing the benefits of inclusion to educators; and understanding the change factors necessary for inclusion to become a reality.

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Introduction to the Research Question

> The wise teacher has a vision that is not limited to seeing a child with a disability and a child with no obvious disability but two children who each have gifts which complement each other. Yes, a child with profound disabilities has a gift that only another child can discover and allow to contribute to the community - even if it is only a smile. (Mackan, 1991, p. 93)

Background to the Question

The trend towards including all students in their neighbourhood schools represents a philosophical change that is part of the educational reform movement paramount since the 1980s in North America (Asante, 1997; Edgar, 1987; Winzer, 1993). The differing national organization stances concerning acceptance or rejection of the inclusion policy are summarized by Lipsky and Gartner (1997), and this disparity in policy "reflects the unique characteristics of the organizations, including their constituencies, historical experiences, and ideology" (p. 180).

In Alberta, numerous policies and documents have also been developed to address the education of students with special needs. Alberta Education has recently undergone restructuring and is now known as Alberta Learning, but since the documents were written when the department was 'Alberta Education', this name will continue to be used throughout this paper. Alberta Education, in its policy, *Educational Placement of Students with Special Needs* (Policy 1.6.1), specifies that "educating students with special needs in regular classrooms in neighbourhood or local schools shall be the first placement option considered by school boards, in consultation with students, parents/guardians, and school staff" (Alberta Education, 1997). Similarly, The Alberta Teachers' Association policy 17.A.5 states:

> The Alberta Teachers' Association believes that integration of students with special needs should be into the most enabling environment; environments less inclusive than the regular classroom may be more appropriate options for some

students with complex or severe learning and/or behavioral needs. (1999)

In addition, *In the Balance - Meeting Special Needs Within Public Education* notes that "inclusion is just one of a range of educational options" (Alberta School Boards Association, 1997, p. 17), and the School Act declares, in its preamble, that "the best educational interests of the student are the paramount considerations" (Province of Alberta, 1988, p. 9). An objective in a document, from the Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities, asserts that by "the year 2000, all children will have, as their right, access in their home communities, in the neighbourhood schools, to the same quality of education which is available to all other students" (Alberta Education Special Education Branch, 1995, p. 1). It seems apparent that these organizations all attest to the philosophy of equality and participation for all students while respecting individual rights and dignity. What is not clear, and what often stimulates heated debate, is the best method of achieving this philosophy through the most appropriate placement for students with special needs. The literature review that follows will provide the reader with a flavor for the differing definitions of inclusion and how these definitions impact upon education for students with special needs.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the inclusion option at high school by gaining a multi-perspective from all participants involved in the research. The goal of the study was to discern the factors necessary for successful inclusion in search of an effective service delivery model for educators. This research took the form of three case studies, gathering data from selected key players within three different high school settings to "catch the complexity" (Stake, 1995, p. xi) of the cases. The data which were generated were analyzed, and the insight reflected will enable parents, educators, and students to become better informed about each of the selected participant's perspectives within the inclusionary environment of his/her high school. The experiences of the individuals in these case studies may, then, be useful to advance our understanding of the inclusive model of service delivery.

My interest in this research has been grounded in my personal experiences

working with students with special needs at the high school level. To be open to the data generated, it is necessary for the researcher to put aside presumptions while observing and learning (Stake, 1995).

Bracketing of Presuppositions and Beliefs

Essential in qualitative inquiry is the need to bracket one's presuppositions and beliefs. Van Manen (1997) explained that, as researchers, we must "come to terms with our assumptions, not in order to forget them again, but rather to hold them deliberately at bay" (p. 47). Van Manen (1997) argued that instead of trying to forget or ignore what we already know, we should "make explicit our understandings, beliefs, biases, assumptions, presuppositions, and theories" (p. 47). Manning (1997) explained that respondents in the research have a right to "understand the lens" (p. 103) which the researcher uses to analyse and construct the data. Because of my history and experiences with segregated special education classes and with high school, as I approached this study, I was sceptical about the inclusion of students with special needs in high school. While I agreed with the basic philosophy of inclusion and belonging, I had some reservations and concerns about how inclusion could realistically be put into practice in high school. It was crucial, then, that every effort be made to face these biases and presuppositions and put forward my *lens* so that I could then, as a researcher, "attain the genuine and true form of the things themselves" (Hammond, Howarth, & Keat, cited in Ray, 1994, p. 119) and seek the beginning of knowledge (Ray, 1994). What follows is my story of my life experiences as it relates to this study.

My Story

In retrospect, I'm not entirely sure when my story really begins! Was it with my memory as an adolescent, joining in the laughter and smirking when it was discovered that a peer, who we referred to as "retarded," collected dead flies in her geometry case? That is my first real memory of, and close experience with, an individual who was very obviously different from the rest of us. I remember how my compassion and sympathy for her was coloured by my egocentric adolescent need to belong to my peer group. Was it

my experience as a parent volunteer working on reading skills with three students in the hallway when one mischievous grade one child tied the others' shoelaces to the leg of his chair. I will always remember the look on both their faces - I can only imagine the look on mine - when he tried to stand! Did my story begin with my experiences, over 2 years, as a teacher assistant with primary students in a segregated classroom:

- the frustration of picking up those math blocks yet one more time with a student who took every chance he could to spread them over the floor?
- the pride and joy of watching our students remember their four-word line for the Christmas Concert?
- the emotion at a students' birthday party when he, overcome with emotion, kissed me on the forehead?

Perhaps my story began when a family member was diagnosed with brain tumors, and, as a result, experienced related cognitive delays and extreme social skill difficulties, and with the many discussions with her mom and other family members to try and explain this child's bizarre thoughts and behaviors. It could be that my story really began on the first day of my new teaching career. After my experience as a teacher assistant, I was bound for university to become a teacher. University did not prepare me for the end of that first teaching day carrying one child out under my arm as she screamed obscenities at me and spit on my shoe, while helping another along as he nervously covered his ears and cowered because of the noise. My story that day ended in tears! Those tears resurfaced one year later when I accompanied that same "spitting" child to our teacher assistant's wedding and watched the complete joy on the student's face as her favorite adult walked down the aisle.

My work in the classroom with students with special needs continued for 10 more years, and my story unfolded further as I remember:

- searching frantically among the stacks of paper being sorted and tied for recycling, for a crucial occupational therapy report.
- watching the first of our students from the segregated class graduate from high school, proudly wearing her gown and beaming across the stage.
- gasping as one of the students tripped on the stairs, in his enthusiasm to get up

on that stage and collect his award.

- playing for a week in Disneyland with 12 students from the segregated classroom and all the teacher assistants, as culmination to a year of fundraising and hard work.

As I broadened my experiences in the high school beyond the segregated classroom, my story continued into new depths. I remember the gales of delight from our first student to be fully included at the high school, as he participated in his very favorite social studies class. Perhaps one of my most poignant chapters in my story is watching one of my students die, and always remembering his words: "I'm going down, Mrs. Stewart."

It would seem that, with any story, one cannot quickly pinpoint a beginning. Instead, all of the memories, experiences, and people shape the story. The segregated settings for the majority of my teaching career are a critical aspect of my story, and ones that continually cause reflection. As my career and story have unfolded over the years, I have come to believe in the importance of offering choice for families, with respect to the optimum education for their children and a "continuum of services" (Vergason & Anderegg, 1992, p. 45). As I continue my career, it is important that I do not let my segregated training and experience interfere with each child's best interests. A poem, modified from Pastor Niemoeller, spoke to me deeply:

> First they came for the "Black man." They said he was a menace to society, a drug dealer, a school dropout, very violent to all humanity. But I was not a Black man. I said nothing, and did nothing.....
>
> Then they came for the welfare mothers. They said they're lazy, overweight, have too many children, a drain on society. But I was not on welfare. I was not a woman. I said nothing, and did nothing....
>
> Then they came for the elderly. They said they were using too much of our federal dollars. They had too many needs, a drain on society. But I was young. I said nothing, and did nothing....
>
> Next they came for the disabled. They said these people had nothing to give to society, that they were ill, diseased, another drain on society. But I was not

disabled. Again, I said nothing, and did nothing....

Then they came for me. They greeted me with big smiles, smiles that represented approval, for by my silence, they knew I was one of them. And together we began planning who we'd go for next! (Asante, 1997, p. 69).

My experiences, described above, have formulated my biases and have colored my lenses. However, it is with openness that I approached this research study to discover the "lived experiences" (Merriam, 1998, p. 4) of high school communities in the inclusive setting. I may change my philosophy on inclusion as a result of my research - I may not, but that is not the purpose of this research. I do recognize and acknowledge that "deep change involving one's understanding of what is true and one's regard for what is worthy is especially difficult" (Paul, Duchnowski, Morse, Christensen, & Martinez, 1997, p. 241). My challenge as a researcher was to remain open and aware of my lenses as I examined these inclusive settings, trying to discern the factors necessary for successful inclusion and then to formulate a model of inclusion.

Nature and Intent of the Study

It must be clear that the purpose of this research was not to evaluate the three programs and schools where the students with special needs were included. Rather, the emphasis of the study was to openly examine and explore the programs surrounding three students with special needs to discern the factors necessary for successful inclusion. This open examination of all aspects of the inclusive settings enabled me to look at the rich, full experiences and "project the joys as well as the pains" (Patton, Blackbourn, & Fad, 1996, p. vi) experienced by the participants in the research.

Through the use of a case study method based on interviews, observations, the researcher's journal, and documents such as the Individual Program Plan and work samples, three high school inclusive settings were examined. This study presented the complexity of the single case through the multi-perspectives of the participants involved in the settings (Snow & Anderson, 1991). These participants included three students with special needs in three separate high school settings, their parents/guardians, teacher assistants, teachers, "regular" students, a counsellor, a special education co-

ordinator/special education teacher, and an administrator. By recognizing and preserving these contradictory views, or "multiple realities" (Stake, 1995, p. 12) in the research, the key players will gain an appreciation of others' perspective within the context of the study, and the educator, parents, and students will gain an understanding of all perspectives.

It is not my intent to persuade or sell readers on inclusion for all students. Instead, I agree with Lieberman (1992), who argued that we must "let each case be judged on its own merit" (p. 14), and Kauffman, interviewed by O'Neil (1994/95), who recognized the merit of decisions being "made on a case-by-case basis - not forced" (p. 9). It is my aim, though, to describe what inclusion means for all involved in this research study, by understanding "what the other wishes to accomplish" (Eyolfson, 1991, p. 26). It is my desire to provide information which can be useful and practical in helping parents, students, and staff, to develop effective models of service delivery based on "research grounded in real practices of classroom teachers" (Taylor & Parmar, 1993, p. 5).

Definitions

> It seems funny and ironic...that most people spend an exorbitant amount of time trying to distinguish themselves as unique and different while all that a person with a disability wants is to be just like everyone else. (Patton et al., 1996, p. 3)

Students with special needs, as defined in *In the Balance - Meeting Special Needs Within Public Education*, refers to

> (i) students being in need of special education because of their behavioral, communicational, intellectual, learning or physical characteristics; or
> (ii) students who may require specialized health care services; or
> (iii) students who are gifted and talented. (Alberta School Boards Association, 1997, p. 11)

For the purposes of this research project, the phrases, "students with special needs" and "students with exceptionalities" will be used interchangeably. Each student's specific special needs will be explained and discussed through his/her story.

The definition of inclusion, for the purpose of this paper, is taken from Gartner and Lipsky:

> Inclusion means providing to all students, including those with significant disabilities, equitable opportunities to receive effective educational services, with supplementary aids and support services as needed, in age-appropriate general education classes in their neighborhood schools, toward the outcome of preparing all students for productive lives as full members of society. (1996, p. 71)

In addition, the Special Education Council of The Alberta Teachers' Association adds another component to the definition by stipulating that "inclusion 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" (1998, p.1). Students who are included, then, become full-time, participating members of that particular class. These definitions will provide a frame of reference for the reader, although each high school setting will be different. Specific details will be provided through the stories.

The following chapter will provide the reader with a review of the literature pertinent to inclusive education. This will be followed, in chapter 3, with a discussion of the methodology used for this research. Chapter 4 will cover the results of the research and will highlight three major categories that have emerged from the data analysis. Chapter 5 will suggest practical applications and a model of service delivery stemming from the results noted in chapter 4. Chapter 6 will present the conclusions generated from the research.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

Special education is undergoing a major paradigm shift, from the traditional dual system of education which evolved in the 1970s (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994), to a unified system of delivery which merges regular and special education (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Epanchin, 1997; Evans, 1997; Idol, 1997; Lupart, McKeough, & Yewchuck, 1996; Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987; Salend, 1994). The resulting inclusive model of service delivery is now being implemented in a variety of ways with varying degrees of success. The philosophy of inclusion has necessitated numerous "changes in educational thought and practice" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 1). The Alberta School Boards Association (1997) struck a task force to investigate these very changes. To prepare myself appropriately for this study, I traced the special education story, ending with a review of inclusion, and the current models supporting inclusion.

Story of Special Education

Meyen proposed that special education is "between stories," with the old story being the "time-honored foundation of grounding beliefs and assumptions" (1995, p. 30). This old story was rooted in cultural attitudes with respect to the obligations and responsibilities perceived by society (Winzer, 1993). Winzer chronicled the progression of attitudinal change with respect to special education practices. An Old World attitude surrounded by "superstition, myth, and fatalism" (Winzer, p. 8) was replaced with a "spirit of reform" (p. 77), and this reform movement was a major influence on special education in North America. Winzer explained that developments in Canadian special education were "tightly bound" (p. 78) to those in North America. Gartner and Lipsky (1996), however, argued that there were differences in the reform movement between Canada and the United States, in regard to educational developments, assurance of individual rights, educational structures, and local delivery systems.

The Old Story

Medical model.

By the close of the nineteenth century, societal attitudes were based upon the medical and deficit models, giving justification to expanding the institutions for students with special needs (Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). The medical model and its "fix on pathology" (Deno, 1970, p. 229) viewed the problems of learning, behavior, and socialization as being inherent within the child, and remediation was understood in terms of treating the disease (Wolfensberger, 1972). The deficit model presupposed deficiencies in all areas, and remediation by a specialist in a special setting was deemed necessary. As a result, there was a "lengthy period of institutional segregated education for persons with disabilities" (Karagiannis, Stainback, S., & Stainback, 1996, p. 18). This attitude carried well into the twentieth century, with the specialist still being viewed as a crucial component for the child with disabilities.

Eugenics movement.

The early twentieth century gave way to the eugenics movement which, combined with the medical model, "helped to entrench the dehumanizations of persons with disabilities" (Karagiannis, Stainback, S., et al., 1996, p. 19). Psychologists were now beginning to favor the theory that intelligence was hereditary, and viewed mental retardation as the "principle factor in such socially repugnant conditions" as alcoholism, prostitution, and drug use (Winzer, 1993, p. 290). Mass IQ testing produced great numbers of individuals perceived by the general public to be criminals and a menace to society. Disability was viewed as a "curse from on high" (Asante, 1997, p. 47) and the disabled as deviants (Biklen, 1977; Wolfensberger, 1972). Wolfensberger further explained that deviants were often considered by a society as sub-cultures or less than human. Biklen (1977) suggested that this denial of full human status inhibited individuals from becoming fully participating members of their communities, and provided the rationale for continued segregation and other practices, such as sterilization, isolation, restraining, and aversive conditioning. To illustrate the dehumanizing effect of institutions and societal attitudes, Bogdan and Taylor (1982) presented the life stories of

two individuals who were former inmates of institutions. These autobiographies, told in the individuals' own words, provided the reader with "a more holistic view of people" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1982, p. 17), which the authors hoped would help readers better understand the attitude of society at that time.

Separate schools and classes.

Separate schools and classes evolved, and "the educational community and society as a whole were proud of their facilities for students with special needs" (Pijl & Meijer, 1994, p. xi). Russo, Morse, and Glancy argued that whether these placements were construed as being "intentional or unintentional discrimination," the end result was "to remove the disabled from the social mainstream" (1998, p. 8). Ferguson (1987) suggested that "what remains constant is the category of exclusion" (p. 53). Biklen and Bogdan (1977) defined this exclusion as handicapism: "a set of practices that promote unequal and unjust treatment of people because of apparent or assumed physical, or mental disability" (p. 206). Bogdan and Knoll (1995) explained that, when using the handicapism paradigm, "a person with a disability is seen not as a client or recipient of special services but, rather, as a member of a traditionally discriminated-against minority" (p. 695). Handicapism continues to underlie prejudicial attitudes, stereotypical views, and discrimination in society today with regard to individuals with disabilities

Civil rights movement.

The civil rights movement had a major impact on society's attitudes towards segregation of minority groups. As a result of this socio-political perspective, students with disabilities began to receive increased attention (Ferguson, 1987; Karagiannis, Stainback, S., et al., 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997). Special education leaders, such as Reynolds (1962), Dunn (1968), and Wolfensberger (1972), began advocating for students with special needs to be learning in more normalized environments with their peers. Howe and Miramontes (1992) posited that these attitudinal changes occurred "largely out of an awakened commitment to the ethical requirement that all individuals should be provided with access to a decent public education" (p. 1). Bodgan and Taylor (1987)

suggested that the time was right for a move away from the "sociology of exclusion" to the "sociology of acceptance" (p. 34), where service providers began integrating those who would otherwise be excluded. The premise for the sociology of acceptance, according to Bogdan and Taylor (1987), was the recognition that all individuals, regardless of their disabilities, form close relationships with people. Little and Weber (1991) provided their explanation of this twentieth century phenomena as a change in the focus of responsibility for the individual with disabilities. Custodial responsibility, emphasizing social caring, was replaced by educational responsibility, which advocated universal education and social integration. Karagiannis, Stainback, S., et al. (1996) explained that, for the first time, segregated institutions, schools, and classes were being challenged by large groups of people. Pressure by parents, courts, and legislation resulted in the enactment of the Education for All Handicapped Act (1975) in the United States, which defined the educational rights for children with disabilities.

In Canada, there was no equivalent law, however, Section 15(1) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1985) supported "the right of everyone to an education" (Alberta Education Response Centre, 1991a, p. 2), and the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (1991) stated that each person has the right to "equal protection and equal benefit ... without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age, or mental or physical disability" (Communications Branch, Multiculturalism and Citizenship Canada, 1991). Kehoe (1998) argued that the "concept of the right of children with disabilities to access public education is now well embedded in law" (p. 3). In the western world today, as a result of the least restrictive environment concept, "we are faced with a large diversity of organisational models, expertise and experiences in the attempts to reduce segregation in education" (Pijl & Meijer, 1994, p. xi). However, Meyen (1995) point out that, despite the changes that have occurred in special education policies and practices, there remains an underlying assumption that disabilities are inherent within the individual. This belief continues to guide our practice, but must be questioned as we write the new story of special education, with inclusive education and the most enabling environment as its frame of reference.

The New Story: Inclusion

Meyen (1995) advocated that the new story with "emerging conceptualizations of disability, assessment, and instructional programming" would cause educators to "think and act differently in the future" (p. 30). In these formative stages of the story, inclusion is often a topic of heated, passionate debate which is emotionally, rather than intellectually charged (Lieberman, 1992). It seems that you are either "*totally* for full inclusion or you are against inclusion" (Edgar, 1987, p. 75), dependent upon your orientation, philosophy, experiences, definition, or entry into the special education story. In fact, Wilmore wrote, "everyone seems to have not only an opinion, but a strong opinion" (1994/95, p. 60) about the inclusion of children with special needs into the regular classroom. Beninghof (1997) viewed the "proliferation of jargon" (p. 5) as a determinant in sparking debate, and recognizes the need to clarify definitions with friends, colleagues, and family. Aefsky (1995) agreed that a "commonality of language among educators will allow school staff to begin building communication bridges with parents" (p. viii), instead of barriers. The literature review that follows will provide the reader with a flavor for the multiple meanings attached to the three terms: integration, mainstreaming, and inclusion.

Integration.

Integration is a term that has a host of meanings. Little and Weber (1991) referred to integration as the "de-institutionalization-cum-integration movement" (p. 81). Sailor et al. (1989) defined integration as the "physical placement of students with extensive needs on regular school campuses" (p. 4). Aefsky (1995) extended the definition to include some participation by the student with special needs in some activities with peers who are nondisabled. Andrews and Lupart (1993) argued that integration represented a "philosophical shift to promote education for handicapped students in the least restrictive environment" (p. 34). Beninghof (1997) explained that, for many, integration implied inclusion in a few classes. Kaufman et al. (1975, cited in Alper, 1996) described three types of integration which were the basis for mainstreaming: temporal, referring to the physical placement; instructional; and social.

Mainstreaming.

Mainstreaming, also rooted in the concept of least restrictive environment and normalization, became prevalent in the late 1970s and 1980s (Salend, 1994). Sarason and Doris (1979) viewed mainstreaming as:

> a concept powered by value: Every effort should be made to allow a handicapped child to be an integral member of his peer age group and only when this is not possible should one employ the least restrictive alternative. (p. 379)

Sarason and Doris contended that the difficulty with mainstreaming arose with each individual school's interpretation of the need for a least restrictive setting. Salend (1994) provided the following definitions of mainstreaming: "inclusion;" "spend any part of the school day with regular class peers;" "social and instructional integration;" and "carefully planned and monitored placement of students" (p. 11). Smith (1997) provided the ERIC system definition of mainstreaming as progressive inclusion and maintenance of exceptional students in classes and schools with peers, with provisions for special needs to be met within these environments. Robichaud and Enns' definition, cited in Andrews and Lupart (1993), focused on placement for the population with mild handicaps in regular classes. Several authors cited the importance of academic skills and emotional readiness as a prerequisite to mainstreaming (Bradley & Switlick, 1997; Ellett, 1993; Eyolfson, 1991; Falvey, Givner, & Kimm, 1995; Friend & Bursuck, 1996). Integral to the concept of mainstreaming was a continuum of services which allowed choice for placement dependent upon the student's capabilities or needs (Alper, 1996). The underlying basis for the definition of mainstreaming appeared to be the provision of a continuum and least restrictive alternatives when students with special needs could not function in the regular class (Aefsky, 1995).

The literature (Cole & Meyer, 1991; Hunt, Farron-Davis, Beckstead, Curtis, & Goetz, 1994; McIntosh, Vaughn, Schumm, Haager, & Lee, 1993; Sobsey & Dreimanis, 1993; Zigmond & Baker, 1990) showed that integration and mainstreaming have failed some students with special needs. In these cases, the teacher's perspectives of the least

restrictive environments have been reflected in practices which tended to segregate, seclude, and isolate students. A typical response to students with special needs has been to remove the problem (York, Doyle, & Kronberg, 1992, p. 1). Despite the challenges in promoting practices, mainstreaming and integration models have been "valuable steps in the evolution of effective education" (Friend & Bursuck, 1996, p. 15). The literature emphasized inclusion as a practice to encourage belonging and acceptance and revealed two differing definitions: full inclusion for all and conditional inclusion based on a continuum.

Full inclusion.

The position, held by advocates of full inclusion, for a restructured, unified system of education designed to meet the diverse needs of all students full-time in the regular classroom, was based on a philosophy of "belonging" regardless of the nature or severity of the disability or whether the students could meet the traditional curriculum or not (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Elliott-Stevens, 1990; Evans, 1997; Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Idol, 1997; Karagiannis, Stainback, W., & Stainback, 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Pearpoint, Forest, & Snow, 1992; Sailor, Gerry, & Wilson, 1987; Thomas, Walker, & Webb, 1998; Villa & Thousand, 1995a; Wang, 1996). Kunc (1992) articulated the importance of belonging in *"The Need to Belong: Rediscovering Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs,"* when he stated: "belonging is one of the central pillars that has been missing from our educational structures for a long time" (p. 29). York, Doyle, et al. (1992) argued that "belonging is the basis for self-acceptance, and esteem becomes the base for achievement and contribution" (p. 8). Alper (1996) explained that "full inclusion includes physical integration, social integration, and access to normalized educational, recreational, and social activities that occur in school" (p. 3).

Inclusion was further defined as the acceptance and value of diversity within the community (Asante, 1997; Forest & Lusthaus, 1989). Inclusion, Asante posited, is not an invitation to allow others *in*, rather, it is the "recognition that we are 'one' even though we are not the 'same'" (1997, p. 36). Stainback and Stainback (1992) adopted the term inclusion because it communicated a "need to be *included* in the educational and social

life of their neighborhood schools and classrooms, not merely placed in the mainstream" (p. 3). Bradley and Switlick (1997) have defined a fully inclusive school as maintaining "an open door policy to all students regardless of abilities and disabilities" (p. 7). York, Doyle, et al. (1992) challenged individuals to define inclusion for themselves as a process for making inclusion personal and relevant. Only then, when personal visions of inclusion are clarified, York, Doyle, et al. argued, could "inclusive educational practices become real and meaningful" (1992, p. 3). Key to these definitions of inclusion was a practice encompassing the education of all students in regular classes, with their chronological age peers without disabilities, as the "only true 'least restrictive environment'" (Wilmore, 1994/95, p. 60).

Although the Alberta School Boards Association argued that the "philosophy of inclusion is being embraced" (1997, p. 6), Idol (1997) cited reasons why many teachers resisted inclusion. She explained that, from past practices and lack of experience and knowledge, classroom teachers were accustomed to referring students with special needs to the "specialists" who could better care for their needs. In addition, with the increasingly large class sizes, teachers did not have the time to focus their attention on the student with special needs. In many cases, teachers lacked the training to work with students with special needs and did not feel competent to provide for diverse needs. Depleting resources often resulted in a lack of availability for training, personnel, or material. Pearpoint and Forest (1997) added fear of change, fear of new responsibilities, and fear of what was not understood, to the list of reasons why teachers were reluctant to include all students in their classes. Most educators appeared willing to have students with disabilities in classrooms, however, they adhered to a more conservative definition of inclusion (Kauffman, interviewed by O'Neil, 1994/95).

Conditional inclusion based on a continuum.

A more conservative definition of inclusion recognized the need for individuals to be involved and belong, but emphasized a "'continuum of placements,' based on the nature and severity of the handicap" (Shanker, 1994/95, p. 20). Kauffman, interviewed by O'Neil (1994/95), argued for the continuation of choice in services for the following

reasons: different instruction was needed for different children and the regular classroom may not be the best place to provide many types of instruction at one time; separate programs did not necessarily equate with segregation; and we "ought to celebrate a diversity of places where we learn and work and play and have friends" (p. 10). This continuum of educational placements has historically been predicated on the cascade model, which featured "more diverse regular classroom placements and fewer specialized segregated placements" (Andrews & Lupart, 1993, p. 650).

The cascade model and the least restrictive environment came under criticism by advocates of full inclusion because they implied "progressive exclusion" (Little & Weber, 1991, p. 10), and any placement other than the regular classroom signified exclusion. Taylor (1988) cautioned his readers to view the least restrictive environment concept in its historical context because "the concepts that guide us today can mislead us tomorrow" (p. 51). Perhaps, if our thinking about the student's environment centered around the most enabling environment instead of the least restrictive environment (Alberta Education Special Education Branch, 1995; Elliott-Stevens, 1990; Witkin & Fox, 1992), then the cascade model could still be a useful guide for providing educational opportunities for children with special needs. In this definition, inclusion became one of the many services and placements to be seriously considered within the range of services provided for the student with special needs (Aefsky, 1995; Alberta Education Special Education Branch, 1995; Alberta School Boards Association, 1997; Alberta Teachers' Association Special Education Council, 1998; Brown et al., 1991; Dettmer, Dyck, & Thurston, 1996; Fuchs & Fuchs, 1994/95; Murray-Seegert, 1989; Salend, 1994; Shanker, 1994/95).

These two inclusionary camps, full inclusion and inclusion based on a continuum, seemed to agree on the critical aspects of inclusion noted by York, Doyle, et al. (1992): attending neighbourhood schools, being in regular education classes with age-appropriate peers, having individualized, relevant learning goals, and being provided with the supports necessary to learn. "Without these supports inclusion becomes no more than warehousing" (Alberta School Boards Association, 1997, p. 17). Debate continued, however, on practices and placement of students with special needs, and the direction of inclusion, either full or partial, remains essentially unresolved (Christensen & Dorn,

1997). Friend and Bursuck (1996) argued that there were four themes which ran through the inclusion debates: philosophical issues, social issues, economic issues, and instructional issues. These issues in the inclusion debate must be recognized and addressed to ensure that the education of the students is not placed secondary to philosophy and policy. As Aefsky (1995) explained, "special education is *not* a place. It is the provision of support services to help students learn" (p. 13)!

This attempt at definition illustrates the necessity for clarification of terms before beginning any dialogue surrounding this topic. By this point in the discussion it is clear that there was not consensus in the literature regarding terminology. In fact, there was similarity and overlap in definitions. For example, although mainstreaming generally targeted students with mild disabilities and inclusion targeted all students with disabilities, these concepts were similar. Alper (1996) explained that both were rooted in the "extension of civil rights" (p. 12), were directed at placing students in same age classrooms, and shared common elements of implementation towards normalization. Similarly, the least restrictive environment thread ran through the definitions.

Author's definitions.

To provide a context for this work, I offer my own definitions, which have their basis in the literature reviewed and my past experiences. Integration, as the first step, involves the physical placement of students from separate schools and other institutions into neighbourhood schools in separate classrooms. Social integration occurs in some option classes and at common school times, while instruction occurs mainly in the separate class. Mainstreaming involves a move towards regular classroom placement for an increased amount of instructional time, for students who have mild disabilities but can still be successful with the academics. Inclusion is a philosophical belief based on the practice of providing educational experiences for all students in their neighbourhood school, with opportunities for students to be educated in regular classrooms. Inclusion is not a program or strategy, rather an underlying assumption or belief that all individuals are valued and belong. When a school or division operates from an inclusive stance, students are taught in the most enabling environment which supports "the educational

needs of all students" (Napier, 1995, p. 33). For a school to practice a model that supports all individuals, there are requirements to be addressed:

- A case-by-case decision is necessary to determine how the inclusion belief will be actualized.
- Support for this model is necessary at the home, school and division level.
- A child's educational program does not mean that every minute of the school day is spent in a regular class. A continuum of services and placements must be offered. The child's environment is not expected to remain static.
- Individualized and small group instruction may occur within the most enabling environment.
- Neither readiness nor ability is a precursor for including a child in the classroom. If the most enabling setting is the regular class, then the material will be modified and adapted as required.
- The setting may not always be in the regular class with peers. Education also occurs in the community, home, library, or other areas in the school.

To reiterate, inclusion is a belief, value or way of living together. Taylor and Parmar (1993) suggested that inclusion " is also about the very human stories of experience, change, difficulty and, most frequently forgotten, success" (p. 41). Our goal as educators is to explore all options and provide the optimum educational experiences and opportunities for students. The final section of this chapter will examine stories of inclusion, at the secondary level, cited in the literature.

Models of Inclusion at the Secondary School Level

Salend (1994, p. 10) cited a 1991 Report to Congress indicating that, by the time students with disabilities reached the junior high and high school ages of 12 to 17, 19% were educated in the regular classroom compared to 41% of elementary aged children. Smith (1998) cited a 1995 Report to Congress indicating slightly higher numbers: 49% of children aged 6 to 11 were in regular classrooms compared to 30.2% of children 12 to 17 years of age. In an Alberta Education Response Centre (1992a) report, 63% of elementary aged children were reported as full-time in regular classes, compared to 37% of junior

high and high school aged children. The Alberta report included children classified with both severely handicapping conditions as well as those in the mild/moderate category. These reports illustrated that, the older the student, the greater the chances for a more restrictive, less inclusive setting.

Once students reached the secondary level, inclusion became increasingly difficult to implement (Ellett, 1993; Lieberman, 1981; Schumaker & Deshler, 1988; 1994/95). Some of the reasons cited by these authors included the widening gap of skill level; the lack of proficiency in using higher order thinking skills and strategies necessary at this age; teacher accountability measured through diploma exams; the necessity of teacher-centered instruction; and the structure of the secondary classroom, which does not permit small group teaching or allow for much contact between teacher and student. Shapiro-Barnard (1998) provided a rationale in defense of inclusive high schools, explaining that there were skills that all students needed to learn in high school, including students with special needs. These skills gained during high school included acquiring habits of learning and working, such as inquisitiveness, diligence, critical thinking, and collaboration; learning basic academic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics; and learning content area knowledge about the world. When realistic expectations were put upon students with special needs, Shapiro-Barnard (1998) posited, these students have the ability to learn these same skills. Brandt (1994/95) commented that many educators "are being pulled in one direction by their values and aspirations and in the opposite direction by pressing realities" (p. 3). Despite the difficulties encountered with secondary inclusive education, the literature does contain studies based on a variety of models.

Full Inclusion

The following studies illustrated cases where students were fully and totally included in the regular classes in high school, for their entire day.

Heron and Jorgensen (1994/95) explained the importance of training teachers for diverse classrooms, and highlighted strategies and modifications that might be useful. Jorgensen (1994/95) and Jorgensen and Tashie (1996) noted three necessary program

components in a full inclusion classroom: collaborative planning; using overarching "essential" questions to guide curriculum development; and planning curriculum backwards from the expected outcomes to the detailed lesson plan. Jorgensen (1994/95) cautioned that, before modifying curriculum, it was necessary to discern whether the student could participate in a portion of the lesson without modification, and then to take a careful look at the modifications needed for full participation. Jorgensen (1998) provided samples of curriculum units and lessons that have worked for teachers at the high school level in an attempt to "germinate the seeds of creativity" (p. 108).

Thousand, Rosenberg, Bishop, and Villa (1997) presented their interpretation of the Circle of Courage model as an alternative paradigm for inclusive schooling. The Circle of Courage was derived from traditional Native American educational philosophy. In the Native American culture, the main reason for existence was to educate and empower youth. To produce courageous youth, Native Americans fostered development in four dimensions: belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity. Over the years, Villa and Thousand (1995a) questioned educators, parents, and community members about their goals for public education, and respondents' answers typically fell into the same four categories that paralleled the above-mentioned dimensions. These common beliefs for student outcomes were seen as important and meaningful, both for children labelled with special needs as well as for those who did not have a label. Thousand et al. (1997) argued that the impact of adopting the Circle of Courage paradigm and the outcomes of belonging, mastery, independence, and generosity, would benefit educators as well as all students.

Alberta Education Response Centre's (1992b) *Integrated Services Review. Yellowhead School Division No. 12* detailed the steps involved in the change process required to move towards a more inclusive school division. This process, the authors explained, began in 1986 at the central office level with a review of their segregated approach, which culminated into an inclusive education Board policy in 1991. The authors suggested that change towards a fully inclusive environment took time because people's belief systems were being challenged and attitudes were difficult to change.

Despite the challenges, the researchers cited a feeling of success with this more

inclusive setting for elementary students with special needs. In the Executive Summary (Alberta Education Response Centre, 1991b), the authors explained that a unique secondary model was required to address the "different culture and the different needs" in a high school (p. ix). Key issues surrounding inclusion at the high school level, cited by the author, included: preparation for life (the responsibility of the school to adequately prepare these students with appropriate living and working skills); individualized instruction (ensuring that students could proceed at their own pace in a non-threatening environment); record-keeping (graduation requirements and assigning grades); additional training and support (appropriate training and in-class support is necessary); and involvement (secondary teachers must have the opportunity to be involved in the decision-making process to define a model at the secondary level).

The Kaleidoscopic Delivery Model, conceived by Forest and cited in Little and Weber (1991), established the regular classroom as the base for planning, placement, and programming. This approach viewed the regular classroom as the sole placement, with support added in varying levels of intensity and expertise, dependent upon the student's needs and abilities.

Fox and Ysseldyke (1997) used a study of an attempt at full inclusion with students in middle school (grades 6 - 8) to explain why implementation in that setting was not successful. Reasons included lack of sufficient resources, lack of active leadership, lack of ownership for the students, inability to share and communicate in the process, lack of training, lack of sense of vision, lack of parental involvement, and lack of promotion of social acceptance of the included students.

Responsible Inclusion in the Most Enabling Environments

The following examples are categorized using Schumaker and Deshler's (1994/95) term, *responsible inclusion*, as educators and researchers searched for "improved ways to deliver, manage, and monitor instruction so that their classes of academically and behaviorally diverse students find learning to be a more exciting and rewarding experience" (p. 51). The Alberta Teachers' Association Special Education Council (1998) highlighted two key concepts towards ensuring a most enabling environment: an

environment most appropriate to the learning and behavioral needs and one that was closest in proximity and nature to that of other students. Witkin and Fox (1992) suggested that using the term "most enabling" would shift the focus onto making the learning environment more facilitative, to enable individuals to achieve regardless of the disability.

The following studies, representing the most responsible inclusion and the most enabling environments, have been categorized as collaborative, resource room, and ecological models.

Collaborative models.

The collaborative model of inclusion emphasized an interdisciplinary team approach. An interdisciplinary team model could take on a number of different formats: a team consisting of a number of individuals; a team-teaching environment; or peer tutoring.

In Dawson Creek, British Columbia, a teacher research project was conducted by Taylor and Parmar (1993) to explore the collaborative model being practised at South Peace Secondary School. In this school population of 650 students, there were 11 "low-incidence, high-cost" (p. 5) students, and all but two were included regularly with their peers in classes and activities. Significant factors, identified by the authors, which contributed to the division's successful inclusionary policy, involved:

- clear, shared vision accepted by all
- an appropriate structure as a framework
- effective collaboration both formally and informally
- effective integration assistants
- a changing school culture
- in-services for staff and students
- enhancement of social integration
- suitable placement, programs and evaluation strategies
- transition planning beginning seriously in grade 11
- pullout available, but greatly reduced.

The South Peace Secondary School model allowed for exceptions to inclusion based on either the severity of disability (two students were not included due to medical or behavioral concerns); or choice (61 students attended an alternate, outreach-type school). Students with disabilities, in this inclusionary high school, were in regular classes for two or three of their four classes each semester. In the remaining time, they were registered in life-skills classes and enjoyed "relaxation time in the comfortable company of others with similar abilities" (Taylor & Parmar, 1993, p. 31).

Although these authors explained that major obstacles to inclusion did not exist in their school, they did outline their concerns about:

- the lack of existing examples which could provide observable, practical models for school leaders
- the anxieties and concerns by teachers and parents as students moved from a segregated to inclusive model
- paraprofessional issues of absenteeism, difficulty adapting to the model, and hiring qualified assistants
- organizational aspects such as the shortage of time for collaborating, planning and materials preparation
- preparation for the future.

This model illustrated the effectiveness of the team approach in providing educational opportunities for all students.

Napier's (1995) story highlighted a district in Quesnell, British Columbia, which involved school and division office personnel in addition to parents, support groups and community agencies, on their beginning journey toward a more inclusive, enabling environment for children. This district developed as their mission statement, "every individual student would be provided the opportunity to experience the most enabling environment" (p. 29). As a result of this process, the district now advocates a "full-service neighborhood school" (Napier, 1995, p. 35) to provide the most enabling environment. Critical components of the full-service school included:

- accepting all students in the catchment area
- providing educational programs in the most enabling environments available

- collaboration
- recognition of the importance of the classroom teacher and the classroom.

School-based teams were viewed as the "within-building problem-solving" (Napier, 1995, p. 37) units, who collaborated to provide the most enabling environments.

The Alberta Education Special Education Branch report (1995), on a variety of programs for students with special needs, highlighted Grimshaw Junior-Senior High School in the Peace River School Division. This school tried to provide the most enabling environment for its students with special needs through collaboration and co-operation of staff. Grimshaw provided a range of options for students, based on their individual needs and abilities, social and academic readiness, and available support. The general outcome of this enabling environment, evidenced by teachers' comments, has been increased tolerance and acceptance by the student population towards students with special needs.

Villa's (1995) moving account of inclusionary efforts in Vermont, for a young man named Bob, was based upon the teamwork and collaborative efforts of all individuals involved with Bob's education. Villa attributed the success of this example to the time and effort expended in building supports for Bob in the school, through teamwork and planning.

Forest, Deeley, and Pearpoint (1992) outlined one girl, Carla's, high school experiences in an Ontario high school. In her first year of high school, Carla required an enabling environment that consisted of a reduced courseload and major curriculum modifications, and this was achieved through collaborative efforts between home and school. Carla gradually increased her course load to the same number as other students, and incorporated a work experience placement into her timetable. Carla's goals in classes focused on functional skills within the context of the regular class setting.

MacKinnon and Brown (1994) reported on a study of the attitude and behavior changes of 57 teachers at two schools (grades 7-12) when inclusive programming was initiated at a rural and urban school. MacKinnon and Brown found that developing teams and co-operative strategies at the secondary school level reflected a move away from the bureaucracy of a traditional high school to more adhocratic methods. MacKinnon and Brown argued that adhocracy and diversity were linked to offer a flexible structure in

which inclusion may work.

The value of collaboration and co-operation was discussed in a paper by Tralli, Colombo, Deshler, and Schumaker (1996). Tralli et al. presented the Strategies Intervention Model (SIM) to accommodate students with special needs in the regular classroom. The strategies in the SIM fell into three categories:

- learning strategies interventions focusing on teaching specific instructional strategies
- content enhancement routines, which are instructional routines that make content more accessible to all students
- empowerment interventions which aim to empower the students in guiding their own learning and relationship building.

Tralli et al. described the efforts of two secondary schools in the United States to implement this model, based on instructional and collaborative strategies. Their findings illustrated how a content focus typical of secondary teachers, and a strategy focus typical of special educators, could blend to produce educational benefit for students.

Components of team teaching between regular and special educators were outlined through Keller and Cravedi-Cheng's (1995) story of a shared voice of inclusion in teaching science. Powell (1997) explained how the special and regular educators were co-teaching in a New Jersey high school. Powell noted that these shared teaching strategies were particularly helpful in high school English and Social Studies classes. Another account, by Ferguson, Meyer, Jeanchild, Juniper, and Zingo (1992), described how the drama teacher and the special education teacher provided support to a student with disabilities. In this account, Ferguson et al. identified three crucial supports needed for successful "full learning membership" (1992, p. 226): teaching support (instructional assistance); prosthetic support (always required to diminish the impact of the disability - it never fades); and interpretive support (interpret directly or indirectly on behalf of the student with disabilities).

A further team-teaching example came out of a New York grade 9 English class (Mahony, 1997), where an English teacher and special education teacher were teamed. Alternative methods of evaluation via portfolios were explored. In addition, Mahony

(1997) recognized the diversity of students and the critical need for differentiating instruction for learners. In a study by Dyches et al. (1996), the perceptions of 20 students with exceptionalities at the junior high level were examined. Inclusive core classes teamed a subject area teacher and special education teacher or resource intern to provide instruction to regular students and students with exceptionalities. Researcher findings indicated that students who would normally have been pulled out for instruction believed they had benefited from this inclusion model. Barry (1994/95) illustrated the value of team teaching with a regular educator and special educator in a grade 8 class. Barry suggested team teaching as a way to address "the time and energy it takes to translate theory into practice" (1994/95, p. 6).

Lovey (1995) described the vital role of a teaching assistant in the regular class, with students who had sensory or physical difficulties. At the high school level, Lovey recognized the need for maintenance of strategies and interventions that began in elementary school for most of these children. The key to an effective collaborative team approach, Lovey suggested, was open communication between the teaching assistant and the teachers.

Staub, Spaulding, Peck, Gallucci, and Schwartz (1996) used a case study methodology to research an inclusion program at a junior high school, where "typically developing students" (p. 194) supported students with disabilities in the regular education classes. The student aide program was implemented in a junior high school that was struggling with the inclusion issue. Research findings pointed to three program factors: a committed school community, a supportive principal, and careful planning. The authors outlined promising outcomes for the students with disabilities and the student aides who participated in this inclusion model, as well as some issues and concerns. Overall, though, the researchers explained that, in this junior high school, this student aide program model was supportive of positive outcomes for all students.

Resource model.

Karge, McClure, and Patton (1995) examined collaborative models within a resource room setting, for meeting the needs of students with disabilities in middle and

junior high schools. Karge et al. concluded that some form of a collaborative model was a feature of resource rooms participating in their research. The researchers cautioned readers on the necessity of clearly laying out teacher's roles and expectations to maximize benefits in the collaborative resource model.

A study, cited by Smith (1997), made reference to a resource model where students in the "A Team," spent some of their time included in the classroom but had a portion of their day allotted to a resource period, where they could get help with areas of difficulty. The "A Team" was one of three grade nine teams in the school, consisting of core teachers, a special education teacher and a teacher assistant. Smith's findings revealed that the variety of meanings and teachers' perspectives of inclusion within this team resulted in inconsistencies in expectations for students with special needs. He reinforced the need for a consensus within the team about the academic and social goals of students with disabilities, to ensure belonging and participation to the fullest.

Ecological model.

The ecological model stemmed from Lewin's (1935) work, when he defined behavior as a function of the interaction between an individual and the environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) conceptualized the behavioral interactions as the relationship between a structured nested environment consisting of the microsystem, mesosystem, ecosystem, and macrosystem. The system's model, Bronfenbrenner (1979) explained, extended beyond the immediate situation to incorporate the many facets of an individual's life and the relationship between these facets.

The microsystem referred to the immediate, innermost of the environments. Bogdan and Knoll (1995) explained that in this behavior setting, "people engage in face-to-face interaction" (p. 688), and it included the school, classrooms, cafeteria, home, and neighborhoods.

Bronfenbrenner's (1979) second level, in this nested model, was known as the mesosystem, which recognized the interactions among the various microsystems. Bogdan and Knoll (1995) suggested that this was a way of explaining the effect of one part of a person's life on every other aspect of life. The mesosystem took into account the linkages,

for example, between home-school, class-class, or regular-special education class.

Bronfenbrenner also acknowledged the outside influences and demands in an individual's life as "those he may never enter but in which events occur that affect what happens in the person's immediate environment" (1979, p. 7), and he referred to these as the ecosystem. Murray-Seegert's (1989) ethnographic study cited examples of these rather distant but influential elements, including parent's work situation, child care issues, federal and state/provincial agencies, school administration, the school district, sibling or peer expectations in other schools, church demands or the teacher's home life.

Finally, the system was bound by even more distant elements such as cultural beliefs and values, the economic system, racial/ethnic/class stratification, the educational system and the political-legal system that affected the behavior of an individual (Murray-Seegert, 1989). Bronfenbrenner (1979) referred to this outermost ring as the macrosystem. Bodgan and Knoll (1995) explained that this outermost ring was the "furthest removed from the individual's immediate experience" (p. 689). For this research, an understanding of the interaction of the systems was important, but the foundation for structuring the research was based primarily on the microsystem (the daily interactions of the child with special needs and other individuals in his/her environment) and the mesosystem (the interactions between the microsystems).

Several authors have predicated their studies based on the concept of investigating environments to understand problems and relationships, and plan interventions, as another model to accommodate the diverse needs of secondary students (Friend & Bursuck, 1996; Murray-Seegert, 1989; Salvia & Ysseldyke, 1995; Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993/94). Based on the ecological model, to enhance learning required identifying students' needs within the context of their environments and using the environment to increase learning, in contrast to just placing an individual in an environment regardless of the resulting impact on the student.

Murray-Seegert (1989) emphasized the reciprocal relationship evident in ecological theory between context and human behavior, and identified the mesosystem as having the "most direct effect on the development of social relations between disabled and nondisabled students" (p. 145). In her year-long study as a volunteer in an inner city

school, Murray-Seegert observed the social relationships between students who were severely disabled and those who were nondisabled, through the school's Internal Work Experience program. At the conclusion of the year, her findings supported the benefits of structured social interactions to both students with disabilities and those without disabilities.

Friend and Bursuck's (1996) INCLUDE strategy was predicated on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory and had two main assumptions: interaction between the student and his/her environment resulted in how the student performed; and most students could be accommodated in the regular classroom if their learning needs and the demands of the environment were carefully analyzed. The steps in INCLUDE (Friend and Bursuck, 1996, p. 21-30) are as follows:

I = Identify classroom environmental, curricular, and instructional demands related to classroom organization, classroom groupings, instructional materials and methods.

N = Note student learning strengths and needs in academic, social-emotional development and physical development.

C = Check for potential areas of student success in view of instructional demands and find activities which build on these strengths.

L = Look for potential problem areas within specific instructional contexts and identify potential mismatches.

U = Use information gathered to brainstorm instructional adaptations to eliminate or minimize the mismatches identified.

D = Decide which adaptations to implement.

E = Evaluate student progress and strategy effectiveness.

Friend and Bursuck posited that, through the use of this strategy, classroom teachers could make reasonable accommodations for students with special needs in the regular classroom.

Shea and Bauer (1997) applied a social systems perspective, based on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecology of development, to address the developmental and learning needs of children with special needs. In this ecological perspective, Shea and

Bauer (1997) posited, the "individual is seen as developing in a dynamic relationship with and as an inseparable part of the settings in which the individual functions over her or his life span" (p. 5).

The studies described on the previous pages suggest that all students should be included in their schools and classes as much as possible. Alberta Education's policy regarding placement of students with special needs reiterates the idea that "most Albertans agree that students with special needs must be full participants in school and society" (1997, p. 1). It is encouraging to read about the innovative methods used to ensure the final goal of belonging and acceptance.

This literature review has provided an historical framework for inclusion and has attempted to present the issues surrounding inclusion, which will serve as a foundation for the research. Inclusion at the high school level was gradually being seen as a viable transition option for students who have been included in regular classes in elementary school. The literature illustrated that, where inclusion was successful, the high schools involved had adopted a school-wide vision or philosophy of belonging. Using a computer analogy, in those schools, inclusion was the "default" setting and other options for the students stemmed from that place. In the studies cited, where inclusion was not successful, past practices of referral to specialists, and the teacher's lack of practice, experience, knowledge, training, and feelings of competency, and attitude were noted as determining factors.

In summary, Deno's message from the seventies needs to continue to serve as a strong reminder that it is imperative to keep the individual's needs foremost:

> The top item on special education's agenda should be how it can move from where it is to where it wants to go without again abandoning children whose needs are different to over-whelming concern for the dominant majority. There must be a way. (1970, p. 229)

This chapter has provided an overview of the literature related to the history of special education; definitions of mainstreaming, integration, and inclusion; and the varying models of inclusion at the high school level. This knowledge has helped the researcher gain a more complete understanding of the past practices in an effort to better

understand the current directions, as revealed by this research. Chapter 3 will present a discussion of the research methodology.

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework and Research Paradigm

The research question sets the parameters for the type of research that will be conducted. Qualitative research, specifically a case study method, was chosen to examine inclusion at the high school in order to address the question: **What are the factors necessary for successful inclusion?** Three case studies were used to provide the reader with a description of inclusion at high school. Research participants included a team of about seven individuals, in addition to the student with special needs, for each case study. To explain the conceptual framework, this chapter has been divided into four sections. The first section will define qualitative research and then discuss the conceptual framework of the case study method, that provides the framework for this research. A methodology section will outline the steps followed towards the completion of this research. A section on data analysis will follow. The final section will discuss validity, reliability, and ethical considerations of the study.

Understanding Qualitative Methodology

Qualitative research is an umbrella term covering many forms of inquiry within a natural context as a means of understanding and explaining social phenomena (Merriam, 1998). Manning (1997) explained that qualitative research must be purposeful, contextual, and plausible, and these three criteria can be best met in the natural context of the classroom. Qualitative research advocates agree that qualitative research is not driven by theory, is not hypothesis testing, nor does it set out to produce generalizations (Merriam, 1998; Peshkin, 1993; van Manen, 1997). Instead, qualitative research is best understood through an inductive, theory-generating method of inquiry which evolves from the study (Merriam, 1998). Although qualitative research is not driven by theory, it is clear that a theoretical or conceptual framework "underlies all research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 48). This conceptual framework, achieved through the literature review, allows the researcher to set the limits around the research and to probe the research question.

When applied with accuracy and sensitivity, these traits of qualitative research provide the opportunity for the lived experiences to be observed and interpreted. According to Merriam (1998), true observation and insightful analysis and interpretation can only happen when the researcher can put aside biases and presuppositions to replace his or her own perspective with the insider's perspective.

This research can be understood through the combination of three types of qualitative research. First, three case studies, employing interviews, observations, the researcher's journal, and document review, were conducted. In addition, ethnography was utilized to study the high school culture. Finally, the tradition of phenomenology ensured that the data analysis involved rich description, to provide in-depth detail about the lived experiences of the participants in the case studies.

Phenomenology

This research is consistent with the phenomenological philosophy, defined by van Manen (1997) as the "study of lived experience" (p. 9). In this phenomenological research, the researcher attempts to "understand the meaning of events and interactions to ordinary people in particular situations" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p. 34) within the inclusive setting at high school. Phenomenology, "a school of philosophical thought that underpins all of qualitative research" (Merriam, 1998, p. 15), emphasizes the "profound insight and comprehension of something's/one's essence" (Lincoln, cited in Manning, 1997, p. 97). This interpretive understanding of human interaction results from meaning constructed through the researcher's multiple experiences in the social environment (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992), as researchers strive to become reflective.

In becoming more reflective, Boostrom (1994) outlines changes that occur in the researcher's perspective, "being an almost inert receiver of visual and aural stimuli... to being perceptually interactive, consciously responding to and shaping perceptions" (p. 53). Interpretation, then, involves working with the observations to explain or develop new concepts, elaborate on existing concepts, provide insights, clarify complexities and develop theory (Merriam, 1998; Peshkin, 1993; van Manen, 1997). In keeping with the phenomenological philosophy, the researcher's task is to interpret and provide meaning,

in an attempt to flesh out what it means to live the experience.

Ethnography

Ethnography is usually employed by anthropologists to study and describe culture. Culture refers to the attitudes, values and beliefs that structure the behaviors of the individuals within a specific framework (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992; Merriam, 1998). This case study is set within the culture of the classroom and school, and frames the research findings in a social, historical, and temporal context (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). Knowledge of this context is crucial to the interpretation of the resulting data.

Case Study

The case study is becoming more prevalent in educational research and cases of interest are typically people and programs (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 1994). The analogy of a case study to a funnel, as described by Yin (1993), is appropriate. Initially, a topic is broadly defined; multiple sources of evidence from a vast amount of data are gathered; decisions are made to modify questions and designs and, eventually, a directed focus in the work results from careful observation and interpretation. For this research inquiry, the case study method within the cultural setting seemed to be the best way to observe inclusion at high school to "deal with real human beings and actual human behavior" (Wolcott, 1973, p. xi). The components of the case study include being a bounded system, instrumental in effecting possible changes, particularistic about the focus of the study, descriptive in the finished product, representing multiple realities, understanding the role of theory, and performing a pilot study. These components will now be discussed with specific regard to this research.

Bounded system.

Qualitative research advocates who discuss case studies agree that the key defining characteristic of the case study is a bounded system involving a single unit in an integrated system (Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995).

In this inquiry, the boundaries are the rural high school setting that delimits the

research and forces the researcher to focus specifically on the inclusion process within this bounded system. The participants in these case studies were specifically selected to ensure a multi-perspective from the stakeholders. The students with special needs were all involved in inclusionary practices to varying degrees prior to this study. This research was also limited by time, as observations, interviews, and data collection occurred over an 8 month period from September 1998 to April 1999.

Instrumental.

This research falls within the realm of "instrumental case studies" (Stake, 1995, p.3), as the students with special needs within the school milieu being studied could influence inclusionary practices and future research (Merriam, 1998). It is this researcher's desire for the knowledge and insight gained through these case studies to be instrumental in providing a multi-perspective view, so educators, parents, and students can acquire understanding about inclusion from many perspectives.

Particularistic.

These case studies focus on a specific, particular phenomenon (Merriam, 1998). Although Bogdan and Biklen (1992) explain that it is an artificial act to study only one specific aspect of the integrated whole, it is necessary to limit each case study specifically to one student with special needs at one high school, so the researcher can respect and capture the details of each particular case (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993). By its nature, case study research can suggest to the reader what to do or not to do in similar situations and illuminate a general problem while examining a specific instance (Merriam, 1998). The interpretation of the data gained from these specific case studies, bounded in high school settings, may reveal useful knowledge with respect to inclusion for readers in similar situations.

Descriptive.

The effectiveness of a case study's finished product is dependent upon its rich, thick description, which comes from in-depth observations and a complete and literal

analysis of the entity (Merriam, 1998). The description is holistic and is acquired through immersion in the naturalistic setting of the case and the openness and astuteness of the researcher to really listen and to observe all aspects of the interactions within the setting.

Nothing was viewed as trivial or unimportant in a situation, and all observation details were carefully recorded, in an effort to "penetrate the surface" (Eisner, 1998, p. 34) and understand the deeper structure that goes beyond the behavior. To avoid the researcher's bias in this description, it was crucial for the researcher to continually bracket presuppositions, self evaluate, and check perceptions with the participants throughout the research process. In this inquiry, classroom and school activities were observed on a regular basis to help gather information which provided the richness of the description, necessary to "paint a portrait" (Fraenkel & Wallen, 1993, p. 392) of the inclusive setting.

Multiple realities.

Because the case study format honors multiple realities (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Manning, 1997; Stake, 1995), it appears to be the best method of obtaining in-depth, intensive information from a multi-perspective. The researcher's task, then, was to incorporate the routines, problems, and meanings in individuals' lives (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994) into the end product that best depicted and portrayed the case.

Interviews with educators, parents, and peers were conducted to seek information and gather data about perceptions of the lived experience of inclusive education. These interviews were taped and transcribed. *The Instructional Environment System-II (TIES-II)* (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993/94) was used as one tool to enhance systematic observation in efforts to gain a multi-perspective within the inclusive setting.

Theory.

A critical component in qualitative research is the role of theory. Merriam (1998) conceptualized the theoretical framework of a study as a set of interlocking frames. The outer frame is comprised of the body of literature or disciplinary orientation; the next frame is the problem statement that draws from the larger frame; and the innermost frame

consists of the exact purpose of the study. In these case studies, the body of literature reviewed on special education and inclusion comprised the outer frame. The problem statement derived from the literature pointed specifically to the difficulties of implementing inclusion successfully at high school, and, the inner-most frame delineating the exact purpose of the study, was the question: What are the factors necessary for successful inclusion at high school?

In qualitative research, the researcher enters the study with a theoretical orientation that forms the structure for the study, and then the inductive nature of the research shapes or modifies the existing theory. Ellis (personal communication, 1997) explained that theory is necessary for "conceptual sophistication when reflecting on findings and their possible meanings."

Pilot study.

Prior to undertaking the main research project, a pilot study, simulating the setting, was conducted over a 3 month period from June 1998 to September 1998. The pilot study involved a student with special needs, who was included in the regular classroom on a part-time basis.

This study allowed the researcher to gain experience in observing and interviewing. Stake (1995) explained the importance of trying out questions to ensure that they get at the heart of the matter, and to help the researcher learn to focus on what the interviewee is really saying. Yin (1994) reminded the researcher that pilot studies are useful for either detecting inadequacies or helping to articulate the case study design. These inadequacies quickly became evident to the researcher during the interviews with the student with special needs and her mother. For example, even the physical placement of the tape recorder was an important determinant, as appropriate placement helped control voice quality and resulted in clarity that was crucial in the transcription process.

Data analysis skills were enhanced through the practice of the pilot study. These skills included the actual physical formatting of the page, with type on one side and blank lines on the other to allow a space for accurate interpretation of the data.

Observation skills were also improved through the opportunity to do a pilot study.

Initially, the researcher found herself taking a consultative role, evaluating the instructional methodology being observed. It was difficult to observe openly through these evaluative lenses!

Finally, through the pilot study, the researcher learned about the protocol necessary for participating in research in a school. The principal of the school where the pilot study was undertaken felt that protocol had not been followed when the researcher contacted the parent first regarding her possible involvement in the pilot study. The principal felt that he should have been consulted first, before the parent. These reflections demonstrate how useful the pilot study can be in ensuring that the main research project runs smoothly.

Methodology

Participants

Three students with special needs, attending different rural schools, were selected as participants for the main research project. In discussion with staff, students were selected if they met the following criteria:

- They had a designated special need as identified by the Alberta Education funding criteria for severe disabilities. Severe disabilities eligibility requires that a student must have a severe physical and/or a severe-to-profound mental handicap that necessitates additional supports to accommodate the student in school. The three students with special needs in this research were cognitively higher functioning with borderline, average, or above-average intellectual ability and were able to handle the curriculum with modifications and/or adaptations. More details on the students will be provided in chapter 4.
- Students with special needs were full-time participating members of a class. Full-time membership was achieved when students were placed on the class attendance list for a specific class, attended regularly from the beginning of the semester, and were expected to participate in the class to some degree.
- Students with special needs, and their schools, had been involved in inclusionary practices prior to the year of the research. Prior membership in an

inclusive setting was determined to be an important aspect of this research. It was felt that prior membership might ensure familiarity, for the participants, with the inclusive philosophy and process.

The selection process began through personal contact with known staff in the three schools, to determine whether there might be students who fit the criteria. Once prospective students were identified, the principals of the schools were contacted, by telephone, and meeting dates were established. With principals, the research was outlined, according to the letter included in Appendix A. A request was then made for the principals to contact the parents and the prospective students, and have them make contact with the researcher. Once this line of communication was established, the researcher set up meetings with each of the students and/or parents. The purpose of this meeting was to: (a) explain the research and ask for involvement; (b) discuss the criteria; (c) confirm interest; and (d) discuss issues of confidentiality. These initial meetings took place in the homes of two of the students and at the school of the third student. All three initial contacts were interested in participating in the study and signed the consent form included in Appendix B. All three students remained involved throughout the entire school year while data was being compiled.

To achieve a multi-perspective of the inclusion process, numerous stakeholders who worked with the students were also participants in the study. These stakeholders included an administrator, special education co-ordinator or special education teacher, guidance counsellor, classroom teacher, teacher assistant, parents, and peer for each of the case studies. Once authorization had been obtained by the school administrator, the parent, and the student with special needs, then contact was made individually with each of the other participants and meetings were established, as described above. Consent forms were signed and discussions were held regarding the optimum time for the researcher's observations in the classroom, and interviews.

Interviews

Twenty-one interviews comprised the primary data for this research. The interview questions were developed through the review of the literature and careful

consideration to the content of the questions. These sets of questions varied somewhat for the participants and are included in Appendix C.

Prior to the interviews, each participant was informed of the general purpose of the study, matters relating to confidentiality and anonymity, and the interview procedure, involving taped responses and transcription. Before the actual formal interview, a period of time was set aside to establish rapport with participants. This was accomplished by meetings, as described in the above section; the researcher's visibility through observations in the classroom; and informal conversation in the staff rooms of the schools. Each participant was interviewed once, formally, using the questions in Appendix C to guide the interview. The intent of these semi-structured interviews was to encourage participants to describe their inclusion experiences. These interviews took place in a number of locations within the school and/or the participants' homes. Subsequent interview questions and discussion emerged from participants' responses to the initial questions, and these responses were reflected in the transcripts. These initial interviews were from one to two hours in duration. During this time of the initial interview with the students with special needs, they were requested to choose a pen name to ensure confidentiality. Each interview was tape recorded with the participant's approval, and transcribed by the researcher immediately following the interview. The tight timelines helped ensure that the data remained fresh, and that the researcher caught the subtle nuances from voice intonation and voice level that aided in the interpretation of the data. An initial data analysis occurred following confirmation with the participants regarding the accuracy of the analysis and interpretations. Appendix D contains a sample of two of these transcripts.

In addition to this formal procedure, a regular classroom teacher in each of the case studies was interviewed a second time, using the TIES-II Teacher Record. The Teacher Interview Record provided the researcher with additional information, from the teacher's perspective, to better understand what it was like to have a student with special needs in the classroom.

Observations

In addition to these interviews, the case studies incorporated the tradition of the ethnographic practice of observation and fieldwork. After contact had been made with the school administrator, an initial assessment was conducted in the school to look at existing structures, boundaries and environments: physical; economic, social, and cultural; and human. Bogdan and Biklen (1992) provided the framework for these observational questions, which are presented in Appendix E. Following this general inventory, the researcher focused the observations specifically on the student with special needs in his/her classrooms. In each case study, students were observed in most of their classes one time, but more frequent observation occurred in the classes where the researcher had targeted the teacher for interviewing. Contact was made with participating teachers to determine the logistics of the observations. Some factors included: (a) introduction of the researcher; (b) the least intrusive place in the classroom to observe; and (c) the most appropriate class to observe. For example, in one math class, the teacher determined that, since students were writing an exam for the entire math class, it would not be appropriate or beneficial for the researcher to observe.

In consultation with the teachers, it was decided to introduce the researcher as a person from the University who was observing classes to gain an appreciation of what occurred in high school classes. The researcher was also introduced as a teacher who had taught in a high school and was gaining ideas for teaching methods. The researcher usually remained in one place for the initial observation, either at the front or back of the room. From this vantage point, the researcher was able to capture the nuances of the teacher-student interactions, observe subtle peer-to-peer responses and reactions, and capture the tone and atmosphere of the classroom. During subsequent observations, the researcher moved freely about and was able to look carefully at students' work and to hear and see the student's interactions. The length of observation time varied, however, the researcher usually tried to ensure her presence in the classroom for the entire block to minimize distractions. Extensive field notes were recorded during the observations, and these notes were later expanded upon, to flesh out the content, as soon as possible following the observation.

Journals

The researcher kept a journal to record experiences throughout the research. These journal entries varied from initial "ah-ha!" moments where a construct or theory began to emerge, to musings about a component of the research proceedings, to frustrations about a particular aspect of the research. Appendix F contains a sampling of two entries from the researcher's journal.

Participants were asked to record the experiences they perceived as critical incidents. Although participants were enthusiastic about being involved in the interviews and observations, they all declined to keep journals. This could be related to the ambiguity of the content of the journals or the time factor involved in keeping a journal.

Documents

Report cards, Individual Program Plans, and student files were reviewed to add to the data collection and provide background history. A block of time was dedicated, in each of the cases, to collecting this data.

Method of Analysis

Category Construction

To help analyse the data and locate common categories, the researcher followed the format of category construction as explained by Merriam (1998). According to Merriam, category construction involves "capturing some recurring pattern" (p. 179) evolving from the text and involves the step-by-step process, naming the categories, and the number of categories chosen.

Step-by-step process.

This initial phase of the analysis began with the readings of the first transcript and continued through all subsequent data collected from interviews, observation field notes and document collection. To manage the data, the transcriptions were typed on the left-hand side of the paper, and the right-hand side was kept free to allow space for the notes, comments, observations, and questions. The comments and notes were grouped together

once this set of data was reviewed, and a separate running list was kept. Merriam (1998) explained that this process was analogous to sorting items in a grocery store. This same process was repeated for each of the remaining sets of data collected, and the groupings extracted were put on a separate list and also added to the master list. Merriam noted that the master list reflects the recurrent patterns in the study, which become the "categories or themes into which subsequent items are sorted" (p. 181). The research findings were returned to the participants for verification throughout this process.

Naming the categories.

Merriam (1998) suggested that the names of the categories can come from the researcher, the participants, or the literature. In these case studies, the categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, were named by the researcher, reflecting what was seen in the data. Merriam provided guidelines to determine the efficacy of categories:

- Categories should reflect the purpose of the research. In these case studies, the categories of knowledge, skills, and attitudes reflect the factors that were determined, by the researcher, to be important for successful inclusion.
- Categories should be exhaustive. All data that were deemed important to the study were placed in one of the three categories.
- Categories should be mutually exclusive. Each unit of the data appeared to fit into only one of the categories.
- Categories should be sensitizing. The naming of each category was sensitive to what was in the data.
- Categories should be conceptually congruent. The same level of abstraction characterizes all three categories: knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

Numbers of categories.

Merriam (1998) cautioned that the number of categories should be manageable and would be determined by the data. Merriam continued that fewer categories would allow for greater ease to communicate research findings to others.

This level of analysis resulted in three key phrases or categories being selected,

that applied to all three case studies: knowledge, skills, and attitudes. A model of inclusion linking the three categories was then formulated, and these categories and models will be explored in chapter 4.

Validity, Reliability, and Ethics

The researcher holds real power through the research process, of turning "other people's lives into texts" (Panza, cited in Newkirk, 1996, p. 14), and research is "concerned with producing valid and reliable knowledge in an ethical manner" (Merriam, 1998, p. 198). For this reason, inquirers must be competent so that their data can be judged trustworthy, believable, and important (Guba, 1981; Merriam, 1998). According to Merriam (1998), theorists such as Lincoln and Guba argue that qualitative research is based upon different assumptions about reality and should consider validity and reliability from a different perspective. Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggested using the terms truth-value and credibility for internal validity; applicability and transferability for external validity; consistency and dependability for reliability; and confirmability and neutrality for objectivity. In the following section, these terms will be discussed.

To ensure validity and reliability in research, the investigation must be conducted in an ethical manner (Merriam, 1998). The final portion of this section will explain the ethical considerations pertinent to this research.

Internal Validity

When research findings match reality, then internal validity is achieved (Merriam, 1998). Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that reality is achieved through human's mental construction of the inquiry process. Because humans are the primary data collection and analysis instruments, interpretations are accessed directly through human observation and interviews. A qualitative researcher is concerned with the question, "Is my interpretation credible?" Merriam (1998) presented six strategies to enhance interval validity, and this research utilized five of the strategies, including triangulation, member checking, long-term analysis, peer examination, and addressing the researcher's biases.

Triangulation occurred to allow the researcher to confirm the data and establish

credibility, through multiple sources of data and multiple methods of data collection. Data were collected from a total of 21 interviews with participants, seven per case. The participants interviewed in each of the case studies held parallel job descriptions. Data collection also involved multiple methods to secure an understanding of the inclusive setting. In addition to the number of people interviewed, data were also collected through numerous observations in the school and classrooms, the researcher's journal, and a review of student documents/artifacts to confirm emerging findings.

Member checking was done continually throughout the analysis process. As each of the levels of analysis was concluded, the participants were asked to review the transcripts to ensure accuracy of the interpretations. Participants were also asked to check for accuracy of the observation summaries.

Long-term observation at the research site involved gathering data at each case study site over the course of one school year. This prolonged engagement is necessary until, as Mertens and McLaughlin (1995) have explained, the themes and examples are repeated. It is hoped that this research which occurred over eight months, will fulfil this requirement of increasing the validity.

Peer examination occurred throughout the research. Confidentiality was maintained as the researcher conversed with colleagues on the findings emerging from the data analysis. One colleague, in particular, was extremely helpful in looking holistically at the data and providing the researcher with insightful comments.

The researcher clarified her assumptions and biases at the outset of the study and made every effort to continually bracket her presuppositions so as to look through clear lenses at the research question and data. Because of her segregated classroom background, the researcher made an extra effort to reflect on her past experiences and be aware of how her background and experiences might impact on her interpretation of the data.

External Validity

External validity refers to the applicability of the research to other situations. Lincoln and Guba (1985) explained how the nature of the controls of internal validity

makes clean generalizations difficult. Merriam, cited in Stake (1995), proposed four reconceptualizations of generalizability which included working hypotheses, concrete universals, naturalistic generalizations, and user generalizations.

Working hypotheses takes into account the local conditions and results in generalizations based on these conditions. In these case studies, the local conditions of each of the high schools and each student's special needs were taken into consideration and became the working hypotheses or basis for generalization.

Instead of searching for abstract universals through generalizations, Merriam discussed the need for concrete universals by studying each case in particular detail, and comparing it to other cases to discover how "...the general lies in the particular" (Cited in Stake, 1995, p. 210). In this research, each of the case studies was analyzed separately to discover the particular detail within each setting. The three cases were then compared to each other, not to evaluate, but, rather, to discover any generalities among the studies.

The third way of viewing external validity, discussed also by Stake (1995), was naturalistic generalization. Stake defined naturalistic generalization as those generalizations embedded in the experience and intuition of people. Each individual will generalize the findings of this research based on his/her own experiences, background, and biases.

The fourth conceptualization of external validity was reader or user generalizability, which extends beyond the experiences and intuition of naturalistic generalization. In user generalizability, the onus is on the reader, not the researcher, to generalize the findings to his or her own situation. While reading this research, educators, parents, and students will generalize segments of the findings discussed in chapter 4, to their own situations in schools.

Merriam (1998) outlined three strategies to enhance the possibility of the results generalizing in any of the ways described above. This study attempted to use all three strategies including providing rich, thick descriptions, establishing typical or modal categories, and using multi-sites.

Rich, thick description will be presented in chapter 4. The researcher attempted to provide enough description, through participants' comments and observations, to allow

the reader to determine whether his/her own situation matched the research setting.

Typicality (or modal categories) was established through a thorough review of the literature and the models of inclusion. The researcher's summary of the situations of each of the students with special needs at the beginning of chapter 4 should help the reader make comparisons with his/her own setting.

The third strategy, using multi-sites, was achieved in this research. Three case studies at three different sites demonstrated the diversity of the phenomenon of inclusion at high school. The reader should have an adequate sampling of students with special needs to look to his/her own experiences for commonalities.

Reliability

Reliability addresses the question of consistency. "How can I be sure that the findings would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with similar participants?" Because qualitative inquiry is not based on a single reality and human behavior cannot be isolated, there is "...no benchmark by which to take repeated measures and establish reliability in the traditional sense" (Merriam, 1998, p. 205). Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue that a substitute criterion for reliability is "dependability" (p. 299). To ensure that the results are consistent and dependable, Merriam (1998) suggested three techniques: (a) investigator position; (b) triangulation; and (c) an audit trail.

Merriam (1998) felt that it was important for the investigator to explain his/her assumptions and theory and describe his/her position in relation to the group being studied. The researcher, through her story in chapter 1, attempted to demonstrate clearly her position and experiences related to inclusion at high school. The basis for selecting the students with special needs was described earlier in this chapter, while a thorough description of the students with special needs will be presented as an introduction to chapter 4.

Triangulation was another technique suggested by Merriam (1998) to strengthen reliability as well as internal validity. This technique has been described in an earlier section of this chapter.

Leaving an audit trail was the third technique noted by Merriam (1998) which

helped to establish reliability and dependability of the study. How the data were collected and the categories or themes derived was described in detail at the beginning of this chapter. The audit trail should explain to the reader how the researcher arrived at her results.

Objectivity

Lincoln and Guba (1985) defined objectivity as confirmability of the data. Techniques for assessing confirmability are similar to those described above by Merriam (1998), an audit trail and triangulation. These have been discussed in detail and will not be dealt with here. The third technique, noted by Lincoln and Guba (1985), was the keeping of a reflective journal. Entries from the researcher's journal can be found in Appendix F.

Through rigorous and systematic methods of data collection, analysis and reporting, the reader will be attempting to fit what is recorded with what actually occurred. If the descriptions are thick and rich enough, then the reader will be able to transfer from one context to another and apply the research to his/her own situation. By attending to and considering this data, as researchers we are fulfilling our "ethical obligations to minimize misrepresentations and misunderstandings" (Stake, 1995, p. 109).

Ethical Considerations

The ethical standards set by the University of Alberta were followed, providing for informed consent and protection of the participants from harm. Participants were informed of the nature of the research through a letter and meeting. They were advised of their right to withdraw at any time without penalty or fear of losing anonymity.

Anonymity and confidentiality were maintained at all times. Participants' actual names were not used, and they were asked to choose pseudonyms. The specific names of the school sites do not appear in any printed material.

Written consent of the participants was obtained before beginning any data collection. Written consent of the appropriate school officials was also acquired before the study began.

This chapter has provided a detailed description of the methodology and issues related to data management and analysis for these case studies. By taking the time to consider all issues and pursue an appropriate path, the research seemed to progress smoothly, and an abundance of data was generated. In chapter 4, the findings will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

Results of the Study

This research, involving three individual case studies, was undertaken to explore and examine the inclusive experiences surrounding three adolescents in rural, Alberta high schools. Seven interviews and numerous observations were conducted in each of the case studies, to provide the reader with differing perspectives from the participants. The data generated were analyzed and formed the basis for defining the factors required for successful inclusion at the high school level.

This chapter will begin with an introduction of the three students with special needs: Kristy, Brahma, and Mike. The participants for each of the case studies will be presented, followed by a discussion of background information and a description of the state of inclusion for each of the students with special needs at his/her high school. These adolescents have chosen pen names to ensure anonymity and maintain confidentiality. Case studies are presented in no particular order.

As defined in chapter 2, inclusion means full-time membership in a regular class or classes with peers. Varying degrees of inclusion will be noted in these case studies, with Kristy included for two grade 10 subjects in each semester; Brahma included in grade 11 and 12 classes for all of his courses; and Mike included in grade 12 courses for all blocks of his day. The final section of the chapter will explore the categories that have emerged from the data: **knowledge, skills** and **attitudes,** as the factors necessary for successful inclusion.

Introduction to the Case Studies

Case Study 1, Kristy's Story

Participants.

Seven semi-structured interviews, nine formal observations and a series of informal observations were conducted from September 1998 to April 1999 to generate data for Kristy's case study. Interviews were obtained from Kristy; Kristy's mother; a teacher assistant who worked Kristy in her inclusive classes; the Foods teacher; a student

in the Foods class; an administrator who taught English to Kristy; the special education teacher in charge of the segregated class; and a guidance counsellor. Observations were conducted in Kristy's English, CALM, Foods, and Work Experience classes.

Background.

Kristy, a 16-year-old female, lives at home with her parents and siblings. She has attended rural schools in the same community since kindergarten. Kristy has spina bifida and spends her day in a wheelchair. She requires assistance for all personal care and when transferring from her wheelchair. Kristy operates her power wheelchair independently, using a joystick, but requires some supervision, when maneuvering ramps, to ensure her safety. Kristy has limited use of her left hand, but her right hand is quite functional, and this is the hand she uses to write.

Kristy presented to the researcher as an engaging young woman who enjoyed adult company and conversation, and enjoyed being part of the group. Kristy was quite verbal, speaking with a husky voice. She was able to participate in conversations about her family, friends, school activities, and her preferences about her favorite teachers. When she accompanied the researcher to dinner, Kristy demonstrated very appropriate social behaviors: she read the menu, ordered her meal, and had good table and eating manners.

A review of Kristy's cumulative records indicated that she is functioning in the borderline range of ability, with specific disabilities in the visual processing area. In her grade 9 school year, Kristy's Gates MacGinite Reading Test indicated a vocabulary grade equivalent of 7.3; comprehension grade equivalent of 3.7; and total reading ability at a 5.6 grade equivalent. A KeyMath Diagnostic Test, done at the same time, showed a grade equivalent of 4.1.

Kristy's elementary school years, from grades 1 to 6, were spent in a fully inclusive setting that accommodated her challenges as the result of her spina bifida. Kristy's mother was clearly pleased with the response from the elementary school towards accepting Kristy into their school:

'Oh I think that's just wonderful', and I just about fell off my chair... They were very pro-integration... they went out of their way to make things possible and if there was ever a problem, I mean, she would get priority. I don't think you'll find another school like that.

Because of this safe, secure environment and the uncertainty about school selection for grade 7, Kristy repeated grade 6 at the elementary school.

Kristy's transition to junior high meant a change in schools and a change in philosophy of inclusion at her new school. Kristy's mother explained that in the junior high school, Kristy *"has to fit in more than they will fit in for her"*. In grade 7, Kristy was involved in most of the grade 7 core courses, but her mother stated that Kristy was becoming frustrated and falling behind in the work. For her remaining years in junior high, then, Kristy was placed in a segregated classroom with some integration into language arts and option courses. Kristy followed along with her same-age peers and made the transition to her local high school.

State of inclusion at Kristy's high school.

The high school was located in the same area as Kristy's previous school, so she was able to ride the same bus, resulting in a move, logistically, that was not drastic for Kristy. There were approximately a thousand students filling the halls of the school and about 60 of these students had special needs. Twenty of the students with special needs were taught in two segregated classes, and the remaining students were included in the regular classes with careful timetable arrangement and course selection by the parents, special education coordinator, and the counsellor. There were about 80 staff in this 40-year-old school, including 10 teacher assistants who either worked in the segregated programs or with students in the regular stream. Originally built in the sixties, the school has undergone six renovations and/or modernizations. The school was built on two levels with a ramp and stairs accessing the second level, which housed a large cafeteria, the business wing and some classrooms. The main level contained four hallways leading to the various "wings" of the school: Vocational/Fine Arts, Math/Science,

English/Social/Drama/Career and Technology Studies, and the two gymnasiums. The location at the south end of the town in the recreational area allowed students quick access to the baseball diamonds, football field, swimming pool, arena, curling rink, and a large open field for games, cross-country skiing or picnics.

The school day began at 8:55 and was broken into four 80 minute time periods (which will be referred to as 'blocks' for the remainder of this chapter). There was one 7 minute break in the morning and another in the afternoon, and a 45 minute lunch break. As a major bus transfer site, when school was dismissed at 3:25, there were approximately 37 buses carrying 800 students away from the school. While the majority of the buses gathered in the transfer site, the buses transporting students with special needs loaded students at the front of the school due to safety and supervision reasons. An exception to the regular school day was staff meeting days and "early dismissal" once a month where classes were shortened to about 60 minutes each and students were dismissed at 2:25 pm.

The school offered a wide course selection including fine arts, second languages, physical education, and an assortment of career and technology studies classes. In all schools in this research, core subjects were available at the following levels: 14-24; 13-23-33; and 10-20-30. The 14-24 sequence is the least difficult set of courses which leads to a high school diploma and entry to the work force. The 13-23-33 sequence is usually for students planning to enter colleges, technical, or trade schools, while the 10-20-30 courses are the most difficult and are intended for university-bound or special college/technical program students.

This high school was in its early stages of inclusive education. In previous years there had been a few other students included full-time in the regular class: a couple of students with physical disabilities and another student who presented with communication deficits and low cognitive skills. Students with learning disabilities were also accommodated in the regular classes. The majority of the students who were functioning at Kristy's level, however, were typically placed in the segregated classrooms, where the focus was on living and vocational skills.

During the time of this research, Kristy was in her grade 10 year, the first year of high school. Kristy's semester one timetable was determined through consultation with Kristy, her mother, the special education coordinator and the special education teacher. After working with Kristy for one semester, the teacher assistant had input into the second semester schedule. As a result of the discussions, Kristy's timetable was structured to include two to three grade 10 courses per semester, combined with a placement in the segregated special education classroom in the school for two blocks per day. The original goal for these classes was for Kristy to complete the work that she could and to get to know other students in her classes. The focus in the segregated class was on functional daily living and working skills.

In the first semester, Kristy was involved in work experience every day, CALM (Career And Life Management) every second day and Foods 10 every second day. For her Work Experience block, Kristy worked with a teacher assistant, performing assorted clerical work on an "as needed" basis for the office, sock sorting and matching for a senior citizen's home, and working on a resume. In CALM, Kristy sat at the front of the room with her teacher assistant beside her, and worked mostly on her own. During observation of this class, very little group interaction was noted between any class members. Most students worked on their assignments independently. The teacher assistant provided support for Kristy in the classroom by rewriting homework assignments, modifying course material, and reviewing and clarifying concepts. Kristy legitimately passed the final exam and was awarded credits for this course. In the Foods lab, Kristy partnered with a peer, who worked with her in the kitchen station that was adapted to accommodate Kristy's wheelchair. The teacher assistant provided support to both Kristy and her partner as they prepared the same food as the rest of the class. Homework was modified by the teacher assistant: quantity was reduced, and sections where answers could be found were highlighted. Tests were 'open book' and read to Kristy, with the teacher assistant scribing the answers. Kristy did not receive credits for this course.

Kristy's second semester included an English 13 course and a Cosmetology course every day. In her English class, Kristy sat at the front of the room beside the

teacher assistant for the lectures but observations revealed that Kristy joined in group and cooperative activities with the rest of the class. Kristy worked on the same English 13 curriculum, but the teacher assistant again modified and adapted the work, as required, for Kristy's understanding and abilities. None of the tests were open book, the teacher assistant scribed the answers for the written sections, and Kristy completed the multiple-choice questions on her own. Kristy was also given additional time to complete the tests. Kristy did not receive credits for English 13 because she did not write the final examination. The goal for Kristy in Cosmetology was to gain an understanding of the theory and participate in the labs to the best of her ability. With teacher assistant support, Kristy found answers from the text for worksheets. "*She mostly does this on her own and does a very good job*" (Teacher assistant). Limited peer interaction occurred with Kristy occasionally joining the group in the lab for hair care and nail care. Kristy did not achieve credits for this course.

In summary, throughout her grade ten classes, Kristy was supported through helpful teachers and teacher assistants, who modified and adapted the material for her. Although achieving course credits was not an original expectation or goal, Kristy did earn full credits in CALM and partial credits in Foods, because she demonstrated that, with appropriate supports, she was able to legitimately pass the courses. Other supports for Kristy included the placement of her locker close to the segregated classroom so she could access help from the staff with her lock combination and morning routine. Kristy also ate lunch with the students from the segregated classroom in the school cafeteria and joined the class on their many outings. Kristy's personal needs included monitoring for safety in her wheelchair, personal care issues related to her spina bifida, and assistance with social skills.

Case Study 2, Brahma's Story

Participants.

To gather data for Brahma's case study, seven semi-structured interviews and eight formal observations were conducted over one semester from February to June 1999.

The interview participants included: Brahma; Brahma's foster mother; the English teacher; a peer in the English class; the teacher assistant who worked with Brahma; the guidance counsellor, and the principal. Observations were conducted in Brahma's English, Drama, and Foods classes.

Background.

Brahma, an 18-year-old male, has lived in rural Alberta with his foster family for 10 years. Brahma was diagnosed with Autism in grade 5, which, his foster mother noted, partially explained his strong need for structure and routine and his deficits in communication and social skills.

Brahma presented to the researcher as an intelligent adolescent with bright eyes. He came up with his pen name, "Brahma," without hesitation, and proceeded to explain to the researcher where he had heard the name before. Although intelligent in some of his comments, Brahma demonstrated an immaturity by giggling loudly and for a long time when a comment struck him funny. Brahma enjoyed talking about computers but tended to perseverate on that topic. Brahma seemed to enjoy the dinner and school play outing with the researcher. Although he did not outwardly demonstrate his appreciation, Brahma ate his meal enthusiastically and was enthralled by the school play. Brahma did not initiate conversation and he was slow in responding, but his brief answers were generally on topic. Brahma spoke candidly about his lack of friends, but stated that, most of the time, he enjoyed his own company and did not need to have lots of friends coming to his house.

A school cumulative file review indicated Grade 8 Canadian Test of Basic Skills scores at the 99th percentile (grade equivalent: 11) for reading decoding and vocabulary; 56th percentile (grade equivalent: 8) in reading comprehension; 99th percentile (grade equivalent: 12) in math concepts; 96th percentile (grade equivalent: 10) in math computation; and 93rd percentile (grade equivalent: 10) in mathematics problem solving. These scores support Brahma's score in the high average range on a test of cognitive ability completed in the same year. A psychiatric diagnosis of Autism in 1996 suggested language deficits in comprehension; difficulty with social interactions, abstractions, and

organization with resulting confusion and agitation. Brahma's Individual Program Plan focused on developing coping skills to deal with his idiosyncratic, perseveration behaviors; promoting independent functioning; and encouraging Brahma to accept constructive criticism.

Since coming to live with his new foster family in grade 4, Brahma attended regular classes on a full-time basis. His elementary/junior high school, prior to high school, educated students from Kindergarten to grade 9, which meant that Brahma did not have to transfer after grade 6 to a junior high school.

Brahma's foster mother stated that his elementary/junior high school was supportive and proactive:

> *The school was very willing to accept him and actually...there were a few behaviors that were more off than they are now, and they were willing to work with him and we had close contact and it worked out all right. They started a chess club to get him into some extracurricular activities.* (Brahma's foster mother)

Supports for Brahma in elementary/junior high school included a teacher assistant to keep him on-task and focused; modification of the quantity of work and the time required to complete it; a scribe for class lectures; and a consistent social skills training program.

State of inclusion at Brahma's high school.

Brahma moved to high school with a number of the same peers who had attended classes with him in his previous school. The high school was situated in a residential area in the northern section of the town and shared common ground with a middle school. There was a large park across from the school giving an open, country feeling. The school was built in the early fifties, but recently underwent major renovations, including the addition of new classrooms, restructuring of old classrooms and spaces, and modernization of laboratories. The school boasted a cleanliness that the students appeared

to appreciate and respect: hallways were free of garbage; lockers were free from dents and marks; and classrooms were well maintained. Registration in this rural community school was around 325 students in grades 10 to12, with three of these students identified as having special needs. All students with special needs were fully included in the regular stream with peers. There were 28 staff, including two teacher assistants who assisted students as required.

To accommodate a Fine Arts option, classes began at 7:30 and ended at 4:15, but students who were not involved in Band attended four 80 minute blocks, beginning at 8:30 am and ending at 3:21 pm. There was a 7 minute break between each of the morning and afternoon blocks, and students and staff had an hour-long lunch break. The majority of the students at the school either walked or drove, but there were three buses carrying about 10 regular passengers to and from the school. Brahma was one of these bus students.

For a smaller high school, there was a wide selection of courses, including the various streams in the core courses; Physical Education and CALM; Second Languages; Fine Arts; Work Experience and a host of Career and Technology studies courses. Students were expected to carry a maximum credit load for each grade with no spares in grade 10; one spare during the year in grade 11; and one spare per semester in grade 12. Brahma's course load and timetable were individually constructed to accommodate his needs and encourage his successful completion of high school.

The inclusive experiences for this high school centered around students who were able to complete their high school diplomas. Students with learning disabilities were educated in the regular classes. Students who were cognitively lower functioning, however, went to a different school; but the school mentioned that they would try to accommodate other students with special needs if parents chose this route.

The high school goal for Brahma, his foster parents, and the school was graduation with a diploma. To help achieve this goal, Brahma's schedule was set up to include four years of high school and allow for only three blocks of the day in classes and one block a day to work with the teacher assistant. In semester one of this year, Brahma's schedule included the following courses: Social Studies 30, CALM 20, and Math 30. The

researcher was not involved with Brahma during semester one, so cannot comment on Brahma's participation in these classes. Brahma's semester two schedule consisted of English 30, Drama 20, and Foods 1A, a grade 10 level class. On the days when he was observed in his English class, Brahma always arrived on time and without the teacher assistant. He sat at the front of the class and rarely interacted with his peers. In fact, he seemed oblivious to them at times and mildly interested in them at others. Brahma participated in all aspects of class: discussions, although his responses were on-target, he took longer to formulate his answers than many of the other students; written tasks, often requiring teacher prompts to remain on-task; and oral reading activities demonstrating fluency in reading and an ability to follow along with the rest of the class. The course content was not modified for Brahma, however, some provisions were made: the teacher gave him extra time to finish assignments and write tests and exams; a classroom scribe gave Brahma a copy of the notes from each class, and the teacher prompted Brahma to remain focused and on-task.

During Drama, Brahma was a full participant and attempted all of the requested tasks. The room was covered with motivational and inspirational posters, and the environment was accepting and caring. Since routines had been established and procedures set, the teacher assistant no longer accompanied Brahma to this class, either. In the Foods class, Brahma was partnered with another student in the class, and the two worked in a station with another pair. Each pair worked independently in their half of the kitchen. Brahma and his partner worked at a slightly slower pace, resulting in his partner cleaning up on occasion so that Brahma could catch his bus at the end of the day. Observation revealed that the teacher provided appropriate prompts and utilized questioning strategies to assist Brahma and his partner with the completion of their recipes. She maintained a positive class environment through her sense of humor and relaxed attitude.

During the daily study block right after lunch, a number of strategies and study skills were used. The teacher assistant worked with Brahma to task-analyze material and organize his daily schedule so that the work did not appear overwhelming. She also reviewed, re-taught, or clarified concepts as required, and then provided Brahma the time

to finish work begun in class. The teacher assistant worked hard to help Brahma understand how the concept was relevant to him so that he could connect material in a meaningful way. Given these provisions, Brahma was generally able to complete the tasks and assignments required for classes. He has been successful with all of his high school courses to date, except Keyboarding. Although Brahma thoroughly enjoys the Internet and chatting and emailing, the attempt to teach him keyboarding skills has not been successful. Brahma is currently in his third year of high school and will graduate in June 2000.

A further accommodation for Brahma was the option of writing the 33-level exams in Social and English despite his registration in the 30-level courses. In regard to these classes, one teacher assistant felt that, although the material was difficult and the pace was too fast at the 30-level: *"the students are more forgiving and understanding of Brahma's behaviors... the 33's* [however] *would not be as socially accepting"*. For these reasons, Brahma registered in the 30-level classes where he was able to utilize his strong verbal skills and reading ability, but wrote the 33-level exams which required more concrete, less in-depth abstractions or synthesis of material.

Case Study 3, Mike's Story

Participants.

The data gathered for Mike's case study were generated from seven semi-structured interviews and four formal classroom observations from September 1998 to January 1999. The interviews were obtained from Mike; Mike's mother; the teacher assistant who accompanied Mike to the majority of his classes; the special education coordinator; an assistant administrator; a Social Studies teacher; and a friend of Mike's. Observations were conducted in Mike's Social Studies and Math classes.

Background.

Mike is a 17-year-old male who lives with his father. He has lived in the same community all his life, attending one school for grades kindergarten to nine and his

current school for grades 10 to12. With the exception of one year in a special needs kindergarten, Mike has been fully included for his entire schooling and will graduate in June 1999 with his diploma.

Mike presented to the researcher as an enthusiastic, energetic adolescent. He was articulate, and asked questions related to the research and his part in it. He was motivated to complete school, and shared with the researcher that he was involved in his own small business, which he would pursue upon completion of high school. Mike explained that he was in his last year of high school, and was looking forward to graduation.

A review of Mike's school cumulative records indicated that he had average cognitive abilities. His grade 8 Canadian Test of Basic Skills corroborated this finding. His scores in reading vocabulary were at the 92nd percentile (grade equivalent: 10); reading comprehension at the 32nd percentile (grade equivalent: 7-6); and math skills at the 14th percentile (grade equivalent: 6-7). His diagnosis of spastic diplegia (cerebral palsy) suggested lower body restrictions and loss of balance, resulting in falls; and some limitations in fine motor skills and organizational skills resulting in the need for a scribe or use of a laptop computer for all written work.

In grades 1 to 6, Mike received help through a teacher assistant and therapy assistant to counteract the effects of his cerebral palsy. He was given assistance learning to use the computer, doing his range of motion exercises to maintain and strengthen his leg muscles and ensuring his safety as he maneuvered from place to place. In his junior high years, Mike continued to be included in the regular classes with minimal teacher assistant time as he had become proficient on the computer and could take his own notes. He received help from a therapy assistant for physical therapy exercises and warm-up exercises prior to physical education classes.

State of inclusion at Mike's high school.

Mike's high school was a 20-year-old building that housed approximately 1 thousand students and 80 staff, including 10 teacher assistants, who worked both in the segregated classes and with the students who were included in the regular classes. Of the thousand students, about 75 had been designated as having special needs. There were

segregated classes for students with mild mental delays, and these students were integrated into the regular classes, depending on their abilities and interests. The remaining students were included in the regular classes through careful timetable scheduling and consultation with administration, the special education coordinator and the counsellors. The school was located at the north end of the city, surrounded by subdivisions and a golf course. There was an open field beside the school used for outdoor activities. A large student parking lot was located beside the school, and, in addition, about 29 buses transported 600 students to and from the school. The school had a theatre attached, which was used often by the public and resulted in increased exposure to the school. Since being built, there have been additions of two portables and a modernization of the vocational spaces. The first floor of the three-story school housed the majority of the Career and Technology Studies classrooms and laboratories, the gymnasiums, classrooms, offices and the cafeteria. A large foyer with student lockers and benches was located just off the cafeteria where many students congregated to talk, eat lunch, and just hang out. Classrooms and accompanying laboratories, the library, and the Fine Arts' rooms were on the second and third levels. An elevator was available in the school, for use only by students with mobility problems; however, Mike used the stairs to get to the other levels of the school.

This school also operated on a semester system, with four 80 minute blocks per day. There was a short break in the morning and afternoon and a 45 minute lunch break. Similarly to the other high schools, Mike's school offered a variety of courses and selection within courses. Courses included: core courses available on many levels, Modern Languages, Fine Arts, Physical Education, CALM, Work Experience, and an assortment of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) courses. Along with the usual CTS courses, this school offered Electro Technologies, Forestry, Robotics, and Wildlife.

This high school's experience with inclusion, like Brahma's, centered around the student's ability to graduate with a diploma. There were segregated classes for students who were lower functioning cognitively and required more hands-on learning and work experience, and would graduate with a certificate of achievement.

In semester one, Mike took Social Studies 33, Information Processing modules, Math 33 and Work Experience. Mike sat at the front of the room in his Social class with the teacher assistant beside him. During observations, he was noted to participate fully in all aspects of the class:

> *He's definitely involved in the class, he takes part in the discussion...he is quite knowledgeable about current events, about things that are happening – many of the issues that we're talking about are political, economic and he's really interested in that and he willingly volunteers to bring in new ideas and make all kinds of connections...he probably volunteers in the top 10% of students volunteering ideas.* (Social Studies teacher)

Mike was observed in his Math class, where he sat between a friend on one side and the teacher assistant on the other side at the beginning of a horseshoe shaped row of desks. He participated in class discussions and provided answers. He interacted freely with the teacher, who seemed to provide an atmosphere of acceptance for all students. In this class, he was involved primarily with his friend who sat beside him. In these core classes, the teacher assistant took class notes and scribed for Mike. She also assisted him in organizing his material and himself. A laptop was accessible to Mike, but he chose to have the teacher assistant scribe the notes while he listened in class. At home, Mike used his computer for all written assignments. Mike stated that his writing was not legible: *" I can sign my name and I can't even sign my last name. I can, but I don't think it's right!"* Mike was extremely proficient with computers, so attended his Information Processing classes and his Work Experience placement independently.

Consultants were available for Mike, if needed, for occupational and physical therapy, but he chose not to use these services:

> *If I truly thought, if I didn't have so much on my mind, and all I had to think about was walking, I could do that. But I want to get from point A to point B, whether I gotta roll to get there or walk or whatever.* (Mike)

Mike utilized the extra time allotted him for tests and exams and was happy to have this time: *"I have whatever I need. If I need an extra 3 hours to do a diploma exam, it's mine, which is nice! And there's no pressure"* (Mike).

Analysis of Data

As the data in each case study were reviewed and analyzed, it became clear to the researcher that the defining characteristics of inclusion at the high school level were based upon the three broad categories of **knowledge, skills**, and **attitudes**. Inclusion was most successful when knowledge, skills, and attitudes were interwoven as part of the educational experience. The characteristics within each strand will be explored in the remainder of this chapter, supported by quotations from participants' interviews and notes from the researcher's observations.

Knowledge

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (Barber, 1998) defined knowledge as an "...awareness or familiarity gained by experience" (p. 787). The Curriculum Standards Branch of Alberta Education, as outlined in the Program of Studies for high school Social Studies, explained that knowledge "...takes into account the history of our community, the nature of a democratic society, and an understanding of the social, political, technological and economic environments" (Alberta Education, 1990, p. 3). Fullan (1999) defined knowledge creation as "...the ability to generate and learn new ideas" (p. 15). Fullan further specified that knowledge creation was an ongoing, change process.

Knowledge is comprised of knowing the facts and knowing the reasons for our actions, including our values (Alberta Education, 1990). The facts, according to Alberta Education (1990), include knowing the parts of the information that applies to specific situations. In these case studies, the educators, parents, and peers suggested that they required facts related to the specifics of the definitions or meanings of inclusion, an understanding of the school policies and procedures, and information about the student with special needs, including his/her abilities, disabilities, program expectations and

goals. The second aspect of knowledge, understanding the reasons for our actions, was explored, based on the educator's, parent's, and peer's knowledge of his/her own abilities, preferences, education and training. The issues related to knowledge in these case studies determined how individuals responded in and reacted to the inclusive settings.

Knowledge of the Definitions of Inclusion

The participant's definitions of inclusion, reflected in this research, demonstrate the confusion surrounding the topic: *"Inclusion wasn't a word that was even around in the first segment of my career. You know, students who weren't achieving... there was no notion to investigate and find out why they weren't able to learn"* (Social Studies teacher). In the research, the meaning of inclusion has been defined and explained by participants through four qualifiers: continuum of services, ability of student with special needs, individualization for students with special needs, and the right to belong.

Continuum of services.

The need for a continuum of services offered in the inclusive setting was expressed by at least one individual in each of the case studies:

> *I would define inclusion as an integration of a special needs student into a regular program. And I would consider there to be degrees of inclusion.* (Counsellor)

> *I don't agree with whole inclusion. I'm not an advocate. I've lived it. Another person might thrive on it and it's okay, but inclusion needs to be case to case. There's just no way it can be whole and complete.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

> *I think it depends upon the student. I think each case has to be assessed. I think it has to be on a case-by-case basis.* (English teacher)

I think my definition of inclusion would be as much as possible having them in the mainstream physically in terms of class space and taking as much regular program as they can with support and assistance as needed. (Administrator)

I think, again, it depends on the kids, for me the balance would be a mixture. I'm not sure that for a full day a special needs child necessarily benefits from being in a regular classroom all day long. (Counsellor)

As noted by these quotations, a continuum of services was viewed as vital for some individuals when defining inclusion. The programming aspects, for children with special needs, in all of the schools involved in the case studies, supported the comments noted above. Two of the high schools provided both segregated and integrated settings for students. All three high schools provided a continuum of educational services for students with special needs.

Student's ability.

Other participants defined successful inclusion based on the student's ability to do the work presented in class. All of the teachers interviewed were of this opinion:

When a child with special needs is in other classes with the regular program kids and they can have some sort of – accomplish something, that's a good thing. But, to have kids in, in matric classes where you know that – it's just a waste of time. You feel that your time is wasted...because in a different type of class, that student could actually be learning something. I also don't believe...that full inclusion is necessarily the smartest and most practical way to go. I like instead, this other alternative where, when there's an option class that can be handled. But kids that

don't seem to have the capacity, whether physically or mentally, to place them in that situation seems a waste of time and energy. (Foods teacher)

My perception of inclusion is trying to – I hate to use the word mainstream – but at one time that word was used – take students who may have some alternative needs in education and try to put them into a regular classroom – an average classroom. (English teacher)

To have a student included in a class where they couldn't begin to master the course material or get something out of it or understand it, then I doubt whether I could support it. (Social Studies teacher)

As well as the teachers, two of the three teacher assistants had strong feelings about the need for students with disabilities to be able to do the work in the regular classes as the defining factor for inclusion:

As long as the ability is there, then I think that they should have the support to get through. I think it should be fit to what they're able to accomplish and what they're able to do. It may not be the right thing for that child in a full time regular classroom. I think it may be more of a punishment to that student if it's something that they can't do. If the student's at, say a grade 6 level, I wouldn't advise putting him in the grade 12 classroom even though it's the same peer group because you're expecting too much of that child. He's incapable of learning that. I think it just accents the difference for him and I think it makes him more segregated in a sense because he feels that much more different than his peer group. (Teacher assistant)

If a student is to be included, they have to be capable of doing some of the work. And getting something out of it, rather than just socialization. I

think they need to have more of the mental skills, too, than just the socialization. (Teacher assistant)

This same view was expressed by some other group members in two of the case studies:

As long as they can keep up with the class. The kid has to be in the appropriate place for their ability intellectually. Because it's just too frustrating for them and they feel that they've failed. (Mike's mother)

We have some students who are included physically, but for the most part, they must be able to handle the material being taught in the classroom. (Special education coordinator)

I think that with the EMD's [educable mentally delayed], *their actual individual programs at the high school are so diverse, so much lower than the regular stream, that I think it would be almost impossible to teach them in the same classroom.* (Administrator)

And then the opportunity for them, for someone like K for example to participate in other classes if she's capable of doing that. Maybe being pulled out and worked on some skills that were appropriate to her needs at that time may have helped more than trying to sort of modify a map of Canada for her that had no meaning for her. (Counsellor)

Two of the students with special needs in these case studies were required to complete the same work as their peers to obtain credits towards their high school diploma. Mike and Brahma, together with their parents and school staff, were looking to graduation at the end of high school. In Kristy's case, instead of being expected to complete the course requirements for credit, staff expected Kristy to participate in the

class and complete a portion of the work that the teacher assistant modified for her. It seemed to come as a surprise to staff and Kristy's mother, that Kristy was able to complete the requirements of her CALM and a good portion of her English 13 course, and she was able to achieve course credits. Kristy's English teacher explained that *"she should finish with no difficulty."*

One of the students with special needs, Mike, also felt that, in order to be included, students should have the ability to do the same work as peers:

> *Inclusion is the ability to work at a normal situation under normal circumstances up to the same grading curve. If you're to be included in inclusive education, you should be coming pretty close to, to everybody else; otherwise you're in the wrong class.* (Mike, student with special needs)

During the times of observation, Mike demonstrated this involvement and ability, especially in his Social Studies class. He volunteered answers to many of the exam questions being reviewed in class, and he participated enthusiastically in the open discussion on China, having his hand up a total of 10 times during the thirty-minute discussion. His teacher later confided that Mike was one of the six major contributors to discussion in the Social class.

Mike explained the danger of including a student when ability was not present:

> *It depends on the state of the individual. Inclusion if the person is capable enough and whatnot, yeah, fine. But sometimes inclusion will harm the individual immensely. They may be struggling with the subject or the entire idea and it's not doing them any good.* (Mike)

Many of the educators interviewed shared similar philosophies of inclusion based on ability. This philosophy may stem from their own individual backgrounds and experiences. As one counsellor stated, *"Most of us are in an age where, when we went through university there were no – even general special education courses"*. These

educators seemed to agree on the concept of having a student with special needs in the regular class if the students could demonstrate that learning had occurred.

Individualization.

The recognition of the need to individualize for students who were included, regardless of ability, was a philosophy shared by fewer participants:

> *Inclusion means taking a student that has some form of disability, whether it's mental or physical, and including them in a regular classroom, and having them attempt to do what everybody else is doing, but also specialize it so they're not doing exactly the same thing.* (Teacher assistant)

> *As much as possible to have them in the mainstream physically in terms of class space and taking as much regular program as they need with support and assistance as needed.* (Administrator)

> *Inclusion is a student with special needs who is included in a regular program, sufficiently supported and the program adapted to their needs. Segregation is a program totally apart from the regular program with only special needs students and teachers who teach special needs and practically no integration or inclusion with other students. Sometimes even in a different location or a regular school with the segregated program in a separate wing.* (Brahma's foster mother)

> *Like, there would be the person and there – a teacher or someone to help the person there.* (Peer)

These participants (a teacher assistant, administrator, mother, and a peer), all from different case studies, recognized the need to include all students through the provision of supports necessary for success.

Belonging.

Yet another definition of inclusion for some participants was the sense of belonging, in either a physical or psychological manner. Physical inclusion dealt mainly with involvement of the student in the actual classroom:

> *...that the students are involved and can be part of the studies.* (Peer)

> *...having students who have special needs in the classroom and creating an environment where they can function...so that there should be as little, the fact that they are special needs students should not be obvious... giving them or allowing them to function, in the classroom and hopefully there wouldn't be the awareness from the other students that they were special needs. As much a part of the class as possible.* (Social Studies teacher)

> *Well, I guess it would be just like, sort of like an integration kind of thing. Sort of like when you have special needs students and they'd be a part of the class instead of in a segregated class.* (Brahma)

> *It would be really neat if those students could be more, more connected to the school activities.* (Social Studies teacher)

> *Well, inclusion is, I guess I would see that more in the options where she could just be part of the group and, sort of do some visiting with her friends and you know, as well as try and work through the craft.* (Kristy's mother)

Other participants felt strongly that, although the physical component of inclusion was important, the psychological component was even more crucial:

> *It can be a physical thing, it can be an event where we take students who learn in different ways and place them in a mainstream environment. But probably an emphasis of mine is the psychological inclusion. That kids feel a part of the school community, more than the physical placement – that they feel safe, secure. That they're happy, that they're learning and they're learning from a psychological and emotional state. I think that most of our kids are doing okay. I think that they are included and they find a niche, they find a place – someplace where they feel they have been included – they do belong here.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

> *I think inclusion is the sense of belonging to help them within themselves personally – for acceptance and self-esteem. And as well to help them with a sense of belonging in the community.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

> *As long as the kid feels safe. I think I have a real big problem with inclusion when it's done by parents, when it's done by advocates and they really haven't listened to what the kid wants.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

> *The fact that she's happy doing what she's doing there. I think that's the main thing – is keeping K happy.* (Teacher assistant)

The students with special needs in these case studies, when observed in their classes, seemed to have a sense of wellbeing that supported the comments noted above. In his Drama class, Brahma was participating in the assignment of learning a new dance. He seemed to find the dance step sequence difficult to learn at the expected pace. It was

evident that Brahma was rehearsing the steps in his head and talking himself through the dance sequence. However, he was still a few steps behind his partners. Brahma's peers were supportive and encouraging, and Brahma appeared to feel comfortable and safe in the class to be involved in this risk-taking activity.

Brahma's experience in his Foods' class was an interesting one to observe. He and his partner were involved in making sloppy joes and salad. Only one partner was requested to get the supplies from the main station, while the other partner remained in his/her station. Brahma was the partner to get the food supplies, and he was very methodical. As a result, he was the last person to get the supplies. By this time, Brahma's partner was beginning to complain that it was taking too long and that Brahma had forgotten the hamburger, but his partner did not volunteer to help or begin to make the salad. Once the ingredients were finally in their kitchen, Brahma began making the sloppy joes while his partner made the salad. There seemed to be some hostility or frustration from the partner initially. *"Come on, Brahma, hurry up!"* was heard numerous times from his partner. Brahma responded by pulling at the material on his jeans and displaying facial tics. However, by the time the two boys had completed their meal, they were talking and joking. Because their food had taken so long to prepare, Brahma's partner, who did not catch a bus, ended up finishing the majority of the dishes. He did not complain about this or say anything to Brahma as he left the class. The boys had obviously worked out their differences before this class, and their responses and reactions reflected a sense of ease and comfort with each other.

In one of the Foods' classes, Kristy and her partner were observed making perogies. The ease of interaction as they prepared the recipe was evident. Her partner would ask Kristy questions as they progressed through the recipe. *"Do you know when the potatoes are done?"* and Kirsty responded that she did. *"Do you think that's enough onion?"* and Kristy responded that she thought it was and that he should turn the stove down or the onions would burn! The interaction was easy, and Kristy and her partner appeared comfortable with each other.

When Kristy was observed in an English class during group work, the rest of her group seemed to respect her answers. The teacher assistant prompted all seven of the girls

to give an answer, and then she asked Kristy for her answer. Kristy gave her view of the conflict from one of the short stories they were discussing, and the others all agreed and nodded. The nature of the interaction seemed to be just a matter-of-course, and there was a level of comfort apparent in this type of relationship.

Mike was observed in his Social Studies and Math classes, and he demonstrated an open and easy manner as he interacted with staff and students in these classes. He appeared to feel quite safe in both classes to give answers to questions and participate in discussion. Even in Math class, where Mike self-reported that the subject matter was more difficult, he took risks by trying to work through questions to try and find the answer.

One teacher assistant expressed the need for unconditional belonging of all students with special needs:

> *It promotes the idea that handicapped people are in our society and the more we segregate and the more that we separate them, the larger the wall. And the less that they are secluded, the more that we become accustomed to having them there and it's not a big deal. If it's something different or unique, than everyone makes a big deal out of it. We're always just people.* (Teacher assistant)

The variety of participant responses, and the observation notes, recorded on the previous pages reinforced the need for a working definition to be established early in the educational process. During the interview process, one counsellor recognized the need for clarification of the definition of inclusion: "*Actually, I'd like you to define inclusion for me because maybe my viewpoint of inclusion is different so I need to know what your working definition of it is*". The goal, then, would be for all individuals to work from this mutually agreed-upon definition of inclusion.

Knowledge of school policies and procedures.

Participants agreed that there was a need for all stakeholders to acquire knowledge of the policies and procedures at the school level to ensure successful inclusion.

School board level.

However, in only one of the three case studies, recognition of the necessity for knowledge at the school board level was expressed:

> *I think they need to have a clear statement from them* [central office administration] *saying that they're definitely part of the school system, they're part of the teaching load. I think it needs to go right from the top all the way down. I think it's buried in at central office in the mission statement, but I think it needs to be spoken a little louder... it is expected that it's part of your teaching assignment to help them learn.* (Administrator)

> *The support of not singling these kids out comes from the school board down to the teachers.* (Mike's mother)

This administrator and parent felt that inclusion could only be successful when it began at the board level with a well-articulated policy. Policies from the schools involved in this research all indicated that consideration was to be given to the regular classroom as the entry point.

Administration at school level.

More common in all studies was a statement of the need for clear direction and leadership from the administration of the school:

I really think that it's possible but that for inclusion to work, there has to be support – effective leadership, effective leaders who are onboard as well. (Social Studies teacher)

I do believe it starts at the top. Inclusion – psychological, emotional, and physical – I mean, that has to be something our administration has bought into. (Special education coordinator/teacher)

Administrators were clearly seen as the key people in the schools who could ensure a supportive environment:

You know, I think it is administration that sort of sets the pace, and, you know, whether ideas are perceived. (Kristy's mother)

I think the principal, that what we need from the principal, is just their awareness and acceptance and support of what you're doing. And also guidelines of what you can do within certain areas of budget and rules and the county. (Special education coordinator/teacher)

I think for the whole thing to work, you need a very positive push from the principal. (Foods teacher)

One mother's comments demonstrated the frustration evident when the school administration policy did not support inclusion. *"I feel that if the administration isn't going to support you, then there's no sense fighting, because that's all it's going to be".* She continued to explain the impact of the role of the administration on the rest of the staff:

I know when you're working, you kind of support the people you're working for so you kind of, you want to stick within the policies of the

school and you want to follow the rules and you don't want to make waves. (Kristy's mother)

Teacher level.

Once the administration has supported inclusion through establishment of principles to guide decision making, and procedural steps to follow, it is the responsibility of the teachers to become cognizant of their own professionalism in implementing the policy:

> *I think it depends on our definition of what is a professional. I should not get to choose who is in front of me as a student. We are a school and we are to educate the children in this community – we don't get to pick and choose who we have.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

Another participant, a school counsellor, however, recognized the impact on the teacher when choice is not given and policy is mandated:

> *I'm thinking, what do you do as a teacher if you really feel having a particular student in your class is something that you personally can't handle for whatever reason. I guess we're not given that sort of choice...I think that would be a terribly difficult position to be in.* (Counsellor)

It would appear that any policy would be most effective when all stakeholders played a role in formulating the policy.

Perception of students with special needs.

Students with special needs, however, seemed to have very little awareness of the impact from the school board or even their principals. Mike's statement reiterates this idea: "*Don't know. Don't know what their function is. Don't know... hell, half the time I forget* [special education coordinator] *exists*". They seemed to be more impacted upon by the immediate people they worked with – specifically the teachers and the teacher

assistants. *"They're always, always nice to me"* (Kristy) and *"stenographers and just the occasional reminder"* (Mike) and *"...the teachers are all nice to me. I haven't seen a mean teacher yet"* (Brahma).

An understanding by all participants, of the division and school policy related to students with special needs, would appear to be crucial in trying to reconcile roles and responsibilities in the inclusive setting.

Knowledge of the Student with Special Needs

A very common theme, throughout the majority of the interviews, was the necessity of having detailed, carefully thought-out transition plans in place to provide staff and students with knowledge about the student with special needs, in two areas: (a) disability, abilities, and needs, and (b) program goals and expectations.

Knowledge of students with special needs' disability.

Before one can begin to understand disabilities and disorders, one must acknowledge the differences that do exist in people:

> *We're sort of, I think, socially right now in North America, we're afraid of acknowledging differences in people. We're trying, we're trying very hard to make everybody the same. There does seem to be a fear of sort of singling kids or labeling or even acknowledging when things aren't working... which makes it harder for kids to understand. And maybe in the long run, makes it harder to accept that kids are different.* (Counsellor)

> *It seems silly to me – it seems totally foolhardy – it seems like you're trying to completely say these kids have absolutely no problems, no challenges. It seems foolish for the child, you're not considering the child.* (Foods teacher)

As explained by Mike's mother, *"...the kids know that they're different and they know what they are"*.

Giving knowledge to staff and peers, through basic information about the student's disability, was seen as a vital key to equipping them with the skills to become more aware of how to teach the child and provide for his/her needs:

> *I don't feel it works unless people take some time to do some pre-working with the kids in the class. Also, that the same thing has to be done with teachers. I don't feel that she can come in like any other student and just, totally interact with people and, and have all her needs met. I would just prefer that someone took a few moments and went over the points with me.* (Foods teacher)

Disability awareness was viewed as important to providing a degree of comfort to the staff as well. One counsellor's comments reflected the necessity for knowledge about the disability and the child with special needs: *"It is, I think, it's very intimidating for a teacher to – to all of a sudden gain a special needs child without knowing anything about that particular disability"*. A teacher also expressed her concerns when faced with a student with special needs without knowledge of those special needs: *"I don't have that knowledge of autism. I was worried more about his physical safety, number one, and that weighed very heavily on me"*. Giving information, in one case study, helped to provide a teacher with *"a real sense of the person and not the disability"*.

The benefit of explaining the student's disability to peers was also viewed as important:

> *I think that maybe that might have – I know that it helped the staff. We found it fascinating, and you know what, maybe that might have been something that would have helped. They might have been more tolerant.* (English teacher)

The kids see that the behavior's different. And they need to understand, I think, that while there is this general classroom rule for speaking out or whatever, but if this particular child doesn't have control of her verbalization – I mean they need to understand why there are two standards. (Counsellor)

But I know he had a lot of problems when he first went to the high school with some of the other kids because they never had to deal or be situated with somebody that was different. With them, it was uncomfortable. (Mike's mother)

Anything that's unusual, you, you look and you're polite, but you don't want to venture past that point. It becomes a little uncomfortable. You don't know if you're going to say the right thing. (Foods teacher)

When this information was not shared in a class, one of the teacher assistants noticed that the students were not as comfortable with the student with special needs:

I think it was really good in Foods because the teacher explained to them what spina bifida was and what Kristy's problems were. But I think the kids in the other classes don't have as much of a background on Kristy and they're not as comfortable. (Teacher assistant)

This comment was borne out through observation in Kristy's Foods and CALM classes. Although the structure of the two classes was very different in some regards from the lab class to the lecture class, there was opportunity in both classes for interaction and independent work. In the Foods class, one student was partnered with Kristy, and her peers were talking to her and her partner on occasion as they all worked in their kitchen stations. These students appeared to be at ease with Kristy in their class. In the CALM

class, however, Kristy's only interaction was with the teacher assistant and the teacher, as she worked independently on the assignments.

If explanations are not given, then a counsellor and teacher, respectively, felt that the results would be as follows: *"People will just think she's weird and will ostracize her even more"*, and, *"the kids don't know how to react to her"*. When discussing how classmates treated the student with special needs, one peer felt that *"they don't treat him good, cause they don't know the story. But if they knew the story, then maybe they wouldn't do it"*. During one of Brahma's English classes, two male adolescents who sat near him were observed looking at each other and rolling their eyes when Brahma responded slowly to the question.

One teacher was adamant that information was vital as a means to stopping the stereotyping and prejudice toward students with special needs. *"The other end of it is that instead of referring to it correctly and understanding it...you leave the door open for 'slow, retarded, dumb'"*. Knowing leads to understanding, awareness and, ultimately, acceptance by most people:

> *When has there ever been a case when you didn't understand something that you were willing to fully accept it? The more knowledge you give people, the less they fight you, the less they want to say 'no, I don't want any part of it'.* (Foods teacher)

> *Before I didn't, well, when I didn't know Kristy, I thought they were, well, you know, special needs students were different – well, they are different in a way, but, like I thought that they were really different than us 'normal' people, I guess you could say. And, they aren't. They're just the same as us. They're people but they just have a little harder time getting around or doing whatever.* (Peer)

> *I think that helps a lot, cause students are so curious. And it's a good curious – it's not a bad one. And once they're comfortable with what her*

problem is, then ok, now we know what it is, let 's get over it. It's no big deal. (Teacher assistant)

But the kids, they're not dumb, they're not stupid. So you bypass them, so now you continue to allow them to call them a retard. No – put it the way it is – you may still get some who can't handle it, but let's lay it on the table. (Foods teacher)

Knowledge of student with special needs' abilities and needs.

In addition to an understanding of the particular disability, a general knowledge and awareness of the student's abilities and needs were viewed as important determinants to achieving goals:

It was really hard at the beginning trying to get – trying to feel my way through and see what is Kristy capable of or what does mom want her doing. And, and being aware of what Kristy is capable of, too. Getting, you know, working with her and just getting an understanding of where she is and what her level is and what she can do. (Teacher assistant)

I think it's really important that you get to know the students...that is crucial. You need to take some time to get to know them. You also have to be aware of the student's needs and, you know, constantly making adaptations. (Social Studies teacher)

Just getting to know them was really important, too, and each one is a unique individual with their personality, likes and dislikes. (Counsellor)

One teacher and special education coordinator explained that having knowledge of the student with special needs provided the information necessary to establish a working relationship:

I want things to be, to go right. I don't want to feel that I'm overindulging K, I don't want to feel that I'm neglecting her. So it's establishing that line where it's a comfortable class. (Foods teacher)

We're still learning K's abilities and inabilities, we're finding that kind of hard to balance now. I'm trying to figure out what she can't do and what she can do and sometimes with the information from K on different things, I'm getting different information from the TA too, so we're trying to figure out what the story is. (Special education coordinator/teacher)

When armed with this information about the child's disability or disorder, one mother reminded us of the importance of recognizing each child's unique potential within the realm of the particular disability: *"Just because he's labeled as having CP, don't put him in the worst category, don't put him in the best".*

Knowledge of goals and expectations.

Goals and expectations must be clearly defined and agreed upon by educators, the student, and parents, to avoid the *"totally fuzzed out"* (Foods teacher) feeling that could result when goals are ambiguous. Many perspectives are represented on a team, but *"...the key goal...is to let the kids work to their full potential"* (Mike's mother). To align the goals within the team framework and school structure, appeared to be a frustration and difficulty for many of the participants:

So, it probably took about 3 or 4 months before we got that straight – what mom wanted. First of all, I assumed that she wanted Kristy doing as much as everybody else. And then that was too much for Kristy. Has to be a balance, yeah, whether it's not letting Kristy be lazy and it's not overburdening her. And that's been the hardest thing is trying to find that balance. (Teacher assistant)

> *I would like to be able, myself, to ask Kristy's mom these questions and then I would get more of a feel for what she wants. That would be nice if there was more communication between Kristy's mother and myself. It's better now than it was at the beginning. It would've been nicer to have that cleared up right off the bat – what the expectations were.* (Teacher assistant)

> *My goal would have been to have had him succeed with the course. And he has succeeded and he has passed the courses, but I don't feel that he has succeeded in some very fundamental areas of emotion. I think that probably it has been a quality of life enrichment for him, but in terms of preparing him for the future, I'm not sure that it's been in any way a benefit to him.* (English teacher)

> *But I don't know if I could say that he's broadened his horizons any in terms of his skills. I don't think so. I think he has continued in the areas he has strength and he has probably stayed the same in the areas of weakness.* (English teacher)

A concerned teacher expressed frustration as she tried to mesh her goals with those of the student:

> *But for her to feel REALLY successful...I just know that when I can see the finished product, see the product from start to finish, it feels good. But it might be just being in the class, doing what the grade 10s are doing.* (Foods teacher)

One of the adolescents with special needs explained that knowledge about his ability could be gained from simply asking him, "*'what can you do?' and you honestly answer them. You know your limits and sometimes you've got to push em – especially*

when you're trying to do the same thing or better than most". Too often, it seemed, students with special needs were not well-informed about their disability, which hindered their involvement in their own education. One teacher assistant explained, *"Kristy isn't as aware of her disabilities as – once in awhile she'll come out and say that she can't do something because she's in a wheelchair – but lots of times, she doesn't have a realistic view of what her ability is"*. If goals cannot be agreed upon, one teacher felt that *"teachers kind of resent, I think, goals that seem totally impossible to fulfill because it seems like you will have a failure. You will not be able to prepare that student for the expectations that the parents are demanding"*.

Expectations must remain high, but realistic, for students with special needs who are included in the regular class. A teacher assistant reinforced that high expectations *"forces him to try things and learn things that he wouldn't have otherwise. I think it's an advantage for him to be in the classes"*. Often the case was made that it was the teacher assistant, not the teacher, who set the expectations:

> *Maybe we should push him a little more. Maybe sometimes I think that we've possibly let him get away with things...you're not sure how much you can expect. I guess, in a way, that's where the teacher assistant becomes handy, because I think maybe she does push him a little harder. Because she really knows him and how to work with him – where I might back off.* (English teacher)

The teacher assistants, when observed working with the students with special needs in the case studies, did indeed appear to be the driving force behind the amount of work that the students accomplished. In Kristy's case, the teacher assistant was the person who set the goals and expectations for her within the boundaries of the courses. The teacher assistant designed all the modifications for the work in class and the homework assignments. In Brahma's case, it was the teacher assistant who prodded and encouraged him during their time together in the third period of the day. She helped him structure his time and analyze tasks so he could get the work done on time. The teacher assistant working with Mike helped him to organize himself, kept him on task, and worked in

close proximity to him for his Social and Math classes. During all observation sessions, the teacher assistants were key players in setting goals and expectations for the students with special needs.

Interviewed parents were in favor of setting higher expectations for their children:

> *Some of the parents tell them, 'you can't do it,' or the teacher says, 'you can't do it because you're handicapped.' That's the biggest mistake you can make. A lot of parents are too protective.* (Mike's mother)

> *So, she may work harder to develop at a higher level, even though you know it's not going to be possible for her to do as well as the other kids in the class, but there would be some desire to work harder and to be like the other kids and you know, rather than in a segregated setting.* (Kristy's mother)

Participants' Knowledge of Themselves

A knowledge and understanding of personal biases by both the adolescents with special needs and other participants appeared to have a major impact on the inclusive setting.

Student with special needs.

For the individual with special needs, the degree of knowledge and understanding of his/her own disability was an important determinant towards self-advocacy. One teacher assistant explained: *"He just sees it as that's how life is"*. When asked to explain what his special needs were, Brahma replied, *"well, I'm sort of slow with my writing. So I need someone to write my notes for me and I need more time for exams. And, that's about it."* In his case, Brahma considered himself very much involved in requesting and obtaining the provisions he required in class. *"We usually just wait and see who is in my class first and then we make it so that we take notes from that person everyday. And if that person's away, we get another person that we know is also very good at writing notes"*. Mike explained his special needs as requiring *"just the stenographer for written*

notes and even in the office, somebody will write up the receipts because you have to be able to read them." Generally, the adolescents in this research explained their special needs related to the academics in classes and not to their actual physical and/or mental disabilities. When pressed further, however, Mike was able to give a text-book definition of his cerebral palsy:

> *When people ask me what I've got, I just tell them, ' it's cerebral palsy,' and define what it was – a lack of oxygen to the brain during birth. It doesn't stop me doing anything I want to do, so it's not a big deal. The only thing I can't do is skateboard and ride a bike. That's the only disabled function as far as I'm concerned. I can run. I can walk. I can talk. I can read. I can make wisecracks. I can get in trouble. I can get out of trouble. Life is good!* (Mike)

However, to really take control of his life in a self-advocacy role, Mike will need to continue to learn how his cerebral palsy may impact on his learning:

> *I said I couldn't get a concept. And she said, 'well, it's not your fault. Another student had the same problem and they chalked it up to your disability.' And I'm going – I never heard this before! That's the first time that, because it's a visual thing, the visual thing is because of the disability. I figured I just couldn't grasp it.* (Mike)

A conversation with the school counsellor revealed her surprise when she learned that Kristy said that she had never read anything about spina bifida or how it would affect her life. The counsellor provided Kristy with written information and detailed explanations.

Other participants.

For the remaining individuals in the research, their background experiences and exposure to individuals with special needs, and the amount of training and education about special needs, were two factors that comprised their knowledge level.

Two educators recollected times in their lives when they had personal dealings with individuals who had special needs or who were in a minority group:

> *When I was doing my master's degree I worked with what was referred to as the "retarded classes" in the 1970s. I worked with them as a project teaching them sexuality and communication skills, and worked with the parents. So from that, I always thought that no matter who you are or what you are, you needed to live in a sort of normal society and be able to move around and communicate with people and be, hopefully, a productive citizen.* (Administrator)

> *We had a friend when we were growing up, their child went to a separate school, but when he came home on the holidays, he was at our place a lot, and he just loved that and he just had a great time. And, but yet there was no, there was never any discussion of him being anyplace but there.* (Social Studies teacher)

The classroom environment in this teacher's Social Studies classroom also demonstrated a level of understanding and support for students with special needs. The posters on the wall spoke to social justice and inclusion for all. These posters included the poem by Pastor Niemoeller, referred to in chapter 1; two classmates' description of cerebral palsy; and a racial discrimination, 'Racism – Stop It!' slogan.

It was interesting to note, though, that despite their early inclusive background experiences, and the level of support observed, these two educators felt strongly that the criteria for inclusion at their school should be based on ability, not belonging:

The students have been slotted into a program that is appropriate to their functioning level. All of the students I've worked with, in terms of inclusion, have always been able to get something out of the course. (Social Studies teacher)

I would need to look at that and search my own philosophy on, if someone is here just straight for social contact only, are there other ways and means to get that done? So, to have one student and provide social experiences and it bleeds the resources of the other kids – I don't know. (Administrator)

Knowledge, then, as important as it is, does not alone result in successful, innovative inclusion. Skills and attitude remain the linking factors.

The second component related to knowledge for educators was the amount of training and education they had received. Lack of training resulted in the common theme of fear and uneasiness:

They seem to be really nervous or even scared of – to teach them. And, they comment – I'm not trained to teach them. (Administrator)

I'm it! I'm the special needs teacher and I have no background in special needs – so that's really scary. (Counsellor)

We're placing these students with teachers who have very little knowledge in dealing with their special needs. (Counsellor)

Actually I had no idea. I was so scared. I was really quite fearful. Because I haven't taught special needs students before. I've been teaching students academically at the very opposite end of the spectrum, so it was a huge leap. (Counsellor)

> *Teachers need a lot of support as well because they're not trained in special education. They get really scared when they know there's a student coming in. I'm finding the more information I can give them, the easier it is for them to deal with the situation.* (Counsellor)

While these educators expressed the fear they felt as the result of a lack of previous experience or training, one special educator felt strongly that the lack of training was often used as an excuse by teachers:

> *And they still say, well I wasn't trained. It's not an argument to me anymore. Now you know how the kid learns and maybe what the diagnosis is, but probably more how the child acts out...what the kid may possibly do. You know these kinds of things, and what you need to do. And that information they have now which they didn't used to have. They're not running from a deficit model. They're running from an informed, proactive model.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

One administrator, however, acknowledged the lack of training and the resulting uneasiness by educators, and provided the following support:

> *Maybe you're not trained to be a special education teacher, but these are our kids and if you need any training – and what do you need from us and how can we help in terms of that? I also think we need to be able to step in and if something is not happening - to step in and show them and conference with them and with the student and with the parent and so on.* (Administrator)

As staff worked with students with special needs, their comfort level was raised, as reflected in their comments:

So nothing but positives about my experience with Brahma. (English teacher)

There's been no way that it's negatively affected my day at all. It's been very smooth. Probably in the end I will feel that she enjoyed herself and that the kids got a chance to see somebody else that they may not have made much of a connection with otherwise. (Foods teacher)

So it's really made me turn around my thinking. I think that this is a wonderful thing. (Teacher assistant)

And I think getting the teachers to buy into the fact that they can do it! We've really had to work on that. It's going to be okay, you will survive. But once they've taught him, they can see that. (Counsellor)

The teachers' comfort level was also reflected through their actions during times of observation. In Mike's Math class, the teacher appeared very comfortable with all the students, including Mike. She joked and had a good rapport with Mike and engaged readily in dialogue with him. This teacher's comfort level and ability to laugh at herself was evident during the class when she was helping a student with an answer. The "Kodak moment," referred to by Mike, occurred when, even with the teacher's help using the overhead, the answer was still wrong! So the class and the teacher did the steps one more time until the correct answer was obtained. This teacher's comfort level appeared to be built on the mutual respect demonstrated in the classroom.

In Kristy's Foods lab, there was a notable difference in the comfort level of the teacher in the two-month time span between observations. After 2 months, the routine of the lab partners had been established, and Kristy and her partner worked well together. Her partner gathered all the supplies needed for the perogies outside of their immediate station, while Kristy worked with the teacher assistant to figure out what utensils and supplies were needed within the station. In contrast to the first observation, when the teacher gave a cursory glance in the direction of Kirsty and the teacher assistant while

they worked, the teacher now stopped at their station and gave feedback and suggestions in the same manner as she did at all the other stations. It appeared, during the latter observation, that the teacher's comfort level had increased over time as a result of Kristy's attendance as a full-time class member working with a lab partner in addition to the teacher assistant.

A teacher in another case study reiterated the positive effects of being proactive and providing staff with information which helped to allay fears: *"There was a real sense of the person. There was a real sense of – not so much of a fear, but we were really excited about meeting this child".*

Staff also recognized that increased knowledge helped to raise awareness:

> *I've become a lot more knowledgeable and have gone to workshops and sessions.* (Social Studies teacher)

> *Those things may not be any different than what I would do with the regular class – with any other student. I have quite a structured learning style...these sorts of things, a student with special needs really benefits from, but I also do this for all of the other students. But, I've started doing it more consciously.* (Social Studies teacher)

The preceding section has explained the importance of garnering knowledge related to definitions of inclusion; school policies and procedures; children's abilities and needs; program goals and expectations; and personal biases as the first step towards providing education in an inclusive setting. Knowledge alone is not sufficient and must be combined with skills and attitude. The skill level required to execute the knowledge is the next part to be discussed, followed by presentation of the factors related to attitude.

Skills

The Canadian Dictionary of the English Language (Nelson, 1998) defined skills as, "...proficiency, facility, or dexterity that is acquired or developed through training or

experience" (p. 1281). This definition suggests that skills are what someone can do when provided with the essential knowledge. Alberta Education (1990) suggested that skills are "...best taught in the context of use rather than in isolation" (p. 3), which alludes to the necessity of including children in the regular classrooms while simultaneously providing educators with necessary supports.

Having acquired a knowledge about individuals' special needs; the goals and expectations related to their programs; and an understanding of participants' own biases, the next step towards successful inclusion was to gain skills to allow individuals to use their knowledge. Alberta Education (1990) categorized skills into the following: process skills to help an individual acquire, evaluate, and use information; communication skills to help one express him/herself and present information to others; and participation skills to help a person interact with others. The results of this research indicated that the skill effectiveness of the participants to utilize supports and plan programs and strategies represented the process skills. Communication and participation skills were reflected in participants' comments related to effective communication with team members. This next section will include direct quotes from participants and observation notes to clarify the need for skills.

Skill in Utilizing Supports

All participants strongly recommended that supports be in place to ensure successful inclusion. These supports included financial, emotional, and material supports.

Teacher assistant support.

Probably the highest priority for the educators and parents was the availability of the teacher assistant. The teachers in this research all agreed that the teacher assistant support was the most beneficial and crucial component to successful inclusion in their classroom:

> *Oh, definitely the TA being there. I wouldn't want to try this without her. You definitely need another person. And, plus, the TA would talk to me...*

she becomes the bridge. I think it's a good idea provided there's an aide. (Foods teacher)

If he did not have a TA, then it would be, well I would have to always have to have my notes available to give to him – that sort of thing. (Social Studies teacher)

I think it really does help if there is an aide available. Now the TA started in the classes in grade 10 all the time. But it really helps because I honestly don't have the time to carry through with him. I could not follow up on that with my teaching load and make sure that the task was completed. And he would monopolize a great deal of my time if I was to try and keep him on time totally in class to make sure that he had some sense of closure to a particular activity. I don't think I'd be a really good supporter of inclusion if that wasn't there – that support system. (English teacher)

Utilization of teacher assistant support was an interesting feature of classroom instruction. With the exception of the two Foods laboratory classes observed where students with special needs were paired with a peer, the teachers used the teacher assistants exclusively over peer mentors or coaches. In Mike's Social Studies class, the desks were organized in groups of two or three, and students sat with classmates. Mike's desk was also paired with another desk, but it was the teacher assistant, not another student, who occupied the desk beside him. One peer commented on this practice: "*I think there should be a person there just like me working with her together. Just not the TA or someone, but someone else, like me, helping her*". Much of the actual teaching and monitoring for understanding appeared to be left to the teacher assistant. *"I see the system crumbling without the aides. It's on the back of the aides. I still think it sits on the back of having responsible, caring, well-informed aides"* (Foods teacher).

In all of Kristy's classes, the teacher assistant was the key person responsible for monitoring her work. During her English class, when the teacher referred to the handout

on conflict, it was the teacher assistant who found the material in Kristy's binder and highlighted material as the teacher lectured. In Brahma's English class, even though the teacher assistant was not present in the class, she was still responsible for monitoring his work because Brahma brought all assignments to her during their daily, specified time of work in the library. A counsellor commented, *"most of it falls on the teacher aide. The teacher aide is keeping track of how he's working and if the student is, you know, actually working – if what we're doing is actually right for the student. And it usually comes from the teacher aide"*. One special education coordinator's comment revealed the truth of this statement: *"Yeah, I've noticed even, like I sent a little form to the integrated teachers and one has come back to me and she's put, 'see TA on that,' so they're even looking at the TA as a huge facilitator"*. In addition, on Kristy's Individual Program Plan, the Integration Report Sheet for one of her classes was completed by the teacher assistant, not the teacher.

Parents also echoed the importance of the teacher assistant *"because the teacher aide is right there and they're more familiar with the child"* (Kristy's mother). The teacher assistant was also seen by one parent as being well trained to handle delicate or disruptive situations in an effort to provide positive inclusive settings, and she felt that *"if you're a good aide, you can often see it coming and take them out"* (Brahma's foster mother).

Concerns were noted, throughout this research, about the exclusive use of the teacher assistant. Mike's mother cautioned that it was necessary to *"watch that the other kids don't become jealous because he has a TA. 'I have to wait my turn and yet he/she always gets help right away.' And so there's some of that jealousy"*. Two teacher assistants explained how the students with special needs they worked with displayed learned helplessness, partially as a result, they felt, of their involvement:

> *And lots of times, Kristy will rely on me too much. And she'll expect me to answer or help things out. And she knows that she's got time constraints where she has to get things done. And some of her insights are really*

good, too. Like she really picks up a lot. But she has a tendency to sit there and expect you to help her out (Teacher assistant).

I know that there's quite often that he can take notes, he would be capable of taking enough notes that are there, but he won't because well, 'I don't have to take notes, somebody else will'. So that part of it, he uses that as a crutch whenever it is convenient for him (Teacher assistant).

This learned helplessness was displayed by Brahma during one observation of an English class. From 8:45 am until 9:50 am, while the class was working on an essay-writing assignment, Brahma wrote only one paragraph. During the remainder of the time in class, Brahma read over the assignment, closed his eyes, alternated between leaning back in his chair to sitting forward, looked at his desk, looked at the dictionary, looked at the assignment again, scratched his head, played with his pencil, and tapped his fingers. As the teacher moved about the room, she would sometimes tap Brahma lightly on the shoulder and comment on the need to work on the assignment. It seemed, though, that both the teacher and Brahma knew that he would finish the assignment when he worked with the teacher assistant later in the day. It was not a stated expectation by the teacher, or by Brahma, that he complete any part of the assignment before he left class, and Brahma did not appear to put any effort into this assignment while in class.

Mike noted some difficulties he had encountered as the result of having a teacher assistant assigned to him: "*There's times when it gets on your nerves. It's just, you took it as an insult because you did it for grade 8 and 9 and you did it well, and then all of a sudden, hey, this is back.*" However, Mike was also able to see the benefit of the teacher assistant's instruction: "*Oh yeah, especially now that I'm as busy as I am. If I can grab an extra ten minutes a day, I'm happy*".

Because teacher assistants are a necessary feature in most cases, for inclusion to be successful, the classroom teacher has a responsibility to be involved as a team member, in setting direction and planning programs for the teacher assistant to implement. Again, training is required. Special educators often take the existence of

teacher assistants for granted. Special education teachers could not begin to imagine life in a segregated classroom without teacher assistant support. However, the regular classroom teacher has not usually had this experience:

> *Not all teachers were used to having aides in the class. So, some teachers don't know how to react with other people in their class. They've gone all these years without anyone sitting and listening to them and it's like, it's like someone spying on them, sort of thing...like, 'I'm not used to having people in my room, and I don't know how I'll handle this'.* (Teacher assistant)

Skill in utilizing the teacher assistant support in the classroom comes directly from the effectiveness of the teacher to use his/her knowledge of the student with special needs; the goals and expectations; and his/her own biases, experiences, training, and willingness as illustrated by this special educator's comments: *" As a teacher in any classroom, I need to facilitate and use the resources I have available to myself and my students in a way that will lean to more successes and positive learning experiences".*

The manner in which teacher assistants are used in the classroom has been the focus of this section. In every case study, the teacher assistant was viewed as vital by the educators in the school and played a key role in providing education for the student with special needs. In addition to the skills involved in having teacher assistants in the room, participants suggested several strategies that could be implemented to make inclusion more successful.

Skills in Program Planning and Strategies

Several strategies were recommended by educators and parents, to provide better skills in program planning. These included group meetings, parental input, special education coordinators/consultants and timetable scheduling. The students with special needs recognized the need to access resources and services.

Group meetings.

Group meetings were noted as being an important method to provide all members with pertinent information, in the least amount of time, at the beginning of the transition process:

> *You could probably bring three to four teachers in...just a little round table thing – you might see this, or this, or this because of the problems he has. We're talking basically 15 minutes. You know, this is what spina bifida is, the kids who suffer with it may have this or maybe just talk to me about Kristy.* (Foods teacher)

> *I think we need to be open and we need to be flexible in giving them ideas and addressing their concerns and questions they have. We have to be informative in the beginning. We can't just say, ' this person is coming into your room. '* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

Group meetings held throughout the year were also valued by some participants:

> *We can get together and – has anybody else been talking about this? And if there is, how can we coordinate – let the person in on it. Make sure that the student sits down with everybody and say, 'here's what we're going to try and work out'.* (Administrator)

> *And usually it goes then directly to the teacher in a conference situation where we bring in the experts and we all sit down and get the information. And then we work together as a team.* (Counsellor)

> *Maybe group meetings so that all the teachers of a particular student could be together. At least that way, there could be a little bit of discussion amongst each other so they're doing some things similar...there was some common problem-solving, too.* (Counsellor)

However, as with all strategies and ideas, these meetings were not viewed positively by all teachers. The success of these meetings depended on the perceived value by the members. As one teacher explained, *"The meetings that you talked about, most people resented. Once again because they didn't think it would be a resolution to anything"*. This is another example where knowledge of the student, combined with the skill in utilizing group meetings, could be helpful for successful inclusion.

Parental input.

Parental input was an area that seemed to be under-utilized in two of the three cases. Only one parent in the three studies reported that she had gone into the school *"and actually gave an inservice at the beginning of grade 10 with all the teachers to explain a bit about him, and maybe that helped. I've given them information over the years, too, about what I've picked up working with autistic children. And I've always sent it through, and they're very willing to look at it and to try and practice it"* (Brahma's foster mother). Of the other two mothers, one explained that she had not felt herself to be perceived as a team member:

> *I felt like I was making waves, instead of, if there was a concern when she was in elementary, maybe they weren't all addressed, but I felt that, you know, that if something were, wasn't being looked at, I was being given a reasonable explanation. But, I don't know, I kinda felt like, maybe I was being too aggressive* [in junior high school]. (Kristy's mother)

In another instance, a mother reported that when she approached the school with an idea for a buddy system for her daughter, she felt *" that it was an insult that I'd kinda brought it up"*. The third mother explained her role as being involved through communications with the school at the elementary level, but to a lesser degree at the high school level:

> *The school has to be responsible to keep the parent involved. I tried to stay back because that's not my expertise. I'm not a child educator, I'm an*

adult educator and that's totally different. You know what you're doing. I'm not going to come in here and tell you your job, but keep me informed. And the school has done that – up until high school. But they're more independent then and don't want their parents involved. Then, as a parent, I need to question, 'How are things today? What happened? How's this class' – if they have an open house, go with them to the open house.
(Mike's mother)

It has been mandated by Alberta Education that parents have an opportunity to be involved in their children's placement and programs. Therefore, it remains the responsibility of the school to determine how parental involvement will be realized, and the responsibility of the parent to remain an involved member of the team.

Special education coordinator/consultant.

A third strategy, recommended by the participants, was the existence of a special education coordinator/consultant in each school, to coordinate the team:

It's really wise to have someone in a school who does the coordinating because that's the way of drawing the staff together and making sure they are all going in the same direction, ensuring ideas, and that person is also – has to be supportive of the staff. If there is a coordinator providing support, then it makes it easier on your job as a classroom teacher.
(Social Studies teacher)

Critical to one mother was the availability of a person who could ensure a smooth transition from school to school, grade to grade, or class to class. She explained that teachers needed to know well ahead of time who was coming to their school, so that supplies and materials and personnel could be in place on the first day. In addition, parents needed to be informed well ahead of time if there were materials or equipment they were responsible for supplying.

A counsellor felt that the special education coordinator could reaffirm that the teachers were doing a good job: *"Encouragement – cause teachers are terrible for wanting to be sure that everything they've done is the best they can be. So, that – encouragement that they're doing right. They also need positive feedback".*

One teacher viewed the role of the coordinator as a supplement to the regular classroom teacher:

> *I'd like to think that a person in that position supplements what we're doing. So it's not necessarily that they will need to do so much with them in the classroom, but they will work behind the scenes to maybe make things better for the student.*

As a key contact in the school, one teacher felt that the special education coordinator would become *"an advocate for students – a real strong advocate for students with special needs".*

Where special educators were not directly available in schools, participants in two of the studies suggested that a special education consultant be available at the division office level to provide support to them in schools:

> *You know what would really help? Is access to a special needs – if we can't have a special needs teacher in the school, but maybe have a special needs teacher who could come in and consult with us. That would be wonderful!* (Counsellor)

> *I think, maybe, special needs – you know, somebody who is familiar with integration policies and procedures and has great ideas. You know, they could probably work as a consultant and I think that would help.* (Kristy's mother)

Timetable scheduling.

A fourth recommendation by the participants to enhance education for included students with special needs was a careful review of the student's timetable. Although high schools are generally structured with four or five blocks and two semesters, there is usually room for flexibility and movement within this structure. Many classes are offered at various times of the day, with different teachers and often in different semesters. This schedule increases the flexibility of choice when planning a timetable for the student with special needs.

One decision to be made when planning timetables has to be the placement of the student in either academic or non-academic classes. The academic classes are referred to as the 10-20-30 route and the non-academic classes are either the 14-24 or 13-23-33 routes. With these levels, consideration must be given to the course content, student population, class dynamics, and role models in these classes. Although there is no one preferred stream for students with special needs, one teacher's experience was:

> *The academic classes have really helped. I don't think it would have been as successful had he been in a nonacademic program. I don't think there's quite the degree of tolerance. Now that's not to say that the kids, maybe in the academic stream, aren't, are accepting more than the nonacademics – it's just that they tend to be more politically correct.* (English teacher)

Skill in planning timetables comes from close communication with all parties involved towards the end goal for the student. For example, in retrospect, one teacher wondered whether Brahma's timetable, beginning in grade 10, could have deviated somewhat from the strict academic schedule:

> *Instead of some of the academic programming, he should have had – yes, some of those subjects and I think there is merit in taking a course not because it is needed for school, but because it gives a quality of life and enjoyment. But also possibly doing work experience since grade 10.*

Students with special needs access to resources.

The students with special needs in this research explained that part of the success of inclusion for them depended on the ability they had to access resources followed by the desire to use those resources. For example, Brahma explained:

> *yeah, someone whose notes are very clear... cause I can understand it, it's just a matter of being able to read it. Cause some of the people write very messy. Sometimes I need a little more time to, like, do some of the homework assignments.*

And Mike explained that:

> *help is the big thing, because there's certain things you can't do – writing. Sometimes you just get so much, like so many things going on that there's problems – you, you can't think straight. And I'm sure it's the same for everybody, but the extra help is needed. Without it, I mean, there's no way.*

Mike specified that *"certain things, like my social essay, I may choose to have it typed up instead because certain things I'd rather have control over"*. Mike was also aware of Alberta Education's commitment to provisions for students with special needs: *"You have to request from Alberta Ed, they have no problem with it. I have whatever I need. If I need 3 hours to do a diploma exam, it's mine, which is nice! And there's no pressure"*. Kristy's idea of supports were based solely on teacher qualities, *"he's real cool!"* and how teachers responded to her *"they're always, always nice to me"*. Kristy commented that she had no preference for inclusive or segregated settings as long as the teachers and kids were nice to her.

This section has described successful inclusion strategies, suggested by educators and parents, including group meetings, parental input, the special education coordinator's

role in the school, and careful timetable planning. The ability to access resources was also recognized by the students with special needs as necessary support.

Skill in Communicating

Throughout the research, participants reiterated the necessity for ongoing communication between all members of the team to help ensure successful inclusion. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, definitions of inclusion, and goals and expectations, must be clarified through communication early in the process.

Within school communication.

Participants felt that this communication must occur at the school division level: *"Teachers need a lot of support and they need to communicate more to the central office where the needs are, where the concerns are, so they can brainstorm together and solve together"* (Special education coordinator/teacher). Teacher assistants explained the importance of communicating regularly with teachers:

> *So there's been a lot of talk with the teacher and teacher assistant which is really, really important. That connection there should be paramount for any inclusion to work. Otherwise you're working from the wrong perspective* (Teacher assistant).

> *And myself, I chat with the teachers sometimes right after class so – other times when we run into each other – or for something if there's a specific problem, then I'll stay in after class and we'll set up a meeting or something* (Teacher assistant).

School-home communication.

Crucial to successful education for students was the involvement of parents and communication between parents and the school as explained by one mother: *"Good contact between the parents and the school is important"*. One teacher assistant

expressed frustration she had experienced due to the lack of communication between herself and the parent: *"It would be nice if there was more communication between her mom and myself"*. The communication had not occurred because of the time constraints, the lack of team meetings, and the teacher assistant's uncertainty about her exact role in regard to the home. Part of effective communication would be to ensure, through team meetings, that all individuals were clear about their role in the education of the child with special needs.

Attitudes

The Canadian Oxford Dictionary (Barber, 1998) defined attitudes as a "settled opinion or way of thinking" (p. 81). The Curriculum Standards Branch of Alberta Education, in the Program of Studies for High Schools, described attitudes as a "way of thinking, feeling or acting and are developed through a variety of learning experiences that encompass knowledge and skills" (1990, p. 5). This definition of attitudes suggests that experiences, background events, and participation in activities are determinants of attitudes. Developing positive attitudes, the document continued, is necessary for responsible citizenship and is a gradual and ongoing process.

The Western Canadian Protocol's (1995) definition of attitudes, related specifically to mathematics, stated: "It is important for students to develop a positive attitude toward mathematics so that they can become confident in their ability to undertake the problems of a changing world" (p. 3). While this same definition can apply to all other subject areas, it is especially pertinent to the topic of successful inclusive education. Armed with the knowledge and skills, peers and staff who develop a positive attitude become more confident, as reflected in this teacher's comments: *"I'd say that my experience has been very positive. I think I've grown"*. An individual's predisposition or mental set is based on his/her knowledge of the entity and skill in implementing the concept. Similarly to the concepts of knowledge and skill, attitude will be explored on behalf of all participants. Attitudes related to three components of change, relationships, and philosophy will be discussed in the following section.

Attitude to Change

Hesitancy of educators.

Inclusive education represents a dramatic change from the traditional system of educating students with special needs, that was familiar to most of the individuals in this research: *"Most of us are in an age where, when we went through university, there were no – even general special education courses. Inclusion wasn't even an issue"* (Counsellor). This counsellor continued, *"...we're placing some of these children with teachers who don't want to work with them. And I would think attitude plays a big part... because we're identifying so many kids with special needs, it's becoming a huge task for teachers"*. Students recognized when teachers did not want to work with them: *"Some of them don't care, some of them do. Depends on the classes you're in, like some classes nobody cares about anything and other classes, everybody wants to help everybody else "* (Peer). One administrator thought that attitude was *"more of a mindset and, I think when you get to a certain age...and I think again our younger teachers coming out of university are much more willing and ready to do that and take kids who might be a bit strange"*.

During my observation of a mathematics class taught by one of these newer teachers, it was refreshing to see how she used many modalities – auditory (jokes, lecture), visual (overhead, blackboard), and kinesthetic, to teach her concepts. The students in her math class seemed to appreciate her sense of humor and the empathy shown for each individual within her structured setting. All students knew the boundaries and limits in the classroom.

As a further example of the changes in mindset, a special education coordinator explained that experienced teachers were requesting to teach students with special needs: *"There certainly seems to be a correlation between IQ – the students that they teach, somehow that there's a status attached. But I see a change here too. I actually have some strong teachers requesting to teach the special needs kids"*.

High school structure.

The departmental structure of a high school creates a separation and division that foster the status quo and help to maintain seclusion and segregation. Inclusion of students with special needs would require a change in thought and structure by meshing together the special education department with the other departments. *"I think they feel that it's* [special education] *sort of a separate department... sort of a separate place in the school"* (Foods teacher). An administrator in another school expressed the following attitude in favor of maintaining the status quo of high school:

> *In high school, unfortunately, that is the idea and most of these kids and parents want these kids to be normalized in terms of working towards credits and working towards a high school diploma and doing some sort of vocational training.* (Administrator)

He continued by explaining that, for many high school teachers, their subject taught sometimes took precedence over the students taught:

> *You know, I'm a high school teacher, I'm an English teacher – like I teach English instead of, 'I'm fortunate enough to be teaching in a high school, teaching adolescents and I teach the subject English.'* (Administrator)

Parent's perception.

One mother felt that change could occur if educators broadened their thinking and allowed time for implementing inclusion. Mike's mother felt that educators could:

> *Think outside the box! I mean the teachers are my age that he's been dealing with and older and it's cut and dried. We were all taught that it's cut and dried and to think outside the box – oh, it's one of the worst things! So we need to, as teachers and parents, think outside the box. Ok,*

so does he really need this, is it such a big deal? Or is there another way it can be done and it's something we can do?

Mike's mother defined thinking outside the box as:

being very open minded and being conscious of what's happening at all times and understanding how people learn. How does this child learn and that child learn and how can I integrate it so that everybody's learning at the same time?

Changes based on experience.

A counsellor stated that her thoughts on inclusion had changed as a result of her experiences working through the process. With time, came experience, knowledge and skills:

Time, cause when it first started, I thought, 'Oh no! This is going to be a nightmare,' and it was because everybody is going, 'I don't know what to do with these kids' and there is nobody out there to help them because we lost our special needs teachers. But I'm starting to see that if everything is in place for specific students, it works. I like it. I think they're healthier being included than when they were in their segregated classroom. But I don't think they are getting as good an education.

A willing attitude to change resulted in rewarding experiences, exemplified by the comments of the following three educators. A teacher assistant explained that *"sometimes it makes it a lot more challenging too. You have to scramble to get all this done. And I like that. So I'm enjoying inclusion a lot"*. Two teachers reiterated these same feelings. One teacher explained that inclusion has *" made it more challenging...but it has also made it really, really rewarding"*. Another teacher's comments illustrated the positive experiences she had as a result of the inclusion of a student with special needs:

"I have to be honest. When he first came in grade 10 after listening to all the things I was taught about him, I thought, 'my goodness, how is this child possibly going to cope?' and yet he's coped well". These comments reflected the positive experiences resulting from inclusion for some educators.

Attitude Based on Relationships

In this research, results indicated that relationships were based on two factors, belonging and friendship.

Belonging.

Belonging appeared to be dictated largely by staff and peer acceptance of the student with special needs: *"I think that one of the biggest problems is just acceptance. You know, convincing people that the students will be able to do the work"* (Social Studies teacher). The perception throughout this research was that, for acceptance to occur, the student with special needs must be capable of demonstrating socially acceptable behaviors to fit into the classroom and school environment. When these behaviors were exhibited, staff and peers were more willing to become involved with the student. The following comments echoed these sentiments:

> *...because she's approachable and she will approach others.* (Teacher assistant)
>
> *She's quite a pleasant girl, there's nothing hostile that comes from her. Actually, she will take the time to smile at you, to give a lot of good interpersonal feedback that you can build a relationship on. I think that's completely necessary, though, to be successful, cause they get along with people.* (Foods teacher)
>
> *I think a lot of it is Brahma as well as his personality. He's a very likeable kid and the teachers are willing to go the extra mile for him.* (Counsellor)

...he reacts so well with everybody - there's nothing negative. (Teacher assistant)

I think it's wonderful for Kristy. It is the best thing. She loves going to the classes. She tries her hardest. She socializes with different students and she's starting to know their names, and they're all starting to become familiar with Kristy. (Teacher assistant)

I think that if it was a child that was more obnoxious, then it might be a lot harder and they might not be as tolerant. He doesn't do anything really to upset the other kids at all. (English teacher)

Keep the students in with other students and I think that the relationship between them will grow stronger. Cause I know that ours, well mine and Kristy's – it's been really good. So, just, just keep it going like that! (Peer)

Both Kristy and Mike, when observed in their schools, appeared to fit in well with the classes they attended. This was evidenced, with Mike, when he interacted so frequently with staff and peers. Although Kristy did not interact so often, when she did, staff and peers seemed to respect her and allow her time to speak. It was reported that peers often would stop and talk to her in the hallway, or converse with her when she wanted to talk to them. In Brahma's case, staff seemed very willing to accommodate him, however, not all experiences with peers would suggest this same openness. A peer who was interviewed explained that, in English class, some students were not patient with Brahma, and could be heard to heavily sigh or seen rolling their eyes when Brahma was answering a question. These actions were also observed by the researcher.

Peers felt that their own involvement and experiences with students with special needs led to an increased attitude of acceptance:

Before I didn't, well when I didn't know Kristy, I thought they were, well you know, special needs students were different. Well, they are different in

a way, but, like I thought that they were really different than us 'normal people' I guess you would say. And, they aren't. They're just the same as us. They're people but they just have a little harder time getting around or doing whatever. I don't even look at the wheelchair. I actually just look at her. I think she's a fine young person. She's loving, she's caring – just everything. She's great. (Peer)

Yeah, it kind of makes me feel more comfortable with him. You get to spend more – more normal time, like in school, with him. (Peer)

Staff had also noticed how peer experience and involvement with students with special needs resulted in increased interaction:

Once they're comfortable with what her problem is, then, ok, now we know what it is, let's get over it. It's no big deal. (Teacher assistant)

More people are approaching her...one of the other girls who had previously not said anything to her, came by and said a few words to her in class. (Foods teacher)

Brahma has been a presence in the lives of at least half of our students for his schooling here because half of the kids came through another school with him. And I think that their tolerance is a part of that. They've seen his successes and I guess his failures, too, and they know him as they do each other. And I think that's helped. (English teacher)

I think with that, coming to the high school with those same students has given him a bond and he is able to relate to the classroom and they know him. (Teacher assistant)

Interaction with peers was observed during one of Kristy's English classes. When the researcher came into the room, Kristy was sitting in one of the front desks, and a peer was talking to her. That girl left to return to her own seat, and another girl from the class stopped to chat for a minute or so with Kristy asking her whether or not she used gloves when pushing herself in the wheelchair. Kristy replied, and her classmate then returned to her desk as the teacher began to get himself ready for class.

Parents commented on their perceptions of the resulting involvement of peers with their sons:

> *Because all the children know him, he gets included. I also think it's good for the regular students who get used to being with less fortunate people who have a lot of handicaps. Instead of being down on them, they befriend them and then they protect them.* (Brahma's foster mother)

> *Other kids stood up for him so he didn't have to worry about it if somebody decided they were going to be the bully, it didn't last too long.* (Mike's mother)

One adolescent with special needs, Brahma, felt that his involvement in the classes and his peers' experience with him lent itself to acceptance: *"Usually the ones who don't know me very well...they try and bug me"*. Observations in Brahma's Drama class, with students who seemed to know him well, reinforced this comment by Brahma. These students gave him the time needed for him to establish dance routines or catch up when he was a step behind.

Peer attitude was not always positively affected by experience with students with special needs. A teacher shared a comment made by a student in her class during their discussion about how to make a better attempt to include Kristy: *"He did mention that 'well, nobody tried to include the rest of us – you either fit in or you don't' - ...but he didn't do it in a malicious way, sort of just noticing"*. One teacher explained that peer

behavior depended, in part, on the nature of the student's disability, and seemed to provide a rationale defending peer's negative attitude, comments and behavior:

> *They're* [students with autism] *not sensitive and they* [students with autism] *don't pick up on the nuances of other student's perceptions so it makes it very easy for them to be in the classroom. I think that for a student that maybe didn't suffer from autism, but had another kind of disability and was more aware of the reactions of other students, then I think that would be even more difficult* (English teacher).

This teacher expressed her dilemma in handling situations that she perceived were disrespectful of the student with special needs:

> *And sometimes it takes him quite a while to get around to his point. Some of the students demonstrate that frustration. You'll see them looking at him, looking at each other, giving a little smile or chuckle. They will not do anything that will actively embarrass him. And I find it very hard – because I don't want to come down too heavy on those kids and make them feel really negative towards him because they get into trouble. But I also feel a need occasionally to caution them about their behavior. And I find that really hard for me. Because I'm very sensitive to what they're going through and the fact that they feel that he sometimes infringes on their education if he's taking too much time to answer a question. They want to get on with things. But I'm not sure that you can do anything because it's human nature to – I don't want to use the word ridicule, because the kids don't do that, but to be aware of the differences and to react and respond to them. I'm sure that if I were to call some of those kids on the carpet, they would really be upset, because I don't think that they realize that they're necessarily being insensitive.* (English teacher)

Another educator's comment reflected the feelings held by many participants that teasing occurred because of the teen-age years in the school setting:

> *I think the biggest thing is to try and help the kids realize where they fit in and teach them behaviors that will help them fit in so they won't get excluded. And I think they'll get less excluded as they get older as well. It's just the teenage years – very picky, some of the kids, and some think, 'I got some power, so I'll poke some fun at you'. Here, everybody's within a two or three year age range. It's too narrow, almost.* (Administrator)

It sometimes seemed as though a commonly-held perception was that this type of teasing behavior was acceptable from people:

> *Oh yeah, everybody always does it – it's just inherent in someone's nature. They have a bad day, so they take it out on someone else. There's some people who are just pricks and do it all the time.* (Peer)

These comments, related to human nature, seem to excuse the students without disabilities for their inappropriate actions or comments.

A mother provided the following rationale for why people tease:

> *Most people don't want to hurt somebody else. I find that most people who hurt somebody else see themselves as somebody else. Something that they don't like about themselves, they see it in another person and so they take it out on another person because they can't take it out on themselves. Quite often they don't realize that that's the reason they're doing it.* (Mike's mother)

Despite the comments of teachers and peers, one student with special needs, Mike, explained that the attitudes and teasing of others was *"really, really hard to deal*

with at first". It is our responsibility as a society to structure caring environments for all individuals and to make others aware of how their actions and comments affect others. For example, one peer stated:

> *I think he could get treated better in the class. That if anyone made fun of him then they could get – not punished, but they could get, you know, spoken to at least. But teachers don't usually do it. Like some teachers are really good but some teachers like, they're not even listening to him. That's not good. You listen to everyone else usually. But if someone is bothering him, then I think they should get a talking to, at least.*

Responsible education means affording all children dignity and respect.

Relationships.

It has been stated throughout the literature that we cannot dictate friends and we cannot fabricate relationships with friends. However true this statement may be, one thing that schools can do is to begin understanding the perspective of friends held by students with special needs.

One mother explained that her daughter with special needs *"sees everyone as her friends...cause she'll sometimes talk about kids who I know don't have hardly anything to do with her, but she considers those her friends"*. Brahma also explained that his comfort level in a school was because *"I know a lot of those kids"*. When the researcher observed Brahma at noon, he was eating his lunch in the drama room along with about ten other students. The students were involved in various activities – drawing on the board, eating lunch, and listening to music. For all activities, the students either congregated in small groups or sat by themselves, and Brahma sat at a desk by himself eating his lunch and watching all the activity with a smile. He was asked by one of the groups of three girls to bring his desk and join them. When Brahma joined their group, he remained quiet, eating lunch, while the girls chatted around him. To Brahma, this noon hour activity constituted *"a group of students I hang out with"*. Brahma continued with his explanation of friends:

"Like, so, you know, and I'm not, like my group of friends, I'm only with them at lunch hour, it's not like I'm with them the whole day or anything like that". Brahma's mother reported that *"He goes to school dances. Doesn't really dance, but stands around and has fun in his own way"*. Kristy's mother felt strongly that peers *"didn't have to be her best friends, but they just had to make her feel like she was included"*.

Perhaps educators need to realign their definition of friends with parents and students so friendships might not be seen as such an issue or barrier to inclusion. If a mother's view of inclusion is to help her daughter have friends, and friends means someone in the immediate area who will say, "good morning", then that does not present such an issue as a teacher trying to institute a friendship club in high school. As stated earlier in this chapter, communication is vital in moving towards successful inclusion.

If inclusive settings were not planned responsibly, one peer felt that *"there would still be people saying 'hello' and 'how are you today' to her, but not as much"*. This young man continued with comments related to the benefits of inclusion as a result of responsible planning:

> *It's a really good thing. I think, just like when you're out at a job or something like that, you need to be able to work – just like school, you just can't be put in one area and never go out and mingle with people, I guess you would say. They can see how special needs students work. They can talk to her a lot, like they communicate with her. She got to work with another person instead of the teacher assistant helping her along. And, just that, she can communicate with other people, too, in the class and get along – just not the people in the segregated class –more the people in the school.* (Peer)

One mother reiterated these same comments related to responsible planning to ensure participation by all class members:

But I think integration is not only beneficial to her but the other kids in the class as well, and, you know, I think that if the teacher said, you know, when we finish school, we don't always get to work with our friends and we don't always get to work with people we want to work with, so if everybody has to rotate, I think that just being forced to work with her would be beneficial to the other kids as well as to Kristy. (Kristy's mother)

Attitude Based on Philosophy

Participants' differing attitudes regarding inclusion were based on their philosophy of education which resulted from their backgrounds, experiences, and training. One philosophy, voiced by a special education coordinator, was the notion of the school as a community: *"Tthis school as a community welcomes them and they are part of it"*. An administrator felt that, with the right setting, inclusion could be done: *"You plan well for it and have a good solid philosophy and policy for it – the staff needs to know why you're doing it. I would encourage it"*. Concern was articulated by a teacher about putting theory into practice: *"When you have to take the practical and work it into the philosophical – then there's a difference there.* In practical terms, if a student were included according to ability or achievement, with minimal modifications, then it would be easier to mesh practice with theory. However, when schools try to maintain their current practices and mesh the philosophy of including all students into that practice, then problems result.

One mother's story of the differences between her daughter's experiences in elementary school and junior high school illustrated this point. She explained how accepted her daughter was in an elementary inclusive school where practice and philosophy were intertwined. In the junior high school, although the administration and staff stated that they welcomed all students, their philosophy of education was to maintain segregated settings. If inclusion is not attempted with a willing attitude and accepting philosophy, *"they're going to be doing it, you know, because they're forced to, and not because they want to, and, that's not the right way to do it"* (Kristy's mother). In this

environment, inclusion will not be successful. The following comments reflected this attitude:

> *There's generally some philosophical talks about being human beings. And some people, it's water off a duck's back. They just don't get it and they're not going to get it. And those are the ones that disturb me the most. And I think we try to talk to the kids and say: not everybody is going to welcome you with open arms and...that's reality. I mean, they'll get it on the jobsite and community and things like that.* (Administrator)

> *There must be a belief, an attitude towards it – this dragging people behind doesn't work.* (Special education coordinator/teacher)

If the administration and staff's attitude suggest an openness and willingness, then one mother felt that inclusion would be successful:

> *The teacher should be willing to have a special needs child in the classroom. It's very easy to make the child fail if you're not willing to work with the special needs child in the classroom. So, I wouldn't encourage that, actually. The willingness of the school and the teachers to give it a try is tremendously helpful.* (Brahma's foster mother)

A willing attitude leaves the door open to some pleasant surprises:

> *I was apprehensive, especially when I had heard things, but they turned out to be okay. His idiosyncrasies are interesting, but I have other kids who have weird behaviors, too. And some of them are a lot stranger than anything he does! I wouldn't have wanted him to be in any kind of alternative program. You know, I don't think that would have been in his best interests"* (English teacher).

The over-arching philosophy which must prevail, comes from the following comment made by a mother:

> *The reason for education is for the child – not for the parents and not for the teachers, not for the school board, not for anybody else – it's for the child. We have to do everything we can to help them or to assist them to succeed. That's the purpose of education.* (Mike's mother)

This comment was also reinforced by an administrator: *"These are our kids, we need to give 'em priority in terms of space and things to do and need to include them and have systems that work".*

Although students with special needs should not have to be molded to fit society's definition of a "regular" student to be included, it was felt by participants that success for these students, like any other student, was based, in part, on their self-determination.

Self-determination of Students with Special Needs

Self-determination was defined by Holub, Lamb, and Bang (1998) as an attitude by students with special needs to help them determine goals. Self-determination gives youth a voice, empowers them to make choices, and enables them to take risks (Holub et al., 1998). One interview with a counsellor helped to explain the notion of self-determination. She noted that one student had taken a course five times before he finally passed it. He'd also failed a number of other courses, but was determined to graduate and had one course left. For self-determination to be realized, the student with special needs requires a supportive environment. One of the peers felt that teachers sometimes got caught up in the time factor and wanting to move the lesson along, and, as a result, respect for the student with special needs is minimized:

> *He needs more time and the teachers sometimes have a hard time giving him time. Like, he needs to talk to the teacher when they ask a question*

and it takes awhile to get it out. And the teachers are just standing there, like they don't pay attention – like they don't look at him. They just sort of 'come on, hurry up.' But, they can wait, you know, like 30 more seconds is not going to hurt. I think that the need is there that he needs extra time. But he needs respect, too. (Peer)

A review of Mike's case study illustrated his self-determination. His self-determined attitude began at an early age as a result of his parent's attitude:

We've never told him, 'no, you can't try something.' It's always been his decision whether he could do it or not. We decided that we would never tell him that he couldn't do something unless it was totally unsafe. I let him make his decisions. A lot of parents are too protective. (Mike's mother)

Mike's comments mirrored those of his mother:

And their desire to do so. Nine times out of ten, it's your attitude, too...you strive to be on the same level as you can, cause you're inclusive and you're expected to. I work harder than most people or some of the kids in my class because I want to – bottom line. You know your limits and sometimes you've got to push em – especially when you're trying to do the same thing or better than most. You're not going to get anywhere if you don't try. (Mike)

A quote from Mike demonstrated his determined attitude:

Ah, I get around pretty good, especially – in the winter, people say, 'it's going to get cold,' and I'm saying, 'yeah, so, it's Alberta, what do you expect?' (Mike)

One of Mike's teachers explained how his attitude was helping him achieve his goals:

> *I think he's definitely involved in the class, he takes part in the discussion, he is quite knowledgeable about current events...he's really interested in that and he willingly volunteers to bring in new ideas and make all kinds of connections.* (Social Studies teacher)

A component of self-determination, as noted by Holub et al. (1998), was the evolution of self-advocacy. An administrator explained the importance of teaching self-advocacy skills to students to help them achieve their goals:

> *I think what we do here is we work with them on how they are going to be able to handle instructors who maybe not have any training, and to get their needs met. How do they advocate for themselves, and that's an important part – so that they can be an advocate. And we try to give information on groups and support groups and agencies once they're past the high school age.*

Conclusion

The participants within each case study provided the researcher with a variety of different perspectives concerning inclusive settings for adolescents with special needs. The data generated from the participants demonstrated the need for a meshing of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, at all levels to ensure successful inclusion.

The findings of the case studies were presented in this chapter. Chapter 5 will contain information about the review of these findings, a discussion of the significance and implications of this study, and presentation of a model for inclusion for educators at the high school level. Chapter 6 will present an overview or conclusion of the research.

CHAPTER 5

Discussion of Findings

The three case studies in this research allowed for the emergence of multi-perspectives from a variety of sources to determine the factors necessary for successful inclusion. Students with special needs; their parents; school staff consisting of guidance counsellors, special education coordinators/teachers, regular classroom teachers, teacher assistants, and administrators; and peers provided the data for the investigation. Chapter 4 presented the findings of these three case studies regarding inclusion at the high school level, under the headings of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for successful inclusion. This chapter will discuss the significance of the findings, present a model of inclusion for educators applicable at the high school level, discuss the practical implications of the study related to previous research, and then outline the limitations of the research.

Inclusion did not look identical in these three case studies, and there was variation in the degree of inclusion, from full time inclusion in every class with the regular coursework, to partial inclusion in one to two classes with a modified curriculum. The degree of inclusion depended, in part, on the school philosophy, allocation of planning time and the promotion of in-service training (Downing, Eichinger, & Williams, 1997). Individuals interviewed had their own definition and perspective of inclusion, but, regardless of the definition, the commitment to making inclusion work for the student with special needs was evident throughout my observations and interviews. There were some similarities between the studies. Teacher assistants were used in all settings and were relied upon heavily by teachers and parents. The degree of success with the inclusive experience was dependent on both the environment as well as the self-determination of the student with special needs. Interview comments from peers demonstrated the benefit to students without disabilities. Educators working with the students with special needs discussed the difficulties they encountered, but also noted the unexpected positive benefits as a result of inclusion. The change in thinking and attitude toward inclusion is a slow, gradual process and not without its trials. The participants'

comments reflected how they viewed change, and the impact of this change on their personal and professional lives. Throughout the research, it was interesting to note how the participant's knowledge, skills, and attitudes interacted in the inclusive experience. The omission of any one of these factors had an impact on the inclusive experience for the student with special needs.

As a precursor to the discussion in this chapter, the significance of the findings will first be explored.

Significance of the Findings

This study had significant impact on my personal and professional life. The purpose of the study was to help me acquire an understanding of the factors required for successful inclusion through the multi-perspectives of the participants, with a goal of formulating a model of inclusion for educators that could be applicable at the high school level.

Foremost, in my discoveries from the participants, was the necessity of clarifying all issues through communication early in the process. From the vast differences in the definitions of inclusion to the varied responses regarding the meaning of friends, the participants illustrated that nothing can be taken for granted. Fuchs and Fuchs' (1994) statement that inclusion is a term, meaning "different things to people who wish different things from it" (p. 299), helps to put this into perspective. For this reason, it is crucial to effectively communicate and listen to one another at the beginning of the educational process to understand what people are really saying and what they really want.

Throughout the research, as I conversed with participants, analyzed the data, and reviewed the literature, I paused to reflect back on my previous inclusive experience at high school. As I explained in chapter 1, I was involved in coordinating the inclusive program for a young man with special needs. The end result of this inclusive experience, as explained previously, was that the student did not complete his high school education or graduate with his classmates. There were many reasons for this conclusion to his high school experience, and I have reflected deeply about how my involvement may have enhanced or detracted from his educational experience. I had the necessary knowledge

and skills, but I wonder whether I had the attitude, at the time, to enhance successful 'full inclusion' as requested by his parents. I had acquired knowledge about this student and prepared a handbook on him for staff, and held information sessions for staff; I had acquired knowledge about inclusion through a summer institute and through university courses; and I had knowledge about the high school itself and the staff. I also had numerous skills to offer this young man, his family and the school: I was skillful in dealing with students with special needs; had a collaborative, working relationship with staff; was adept at modifying material; and worked effectively with teacher assistants. But, in retrospect, I think that I was having a difficult time crossing "...the bridge between philosophical acceptance of reform efforts and the practicality and reality of implementation" (Taylor, Richards, Goldstein, & Schilit, 1997, p. 54).

Taylor et al. (1997) hypothesized that experienced teachers may be somewhat more sceptical about changes associated with inclusion due to their reality base in the classroom. My reality base had been training and experience in a segregated classroom with an emphasis on functional daily living and working skills. Although nervous about how things would proceed, I was excited by the challenges that were imminent in this new experience at our high school. I was dedicated to ensuring that this child would succeed. I truly felt, at the time, that I was open to this new option for educating students with special needs. Upon reflection, though, I am drawn to Costa's (Personal Communication, July 8, 1999) caution against the "prisons of our perceptions." Costa felt that our perceptions might confine our thinking and learning. Perceptions result from our experiences and background and are deeply embedded in our subconscious. We are not aware, I believe, of how strongly our perceptions impact on our thoughts and actions. As a result of my research and discoveries, I reflect back about the impact that my perceptions may have brought to this first new inclusion experience at our high school.

Since that particular experience, my role as facilitator with our school division has provided me with an opportunity to be involved with families regarding inclusive placements for their children. I have tried diligently to listen openly to parents and school staff as concerns are discussed. I have tried to provide resources to help facilitate inclusive experiences. I have observed students with special needs in their inclusive

classrooms and celebrated their successes. As I reflected on my experiences and reviewed the data from these case studies, a model of inclusion for educators presented itself to me which would build on each individual's knowledge, skills and attitudes. This model will be explored in detail later in this chapter.

Practical Applications of the Findings

In chapter 4, the data gathered from the insightful comments of the participants and the observation field notes were presented. The findings of this research have many practical applications for administrators, teachers, teacher assistants, and students. Not the least is the model of inclusion for educators to be presented. First, other applications will be discussed: definitions of inclusion; teacher assistant issues; self-determination of the student with special needs; effect of inclusion on the student without disabilities; effect of inclusion on educators; the key role of the administrator; and change factors.

Definitions of Inclusion

In this research, participants' definitions and meanings of inclusion were varied. Dyal, Flynt, and Bennett-Walker (1996) explained that "...inclusion means different things to different people" (p. 32). In Mike and Brahma's cases, inclusion was defined and implemented based mostly on a demonstration of their ability to do the work. These two students were able to work on the regular high school curriculum, with some provisions, but no major modifications required. Academic content was the focus of the experience, and the school was willing to work with these students to make the necessary provisions required to ensure graduation with a diploma. For Kristy, inclusion was founded primarily on the social aspect. Based on this definition of inclusion, there was less emphasis on the academic side of education, and it was surprising to both the school staff and parents when this adolescent demonstrated an ability to perform the academics successfully.

Although the students with special needs' experiences were quite different, educators and parents in all three case studies viewed inclusion for the students as generally successful based on their meanings and expectations from the experiences.

Clarifying definitions through conversation.

Chapter 2 provided the reader with the literature surrounding the various definitions of inclusion, and chapter 4 clarified these definitions through participants' quotes and observation notes. The inclusive experience and inclusive setting for the child will vary tremendously depending on the meanings attached to "inclusion" by the stakeholders. An initial team meeting, held in advance of the first days of school, would provide the vehicle to begin the communication process. Team members would come to the table with the purpose of giving their own philosophy of inclusion and expectations from the experience to clarify their perspectives and meaning of inclusion.

For example, Kristy's mother stated that one of her goals of inclusion for Kristy was the social aspect of friends and relationships. The teacher might comment on the difficulty of fabricating friendships through buddy-systems or clubs at the high school level. But, through further conversation, Kristy's mother could explain that her meaning of friends for Kristy was the mere proximity of Kristy in the regular classes with peers, sitting beside a "friend." Based on an understanding of that meaning, it would be difficult for the teacher to exclude Kristy from sitting beside peers in the classroom. A further spin-off from the understanding that was gleaned from the conversation might be a recognition, by the teacher, of the basic need for belonging and relationships for all students.

Another example from the data was Brahma's case where his foster mother met with the school team prior to his arrival at school. At this time, Brahma's foster mother clarified her meaning of inclusion by providing the school with her vision for Brahma, which was a continuation of enrolment in regular classes with the goal of a high school diploma. She also explained to the staff what to expect from Brahma regarding his behaviors related to Autism. The school staff, in turn, expressed their uncertainty and fear about having Brahma in the regular classes, due to their lack of experience with students with special needs. The school explained that a teacher assistant would be available to support Brahma and staff through this process. Through subsequent meetings, Brahma's

timetable was decided and his high school experience was extended to four years to provide one block a day for assistance.

Communication, as demonstrated by the above examples, will provide the opportunity for team members to share their philosophy behind inclusion, their expectations of the inclusive experience, their fears, concerns, and questions surrounding inclusion. This open communication will form the basis for the collaboration and compromises that will be necessary to ensure successful inclusion for the student with special needs.

Utilization of the Teacher Assistant

The literature uses a variety of terms for the adults who support children in their inclusive settings. For this discussion, the terms paraprofessional, teacher assistant or instructional assistant will be used interchangeably.

The literature on teacher assistants.

French and Pickett (1997) noted that paraprofessionals have been employed by school districts for almost 40 years, in various roles in the education system. In the United States, there has been an increase in the number of assistants in the classroom, from 150,000 in 1985 to 500,000 in 1995, but there have been a limited number of studies to investigate teacher assistant use in the classroom (French & Pickett, 1997; Jones & Bender, 1993). Although the teacher assistant's role is seen as a necessity for inclusion to be successful, it can also serve as a barrier to inclusion (Ainscow, 1992; Kelly & den Otter, 1991).

Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli, and MacFarland (1997) studied the impact that instructional assistants, who have become a "primary mechanism to implement more inclusive schooling practices" (p. 8), had on students with disabilities. One of the most prominent findings of the study was that the assistants were in close proximity to the students with disabilities on a continuing basis, resulting in several problems as noted on the following page.

- Interference with ownership and responsibility: most of the regular educators left the responsibility of educating the student with special needs to the assistant.
- Separation from classmates was regularly observed.
- Dependence on adults: the assistants in this study were observed prompting the student with special needs for most behaviors, and little evidence of fading the prompts was observed.
- Impact on peer interactions: assistants often dominated the group's interactions, which limited the peer-to-peer interaction.
- Limitations on receiving competent instruction - many teachers expected capabilities and performance from the assistants that were potentially unrealistic. Assistants often felt compelled to follow through on a task with the student with special needs even when they felt that their efforts were not being effective.
- Loss of personal control: assistants were observed to advocate for students instead of allowing the students to express their preferences for activities, events, and/or individuals.
- Loss of gender identity by students with disabilities: the gender of the assistant often superseded that of the student, especially in gym classes.
- Interference with instruction of other students – the students without disabilities did not seem to be distracted by the behaviors of the student with disabilities, but were distracted by the assistant when he/she performed a different activity with the student with special needs.

Kelly and den Otter (1991) explained how the presence of the teacher assistant was a mixed blessing for a grade 5 student. Although the teacher assistant could help the child with immediate concerns and behaviors, over the long term, Kelly and den Otter noted, the teacher assistant seemed to distance the child from his/her peers. The end result was what Kristy's mother, in these case studies, referred to as *"segregation in inclusion"* (M1), when her daughter was included in the classroom with peers, but interacted mostly with the teacher assistant.

When teacher assistants become so involved with "their" student, they become over-protective and take on more of a parenting role than a facilitator role. Perske (1972) cautioned against smothering individuals with special needs, indicating that such behavior "...endangers the retarded person's human dignity, and tends to keep him from experiencing the normal taking of risks in life which is necessary for normal human growth and development" (p.24). Similarly, Ferguson (1997) referred to the extra adults as "clip-board bearing adults," "an adult hovering over," or "velcroed adults" who were easily identified in the classroom and school (p. 50). Students, Ferguson noted, seemed "...in, but not of the class" (1997, p. 50).

As I reflected on my years as a teacher assistant, these concepts were highlighted. When one works in such close proximity with students, a natural "mothering" instinct and bond tends to form. I started thinking of these students as "mine," and, with this feeling, came a degree of ownership and responsibility to protect. When I first began my job as a teacher assistant, I remember being extremely apprehensive, in a school-wide assembly, when the speaker responded to "my" student's raised hand. What if the student said something to make the other children laugh, or what if the others poked fun? What if his answer was totally bizarre or off-topic? In fact, I remember trying to intervene and discourage the student from asking the question. This example illustrates some of the issues that surround the actions of well-meaning, caring assistants. It is vital to the well-being of all concerned that the school team look very closely at the effect of the teacher assistant's presence on the children in the classroom, to ensure that this support does not further separate and segregate the child with special needs from his/her peers.

French and Pickett (1997) outlined issues surrounding the utilization of teacher assistants. First, educators often receive very little training or preparation in supervising paraprofessionals, yet they are held responsible for the outcomes of the paraprofessionals' assignments. Secondly, many paraprofessionals have little training themselves, to perform the tasks assigned. A third issue noted by French and Pickett was the issue of role overlap. There has not generally been a clear distinction between educator and assistant, and, as a result, the jobs are frequently blurred. In many instances, paraprofessionals remained the primary service provider to individuals with special needs – in spite of lack

of training. In practice, the roles of the paraprofessionals have emerged in response to demands placed on them and the intuition of the teacher to whom they are assigned. French and Pickett reported that modifying assignments and writing lesson plans were the responsibility of the assistant. A fourth issue raised by French and Pickett was the fact that paraprofessionals can be a vital community link and serve as liaisons with the community. Many paraprofessionals live in the area while educators live elsewhere. In many situations, special education teachers/coordinators maintain full and complete contact with parents and the community. Teacher assistants are often requested to filter all communication from home or the community directly to the teacher 'in charge.' The fifth issue was the fact that paraprofessionals were potential educators and were being recruited into the teaching profession. However, the courses that paraprofessionals may have taken are often not transferable to colleges or universities.

Giangreco et al.'s (1997) study highlighted factors to explain why teachers often abdicate responsibility for the student with special needs to the teacher assistant. Teacher's lack of knowledge about the student with special needs resulted in a fear that inhibited interaction. Giangreco et al. (1997) also noted that teachers were more reluctant to either add another task to their responsibilities or stray from their established routines.

Teacher assistants in the research.

In these case studies, teacher assistants were used with all three students with special needs in their inclusive settings, and the degree of involvement varied with individual student's needs. In Mike's case, the teacher assistant accompanied him to his core classes, Social Studies and Mathematics, and sat next to him to scribe notes, keep him on track, and clarify material. With Brahma, his teacher assistant no longer accompanied him to any of his classes. Brahma worked independently on his courses. The teachers tried to keep him on track and focused, and a peer provided his teacher assistant with her notes to copy. During my observations, there was no interaction between the peer who scribed and Brahma. When included in the regular classes, a teacher assistant worked beside Kristy to keep her focused, clarify the material, modify and adapt the material as required, and work with her in small groups as assigned. Most

questions about the course content were fed from Kristy to the teacher assistant, not directly to the teacher. There was a distinct difference in the student/teacher interactions between the cases where the students were perceived as capable and academics were the focus, and in Kristy's case, where social integration was the focus for her inclusive settings. Kristy interacted mostly with the teacher assistant and would look to the teacher assistant for clarification. Interaction with the teacher was generally socially related, not content related.

Teachers in all three cases relied heavily on the assistants to modify the material where needed, follow-up on work not finished, and keep the students focused and on-track in class. Teachers commented repeatedly that inclusion would not work if there were not a teacher assistant to support the student with special needs in the classroom. It seemed that educators in these case studies felt, given their course loads, diploma exam expectations, number of students in the class, that the teacher assistant was the key person responsible for the education of the student with special needs. The teacher assistants were seen as a vital link to the success of the inclusion experience.

Training for teachers and teacher assistants.

To ensure optimum learning experiences for all students, it is essential that teacher assistants and teachers act as a team. A team is most productive when roles are defined, control is not an issue, and expectations are clearly stated. A team approach to training, suggested by several authors (Frith & Mims, 1985; Miramontes, 1990), would appear to be an appropriate way for teachers and assistants to work together effectively. School districts could promote this training by providing substitute time for both teachers and assistants to acquire training together. In-depth training versus one-day conferences or workshops, has been suggested as the best way to ensure generalization to the classroom (Downing et al., 1997). Further implications from a study conducted by Downing et al. (1997), to determine perceptions toward inclusive education from elementary staff, stressed the importance of districts offering adequate support through well-trained professionals and paraprofessionals.

Training was deemed necessary, in Downing et al.'s study, to assist staff in identifying and developing appropriate adaptations and in using peers as natural supports for students with disabilities. Other areas to be targeted for training include:

- sensitivity training or ability awareness sessions to help the team become familiar with the needs of student's with special needs
- sessions on collaboration and working co-operatively
- sessions defining the roles and responsibilities of both the teacher and teacher assistant, in conjunction with other team members.

In addition to training for the teacher and teacher assistant in the classroom, Tashie et al. (1993) suggested that school districts could initiate an Inclusion Facilitator position at the division level. The availability of this individual to schools could help to provide an extension to the initial training, through ongoing feedback, distribution of resources, and collaboration throughout the inclusive experience.

Self-determination

The degree of success of the inclusive experience depends largely on the environment, however, the self-determination of the student with special needs is also a factor. Holub, Lamb, and Bang (1998) defined self-determination as "...an attitude expressed in determining one's goals and taking the initiative to meet those goals" (p. 185). Holub et al. (1998) explained that youth with disabilities have less control over their lives, and are viewed as needing protection or being incapable of making decisions for themselves. Three factors must be addressed to help students become self-determined: the students need to learn about their disability and develop self-advocacy skills; become responsible for their learning and development; make their own decisions and accept the consequences of their actions (Holub et al., 1998). Kunc (1981) agreed that "...it is OK to be handicapped, everyone has limitations, and it is all right to live and work hard inside those limitations" (p. 37). These factors do not negate the responsibility of the school to ensure that the environments are conducive to fostering self-determination.

Wehmeyer and Schwartz (1997) studied self-determination in youth with special needs. Wehmeyer and Schwartz discovered that self-determination was an educational

outcome necessary for youth to achieve positive adult outcomes. An act or event is self-determined, according to Wehmeyer and Schwartz, if the individual's actions reflect four characteristics: acting autonomously; demonstrating self-regulated behaviors; initiating and responding to events in an empowered manner; and acting in a self-realizing manner using accurate knowledge of himself/herself to capitalize on this knowledge. The authors used a self-report measure, The Arc's Self-Determination Scale, to provide data on the student's self-determination. The results indicated that self-determined students were more likely to have achieved positive adult outcomes, including being employed at a higher rate and earning more per hour than peers who were not self-determined.

Self-determination demonstrated in the research.

In chapter 4, Mike explained how his self-determined attitude resulted in positive outcomes in relation to his choices in school. He was determined to graduate with his high school diploma, and was working hard toward that goal. Mike seemed to be an active participant in his educational decisions and choices. To a lesser degree, Brahma's determination was based more on what the adults wanted for him. In contrast to both of the other situations, Kristy's attitude toward school was much more passive. She seemed to go with the flow of the day and complied with adult requests as much as possible. Parents and staff have a responsibility, through realistic, high expectations, to ensure that children are given every opportunity to become self-reliant, self-determined citizens.

Teaching self-determination at the school.

Holub et al. (1998) cited an example of one high school that offered a self-determination class to assist individuals with special needs to learn about disabilities, discover their strengths and challenges, explore feelings about school experiences, examine loci of control situations, and develop a self-advocacy plan. In most high schools in Alberta, the Career And Life Management (CALM) course covers some of these topics, and I would advocate for the inclusion of all students with special needs into one CALM class during their high school experience. Presentation of a unit, similar to the one

described by Holub et al. (1998), by staff and parents would provide an opportunity for the team to collaborate, disseminate information and share perspectives with all students.

Benefit to Peers Without Disabilities

Literature studies depicting benefit to peers.

There is a growing body of literature suggesting that students without disabilities, referred to as 'typical', may benefit from integration experiences with students who have disabilities. "Accepting relationships are formed in stages – meeting, getting acquainted, becoming close, becoming intimate – in which the disability gradually becomes less salient in the eyes of the other" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987, p. 38). The initial encounter may focus on the individual's difference, but increased positive contact results when the typical individual feels more at ease. "Typical people who are in caring relationships with people who are different de-emphasize the negative aspects of the person and stress the positive" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987, p. 39).

Most prominent in the research was the description of social benefits accrued by the students without disabilities. Murray-Seegert's (1989) year long ethnographic study, of social relations between high school students with disabilities and their peers without disabilities, discussed the benefits for peers without disabilities. The students without disabilities described the benefits in terms of having positive experiences of helping another person, increasing their preparedness to deal with disability and learning from students with disabilities. Sebastian and Mathot-Buckner (1998) examined the beliefs of secondary educators, and the results suggested that students without disabilities grew in their tolerance, acceptance, and understanding of differences.

In Helmstetter, Peck, and Giangreco's (1994) study, the authors surveyed a statewide sample of high school students without disabilities, who had developed relationships with peers with severe disabilities at their high schools. Positive outcomes were reported with regard to enhanced self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings of self-worth related to helping others, increased sense of personal development, and an increased tolerance of the behavior and appearance of individuals with disabilities. Similarly,

Giangreco, Dennis, Cloninger, Edelman, and Schattman (1993) reported increased acceptance, enhanced emotional and social development, and flexibility on the part of the nondisabled peers. York, Vandercook, Macdonald, Heise-Neff, and Caughey (1992) surveyed regular and special educators and students without disabilities at the end of a year of inclusion for middle-school students. About 90% of the peers responded positively to having students included in their classes, and about two-thirds felt that they had learned something from the student with special needs. Results revealed benefits for both peers and educators, including increased acceptance, understanding, and the acknowledgement of differences.

A study conducted by Peck, Donaldson, and Pezzoli (1990) revealed similar outcomes for students without disabilities, as they developed personal relationships with students with disabilities. These adolescents reported that the experience gave them an improved understanding of individuals with disabilities, improved their own self-concept as they helped other people, and reduced their fear of unusual behavior and appearance of individuals with disabilities. Porter (1997) cited one study in a New Brunswick high school, where students without disabilities were asked to reflect on their experiences being in classrooms with students with exceptionalities. Ninety-one percent of the 70 students felt that inclusion did not take away from their own learning, and about two-thirds felt that the regular class setting was appropriate for students with special needs.

Fisher, Pumpian, and Sax (1998) studied the impact that placement and service models had on nondisabled high school students' attitudes. For this study, Fisher, Pumpian, et al. (1998) surveyed about 1400 high school students from two high schools, regarding their attitudes toward peers with disabilities. One school provided limited mainstreaming opportunities while the other school operated from an inclusive position. Students without disabilities in both schools were asked directly for their recommendations in support of inclusion. The results revealed that students without disabilities expected and recommended a degree of inclusion comparable with what was offered already in their school. For example, in the inclusive school, 87% of the students without special needs, compared to 23% of the students without special needs in the traditional, self-contained classroom model, felt that inclusion should continue. Fisher,

Pumpian, et al. (1998) believed that this study has implications for the impact of school design and curriculum on how students viewed social justice issues. Generally, the results of the study indicated that most adolescents in both schools held positive attitudes toward students with special needs. However, as mentioned above, the belief about the degree of inclusion was dependent upon the students' experiences.

Kennedy, Shukla, and Fryxell (1997) studied the impact of placement on the social relationships of students with special needs. One group of students participated full time in general education classes while the second group was supported through special education classrooms. Kennedy et al.'s (1997) findings indicated substantial positive social benefits for students with disabilities who were educated in the inclusive setting. The study suggested that these students with disabilities interacted more frequently with their peers and had larger networks comprised of students without disabilities. Although the sample size was very small, suggesting limited generalizability, Kennedy et al.'s (1997) study is consistent with other studies mentioned previously, which indicate that peer interaction and support is dependent upon the degree and frequency of inclusion experiences.

Kennedy and Itkonen (1994) used the Social Contact Assessment Form and the School-Based Social Network to measure the effect of social participation of students without disabilities with their peers with disabilities. The primary finding of this research was that regular class participation increased a student's social contact with peers without disabilities.

Kishi and Meyer's (1994) longitudinal evaluation, on the effects of earlier interaction between students with disabilities and those without disabilities, produced interesting results. One hundred and eighty-three students from three groups – social contact (students had participated in the structured Special Friends program in their elementary years), exposure only (students were schoolmates only but had not participated in the Special Friends program), and no contact/exposure (students were enrolled in their elementary, junior and senior high schools that did not included students with special needs). The results indicated that students from the contact and exposure groups were more positive and accepting of the students with special needs, maintained

higher levels of current reported social contact, and were more supportive of full community participation. Similarly, Villa's (1995) touching story, of the inclusion of a student with multiple disabilities into junior high school, outlined the positive effects that this student had on his peers.

Some authors have conducted a review of the research on the effects of inclusion on students without disabilities (Hunt & Goetz, 1997; Staub & Peck, 1994/95). In their reflection on the research, Staub and Peck (1994/95) posited that, although there is limited research on this issue, the existing studies have demonstrated that inclusion does not harm nondisabled students, in fact, there has been some evidence to show positive benefits of inclusion.

Hunt and Goetz (1997) reviewed 19 research investigations of inclusive educational programs, practices, and outcomes for students with severe disabilities. Hunt and Goetz discovered that six guidelines emerged from the analysis of the data:

- parental involvement is essential
- students with disabilities can achieve academic and learning outcomes in inclusive settings
- students with disabilities can realize acceptance, interactions, and friendships in inclusive settings
- students without disabilities can experience positive outcomes when students with disabilities are in their classes
- collaboration is essential to inclusion
- curricular adaptations are vital to inclusion. (pp. 25-26)

Although studies have shown the benefits to students without disabilities, peers have expressed concerns as well (Peck et al., 1990; Schnorr, 1997). In Peck et al.'s study, the students without disabilities commented on some of the difficulties they had experienced with the student with disabilities. The major theme was termed "social discomfort" (p. 245), reflecting difficulty with the lack of social skills exhibited by the students with disabilities. When questioned about these behaviors, such as interrupting, calling on the phone too much, or making inappropriate comments, the students without disabilities were "reluctant to provide direct and unambiguous feedback" (p. 248). A

concern expressed by Peck et al., with regard to the reluctance to provide feedback about inappropriate social behavior, was that an opportunity for teaching appropriate behaviors was not realized.

Benefit to peers in the research.

There were three peers interviewed in the case studies, and two of them expressed similar comments regarding the benefits to them and their classmates as a result of inclusion. One peer felt that it was crucial to "*keep the students in with other students and I think that the relationship between them will grow*" (P1). Another peer explained that, with the presence of a student with disabilities in his class, "*it takes more time, like it takes more time to get to the next question, but to me it's not really a big deal. It doesn't bother me. If nothing else, it makes us realize that not everyone's perfect*" (P2).

In two of the case studies, teachers expressed an indication of the benefit to peers:

> *Until you work closely with someone, you never come to know. So the kids in the class, without ever pairing them up with her would never.. she'd have been there, just a person in a wheelchair, no personality.* (Foods teacher)

> *I think that he's enriched my own awareness, and I think that has probably carried onto the kids in my classroom, too.* (English teacher)

Kristy's mother also felt that peers would benefit:

> *I think integration is not only beneficial to her, but the other kids in the class as well. You know, I think that if the teacher said, 'when we finish school, we don't always get to work with people we want to work with', so if everybody had to rotate. I think that just being forced to work with her would be a benefit to the other kids as well as Kristy.*

Maximizing benefits to peers.

Schnorr (1997) examined the meaning of belonging and membership in high school in her study in four secondary level general education classes. Her findings revealed that the organization and structure of high schools could hinder the development of peer relationships and belonging for students. Schnorr listed features such as individual schedules, changing classes and peer groups, and numerous teachers as factors that can increase the sense of isolation for students with disabilities. In her study, class membership was defined by the regular students as affiliation with a small group of classmates and social participation in the large group.

Providing class membership to students with special needs in the regular classroom will help to enhance benefits to peers. As peers affiliate with students with special needs and experience their differences, they will become more understanding and accepting.

Benefit to Educators

Literature studies depicting benefit to educators.

The literature cited studies of responses by educators with regard to having a student with special needs in their classes. In comparison to the studies on peers, the studies related to educators suggested more variation in response and more hesitancy toward full inclusion. Positive outcomes for educators were reported by Giangreco et al. (1993), who discovered that the transformations of teachers in their study were gradual and progressive as teachers reflected and reconsidered previous positions. Villa (1995) told of the impact felt by staff when a student with multiple disabilities, who had been included in their school, died suddenly:

> He demonstrated for us the value of collaboration, the value of inclusive education, the value of friendship, and the value of saying yes to the unknown. He is fondly remembered. (p.135)

Villa felt that this student had "taught students and adult alike to accept and appreciate the difference in others and within themselves" (p.133).

Although positive outcomes were revealed in some studies, the literature also cited examples of concerns expressed by educators. "The acceptance of inclusion grows with experience, but it doesn't eliminate teacher's concerns about a number of very practical matters" (Porter, 1997, p. 59).

York, Vandercook, et al. (1992) reported mixed results for special and regular educators. Some educators noted positive changes in themselves with regard to working with students with special needs; however, teachers also explained that it was difficult determining class activities to include students with special needs, and the scheduling and time factors were problematic.

Similarly, Soodak, Podell, and Lehman's (1998) survey of educators revealed varied results with regard to students with special needs being included in their classes. Findings suggested that teachers' receptivity toward including students with disabilities diminished with experience. In addition, teachers held more positive attitudes toward including students with social and physical disabilities than toward including students who had academic and behavioral disabilities.

Despite the study results discussed above, some authors have suggested that, if educators had an open attitude to work with the students, they would become more receptive to students with special needs (Giangreco et al., 1993; Porter, 1997). Porter (1997) argued that discussions and training may be important for educators, but the turning point for teachers was to actually work with students with special needs in their classes, and get to know them before the benefits are realized; "...the direct experience...seems to be the key to eliminating a fear of the unknown" (p. 59). Giangreco et al. (1993) credited the transformation, for all but two of the 19 participating educators, to openness and willingness to become more involved in the education of the student with special needs in their classes. These authors advanced the idea that transformation was due to direct experience working with students with special needs.

Benefit to educators in the research.

The three teachers in the case studies all commented on the benefits they felt they had experienced as a result of having students with special needs in their classrooms:

Nothing but positives about my experiences with Brahma. (English teacher)

There's been no way that it's negatively affected my day at all. It's been very smooth. Probably a very positive experience, because in the end I will feel that she enjoyed herself and that the kids got a chance to see somebody else that they may not have made much of a connection with otherwise. (Foods teacher)

It's made my job a lot more challenging because you have to be aware of the student's needs and constantly make adaptations. But it has also made it really, really rewarding. I have become a lot more knowledgeable and have gone to workshops and sessions. (Social Studies teacher)

Maximizing benefits to educators.

Epstein and Elias (1996) remind us that children are our future. Our actions, as educators, regarding how we respond and react to individuals, will send clear messages to our citizens of the future and influence their responses. As educators, being open to the inclusive experience and having a willing attitude, coupled with a desire to communicate effectively with team members can help to realize the benefits of inclusion. Our responses are affected, in turn, by reactions to the changing environments.

Change Factors

To include adolescents with special needs into the general education classes and high school milieu involves tremendous change by educators, in their thinking, planning, and methods of instruction. To make these changes is not an easy feat, and the literature provided reasons for the hesitancy toward change. Tye (1998) explained that change in attitude and programs in schools was so difficult because of the "identifiable forces that act, over time, to pull innovative efforts in any enterprise – not just in education – back to the 'tried and true'" (p. 332). These forces, Tye noted, were: the social context, including the role of the media in shaping society's attitudes; the nature of the education

bureaucracy, including the district offices and the school board; the knowledge industry; fiscal realities; parental expectations; and the nature of the teaching profession, including competing demands and the norms that discourage collective action. Tye posited that these forces were "...grounded in the 'deep structure' of schooling: our society's widely shared assumptions about what schools are for and how they should function" (1998, p. 332). The structure of high schools seems to be firmly grounded in standardization and routines of schedules and timetables (Malloy, 1996). Secondary schools have changed very little, despite the talk of reform and restructuring (Costa, 1999; Thousand & Villa, 1995), and they continue to offer instruction in isolated segments through four or five blocks throughout the day.

Skrtic (1996) argued that schools traditionally have acted out of a "professional bureaucracy" position shaped by society's goals. The professional bureaucracy emphasized programs, not students; standardized services, not flexibility and creativity; and isolated environments of the classroom, not collaborative approaches. MacKinnon and Brown (1994) followed Skrtic's thinking in their study of the attitudes and behavioral changes of secondary teachers, in two schools where students with special needs were placed in regular classrooms. As the year of the study progressed, the teachers began collaborating, sharing ideas and resources, and cooperating in solving problems. MacKinnon and Brown (1994) posited that this move demonstrated an "adhocratic manner" (p. 147) of operation. Skrtic (1996) defined an adhocratic organizational structure as one based on a team approach to problem solving, resulting in novel products and services instead of standardized ones. MacKinnon and Brown (1994) argued that "diversity and adhocratic behavior are inextricably connected" (p. 148), and that one demands the other. Diversity provides a sense of uncertainty, making team problem solving, shared responsibility, and mutual adjustments necessary. Operating in an adhocratic manner would mean that society and schools would need to share a different set of assumptions with regard to educating all students. Mastropieri and Scruggs (1997) argued that there is uncertainty about whether "...society is willing to make this commitment during a time of declining public resources" (p. 210). However, Napier

(1995) stressed the importance of the community making a commitment to work together to provide the most enabling environment for all children.

The traditional view, in keeping with the medical or deficit model, was that schools operated from a reductionist stance, focusing on reducing the problem to the student (Malloy, 1996; Poplin & Stone, 1992; Skrtic, 1996). Malloy (1996) advocated that educators needed to "...adopt a constructivist teaching stance" (p. 231), where learning occurs in the natural environment with general educators, instead of the isolated learning experiences that often occur in the segregated classes with special educators. Scholars have argued, however, that very little change will occur until educators begin to see the environment, and not the student with special needs, as the problem (Bogdan & Taylor, 1987; Kunc, 1981; Skrtic, 1996; Thousand et al., 1997).

This environmental view stresses the need to modify or adapt the environment for students, in order to accommodate their needs. Kunc (1981) posited that difficulties in the education system were usually the result of a problem coming into conflict with the situation. He provided the example of a situation of 35 children, and a problem, the student with special needs, coming into the room. Kunc advocated that we should reverse our thinking so that the situation becomes 36 students to teach, one with a disability, and the problem is the result of the teaching environment not being set up adequately to meet the situation. Inclusion captures the ideology, but actualization is impossible in the traditional school organization of standardization and formalized operation, where high schools maintain a "...sorting function" (Malloy, 1996, p. 233). In this traditional school, the less advantaged students usually end up in the less demanding courses. To include students with disabilities in this school usually results in these students sorted into lower level classes.

Thousand and Villa (1995) explained the success or failure of change through Knoster's formula for managing change. Five variables, vision, skills, incentives, resources, and action planning, were factored into the formula for managing change. If any one of these variables were omitted, then the outcome for change would not be the desired one. For example, if the schools had not built a common vision outlining future directions for students with special needs, then confusion would likely result. A lack of

skills by educators, to respond to each student's needs, could lead to anxiety. Thousand and Villa (1995) described incentives as being both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards, but for change to be effectively managed, educators must be intrinsically motivated. If incentives were not evident, then either active or passive resistance could result. Resources were the fourth factor in the change formula. If people believed that there were insufficient resources, including time, organizational or material/technical resources, then frustration could occur. Lastly, Thousand and Villa argued, an action plan, communicated to all participants, about the sequence and process of change, would be essential to ensure that individuals were not "...running on a treadmill" (1995, p. 73). These five variables represent change as an ongoing, gradual process.

Costa (1999) explained that change is so difficult because it involves risk-taking, a new way of thinking and acting, and it involves emotional, psychological and physical factors. Change can occur through an individual's acquisition of professional preparation and experience, and the skill in utilizing this knowledge on a daily basis. The bottom line, advocated Lupart et al.(1996), was how the classroom teacher and the students actually perceived the change and dealt with it in the classroom. Lupart et al. felt that the teacher and students were "the essential elements for effective school improvement and change" (1996, p. 267).

This review of the literature on change has been presented to provide an explanation to the readers for why change is so difficult. Fullan (1991) posited that it is essential to "know what change looks like from the point of view of the teacher, student, parent, and administrator if we are to understand the actions and reactions of individuals" (1991, p. xi). The data generated from the three case studies in this research have attempted to provide the reader with varying points of view to lead to increased awareness and understanding. In his later work, Fullan (1999) further explained that change is the result of new material, new behavior and practices, and new beliefs and understanding. Fullan's (1999) change forces paralleled the components of the model of inclusion being presented by this researcher: knowledge (new material), skills (new behavior), and attitudes (new beliefs). This model of inclusion for educators will be discussed in the next section.

Model of Inclusion: The Most Enabling Environment

Martin (1997) explained that "...the term 'inclusion' has entered the language of special education as the latest policy interpretation of LRE" (p. 235). The model to be presented is the researcher's interpretation of the most enabling versus the least restrictive environment for educating children. Three components that emerged from the data, knowledge, skills, and attitudes, comprise the inclusion model. This model is presented as a result of the researcher's interpretation of the data collected, policies and practices observed, and previous literature reviewed.

The inclusion model for educators, represented by Figure 1, is predicated on Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological model. Bronfenbrenner's model conceptualizes behavioral interactions as relationships between all environments with the child in the centre. The inclusion model conceptualizes the interactions between all factors with the most enabling environment in the centre, resulting when these factors connect and intertwine. As illustrated in Figure 1, when the connections are only drawn between any two factors in the inclusive setting, then inclusion is compromised. If all components of the model are in place, and planning for transitions occurs carefully and on an individual basis, then chances are more likely that the most promising programs for children will be realized in the most enabling environment. The next section will highlight the author's interpretation of the model when a combination of only two factors are addressed followed by a presentation of the model when all factors are intertwined. Evidence from the study and data to support the model will then be presented.

Knowledge and Skills

With knowledge, comes an understanding of the children and their program goals and expectations, and the educators' own biases. With skills comes the ability to plan, utilize supports and communicate. The missing component, attitudes, in the model, has been determined by some authors to be the most crucial variable in determining the success of including children with special needs (Blenk & Fine, 1995; Chow & Winzer, 1992; Napier, 1995). Attitudes are multidimensional and can have a strong effect on

Model of Inclusion for Educators
to achieve the
Most Enabling Environment
for Students with Special Needs

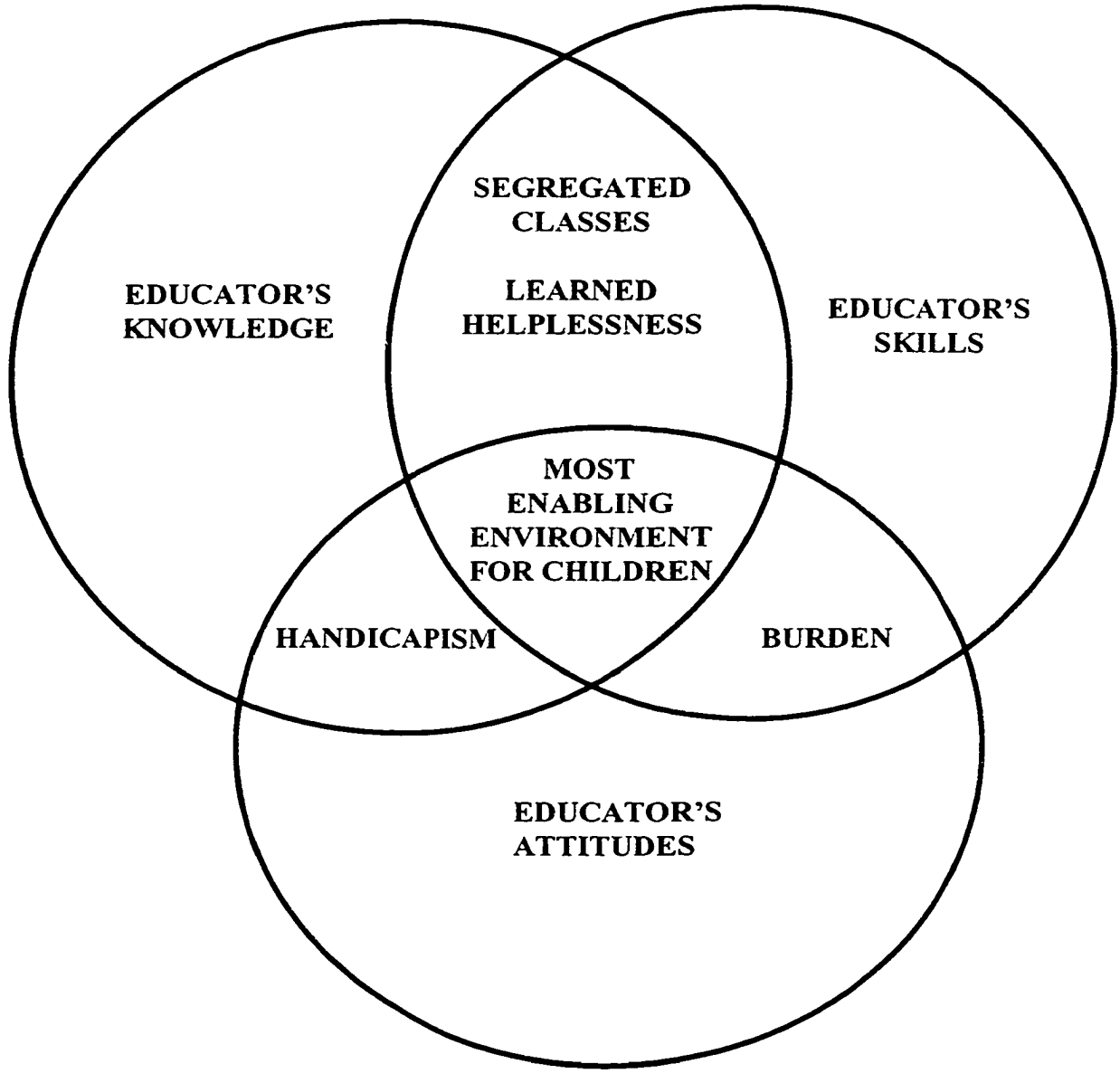

Figure 1: The most enabling environment for children is achieved through the interconnection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

teaching and learning. Blenk and Fine (1995) emphatically stated that "forced inclusion of children with special needs into classrooms whose teachers don't want them is probably the worst injustice we can do to our children" (p. 28). Without an open, willing attitude to inclusion, segregation and the status quo will be maintained and learned helplessness, for both staff and students, may be perpetuated.

Studies have been conducted to illustrate how teachers' attitudes, philosophies and characteristics are key elements in educational settings. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) summarized the results of 28 surveys of over 10,000 teachers from 1958 to 1995, regarding this issue. Scruggs and Mastropieri (1996) found that about two-thirds of the teachers accepted the general concept of teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms, about half expressed a willingness to do so, and one-fourth to one-third felt that they had sufficient time, training, or classroom assistance to implement inclusion successfully. These same comments were reflected in Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes' (1995) article, concluding that teachers were often hesitant to embrace change because their views were "reflective of their 'ethic of practicality'" (p. 88). Janney et al. (1995) found that teacher's attitudes, regarding including students with special needs, were dependent on their understanding of the purpose; their clarity of role expectations; their knowledge of supports; and their perception about rewards. Conversely, Green, Rock, and Weisenstein (1983) examined the reliability and validity of the Attitude Toward Mainstreaming Scale and discovered that just increasing knowledge does not necessarily produce positive attitudes in preservice teachers, although increased knowledge was shown to be strongly related to classroom acceptance of children with exceptional needs. Giangreco et al. (1993) discussed the critical nature of the teacher's willingness to take risks and become involved with students with special needs, as determinants in successful inclusion. A study of effective general education inclusionists, by Olson, Chalmers, & Hoover (1997), revealed that the most effective teachers were ones who held a "humanistic stance regarding the worth of individuals" (p. 32). It seems, then, that a teacher's attitude will be crucial in determining where the individual with special needs will receive his/her education.

Martin (1997) explained that, when segregated classes are viewed as the only option, it does not encourage thinking for alternatives. Other options to the segregated classroom, cited by Martin, included: full inclusion; reverse mainstreaming; partial inclusion; or use of a regular education curriculum versus the special education curriculum. The key is to "...make the concept of placement 'inclusive' and to move away from 'inclusion' as the only alternative" (Martin, 1997, p. 239). Dyal et al. (1996) concurred that there is "...more than one way to accomplish inclusion in schools" (p.32), but if educators do not have the attitude and mindset to look at options, the acquisition of knowledge and skills will not be sufficient to enhance inclusive settings.

Recognizing the need for diversity of placement, Agran, Snow, and Swaner (1999) conducted a study to obtain secondary level teachers' opinions on both community-based instruction and inclusive education for students with disabilities. The respondents supported both approaches and suggested benefits to students from each approach. The findings supported the notion of providing a balance of regular education and community-based programs as an option for students with special needs.

One teacher, interviewed in the case studies, explained her fear of the segregated setting for all students: *"I think there is a tendency, if you put those students in special ed kind of settings, that sometimes – I don't want to say we cater to their differences, but we anticipate and expect them more".* In his story of Eric's journey, Richardson (1998) followed a young man with special needs out of his segregated setting and into an inclusive setting. Eric's mother felt that his multiple disability diagnosis had resulted in decreased expectations for Eric in his segregated class. In the inclusive setting, Eric's academic skills increased and his social skills fluorished. This scenario has been presented as an example of the reason to remain flexible when providing placements for children with special needs in their educational settings.

Brady, Hunter, and Campbell (1997) agreed that offering inclusive settings for children should be just one of many options, in the same manner that students without disabilities are provided a variety of options for their education. These options include public schools, private schools, home schooling, virtual schooling and blended programs. The options continue at high school, through the wide selection available within many

courses. For example, in Alberta, in English at the grade 10 level, students could register in four different levels according to their ability and preference: English 16, English 13, English 10, and Advanced Placement English. Registering for the 13-level course in one subject does not necessitate taking all core subjects at that level, nor does it mean that students must remain at the 13-23-33 level for that particular course throughout their entire three years of high school. Ainscow (1992) cautioned that segregated forms of education, with their sizes, forms, and populations, could result in fewer opportunities for children with special needs with respect to more narrow and restricting curriculum.

If we continue to inhibit opportunities for students with special needs, several authors have suggested that students will not find their place in the community. Stainback, Stainback, and East (1994) argued that adolescents require opportunities to "exercise and express choices about friendships and group affiliations" (p. 489). This ability to make informed choices, Stainback et al. advocated, was provided to children who were in flexible and adaptive settings. Mackan (1991) questioned how growth and a sense of community could be fostered if children with special needs were educated only in segregated settings: "Children with special needs who associate almost exclusively with others who have like disabilities resort to roles and behavior that leave little possibility of normal human or personal growth. Such children are simply not being themselves" (p. 125). Sobsey, Ray, and Raymond (1997) used the analogy of swimming and the need to immerse the child in the water to learn how to swim. With education, Sobsey et al. argued, children need to be immersed in regular classes, not sitting on the sidelines, to prepare them for roles in society.

A second possible result, when attitude is omitted from the model of inclusion, is learned helplessness. Learned helplessness, a theory described by Seligman (1992), occurs when an individual does not perceive a relationship between his/her behavior and ability to make changes. An individual's attitude and belief system comes into play very strongly in learned helplessness. Sobsey and Dreimanis (1993) posited that special education classes have tended to remove control from children with disabilities, and, instead, these classes foster compliance. If children with disabilities are not given choices or opportunities to exert control, then learned helplessness will eventually result. To

emphasize the impact of learned helplessness, the reader is referred to a study by Ryndak, Morrison, and Sommerstein (1999), of a young woman with disabilities and the observable changes when she moved from a segregated setting after 10 years, into inclusive settings.

Ainscow (1992) cautioned that the learned helplessness theory also holds true for educators. Special educators have typically been seen as the experts who are most capable of exerting control over the student with special needs. A form of learned helplessness is thus created by regular educators who do not see themselves as capable of influencing the situation or the child positively. Individuals may have the knowledge and skills to implement alternative educational choices, but if they do not believe that they can influence the situation, then they likely will not try.

Knowledge and Attitudes

Individuals may try to implement the model of inclusion using their knowledge of the child, the goals, and their own biases and having a positive attitude toward accepting all children in a belonging environment. However, if they lack the skills to plan effectively, utilize supports and communicate with team members, then unrealistic, lowered expectations could result for the student. Martin (1997) argued that students with special needs often suffer from, "...the abuse of low expectation" (p. 232).

Biklen and Bogdan (1977) termed this effect, "handicapism," which they defined as "a theory and set of practices that promote unequal and unjust treatment of people because of apparent or assumed physical or mental disability" (p. 206). Biklen and Bogdan explained that, when individuals without disabilities lack skills, they often act inappropriately around people with disabilities, as summarized in the following list:

- a tendency to presume that the person with a disability is perpetually sad and does not have a reason to be happy
- the penchant to feel an underlying pity for individuals with disabilities
- the intense need to focus on the disability to the preclusion of any other characteristics of the person

- treating the person with disabilities as a child as evidenced by tone of voice and the verbal message
- avoiding the person with disabilities
- the presence of humor at the expense of the individual with disabilities
- speaking for individuals with disabilities as if they were not present or were incapable of speaking for themselves.

Biklen and Bogdan argued that the helping professions frequently intensify handicapism through their attitudes and misguided perceptions of caring. With combined knowledge, skill, and attitude, this researcher believes that handicapism can be reduced.

Skills and Attitudes

Similarly, unrealistic expectations could also occur when individuals have skills and attitude, but lack the knowledge and understanding about the definitions of inclusion; the needs and abilities of the student with special needs; and their own biases. Connelly, Clandinin, and He (1997) argued that, in contrast to the concern about teacher's attitudes and skill, "...teacher knowledge and knowing affects every aspect of the teaching act" (p. 666), from relationships with children to treatment of ideas, to interpretation of subject matter, to curriculum planning.

The teacher's skill, but lack of certain knowledge about how to use this skill, can result in the teacher thinking that he or she must be the exclusive advocate for the child with special needs. Kunc (1981) argued that, in his experience, teachers were not prepared with knowledge to have students with special needs in their classrooms. Teachers relied on intuition based on society's assumptions of how to handle students with special needs. Teachers viewed the addition of a student with needs as an extra load, and Kunc felt that teachers unnecessarily complicated their job. Kunc posited that education should be a teacher-student team effort, with the teacher bringing educational skills and the student bringing limitations and knowledge of how these have been overcome in the past.

Without necessary knowledge, the student with special needs may be deemed to be a burden upon the regular classroom teacher. Staff will feel this burden when they lack knowledge about the student; training; parental input; and direction by the administration.

Williams' poem, cited in Mackan (1991), speaks to what participants in this research suggested could result from a lack of knowledge about children with special needs' abilities and disabilities:

When No One Answers

A child sees me.
Naturally curious,
He looks to his mother,
"Why?"
"Shhh!" Is her answer.
Time passes;
We meet again,
The child and I,
I smile recalling
His curiosity.
This time he
Isn't curious though.
He picks up a
Stone, throwing
It in my direction
He yells,
"Get ya mental"
Where did he learn that?
Surely not his mother,
Her only answer was
"Shhh!" (p. 55)

An important finding in the York, Vandercook, et al. (1992) study was that special educators/coordinators needed to communicate clearly the goals, objectives, and expectations regarding the student with special needs.

When knowledge about the student with special needs was lacking, fear and uncertainty may result, as revealed by educators in these studies: *"I was so scared. I was really quite fearful"* (Counsellor) and *"I was worried about his physical safety. I was afraid to let him leave the classroom"* (Teacher). The literature cited cases where educators were fearful, but their initial apprehensions were alleviated after having experience working with students with special needs included in their classrooms (Giangreco et al., 1993; Taylor et al., 1997).

When asked for their support critical to inclusion, respondents in a survey conducted by Werts, Wolery, Snyder, and Caldwell (1996), cited the need for training as one of the key themes. The perceived training by the teachers included information on the specific disability and teaching how to adapt and modify the material. Training can help students and educators move beyond tolerance and seeing the child with special needs as a burden to acceptance.

Beninghof (1997) explained that parents have different experiences unique to the team because of their knowledge level about their child's disability. Because they are the best source of information, school staff need to capitalize on parents' knowledge to ensure that children's needs are best met.

The literature explained that the principal and administration of the school were another key factor which could help ensure that staff felt supported and not alone with the child with special needs who was included.

Without knowledge of the school policy and procedures and administration support, several authors explained that inclusion would not be successful. Andrews and Lupart (1993) noted the importance of the direction and leadership of the school administrator on the school team. Jung (1998) explained the administrator's role as providing, "moral, monetary, and evaluative support" (p. 134), while Dyal et al. felt that "the school principal plays a critical role in shaping an educational climate that provides opportunities for interaction between nondisabled and disabled students" (1996, p. 32).

Fullan (1991) argued that classrooms and schools are more effective when quality teachers are hired and accomplishments are rewarded.

Administrators play a big role in ensuring that these two components are in place. In his later work, Fullan viewed administrators as crucial components in the change process as he explored tacit and explicit knowledge (Nonaka & Takeuchi, 1995, cited in Fullan, 1999). Fullan (1999) felt that principals were key players in converting this tacit knowledge (skills and beliefs below the level of awareness, which are deeply rooted in experience and difficult to share) into explicit knowledge (words and numbers that can be shared and communicated in hard data). Perner (1991) recommended a number of practical ways for an administrator to reflect his/her commitment to children, parents, and staff, by playing an active role in the inclusion of all children. "Without a doubt, the school principal is one of the key persons in successful integration" (Perner, 1991, p. 157). Beninghof and Singer (1996) prepared a detailed guide for school administrators, to help them "lead by example" (p. 14) and prepare their schools for all children. Porter (1997) explained that the principal must "link the success of inclusion to good instructional strategies and procure additional supports needed to guarantee the success of teachers and students" (p.36). Fisher, Sax, and Jorgensen (1998) argued that "...administrative vision that is unwavering in the face of uncertainty" (p. 31) was a necessary principle of inclusive schools.

Specific studies have been undertaken to explore how principals administer special education programs in their schools (Evans, Bird, Ford, Green, & Bischoff, 1992, cited in Downing et al., 1997; Morgan, Whorton, & Cruzeiro, 1998; Smith & Colon, 1998). These studies demonstrated the need for administrators to be knowledgeable about the students with special needs and their programs. This knowledge, in turn, should help administrators view inclusion as an opportunity to support their teachers. Conversely, Malloy (1996) argued that administrators are driven by standards and find the current system comfortable and effective in sorting students. Until the structure of schools change, administrators will likely continue to find comfort in maintaining the status quo, which means that teachers will continue to feel the burden of educating students with special needs.

Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes

To implement this model means meshing together the three factors, and this represents change. Fullan (1999) argued that change required the fusion of intellectual, political, and spiritual forces. In relation to this research, the intellectual dimension parallels knowledge to seek and incorporate new ideas regarding education for children that will encourage belonging. The political force can be equated to the skill required by educators to "...mobilize power to get things done" (Fullan, p. 81). Fullan's third core element, the spiritual dimension or moral purpose, parallels the attitudes discussed throughout this research. Fullan described the spiritual dimension as "elevating the debate and commitment to making a difference in the lives of all students" (p. 81). In this researcher's model of inclusive education, all three elements must be fused to provide the most encouraging programs and most enabling environments for students.

Several checklists and rating scales have been developed to evaluate effective inclusive settings. This section will provide the reader with a sampling of the literature. Readers may wish to refer to Mastropieri and Scrugg's (1997) PASS model to evaluate inclusive settings. The PASS variables consisted of **prioritizing** objectives through a careful review of the curriculum; **adapting** curriculum, methods, materials and environments to be the most effective for the student; **SCREAM** variables for effective teacher presentations; and **systematically** evaluating and monitoring progress toward goals. The SCREAM acronym, Mastropieri and Scruggs stated, encompassed variables summarized from teacher-effectiveness research: structure in the presentations, clarity of presentations, redundancy to emphasize concepts, enthusiasm of the presenter, appropriate rate of presentation, and maximizing student engagement with instruction.

Winter (1997) proposed a five-point system designed to guide teachers through the process of instructional planning for inclusive education programs. SMART is an acronym standing for **Select** curriculum and approaches, **Match** instruction to the child, **Adapt** when necessary, **Relevant** skills targeted, and **Test** to evaluate. These components, Winter advocated, when used singly or in combination, could influence instructional power.

In their questions and answers about inclusive programs, McLeskey and Waldron (1996) provided four criteria to judge good inclusive programs. The first criterion was the amount of academic and social gains achieved by the student with special needs. A good inclusive program is one in which students with special needs makes at least as many academic and social gains as they would in a segregated room. The second criterion looked at these same gains as made by the student without special needs. In a good inclusive setting, peers will make as many academic and social gains as they would in a noninclusive setting. Teacher support was the third criterion. Teachers are supported as they make the necessary adaptations and modifications for all students. The final aspect to a good inclusive program, according to McLeskey and Waldron was the maintenance of normalization. The concept of normalization is reflected in good inclusive programs where the "...rhythm of the day for students with disabilities is as similar as possible to the rhythm of the day for typical students" (McLeskey & Waldron, 1996, p. 155).

Vaughn, Schumm, and Brick (1998) developed a rating scale as a framework to design, implement, and evaluate inclusive programs. The Rating Scale of Components of a Responsible Inclusion Program for Students with High-Incidence Disabilities could be a useful tool to provide guidance and structure to schools either beginning their programs or already in some stage of implementation. As mentioned previously, fear of the unknown was a common feature throughout the research and the literature review, and this tool could help educators acquire a better understanding of expectations in inclusive settings.

A more formalized assessment tool, The Instructional Environment System – II (TIES-II) (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1993/94), could be used to evaluate the environment for the student with special needs. The TIES-II is an evaluation tool that can help identify environments conducive to learning for all children. This ecological assessment seeks to understand the ongoing relationship between the child and environments. It looks closely at the particular environments and helps the educator determine the steps involved in performing the activity and changes needed in the environment. There is an emphasis on looking at the interactions of the child and the environment, not just the child or just the

environment. Bronfenbrenner (1979) argued that every individual is affected by the entire environment as a number of systems operate and interact with each other.

Evidence from the research to support the model.

Kristy.

Observations in Kristy's Foods class provided evidence for the model. Kristy was registered in the Foods 10 class and the teacher had a working knowledge about Kristy's needs, abilities, and disabilities. She was skillful in utilizing the teacher assistant for support; however an inclusive attitude was not apparent. The initial observation in this class demonstrated segregation in the inclusive setting as Kristy worked exclusively with the teacher assistant at her work station and interacted infrequently, it at all, with any other student in the room. After reading the researcher's field notes from the initial observation, the teacher had talked to the class about Kristy's needs as a member of the class, and how the class could better accommodate her needs. As a result, when the researcher observed this same class about a month later, Kristy was partnered with a typical peer at her wheelchair accessible station, and they were preparing the recipe together. The teacher assistant was helping the pair, offering advice and/or suggestions to Kristy and her partner. Kristy's partner interacted freely with Kristy, and the teacher was observed to supervise all stations equally, including Kristy's. It appeared that the teacher had adopted a more willing attitude and encouraged the students to do the same. The result was a more successful inclusive experience.

Brahma.

In Brahma's Drama class, the teacher displayed a meshing of the knowledge, skills, and attitude for successful inclusion in the class. All observations pointed to this same conclusion. The teacher's attitude was reinforced through her classroom decorating of "positive attitude" posters on all walls, and through her respectful comments to all students. Students, in turn, displayed the same respectful manner to the teacher and to each other. The teacher assistant did not accompany Brahma to this classroom, and the

teacher demonstrated her skillful use of peer support and mentoring to help Brahma learn new dance steps and compose a short sequence. This teacher appeared to have a clear understanding of Brahma's needs, abilities, disabilities, and goals/expectations for the class. The end result, as observed, was a highly successful inclusive experience for Brahma in his Drama class: he participated enthusiastically in all aspects of the class, he seemed to be accepted in the class, and he went back to that class at noon hours to sit with peers or use the computer.

Mike.

The most memorable occasion in Mike's classes to depict the connection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes was in his Math class. In this class, the teacher assistant accompanied Mike, however, he worked and interacted closely with a peer as well. The teacher's attitude was positive, and she welcomed all students into her class. Her knowledge of Mike's needs, abilities, disabilities, and goals/expectations was evident through her interaction with him. For example, she asked him, along with others, to explain how to do questions, while she followed his instructions on the overhead. She was skillful in her use of resources available in the classroom. As a result, Mike's inclusion in this class appeared to be successful: he interacted freely with the teacher and his peers, he was an active participant, and he seemed happy to be in Math class!

It is hoped that the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and attitudes will help to alleviate the "natural enemies" of mainstreaming: ignorance, tradition, and prejudice. (Forest, 1984, p. 20). Creating knowledge will help to overcome ignorance; becoming competent and skillful will help to ensure that tradition does not have to be followed as strictly as in previous educational times; and reflecting on attitudes will help to eliminate prejudice and biases. Knowledge, skills, and attitudes will lead to effective education or "doing the right things," versus efficiency, "doing things right" (Ainscow, 1992, p. 121). Being effective and having an awareness of the three components of the model will help to ensure that, despite our best intentions to do things right, we often end up doing things wrong. "The new three R's – reading, writing, and relationships" (Stainbach & Stainbach,

1992, p. xvi) would be evident in an environment where knowledge, skills, and attitudes were interrelated.

Implications of the Study

This study generated multi-perspectives from a variety of sources in an attempt to provide the reader with an understanding of the factors required for successful inclusion. Due to the limited number of participants and the limited number of case studies, readers should not infer generalizations to other settings, however, readers are referred to implications for future research.

These case studies have purposely included the perspectives of the individuals with special needs to give credence to their life stories. Past research of Edgerton (1967), Bogdan and Taylor (1982), and Raymond (1995), has portrayed individuals with special needs as valuable members of society, with a story to tell about their need for understanding, love, and acceptance. If we can listen openly to these stories, we can gain an appreciation of their perspectives, wants, and needs, and really " understand the meaning of mental retardation in our culture" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1982, p. 4). In these case studies, by listening carefully to the life stories of the students with special needs, it became apparent that belonging and acceptance were crucial to them. As mentioned in earlier chapters, participant's definitions of friendships varied, but all needed to know that they did have a place where they were accepted. It behooves educators and parents to work together to find the most enabling environment for all children. Further research is required with individuals with special needs, so their perspective can be understood even more clearly.

It has been demonstrated that the belief about the degree of inclusion stems from what the student and teacher knows. A necessary prerequisite, to including children and ensuring that they belong and are accepted in the most enabling environment, is to provide staff and students with disability awareness training, sensitivity training, and experiences with students with special needs. Team training for teachers and teacher assistants has been revealed as one of the most important beginning points toward

ensuring that inclusion is successful. Further research is required in this area and detailed, specific training for both parties is necessary.

Knowledge can be obtained in many ways. The literature contains many resources now for implementing theory into practice (Andrews & Lupart, 1993; Beninghof, 1997; Beninghof & Singer, 1996; Blenk & Fine, 1995; Bradley, King-Sears, & Tessier-Switlick (1997); Downing, 1996; Giangreco, 1997; Jorgensen, 1998; Raymond, 1995; Salend, 1994; Smith, 1998; Stainback, Stainback, & Ayres, 1996; Villa & Thousand, 1995b; Wang, 1992). These resources will provide educators with the strategies necessary to creating accepting classrooms.

The research and literature review has demonstrated that, at high school, children with special needs are, partially, a product of their disabling environments. It is important for society to look carefully at these environments and begin to make some necessary changes so "disabled and nondisabled persons could become functionally equal" (Hahn, 1988, p. 26). Administrators, the research has shown, are a key feature within educational change. There is room for vast amounts of research in action to be done in this area of change, and to begin using some of the research and literature already available to begin implementing change. Further inquiry into high school inclusion, to yield an understanding of perspectives and structures that are unique to high schools, is needed.

Limitations of the Study

The major limitation of this research is the cognitive functioning level of the students with special needs in this research. In many cases, students who would be funded at the severe level by Alberta Education, as referred to in chapter 3, might have cognitive abilities in the severe to profound range. However, the three students in this research were functioning in the borderline, average, or above-average range of cognitive ability with varying other disabling conditions. This is a significant limitation of this research on inclusion.

A second limitation stems from case study method utilized for the research. The data generated from these three case studies are not expected to generalize to other studies. Although the students with special needs represent a diverse group that might

make generalization even more difficult, this diversity also ensures that the reader will gain an appreciation of the vastness of the issues related to inclusion through these participants. Strengths of the ethnographic case study approach, Fraenkel and Wallen (1993) noted, are in its ability to "reveal nuances and subtleties" (p. 394) that other research methods often miss. It is the researcher's desire to have listened and observed carefully and accurately enough in the inquiry, so that the insights and categories that emerged will speak to others in similar situations, as described in the previous section on external validity.

A delimitation is in the narrow focus on students with moderate to severe disabilities. Many of the current inclusive classrooms and studies surrounding inclusiveness involve students with mild disabilities, such as learning disabilities. These students present with a whole different set of challenges.

A key limitation is that the student with special needs has participated in inclusion prior to the time of the study. If the student, his/her peers, staff and parents have worked through inclusion for a period of time already, this factor could impact on the results of the research.

This chapter has attempted to pull together the research findings through a discussion of the practical implications of the research. A model of inclusion for educators, for the most enabling environment for children with special needs, was presented based on the findings. Chapter 6 will provide an overall summary statement of the purposes, findings, and conclusions related to the case studies of inclusion at the high school level.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion

I Really Want

I really want a world without prejudice,

Because there would be tolerance.

I really want a world without racism,

Because there would be equality.

I really want a world without humiliation,

Because there would be kindness.

I really want a world where people would just be themselves,

Because there would be diversity.

I really want a world where people would be understood.

By Felicia Wile, Grade 5 student, Parkland School Division #70 (1999).

This research began by looking at the question, "What are the factors necessary for successful inclusion in high school?" The poem above, written by a young girl in grade 5, summarizes the findings of this research in a poignant manner. Wile's (1999) words, tolerance, equality, kindness, and diversity, epitomize the qualities that are necessary to achieve successful inclusion in the most enabling environment. This chapter will review the model of inclusion for educators and outline the findings, as explained in chapter 5.

The model of inclusion, presented in chapter 5, demonstrated the interconnectedness required between knowledge, skills, and attitudes to achieve successful inclusion for students with special needs. As was illustrated with the model, when these three factors, knowledge, skills, and attitudes, do not mesh together, then the environment will not be the most enabling for the child. If only knowledge and skills are connected, segregated classes will be perpetuated and learned helplessness may result. Staff who have the appropriate knowledge about the student with special needs, including goals and expectations, and skills to implement the program, but who lack the attitudes of

belonging and acceptance for all children regardless of ability, will tend to look to segregated settings as the placement for education for these students with special needs. A second combination, that also inhibits successful inclusion, is the presence of knowledge and attitudes without skills to utilize supports and plan programs. When skills are lacking, handicapism may be intensified through misguided attitudes and perceptions. Well-meaning comments and actions tend to promote the unequal treatment of students with special needs. Similarly, when skills and attitudes are combined in the model, staff may feel that students with special needs are a burden. The skills that teachers have acquired to work with students with special needs, and their positive attitudes towards inclusion, may result in teachers doing all the programming and planning themselves instead of enlisting the help of others. The model of inclusion, presented as a result of this research, advocates for the connection of knowledge, skills, and attitudes to provide the most enabling environment for students. Having recognized this connection, it is important to explain that there is not one way to ensure the connections are made. The findings from the case studies illustrated how different inclusion can look in a variety of situations and settings.

The findings from the three case studies and the review of the literature have demonstrated that there is not one correct way to successfully implement inclusion at high school. This thought was reiterated by Fox and Ysseldyke (1997), who reminded us that there will "probably never be a definitive blueprint for implementing inclusion" (p. 95). Further, a personal communication, with the mother of a child who has disabilities, reinforced the notion that inclusion does not mean that differences do not exist nor that all children are treated the same. She explained that the rights of the individual must be balanced with the rights of the group (Pivato, Personal Communication, May 1999). Instead, it is the responsibility of the educator, the parents, and the student with special needs, to work together to find the most enabling environment for each child.

As discussed in chapter 5, there were six practical applications stemming from these case studies. These applications included: (1) clarifying perceptions and definitions, (2) appropriate use of the teacher assistant, (3) self-determination of the adolescent with

special needs, (4) recognizing the benefits to peers without disabilities, (5) recognizing the benefits to educators, and (6) understanding the change factors.

Throughout the research, the importance of clarifying definitions was demonstrated. When all parties have a common understanding of the terms and concepts of inclusion, then work can begin to provide the most enabling environment for the child. At the outset of any discussion, and during conversations, it is crucial that perceptions are checked to avoid miscommunication. For example, the following questions could be asked: "what is meant by full time or part time inclusion," "what support is given when my son/daughter is included in the regular class," and "how do the classroom teachers feel about inclusion?" Clarification of questions similar to these could help alleviate the difficulties that arise and the roadblocks that occur when communication is stymied.

In all three case studies, the teacher assistant was a crucial component to the inclusion process. Effective utilization of the teacher assistant, however, was an issue. Many of the teachers were not trained to work with the teacher assistants, and they left the program planning and evaluation to the teacher assistant. It was determined that the teacher and the teacher assistant, as a team, required joint training in working with students with special needs, to ensure that inclusion was successful.

Students with special needs, in these case studies, who demonstrated self-determination, appeared to be more capable of advocating for their own needs. It remains the responsibility of the school to help students with special needs become more self-reliant by assisting the students in learning about their needs, abilities, and challenges. When students with special needs demonstrate self-determination, they demonstrate the ability to make decisions and choices regarding their education.

Students without disabilities appeared to benefit in numerous ways from having students with special needs in their classrooms. Social benefits were noted most often as peers became familiar and more comfortable with students with special needs. To this end, students without disabilities need a chance to gain an understanding of the exceptional student's needs. This knowledge can be shared by an adult familiar with the student with special needs, in the regular classroom, without the student present. Although there are contrasting views about whether to share information or not, this

research repeatedly supported the necessity of having information in order to begin understanding the student with special needs.

Similarly, benefits were accrued by staff after working with students with special needs. Many staff were hesitant when they began the inclusion process, however, their attitudes changed as a result of having the student with special needs in their classroom. Again, the deciding factor, enabling staff to understand the student with special needs, was the dissemination of knowledge about the child's needs, challenges, and abilities. Armed with this knowledge, staff were more willing to try the inclusion route.

An underlying aspect of the whole inclusion topic was the recognition of the changes that are involved with delivery of an educational program differing from the norm. This research illustrated the need for staff and parents to become cognizant of the change processes and their comfort level with these changes. Staff and parents who can work together as a team, communicate their desires, and compromise where required, will be in a better position to provide the most enabling environment for their children.

As the story of special education continues through these case studies, it is this researcher's hope that readers will be reminded of the changes required in our mindset of special education:

> People have to stop thinking of special education as synonymous with underachievement. Special education is not a place, it's not a remedial program, and it's not small group instruction. Instead, special education is *'specially designed instruction'* to meet the unique needs of individuals with exceptional needs. The ultimate educational outcomes for the child with a disability are the same as for any other child. (Campbell, 1992, cited in Fisher, Sax, Pumpian, Rodifer, & Kreikemeirer, 1997, p. 61)

Once we begin to see the value in all individuals, and understand the importance of the interconnections between the child and his/her settings, we will be better able to structure the environments to be the most enabling for all children.

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Appendix A

Teacher Information Letter

DATE: September 1998
RE: Research Project

Dear Sir/Madam:

I am a PhD student at the University of Alberta in the Department of Educational Psychology. I am conducting a research project on inclusion of individuals with special needs at the high school level, under the supervision of Dr. L.Wilgosh. The study is important to gain an increased awareness and understanding of the implications for all people involved with the education of students with special needs who are included in the high school setting.

Therefore, we would like to invite you to participate in this research project, which looks at inclusionary practices at the high school. The project will run from September 1998 to June, 1999. If you choose to participate in this study, you will be observed and interviewed at varying times throughout the school day during this time frame and you may also be asked to submit a journal. During these sessions, notes will be taken on observations and interviews will be taped and transcribed. These notes will be shared with you to ensure that the researcher's perception of what has been observed and said is accurate. All information collected during the study will be considered confidential and records will be identifiable by pseudonyms.

Please feel free to telephone me at 963-8459 (work) or 963-6009 (home) if you have any questions regarding this study. If you agree to participate, arrangements will be made to meet with you and explain the study in greater detail and to obtain your final written consent.

Thank you for taking the time to consider the information in this letter. If you have any questions, please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Lorraine Stewart
Doctoral Student
Department of Educational Psychology
University of Alberta

Appendix B

Consent Form – Research Project
Student and parent/guardian

I understand that Lorraine Stewart, under the direction of Dr. L. Wilgosh of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, is conducting a study to look at the inclusionary practices at the high school level.

I understand that participation in the study is purely voluntary and is my own decision.

I understand that I will be observed and interviewed in school settings and may be asked to submit a journal.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have discussed the above information with Lorraine Stewart and she has agreed to answer any questions I may have concerning this study.

I understand that I can ask questions of the researcher and her thesis advisor at anytime. These people are:

Lorraine Stewart	963-8459 (work)	963-6009 (home)
Dr. L. Wilgosh	492-3738 (work)	

_____ _____

Signature of Student Date

_____ _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

_____ _____

Witness Date

Consent Form – Research Project
Student with special needs and parent/guardian

I understand that Lorraine Stewart, under the direction of Dr. L. Wilgosh of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, is conducting a study to look at the inclusionary practices at the high school level.

I understand that participation in the study is purely voluntary and is my own decision.

I understand that I will be observed and interviewed in school settings and may be asked to submit a journal. I understand that Lorraine Stewart will have access to my son/daughter's school files and Individual Program Plan.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have discussed the above information with Lorraine Stewart and she has agreed to answer any questions I may have concerning this study.

I understand that I can ask questions of the researcher and her thesis advisor at any time. These people are:

Lorraine Stewart	963-8459 (work)	963-6009 (home)
Dr. L. Wilgosh	492-3738 (work)	

_____ _____
Signature of Student Date

_____ _____
Signature of Parent/Guardian Date

_____ _____
Witness Date

Consent Form – Research Project
Adult Participants

I understand that Lorraine Stewart, under the direction of Dr. L. Wilgosh of the Department of Educational Psychology at the University of Alberta, is conducting a study to look at the inclusionary practices at the high school level.

I understand that participation in the study is purely voluntary and is my own decision.

I understand that I will be observed and interviewed in school settings and may be asked to submit a journal. I understand that Lorraine Stewart will have access to the student with special needs' school files and Individual Program Plan.

I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time.

I have discussed the above information with Lorraine Stewart and she has agreed to answer any questions I may have concerning this study.

I understand that I can ask questions of the researcher and her thesis advisor at any time. These people are:

Lorraine Stewart	963-8459 (work)	963-6009 (home)
Dr. L. Wilgosh	492-3738 (work)	

_____ _____
Signature of Participant Date

_____
Title of Participant

_____ _____
Witness **Date**

Appendix C

Interview Questions for staff

Historical Data:

Name: Male/Female: Today's date:

Position: Grade/Class taught:

Number of students in class: Number of special needs students in class:

Number of years teaching: Highest degree: Year:

Number of years teaching students with special needs:

Number of students with special needs taught:

Interview questions:

1. What is your general feeling about how inclusion is working here?
2. What makes you feel it has or has not been successful?
3. What has helped you the most?
4. What have the biggest problems been?
5. What things about this school or the school system have either helped or hindered?
6. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from central administration?
7. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from special education teachers?
8. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from principals?
9. Have your feelings about inclusion changed? If so, what made you change?
10. What were your original goals for the inclusion effort, and have you met these

goals?

11. How has inclusion changed your job?

12. If another school district asked you about inclusion, what would you say?

Interview Questions for student with special needs

Historical Data:

Name: Male/Female:

Today's date: Grade/Class:

Interview questions:

1. Show me what kinds of things you are doing in this class today?
2. What do you like best about being in this class?
3. What don't you like about being in this class?
4. Who are your friends in this class?
5. Why are those kids friends? What do they do?
6. Who do you mostly work with in this class?

Interview Questions for "regular" students

Historical Data:

Name: Male/Female:

Today's date: Grade/Class:

Interview Questions:

1. How long have you known the student with special needs?
2. Has this student been in other classes with you? Please explain.
3. What is the student with special needs learning in this class?
4. Who helps him/her to learn?
5. What do you think are this student's strengths or talents?
6. What do you think are this student's needs?
7. How can these strengths and needs be addressed in this inclusive setting?
8. What have the biggest problems been for you as a result of having this student with special needs in your class?
9. What have the benefits been to you of having this student in your class?

Interview Questions for parent/guardian

Historical Data:

Name: Male/Female: Today's date:

Relationship to child:

Interview questions:

1. What is your vision for your child?
2. Define inclusion; integration; segregation:
3. What is your general feeling about how inclusion is working here?
4. What makes you feel it has or has not been successful?
5. What has helped you the most?
6. What have the biggest problems been?
1. What things about this school or the school system have either helped or hindered?
2. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from central administration?
9. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from special education teachers?
10. For inclusion to be successful, what do teachers need from principals?
11. Have your feelings about inclusion changed? If so, what made you change?
12. What were your original goals for the inclusion effort, and have you met these goals?
13. How has inclusion changed your son/daughter's life?
14. If another parent asked you about inclusion, what would you say?

15. What is your vision for your child?

(Adapted from Janney, Snell, Beers, & Raynes, 1995).

Appendix D
Transcript Samples

Interview with P2, February 26, 1999

L. (interviewer):
Ok, um, what do you think the other kids are learning by having B in their class?

P2 (interviewee):
Um, I don't know if, I don't know if they're learning much. I think it's – it's not like anyone talks about B, you know, in the class like. Maybe he has his difficulties, you know, but they don't take it seriously. They don't treat him good, I don't know, cause they don't know the story. They don't learn anything from it cause they're just looking at it from....

L. Ok, um, tell me a little bit, like when I say inclusion, this whole research that I'm doing is based on kids who are included in regular classes...

P2. Right

L. And so, when I say inclusion, what does that mean to you?

P2. Um, that the students are involved and can be part of the studies.

L. Just along with everyone else?

P2. Yeah

L. Ok. Tell me a little bit more about – you started to tell me when I was here a couple of weeks ago, about, um, B down on the bridge. Do you want to tell me a little bit about that?

P2. Alright. Um, after school, I got home and I was driving – it was 4:30 and we get out of school at 3:30. I was driving and it was probably about 2 or 3 km maybe, and we saw him walking on the side of the highway and so I said, "Oh shoot, what's he doing," you know. So I turn around and go all the way back to town and go back – it's 4:30 and so, um, he's been walking for a long time. So I said, "Hey, can I give you a ride?" "Oh no, it's okay." "It's okay, hop in," you know. And he's like.....

L. Did he know who you were?

P2. Yeah, I think he remembered me. But he's, like, uh, "Ok." And I'm like, "What are you doing? Why are you walking?" And he's like, "My mom or dad didn't pick me up so I'm just going to walk home." He's like, "I waited half an hour for them to show up, so I decided to walk." And I'm like, "Where do you live?" My girlfriend knows where he lives. "Oh, are you walking all that way? Can't walk that far." And then when he got off, he's like, he didn't say thank you or nothing like that, which is okay, cause I understand. I thought it was kinda funny.

L. Ok, did he know where he lived?

P2. It took him awhile...

L. To be able to tell you?

P2. Yeah, he goes, "Oh, I live in, uh, up on that road." My girlfriend knew which house. He knew where he lived.

Interview with T1 (Foods teacher for Kristy), October 12, 1998

L. What is your general feeling about how inclusion is working here?

T1. I've had limited experience – she's only been in class, what – have I seen her about 10 times? Ok, so I don't feel it works unless people take some time to do some, uh, pre-working with the kids in the class. Also, that the same thing has to be done with the teachers working with these kids. Uh, I don't feel that she can come in like any other student and just, totally, uh, interact with people and have all her needs met. Obviously she can't because she has an aide in class. The other one is, the kids don't know how to react to her.

L. They need some education then?

T1. Yeah, or they need some kind of almost a social thing there they can get to know her other than in the classroom. Because, if they have their druthers, they're just like people. Anything that's unusual, you, you look and you're polite, but you don't want to venture past that point. It becomes a little uncomfortable. You don't know if you're going to say the right thing, you, I think that it's going to be difficult, more difficult for you if you volunteer to be her partner for the year. Is that going to be a more difficult procedure? Will you be graded the same? Or, uh, you don't have to consider all those things if you just partner up with anyone else.

L. So, could you sum it up in a feeling even though it's been a limited experience – a feeling about how it's working so far?

T1. Well, from the feedback that I've got from you and the TA, I think that it's working fine. But obviously, it took a little bit of, uh, getting used to stage, too. An accommodation stage. It's working fine now because the TA doesn't seem to be so stressed. Uh, I can see that the students, after we had our little talk, you know, know they should be more involved with her. So, yeah, I'd say that it's working fine right now.

Appendix E

Observational Questions for Educational Settings

School Environment - Physical:

How large is the building? Does it adequately accommodate the students?

How old is the building? What condition is it in generally?

What are the grounds like?

Are there fences and walls around the school?

Are the entrances to the building accessible to all students and staff?

In what section of the community is the building located? What is the nature of that section?

What transportation facilities are available to and from the school?

Are entrances clearly marked so visitors can find the office?

What is the temperature of the school? Can the temperature be controlled in each room? Can windows be opened?

Do staff think of some space as their private territory?

Do students have private, locked places to keep their personal belongings?

Do students decorate hallways, rooms? What is the nature of these decorations?

Are any parts of the building inaccessible to students in wheelchairs? Including bathroom doors and cubicles?

Are the washrooms clean and free of odor?

Are there soap and towels in the washrooms?

Are there doors on the stall to ensure privacy?

What is the nature of the graffiti (if any)?

Do staff members eat with students?

How much time is given for the staff and students to eat? Is it enough for a leisurely meal?

What is the dining atmosphere?

How is food served? On what vessels?

What eating utensils do students use?

What kind of food is served? How is it served?

What are the rules and regulations of the cafeteria?

What do children talk about at lunch?

Are children allowed to sit where they wish for lunch?

What do teachers think about cafeteria duty?

What do staff members talk about at lunch?

What is the seating arrangement in the teachers' eating place? Is it the same every day?

Econonic, Social, and Cultural Environment

What is the reputation of the school in the community?

What are some of the major problems the school has faced over the past five years?

What sorts of things is the school criticized for by outsiders?

What is the racial composition of the school?

Do classes tend to be balanced or do minority students tend to wind up in the same class?

What is the socioeconomic composition of the school?

Semantic Environment

What nicknames do staff give students?

What nicknames do students have for staff?

What words or phrases are used in the school that you have not heard before?

What is their meaning?

How do staff describe their school?

How do students describe their school?

Appendix F

Journal Samples

Entry #1: Dated November 20, 1997:

Good a day as any to start – found out yesterday that I passed written sectn of EPPP – only 1 more step to go! Also found out today that L. McD agreed to my research topic – inclusion at high school – case study. Now – for a student! Will be really impt to bracket presupp in this case – I've got 3 yr of past incl exper to deal with and lots of yrs of segr exper. Left numerous messages with school districts to find kids. Looking for a 'model' that's in place and how to expand/restructure that model for better effectiveness. Seems to be so hard in high school – altho I know change is difficult always. And a name – keep it simple – Included in High School: A Case Study? Maybe I need a different name than inclusion – it's loaded with so many negatives due to the way it was introduced and mandated. But – I don't necessarily think it's collab either. I'll check searches on net and reference for various terms – I <u>think</u> it's finally coming together – feels good. Lots of work – but it's a good work & doesn't seem like work. In fact – it's harder to stop the searching/reading! Good things take time – and this is good!

Entry #2: Dated June 21, 1998, Sunday 9pm:

Thursday took K for supper after interview – general impressions:

Eager to please
Lonely
Friends = anyone who is nice to her and likes her
Relies on others – key, coat, etc.

- dinner – enjoyed Chinese food/polite.
- overall – K seems to be the type who could fit into school better than X due to her social skills/communication skills/humor/wit.
- interesting how 2 in restaurant warmed to her – but asked ? thru me – I referred back to her to answ
- somewhat apathetic re: activities – doesn't enjoy outside much at all – walks – library, etc. Possibly needs friend to do these things with?